Three in One: The Style, Structure, And Sound of Thad Jones as a Jazz Trumpeter

Shawn Edward Williams

Follow this and additional works at: https://digscholarship.unco.edu/dissertations
THREE IN ONE: THE STYLE, STRUCTURE, AND SOUND OF THAD JONES AS A JAZZ TRUMPETER

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Arts

Shawn Edward Williams

College of Performing and Visual Arts
School of Music
Jazz Studies

December 2020
This Dissertation by:  Shawn Edward Williams

Entitled:  *Three in One: The Style, Structure, and Sound of Thad Jones as a Jazz Trumpeter*

has been approved as meeting the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Arts in the College of Performing and Visual Arts in the School of Music, Program of Jazz Studies

Accepted by the Doctoral Committee

__________________________
Dana Landry, M.M., Research Advisor

__________________________
Jim White, M.M., Committee Member

__________________________
Brian Casey, D.M.A., Committee Member

__________________________
Drew Zaremba, M.M., Committee Member

__________________________
Mary Schuttler, Ph.D., Faculty Representative

Date of Dissertation Defense ________________________________

Accepted by the Graduate School

__________________________________________________________________________
Jeri-Anne Lyons, Ph.D.
Dean of the Graduate School
Associate Vice President for Research
ABSTRACT


Thad Jones’s role as a big-band composer, arranger and leader of the famed Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra formed the basis for his international reputation in the jazz world. However, it can be demonstrated that Jones’s improvisational style as a jazz trumpet soloist directly informed his composition and arranging style. Long before Jones became an active composer and arranger, he spent decades performing as a soloist with various small groups. Jones spent his formative years in Pontiac, Michigan playing with the Arcadia Club Band, a family band formed by his uncle, where he worked alongside his brother Hank Jones. Jones continued to develop his skills as a musician at the acclaimed Bluebird Club in Detroit from 1952-1954, where he performed approximately six nights each week in the house band. The band included saxophonist Billy Mitchell, pianist/vibraphonist Terry Pollard (later replaced by Tommy Flanagan), bassist James “Beans” Richardson, and Jones’s younger brother Elvin Jones on drums.1 Jones’s two-year engagement at the Bluebird eventually led to his collaborations with artists such as Sonny Rollins, Thelonious Monk, Frank Wess, Sonny Stitt, Pepper Adams and Charles Mingus.

---

The focus of this research document lies in the relationship of Jones’s improvised solos with his compositions and arrangements, and how his musical language is consistent between his writing and playing. Through the strategic analysis of several transcribed cornet, trumpet, and flugelhorn solos of Thad Jones, specific nuances in his improvisations can be directly related to his style and language as a big-band composer and arranger. Currently there are few sources that provide a detailed analysis specific to Jones as a jazz trumpet soloist and performer. This document will be beneficial to jazz students and scholars as it provides an understanding of how Jones developed his unique musical voice and how it continues to captivate audiences and listeners to this day. Through this research, jazz enthusiasts will discover the improvisational style of Thad Jones and learn how improvisation and composition are interconnected.

This research examines the style, structure, and sound of jazz trumpeter Thad Jones between 1953-1986, the years Jones was most active as a performer and composer. Through the analysis of selected transcribed solos recorded by Jones in various small groups from the beginning to the end of his career, this study aims to discover the melodic, rhythmic, harmonic, and sound conception that can be ascribed to the jazz trumpeter. Thorough and detailed analyses of the transcriptions aim to unveil his talents as a jazz trumpeter that are often overshadowed by the fame he has earned as a writer and bandleader.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my family and friends. Thank you for your continued love and support, especially through this process. A huge thanks to my parents, Steve and Lourdes, for all of the music lessons, instruments, and rides to rehearsals in my youth. Thank you for encouraging me in my endeavors to pursue a career in music. Deepest thanks to Clay Jenkins—my mentor and former teacher. Thank you for exposing me to Thad Jones when I initially studied with you at the Eastman School of Music. I wish to thank my first director of jazz studies, Gary Pratt, with whom I studied at California State University, Northridge. I would not be where I am today without the guidance and support you graciously provided me in my formative years. Thank you to my committee members, Professor Dana Landry, Professor Jim White, Professor Drew Zaremba, Dr. Brian Casey, and Dr. Mary Schuttler for your guidance and support through this project and for generously serving on my dissertation committee. Thank you to all of the UNC jazz faculty for your support, especially Greg Gisbert, Erik Applegate and Kelsey Shiba. I would like to give thanks to Dick Oatts, Harold Danko, Rufus Reid, Eddie Daniels, Cecil Bridgewater, Billy Harper, Tim Hagans, John Mosca, and Dr. David Dempsey for contributing to this project in the form of interviews and other resources. Special thanks to my partner Cameron Watt for his continued encouragement and support through this challenging process and for making the move to Colorado from California with me.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## CHAPTER

### I. INTRODUCTION

- Purpose of Study .................................................. 3
- Scope and Limitations ............................................. 4
- Need for Study ..................................................... 5

### II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND RELATED MEDIA

- Recordings and Liner Notes ...................................... 8
- Interviews and Articles in Musical Publications .............. 9
- Other Interviews .................................................. 11
- Dissertations and Other Academic Works ...................... 13
- Thad Jones Archive at William Paterson University ......... 18
- Overview Sources ................................................. 18
- Literature Related to Composition Analysis .................. 20

### III. METHODOLOGY .............................................. 22

### IV. BIOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW ................................. 28

### V. ANALYTICAL STUDY .......................................... 51

- Introduction ..................................................... 51
- Section I: Melodic Conception .................................. 56
  - Angularity .................................................... 57
  - Octave Transference ......................................... 63
  - Motivic/Thematic Development ............................. 67
    - Call-and-response ....................................... 68
    - Sequences ............................................... 72
    - Mixture of Melodic Devices ......................... 80
- Humor .......................................................... 90
- Summary ....................................................... 96
- Section II: Rhythmic Conception .............................. 98
  - Syncopation ............................................... 101
  - Rhythmic Forward Motion ................................ 104
  - Rhythmic and Phrasing Development ..................... 111
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter/Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Playful Triplet Lines</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Double-Time, Flurries, and Scalar Runs</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section III:</td>
<td>Harmonic Conception</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Influence of Bebop and Hard Bop</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dissonance</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reharmonization</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Upper Structure Triads</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section IV:</td>
<td>Sound Conception</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small Group Sound</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sheets of Sound</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speaking of Sound</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freedom and Joy</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI.</td>
<td>CONCLUSION AND TRIBUTE</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Foreword: Clay Jenkins</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
<td>Definition of Terms</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.</td>
<td>Selected Solo Transcriptions</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Airegen</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Airmail Special</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All Of Us</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All Of You</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bitty Ditty</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blue Jelly</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blue Room (1953)</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blue Room (1956)</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blues De Funk</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cold Miner</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>East Coast, West Coast</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evol Deklaw Ni</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Friday The 13&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Groovin’ High</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H &amp; T Blues</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Page</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haitian Fight Song</td>
<td>246</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Got It Thad [And That Aint’ Bad]</td>
<td>248</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Love You</td>
<td>251</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Mean You</td>
<td>253</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ll Remember April</td>
<td>255</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lady Luck</td>
<td>257</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let’s</td>
<td>259</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Juicy</td>
<td>261</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mad Thad</td>
<td>264</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean What You Say</td>
<td>266</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Of The Same</td>
<td>267</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Refill</td>
<td>270</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oh! Karen O</td>
<td>271</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opus De Blues</td>
<td>275</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osie’s Oasis</td>
<td>277</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potpourri</td>
<td>279</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiet Sip</td>
<td>281</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quittin’ Time</td>
<td>284</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ray El</td>
<td>286</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ritmo Bobo</td>
<td>288</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salute To The Bluebird</td>
<td>290</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scratch</td>
<td>293</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sput ‘N’ Jeff</td>
<td>297</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight No Chaser</td>
<td>299</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtle Rebuttal</td>
<td>302</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangerine</td>
<td>303</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Search</td>
<td>306</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Theme</td>
<td>307</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Zec</td>
<td>310</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thedia</td>
<td>311</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This Can’t Be Love</td>
<td>316</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three And One</td>
<td>317</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Flowers</td>
<td>319</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Is This Thing Called Love?</td>
<td>321</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Is This Thing?</td>
<td>323</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woofer</td>
<td>327</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You’ll Never Get Away From Me</td>
<td>328</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zec</td>
<td>330</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D. Institutional Review Board Documentation .................................. 334
LIST OF EXAMPLES

Ex. 1: Angularity in “Tip Toe,” mm. 1-8………………………………………………… 58
Ex. 2: Angularity in “A – That’s Freedom,” mm. 81-92…………………………… 59
Ex. 3: Angularity in “Second Race,” mm. 37-48……………………………………… 60
Ex. 4: Angularity in “Scratch,” mm. 9-14………………………………………… 61
Ex. 5: Angularity in “The Theme,” mm. 105-111…………………………………… 62
Ex. 6: Octave transference in “Little Rascal On A Rock,” mm. 1-4……………… 64
Ex. 7: Octave transference in “With Bells On,” mm. 137-138……………………… 64
Ex. 8: Octave transference in “Kids Are Pretty People,” mm. 21-23……………… 65
Ex. 9: Octave transference in “Kids Are Pretty People,” mm. 22-24……………… 65
Ex. 10: Octave transference in “Friday The 13th,” mm. 1-4……………………… 66
Ex. 11: Octave transference in “More Of The Same,” mm. 53-57………………… 66
Ex. 12: Octave transference in “Straight No Chaser,” mm. 31-33………………… 66
Ex. 13: Octave transference in “The Theme,” mm. 63-66………………………… 66
Ex. 14: Octave transference in “Salute To The Bluebird,” mm. 9-13…………… 66
Ex. 15: Call-and-response in “Cherry Juice,” mm. 202-207……………………… 69
Ex. 16: Call-and-response in “Rhoda Map,” mm. 9-24…………………………… 70
Ex. 17: Call-and-response in “Little Juicy,” mm. 0-12 ……………………………… 71
Ex. 18: Call-and-response in “Salute to the Bluebird,” mm. 33-40………………… 71
Ex. 19: Call-and-response in “Blue Room (1956),” mm. 57-65………………… 71
Ex. 20: Sequences in “Three and One,” mm. 1-11 ............................... 74
Ex. 21: Sequences in “Consummation,” mm. 29-32 ............................... 74
Ex. 22: Sequences in “Once Around,” mm. 1-8, 48-53 ............................. 75
Ex. 23: Sequences in “I Get A Kick Out Of You,” mm. 52-56 ............... 76
Ex. 24: Sequences in “Zec,” mm. 1-16 ............................................. 76
Ex. 25: Sequences in “Scratch,” mm. 37-45 ....................................... 78
Ex. 26: Sequences in “Scratch,” mm. 80-87 ....................................... 78
Ex. 27: Sequences in “Scratch,” mm. 100-105 .................................. 78
Ex. 28: Sequences in “Thedia,” mm. 65-76 ...................................... 79
Ex. 29: Mixture of melodic devices in “All of Me,” mm. 1-8 ................... 81
Ex. 30: Mixture of melodic devices in “Little Pixie II,” mm. 45-54 ........... 82
Ex. 31: Mixture of melodic devices in “Little Pixie II,” mm. 109-112 ........... 82
Ex. 32: Mixture of melodic devices in “Cherry Juice,” mm. 17-49 ............. 84
Ex. 33: Mixture of melodic devices in “Greetings and Salutations,” mm. 21-31.... 85
Ex. 34: Mixture of melodic devices in “Bitty Ditty,” mm. 36-47 ............... 87
Ex. 35: Mixture of melodic devices in “Lady Luck,” mm. 1-16 .................. 88
Ex. 36: Mixture of melodic devices in “Straight No Chaser,” mm. 24-37 ........ 89
Ex. 37: Humor in “Tip-Toe,” mm. 1-8 ........................................... 94
Ex. 38: Humor in “Little Pixie II,” mm. 1-8 .................................... 95
Ex. 39: Humor and quote of “Habanera” in “What Is This Thing Called Love?” mm. 40-44 ................................................................. 96
Ex. 40: Humor and quote of “Turkey and the Straw” and “Chattanooga” in “I Can’t Get Started” .......................................................... 96
Ex. 41: “Fundamental Types of Syncopation” .................................... 101
Ex. 42: Syncopation in “Kids Are Pretty People,” mm. 89-92

Ex. 43: Syncopation in “A – That’s Freedom,” mm. 62-70

Ex. 44: Syncopation in “Us,” mm. 59-65

Ex. 45: Syncopation in “I Mean You,” mm. 3-5

Ex. 46: Syncopation in “Mean What You Say,” mm. 9-16

Ex. 47: Syncopation in “Straight No Chaser,” mm. 35-39

Ex. 48: Rhythmic forward motion in “Once Around,” mm. 1-8

Ex. 49: Polymetric effect in “Once Around,” mm. 1-10

Ex. 50: Rhythmic forward motion in “Once Around,” mm. 73-88

Ex. 51: Rhythmic forward motion in “Don’t Git Sassy,” mm. 17-24

Ex. 52: Rhythmic forward motion in “Fingers,” mm. 1-11

Ex. 53: Rhythmic forward motion in “Let’s,” mm. 8-11

Ex. 54: Rhythmic forward motion in “Zec,” mm. 21-24

Ex. 55: Rhythmic forward motion in “What Is This Thing?” mm. 9-28

Ex. 56: Rhythmic forward motion in “What Is This Thing?” mm. 73-90

Ex. 57: Rhythmic and phrasing development in “A – That’s Freedom,” mm. 65-84

Ex. 58: Rhythmic and phrasing development in “The Farewell,” mm. 152-169

Ex. 59: Rhythmic and phrasing development in “Blue Jelly,” mm. 0-16

Ex. 60: Rhythmic and phrasing development in “I Got It Thad,” mm. 1-11

Ex. 61: Rhythmic and phrasing development in “Straight No Chaser,” mm. 73-78

Ex. 62: Rhythmic and phrasing development in “I Love You,” mm. 32-41

Ex. 63: Playful triplet lines in “The Waltz You ‘Swang’ For Me,” mm. 79-81
Ex. 64: Playful triplet lines in “Don’t Git Sassy,” mm. 97-110................. 120
Ex. 65: Playful triplet lines in “A – That’s Freedom,” mm. 73-80............ 121
Ex. 66: Playful triplet lines in “Tip-Toe,” mm. 59-90............................ 121
Ex. 67: Playful triplet lines in “Quittin’ Time,” mm. 28-31......................... 122
Ex. 68: Playful triplet lines in “I Got It Thad (And That Ain’t Bad),” mm. 20-23... 122
Ex. 69: Playful triplet lines in “Lady Luck,” mm. 9-22............................. 123
Ex. 70: Playful triplet lines in “Straight No Chaser,” mm. 13-23................ 123
Ex. 71: Double time, flurries, and scalar runs in “Groove Merchant,” mm. 61-93................................................................. 126
Ex. 72: Double time, flurries, and scalar runs in “Tribute to a Statesman” mm. 17-19................................................................. 126
Ex. 73: Double time, flurries, and scalar runs in “This Bass Was Made For Walkin’,” mm. 73-81................................................................. 127
Ex. 74: Double time, flurries, and scalar runs in “All Of Us,” mm. 15-19........ 127
Ex. 75: Double time, flurries, and scalar runs in “Straight No Chaser,” mm. 34-43 127
Ex. 76: Double time, flurries, and scalar runs in “Oh! Karen O,” mm. 20-23...... 128
Ex. 77: Influences of bebop in “Fingers,” mm. 185-200............................ 136
Ex. 78: Influences of bebop in “Cherry Juice,” mm. 180-191..................... 136
Ex. 79: Influences of bebop in “Zec,” mm. 64-74................................. 137
Ex. 80: Influences of bebop in “I Mean You,” mm. 44-49.......................... 137
Ex. 81: Influences of hard bop in “Don’t Git Sassy,” mm. 41-49............... 140
Ex. 82: Influences of hard bop in “Don’t Git Sassy,” mm. 143-146........... 140
Ex. 83: Influences of hard bop in the melody of “Us,” mm. 11-20............... 141
Ex. 84: Influences of hard bop in the harmony of “Us,” mm. 11-20............ 142
Ex. 85: Influences of hard bop in “Quittin’ Time,” mm. 12-17.
Ex. 86: Influences of hard bop in “H & T Blues,” mm. 67-69.
Ex. 87: Influences of hard bop in “H & T Blues,” mm. 49-63.
Ex. 88: Dissonance in “Mean What You Say,” mm. 144-146.
Ex. 89: Dissonance in “All My Yesterdays,” mm. 44.
Ex. 90: Dissonance in “Groovin’ High,” mm. 7.
Ex. 91: Dissonance in “No Refill,” mm. 11.
Ex. 92: Dissonance in “What Is This Thing Called Love?” mm. 63-65.
Ex. 93: Dissonance in “Haitian Fight Song’ High,” mm. 45-46.
Ex. 94: Dissonance in “Little Juicy,” mm. 11.
Ex. 95: “Love Walked In” concert lead sheet, mm. 1-32.
Ex. 96: Reharmonized solo and shout chorus of “Evol Deklaw Ni,” mm. 133-164.
Ex. 97: Reharmonization in improvised solo on “Evol Deklaw Ni,” mm. 9-16.
Ex. 98: Upper Structure Example Chart (Pease and Pullig).
Ex. 100: Upper-structure triads in “Straight No Chaser,” mm. 4-6.
Ex. 101: Upper-structure triads in “Straight No Chaser,” mm. 61.
Ex. 102: Upper-structure triads in “Blue Room (1956),” mm. 22.
Ex. 103: Upper-structure triads in “Blues De Funk,” mm. 34.
Ex. 104: Upper-structure triads in “Lady Luck,” mm. 7-11.
Ex. 105: Sheets of sound in “Mean What You Say,” mm. 144-146.
Ex. 106: Sheets of sound in “All My Yesterdays,” mm. 44-47.
Ex. 107: Sheets of sound in “Oh Karen! O,” mm. 22-23.
Ex. 108: Sheets of sound in “Straight No Chaser,” mm. 31-42.......................... 170
Ex. 109: Stylistic inflections in “Second Race,” mm. 44-64.......................... 175
Ex. 110: Stylistic inflections in “Low–Down,” mm. 33-41........................... 175
Ex. 111: Stylistic inflections in “Don’t Git Sassy,” mm. 43-52......................... 176
Ex. 112: Stylistic inflections in “Little Pixie II,” mm. 1-8 ............................. 176
Ex. 113: Stylistic inflections in “Blues De Funk,” mm. 12-27....................... 177
Ex. 114: Stylistic inflections in “Blue Room (1956),” mm. 32-36................... 177
Ex. 115: Stylistic inflections in “Evol Deklaw Ni,” mm. 1-9.......................... 177
Ex. 116: Stylistic inflections in “Sput ‘N’ Jeff,” mm. 1-4.............................. 178
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Stylistic Inflections…………………………………………………………………………………. 173
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Thaddeus Joseph Jones (more formally known as Thad Jones) holds a position of
great stature in jazz history for his innovative compositions and his collaborations with
drummer Mel Lewis in the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra. The ensemble is regarded
as one of the most influential and innovative big bands since its formation in 1965. They
brought a contemporary energy and freedom to the music that forever changed how big
band jazz is composed and performed.² Musician and scholar Bill Kirchner describes the
influence of the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra in Mark Stryker’s book Jazz From
Detroit:

Jones revitalized postwar big-band writing for the conventional ensemble of
saxophones, trumpets, trombones, and rhythm section. He created a new template.
On top of a Basie and Ellington foundation he added all the harmonic and
rhythmic advances since bebop, even venturing into the modal territory of John
Coltrane. It was big-band music in the present tense.³

Jones remains central to the big band tradition – his music is widely performed, and his
arrangements are considered to be foundational texts within jazz education.⁴

The Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra maintained a weekly Monday night
residency at the Village Vanguard, a prestigious New York City jazz venue, between

² Chris Smith, notes to Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra”, All My Yesterdays: The Debut
1966 Recordings at the Village Vanguard (2016), CD, Resonance Records HCD-2023,
10.
³ Stryker, Jazz From Detroit, 158.
⁴ Ibid., 165.
1965-1978. The Orchestra featured an array of Jones’s compositions and arrangements; these selections are considered to be hallmarks of the band’s success. Pieces such as “A Child Is Born,” “Little Pixie,” “Three & One,” “To You” and “Cherry Juice” represent several examples of iconic compositions that have not only led to the Orchestra’s fame, but also to the recognition of Thad Jones himself.

While Jones gained widespread recognition during his association with the Count Basie Orchestra and later with the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, he became primarily known as a composer and bandleader and never received the full credit he deserved as a soloist. However, there was a time when Jones’s playing abilities were praised by influential figures in jazz. Bassist Charles Mingus wrote a letter to Bill Coss in 1954:

I just heard the greatest trumpet player that I’ve heard in this life. He uses all the classical techniques and is the first man to make them swing … his brother Elvin is just about [as] good on drums. The cats call Thad Jones (Hank Jones’ brother) the Messiah of the trumpet … Thad was too much for me to believe. He does things that Diz and Fats made difficult for the trumpet. I mean the things they didn’t quite make, yet you respected because you know no others would even attempt them. The things Miles never made. The things Diz heard Bird do, and Fats made us think were possible. Yet we wait and wait and a Clifford Brown comes along and reminds us today that this [is] the way Fats would play those things if we had heard him a week later when or if he practiced instead of junked. Here is a man who practiced while Fats goofed and thought while Brownie copied. Here is Bartok with valves for a pencil that’s directed by God.

Aside from the recordings that Jones made with the Count Basie Orchestra and the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, he was included on numerous small-group recordings as a sideman and leader with many notable jazz icons, including Sonny Rollins, Dexter Gordon, Thelonious Monk, McCoy Tyner, Sonny Stitt and Pepper Adams.

---

6 Bill Coss, letter to Thad Jones, *The Fabulous Thad Jones* (1954), LP, Debut Records DLP12.
In order to fully understand the success of Thad Jones as a composer and bandleader, one must first examine his contributions and success as a performer. Therefore, the focal point of this analytical research centers on Thad Jones’s life as a jazz cornetist between 1953-1986. He performed on his first credited recording in 1953 on an album with vocalist Jackie Wilson (previously Sonny Wilson) and the Billy Mitchell Orchestra. Jones recorded his final album in 1986, which was the year of his passing.

**Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study was to codify the unique stylistic approach to improvisation that Thad Jones embodied as a jazz trumpeter throughout his career in small-group performances (sideman and leader) and to discover the relationships that exist between his improvisational and compositional style. To accomplish this goal, a selection of Jones’s solo transcriptions was chosen for analysis. Prior to this research study, the number of Thad Jones’s solo transcriptions proved scarce. Over fifty of Jones’s solos that he recorded throughout the span of his professional performance career have been proprietarily transcribed for the purpose of this research study. Original analysis serves to provide focus to improvisational elements pertaining to melody, rhythm, harmony, and sound concepts. Selected fragments of big-band scores from Thad Jones’s library were used to support the notion that Thad Jones’s improvisational and compositional style are interconnected.

The intent of this research was to discover and explore the characteristics of Thad Jones’s improvisational style that made him unique as a soloist and to find musical elements in his improvisational style that directly relate to his compositional style. Additionally, a collateral result of this research illuminated Thad Jones’s role as a jazz
trumpeter and ultimately celebrated the overall impact and influence he has contributed to
the jazz idiom.

Scope and Limitations

The scope of this dissertation is confined to selected small-group and big-band compositions and arrangements. Thad Jones began his career as a jazz cornetist at the age of sixteen in 1939. He recorded his first album, *Sonny Wilson Sings/Billy Mitchell Plays*, as a sideman in 1953 with the Billy Mitchell Orchestra featuring vocalist Jackie “Sonny” Wilson; he recorded his first album as a leader in 1954 at the age of thirty-one. He continued to record in small group settings even during his affiliation with Count Basie, the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, and the Danish Radio Big Band. This study includes transcriptions from selected small-group recordings by Jones between 1953-1984, encompassing fifty-three solo transcriptions deriving from various small-group albums that Thad Jones performed on as both a leader and sideman. Very few literary and online resources hold a collection of Thad Jones’s solo transcriptions. The intent of including a variety of Jones’s transcriptions is to make them readily available for those who are eager to further their understanding of Jones’s improvisational style and to learn how it developed over the course of his entire performance career.

Solo transcriptions were chosen based on the following factors: personal interest, popularity, style, form, tempo, meter, and key for the purposes of determining a variety of approaches to Jones’s improvisation. Selected transcriptions were analyzed giving attention to specific elements of Jones’s improvisational style in regard to melody,

---

7 Tom Lord, “TJD-Online: Thad Jones,”
rhythm, harmony and sound. This study includes selected big-band excerpts from the Thad Jones library (for example, “Three in One” from the album *Presenting Thad Jones-Mel Lewis & The Jazz Orchestra* \(^8\) and “Little Pixie” from the album *All My Yesterdays: The Debut 1966 Recordings at the Village Vanguard* \(^9\)). Additionally, analysis of several small-group compositions written by Jones is conducted. Thad Jones’s compositions are analyzed and referenced merely to provide evidence that his improvisational style directly informs his compositional style and vice versa. The analysis of Jones’s big-band and small-group compositions highlights his ability to compose for various instrumentations and ensemble types.

**Need for Study**

There are currently very few resources that provide focus to the analysis of Thad Jones’s improvisational style. The majority of available literary resources deriving from books, journal articles, scholarly dissertations and liner notes are primarily biographical and/or give attention only to Jones’s composition and arranging techniques. While Jones holds a significant reputation as a big-band composer, arranger and bandleader, he is often overlooked as a jazz trumpeter and performer. Literature exists in regard to Jones’s composition and arranging style/technique; however, limited research currently exists that highlights his improvisational style. The goal of this study was to examine the style, structure and sound of Thad Jones as a soloist, which in turn aids in the understanding of Jones’s overall musical conception.

---

\(^8\) Ibid.
\(^9\) Ibid.
Jones achieved widespread acclaim as a composer and arranger in addition to his associations with Count Basie, Mel Lewis, and the Danish Radio Big Band. The Vanguard Jazz Orchestra continues to celebrate the legacy of Thad Jones every Monday night at the Village Vanguard in New York City. Jones’s compositions and arrangements gained attention and success with the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra; however, tended to obscure his abilities as a soloist in the eyes of many critics and fans. Over time, this often resulted in critics and fans overlooking his recorded performances. Jones is credited with over 400 recordings, which is more than most professional jazz trumpeters and cornetists of his era.\textsuperscript{10} To place this in perspective, the legendary trumpeter Freddie Hubbard has 379 recording credits to his name, while 214 recordings are credited to Wynton Marsalis. Jones is often associated with the “Pop Goes the Weasel” cornet solo on Basie’s well-known \textit{April in Paris} album; however, while this recording gained popularity among listeners, it does not reflect the full extent of Jones’s musical capabilities.

It is evident that Jones is well respected among jazz enthusiasts and scholars. Literature, including scholarly dissertations devoted to his composition and arranging techniques are commonly found in course curriculums throughout America and abroad; however, there are currently very few resources dedicated to the study of Jones’s improvisational style. During Jones’s nine-year stint with the Count Basie Orchestra (1954-1963), he simultaneously proved to be a top choice as a sideman for record dates of some of the biggest names in jazz, including Thelonious Monk, Sonny Stitt, Sonny Rollins, Sarah Vaughn, Curtis Fuller, Charles Mingus, Elvin Jones, and Hank Jones. The

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid.
following words given by Mel Lewis further attest to the merit that Thad Jones encompassed as a jazz trumpeter:

Thad is probably one of only two or three other people who play trumpet or cornet who can sustain a whole evening by himself with just a rhythm section. I don’t know of anyone other than Dizzy, Freddie Hubbard, Clark Terry, and possibly Woody Shaw who can do that. Thad is a unique player who’s incredibly inventive. Everyone knows his arranging abilities, and when he plays it all comes right out of the horn. What he can put on paper he can play on his horn. Even though he’s my partner, buddy, friend, and brother, I say he’s one of the greatest trumpet players of all time and maybe now some people will really pay attention to that fact.\textsuperscript{11}

The goal of this study was to add to the understanding and proliferation of Jones’s musical legacy.

\textsuperscript{11} Mel Lewis, notes to Thad Jones, \textit{Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Quartet} (1977), LP, Artists House AH3.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND RELATED MEDIA

The literature and media pertaining to Thad Jones’s life and career may be examined through the following categories:

- Recordings and Liner Notes
- Interviews and Articles in Musical Publications
- Other Interviews
- Dissertations and Other Academic Works
- Thad Jones Archive at William Paterson University
- Overview Sources
- Literature Related to Composition Analysis

**Recordings and Liner Notes**

Recordings of the included solo transcriptions are integral to this study as listening is essential for the transcription and analytical processes. The Tom Lord Jazz Discography proved to be an invaluable resource in this research. Currently, the Tom Lord Jazz Discography lists Thad Jones on nearly 450 recording sessions. Jones began his recording career as a sideman with saxophonist Billy Mitchell, and with the help of bassist Charles Mingus, he recorded his first album as a leader on the Debut record label in 1954.\(^\text{12}\) The Tom Lord Jazz Discography contains information on Jones’s recording

---

\(^{12}\) Lord, “TJD-Online: Thad Jones.”
contributions as a sideman and leader until 1986, the year Jones passed away. This resource is particularly vital as it provides recording dates, personnel, track listings, and session information, which help to direct the chronological order of transcriptions and material for this dissertation.

Liner notes, which are usually included in many of these albums, offer historical information relevant to Thad Jones that cannot be found in any other source. Liner notes from both original LP releases and CD issues often have more detailed and factually corroborated information. Many well-known jazz critics, musicians, authors, producers, and journalists wrote notes for albums that Jones recorded as a small-group leader and sideman. Such prominent figures include Leonard Feather, Ira Gitler, Bill Evans, Bill Coss, Nat Hentoff, Benny Golson, and others. Liner notes often contain valuable insights, including interviews and information regarding the musicians that performed on the albums.

**Interviews with Jones and Articles in Music Publications**

Thad Jones participated in interviews in a variety of music publications including *DownBeat Magazine, Jazziz, Jazz Journal International, JazzTimes, Crescendo International, The Village Voice, Jazz Magazine*, and several online sources. These interviews primarily lend focus to Jones’s early life and musical training, his experiences with the Count Basie Orchestra, the formation of the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, and his departure from the United States to Denmark to lead the Danish Radio Big Band. Several articles across the aforementioned musical publications offer insight into Thad Jones’s craft as an arranger and composer. Prominent articles include:
• “Thad’s Thing” – An interview conducted by Ira Gitler in the February 22, 1968 issue of DownBeat. Here Jones discusses his approach to sound when writing for the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra. Jones discusses his admiration for Duke Ellington and Dizzy Gillespie and gives his thoughts on promising young composers in the jazz scene during that time.13

• “Thad Conducts An Interview” – An interview conducted by Arnold Jay Smith in the December 5, 1974 issue of DownBeat, wherein Jones discusses aspects of his writing process. Jones briefly covers his conceptional approach when it comes to creating and achieving specific sounds he has in mind for his arrangements and compositions.14

• “Thad Jones – A Forgotten Giant?” – A 2014 JAZZed article in which the jazz trumpeter and regular substitute for the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, Mike Carubia, examines Jones’s melodic and harmonic tendencies in his big-band compositions and arrangements. Carubia includes specific musical examples and offers his opinion on what makes Thad Jones’s compositional style distinctive.15

• “Thad Jones Composition & Scoring Techniques” – An issue of Jazz Educators Journal in which former University of Northern Colorado Professor H. David Caffey authored an article discussing several consistent writing techniques utilized by Thad Jones. In the brief article, Caffey elaborates on how Jones’s writing techniques contribute to the “Thad Jones sound.” Caffey provides musical

examples pertaining to Jones’s scoring techniques as well as his approach to form, using several examples from the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra library.  

- “Thad Jones Rattles No Bones” – A December 1985 *Village Voice* article written by Gary Giddens discussing Jones’s musical upbringing and the influences that led him to achieve his unique musical approach in terms of improvisation and composition. The article examines Jones’s history with the Count Basie Orchestra and celebrates his newly appointed leadership role as the Orchestra’s director.

- “Interview with Thad Jones” by Leigh Kamman – A 1976 interview on the KSTP radio station in St. Paul, Minnesota. In this brief ten-minute audio interview, Jones discusses his first arrangement that he wrote at thirteen years old, his relationship with his brothers Hank and Elvin Jones, and the success of the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra.

**Other Interviews**

Several interviews of musicians that have worked with Thad Jones are available through print and digital sources. These interviews follow the perspective of individuals that worked closely with Jones in various musical situations. The interviews cover a broad range of topics and provide valuable perspectives pertaining to Jones’s life, musical attributes, as well as his personality and musical legacy. These interviews include:

---

• “Interview with Tim Hagans” by Michael Davis.\textsuperscript{19}
• “Interview with Earl Gardner” by Michael Davis.\textsuperscript{20}
• “Interview with Nick Marchione” by Michael Davis\textsuperscript{21}
• “Interview with Douglas Purviance” by Michael Davis.\textsuperscript{22}
• “Interview with Jim McNeely” by Tonatiuh Vazquez.\textsuperscript{23}
• “Interview with Jerry Dodgion” by Ed Joffe.\textsuperscript{24}
• “Interview with Hank Jones” by Joe Lovano.\textsuperscript{25}
• “Interview with Hank Jones” by Eric Nemeyer.\textsuperscript{26}

The listed interviews focus primarily on the careers of those interviewed and each musician references their experience working and/or collaborating with Jones. Topics from these interviews include personal experiences performing Jones’s music in the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, Jones’s musical style and influences, and how Jones’s music proved to be innovative as compared to other prominent big bands of the 1960s and 1970s. These musicians were significant in Jones’s professional life, and each interview

offers valuable insight as well as material that support the understanding of Jones’s life and musical legacy.

Personal interviews with musicians that have worked closely with Thad Jones have been conducted by the author. Quotes and related information from these interviews are included in this document. The present author has possession of all recorded interviews and interview transcriptions. Interviewees include:

- Cecil Bridgewater
- Eddie Daniels
- Harold Danko
- Tim Hagans
- Billy Harper
- John Mosca
- Richard “Dick” Oatts
- Rufus Reid

**Dissertations and Other Academic Works**

Searches on *ProQuest Dissertations* and *Theses and Doctoral Dissertations in Musicology - Online* and *Google Scholar* currently yields one existing dissertation with Thad Jones as a jazz trumpeter as the main topic. In 2012, Michael Corey Jones wrote a dissertation titled *Study in Thad: The Improvisational Solo Style of Thad Jones,*\(^{27}\) as part of his Doctor of Musical Arts requirement at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Michael Jones’s dissertation is the closest related research found that

---

\(^{27}\) Michael Corey Jones, *Study in Thad: The Improvisational Solo Style of Thad Jones* (D.M.A. Diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2012).
investigates Thad Jones as a jazz trumpet soloist. The study gives focus primarily to Jones’s improvisational style. Michael Jones’s analytical research is based on David Baker’s *The Style of Clifford Brown: A Musical and Historical Perspective*\(^\text{28}\) giving focus to the following characteristics of Jones’s improvisational style: melodic development, implied harmony, intellectual output, idiomtatic characteristics, melodic connectors, varied articulations for stylistic effects, and bebop language performance practices. The research includes thirty-one solo transcriptions selected from three distinct periods of Jones’s recording career. The author of this dissertation has labeled the three distinct periods as follows: Early Period (1953-1955), Middle Period (1956-1966), and Late Period (1967-1984). While the analysis provided in Michael Jones’s research proves valuable, it can certainly be expanded upon to a greater extent. Michael Jones’s research is supported by concrete sources; however, no personal interviews were conducted as part of his study.

The earliest dissertation available on *ProQuest* that pertains to Thad Jones is George Washington Shaw Jr.’s 1979 Ph.D. dissertation *Relationships Between Experimental Factors and Percepts of Selected Professional Musicians in the United States Who Are Adept at Jazz Improvisation*. The study examines the importance of improvisation in the development of comprehensive musicianship. As part of Shaw’s research, he conducted several interviews with jazz musicians for the purpose of discovering the relationships that exist between certain experimental factors and percepts of jazz improvisation. Among the interviewees, Thad Jones was one of the many jazz

musicians that were involved. An extensive interview is provided by Shaw covering topics such as improvisation concepts, definition of improvisation, musical expression, personal expression, early experiences, formal training, influences, aspirations, and more. Jones’s interview can be found on pages 607-643 of Shaw’s Ph.D. dissertation.29

Leon Petruzzi’s 1993 Ph.D. dissertation entitled *Lead Trumpet Performance in the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra: An Analysis of Style and Performance Practices* examines the lead trumpet style that developed from the various lead trumpeters who have performed with the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra. Selected artists include Snooky Young, Al Porcino, Jon Faddis, and Earl Gardner. The primary purpose of this study is to provide a model of lead trumpet performance in a big-band setting.30

*An Original Work for Jazz Orchestra: With A Comparative Analysis to Works by Duke Ellington and Thad Jones* is a 1998 doctoral dissertation written by Michael A. Williamson. The dissertation focuses on multi-movement compositions written for jazz orchestra. Williamson provides an analysis of Thad Jones’s “Suite for Pops” and explains how unity is achieved within the composition. Williamson provides a narrative of the history of jazz suites and multi-movement pieces for big bands and includes a historical outline of composers leading up to the era of Duke Ellington and Thad Jones. The dissertation utilizes the Robert Cogan and Pozzi Escot “Sonic Design” method as the main analytical concept in order to describe how Ellington and Jones approached unity

---

and variety in their multi-movement compositions. The “Sonic Design” concept includes five essential elements: sound, language, time and rhythm, color of sound, and form. While this study focuses principally on Jones’s compositional style, the “Sonic Design” concept in particular serves as an aid in finding connections with Jones’s improvisational style.\textsuperscript{31}

Christopher Smith’s doctoral dissertation \textit{The View From the Back of the Band: The Career of Mel Lewis}, written in 2012, examines the life and musical career of drummer Mel Lewis. While emphasis is given to Lewis, Smith provides a historical outline of Thad Jones and the formation of the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra. Jones’s inclusion in the document is limited to the years between 1964-1980. While Smith discusses the legacy that Lewis and Jones built with their orchestra, there lacks an analytical component to this study. It is primarily biographical and is interview based.

In 2015, Michael Rogers authored \textit{Tonality and the Extended Common Practice of Thad Jones}, a Ph.D. dissertation that analyzes three Thad Jones big-band compositions: “Three and One,” “Cherry Juice,” and “To You.” The study examines elements regarding chord-scale application techniques, the use of harmonic progressions, and the use of contrapuntal connections in the context of big-band writing and orchestration. Rogers provides a comparative study of Jones’s music with traditions that derive from twentieth century scale-based procedures, Renaissance and early-twentieth century modality,

\footnote{Michael A. Williamson, \textit{An Original Work for Jazz Orchestra: With A Comparative Analysis to Works by Duke Ellington and Thad Jones} (D.A. Diss., New York University, 1998).}
eighteenth and nineteenth century voice leading schemas, and Baroque and Classical descending fifth progressions.32

The latest study is Chang Su’s 2019 dissertation, *The Development of Thad Jones’ Arranging/Scoring Style: A Comparative Study of Six Works for Large Jazz Ensemble*. The study focuses on the arranging and scoring techniques that Thad Jones developed within three distinct periods of his writing career. The first period examines the arrangements and compositions that Jones created in the beginning stages of the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra. The second period studies Jones’s compositions and arrangements for the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra between 1969-1978. The third period gives attention to Jones’s compositional contributions for the Danish Radio Big Band between 1978-1986.33

In December 1991, jazz trumpeter Clay Jenkins completed an essay entitled: *A Comparison of Thad Jones Solo & Compositional Techniques*, as part of a jazz history course requirement at the University of Southern California. In the short unpublished essay, Jenkins provides a comparison of Jones’s writing and playing style by drawing examples from two transcribed solos, “I Mean You” and “Straight No Chaser,” from Thelonious Monk’s album *5 By Monk By 5*, and a third notated solo on “A Night in Tunisia,” that Jones gave to a member of the Basie Band when he led the orchestra in 1986. Jenkins offers an analysis on the compositional tools that are found in Jones’s improvised solos. Jenkins identifies musical devices that pertain to melody, rhythm,

---

harmony, and form.\(^{34}\) Jenkins graciously provided the author a printed copy of his essay to supplement this current study.

**Thad Jones Archive at William Paterson University**

The Thad Jones Archive, which is housed at William Paterson University in Wayne, New Jersey, contains a comprehensive list of small-group music that Thad Jones has performed and/or recorded. In addition to the list, forty available lead sheets are provided, which aid in the understanding of the harmonic vocabulary that Jones presented in his improvisational style. The archive maintains a website that contains significant references to Jones’s life events in chronological order in addition to his complete discography. This assisted in the selection process regarding which albums were chosen for transcription. Access to Jones’s small-group lead sheets additionally allows for a brief comparison of the melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic elements in his compositional and playing style.

**Overview Sources**

Currently, there are no available sources that are dedicated solely to the life and career of Thad Jones. There are, however, books that contain segments of information on Jones’s impact on the history of jazz. These overview sources helped to establish a more substantial biographical overview of Thad Jones’s life and musical career that cannot be found from a single source. The following sources derive from various books, articles, and online encyclopedias. Notable overview sources include:

• Chip Deffaa’s *Swing Legacy*\(^{35}\) offers the longest segment on Thad Jones. In twelve pages (247-259), Deffaa gives a synopsis of Jones’s musical life and career. He provides a concise chronological history of Thad Jones’s musical career beginning with Jones’s early life and musical upbringing in Pontiac, Michigan. Deffaa discusses Jones’s experience with the Count Basie Orchestra, the formation of the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, and Jones’s departure to Copenhagen, Denmark to lead the Danish Radio Big Band. Deffaa provides further background information on Jones that cover other details of his musical career.

• Mark Stryker’s *Jazz From Detroit*\(^{36}\) explores Detroit’s pivotal role in shaping the course of modern and contemporary jazz from the 1940s to present. Stryker discusses the profiles of Detroit-bred jazz musicians that have significantly contributed to the development of the Detroit jazz scene. Part III of Stryker’s text is dedicated to the Jones brothers (Hank, Thad, and Elvin). Pages 158-166 provides biographical information pertaining to Thad Jones and offers valuable insight on his improvisational and compositional style.

• *Good Morning Blues: The Autobiography of Count Basie as told to Albert Murray*\(^{37}\) provides a brief overview of Thad Jones from Count Basie’s perspective. Writer and co-founder of Jazz at Lincoln Center Albert Murray


\(^{36}\) Stryker, *Jazz From Detroit*.

recounts Basie’s relationship with Jones and his experience performing and writing for the Orchestra.

- *Oxford Music Online*\(^{38}\) contains background information regarding Jones and individuals that he worked with over the course of his musical career, including his siblings Hank Jones and Elvin Jones.

- *50 Years at the Village Vanguard*\(^{39}\) – written in 2017, authors Dave Lisik and Eric Allen discuss the history, formation, and legacy of the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra. They provide an overview of the band’s relationship with the Village Vanguard in New York City and also discuss notable musicians in the band that have contributed to the band’s sound and personality throughout the years. This book uniquely contains many valuable photos of Thad, Mel, and members of the orchestra throughout the band’s existence. Lisik and Allen provide a full discography of the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra that also includes personnel, soloists on each track, as well as composers and arrangers.

**Literature Related to Composition Analysis**

*Inside the Score*\(^{40}\), written by Rayburn Wright provides a detailed analysis of Thad Jones’s compositional style. Wright examines three notable Jones compositions, “Three and One,” “To You,” and “Kids Are Pretty People,” giving careful analysis to

---


40 Rayburn Wright, *Inside the Score: A Detailed Analysis of 8 Classic Jazz Ensemble Charts by Sammy Nestico, Thad Jones and Bob Brookmeyer* (New York: Kendor Music, 1982).
characteristics such as voicings, melodic construction, form, orchestration, textures, passing harmonies, and more. The book includes a score of each piece in addition to a reduced score that demonstrates specific musical examples of Jones’s arranging and composition technique. An interview with Jones is also included, highlighting Jones’s writing approach.

Fred Sturm’s book *Changes Over Time: The Evolution of Jazz Arranging*⁴¹, is a comparative study which analyzes the development of rhythm, harmony, orchestration, and structural variation present in jazz arranging from the 1920s to the present. Multiple notable jazz arrangers are represented through the scope of the book, including Fletcher Henderson, Benny Carter, Duke Ellington, Bob Brookmeyer, Thad Jones, and more. Sturm uses Jones’s 1985 arrangement of “All of Me,” as played with the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, to illustrate his approach to melody and rhythm, harmonic variation, voicings, unifying components, and orchestration, as well as form and structure. A reduced score of musical examples are provided throughout the book to demonstrate specific musical characteristics that highlight Jones’s composition and arranging style.

The present author was inspired to pursue this research topic after having studied with trumpeter and educator Clay Jenkins at the Eastman School of Music from 2009-2011. Jenkin’s passion for Thad Jones along with his 1991 essay on Jones influenced the author to continue researching this subject. The listed sources above obtain a dearth of information regarding Jones’s improvisational style, which further validates the need for study on this aspect of Thad Jones.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The foundation of this study is to identify the shared characteristics of Jones’s improvisational and compositional style. Improvisation and composition are often understood to have distinctive characteristics; however, past research has argued that improvisation and composition share more similarities than what has traditionally been acknowledged. In a 2005 *Journal of Music Theory* article titled “Composition Versus Improvisation?,”42 Steve Larson analyzes selections from *Conversations with Myself*,43 a 1963 album recorded by pianist Bill Evans, in order to construct evidence that improvisation and composition share a deeper relationship than what had previously been assumed. Larson draws on specific musical examples in order to demonstrate how Evans’s processes of improvisation and composition inform one another. Improvisation is spontaneous and composition allows revision; however, both processes ultimately derive from similar cognitive processes. Similarly, in the novel *Ellington: The Early Years*,44 author Mark Tucker provides examples of how pianist and composer Duke Ellington’s keyboard style informs his compositional style. Through his study of Ellington’s “Down

---

In Our Alley Blues,” Tucker establishes a “direct link” between Ellington’s keyboard style and arranging techniques.45

This study seeks to discover the elements of Thad Jones’s improvisational style that are interconnected with musical characteristics associated with his composition and arranging styles. The basis of this study is the analysis of Jones’s solo transcriptions, selected from small-group recordings throughout his solo career (1953-1984). Fifty-three improvised solos performed and recorded by Jones have been transcribed by the author and are included in Appendix C. All solos included in this document were transcribed by the author except for the following: “Oh! Karen O,”46 “Straight No Chaser,”47 and “What Is This Thing?”48 The author reformatted these transcriptions using the music notation software program Sibelius. All transcribed solos were edited twice through, by two respected professional jazz musicians and educators in the Colorado region (saxophonist Dr. Joel Harris and pianist Tom Amend). Attention to rhythm, pitches, articulation, chords, and inflections were given for all transcribed solos.

Not all fifty-three transcriptions included in this document have been analyzed. Currently, a limited number of sources exist that document a substantial portion of Jones’s notated solo transcriptions. The transcriptions that are not analyzed as a part of this study are included with the intention of providing an archived source of Jones’s notated solos that may be used for continued study. Solos were selected from various

45 Ibid.
47 Jenkins, A Comparison of Thad Jones Solo & Compositional Techniques, 12–14.
48 Bruce Thomas, notes to Thad Jones, Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Quartet (1977), Artists House AH3.
small-group recordings that featured Jones as a sideman and leader. The Tom Lord Online Jazz Discography\textsuperscript{49} has proven to be an essential resource, as it provides the means to trace Jones’s full recording history. This thirty-one year period offers a wide variety of jazz styles and displays the development of Jones’s improvisational style over the course of his professional solo career.

The analyses were adapted from the methodologies presented in Rayburn Wright’s \textit{Inside the Score}\textsuperscript{50} and Fred Sturm’s \textit{Changes Over Time: The Evolution of Jazz Arranging}\textsuperscript{51} and applied to improvisation as an aesthetic equivalent to arranging. The extant analysis of Jones’s approach to composition and arranging in sources like Wright (1982) and Sturm (1995) discussed above provide a framework to be adapted to the improvisation analysis presented below. The structure of the analysis was based on the musical techniques found in both Wright and Sturm’s published research. The techniques from these sources include the following components: melody, rhythm, form and structure, voicings and vertical sonorities, harmony, orchestration, and unifying components. In order to demonstrate the notion that Thad Jones’s improvisational style indeed informs his compositional style, it is crucial to analyze and identify the above-mentioned technical components in his small-group solo transcriptions. Musical scores of Thad Jones’s big-band compositions and lead sheets of his small-group pieces were also analyzed as part of this study in order to provide evidence that Jones’s improvisational style informs his compositional style and vice versa.

\textsuperscript{49} Tom Lord, “TJD-Online: Thad Jones.”
\textsuperscript{50} Wright, \textit{Inside the Score}.
\textsuperscript{51} Sturm, \textit{Changes Over Time: The Evolution of Jazz Arranging}.
Of the technical components listed above, this study specifically includes an examination of melody, rhythm, harmony, unifying components, and sound. Additionally, new musical nomenclature and theories are presented as part of this research. Below is a breakdown of how the musical analysis was conducted.

- **Melodic Conception**: The contour and intervallic characteristics present in the melodic content of Jones’s solo transcriptions and compositions were analyzed. The identification of angularity, octave transference, chromaticism, sequences, motivic and thematic development, and Jones’s implementation of humor were also included as part of this study with various musical examples from Jones’s compositions and solo transcriptions.

- **Rhythmic Conception**: Rhythmic elements in this study include syncopation, rhythmic forward motion, rhythmic and phrasing development, playful triplet lines, double time, flurries, and runs. Selected musical examples from Jones’s solo transcriptions and compositions were used to visually demonstrate each rhythmic element.

- **Harmonic Conception**: The harmonic characteristics in Jones’s solo transcriptions and compositions were analyzed and indicated utilizing traditional jazz nomenclature. Jerry Coker’s book *Elements of the Jazz Language for the Developing Improviser*[^52] is a widely accepted source that includes commonly-used jazz terminology and definitions that are associated with harmonic elements frequently used within the jazz idiom. Voicings and vertical sonorities were

examined in order to assess the relationship between Jones’s approach to harmonic voicings in his compositions and his note choices through various harmonic progressions present in his solo transcriptions. Additional topics pertaining to Jones’s influence of bebop and hard bop, reharmonization, and Ted Pease and Ken Pullig’s definition of “Upper-Structure Triads”\(^5^3\) is also discussed.

- Sound Conception: Beyond the scope of this study, defining the “Thad Jones sound” and narrowing it into a quantifiable list of attributes is a challenging task; however, the analysis of Jones’s approach to melody, rhythm, and harmony, will aid in the understanding of Jones’s conception of sound from both an improvisation and composition based perspective. This portion of the research study closely examines Jones’s influence of Count Basie’s swing concept. An investigation of Jones’s integration of freedom and joy in his music and its role in contributing to the overall “Thad Jones sound”\(^5^4\) is included in addition to John Coltrane’s “sheets of sound”\(^5^5\) concept. Additionally, Jones’s unique concept of sound is discussed in articles, interviews, and other literature. Among the interviews contained in the articles referred to in Chapter II, Jones discusses aspects of his musical influence that contribute to the understanding of his sound conception, which will further aid this portion of the research.

To further supplement this research, interviews of musicians that worked closely with Thad Jones have been conducted by the present author. Quotes and related


\(^{55}\) Ira Gitler, notes to John Coltrane, *Soultrane* [1958], LP, Prestige LP7142.
information from these interviews are included in this document. Each individual that was interviewed offered their unique and personal experiences with Jones and provided additional information regarding his life and career. All interviewees were informed of the purpose of this research study and how their interview would be used. Interviews were conducted in person and through online video streaming services. Each interviewee that participated in this study is a public figure, per Institutional Review Board guidelines regarding research on human subjects.56

Interviewees include:

- Cecil Bridgewater
- Eddie Daniels
- Harold Danko
- Tim Hagans
- Billy Harper
- John Mosca
- Richard “Dick” Oatts
- Rufus Reid

With permission from all participants, all interviews were recorded and transcribed. Quotes by the interviewees were included in relevant sections in the body of this study. All participants were given the opportunity to approve their interview before inclusion and final publication.

56 See Appendix D for full IRB documentation.
CHAPTER IV

BIOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW

Thaddeus Joseph Jones was born on March 28, 1923 in Pontiac, Michigan. Jones was the middle brother in what may be considered the first jazz family. He was a younger brother to pianist Hank Jones and an older brother to drummer Elvin Jones. Their father, Henry Jones, was originally from Vicksburg, Mississippi and worked for General Motors as a lumber inspector in addition to serving as a deacon in the Baptist church; he also played bass in the church choir. Their mother, Olivia Jones, was a housewife who was a strong supporter of music and encouraged all ten of her children to play an instrument. In a 1968 New York Times interview, Elvin Jones remarked on the memory of his mother:

My mother was a big warm woman and the greatest lady in the world. She gave me every kind of encouragement. She’d tell you to make up your mind at what you wanted to do and then just do it. When I finally decided I wanted to be a musician that was it to her. But she tried to make you into a man before anything else, so that you learned how to survive. That was especially valuable to me in the beginning as a musician.57

In the late 1920s, Thad Jones immersed himself with music after hearing Duke Ellington broadcasts from the Cotton Club in New York City. Shortly after, Jones discovered musicians and bands such as Jimmie Lunceford, Benny Goodman, Sam Donahue, Erskine Hawkins, Billy Strayhorn, Eddie Wilcox, and Andy Kirk. The aforementioned bandleaders made a positive impression on Jones that would influence

the start of his musical career. After hearing Louis Armstrong perform at a show in Detroit, Jones was inspired to play the trumpet. During an interview published in an article by Bill Coss, Jones stated that Louis Armstrong influenced his choice of instruments; not his playing. He realized that Armstrong was a stylist and did not want to copy him.\(^{58}\) Jones received his first trumpet from his uncle William, who was also a trumpeter. He shortly switched over to the cornet.

I play cornet. I’ve never really played the trumpet, except for brief periods. I started on trumpet in Pontiac Junior High School. But when I got in high school, the band instructor, Dale Harris, did not allow trumpets in the concert band; you had to have cornet. And after I tried the cornet, I liked it so much that I never got away from it. For me, the cornet is more natural. It feels better. I didn’t want to take my cornet when I went into the army, because I didn’t want anything to happen to it. So, I took my trumpet, and played trumpet in the army for three years. And as soon as I got out, I put it right down and said, “No more!” I like the cornet.\(^{59}\)

At the young age of thirteen years old, Jones taught himself to play cornet and began to perform professionally with his older brother Hank Jones just three years later at the age of sixteen years old. In his early years, soon after Jones received his first cornet, he and his friends and family frequently listened to the blues and to the bands of Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Sam Donahue, Artie Shaw, and Chick Webb. Jones recalled buying every record possible and attempting to play everything he heard.\(^{60}\) He remembered his first experiences as he became interested in music and learned to play the trumpet:

I was very taken with the sound of the trumpet. The trumpet seemed to be in agreement with being a boy and being loud, and I wanted an instrument that represented me. When I heard Louis Armstrong, I realized that not only was it a

\(^{60}\) Coss, “Horns of Plenty,” 16.
commanding instrument, but it was also an instrument of exquisite beauty. My uncle was a trumpet player, and he had just bought a new trumpet and given me the one that he had been playing. I was thirteen and that was the instrument I learned to play on. Basically, I’m self-taught, but I don’t think anyone just picks up a horn and starts to play. I went out and bought an instruction book and I found out how to put the instrument on my lips. I didn’t do it like they did it in the book. I knew instinctively that everybody can’t be the same, because if that were so, everyone would sound the same, be the same, have the same approach to the horn, and probably have the same type of technique. I placed the horn on my lips where it was comfortable and looked in the instruction book and the diagram that told what note was what. I learned to read and then how to play fairly well. I applied for a position in the school band, and to my surprise, I was accepted.61

Jones’s older brother Hank Jones recalls his brother’s musical upbringing in a 2005 interview with *DownBeat Magazine*:

Thad was an arranger who never studied the craft, per se. He never took a formal course in arranging, harmony, counterpoint or anything like that. He had this natural ability. Of course, he played with the high school orchestras and band. In fact, he and I went to Ann Arbor once on a trumpet competition. We played “Flight of the Bumblebee” – I was his accompanist. Thad was a genius. A lot of people don’t give him credit for being a trumpet player that he was.62

1939 was the year that Thad Jones experienced his first professional performances as a member of his uncle’s ten-piece jazz band called the Arcadia Club Band.63 The group was mostly comprised of his family members, including his older brother Hank on piano. Jones’s interest in composition and arranging also began at an early age. He wrote his first complete arrangement of “Little Coquette” for the Arcadia Club Band.64 He presented it at a rehearsal, and after playing the first two or three measures the band broke up with laughter. Jones realized he had written all the instruments in a different

---

64 Ibid., 252.
key. Jones continued to practice writing through trial and error; he was never given formal instruction in cornet or composition.

In the late 1930s, Jones was involved in various groups throughout Michigan. Jones eventually collaborated with master saxophonist Sonny Stitt, who came from nearby Saginaw, MI. In 1941, Thad Jones toured with a band led by Connie Connell. After working with the group for two and a half years, Jones spent six months in Dallas, TX where he joined a band led by alto saxophonist Red Calhoun. Jones later realized that the road was not as great as he had initially thought:

I went out on the road in ’41 and started travelling with Connie Connell’s Band through the south. We found out that the road wasn’t all it was made out to be. The jobs weren’t plentiful. And we were having pistols stuck in our faces by cops. We lived under the threat of the gun the whole time we were in the south. Because you never knew when one of those irrational people would just go off and decide to use the weapon that they always carried. The society was very permissive in that area – against blacks, that is. There was a lot of killing going on. We sort of travelled in fear for a large portion of the trip. It was very seldom that that thought ever left us.65

In December 1943 Jones enlisted in the Army and served until April 1946,66 where he was stationed at Camp Walter in Texas. He was later stationed in Seattle, Washington.67 Unfortunately, he did not play in any organized bands during his enlistment. By the time he arrived, most bands were already complete. Jones did, however, continue to play frequently on an unofficial basis. Raymond Horricks provides a brief explanation of Jones’s enlistment duties in the military:

He [Thad] was inducted at Camp Walter, Texas in [December] 1943, where the army passed over his musical talents and gave him a job checking cargo. In the

65 Deffaa, Swing Legacy, 252–253.
67 Shaw Jr., Relationships Between Experimental Factors and Percepts of Selected Professional Musicians in the United States Who Are Adept at Jazz Improvisation, 618.
last few months of service, however, he managed to join the band in the G.I. show sponsored by the 8th Air Force Special Service Division. Eventually he was discharged [April] at Des Moines, Iowa, where he stayed for seven months playing at the Sepia Slipper Club.68

After Jones’s discharge from the Army in 1946, he lived in Oklahoma City for the next seven months while touring with the Charlie Young Orchestra. Young died shortly thereafter, and Jones inherited leadership of the ensemble. Within six months, the band under Jones’s leadership ran out of gigs, forcing the group to disband.69 Jones ended up travelling to Denver, Colorado for approximately eight months to play with Denver-based drummer Shelly Rhym.

In 1952, Jones returned to Michigan where he joined his brother Elvin Jones in Detroit.70 There he worked at the Bluebird Inn, playing with a quintet that included his brother Elvin Jones on drums, Billy Mitchell on tenor saxophone, Kenny Burrell on guitar, pianist Terry Pollard (Tommy Flanagan would later replace Pollard), and bassist James Richardson. Musicians such as Pepper Adams, Sonny Stitt, Wardell Gray, Barry Harris, and Miles Davis dropped by to sit in and play occasionally. Jones noted that this group was about the finest five-piece combo he had ever heard.71 The Blue Bird Inn was the center of Detroit’s jazz activity and the premier stop for touring bebop masters. The Blue Bird was a black-owned, working-class bar in the heart of the West Side black community where six nights a week a house band would play modern jazz.72

69 Deffaa, Swing Legacy, 253.
70 Stryker, Jazz From Detroit, 160.
71 Henthoff, “They’re all Talking About the Jones Boy,” 9.
72 Anthony Macías, “‘DETROIT WAS HEAVY’: MODERN JAZZ, BEBOP, AND AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPRESSIVE CULTURE,” JSTOR: The Journal of African
In the book *Swing to Bop*, Billy Mitchell recalled how he first arranged for Thad Jones to join the Blue Bird band as a regular trumpeter:

I told the lady that owned the place that I wanted to stretch out and put another piece in. She said, no, she couldn’t afford it. So, I told her, “Listen, I think it would be a good move and increase business. I’ll have him come and work this weekend and if you don’t think we should keep him, you’ll pay nothing, and I’ll pay him, and we’ll say no more to it.” So, Thad came in and worked the first weekend, and at the end of the weekend the lady walked up and said, “Yeah, definitely.” She paid me to pay him that weekend, and from then on that was it.

That was the group. We had a five-piece group. Naturally, genius is a rare thing, and, brothers, we had a tremendous musical direction as well as everybody there being hard players. Then we had the advantage of having Thad Jones’ imagination. So, for five years we had the ultimate group. We had such a variety of musical things going, and we had so much talent and so much original music. As a matter of fact, we were nationally known and had never been out of Detroit. It was the place for jazz. It was the place for creative jazz music, and it was also the training ground for a lot of the people who came up during that era…

The quintet performed six nights each week for roughly two years at the Bluebird. Jones recalls his experience performing at the Bluebird: “It lasted into 1953, and it was one of the most satisfying groups I ever played with – very versatile.”

In 1954, Jones was contacted by Frank Wess in regard to joining the Count Basie Orchestra. Jones had worked in Basie’s condensed small group for one week in Boston in approximately 1952 when [trumpeter] Clark Terry was ill, but he did not think that Basie remembered him.

After Basie returned from a European tour, Basie called Jones to ask him if he would be interested in joining the orchestra. On May 12, 1954, Jones joined the Count Basie Orchestra, replacing trumpeter Joe Wilder on the second trumpet part. Other members of

---


74 Jordi Pujol, notes to Thad Jones, *Opus De Blues* (1960), CD, Fresh Sound Records, FSRCD727.

75 Henthoff, “They’re all Talking About the Jones Boy,” 9.
the trumpet section at that time comprised of Reunald Jones, Wendell Cully, and Joe Newman. Trumpeter Snooky Young would later replace Reunald Jones on lead trumpet.

Count Basie described the inclusion of Jones in the section by saying:

Thad just moved right on in and became one of us. When we went into the studio in June to make all eighteen of those tunes that Clef Records brought out in our next two albums, I don’t think he [Jones] had been in that section a whole month yet, but he was already with it, and that’s his first recorded trumpet solo for us on “Ska-di-dle-dee-bee-doo.”

In the same year that Jones joined Basie, bassist Charles Mingus invited Jones to participate in his 1954 “Jazz Workshop” – a platform created with the aim of enabling young composers to have their new works performed in concert and on recordings. Mingus produced the first two recording sessions under Jones’s own name, and released them on his Debut record label, marking the beginning of a new series of interesting, but now obscure recordings away from the Basie band. These recording sessions were the outlets for Jones’s writing, and some of them do much to clarify the relationship between his approach to the trumpet and the special flavor of The Jazz Orchestra. Jones’s albums *The Fabulous Thad Jones* (1954) and *The Magnificent Thad Jones* (1956) display Jones’s talents as a composer in addition to his unique approach to improvisation. These recordings marked the beginning of a series of interesting, but now obscure recordings separate from the Basie band. It was not long before musicians, critics, and fans began to give him acclaim and recognition. In 1955, Jones almost won the *DownBeat* Critics Poll as “New Trumpet Star of the Year”: he missed it by half of one vote. Critics have the ability to vote for multiple musicians per instrument. If a critic votes for two musicians,

---

78 Ibid.
each receives half of a vote. Trumpeter and cornetist Ruby Braff won the award that year. Trumpeter Chet Baker won the inaugural award in 1953 and Clifford Brown won in 1954. Jones was later awarded the DownBeat Critics Poll as new trumpet star of the year in the summer of 1956. He also recorded his debut album for Blue Note Records in 1956, Detroit-New York Junction, which proved to further highlight Jones’s talent, including his advanced harmonic conception that is evident through his improvised solos.

In the Basie band, Jones shared solo duties with trumpeter Joe Newman, whom Jones admired and respected. Jones considered Newman as one of the finest and most thoughtful people in his life. “He is truly a great trumpet artist – I was always learning from him. What I admired was his remarkable consistency – to this very day I have never heard Joe play bad.” In Jones’s early days in the Basie band, composing and arranging were not priorities for him. In those days he preferred to solo, having mostly worked in small groups up to this point. In 1955, Jones continued to gain popularity from his brief yet attention-grabbing “Pop Goes the Weasel” solo he played on “April in Paris,” which can be heard on the 1955 Basie album April in Paris. Jones’s solo was so well received that Basie had Jones continuously recreate the solo in live performances after the record became a hit. Jones inevitably became tired of repeating himself, so he finally asked another trumpeter in the section to take over the solo for him. Jones remarked,

It was successful on the record so, naturally enough, Basie wanted me to play it every time we played the number. Can you imagine how many times I played it?

---

80 Henthoff, “They’re all Talking About the Jones Boy,” 9.
81 Leonard Feather notes to Thad Jones, Detroit–New York Junction (1956), LP, Blue Note, BLP1513.
82 Smith, “Thad Conducts An Interview,” 15, 34.
God, how I got to hate it. But it was necessary. I remember one time in Philadelphia at Peps, and the band played the number, and I played a different solo. Almost immediately someone in the audience asked Basie to play “April in Paris.” They didn’t recognize it without the little solo.83

After Norman Granz rejected the first two-dozen takes of the tune during the recording session, Jones employed the playful quote as a joke, which for Jones turned out to be a misfire. During Jones’s tenure with Basie, he continued to find additional opportunities where he could display his solo abilities. He recorded several small-group modern jazz albums apart from the Basie band with the likes of pianist Thelonious Monk, alto saxophonist Sonny Stitt, baritone saxophonist Pepper Adams, vocalist Sarah Vaughan, and many others. He also recorded an album titled *Keepin’ Up With the Joneses* (Metro Jazz 1959), which featured his brothers Hank and Elvin.

While Jones furthered his career apart from the Basie band, he continued to offer his talents within the group. While Jones gained wide recognition as a soloist with Basie, he also began to experiment with composing and arranging. A sampling of the compositions and arrangements that Jones wrote for Basie include “Counter Block,” “Fools Rush In,” “Bluish Grey,” “Speaking of Sound,” “Her Royal Highness” (HRH), and “The Deacon,” which was Jones’s nickname within the band. Count Basie quickly became aware of Jones’s talents as a writer. In his autobiography *Good Morning Blues*, Basie recounted his initial impression of Jones’s writing abilities:

> I still can’t get over Thad. There he was, sitting up there listening to everybody and never opening his mouth about what he can do. ‘Hey Base,’ he said, ‘why don’t you look at these things?’ So I did, and we went over them, and wow! Thad’s things were always very exciting. And you never knew what he was going to do next. He wrote some things that were just fantastic. And he can play the

---

83 Coss, “Horns of Plenty,” 40.
horn the same way. Anytime Thad brought something in there, you’d better watch it, because he always had something happening.84

While Basie truly respected Jones’s writing ability, his music did not always fit what exemplified the Basie sound. Basie preferred his music to be simple, because he felt that simple charts swung the best. While Jones’s charts swung, they were often challenging and filled with complicated lines and phrases that made them difficult to play on the first run-through. Jones’s writing tended to be more advanced and complex than that of Basie’s other composers, and as a result Basie did not use his arrangements as much as others. As time went on, Basie became somewhat more receptive to Jones’s offerings, although his personal preference for simpler music remained.85

In 1963 at the age of forty, Jones decided to leave the Count Basie Orchestra after a tenure of nine years. Jones realized that the band prevented his growth as both a performer and composer. He realized that if he wished to express himself completely, he could not stay with Basie as a sideman indefinitely.

Musically, I thought it was the most supreme organization [Count Basie Orchestra]. I have a very deep love for Count Basie. I think he’s one of the greatest people in the world. It’s not for those reasons that I left. It’s just that I wanted to be in New York. I wanted to spend time with my family and New York was where we wanted to live.86

Basie was a highly influential figure and musical mentor for Jones. His respect and admiration for Count Basie greatly impacted his personal approach to music and would inevitably influence his attitude and approach to leadership.

Playing in Count Basie’s band – between ’54 and ’63 – was a truly beautiful period in my life. It would take a whole magazine to say all I could say about it. Just to watch this man was an experience – to see how he controls a band in his

85 Deffaa, Swing Legacy, 255.
86 Lisik and Allen, 50 years at the Village Vanguard, 4,7.
way. And then to listen to his tempos and absorb the whole Basie time concept. When he sets a tempo, that’s the only tempo this piece can be played in. Don’t even think about it, just play it, because that’s where it is.\(^87\)

Shortly after Jones’s departure from Basie, he received an invitation to join the Duke Ellington Orchestra. Jones greatly admired Ellington, especially the way he wrote; Jones once remarked, “He influences my writing more than anyone else. I can’t write like him, but God knows I’d like to.”\(^88\) For Jones, this was an opportunity that seemed too good to pass up. He initially accepted Ellington’s offer and spent ten days on the road with the band before realizing that he was falling into the same trap as he had with Basie. While the offer from Ellington was highly attractive, Jones knew he could not stay because it would mean returning to the road and denying his young children.\(^89\)

Jones reunited with his first wife Elaine and two children: Bruce Thaddeus and Thedia Elaine. He took a job at CBS in New York as a staff writer and sought opportunities to play in small groups. He played with the pianist George Russell, the composer and music theorist largely credited with the codification of the chord-scale theory of jazz improvisation. Jones also acted as a substitute for trumpeter Art Farmer in Farmer’s group, in addition to performing in baritone saxophonist Gerry Mulligan’s Concert Jazz Band alongside drummer Mel Lewis, whom he met several years prior in 1955. Jones explains his initial encounter with Mel Lewis in a 1979 interview:

> Mel and I have been friends since 1955. I was working with Count Basie and he was working with Stan Kenton. We played a battle of the bands in Detroit. I was hotter than a son of a bitch that night, the temperature must have been about 103 degrees. We had on these gray suits and I was never able to wear that suit again because it took a bath. It was just like I had thrown that suit in the tub.

---


\(^88\) Coss, “Horns of Plenty,” 40.

\(^89\) Deffaa, *Swing Legacy*, 255.
Basie’s band worked on the terrace in the open section, and Kenton’s band played the first half of the night inside. At intermission we changed places. We had about thirty minutes off. I was so tired. I was very depleted. My energy source was at its lowest level. I was just sitting there trying to recharge and find me a little open space where I could sit down and not bother anybody. All of a sudden, I saw this cat come out. He was dripping too. The first thing he said was, “Shit, it’s hot as a son of a bitch out here.” Do you know what? Out of all those musicians in those two bands, Mel and I were the only two who could sit down and talk.

I took him out to the Midwest Inn, and he met nearly everybody out there. He hung out all night. We went out there and jammed, played all night long. To show you how our lives have been running parallel — in 1963 he left California where he was living and moved to New York. Neither one of us knew we lived there. We wound up working together with Gerry Mulligan and his big band.90

Jones and Lewis worked in Mulligan’s Concert Jazz Band and also performed on a regular basis in a small group with Pepper Adams. In his 2015 doctoral dissertation, View From the Back of the Band, Chris Smith explains the bond that Lewis and Jones formed during their time in Mulligan’s Concert Jazz Band as a life-changing event for both men.91 The musical connection and experience they shared in the band helped them to realize how exciting and innovative leading a big band could be. Mulligan’s Concert Jazz Band wasn’t exactly the most creative outlet for Jones and Lewis. The opportunity for soloists to “stretch out” and explore was very slim. Jones and Lewis often pondered the possibilities of a band without musical limitations:

Mel and I were working with Gerry Mulligan, who had a very good band at the time. He didn’t use piano, incidentally. And Bobby Brookmeyer, one of the original members of our band, was also in that band. Phil Woods was in there — and can you imagine Phil Woods sitting up in a band and not playing a solo all night long? But this is what used to happen, because Phil’s got so much fire, and

---

90 Shaw Jr., Relationships Between Experimental Factors and Percepts of Selected Professional Musicians in the United States Who Are Adept at Jazz Improvisation, 628–629.
when he started playing it would just take things away, you know. Gerry started cutting him off, then leaving him out: How can you do this to a musician?

This isn’t putting the knock on Gerry, but the band always seemed to reach a certain level of intensity – and it never went beyond that. Mel and I always felt that there was an area beyond this.92

Mulligan eventually disbanded his Concert Jazz Band in order to focus more on his small group. At the close of 1964, Jones and Lewis made a verbal agreement to start their own big band. Mel Lewis recalled the moment that he and Jones decided to form what would be known as the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra:

I was back with the Mulligan Band, and Clark Terry had left, and Thad joined the band. Now we’re sitting next to each other, and there we are! Then we started getting each other on gigs, hanging out, and starting to make all kinds of scenes. We’d always talk and say, “Well we need to do something ourselves.” And then one day Mulligan just gave us the opening, he said “Fellas, I am breaking up the band,” and we said, “There goes the last of the big bands,” and we thought that was it for us. We were through, unless we wanted to go back on the road with Count Basie or Stan Kenton, which we couldn’t do at this point in our lives. No way could we do that anymore, we’d have to be something new or forget it completely. So, we looked at each other and somebody said “Zing! You two guys are going to do it,” and we did it!93

Jones spent the next year and a half composing new music for the new collaboration that he and Lewis had envisioned. Jones continued to work as a staff writer at CBS Studios and continued with his regular performance opportunities throughout New York City. 1965 proved to be a busy year for Jones, especially in the spring, when Count Basie commissioned Jones to compose and arrange an entire new album for the Count Basie Orchestra. He completed the new arrangements for Basie, but the veteran bandleader rejected every arrangement. Jones was devastated that he worked so hard and invested so much time in the Basie arrangements only to have them rejected. Lewis, on

93 Smith, The View From the Back of the Band: The Career of Mel Lewis, 118.
the other hand, looked at this situation in a positive light. The ten or eleven arrangements that Jones wrote became the first Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra pieces. The arrangements that Jones wrote for the Count Basie Orchestra included “Big Dipper,” “Low-Down,” “All My Yesterdays,” Backbone,” “Second Race,” and an arrangement of his brother Hank’s composition “A – That’s Freedom.” Jones could not help but to include his musical personality and instincts when he wrote. The style of his charts were deemed to be complex and challenging. While Basie preferred his music to be simple, Jones’s charts were too difficult for the Basie Orchestra. When all was said and done, Basie allowed Jones to keep the scores and individual parts, and never used any of the arrangements with his band.  

Jones and Lewis organized the band’s first rehearsal in December of 1965 at A&R Studios, which was located at West Forty-Eighth Street near Sixth Avenue in Manhattan. The owner, Phil Ramone, allowed the group to rehearse for free after midnight, so it was a perfect situation for Jones and Lewis. This was also convenient for members of the band since many of them were involved in studio sessions during the day. Dave Lisik and Eric Allen’s book, 50 Years at the Village Vanguard, includes a 1986 interview where Mel Lewis recalled how the band acquired its famed residency at the Village Vanguard. He also described the band’s very first night at the legendary jazz club:

Thad Jones and I formed the band at the end of December 1965, and the first week of February 1986, we started working in the Vanguard.

There was a disc jockey by the name of Alan Grant at WABC. They had a jazz show on AM radio late at night and that was his show. He used to run jam

---

94 Bill Kirchner, notes to *The Complete Solid State Recordings of the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra* (1994), CD, Mosaic Records, MD5-151, 2.
sessions down at the Vanguard on Monday nights. Funny thing is, I had never even gone to any of them and I don’t think Thad had either. Dan Morgenstern came to our first rehearsal. He flipped over the band. He got a hold of Alan and said, “You gotta hear this!” Alan showed up later that night. After he finished his show, he came right over to the studio we were rehearsing in. We made a deal with an old studio called A&R. It was, “You can use the studio late at night and you can help us break in new engineers.” We taught some of the top engineers of the time how to record a big band.

Alan ran back and told Max [Gordon], “I’d love to bring this big band into the club.” Max said, “Big Band? Where are we going to put them?” Alan said, “We’ll fit ‘em in here.” I had already worked there with Gerry Mulligan’s big band, but it wasn’t quite as big. It was only twelve pieces. And twelve pieces to seventeen is a big difference. Anyway, Alan talked Max into it.95

The band made its debut performance at the Village Vanguard on Monday, February 7, 1966. Before the band was formally referred to as The Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, they were simply called “The Jazz Band.” Admission was $2.50 and the band members were each paid $17 for the three-set performance.96 The first band was comprised of Jimmy Maxwell, Jimmy Nottingham, Jimmy Owens, and Eugene “Snooky” Young (tp); Bob Brookmeyer (v-tb), Garnett Brown, Cliff Heather, and Jack Raines (tb); Jerome Richardson, Jerry Dodgion, Eddie Daniels, Joe Farrell, and Pepper Adams (reeds); Hank Jones (p), Sam Herman (g), Richard Davis (b), Thad Jones (cor) and Mel Lewis (dr).97

As most clubs and theatres were closed, or “dark,” on Monday evenings, the band’s performances at the Village Vanguard gradually began to attract an audience of prominent jazz musicians. Trumpeter Marvin Stamm, a member of the band from 1966-

95 Lisik and Allen, 50 years at the Village Vanguard, 11.
96 Ibid.
1973, described several of these musicians who became regular audience members in the early days:

Because of this being new, a lot of people came in to see the band with all these great players. On any given Monday, you might see Sonny Rollins, Oliver Nelson or Quincy Jones in the club. Stan Getz and Art Blakey might come in, as well as many other musicians. A lot of other arrangers and composers also came in – writers such as Manny Albam, Patrick Williams and Jack Cortner.98

The Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra’s Monday night performances proved to be very popular. Soon, the band began to perform at colleges and jazz festivals and began full-scale touring across the United States and abroad. The band recorded seven albums between 1966-1971. The albums were critically acclaimed and surpassed all that Jones and Lewis had hoped for and envisioned. Jones reflected on the band’s great success:

Mel and I are very lucky because we didn’t know this was going to happen. All of a sudden, we found ourselves surrounded by the most beautiful people, musical people, that we’ve ever been around in our lives. To me, this is the most beautiful band in the world. We wanted to play with guys we enjoyed associating with. We wanted guys who could really pop on their horns individually – to see how they would fit together as section men. This band could play anybody’s arrangement on “Yankee Doodle” and make it sound like a masterpiece. It isn’t my music that’s complementary to the band; it’s the band … that flatters my music.”99

Critics hailed the group for its rhythmic buoyancy and for the freshness and vitality of its charts, most of which were created by Jones.100 The Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra was voted as the top band in the country for five years in a row by critics and fans: it led the DownBeat “Readers Poll” from 1972-1977, and the same magazine’s “Critics Poll” from 1974-1978.101 The Orchestra quickly grew into one of the most

---

98 Lisik and Allen, 50 years at the Village Vanguard, 12.
99 Lisik and Allen, 50 years at the Village Vanguard, 14.
101 Deffaa, “New Directions for the Basie Band,” 17.
admired and successful big bands in jazz. They performed nationally and internationally and eventually won a Grammy award.\textsuperscript{102}

For nearly thirteen years, the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra was one of the enduring institutions of contemporary jazz.\textsuperscript{103} In the very beginning they originated as a band that gathered to rehearse, which led to confusion regarding the nature of the group. The lingering misperception that the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra was a “rehearsal band” consistently aggravated both bandleaders. In the April 1969 and April 1970 issues of \textit{DownBeat}, Jones provided his perspective on what a “rehearsal band” meant to him:

\begin{quote}
The type of bands that we have are not part-time or rehearsal bands, they are organized bands. We didn’t intend to just have a rehearsal band, because there is nowhere you can go with that.\textsuperscript{104}

There’s no way in the world you can perform new music with strange men that have never played together as a group before without a rehearsal. That’s why rehearsals are necessary. Hence the label “rehearsal band.”\textsuperscript{105}
\end{quote}

During a European tour in the fall of 1978, Jones found himself at a crossroads. Despite the success of the Orchestra, several events inevitably caused Jones to make the ultimate decision to part ways with Mel Lewis and the Orchestra. The first event took place in November 1978 when the band toured Yugoslavia. While sitting in a taxi, a bystander shoved his fist through the car window, shattering the glass and cutting Jones’s lip.\textsuperscript{106} Jones recalled the incident:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{102} Newton, “Thad and Mel Go Pffftt,” 40.
\item \textsuperscript{103} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{104} Ira Gitler, “New York’s Big Band Community: A Discussion with Thad Jones, Mel Lewis, Clark Terry, Duke Pearson, Ira Gitler,” \textit{DownBeat}, April 1969, 19.
\item \textsuperscript{105} Mike Bourne, “Soulmates,” \textit{DownBeat}, April 1970, 15.
\item \textsuperscript{106} Stryker, \textit{Jazz From Detroit}, 165.
\end{itemize}
Glass got embedded in my lip and cut the major muscle on the top of the lip that controls the movement as you play. Before I found out that the muscle was cut, I tried to play, but I knew something was wrong – because I couldn’t get any stability in the top lip. I had it examined by this guy, and he just felt in there, and said, “The reason you don’t have stability is the muscle was cut. One end’s over here and one end’s over there.” I had to learn how to play all over again.\footnote{Deffaa, \textit{Swing Legacy}, 258.}

The injury was so severe that Jones eventually needed surgery to repair the damage.\footnote{Smith, \textit{The View From the Back of the Band: The Career of Mel Lewis}, 200.} Performing on his cornet proved to be a difficult task for Jones after the incident—so much so that he was forced to take up the valve trombone as an alternative, being that it had a much larger mouthpiece and was less painful to play.

At this point, members of the Orchestra were hearing rumors that Jones was considering leaving the band.\footnote{Dick Oatts, personal interview (Greeley, CO: 10 March 2020).}

While rumors of Jones’s departure circulated, band members expressed confusion, anger, and fear. They were unaware that Jones had been offered the opportunity of a lifetime: an opportunity that would be difficult for any composer with a strong musical vision to turn down. Outside of the Orchestra, Jones had also built a relationship with a Danish woman named Lis. The move gave him the chance to become more serious with the woman he loved. Saxophonist Dick Oatts remembered the day that he and Jones had a conversation about the possible move to Denmark:

I said, “Thad. Look, this is my first time playing lead. I’m basically subbing for a great lead alto player [Jerry Dodgion]. I just wanted you to know you gave me a great opportunity. An opportunity of a lifetime. I’ll always love you for it.” We talked, then I just asked him and said, “look, I’m hearing all this stuff and whatever you do – I want you to go with my best love and graces.” We talked it out and he said he was given a great opportunity. A great once in a lifetime experience. He said, “look – I want to marry this lovely lady.” And I said, “Thad,
you’ve given me so much that I want you to do whatever you need to do, with love. I’ll never forget what you gave me.” He set me in motion basically. So, that was kind of it. We got on the bus and people were wondering what Thad talked to me about – and then one of the cats said, “Hey Jones, what’s up?” He said, “talk to Oatts, he’s the one who asked me.” And then three weeks later, it was over. He got Buddy DeFranco for the next tour. And then for years Mel was bitter. Well, not years. I’d say, about a year he was upset. Very angry. Mel said, “How could Thad do this? This is our best year. We’ve never worked so much, and we had all this stuff going down.” Thad told me that he wanted to write for percussion, write for strings and there was an opportunity for him to do that. And so, I thought, man, how can you deny a writer like that? A place that says, we’re going to give you a full time orchestra. We’re going to give you this, we’re going to give you benefits, a pension, etc.\textsuperscript{110}

From Jones’s perspective, the opportunity to lead a full-time orchestra with a good salary and benefits was a dream come true for any serious composer.

Jones experienced much frustration in the late 1970s. He and Lewis were unable to parlay the Orchestra’s acclaim into higher fees, steady recording, and consistent touring.\textsuperscript{111} Jones was balancing a weekly teaching schedule between two institutions: William Paterson University in Wayne, New Jersey, and the New England Conservatory in Boston, Massachusetts. He played seven shows each week on Broadway and reserved Mondays for the Vanguard.\textsuperscript{112} Jones spent his time and energy in multiple facets of the professional music world. He felt that jazz was under appreciated in America and came to the realization that it would not be feasible dedicating his life completely to composing and performing because of the lack of opportunity. “America makes a mockery of higher aesthetic yearnings,” Jones told Jazz Journal International article. Jones also added,

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{111} Stryker, Jazz From Detroit, 165.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid.
If there’s one word that can sum up the problems of the American music business, it’s politics. The recognition of your peers doesn’t pay the rent. The reason jazz is struggling for acceptance among the American public is lack of exposure.113

When Jones was abroad, particularly in Europe, he felt recognized for his contributions as a jazz musician and composer. His pent-up frustration with the American music industry, his feelings towards the lack of respect for jazz as an artform, and his unfortunate lip injury proved enough for Jones to leave the Orchestra despite the band’s great success and his deep friendship and love for Mel Lewis and the band’s great success.

In December of 1978, the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra ended their European tour and returned to New York City. Jones accepted an offer to lead the Danish Radio Big Band in Copenhagen, Denmark and left New York in January 1979. He directed the Danish Radio Orchestra, taught jazz at the Royal Conservatory, performed, and recorded a number of albums in Europe after his embouchure had healed.114 Fortunately, Jones recovered from his lip injury after seeing a well-qualified plastic surgeon in Denmark. He also received expert help from the famed trumpet guru Carmine Caruso in New York.115 Additionally, Jones married the love of his life, Lis, which did much to restore his spirits.116 He was previously married to a woman named Elaine, who was also the mother of Jones’s first two children Bruce and Thedia, however, they ultimately divorced.

114 Deffaa, “Thad Jones: New Directions for the Basie Band,” 18.
115 Deffaa, Swing Legacy, 258.
116 Ibid., 259.
Jones found happiness in Denmark. He found an environment conducive to doing what he did best: writing for and directing a big band.\footnote{Deffaa, “Thad Jones: New Directions for the Basie Band,” 18.} When his radio contract came to a close, Jones formed a new jazz orchestra comprised of both European and American musicians. Anders Stefansen, owner of the jazz club Slukefter (One for the Road), offered Jones the use of his club for rehearsals.\footnote{Jack Lind, notes to Thad Jones, Eclipse (1979), CD, Storyville 101-8372.} Jones began his nineteen-piece band in August 1979. He dubbed the band “Eclipse,” and the group recorded an album of his music in September 1979. In the album liner notes, Jones explained how he decided on the band’s name:

We were sitting around one day and I thought more than a decade had gone by (since the earlier band started). And you know music happens in cycles of seven to ten years, I thought now is the time. I think the word Eclipse symbolizes the time cycle. It has to do with an occasion, and astrological phenomenon. It takes place once in a very long period of time. I forgot the exact figures, but I know a great number of years pass before it happens. I feel this band is that kind of phenomenon, and it is time for it to happen here, so this will be eclipse here on earth.\footnote{Ibid.}

In April 1984, Count Basie, with whom Jones had spent the better part of the 1950s, passed away. After Basie’s death, Aaron Woodward, Count Basie’s adopted son, organized a list of potential leaders for the band. After careful deliberation, the committee responsible for the search felt that Thad Jones was the only person on whom they could unanimously agree. No other Basie alumnus could have brought to the band his combined strengths as a musician and experienced bandleader.
Jones returned to America in 1985 to take over the leadership of the Count Basie Orchestra. Jones completed his commitments in Denmark and left the country that he, his young wife Lis, and their five year old son Thad Jr. considered to be their home.\textsuperscript{120} Jones held the mentality that music should always progress and move forward. He had no intention of asking the Basie band to perform old arrangements. Instead, he began a new chapter in the band’s fifty-year history by composing new music and commissioning fresh pieces by former members of the band, such as Frank Wess, Frank Foster, Ernie Wilkins, and Sammy Nestico.\textsuperscript{121} Jones was an exceptional leader, whose entire career had prepared him to make the Basie band a great orchestra of the day, with a larger reach and more flexible vision than was possible during Basie’s final years. The alternative was just another ghost band, and ghosts always return to the graveyard, or they should.\textsuperscript{122}

The newly formed Count Basie Orchestra found great success with Jones as leader; however, within several months Jones was forced to retire due to ill health. He returned to his home in Copenhagen, Denmark for the remainder of his life. After being hospitalized for several months, Jones passed away from complications of bone cancer on August 21, 1986 at the age of sixty-three. He died at a considerably young age, but he left a tremendous legacy of music. To this day, Jones’s music is widely performed and his compositions and arrangements are highly valued in jazz education. Nearly every mainstream big-band composer and arranger to emerge during the 1970s and 1980s bore

\textsuperscript{120} Deffaa, “Thad Jones: New Directions for the Basie Band,” 17.
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{122} Giddins, “Thad Jones Rattles No Bones,” 98.
his influence, among them Jim McNeely, John Clayton, and Bob Mintzer.\textsuperscript{123} Jones was buried in Copenhagen’s Vestre Kirkaard Cemetery (Western Churchyard Cemetery). Thad Jones has a street named after him in southern Copenhagen: “Thad Jones Vej” (Thad Jones Street).\textsuperscript{124}

Jones’s trumpet and cornet playing in particular remains a gold mine of ideas and inspirations.\textsuperscript{125} The intent of this study is to discover the aspects of Jones’s improvisational style that make him unique and to understand how his composition and arranging style is ultimately influenced by his performance style. Through this research, the focus is to uncover the beauty and magic that was present in his improvisational and compositional style so that jazz musicians and enthusiasts alike may fully understand the significance of Thad Jones and the contributions that have positively impacted the jazz idiom. William Paterson University commemorates Thad Jones’s accomplishments in composing and arranging, as well as his achievements as the university’s first director of jazz, through the \textit{Thad Jones Music Archive}.\textsuperscript{126}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{123} Stryker, \textit{Jazz From Detroit}, 165.
\item \textsuperscript{125} Stryker, \textit{Jazz From Detroit}, 165.
\item \textsuperscript{126} Jones, \textit{Study in Thad: The Improvisational Solo Style of Thad Jones}, 22.
\end{itemize}
CHAPTER V
ANALYTICAL STUDY

Introduction

Thad Jones had a unique approach to improvisation and composition that differed from most jazz musicians. The significance of Jones’s improvisational and compositional styles stems from his unique ability to summon fresh material that is spontaneous, unexpected, and exciting. Jones remarked on the gratification he received from his constant discovery of musical knowledge and ideas: “Knowledge by itself is a beautiful thing, but there has to be that additional factor of accumulation. The knowledge that you have means nothing unless you can constantly add to it; otherwise it’ll stagnate and just remain dormant.”

The diversity of Jones’s professional musical experiences and influences ultimately helped to shape the style and sound that inevitably became signature traits of his performance and compositional styles. Jones’s compositions have been widely studied since he first garnered acclaim, and his playing and writing style is so distinctive that it is nearly impossible to reproduce. For instance, one will never be able to produce the trumpeter’s melodic concept. Trumpeter Tim Hagans elaborates, stating: “The combination of his incredible understanding of Strayhorn and Ellington harmonies,

---

placed atop the Basie concept of swing, alongside an incredible melodic and horizontal sense, made Jones special within the musical community. This is why his music is so joyous.” In a 1979 interview with George Washington Shaw Jr., Jones explained that his approach to composition is heavily influenced by the passion he had for the cornet:

You have to understand that I was a player before I became a writer. Basically, that’s my love. I think writing supplements that love that I feel for the horn, and it gives me more of a feeling of being in tune with the horn because of my ability as a writer. They run parallel; they run together.

In writing lines, I try the things that I would play as a soloist. I write a line that I would want to play in my solo. I was really impressed with writing. I listened to a lot of arrangements.

Jones’s music was exciting because it was unpredictable, as he was always present or “in the moment.” Nobody ever knew how Jones would interpret his lines. He was by no means a “safe” player or writer; he often took incredible chances that helped to create suspenseful and thrilling sensations that his audiences and bandmates appreciated. Saxophonist Dick Oatts noted that Jones often took risks in his compositions and improvisations that other musicians avoided. Bassist Rufus Reid offered his perspective on Jones as an improviser and composer:

[Thad] was a much better improviser than a lot of people would ever know. He was amazing. His entrances and the choice of notes were always unpredictable. It was a lot of fun to hear him. He thought compositionally all the time. He would write things that were thrilling and surprising to hear and that’s also the way he played.

---

129 Shaw Jr., Relationships Between Experimental Factors and Percepts of Selected Professional Musicians in the United States Who Are Adept at Jazz Improvisation, 636.
130 Dick Oatts, personal interview (Greeley, CO: 10 March 2020).
131 Lisik and Allen, 50 years at the Village Vanguard, 96.
Several elements in Thad Jones’s compositions and arrangements, when combined, make his music unique and instantly identifiable. It is clear that Jones’s arrangements were strongly influenced by his long relationship with the Count Basie Orchestra, with their hard-swinging rhythms and common forms, all steeped in blues-based vocabulary.\textsuperscript{132} By the time that Jones composed music for the Count Basie album commission of 1965, his rhythmic and harmonic language had evolved to include complexities that were incompatible with the Basie band’s firmly established style.\textsuperscript{133}

Jones explained his concept of improvisation in George Washington Shaw, Jr.’s 1979 Ph.D. dissertation:

First of all, I'm not a strong believer in methods, because to me, improvisation means just that. It is as free and uncluttered as an eagle. To compare it with linguistics is not right. I think logically you have to have some kind of idea of what the harmonies are and what they can and should be, but that's as far as your logic should take you. Logic isn't the only thing involved in playing. It's the knowledge of the chords and the technical facility that you have and use on your instrument that takes you over the boundaries that have been imposed on you. You think your way through a problem spontaneously up to a point, and then sometimes it doesn’t require thought at all. If you hear something, a chord that you like, and it strikes your ear and your mind at the same time, you transform it into an active thing by responding to it technically. That type of playing really is what appeals to you. I like to hear a person create harmonic patterns. Whatever method is used, as long as it's done spontaneously, is acceptable. That's what improvisation is.\textsuperscript{134}

Jones’s compositions and improvisations are filled with what some would refer to as “Jonesisms”: melodic surprises and dissonance, sudden harmonic shifts, rhythmic displacements, and curious sequences and intervals.\textsuperscript{135} that keep the ear in a constant state

\textsuperscript{132} Lisik and Allen, \textit{50 years at the Village Vanguard}, 86.
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{134} Shaw Jr., \textit{Relationships Between Experimental Factors and Percepts of Selected Professional Musicians in the United States Who Are Adept at Jazz Improvisation}, 619.
\textsuperscript{135} Stryker, \textit{Jazz From Detroit}, 161.
of wonder. Pianist Tommy Flanagan may have been the first to use the term “Jonesisms” to refer to Jones’ unique style:

It wasn’t like bebop. It was just the way Thad wrote. He just had a way of making things sound familiar, but as far as I know most of his chord structures are completely original. There was one that I tried to match with some other tunes, but I could never work it out. I guess it was just one of those ‘Jonesisms.’ Many of his originals are just that – very original.136

Jones’s solos are models of tension and release; each risky dissonance ingeniously resolved. Jones’s tone was uniquely burnished and warm, and he did not rely on preconceived patterns or formulas. Jones maintained one of the highest percentages in jazz history of true improvisation in his instrumental solos.137 The quality and percentage of new material in his performances was astounding. His creative melodic language informed all of his lead lines in his big-band writing. This accounts for the warmth and humor in his music, says trumpeter Tim Hagans.138

In a 1974 interview conducted by Arnold Jay Smith, Jones provided an explanation of his approach to creating music from both a compositional and improvisational standpoint:

Subconsciously I have a total idea of what I want to say musically. I try to write it as I’m building a house, adding as I go, maybe bypassing one section and coming back to it, rather than go from level to level. I try to give a total picture. I have no idea what it’s going to sound like. All I’m interested in is putting it down and at least presenting the idea.139

136 Bob Blumenthal, notes to Thad Jones, Detroit–New York Junction (1956), LP, Blue Note BLP1513.
138 Ibid.
139 Smith, “Thad Conducts an Interview,” 14.
Jones’s musical style consists of a variety of melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic devices that can be found in examples of his solo transcriptions as well as his small-group and big-band compositions. Jones’s melodies typically demonstrate a tendency of angularity and jaggedness. Through his improvisation and compositions, one may observe a type of angular melodic motion that involves an irregular mixture of skips, stepwise movement, chromaticism, and large intervallic leaps woven together. Jones also had the unique ability to create complex melodies from basic material. Octave transference, upper and lower neighbor embellishments, and prolongations of a line or phrase were methods that Jones utilized when constructing his melodic material. Author Mark Stryker provides an accurate description of Jones’s music in his 2019 book, *Jazz From Detroit*. Stryker states, “[Jones’s] writing is virtuosic, filled with witty acrobatics, breathless triplets, and colorful chord extensions. Joyous swing is built into every bar. Harmonies bite with dissonance. Tension builds. Fingers fly. Emotions soar. Reeds and brass merge in a rocking climax.” The aforementioned description can certainly apply to Jones’s improvisational style as well.

The initial recordings of Thad Jones in small-group formats can be heard on albums produced by bassist Charles Mingus and drummer Max Roach on their record company, Debut Records. Jones eventually dissolved their relationship in 1957 due to the combination of his misunderstanding of Debut Records’ exclusivity rights and Mingus’s emotional mishandling of the situation:

Debut had an exclusive contract with Thad Jones. Mingus and Max Roach wanted to record Thad with his brothers and call it The Jones Boys. An RCA artist-and-repertoire (A&R) man stole the idea. Jones didn’t realize he had broken his

---

140 Stryker, *Jazz From Detroit*, 159.
141 Jones, *Study in Thad: The Improvisational Solo Style of Thad Jones*, 42.
contract—or convinced Mingus he didn’t. Mingus called Jones, whose wife answered the phone. He spent his rage on her. When Jones called him back, he warned his ex-boss that if he did anything like that again, he’d kill him. They didn’t speak for twenty years.\textsuperscript{142}

Shortly following Jones’s fallout with Mingus and Debut, the trumpeter was sought out by Blue Note Records. Blue Note signed Jones in 1956 and produced some of his most creative improvisational output to date.\textsuperscript{143} The analysis of Jones’ solo improvisations derives from records that Jones recorded with Debut and Blue Note, along with other labels that Jones was regularly involved with throughout his recording career.

**Section I: Melodic Conception**

To gain further understanding regarding Jones’s improvisational and compositional styles, analyses from selected solo transcriptions (See Appendix C for complete transcriptions) were studied. Additionally, fragments of musical examples have been extracted from Jones’s big-band and small-group compositions and arrangements to support the work of subsequent researchers. Jones’s melodic characteristics have been organized into the following categories: angularity; octave transference; motivic/thematic development; mixture of melodic devices; and humor. Selected portions are separated into subcategories for the purpose of providing more depth of knowledge that will supplement the continued understanding of Jones’s musical style. In addition, the author organized the musical analyses by utilizing 2-4 musical examples deriving from Thad Jones’s compositions and arrangements, and 2-4 musical examples from his solo improvisations.

\textsuperscript{142} Gene Santoro, \textit{Myself When I am Real: the Life and Music of Charles Mingus} (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 129.

\textsuperscript{143} Jones, \textit{Study in Thad: The Improvisational Solo Style of Thad Jones}, 73.
Angularity

Angularity in music can be defined as a melody that moves in large leaps, often incorporating distant intervals such as a seventh. Angular melodies typically move in varied directions with no discernable pattern. If you were to draw lines on a stave between notes of an angular line, the resulting line would consist of sharp angles as compared to a more gently changing line. Many people have described Jones’s improvisation and composition style as having an angular quality. Jazz trumpeter Tim Hagans, who worked closely with Thad Jones in Copenhagen, Denmark from 1977-1981, offers his take on Jones’s approach to angularity:

Thad is not coming from an angular way that I would think when talking about Woody Shaw, where it was more of a real stylistic thing of playing – you know, like larger intervals. Woody had a lot of patterns that he worked out, as you can hear over the same kind of … wide interval patterns. And I think Thad Jones’ angularity was coming from more of a bebop way. I mean … and it could be partly because – and I’m just thinking out loud here without spending hours under a tree contemplating what I’m about to say. Charlie Parker could play all over the horn and it was incredibly melodic and it wasn’t considered angular because it was done on a saxophone – and the trumpet is traditionally more of a diatonic instrument, but anybody that plays – you know I would call Dizzy Gillespie, because he’s playing all over the horn – jumps and leaps, but not in a more modern kind of – coming out of the Coltrane way of thinking about patterns and things … so I think it is angular but it’s more of a traditional bebop melodic angularity, if that makes sense.144

The most important aspect of Jones’s music is its spontaneous feel. He creates unity through the manipulation of intervals and scale steps.145 The examples below display Jones’s use of angularity in his compositions and solo improvisations.

144 Tim Hagans, personal phone interview (New York, NY and Greeley, CO: 3 March 2020).
Compositions

The opening saxophone melody to Thad Jones’s composition “Tip Toe,” from the 1970 Blue Note album *Consummation*,\(^\text{146}\) provides a clear example of Jones’s approach to angularity when composing melodies. Example 1 illustrates the initial opening lead soprano saxophone line (transposed to concert pitch). In the first four measures alone, Jones cleverly incorporates varying intervals into the melody. Jones adds interest by frequently changing the directions of the intervals, which in turn provides an element of spontaneity and surprise. The arrows shown below demonstrate Jones’s approach to angularity, which involves sudden directional shifts and large intervals spanning as much as an octave.

![Ex. 1: Angularity in “Tip Toe,” mm. 1-8](image)

Jones arranged his older brother Hank’s composition, “A - That’s Freedom.” It was recorded on the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra’s live album *Thad Jones & Mel Lewis: Live At The Village Vanguard*,\(^\text{147}\) recorded in 1967 and re-released on the album *All My Yesterdays*,\(^\text{148}\) by Resonance Records. Example 2 displays another usage of angularity, which can be observed in the brass shout chorus in measure 81 (Letter F).

\(^\text{146}\) Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, *Consummation* [1970], LP, Blue Note BST-84346.
\(^\text{147}\) Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, *Thad Jones & Mel Lewis: Live At The Village Vanguard* [1967], LP, Solid State SS-60439.
\(^\text{148}\) Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, *All My Yesterdays* [2016], LP, Resonance HLP-9023.
Here, the lead trombone (written in treble clef below) zig zags its way through large intervallic leaps. Within the melodic line, Jones has written interesting intervallic jumps throughout the register of the trombone with an inconsistent pattern of ascending and descending leaps. Jones’s use of large intervals is clearly evident. The lines in the section rarely follow a linear contour, which is very uncommon – especially for brass instruments. Typically, stepwise motion in addition to intervals of a third are considered idiomatic for most brass instruments. This example displays Jones’s unconventional approach of incorporating challenging intervallic passages in his arrangements.

Ex. 2: Angularity in “A – That’s Freedom,” mm. 81-92

“Second Race” is one of the pieces Jones composed in 1965 when Count Basie commissioned him to write an album of big-band arrangements. When Basie rejected all of Jones’s charts, Jones utilized the rejected arrangements for the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra. “Second Race” was recorded on the 1967 Solid State recording Thad Jones &
Mel Lewis: Live At The Village Vanguard. Example 3 below is an additional instance of angularity in Jones’s melodic lines. The introductory shout chorus in the brass section clearly demonstrates Jones’s continued use of large intervals. Very few instances of linear or stepwise motion are present. When moments of stepwise motion exist, they occur briefly and transition to unexpected wide interval leaps. There seems to be no consistent pattern regarding the intervallic construction in the unison trumpet section line at letter B. The trumpet melody is well balanced in its use of alternating ascending and descending motion. The initial phrase in measure 37 begins with a descending minor third figure that quickly jumps up an interval of a sixth. After a brief half-step transition, Jones quickly descends a diminished 4th interval.

Ex. 3: Angularity in “Second Race,” mm. 37-48

Jones is particularly fond of intervals of a third and greater. While these types of interval leaps are challenging for brass instruments, Jones has no hesitation when

---

149 Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, Thad Jones & Mel Lewis: Live At The Village Vanguard [1967], LP, Solid State SS-60439.
implementing unconventional intervals in his music. Although Jones is a cornetist himself and understands the challenges and limitations that brass instrumentalists face, he nevertheless incorporates difficult passages in his compositions and arrangements.

**Improvized Solos**

Jones’s use of angular melodic lines and phrases is also evident in his improvisational style. Example 4 exhibits Jones’s angular approach in a segment of his solo on his small-group composition “Scratch,” which can be heard on the 1956 album *Detroit-New York Junction*. The example provided below further illustrates Jones’s use of intervals larger than a third.

Ex. 4: Angularity in “Scratch,” mm. 9-14

Another example of Jones’s method of employing angularity and large intervalic leaps in his improvised solos can be heard on a live recording at the Newport Jazz Festival in 1966. Jones is joined by renowned jazz trumpeters Kenny Dorham and Howard McGhee and is accompanied by Billy Taylor on piano, Percy Heath on bass, and Albert “Tootie” Heath on drums. This rare performance took place as part of a *Trumpet Workshop Session* that was hosted by the Newport Jazz Festival in Rhode Island. Jones’s use of angularity can be heard throughout the nine solo choruses he takes on the classic

---

150 Thad Jones, *Detroit-New York Junction* [1956], LP, Blue Note BLP-1513.
rhythm changes tune, “The Theme.” Example 5 gives attention to the final four measures of his eighth chorus and the first four measures of his ninth chorus. Jones continuously performs large intervallic jumps that are not ideal for an instrument such as the cornet. In measures 105-107, he adds musical interest by employing quick stylistic rips or falls that disguise the complexity of executing wide intervallic jumps. Jones utilizes repetition in the form of motivic/rhythmic development, which is discussed in more detail in Section I and Section II of Chapter V. The arrows shown in the diagram indicate the constant shift and abrupt changes of direction that Jones utilizes in his lines.

Ex. 5: Angularity in “The Theme,” mm. 105-111

Jones’s ability to zig-zag through the cornet’s registral space is atypical among most other trumpet greats. Due to the physical demands of the trumpet, the execution of angular passages is quite challenging and difficult to master. Generally speaking, trumpeters are more likely to apply linear and scalar passages with intervals no greater than a second or third. Jones’s inimitable angular approach most likely stems from his lack of formal training in his formative years. Jones discusses his musical upbringing in an interview conducted by jazz historian Nat Hentoff: “… there are certain things I do in certain ways that nobody else does. A schooled musician has, I imagine, a more crisp style than mine, but there is a freedom in the way I play. What I do could be wrong at
times, but I feel whatever I’m doing.”¹⁵¹ When mastering the technical difficulties of the cornet, Jones approached his individual practice with the idea that any and all limitations he faced were 75% mental and 25% physical in nature. Jones believed that mastery begins with attitude. Jones remarked, “Most problems that I’m confronted with are mental. It's my attitude toward them that makes it either difficult or easy.”¹⁵²

Additional examples of Jones’s implementation of angularity are discussed in future sections. Additional examples of his use of angularity in his solo improvisations are available in Appendix C.

Octave Transference

The term octave transference has been adapted from Michael A. Williamson’s 1998 doctoral dissertation entitled An Original Work for Jazz Orchestra: With A Comparative Analysis to Works by Duke Ellington and Thad Jones.¹⁵³ Octave transference is the method of commencing a line or phrase on a particular note and through various methods, ending the phrase with the same note one or two octaves lower or higher from the initial starting note. As discussed previously, Jones’s lines do not favor stepwise movement. On the contrary, his written lines in his compositions and his improvised lines on the cornet are often angular with skips of a third or more. Consequently, melodies tend to occupy a large registral space.¹⁵⁴ The musical examples presented below continue to emphasize Jones’s technical facility on the cornet and further

¹⁵¹ Nat Hentoff, “They’re All Talking About the Jones Boy,” 9.
¹⁵² Shaw Jr., Relationships Between Experimental Factors and Percepts of Selected Professional Musicians in the United States Who Are Adept at Jazz Improvisation, 639.
¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 104.
attest to his ambitious mindset when employing octave transference in his compositions and arrangements.

**Compositions**

In Example 6, the opening melody line presented in the brass section on Jones’s composition “Little Rascal On A Rock,” which can be heard on the 1976 Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra album *New Life*\(^{155}\) clearly demonstrates Jones’s unique ability to utilize a significant registral space. Within the span of two-and-a-half measures, Jones is able to creatively begin the opening melody line with an F# at the bottom of the staff and through a series of third and fourth intervals, he effectively completes the phrase with an F# two octaves higher.

![Ex. 6: Octave transference in “Little Rascal On A Rock,” mm. 1-4](image)

“With Bells On” is a rarely recorded Thad Jones composition with a drum feature written for Louis Bellson in 1962. It was recorded in January of 1962 on Belson’s album *Big Band Jazz Live at the Summit*.\(^{156}\) Example 7 provides another example of Jones’s use of octave transference in the trumpet section in measure 137-138 (Letter M).

![Ex. 7: Octave transference in “With Bells On,” mm. 137-138](image)

---

\(^{155}\) Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, *New Life* [1976], CD, A&M/Horizon A&M CD-810.

\(^{156}\) Louis Bellson, *Big Band Jazz Live At The Summit* [1962], LP, Roulette R52087.
Jones’s composition “Kids Are Pretty People” is a well-known original that was composed shortly after his departure from the Count Basie Orchestra. Jones’s big-band arrangement became widely popular with the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra. Before Jones arranged “Kids Are Pretty People,” he first wrote a sextet arrangement that was featured on saxophonist Billy Mitchell’s 1963 small-group album *A Little Juicy.*157 The melody has a slow lyrical swing style mostly in a minor key and follows a traditional AABA form. As you can see in Example 8 below, the opening motive in the first two measures displays Jones’s use of octave transference.

![Ex. 8: Octave transference in “Kids Are Pretty People,” mm. 21-23](image)

Jones begins the melody with a G at the top of the staff, and after a series of intervals and turns, he completes the phrase an octave lower from the initial starting point. Another instance can be observed in the last three measures of the bridge as seen in Example 9 below. Jones begins the final phrase of the bridge with a C below the staff and completes the phrase an octave higher.

![Ex. 9: Octave transference in “Kids Are Pretty People,” mm. 22-24](image)

**Improvized Solos**

Examples 10-14 illustrates various examples of Jones utilizing octave transference within improvised solos he has recorded in small-group settings. Jones’s

ability to maneuver his way through the entire register of the cornet in an effortless manner demonstrates his proficiency and technical capability on the cornet.

Ex. 10: Octave transference in “Friday The 13th,” mm. 1-4

Ex. 11: Octave transference in “More Of The Same,” mm. 53-57

Ex. 12: Octave transference in “Straight No Chaser,” mm. 31-33

Ex. 13: Octave transference in “The Theme,” mm. 63-66

Ex. 14: Octave transference in “Salute To The Bluebird,” mm. 9-13
Motivic/Thematic Development

Jazz analyst Laurent Cugny defines a motive or motivic development as “a melodic and/or rhythmic fragment.” A motive or theme developed in a solo or soli may derive from the melody while being an element of the common vocabulary of an improviser/composer, in which case the improvisation displays motivic, thematic, and formulaic features simultaneously. American ethnomusicologist Paul Berliner adds to this definition, explaining that jazz musicians utilize motivic and thematic development as a method of employing qualities such as musical logic and development that guide expression in jazz. Berliner elaborates on this notion in his book, Thinking In Jazz:

One conventional approach for achieving such qualities focuses on what players describe as motivic or thematic development, in which they subject an idea to recurrent use and variation while preserving its fundamental identity…Beyond strict imitation, a more subtle way for improvisers to imbue successive phrases with a sense of logic is by varying the initial contour of the pattern when they first repeat it. They may re-create its general shape, but change its intervals. Or, they may append to the pattern a short cadential extension, or a short introductory figure, or both.

The use of sequences, repetition, and call-and-response are all characteristics of motivic or thematic development, and that of Jones’s music. Variations of melodic fragments employed over different points in a progression in a piece is an additional method of melodic development. More specifically, variations may be comprised of musical devices that include inversions, octaves, intervals, embellishments, and more. Repetition and variation through call-and-response, sequences, and other devices that are

---

159 Ibid.
161 Ibid., 194.
associated with motivic/thematic development provide an opportunity for listeners to absorb a melodic idea. Composers and performers benefit from the use of motivic development in their music because it helps to create interest and move musical content in a forward direction.

To understand the various devices that are used in reference to motivic development, this section is broken up into subcategories. The following devices are examined: call-and-response, sequences, and mixture of melodic devices.

**Call-and-Response**

Jones’s use of call-and-response in motivic and phrase structure is frequently employed in his compositions and solo improvisation. American musicologist and jazz saxophonist Barry Kernfeld provides his definition of call-and-response in Grove Music Online:

The performance of musical phrases or longer passages in alternation by different voices or distinct groups, used in opposition in such a way as to suggest that they answer one another; it may involve spatial separation of the groups, and contrasts of volume, pitch, timbre, etc. The term (the equivalent of which in more formal analytical language is “antiphony”) originates in descriptions of the singing of African-American work-songs, in which a leader and a chorus respectively sang verse and refrain or successive phrases in alternation. In jazz it is used of exchanges between instrumentalists, two sections of a big band, and even a singer and his own instrumental accompaniment; the most characteristic forms of call-and-response in jazz occur when musicians trade fours and take part in a chase.¹⁶²

A similar concept is used in Western classical music. Call-and-response devices share similarities with what classical music theorists refer to as antecedent and consequent phrasing. The antecedent acts as a proposition or question statement and the

consequent acts as the answer to the proposition. The selected musical examples below exhibit Jones’s use of call-and-response and provide evidence that his musical style is partially characterized by such devices.

Compositions

Example 15 is a melodic fragment taken from Jones’s big-band composition “Cherry Juice.” A recording can be found on the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra’s album New Life. The album was meant to be a ten-year anniversary recording of the band and a tribute to Max Gordon, owner of the Village Vanguard. The motivic statement in measure 202 introduces the first segment of a three part call-and-response motive. Each time motive “A” is repeated, Jones applies a variation that involves subtle modifications. Note that the second motive (A’) is metrically displaced from the original statement. Motive “B” in measure 206 represents the response or answer to the initial proposition. This example displays Jones’s ability to employ variation in conjunction with repeated material.

Ex. 15: Call-and-response in “Cherry Juice,” mm. 202-207

\[163\] Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, New Life [1975/1976], LP, Horizon, SP-797.

Jones’s composition “Rhoda Map,” written for jazz organist Rhoda Scott, offers another example of his approach to call-and-response motives in a composition. In Example 16, Jones incorporates motivic development with another call-and-response motive in the saxophone melody. Again, each motive is elaborated from the original statement offering slight variations that capture the attention of the listener. After the repetition of three motivic statements, Jones incorporates contrasting material in the form of a response. In measure 21, Jones repeats the call-and-response motive verbatim and answers with an adaption of the original response that was presented in measure 16.

Ex. 16: Call-and-response in “Rhoda Map,” mm. 9-24

Improvised Solos

The excerpts above in Examples 17-19 provide additional instances of call-and-response techniques in various small-group solo performances. Note Jones’s treatment of phrase structures and his creation of unique variations, as he continues to find interesting ways of developing motives. Jones often applied sequences and call-and-response devices simultaneously, which resulted in stimulating melodies.
Ex. 17: Call-and-response in “Little Juicy,” mm. 0-12

Ex. 18: Call-and-response in “Salute to the Bluebird,” mm. 33-40

Ex. 19: Call-and-response in “Blue Room (1956),” mm. 57-65
Sequences

Sequential material is often found in both Jones’s improvisational solos and compositions. American jazz saxophonist and pedagogue Jerry Coker defines a sequence as follows:

A sequence occurs when a melodic fragment is immediately followed by one or more variations on that same fragment. Sequences may be long or short, and they may be melodic, rhythmic, harmonic or based on a provocative interval. Sometimes the sequential occurrence of the motive is simple and transparent. Other times it may be heavily decorated and disguised, perhaps escaping the conscious awareness of the listener, but it is nevertheless sensed in some subtle way.\(^{165}\)

To provide supplementary perspective, an additional definition of the term can also be found at Grove Music Online:

A melodic or polyphonic idea consisting of a short figure or motif stated successively at different pitch levels, so that it moves up or down a scale by equidistant intervals. It may be true to the diatonicism of the passage or may involve a literal transposition. It is not uncommon for successive statements of a motif to be inexact repetitions of the original form and yet maintain the character of the sequence.\(^{166}\)

Jones’s use of sequences in his improvised solos and compositions is balanced by organization and unpredictability. Trumpeter John McNeil recalls his experience of watching Thad Jones perform:

I remember hearing him play night after night on tunes that I knew really well, and I would think: Why did he just play that? Then five or six seconds later I’d wonder why I never did! He could make a sequence out of anything. He would play a phrase, then play it a minor 3rd away, then maybe a step down; he would

\(^{165}\) Coker, *Elements of the Jazz Language for the Developing Improviser*, 55.

move it all over the place. And he would make changes to it as he went along, throwing other notes in or changing the rhythm.\textsuperscript{167}

The following musical examples demonstrate a variety of scenarios in which Jones applied sequences in his music.

Compositions

The composition “Three and One” is a classic Jones piece originally written for quartet. It was first released on the 1958 album \textit{Keepin’ Up With the Joneses},\textsuperscript{168} which featured Thad Jones on flugelhorn along with his brothers Hank and Elvin on piano and drums, respectively. Eddie Jones, who has no relation, joined on bass. The title “Three and One” is named for the three brothers and the bassist. The title of this dissertation, \textit{Three in One: The Style, Structure, and Sound of Thad Jones as a Jazz Trumpeter} was inspired by the title of Jones’s classic composition. Example 20 highlights the melody that is featured in the flugelhorn, baritone saxophone, and bass. All phrases are unified by sequences.\textsuperscript{169} The example illustrates Jones’s ability to develop a motive by transposing and manipulating melodic figures while logically incorporating consequent statements between phrases. Sequences B and B’ also demonstrate Jones’s ability to integrate multiple variations in a sequence. In this case Jones provides a rhythmic variation along with the transposition.


\textsuperscript{168} Thad Jones, \textit{Keepin’ Up With The Joneses} [1958], LP, Metrojazz E1003.

\textsuperscript{169} Wright, \textit{Inside the Score}, 46.
Example 21 highlights another brief sequence in Jones’s composition “Consummation,” which was recorded on the album of the same title. Jones employs a sequence in the trumpet section in measure 29. The two-measure sequential motive is transposed by a minor third interval. The introductory brass melody, as well as the brass sendoff melody in measure 48 in “Once Around,” (shown in Example 22 below) demonstrates two additional examples of Jones’s use of sequences in a composition.

Ex. 21: Sequences in “Consummation,” mm. 29-32
The following examples demonstrate Jones’s use of sequences in many of his small-group compositions. Example 23 derives from an arrangement that Jones wrote for the great jazz trumpeter Clifford Brown on the Cole Porter piece, “I Get A Kick Out of You.” Not only does this provide another example of how Jones unifies his compositions through the use of sequences, it also demonstrates the influence he had on other musicians; including people such as the iconic trumpeter Clifford Brown. Detroit saxophonist Sonny Stitt, who worked closely with Thad Jones, introduced the arrangement to both Clifford Brown and drummer Max Roach after Jones shared the arrangement with him. Brown and Roach loved Jones’s arrangement and made the decision to record it on their 1955 album *Brown and Roach Incorporated*. The tempo

---

alternates between 3/4, 4/4, and 2/4 time signatures with both rubato and syncopated rhythmic figures present throughout the arrangement.\footnote{Nick Catalano, \textit{Clifford Brown: The Life and Art of the Legendary Jazz Trumpeter} (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 125.}

Ex. 23: Sequences in “I Get A Kick Out Of You,” mm. 52-56

A sequence in “I Get A Kick Out of You” occurs in the last five measures of the extended melody beginning in measure 53. Jones composed a short two-beat cell comprised of four eighth notes. He repeats the idea three times, ascending the cell by a minor third each time, and eventually transitions into a drum fill that initiates the solo section.

Ex. 24: Sequences in “Zec,” mm. 1-16
Example 24 above displays another sequence in Jones’s composition “Zec,” previously titled “The Zec,” on the 1953 album Swing...Not Spring.¹⁷² Jones recorded another version of the tune on his 1956 Blue Note album Detroit-New York Junction.¹⁷³ The title “Zec” refers to saxophonist Billy Mitchell’s nickname “The Executive,” which he earned from becoming a top bandleader in Detroit in the 1950s. Jones’s composition features a two-measure sequence in the melody’s introduction and main theme. The first two sequence statements are identical. In measure 13, the sequence motive is transposed a perfect fourth higher and the rhythm remains comparable to the original. This example again showcases Jones’s ability to unify his melodies with sequential material. Author Mark Stryker refers to Jones’s approach in his solo on “Zec,” as follows: “Jones’ zigzagging rhythms, piquant note choices, and burnished tone announce a unique voice.”¹⁷⁴ Jones’s complete solo on “Zec” can be found in Appendix C of this document.

Improvised Solos

Thad Jones’s use of sequences is also characteristic of his improvisational style. In Jones’s solo on his composition “Scratch,” he employs sequential devices throughout his three-chorus solo. Examples 25-27 demonstrate various approaches Jones assimilates when applying sequential material in a solo.

¹⁷² Billy Mitchell Quintet, Swing...Not Spring [1953], LP, Savoy MG-12062.
¹⁷³ Thad Jones, Detroit-New York Junction [1956], LP, Blue Note BLP-1513.
¹⁷⁴ Stryker, Jazz From Detroit, 161.
Mark Stryker describes Jones’s approach to composition and improvisation, specifically regarding Jones’s tune “Scratch,” in his book *Jazz From Detroit*:
The song [“Scratch”], begins with a jaunty introduction landing on a tangy flatted fifth. After the buoyant 36-bar theme, Jones strolls through three choruses with skipping rhythms, bebop curlcues, and double time. Sequences, call-and-response, rhyme, and humor animate his solo; Jones tosses an idea in the air and teases out its implications. In the second eight bars of his final chorus he hits on a flirty two-bar motif that sashays at a higher pitch.175

Another example of Jones’s use of motivic development through sequential material in a solo improvisation can be heard on his placidly happy composition “Thedia,” which is dedicated to his daughter. The piece can be heard on Jones’s 1956 Blue Note album The Magnificent Thad Jones.176 In Example 28, two instances of Jones’s approach to sequences as part of his motivic development are present at the beginning of his third solo chorus. Jones continually develops each sequential motive (A and B) by elaborating the rhythm that he initially conceived in measure 65 and 71. He adds interest by adding an inflection in the form of an ascending “rip” at the beginning of each sequence (A).

Ex. 28: Sequences in “Thedia,” mm. 65-76

175 Ibid., 162.
176 Thad Jones, Magnificent Thad Jones [1956], CD, Blue Note, CDP7-46814-2.
Mixture of Melodic Devices

“Unpredictable,” “unexpected,” and “spontaneous” are common words that are often associated with Jones’s composition, arranging, and improvisational style. Drummer Mel Lewis briefly discussed stylistic traits regarding Jones’s compositional style in a 1968 issue of *DownBeat*:

Jones writes the unexpected, interesting underparts, interesting jumps for the guys playing lead. His placing of the notes as opposed to the rests is never obvious. You can’t anticipate his charts. He stays away from the eighth rest-dotted quarter routine. His whole rhythmic conception – the way everything falls – his use of space – it’s so beautiful from a drummer’s standpoint.\(^\text{177}\)

In an interview with Rayburn Wright, Jones briefly discussed his writing process stating, “I get a general conception, not a total picture, but an idea of a focus or direction in which I want to go. Then I start gathering the things around me that will probably help me in that direction.”\(^\text{178}\) Jones’s organization of linear motion, chromaticism, angularity, and motivic development in his compositions and improvisations are significant elements that contribute to the spontaneity of his musical phrases. The following examples exemplify Jones’s unique ability to conjure various melodic devices in his musical creations.

Compositions

The lyricism of Jones’s improvisational style is evident in all of his compositions and arrangements, and the tuneful melody cited in Example 29 is typical of the diverse contours, natural rhythms, and comfortable flow in his linear writing. Chord alterations and upper extensions often colored Jones’s melodies and vertical sonorities (measure 4

\(^\text{177}\) Gitler, “Thad’s Thing,” 18.
Jones’s arrangement of the “All of Me” melody is completely enhanced as compared to the original melody written by Gerald Marks as shown in Example 29. Jones demonstrates his melodic conception through his unique ability to combine linear motion and angularity in the structure of a melody while maintaining a strong sense of swing. In the first two measures, Jones spanned a registral space of nearly two octaves, which is fairly unexpected in the construction of melodies.

Ex. 29: Mixture of melodic devices in “All of Me,” mm. 1-8

Example 30 and Example 31 provide additional models that demonstrate Jones’s ability to incorporate a combination of varying melodic devices. Jones’s composition “Little Pixie II” was originally composed and arranged for the Count Basie Orchestra and later adapted for the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra. A recording can be heard on the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra album, *Thad Jones & Mel Lewis Orchestra: Live At The Village Vanguard*. Mark Stryker provides an imaginative depiction of Jones’s compositional style in reference to the live recording of “Little Pixie”:

The opening-night performance of ‘The Little Pixie’ defines Jones’ art. It’s a simple form: a 32-bar “I Got Rhythm” – derived tune in A-flat transformed into a symphony of melody and swing. It starts with a burst of muted brass suspended in mid-air. Saxophones announce the jabbing theme, heavily syncopated, sparkling

---

180 Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra, *Thad Jones & Mel Lewis: Live at the Village Vanguard* [1967], LP, Solid State, SS-60439.
like pixie dust. Three scampering ensemble choruses follow as reeds and brass (in cup mutes to start, then open) chase after each other in a game of anything-you-can-do-I-can-do-better. They trade 16-bar phrases, then 8s, then 4s. The writing is virtuosic, filled with witty acrobatics, breathless triplets, and colorful chord extensions. Joyous swing is built into every bar. Harmonies bite with dissonance. Tension builds. Fingers fly. Emotions soar. Reeds and brass merge in a rocking climax. Wow!

The original melody of “I Got Rhythm” is simple and repetitive, which heavily contrasts the continuous stream of fresh melodic ideas displayed in the examples below (30 and 31). Example 31 is also excerpted from “Little Pixie.” Here, Jones applies a sequence in the brass section in measures 109-112 (Letter M).

Ex. 30: Mixture of melodic devices in “Little Pixie II,” mm. 45-54

Ex. 31: Mixture of melodic devices in “Little Pixie II,” mm. 109-112

\(^{181}\) Stryker, *Jazz From Detroit*, 159.
Example 32 offers an additional instance of Jones compositional style, showcasing his melodic conception through his continued mixture of melodic devices such as linear motion and angularity. The following example was revealed in Michael A. Rogers’ 2015 Ph.D. dissertation *Tonality & The Extended Common Practice in the Music of Thad Jones*:

An analysis of this fairly typical Thad Jones melody demonstrates a tendency for melodic “jaggedness” with conjunct motion also playing an important role. Not surprisingly, this type of angular melodic motion accompanied by stepwise movement characterizes Jones’s trumpet improvisations as well. As to whether Jones’s compositions fit the “conjunct melodic motion” criteria, the answer is ambivalent. Yes, conjunct motion plays a significant role, but disjunct motion seems to play an equally important role.\(^\text{182}\)

Rogers’s use of “jaggedness” refers to melodic phrases that move in the manner of skips or intervals of a third or more. Conjunction motion refers to a melodic phrase that is joined together by way of stepwise motion (i.e. minor or major second). The circled segments below are the only indications of repeated material that exist in sections A and B. Among the variety of fresh material that Jones implements in the saxophones and brass section, he finds clever methods of returning to the initial “scale in thirds pattern.” The pattern utilizes the E Aeolian scale and occurs three times within sections A and B. The material that precedes the scale in thirds pattern is altered by Jones on each occasion.

Thad Jones’s composition “Cherry Juice,” shown in Example 32 below, clearly demonstrates Michael Roger’s claim that Jones’s melodies are constructed by means of both jagged and conjunct motion. Jones balances the melodic structure with stepwise motion and skips, thus illustrating his spontaneous approach towards motivic/thematic development.

\(^{182}\) Rogers, *Tonality and the Extended Common Practice in the Music of Thad Jones*, 20.
Example 33 is extracted from the lead soprano melody in Jones’s composition “Greetings and Salutations,” a blues-based form with influences from funk and rock. While developing a repeated two-measure call-and-response motive, Jones applies a sequence modulation in measure 25 to accommodate the prevailing blues harmony. Subsequently, Jones responds to the repeated fragment in measures 21-28 with a contrasting interjection that includes instances of linear motion, varying intervals, and
chromaticism. Jones completes the phrase with a sustained note in the high saxophone register attached with a long fall.

Ex. 33: Mixture of melodic devices in “Greetings and Salutations,” mm. 21-31

Improvised Solos

In an interview with Eddie Daniels, former saxophonist and clarinetist with the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, Daniels offers his thoughts on Jones’s improvisational style:

Technically on the trumpet he [Thad] could play anything. His style of trumpet playing and the way he played through changes … he would play a group of fast notes, and then he’d be lyrical. He wouldn’t blow through the changes like Freddie [Hubbard] or any of the modern players that we idolize in the trumpet world. He’s [Thad] very … kind of different in that way in terms of the way he played lines.183

Modern bebop trumpet players are well known for approaching lines primarily with linear and horizontal motion based on scales and stepwise motion. Devices such as enclosures, voice leading, and change running are common among modern jazz musicians. Jones differed from modern players in that he not only integrated similar

183 Eddie Daniels, personal phone interview (Greeley, CO & Albuquerque, NM: 30 March 2020).
devices, but he unified his solos with unorthodox devices that are uncommon on the trumpet. Despite being self-taught, Jones attained great technical facility on the trumpet in his formative years and was previously referred to as a classical trumpet player. Jones recalls his early training in an interview with George Washington Shaw, Jr.:

> When I was learning the horn, I used to be referred to as a classical player. I had all the techniques down – double tonguing, triple tonguing – and I had to play most of the standard trumpet solos at that time. I think that part of it is necessary because it gives you a strong base from which to operate when you’re confronted with a technical problem.\(^{184}\)

Jones’s technical facility and his self-taught methodology in his formative years are factors that have contributed to his unique improvisational style. Jones had an extraordinary ability to maneuver through the entire register of the horn and spontaneously change the direction of his improvised lines. Jones’s approach of incorporating a mixture of melodic devices in addition to his creative imagination gave him the ability to continuously create new material that was innovative and thrilling to listeners. Harold Danko, pianist and former member of the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra and Quartet agrees:

> As a player, I think that it’s really important that people understand night to night was a thrill … when you heard him play something different … ‘I never heard him play that on trumpet before’ … ‘I never heard him play that line’ … ‘I never heard him play that before.’ That was always inspiring. That inspired us to look for something new. Look for something we haven’t played before.\(^{185}\)

Below are several examples of Jones’s improvised solos that comprise a mixture of his melodic devices. The stylistic traits found in the analyses of Jones’s improvised

---


\(^{185}\) Harold Danko, personal phone interview (Greeley, CO & Rochester, NY: 12 February 2020).
solos are also characteristic of his compositional style. The analyses give attention to the unification of the following melodic devices: linear motion, chromaticism, angularity, and motivic development.

Example 34 is extracted from the fourth chorus of Jones’s solo on “Bitty Ditty,” which can be heard on his debut album as a leader, *The Fabulous Thad Jones.* Jones’ solo provides a model of melodic continuity through the merging of multiple melodic devices in a cohesive manner. Jones’s initial formulation of short call-and-response phrases begins with large intervals. The wide intervals showcase Jones’s angular approach. The largest interval is shown in measure 40, where Jones leaps an interval of a twelfth. The subsequent phrases expand with subtle pitch variations, which illuminates the presence of sequential development occurring among the call-and-response phrases. Jones continues to showcase his diverse use of melodic devices with his application of large intervals and diatonic scalar passages blended with one another.

Ex. 34: Mixture of melodic devices in “Bitty Ditty,” mm. 36-47

---

186 Thad Jones, *The Fabulous Thad Jones* [1954], LP, Debut Records, DLP12.
Example 35 displays Jones’s unification of melodic devices in his solo on “Lady Luck.” The above example further illustrates Jones’s ability to apply variation and symmetry in his improvised phrase structures.

Jones had complete control of his horn and was never at a loss for melodic, rhythmic, or harmonic ideas; in fact, his creativity seemed to flow endlessly. In a personal interview with Dick Oatts, saxophonist and current professor at Temple University in Philadelphia, PA, he explains, “Thad used to take some amazing chances

---

that nobody writing wise or playing wise would take, that I knew." Jones’s solo on “Straight No Chaser,” displayed in Example 36, provides another instance of Jones’s approach to constructing melodies and highlights his innate chance-taking ability. It also demonstrates his thematic and compositional approach to improvising, which was a quality that made Jones an ideal partner for Thelonious Monk’s 1959 album Five By Monk By Five, which includes “Straight No Chaser.”

Ex. 36: Mixture of melodic devices in “Straight No Chaser,” mm. 24-37

In addition to the linear motion, repetition, call-and-response motives, and angularity, Jones incorporates chromaticism through grace note ornamentation in the

---

188 Dick Oatts, personal interview (Greeley, CO: 10 March 2020).
189 Stryker, Jazz From Detroit, 162.
190 Thelonious Monk, Five By Monk By Five [1959], LP, Riverside RLP12-305.
antecedent motives. This also generates strong usage of blues-based language. The expanded consequent motive beginning in measure 31 emphasizes Jones’s penetrating rhythmic conception, which is discussed in more detail in Section II of this chapter. Jones’s rhythmic complexity, joined with the integration of linear and intervallic motion, further validates his logical and technical facility. Jones’s symmetrical construction is one of his telling virtues. When he builds a solo, he has the natural ability to assimilate a continuous melody, which Leonard Feather asserts is the goal.\footnote{Leonard Feather, notes to Thad Jones, \textit{Detroit-New York Junction} (1956), LP, Blue Note BLP-1513.}

Humor

Thad Jones was known to animate his improvised solos, compositions, and arrangements with humorous melodic material. Jones’s use of humor and quirky melodies gained recognition after the release of the 1955 Count Basie Orchestra record \textit{April in Paris},\footnote{Count Basie, “April in Paris,” \textit{Count Basie and his Orchestra} [1955], CD, Verve P2 25575YH.} in which he quotes the popular nursery rhyme “Pop Goes the Weasel” at the onset of his improvised solo on the title track. By alluding to a well-known nursery rhyme, especially one that was commonly associated with a “jack in the box” (a popular children’s toy in the 1950s), Jones had the ability to conjure nostalgia and comedy through a recognizable melody.

Paul Berliner suggests that performers create jokes in their music by deliberately juxtaposing patterns that are incongruous, quoting a trite popular tune within a sophisticated solo or shifting a solo’s mood unexpectedly.\footnote{Berliner, \textit{Thinking In Jazz}, 258.} Leonard Bernstein describes humor in music as “something shocking, surprising, unexpected, absurd; it puts two
things together that do not belong together, which are essentially incongruous.\textsuperscript{194}

“Incongruous things are things that don’t make sense; and that’s how we get nonsense.”\textsuperscript{195} “Nonsense is the loveliest thing there is because it makes us laugh – and boy, nothing feels as good as laughing.”\textsuperscript{196} Jones used humor not only to evoke laughter, but also to establish group rapport and a sense of intimacy among his audiences and fellow musicians.

Humor in jazz moves beyond the comic production of musical incongruity to encompass a variety of artistic strategies, including wit, comedy, slapstick, irony, parody, and satire. It is also possible to manufacture musical humor in the form of accidental gaffes: mistimed entrances, misplaced notes, and other unintentional mistakes.\textsuperscript{197} Berliner proposes the notion that humor typically involves the deliberate distortion of particular musical elements and the stretching of the limits of form. Humor often allows an artist to operate temporarily outside of formal constraints before successfully returning to them, while teasing listener expectations in the process.\textsuperscript{198}

Jones’s musical style is often compared to the lighthearted and playful quality that pianist Thelonious Monk exudes in his music. Orrin Keepnews included a brief comparison of Jones and Monk in the liner notes of Monk’s 1959 album, \textit{Five By Monk By Five},\textsuperscript{199} where he indicated that Jones provides a “Monk-like” command of the art of

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{195} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{196} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{198} Berliner, \textit{Thinking In Jazz}, 257.
\textsuperscript{199} Thelonious Monk, \textit{Five By Monk By Five} [1959], LP, Riverside RLP12-305.
\end{flushleft}
bending a musical phrase.²⁰⁰ The term “Monk-like” is often associated with the following characteristics depicted by jazz historian Gabriel Solis:

… Monk was particularly good at a kind of fun or playfulness that came from incorporating and interpreting what he heard around him. I think Monk knew as much about convention as he did about unconvention. [He had] the knowledge of unconvention, the knowledge of mistakes, surprise, the unpredictable, the unforeseen …²⁰¹

Trumpeter Cecil Bridgewater attests to Jones’s Monk-like approach stating, “he [Thad] sounded like Monk playing the trumpet. You know the angular kind of things. The first time I heard Thad play the trumpet, I thought to myself – I’ve never heard anybody play like that.”²⁰²

Another musician that is associated with humor in music is trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie. Nicholas Walter Schroeder provides a synopsis of Gillespie’s method of incorporating humor in solo improvisations in his 2016 doctoral dissertation:

Quotation was an excellent method of communication with the audience, who can generally appreciate recognizable melodies amidst a flurry of bebop phrases. Dizzy Gillespie’s use of quotation also reveals a commitment to spontaneity in his solos, because rather than regurgitating the same tired licks over and over, he implemented a good deal of his lexicon in an unpredictable manner, which is critical to the spontaneous compositional nature of his improvisations.²⁰³

Gillespie’s implementation of humor was characteristic of his musical style and personality. It could be argued that Jones’s use of humor in his music was due in part to

²⁰⁰ Anonymous, notes to Thelonious Monk, Five By Monk By Five (1959), LP, Riverside RLP12-305.
his admiration of Gillespie. Jones discussed Gillespie’s influence on him in an interview with Bill Coss, stating, “Incidentally, I should say that Diz was more of an influence on me than anyone else, especially for his completeness and originality. Listening to Diz is always like reading a new book. He’s the complete trumpet player.” In a personal interview with Harold Danko, he discusses Jones’s strong infatuation with Gillespie stating that, “Thad revered Dizzy – he really did. Dizzy was probably as gracious, but you know Thad was probably his best disciple – he [Gillespie] would even call him that.”

In Paul Berliner’s book *Thinking In Jazz*, Arthur Rhames speaks about the historical tradition of quotations in jazz:

> The great players always give homage to their predecessors by recalling certain things that they did. They give it an appreciation and an understanding of the validity of their predecessors. Being able to quote from songs and solos is always part of a mature artist, because they’re aware of the contribution of others and its impact – how valid it is. Something that is really valid is timeless.

It is evident that Jones was heavily impacted by Gillespie’s stylistic contributions. Gillespie’s infamous bandstand humor and quotations showed Jones how to interject personality into his solos. Selected quotes that have been identified in solo improvisations performed by Thad Jones include: “Habanera” from Bizet’s *Carmen*, “Chattanooga-Choo-Choo,” “Pop Goes the Weasel,” “Sailor’s Hornpipe,” “Swing on a Star,” “Taking a Chance On Love,” “Tea For Two,” “Do You Know the Muffin Man,” and “Turkey and the Straw.”

---

204 Coss, “Horns of Plenty,” 40.
206 Berliner, *Thinking In Jazz*, 103–104.
207 Jones, *Study in Thad: The Improvisational Solo Style of Thad Jones*, 36.
Jones’s unorthodox approach of implementing angularity in addition to the spontaneity of his musical phrases produced many idiosyncratic melodies that were playful, quirky, and light-hearted. Jones experimented with subtle melodic variations that were unexpected yet delightful. More specifically, Jones altered elements such as articulation, rhythm, dynamics, and inflections to inject humor into his music. Composer Mike Carubia explains that “Thad used his ‘quirky’ melodic lines as primary melodies, countermelodies, backgrounds for solos, and ensemble passages.” Jones’s quirky approach, balanced with more conventional musical practices, generates a humorous effect that is engaging and entertaining to listeners. Below are several examples that demonstrate Jones’s use of quotations and quirky melodies that create humor in his compositions and solo improvisations.

**Compositions**

Ex. 37: Humor in “Tip-Toe,” mm. 1-8

Example 37 illustrates Jones’s use of humor in the main theme of “Tip-Toe,” presented in the saxophone section. Jones is successful in integrating humor by employing several techniques. First, he utilizes the soprano saxophone as the top voice in the melody. In a 1972 issue of *Crescendo International*, Jones explained the role of the

---

208 Mike Carubia, “Thad Jones – A Forgotten Giant?” *JAZZed*, January/February 2014, 39.
soprano lead line in a big band, jokingly stating “you had to be funny, somehow if you played a soprano.” The soprano saxophone produces a high-pitched squeaky duck-like sound that easily resembles a character in a cartoon. The high tessitura of the soprano blended with the timbre of the alto, tenor, and baritone saxophone creates a unique sound quality. The balance between light and crisp staccato articulation intermixed with swing articulation contributes to the humorous effect as well. While the rhythmic structure is simple, rhythmic displacement causes a spontaneous, thrilling effect. The exaggerated swells in measures 6-8 contribute to the animated character of the main melody. The brush work and light touch of the hi-hat on beats two and four, along with the graceful high-note interjections in the piano that nearly resemble the sound of bells, support the humorous light-hearted feeling in Jones’s composition. Lastly, the two-feel in the upright bass captures the description of the tune’s title.

The comical melody exhibited in Jones’s composition “Little Pixie II” uses similar musical devices shown in the previous example. Syncopation, exaggerated dynamics, a balance of straight-eighth and swing articulation/phrasing, and muted brass all contribute to the amusement of Jones’s well-known composition “Little Pixie II” shown in Example 38.

![Ex. 38: Humor in “Little Pixie II,” mm. 1-8](image)

---

209 Tompkins, “The Thad Jones Story,” 16.
Improvised Solos

Example 39 and 40 below illustrates Jones’s use of quoted material within his improvised solos. The “Habanera” quote displayed in Example 39 in particular, demonstrates Jones’s influence of Dizzy Gillespie. The quote is taken almost directly from Gillespie’s improvised solo on Tadd Dameron’s “Hot House,” which was recorded the year prior in 1953.

Ex. 39: Humor and quote of “Habanera” in “What Is This Thing Called Love?” mm. 40-44

Ex. 40: Humor and quote of “Turkey and the Straw” and “Chattanooga” in “I Can’t Get Started”

Summary

Through the analysis of Jones’s melodic conception, it is evident that he has an innate storytelling ability. In part, the metaphor of storytelling suggests the dramatic molding of creations to include movement through successive events transcending particular repetitive, formal aspects of a composition/improvisation and features distinct

---

210 Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker, The Quintet: Jazz at Massey Hall [1953], LP, Debut DLP2.

211 The full transcription is not included in Appendix B. A recording can be heard on The Fabulous Thad Jones [1954], LP, Debut Records, DLP12.
musical material. Jazz historian Paul Berliner suggests that the jazz community praises such attributes as the suspenseful development of ideas and the dramatic shaping of sound. Berliner further adds to this notion:

These [storytelling attributes] represent values related to those described earlier; the artist’s ability to tell personal stories and to convey emotion through music. Trumpeter Thad Jones likens the experience of listening to Roy Eldridge’s solos to “being caught up in a thrilling mystery novel that you can’t put down.”

It is clear that Jones was influenced by Eldridge’s ability to convey stories in his music. Jones validates this through the melodic devices implemented in his compositions, arrangements, and improvised solos. Saxophonist Dick Oatts expressed his admiration of Jones in a personal interview:

When Thad would play “Body and Soul,” “Deep Purple,” and “I Love You,” it would always be like we can hardly play … we [members of the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra] would just listen to him and be mesmerized by him. He was so deeply rooted in taking a chance and having the freedom and the trust and the skill set … and to be able to follow through. It was like you were a little kid and he was telling you a story.

Jones’s musical voice is highly distinctive compared to others. Based on the analysis of his compositions and solo improvisations included in this research, it is evident that Jones’s palette of melodic material was infinite. Recycled vocabulary and cliché phrases are rarely found in Jones’s music. His unpredictable and spontaneous quality, matched with his storytelling ability, creates beautiful and intricate melodies that are captivating for any listener. Jones’s compositions and improvised melodies display recurring logic, emotion, expression, technical skill, and freedom in a manner that was natural and uncontrived.

212 Berliner, Thinking In Jazz, 201.
213 Ibid., 262.
214 Ibid.
215 Dick Oatts, personal interview (Greeley, CO: 10 March 2020).
Section II: Rhythmic Conception

Much like his melodic conception, Thad Jones was equally unpredictable in his rhythmic approach from both an improvisational and compositional standpoint. He utilized a seemingly endless collection of rhythmic vocabulary. Jones’s conception of rhythm contributed to his ability to create fascinating melodic variations and humorous effects in his music. His technical facility on the cornet also allowed him to maneuver through complex rhythms through unconventional means. Jones frequently employed rapid sixteenth notes and flurries of thirty-second notes in his music. These uses were often abrupt, unexpected, and jaw-dropping.

Jones’s music swung very hard and encompassed a sense of joy that was undeniable. He discussed aspects of his rhythmic conception in a 1979 interview with George Washington Shaw, Jr.:

One thing I began to realize is that the true impact of the band is not on the syncopated beats. [Beats]1-2-3-4 is probably the strongest rhythmic force in the world. When a band syncopates it dissipates the impact and reinforces with something else. Like the drummer will have to reinforce the horn passages, because by separating 1 and 2, you have minimized the force. I realized how much more simple, but effective the true forceful acts were.216

While Jones considered downbeats to have a stronger impact than syncopated rhythms, drummer Mel Lewis explained that Jones nevertheless incorporated syncopation as part of his rhythmic development. Lewis offered his perspective of Jones’s senses of rhythm in an article published by the New York Times, which was released on the day of Jones’s death in 1986:

He was a natural writer, self-taught. He wrote like he played, which means he was different. He had a unique sense of rhythm. He wrote the rhythm into the music.

216 Shaw Jr., Relationships Between Experimental Factors and Percepts of Selected Professional Musicians in the United States Who Are Adept at Jazz Improvisation, 636.
It's hard to explain. He didn't write squared-off music. There was a lot of syncopation, and his harmony – he used special voicings that was almost impossible for anybody to copy. Very difficult to play, but when played correctly, was absolutely fantastic to listen to.\(^{217}\)

Although Jones considered downbeats to be the strongest rhythmic force, it is evident in his compositions and solo improvisations that he tended to favor a balance of both downbeat-centric rhythms and syncopation. Jones’s configuration of simple and complex rhythms gifted his music with interest and excitement. His improvised solos and soli writing, in particular, encompassed a spontaneous quality as a result of his diverse rhythmic approach. Jones refrained from employing obvious rhythmic patterns by utilizing his vast rhythmic palette. He had the unique ability to zig-zag his way through rhythms and was inventive in his approach of manipulating meter and employing gripping subdivisions. Saxophonist John Coltrane, who worked closely with Jones’s younger brother Elvin, described Elvin’s conception of rhythm as follows:

> I especially like his ability to mix and juggle rhythms. He’s always aware of what’s happening. I guess you can say he has the ability to be in three places at the same time. [Elvin] Jones implied the basic rhythm in a highly elliptical manner, yet he always swung furiously.\(^{218}\)

While this quote is referencing Jones’s younger brother Elvin, it is certainly applicable to Thad Jones’s conception of rhythm; perhaps this is because the two brothers performed together regularly at the Blue Bird Club in Detroit for two years, six nights a week. Jones had an innate ability to meld various rhythms, weaving them together in an inventive


way. This energized his music and allowed his rhythmic and melodic content to propel
forward. Trombonist John Mosca shared his thoughts on Jones’s rhythmic conception:

The rhythmic content of his writing is unique and very sophisticated, just as it was
in his playing. It all works together and it’s hard to isolate one thing. It’s melodic
and, at the same time, so dense harmonically. And it happens in this matrix of
great swing and rhythm. He also writes a lot of “drum work” for the horns; so
much of what we play is like drum fills. For me, this is the greatest book of music
in the last half of the twentieth century.219

In a 1994 interview with WKCR in New York, Detroit pianist Tommy Flanagan,
who worked closely with Thad Jones in the 1950s and 1960s, offered his thoughts on
Jones’s rhythmic conception:

Well, it’s so rhythmic. The melodies are kind of like [Thelonious] Monk’s
things. They have so much syncopation in the melody. If you play that, you’re
well on your way to being able to construct your own style. The music is so
strong that it just comes through. I mean, if you play one chorus of “Lush Life,”
that’s all you actually need to play. You don’t need to improvise on that. It’s all
in the composition. It’s the same with Thad’s pieces, except for he has more
rhythmic things. It just calls for you to play more, get into that rhythm.220

Jones had an individual rhythmic sense. It is extremely supple and is combined
with his sophisticated attention to details of space and time.221 Jones weaved together an
assortment of rhythms that no one could possibly predict. The rhythmic conception found
in Jones’s compositions and improvised solos is comprised of the following devices:
syncopation, rhythmic forward motion, rhythmic and phrasing development, playful
triplet lines, double time, flurries, and runs. The analysis of such devices among Jones’s
compositions and solos will support the understanding of his total rhythmic conception.

219 Lisik and Allen, 50 years at the Village Vanguard, 84.
220 Ted Panken, “For Tommy Flanagan’s 83rd Birthday Anniversary, A 1994 Interview on
WKCR: November 20, 1994,” https://tedpanken.wordpress.com/2013/03/16/for-tommy-
flanagan-s-83rd-birthday-anniversary-a-1994-interview-on-wkcr/ (November 24, 1994),
Syncopation

Ken Rattenbury, author of *Duke Ellington, Jazz Composer*, describes syncopation as being the dominant element in black music – blues, ragtime, and jazz.

Rattenbury further defines the term syncopation as follows:

1. The momentary displacement by some precise degree of anticipation or delay of the regular or normal accent of a piece of music, into a position between the pulses.223

2. The occasion when a strong accent is brought in where a weak one is expected.224

3. A displacement, in the manner of a rhythmic contradiction of either the beat or the normal accent of the musical phrase – although the underlying, original metric pulse of the music, as indicated by its time signature, remains recognizable.225

Ex. 41: “Fundamental Types of Syncopation”226

Rattenbury further delineates the term by offering explanations of three “fundamental types of syncopation”: mid-beat, mid-bar, and cross-bar. Refer to Example 41 above. Type A is described as mid-beat because the strong accents appear between the basic pulses indicated by the time signature of the music. It is marked as untied because

---

223 Ibid., 58–59.
224 Ibid.
225 Ibid.
226 Ibid.
the effect is contained within the first two beats of the measure. Type B occurs mid-bar with the final eighth note in the first half of the measure, which is tied to the first note in the second half of the measure. Type C displays the final eighth note of one measure tied across the bar line to the first note of the measure that follows.\textsuperscript{227} These “fundamental types of syncopation” are regularly employed in the music of Duke Ellington. Thad Jones revered Ellington and was significantly influenced by his music. Jones even asserted that Ellington influenced his writing more than anyone else.\textsuperscript{228} Longtime member of the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, John Mosca, discusses the significant impact Ellington had on Jones:

\begin{quote}
Thad was very similar to Duke Ellington, except for the fact that he was a real bebopper. That’s one of the major differences between them. Duke comes out of a stride piano tradition as a player and I think he also had a lot of classical ears too. The fact that Thad was a bebopper – I think that was a big difference in terms of how he heard the music, but he revered Duke and you can hear how his rhythmic and harmonic palette kind of came out of … just grew out of that. And the idea that Duke wrote for the guys in his band was something that Thad jumped on.\textsuperscript{229}
\end{quote}

Rattenbury’s “fundamental types of syncopation” is utilized for the purposes of quantifying Jones’s method of syncopation found in his compositions and improvised solos. The musical examples displayed below include brackets with the letters “A,” “B,” or “C,” which indicate areas where specific methods of rhythmic syncopation take place in the music. To reiterate, letter A represents a “mid-beat” syncopation, letter B represents a “mid-bar” syncopation, and letter C represents a “cross-bar” syncopation.

\textsuperscript{227} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{228} Coss, “Horns Of Plenty,” 40.
\textsuperscript{229} John Mosca, personal phone interview (Greeley, CO & Wayne, New Jersey: 22 April 2020).
Compositions

Ex. 42: Syncopation in “Kids Are Pretty People,” mm. 89-92

Ex. 43: Syncopation in “A – That’s Freedom,” mm. 62-70

Ex. 44: Syncopation in “Us,” mm. 59-65

Improvised Solos

Ex. 45: Syncopation in “I Mean You,” mm. 3-5
Pianist and composer Hal Galper explains the concept of rhythmic forward motion in his book, *Forward Motion: From Bach to Bop, A Corrective Approach to Jazz Phrasing*. Galper proposes the notion that rhythmic forward motion is dependent on the strong and weak beats of a measure. He explains that beats 1 and 3 in a measure of 4/4 time are considered strong beats in a measure and beats 2 and 4 are considered weak beats in a measure. Galper defines beats 1 and 3 as “release beats” and beats 2 and 4 as “tension beats.” He further suggests that when emphasis is given to the tension beats (beats 2 and 4), music tends to swing much harder as compared to the alternative. When

---

emphasis is given to tension beats, a sense of anticipation towards the next chord or
rhythm creates a sense of forward motion.

Thad Jones often utilizes periods of rhythmic forward motion in his compositions
and solo performances. A common method of rhythmic forward motion Jones employs in
his music involves starting motives and phrases on tension beats. Jones often creates
forward motion by interrupting a phrase he has already begun. In other words, he
abruptly begins new phrases before officially completing preliminary phrases. This
method of rhythmic forward motion contributes to the spontaneity with which Jones is
often associated. Just when a listener thinks they might anticipate where Jones is taking a
melodic or rhythmic gesture, he unexpectedly shifts into something completely different;
creating a brief moment of tension and instability. The musical examples below illustrate
Jones’s method of rhythmic forward motion found in his compositions and improvised
solos.

**Compositions**

Example 48 is extracted from Jones’s composition “Once Around,” the piece that
begins the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra’s debut album *Presenting the Thad Jones –
Mel Lewis and the Jazz Orchestra.* Thad Jones’s introductory melody begins with a call-and-
response phrase in the brass section. The second half of the phrase begins on beat 4 of
measure 2. Jones effectively generates forward motion by giving emphasis to the tension
beat, which creates a strong sense of anticipation. Arrows pointed downward in the
diagram below indicate areas where Jones employs emphasis on tension beats.

---

231 Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra, *Presenting the Thad Jones – Mel Lewis and the Jazz Orchestra* [1966], LP, Solid State, SS 18003.
The phrase structure and placement of rhythms in the opening “Once Around” motive creates a subtle illusion of multiple time signatures taking place. Though Jones’s composition is completely written in 4/4, it is possible to perceive the introductory brass melody as one measure of 4/4, two measures of 3/4, one measure of 2/4, and another measure of 4/4. Example 49 demonstrates how the “Once Around” melody would be written if it were actually notated in multiple time signatures.

While the primary purpose of this example is to demonstrate Jones’s use of rhythmic forward motion, it is worth considering the subtle polymetric effect occurring in “Once Around.” Paul Berliner explains the concept of “polymetric invention” in Thinking in Jazz:

In its most basic form, polymetric invention creates a recurring cycle of rhythmic counterpoint. Within the same time span, the basic beats of different meters cross over one another, creating syncopation and temporarily increasing the music’s instability and tension. They then coincide with one another, resolving the tension.232

---

232 Berliner, Thinking In Jazz, 153.
The above example is reminiscent of Jones’s arrangement of “I Get A Kick Out of You,” recorded by trumpeter Clifford Brown and drummer Max Roach on their 1955 album *Brown and Roach Incorporated*\(^{233}\) and previously discussed in Section I: Melodic Conception. Jones’s arrangement of “I Get A Kick Out of You” incorporates time signatures of 4/4, 3/4, and 2/4, producing a similar time-feel to the main “Once Around” melody.

Example 50 is another instance of rhythmic forward motion found in “Once Around.” In measures 73-88, Jones continues to create forward motion by continuing to accentuate the tension beats, this time with beat 2. The rests between phrases provide the opportunity for the drummer to support instances of forward motion by responding with lively energetic fills.

Ex. 50: Rhythmic forward motion in “Once Around,” mm. 73-88

Jones’s rhythmic conception in “Don’t Git Sassy,” is approached in a similar fashion to “Once Around.” Example 51 continues to illustrate Jones’s attention to tension beats. Again, the rests between phrases offer spaces for the rhythm section to interact with the forward motion occurring in the horn melody, thus contributing to the overall energy and rhythmic drive.

Ex. 51: Rhythmic forward motion in “Don’t Git Sassy,” mm. 17-24

The up-tempo opening line, shown in Example 52, which is orchestrated in the trumpets, two flutes, piccolo, clarinet, and tenor sax in Jones’s composition “Fingers,” offers excitement, energy, and displays Jones’s ability to provide linear dexterity in his melodies. This example is another instance where Jones employs rhythmic forward motion in a composition. The initial phrase unexpectedly merges into the start of a new phrase motive in measure 4. A slur connects the first two phrases together, which obscures the ending of the first motive and the beginning of the second.

Ex. 52: Rhythmic forward motion in “Fingers,” mm. 1-11

**Improvised Solos**

Many examples of Jones’s method of rhythmic forward motion can also be heard in his improvised solos. Example 53 provides a fragment of Jones’s solo on “Let’s,” from
The Magnificent Thad Jones, Volume 3. In measure 9, Jones interrupts the start of his initial motive with his emphasis of the tension note on beat 4.

Ex. 53: Rhythmic forward motion in “Let’s,” mm. 8-11

Jones’s solo on “Zec,” in Example 54 offers a similar paradigm to the previous example. Jones again emphasizes the tension beat (measure 22) and produces a surprise effect by disrupting the flow of the initial motive.

Ex. 54: Rhythmic forward motion in “Zec,” mm. 21-24

Ex. 55: Rhythmic forward motion in “What Is This Thing?” mm. 9-28

[234] Thad Jones, The Magnificent Thad Jones Vol. 3 [1957], LP, Blue Note, BLP 1546.
Example 55 above and Example 56 below derive from Jones’s solo on his contrafact of the well-known Cole Porter tune, “What Is This Thing Called Love?,” which he cleverly titled “What Is This Thing?” A recording can be found on Thad Jones and Mel Lewis’s live quartet record, simply titled *Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Quartet*. The quartet includes pianist Harold Danko and bassist Rufus Reid. Jones creates several instances of rhythmic forward motion by continuing to accentuate tension beats.

Ex. 56: Rhythmic forward motion in “What Is This Thing?” mm. 73-90

Notice that the examples of rhythmic forward motion analyzed in Jones’s improvised solos and compositions directly influence his melodic material. In other words, Jones’s rhythmic conception forms the underpinning of successful melodic excursions. His use of rhythmic forward motion certainly contributes to the spontaneity and excitement of his music.

---

235 Thad Jones/Mel Lewis, *Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Quartet* [1977], LP, Artists House AH3.
Rhythmic and Phrasing Development

Jones approaches rhythmic and phrasing development in a similar manner to motivic development in his music. He often constructed short rhythmic motives and developed them by adding decorative variations and embellishments to the original rhythmic structure. Jones took simple rhythmic ideas and transformed them into stimulating phrases that resulted in positive responses from audiences and listeners alike.

In Dave Lisik and Eric Arlen’s book, *50 Years at the Village Vanguard: Thad Jones, Mel Lewis and the Vanguard Orchestra*, pianist Jim McNeely discussed the significance of Jones’s rhythmic conception:

> The rhythmic element of Thad’s writing was one of the things I took with me when I started to write big-band music. When I wrote the shout chorus for the chart, “Thad,” the model was the shout chorus in “A – That’s Freedom,” which still sends a chill up my spine when I hear the band play it. Every time the band plays that shout chorus, the audience applauds at the end of it. My goal was to write a shout chorus where the audience would do that. And it happens half the time, so I guess I halfway succeeded in my goal. But just to create something as exciting as Thad did, that was my goal in that shout chorus.\(^{236}\)

> While Jones had the ability of employing a variety of rhythmic devices in his music, he also had the ability of building off one idea and developing it into something much more. When it came to rhythmic decisions for the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, Jones always kept drummer Mel Lewis in mind. John Mosca briefly discusses Jones’s rhythmic development process:

> The development of Thad’s music was fairly complex. The drummer had to be a guy who was dedicated to making music, not banging the drums – and that was Mel all over. Mel would create this space for all these things to happen. That was a significant thing that freed Thad to develop more. This was the box that Count Basie needed his arrangers to stay in, that Thad needed to get out of. I think that’s

---

\(^{236}\) Lisik and Allen, *50 years at the Village Vanguard*, 150.
one of the reasons that it went that way. That Basie didn’t end up using those charts.237

Lewis’s presence on the drums gave Jones the freedom to compose complex and unconventional rhythmic phrases. He knew that he had a drummer who had a complete awareness of the music and who thought in a similar manner, thus allowing Jones to be more adventurous when it came to the rhythmic and phrasing development in his compositions. Mel Lewis discussed his method of complementing Jones’s phrasing development in a 1978 interview:

I think like a horn player. I like to cross bar lines, to think meters without thinking anything other than 4/4. I sort of think like Thad. He’ll start phrases in the middle of nowhere, continue them on through, and end up where you’re supposed to. You really have to have a very good awareness of where you are.238

Jones avoids monotony by incorporating creative variation in his rhythmic choices. This helps to support the energy and forward motion in his music, which results in highly effective phrases. Jones experimented with a range of subtle to complex rhythmic variations in his compositions and solos.

**Compositions**

Example 57 represents only a fraction of the rhythmic sophistication that is taking place in the shout chorus of Jones’s arrangement on “A – That’s Freedom.” Jones’s trumpet melody begins with a simple rhythmic motive involving consecutive eighth notes. Jones repeats, displaces, and varies the figure by applying different pitches to the rhythmic template (measures 65, 69, 74, 76, 81). He provides contrast and variation by

---

expanding the initial motive. At times Jones chooses to begin or end phrases with the rhythmic motive, thus highlighting his approach of rhythmic displacement. Jones alternates between off-beat and on-beat emphasis, causing a scheme of tension and release that inevitably creates a strong sense of forward motion. Additionally, Jones generates a call-and-response motive that seems to imitate speechlike dialogue between two people. The trumpet motive, combined with the trombones, saxophones, and rhythm section, creates an unquestionable feeling of excitement and thrill.

Ex. 57: Rhythmic and phrasing development in “A – That’s Freedom,” mm. 65-84

Example 58 below derives from Jones’s composition “The Farewell,” which is part of a suite dedicated to Louis Armstrong, who is arguably the single most original and influential instrumentalist in jazz. *Suite for Pops* was commissioned by trumpeter Joe

\[\text{Ex. 58: Rhythmic and phrasing development in “A – That’s Freedom,” mm. 65-84} \]

239 Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, *Suite for Pops* [1975], LP, Horizon A&M SP-701.
Newman, who worked closely with Jones in the Count Basie Orchestra. Newman asked Jones to compose something appropriate to commemorate the passing of the jazz giant. The suite originally included three movements (“Meetin’ Place,” “The Summary,” and “The Farewell”). Three other pieces were later added to an updated edition. Jones shared his feelings behind his notable suite:

The whole idea of the “Suite” was to have something tangible. A retrospective of a man who Joe Newman and I loved and revered. A good deal of time and effort went into this. He [Louis Armstrong] made me happy, made my foot tap, my head nod, my fingers snap, and my lips smile. And you know what? He was pure and honest. Just simply Louis.

Jones employs many rhythmic devices in “The Farewell,” that effectively reflect the joyful and bouncy spirit Armstrong was known to possess. Jones utilizes a strong triplet feel in the form of a fast shuffle. The quick tempo makes for a danceable groove.

Example 58 is extracted from the full ensemble shout chorus in measures 152-169 (Letter J). Rhythmic and phrasing development is evident in Jones’s work. He continues to provide variation and extension to rhythmic motives. For instance, in measures 152-153, Jones introduces a simple motive and reproduces a variant of the motive in measure 154. The varied motive is compressed from the original. Subsequently in measures 156-159, Jones continues to add variation, this time extending the motive. Additionally, Jones alternates the start and end of phrases with syncopation and downbeat emphasis, providing an element of surprise. These rhythmic elements contribute to the strong rhythmic momentum and vitality of Jones’s shout chorus writing.

Arnold Jay Smith, notes to Thad Jones, *Suite for Pops* (1975), LP, Horizon A&M SP-701.

Ibid.
Ex. 58: Rhythmic and phrasing development in “The Farewell,” mm. 152-169

**Improvised Solos**

Extracted fragments from Jones’s improvised solos validate the notion that his approach to rhythmic and phrasing development is transferred between both his composition and solo performance style. The examples below provide scenarios where Jones employs rhythmic development devices also found in his compositions and arrangements.

Example 59 derives from Jones’s first solo chorus on “Blue Jelly.” Jones commences his solo by utilizing an almost entire pick-up measure. His first statement motive is scalar and involves triplet rhythms and brief instances of syncopation. Jones develops his initial motive by repeating it twice more. Each time the motive is repeated, Jones displaces the rhythm, reassigns pitches to the original rhythmic template, and adds
short rhythmic extensions. The first nine measures follow a call-and-response pattern, similar to the examples found in the composition analyses. In measures 9 and 10, Jones employs a repeated sixteenth note turn figure that takes the form of a sequence. He descends using an ornamented effect that involves a half-valve/note-bending technique. Jones’s use of ornamentation and inflection is discussed in more detail in “Section IV: Sound Conception.”

Ex. 59: Rhythmic and phrasing development in “Blue Jelly,” mm. 0-16

Example 60 showcases a segment of Jones’s improvised solo on the Sonny Rollins composition, “I Got It Thad.” His first solo chorus begins with a repeated two-beat motive. Jones varies each motive by displacing the rhythm on each occasion, creating a feeling of rhythmic instability. Jones abandons his initial motive and
introduces a contrasting figure in measure 7. The new four-beat motive employs an ascending scalar line that utilizes a combination of sixteenth notes and eighth note rhythms. Similar to previous examples, Jones finds a balance between off-beat and on-beat emphases. Jones’s first motive begins on downbeats, whereas his second motive primarily begins on up-beats. He continues to develop his second motive by employing variation through rhythmic displacement and by expanding the final recurrence of the motive.

Ex. 60: Rhythmic and phrasing development in “I Got It Thad,” mm. 1-11

Ex. 61: Rhythmic and phrasing development in “Straight No Chaser,” mm. 73-78
Ex. 62: Rhythmic and phrasing development in “I Love You,” mm. 32-41

Examples 61 and 62 offer two additional instances of rhythmic development discovered in Jones’s improvisation. Each excerpt displays Jones’s method of employing rhythmic displacement, variation, syncopation, and repetition. Through the repetition and manipulation of simple rhythmic motives, Jones exemplifies his continued method of rhythmic invention.

**Playful Triplet Lines**

As part of his rhythmic conception, Jones often assimilated playful triplet lines in his written and improvised music. The term “playful” denotes the lively, imaginative, and animated manner with which he weaved together duple and triple meter rhythms. Jones developed unique strategies of combining eighth note triplet figures among the many simple and complex rhythms available in his advanced rhythmic vocabulary. Drummer Charlie Persip offered his perspective on the effectiveness of playful triplet rhythms in jazz:

… the triplet feeling in rhythm … makes you relax. It makes you hold back; you can’t rush triplets. But the duple part of the rhythm is like marches, “one and two and” or “one and two and three and four and.” That kind of division of time makes you move ahead, forge ahead … That’s the push of the rhythm. And that’s why it so nice when you combine those two feelings. Then you get a complete rhythm that marches and still relaxes.242

242 Berliner, *Thinking In Jazz*, 153.
Persip’s description of playful triplet rhythms is a perfect portrayal of Jones’s approach. Jones’s method of mentally superimposing triple meter over duple meter creates a “tug-of-war” effect that makes his music sound complex and relaxed at the same time. In other words, the constant pulling and pushing of time causes moments of tension and resolution, creating a feeling of playfulness. His ability to shift between meters so quickly contributes to the unpredictability of his musical lines. Jones often ends triplet lines abruptly with an accented quarter note on a downbeat or an unexpected rest. He often adds interest and playfulness in his triplet lines by decorating notes with varied articulations and embellishments. Additionally, Jones incorporates triplet passages comprising of many melodic devices that identify with his unique musical style. Such devices include linear motion, chromaticism, and angularity. The combination of these devices along with Jones’s rhythmic “tug-of-war” effect produces unconventional, yet danceable melodies that are thrilling and adventuresome. Below are several examples of playful triplet lines existent in Jones’s compositions and solo transcriptions.

**Compositions**

Example 63 contains a playful triplet line in Jones’s composition “The Waltz You ‘Swang’ For Me,” recorded on the 1969 Solid State album *Monday Night.* Jones incorporates a chromatic descending triplet figure in the saxophone melody. He ends the phrase with an abrupt quarter note on beat 3 of measure 80.

Ex. 63: Playful triplet lines in “The Waltz You ‘Swang’ For Me,” mm. 79-81

---

Another example can be observed in the saxophone countermelody in Jones’s composition “Don’t Git Sassy,” shown in Example 64. This was recorded as part of the 1967 album *Thad Jones & Mel Lewis: Live at the Village Vanguard*. Jones begins a triplet-based motive in measure 97. He continually displaces the rhythm and assigns what seems to be random pitches to the original triplet motive, which displays his approach of rhythmic evolution. Jones demonstrates his method of superimposing multiple meters. Segments where Jones employs duple or triple meter are labeled with a “D” or “T.”

Ex. 64: Playful triplet lines in “Don’t Git Sassy,” mm. 97-110

Example 65 below demonstrates another example of Jones’s varied use of triplet passages on his arrangement of “A – That’s Freedom.” Jones’s application of triplet figures provides contrast to the more common duple meter figures.

---

244 Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra, *Thad Jones & Mel Lewis: Live at the Village Vanguard* [1967], LP, Solid State, SS-60439.
Ex. 65: Playful triplet lines in “A – That’s Freedom,” mm. 73-80

Ex. 66: Playful triplet lines in “Tip-Toe,” mm. 59-90

Jones’s composition “Tip Toe,” shown in Example 66, provides an extended model of Jones’s duple and triple meter “tug-of-war” effect in the trombone and bass soli.

In addition to Jones’s continued application of weaving in and out of duple and triple
meter, the example also displays many other stylistic characteristics that are attributed to his melodic and rhythmic conception. Instances of syncopation, rhythmic forward motion, and angularity are present in Jones’s soli, generating a challenging feat for the trombones and bass. The rhythmic diversity and lack of repeated material illustrates Jones’s unique ability of summoning fresh material.

The provided musical examples only showcase a few instances of Jones’s use of playful triplet rhythms in his compositions. Through the analysis of additional Thad Jones compositions and arrangements, further discoveries of his innovative approach can certainly be made.

**Improvished Solos**

The examples below demonstrate Jones’s approach of integrating playful triplet lines in his improvised solos. These musical excerpts continue to showcase Jones’s ability to seamlessly shift between duple and triple meter, and to create moments of rhythmic tension and resolution. Jones’s skill in maintaining playful triplet passages for long durations is also exhibited.

Ex. 67: Playful triplet lines in “Quittin’ Time,” mm. 28-31

Ex. 68: Playful triplet lines in “I Got It Thad (And That Ain’t Bad),” mm. 20-23
As a part of Jones’s rhythmic conception, he often created climactic events in his music by gradually increasing the rhythmic density and texture. Rhythmic density refers to the quantity of notes within a specific time period. Jones’s ability to apply complex rhythmic motives is due in large part to his technical proficiency as a cornetist. In his formative years, Jones spent hours each day practicing fundamental techniques from the
Arban’s: Complete Conservatory Method for Trumpet;\textsuperscript{245} arguably the most widely used pedagogical method for students of the trumpet, cornet, and other brass instruments. The original edition was published by Jean Baptiste Arban sometime before 1859, and to this day it remains a common source for individual development. Arban’s contains hundreds of exercises that are designed to develop technique and to address other challenges that are associated with playing the trumpet and cornet. Jones reminisces on his experiences of persistently practicing the Arban’s exercises in his formative years:

I felt that, if I didn’t acquire the techniques required to play the trumpet, I’d never be able to express the things I thought about. I applied myself very diligently to practice seven to eight hours a day. I went from cover to cover of the Arban book two or three times. I had a good buddy who also played trumpet, and he used to play duets with me for practice. When we got out of school at three o’clock, we’d go to either my house or his, alternating every other day. We had our horns out by four o’clock practicing, and we did so until the mother of the house where we were practicing told us flat out to stop because it was too late, and people were tired and sleepy. We did this every day in addition to the time we spent practicing at school. Saturday was the day we really looked forward to because then we could practice all day.\textsuperscript{246}

Jones’s proficiency on the cornet allowed him to employ double time and complex rhythmic flurries in his improvised solos. Unlike his great composer and orchestrator predecessors who were typically pianists, Jones utilized his trumpet expertise to shape his approach to the problems of composing and arranging for a big band.\textsuperscript{247}

Because Jones was primarily self-taught, he developed an unorthodox trumpet technique.

\textsuperscript{245} Jean Baptiste Arban, Arban’s: Complete Conservatory Method for Trumpet (New York: Carl Fischer, 1982).
\textsuperscript{246} Shaw Jr., Relationships Between Experimental Factors and Percepts of Selected Professional Musicians in the United States Who Are Adept at Jazz Improvisation, 610–611.
\textsuperscript{247} Sheridan, “Greetings & Salutations,” 6.
He took full advantage of certain ambiguities in the trumpet’s fingerings, allowing for note placements and contours which other players find difficult to emulate.248

Jones’s use of double-time passages, flurries and fast scalar runs stems from his admiration and influence of trumpeter and bebop pioneer Dizzy Gillespie, who was known to regularly employ upper-register flourishes of sixteenth notes in countless recordings. Rapid figures and rhythmic density are common elements that grew out of the bebop era, as Ted Gioia attests:

Improvised lines grew faster, more complex … Never before had instrumental technique been so central to the music’s sound. Rarely had jazz tempos been so fast … solos frequently implied a doubling of the stated time, staying true to the ethos of speed at all costs.249

Gillespie was Jones’s most significant influence;250 he assimilated the swift attack, complex syncopation, and chromatic melodies that defined the emerging bebop style spearheaded by Gillespie and alto saxophonist Charlie Parker.251 Jones’s bebop influences are discussed further in “Section III: Harmonic Conception.”

Jazz pianist and producer Leonard Feather explained that double-time is used for contrast, and like so many other devices in every kind of music, it is only effective when artists know how and when to employ it discreetly.252 The examples below demonstrate Jones’s effective use of double-time, sixteenth-note flurries, scalar runs, and other complex rhythmic passages analyzed in selected compositions and solos.

248 Ibid.
251 Ibid.
Compositions

Ex. 71: Double time, flurries, and scalar runs in “Groove Merchant,” mm. 61-93

Ex. 72: Double time, flurries, and scalar runs in “Tribute to a Statesman,” mm. 17-19
Ex. 73: Double time, flurries, and scalar runs in “This Bass Was Made For Walkin’,”
mms. 73-81

Improvised Solos

Ex. 74: Double time, flurries, and scalar runs in “All Of Us,” mm. 15-19

Ex. 75: Double time, flurries, and scalar runs in “Straight No Chaser,” mm. 34-43
Jones’s diverse palette of rhythmic devices gave him the flexibility to fully express himself. His rhythmic conception and technical facility as an instrumentalist allowed him to take chances that many would never dare to pursue. His rhythmic imagination created captivating moments of tension and release that were spontaneous and exhilarating. Jones’s varied use of simple and complex rhythms, intermixed with his approach to mixed-meters, syncopation, and double-time, contributes to the undeniable sense of swing that has become known as his signature sound.

Jones has previously stated that “music should never be confined to any one particular area, one straight and narrow road; no road is engineered that perfectly.” This statement holds true in the sense that Jones never limited himself to any one particular device or preconceived pattern. In conjunction with his melodic conception,
Jones’s ability to innovate new material was endless. The quality and percentage of new material in Jones’s improvisations was astounding.\footnote{Stryker, \textit{Jazz From Detroit}, 161.} Jazz trumpeter Tim Hagans, who worked closely with Jones in the late 1970s and 1980s, provides his perspective of Jones’s innovative style of improvisation:

> Thad Jones during that time – I really realized, compared to other players perhaps – how much new material I was hearing constantly … and it was cracking me up, not only that fact, but some of the ideas he played were just hilarious – and not in the kind of “Pop Goes the Weasel” sense that he played on “April in Paris,” but just in … like on a standard tune, how he boxed himself into a corner and then played out of it – into the next phrase or the next section of the tune. It was just so incredible. I’m like going “What happened? What was that?” Thad has always been one of my trumpet heroes – of course composition and arranging as well.\footnote{Michael Davis, “Interview with Tim Hagans,” \url{https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3OA8vmje6kQ&t=2171s} (December 2, 2015), accessed 10 November 2019.}

Based on the completed analysis of Jones’s music, it is evident that his rhythmic conception interconnects with his compositional and improvisational styles. The rhythmic devices found in this analysis sheds light on his rhythmic foundation, thus providing the opportunity for the continued discovery of Jones’s musical identity.

**Section III: Harmonic Conception**

A key component of Thad Jones’s genius lies in his unique harmonic language. Jones’s distinct concept of harmony stems from several key components. He was heavily impacted by his nine-year association with the Count Basie Orchestra, who was known for hard-swinging rhythms and common forms, all steeped in blues-based vocabulary.\footnote{Lisik and Allen, \textit{50 years at the Village Vanguard}, 86.} His admiration for Duke Ellington influenced him to draw on Ellington’s harmonic
output as a source of inspiration. Composer David Caffey provides his perspective of Jones’s unique style in an issue of Jazz Educators Journal:

His writing was unique; it was new sounding and fresh, yet it certainly was a logical extension of the traditions which preceded the ascendency of the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra. It has always seemed to me that the Jones-Lewis Orchestra was a perfect balance of concepts flowing from the Ellington Band and the Basie Band. Certainly, it is no coincidence that Thad spent many years playing in Basie’s Band and his debt to Ellington seems fairly obvious.257

Atop the Basie and Ellington foundation he added the post-bebop harmonic and rhythmic advances, and even ventured into the modal territory of John Coltrane.258 Jones was deeply immersed in the Detroit hard bop scene in the early stages of his professional career. Tenor saxophonist Billy Mitchell led the house band at the Blue Bird Inn in Detroit from 1951-1954. This world-class quintet featured the stylist Thad Jones: hard bop’s most harmonically daring trumpet player at the top of his game.259 Hank Jones explains, “… the Blue Bird, just playing at that place was a great influence on his [Thad Jones’s] style and his playing and his musical thinking.”260 His lack of formal training allowed him to explore the vast possibilities of sound. Jones’s freedom-based mindset gave him permission to fully express himself without any restrictions.

In a 1979 interview with George Washington Shaw, Jr., Jones shared an aspect of his writing philosophy:

I have a philosophy in writing. I think each chord is the last chord I’ll ever write. It’s just another way of saying that there is not bad music. Like Art Tatum used to say, “There are no bad notes, just notes in the wrong

258 Stryker, Jazz From Detroit, 158.
place.” I try to treat each chord as if it is the chord, the only chord, the ultimate. In construction and in beauty, I try to give it all the color I possibly can, and that’s my philosophy, basically of writing. I try to treat each note as the most important note I’ll ever write. I try to do the same with my playing.261

To begin to understand Jones’s harmonic conception, the analysis of the following characteristics in his compositions and solo transcriptions will serve as a valuable starting point: influence of bebop and hard bop, dissonance, reharmonization, and upper-structure triads. The completed analysis of Jones’s harmonic output aids in the understanding of how his concept of harmony is mirrored in his approach to both composition and improvisation.

**Influence of Bebop and Hardbop**

**Bebop**

Jones’s bebop influence was the result of his upbringing in the Motor City jazz scene in the 1940s and 1950s, more familiarly known as Detroit, Michigan. The explosion of Detroit talent reached a peak during the post-bebop and hard bop era when the city’s influence arguably outpaced perennial hotbeds like Chicago and Philadelphia.262 Almost every Detroit musician is firmly rooted in the jazz tradition, especially bebop. You can hear it in their allegiance to the fundamentals of swing and blues, the balance of head and heart in their improvisations, and the marriage of fluid instrumental technique and soulful expression.263

---

262 Stryker, *Jazz From Detroit*, x.
263 Ibid., xii.
Jones was heavily influenced by the bebop pioneer and distinguished jazz trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie, who became the epicenter of the new music in the early 1940s. Gillespie was fully aware of the harmonic possibilities of bebop. He loved the edge that dissonant chords gave melodies and was generous enough to spread his knowledge as far as possible. Gillespie’s contribution to bebop had been to push the technical boundaries of the trumpet beyond those drawn by Roy Eldridge, particularly those of its range and speed, and to attack the fundamental harmonic structure of jazz by playing and composing pieces that incorporated difficult and unfamiliar chord structures or that involved breaking up rhythms with new ostinato patterns. In a 1985 issue of The Village Voice, Jones reflected on one of his initial encounters with Gillespie’s music while he was serving in the U.S. Army in Guam in the early 1940s:

There were about six of us, all in our tent preparing for the evening and listening to the radio, and all of a sudden, Dizzy comes on playing: “Shaw Nuff” with Charlie Parker. And you know, I can’t describe what went on in that tent. We went out of our minds! There was a good friend of mine, saxophonist who lives out in California now, and he and I were rolling on the floor, man, so happy we were laughing. People must have thought we were crazy, because here’s music playing and we’re laughing, cracking up. It was so beautiful, but that was our reaction. It was the newness, and the impact of the sound, and the technique. It was something we were probably trying to articulate ourselves and just didn’t know how.

Jones revered Gillespie and considered him to be more of an influence than anyone else, especially for his completeness and originality. Jones did with Gillespie’s music what

---

265 Ibid.
267 Giddins, “Thad Jones Rattles No Bones,” 90, 98.
268 Coss, “Horns of Plenty,” 40.
Gillespie did with Roy Eldridge’s music. He broke it apart and put it back together in a way that was completely his own.\textsuperscript{269} It is evident that Jones’s choice of harmonically stimulating notes in his improvised solos and compositions is characteristic of his time spent in Detroit and his influence of Dizzy Gillespie.

In the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, Jones’s compositions tended to be extensive. Trombonist and composer Tom McIntosh explains the typical structure Jones employed in his compositions:

Basically, the format was: you play the tune. Then you play solos and then there is what we call a shout chorus. And then you take it out. So, there are essentially four states. And Thad simply extended that. He made the shout chorus more like a solo; a band solo. So instead of the sense of a section, you got the sense of the band sounding like one person. He was the master of that.\textsuperscript{270}

Jones’s bebop influence is an unmistakable characteristic of his harmonic conception. Jones wrote incredible shout choruses that were filled with astonishing and exciting bebop lines. Pianist Jim McNeely describes his thoughts on Jones’s approach to composition and improvisation:

The thing that killed me about Thad’s writing is that it reflected the music that was going on more in the day; in the mid-’60s. You know, Coltrane and say, Art Blakey’s group and the more modal things they were doing – the kind of energy they were bringing to the table. Thad’s music, just like Dizzy’s big band, reflected the bebop era that he came up in. Thad – his band, his writing – reflected the stuff he was doing, especially in the ‘60s. That’s another thing that really got me about the band.\textsuperscript{271}

\textsuperscript{269} Lisik and Allen, 50 years at the Village Vanguard, 96.
\textsuperscript{270} Tom McIntosh, notes to Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, All My Yesterdays: The Debut 1966 Recordings at the Village Vanguard (2016), CD, Resonance Records HCD-2023.
\textsuperscript{271} Jim McNeely, notes to Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, All My Yesterdays: The Debut 1966 Recordings at the Village Vanguard (2016), CD, Resonance Records HCD-2023, 8.
While New York is arguably considered the city from which bebop emerged, the Detroit bebop scene rivaled the New York scene in many ways. Many of the important innovators of the idiom traveled through Detroit on tour routes. The exposure to these leading bebop musicians, combined with the musical culture of the region, developed Detroit into a breeding ground for great jazz contributors. Lars Bjorn and Jim Gallert, Detroit jazz historians, discussed the surge of bebop in Detroit:

From the very beginning Detroit contributed to the development of bop. Some Detroit jazzmen played with the early bop pioneers in New York and on the road, while others helped form viable modernist circle of musicians in Detroit after 1945. The bop pioneers got their start in the national big bands in the late 1930s and early 1940s, and Detroit was part of the circuit for these bands. This meant that Detroit was in contact with what was going on musically in New York and that Detroit musicians were recruited by the name bands. Visiting bands met local musicians backstage, often at the Paradise Theatre, and at clubs and after-hours spots in Paradise Valley. The level of musicianship in Detroit was so high that young talent was continually snapped up.

The Bluebird Inn, an important jazz venue in Detroit, began incorporating bebop as their main genre in 1948. The Bluebird proved to be a great opportunity for Jones to work on his craft with the trumpet, as well as his composition and arranging skills.

Jones’s bebop influence is evident in the harmonic choices found in his compositions, particularly in his soli and shout chorus writing. His harmonic processes became more complex, resulting in intricate phrases involving linear chromatic movement and dense harmonies. Elements of bebop that are often employed by Jones

---

272 Jones, *Study in Thad: The Improvisational Solo Style of Thad Jones*, 22.
273 Ibid.
275 Ibid., 99.
276 Jones, *Study in Thad: The Improvisational Solo Style of Thad Jones*, 23.
include enclosures, bebop dominant scales, and linear chromaticism. These bebop elements are defined by Jerry Coker as follows:

Enclosure: An enclosure is a linear or melodic device in which an object note is approached by both the upper and lower leading tones. The object note is the eventual note aimed for by the improviser.\textsuperscript{277}

Bebop Dominant Scale: A common scale that has one specific chromatic note [non-harmonic] added. The added chromatic in the major scale is the half-step between the fifth and the sixth degrees of the scale. In the Dorian scale, the added note is the half step between the third and fourth degree, and in the Mixolydian scale it is the half step between the seventh degree and the octave of the first degree.\textsuperscript{278}

Linear Chromaticism: All improvised lines, even melodic fragments, will include non-harmonic, chromatic notes. Similar to the principle of the bebop scale, chromatic notes are often the result of a metric problem that results in adding one or more notes to cause the phrase to agree with the number of beats in a measure. At other times the player may simply want to use a chromatic scale, or at least consider a portion of it.\textsuperscript{279}

The examples below clearly illustrate Jones’s use of bebop elements in his big-band writing and small-group improvisation. His use of linear chromaticism, enclosures, and bebop dominant scalar devices allows him to satisfy the resolution of his phrases in interesting ways. Jones will often write or play an extended succession of enclosures that involve non-chord tones on downbeats, creating brief moments of tension as a result. For example, in Example 78, measure 182, Jones lands on an A$^\#$ over an Ami7 chord directly on beat 1.

\textsuperscript{277} Coker, \textit{Elements of the Jazz Language for the Developing Improviser}, 50.  
\textsuperscript{278} Ibid., 33.  
\textsuperscript{279} Ibid., 81.
Compositions

Ex. 77: Influences of bebop in “Fingers,” mm. 185-200

Ex. 78: Influences of bebop in “Cherry Juice,” mm. 180-191
Improvised Solos

Ex. 79: Influences of bebop in “Zec,” mm. 64-74

While Jones utilizes many non-chord tones in various compositional and improvisational situations, his consistent arrival at chord tones and alterations on strong beats clearly demonstrates his advanced depth of harmonic knowledge. There is no indication that Jones makes use of specific enclosure patterns; on the contrary, it seems as though he has specific target notes in mind. In Example 80, among his string of sixteenth notes, Jones successfully gravitates to chord tones and chord extensions on the downbeats.

Ex. 80: Influences of bebop in “I Mean You,” mm. 44-49
of measures 48 and 49. The only exception is the F♯ over the G6 chord on beat 4 of measure 48.

Elements such as enclosures and chromaticism have been widely utilized among jazz musicians since the birth of bebop and are no longer considered to be unique. The combination of Jones’s harmonic understanding, spontaneity, and his creative spirit are what make his style of bebop significant. His mastery of the harmonic implications of bebop gave him the freedom to unleash his musical creativity while retaining a sense of form and order. See Appendix C for additional examples of bebop devices present in Jones’s improvisational style.

**Hard Bop**

Traces of hard bop elements are also found in Jones’s overall musical style. Hard bop was born largely from musicians who came from the nation’s inner cities, which includes Detroit. Jones’s hard bop influences can be found where traces of blues, gospel, and spiritual elements occur in his music. Trumpeter, composer, and producer Quincy Jones (no relation to Thad Jones) explains the emergence of hard bop, stating that “it reasserted the primacy of rhythm and blues. Hard bop, with its more earthy church sound, drew a lot of new black fans to our music.”

Thad Jones’s childhood was heavily rooted in the church. Jones recalled his upbringing in the church and the influence it had on his musical development:

> Church was a big part of our lives … My parents were very religious church goers. Every Sunday the whole family was sitting up there, and sometimes it was a full day in church. We got so much church, that it was really beginning to get to me. In addition to the Baptist church we went to, there was a Holiness church down the street. They were unfettered and unafraid to show their emotions. We used to go around to these churches, and if they had their windows open, we’d

---

chin ourselves up so we could look in and see them. I loved to see the people shouting and see this guy work with his tambourine. That was music.\textsuperscript{281}

Hard bop shares many of the same harmonic complexities that are present in bebop in addition to elements rooted in the blues, gospel, and soul music. Harmonic devices such as the pentatonic scale and blues scale are frequently used in hard bop and church music. James Williams, a gospel pianist and former member of Art Blakey’s Jazz Messengers (1977-1981), explains several key harmonic characteristics that are prevalent in gospel music:

By and large, it’s like the blues in that it’s based around I, IV, and V chords. We use various reharmonizations and tritone substitutions. We also like to use suspended chords in addition to straight triads. It gives it a more church and blues flavor. A lot of melodies, if you listen to them carefully, are based on the pentatonic scale … Dark yet brilliant, the keys of G-flat, D-flat, and A-flat are called the “soul keys” among gospel players.\textsuperscript{282}

Jones’s hard bop, blues, and gospel music influences are analyzed through various methods. Attention is given to Jones’s utilization of pentatonic and blues-based scales and progressions; application of tritone substitutions and triad-based voicings in his big-band arrangements; and his use of suspended chords and fourth relationships in his compositions and improvised solos.

Compositions

Jones’s composition “Don’t Git Sassy,” displayed in Examples 81 and 82, recalls the energetic, hand-clapping tradition of a church camp meeting.\textsuperscript{283} Example 81

\textsuperscript{281} Shaw Jr., \textit{Relationships Between Experimental Factors and Percepts of Selected Professional Musicians in the United States Who Are Adept at Jazz Improvisation}, 609–610.


illustrates the main theme carried out by the lead trumpet. Jones constructs the melody using only notes from the Eb (concert Db) pentatonic and blues scale.

Ex. 81: Influences of hard bop in “Don’t Git Sassy,” mm. 41-49

Example 82 derives from the final four measures of “Don’t Git Sassy.” The example shown below highlights various major triads that occur in the trumpet voicings over the underlying chord progression. Jones essentially utilizes major triads whose chord tones act as alterations or extensions against the underlying chord. For example, in measure 143 beat 3, Jones employs a Bb triad in the trumpet voicing, which acts as a 9th, #11, and 13 over the Ab13 chord. In measure 144, Jones similarly incorporates a triad built from a tritone substitution of G7. The Db major triad over a G7 chord achieves a #11, b7, and b9. This concept is also referred to as an “upper-structure triad” and is discussed further in a subsequent section.

Ex. 82: Influences of hard bop in “Don’t Git Sassy,” mm. 143-146
Jones’s voicings include intervals of a fourth between two voices in the trumpets. This approach contributes to an “open” sound that is characteristic of gospel music. James Williams indicated that tritone substitutions are frequently employed in gospel and church-oriented music. In measures 146-148, two instances occur where Jones employs tritone substitutions by way of tonicization. In the book Inside the Score, Rayburn Wright explains that tonicization occurs when any chord (except a diminished 7th) is being used to act momentarily towards a transient tonic. He adds that tritone substitutions may be used in the tonicization process. Tritone substitutions, also referred as upper chromatic chords, can have the quality of a dominant 7th or major 7th. The chord is considered to be a tritone substitution when the root of these two chord qualities is a half-step above the transient tonic. Jones employs a tritone substitution and an upper chromatic major tonicization in the final three beats of “Don’t Git Sassy,” as shown above.

Example 83 demonstrates another Thad Jones composition that incorporates elements of hard bop, blues, and gospel music. The melody of “Us” is based again on the pentatonic and blues scales.

Ex. 83: Influences of hard bop in the melody of “Us,” mm. 11-20

284 Wright, Inside the Score, 55–56.
285 Ibid.
286 Ibid.
Observe how Jones’s blues and gospel influences permeate his harmonic conception in Example 84. Jones finds unique methods of decorating the melody to capture the essence of down-home, feel-good music. Jones’s harmonies center around common blues-based chords (I, IV, and V). He provides a balance of dissonant sounds and strong resolutions by utilizing tritone substitutions and diminished harmonies. The major and dominant chords all include extensions or alterations which add to the diverse
sound palette. Additionally, Jones employs suspended and minor 11th chords providing a balance of open and dense voicings. “Us” can be heard on the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra album, *Consummation*.287

Improvised Solos

Examples 85-87 provide several examples of hard bop elements in Jones’s improvised solos. Fragments are extracted from his solos on “Quittin’ Time” and “H&T Blues.” Jones demonstrates his gospel and blues influences through his skilled approach of employing blues and pentatonic scalar devices. His use of blues and gospel-oriented language provides contrast from the many other devices he regularly employed. The utilization of hard bop and blues language allowed Jones to express himself freely and it contributed emotional zeal to his performances.

Ex. 85: Influences of hard bop in “Quittin’ Time,” mm. 12-17

Ex. 86: Influences of hard bop in “H & T Blues,” mm. 67-69

---

287 Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, *Consummation* [1970], LP, Blue Note, BST-84346.
Ex. 87: Influences of hard bop in “H & T Blues,” mm. 49-63

In a 1973 issue of *DownBeat*, David Baker commended Jones’s solo on “H&T Blues” stating, “The overall shape of the solo, the inner logic, the skillful manner in which the material is utilized, and the inevitability of musical line all attest to Thad’s genius.\(^{288}\)

Dissonance

Based on the listening and analyses of Jones’s compositions and recorded performances, it is safe to say that he had an affinity for tension and dissonance. Pianist Jim McNeely offers his thoughts on Jones’s use of dissonance:

First of all, there was this tension, this strong harmonic tension, from the very chromatic kind of language he was using and that was combined with the fact that it swung so hard … this dense, chromatic language … I didn’t really understand it at the time, but there was something about the music that just swung like crazy and I loved it.\(^{289}\)


I knew about Thad as an improviser for some years; what killed me about his writing was that he brought that angularity not only to the saxophone lines, but to the brass writing. He would always emphasis the dissonant notes and that really spoke to me, the way he did that. Another thing that influenced me was Thad’s melodic writing. Like I said before, in his playing he tended to emphasize the more dissonant notes.290

Despite being primarily self-taught in his formative years, Jones was well versed in his knowledge of advanced harmonic concepts. Jones often purposely employed dissonance in his phrases with the objective of gravitating towards strong resolutions. In the context of improvisation, it is possible that Jones may have been superimposing different chord structures in his mind.

One may never know what Thad Jones thought in situations where he deliberately landed on non-chord tones on strong beats. Jerry Dodgion, saxophonist and former member of the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, portrayed Jones’s unique approach to dissonance:

Thad. He could write so beautifully. He could play so beautifully and never play the same way twice. A true improviser. His improvising had no boundaries. Bar lines or key signatures – he could play any note and it was great. I remember when I tried to improvise, I’d end up on a major third on a minor chord or something. That’s about as bad as you can get, but when he would play it [a major third on a minor chord], it was music. He made music out of it, like wow.291

In a composition and arrangement framework, Rayburn Wright explains that Jones frequently employs minor 2nd grinds for harmonic bite.292 Wright clarifies further that voicings occur between available chord members: in dominant 7th chords between

290 Ibid., 16.
292 Wright, Inside the Score, 52.
the 7th and 13th, or between the 3rd and 9th; the minor.\textsuperscript{293} Below are examples of Jones’s use of minor 2nd grinds, further reflecting his distinctive musical style.

**Compositions**

Ex. 88: Dissonance in “Mean What You Say,” mm. 144-146

Ex. 89: Dissonance in “All My Yesterdays,” mm. 44

**Improvised Solos**

Ex. 90: Dissonance in “Groovin’ High,” mm. 7

Ex. 91: Dissonance in “No Refill,” mm. 11

\textsuperscript{293} Ibid.
Examples 90-94 above are extracted from selected Thad Jones solos. Full transcriptions of these solos are available in Appendix C of this research document. The circled notes in the diagram are instances where Jones makes use of non-chord tones in his improvisation, thus causing brief moments of dissonance and tension. As shown above, Jones lands on dissonant notes such as a raised 7th on a minor chord, a raised 5th and a major third over a half-diminished chord, and a flatted 9th against a major chord. Jones may or may not approach his note choices in the same manner in which he incorporates minor 2nd grinds in his compositions. However, it can be assumed that he is not fearful of presenting dissonant moments for effect.

Amateur musicians and even some professionals often unintentionally employ “wrong” notes in their improvisational output. Most often it is obvious when accidental mistakes occur. On the contrary, when Jones employed “wrong” notes, the strength of his conviction and intention was such that it did not initiate the thought that he made a
mistake. Instead, he created a sense of wonder and surprise that pulled his audience in.

Pianist Harold Danko shares his thoughts:

… I think he knew the most about harmony more than about any horn player I could ever think of. There would be nothing he couldn’t deal with within a chord. He could play something totally wrong and he’d make it sound right.²⁹⁴

Similar to the storytelling process, Jones invites his audience in with an introduction to a beautiful story. He presents the main theme of the story, introducing various characters and background stories that provide support to the main theme. He implements climactic moments that are thrilling and suspenseful. He then resolves any moments of conflict by creating a sensation of relief and familiarity. Jones’s stories conclude with feelings of happiness and excitement that leave the listener wanting more.

Reharmonization

Jones constantly strived for innovation and originality in his music. He avoided clichés and preconceived patterns at all costs.²⁹⁵ Instead, he was concerned with developing his craft as a writer and soloist through continuous reinvention and exploration of new ideas. Jones’s unpredictable personality found its way into his harmonic conception and allowed him to embrace the many possible directions in which he could steer his music. In a personal interview with bassist Rufus Reid, Reid discussed Jones’s constant need to create:

His mental concept was not to write or play the same thing he did before, which I think is part of his composing attitude – because all of his big-band charts are his, but they don’t sound the same. To me, I think his whole thought process was just … play what you hear now as opposed to trying to make this work, make this fit in this situation of what I’ve already worked out. To me, he was a true improviser as opposed to having a serious vocabulary that he was throwing out all the time.

²⁹⁵ Rufus Reid, personal phone interview (Greeley, CO & Teaneck, NJ: 30 March 2020).
Thad was always trying to come up with new ideas. He didn’t want to sound like he did the night before. He was very conscientious of not repeating himself. I think he just did it naturally … intuitively. He was essentially trying to avoid himself. And that’s the way he wrote the music.\textsuperscript{296}

Jones consistently reinvented his music through his approach of reharmonization.

Several analytical studies focus on Jones’s method of reharmonization from a compositional perspective. Such studies include Rayburn Wright’s \textit{Inside the Score}\textsuperscript{297} and Fred Sturm’s \textit{Changes Over Time: The Analysis of Jazz Arranging.}\textsuperscript{298} Based on listening and analyses of Jones’s improvised solos on small-group recordings, it is evident that the method of reharmonization revealed in his composition process parallels his distinct improvisational style.

Analysis of the traditional jazz standards and contrafacts (i.e. blues progressions, rhythm changes, etc.) that Jones utilized as a base for his improvisational and compositional output is beneficial toward the understanding of Jones’s approach to reharmonization. Jones’s process abstained from traditional norms. In his compositions and arrangements, he substituted and added chords that offered stronger functional character than the original progression.\textsuperscript{299} Jones frequently employed dominant chords with colorful extensions. He often structured melody notes to obtain upper-chord extensions or alterations, which contributed to the rich sound that his music is commonly associated with. Jones’s unorthodox concept of melody and harmony allowed him to resolve his phrase structures in the most unexpected ways.

\textsuperscript{296}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{297}Wright, \textit{Inside the Score}.
\textsuperscript{298}Sturm, \textit{Changes Over Time: The Evolution of Jazz Arranging}.
\textsuperscript{299}Wright, \textit{Inside the Score}, 55.
Rufus Reid, former bassist with the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra and Quartet, again provides his perspective on Jones’s unique style:

To me, Thad was linear, but he mixed it up. He kind of used it all. He was thinking linearly … thinking lines, not necessarily the notes of these chords. What he understood was resolution. He could make a lot of things appear at the outset to be really obtuse and then all of a sudden, he’d resolve it. And then you’d say, “oh, wow – that was great,” but you don’t even know what the hell he just did. In some ways, I don’t even want to try and analyze the way he played or wrote. Just because it was so much fun to listen to. Some of the figures he wrote were rhythmically so strong. When he soloed on the trumpet, his rhythms were really very different than the typical soloist. He always brought a smile to your face.\(^{300}\)

Ex. 95: “Love Walked In,” concert lead sheet mm. 1-32

Example 95 provides a diagram of the original chord changes to the popular George Gershwin standard “Love Walked In.” Compare the original chord progression with Jones’s reharmonization found in the saxophone soli and full ensemble shout chorus shown in Example 96, shown in concert pitch. The lead alto saxophone line is displayed in measures 133-148 and the lead trumpet line is displayed in measures 149-164.

Compared with the original chord progression, the method of reharmonization in Jones’s

\(^{300}\) Rufus Reid, personal phone interview (Greeley, CO & Teaneck, NJ: 30 March 2020).
big-band arrangement clearly illustrates his utilization of sophisticated harmonic alterations and substitutions.

Ex. 96: Reharmonized solo and shout chorus of “Evol Deklaw Ni,” mm. 133-164
Jones provides support to his intricate soli and shout chorus melody by adhering to a linear approach of reharmonization. He achieves this by emphasizing the individual melody notes in his phrase structures. More specifically Jones adds passing chords, substitute chords, and occasionally alters an original chord quality whilst keeping the root pitch intact at various points in the progression. For instance, in measure 1, Jones’s reharmonization includes an added 9th to the major 7th chord. He also adds three chords to the quarter note triplet figure on beat three (Db9/Ab, Gmi9, and Bbm7).

Each newly added chord supports and enhances the sound of the melody, which in turn disguises the original progression. Jones substitutes the original Dmi7 chord in measure 134 with a ii–V7 structure that leads to a transient tonic, G9 in measure 135. In measure 134, the A7#9 serves as a secondary dominant function to D+7b9#11, which in turn tonicizes G9. Instead of using the common chord qualities of a standard ii–V7 progression, Jones uses a II7#9–V+13(b9) quality, which effectively enriches the overall sound.

Examples of Jones’s method of resolution are scattered throughout the extent of the soli and shout chorus shown in Example 88 above. One particular moment of resolution that stands out occurs in measures 150-152, where nearly every melody note is reharmonized. Instead of the original Dmi7–G7–C7 function that takes place in the traditional progression, Jones utilizes a series of secondary dominant chords. The Eb9 chord on beat 2 of measure 151 acts as an upper chromatic neighbor chord, also known as a tritone substitution, to the Dmi9 chord that follows.

Notice that the first and second A section in the original progression of “Love Walked In” (Example 95) are identical to one another. Also notice how Jones’s A
sections differ in the saxophone soli (Letter N) and shout chorus (Letter O) of his contrafact “Evol Deklaw Ni” (Example 96). He does not utilize the same substitute chords or passing chords in his reharmonization. Instead, he continuously strives to create variation in the support of his intricate melody lines. Rufus Reid elucidates Jones’s concept:

> Sometimes we [the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra] would start every Monday night with #17 in the book, ‘Loved Walked In’ [Evol Deklaw Ni]. We’d start with the trio. I knew where the climax … I knew where the apex was. You could hear it coming and you’d say “oh,” it was just great. And we would play it … but the music never got old. Because he satisfied the phrases, whatever that means. You were terribly satisfied every time you played the chart.301

I realized that when he wrote something, he was very adamant about what he wrote. I realized that I couldn’t come up with anything better than what Thad had written. “Maybe I should just go ahead and read what he wrote,” because he gave me a ton of room to create my own thing and generally it was crafting a saxophone soli or some kind of soli was going on and those notes were chosen particularly to craft that line.302

Prior to writing his big-band arrangement of “Evol Deklaw Ni,” Jones composed the “Love Walked In” contrafact as a quintet arrangement. It was recorded as part of *Soulmates*, a collaborative album between tenor saxophonist Ben Webster and pianist Joe Zawinul.303 Thad Jones joined on cornet along with Sam Jones on bass and Philly Joe Jones on drums. A segment of Thad Jones’s solo is displayed below in Example 97. The example is transposed to concert pitch for contextual purposes.

---

301 Ibid.
302 Ibid.
303 Ben Webster and Joe Zawinul, *Soulmates* [1963], LP, Riverside M476.
In the second A section of Jones’s improvised solo, it appears as though his note choices do not properly fit the chord progression. Measures 10-11 are centered around B♭ major and G major, yet Jones executes notes outside of both key centers. The author suspects that Jones is subconsciously superimposing other key centers while the rhythm section accompaniment continues performing the written chord progression. Despite the theoretical disagreement between Jones’s note choices and the provided chord progression, the flow of his improvised line pulls so strongly to a resolution that the dissonance is realized as an effect. As Rufus Reid previously explained, this is an example of Jones’s compositional attitude.

Saxophonist Billy Harper provides his perspective of Jones’s composition and performance style in a personal interview conducted by the author:

He played in a fluid style and every once in a while, you’d hear something that sounded like it would be a big composition for a band … It seems that most of the tunes he’d come up with were things that he probably ended up playing as part of his solo or something; and then he’d make that idea into a composition or a song. Thad’s creative ability … he was always coming up with new ideas and strong statements. He had definite structural ideas.\(^{304}\)

---

Jones’s approach to reharmonization in the context of composition and improvisation gave him the opportunity to explore his creative mind. He constantly found unique ways of transforming simple melodies and chord progressions into mesmerizing sounds that left audience members dumbfounded. Through the continued analysis of his improvised solos, compositions, and arrangements it is evident that his style of improvisation influenced his approach to composition, and vice versa. Tim Hagans adds, “The quality and percentage of literally new stuff that come out of his horn was astounding. That creative melodic language is what informs his lead lines in his big-band writing. That’s why his music has so much warmth and humor.”

Upper Structure Triads

Through the analysis of Thad Jones’s big-band compositions, it can be observed that he often employs a compositional technique of superimposing major and minor triads built above the chordal root in instruments that contain the upper voices (typically voiced in the trumpets). This technique is commonly referred to as “upper-structure triads.” Ted Pease and Ken Pullig, former Berklee School of Music professors, explain the concept of upper-structure triads in their book, Modern Jazz Voicings: Arranging for Small and Medium Ensembles:

An upper-structure triad voicing is a complex sound. It projects two simultaneous harmonic impressions. First and foremost, all notes of the voicing collectively create a sound that clearly represents the given chord symbol. At the same time, the three upper notes form a triad in close position (including, possibly, various inversions). These upper notes have their own separate and clearly identifiable triad sound, while simultaneously functioning as chord tones and/or tensions of the given

305 Stryker, Jazz From Detroit, 161.
chord symbol. Upper-structure triad voicings are used when the writer wants a powerful sound containing a high level of resonance.

Example 98 below contains a chart of common major and minor upper-structure triads provided in Pease and Pullig’s text:

Ex. 98: Upper-structure triad example chart (Pease and Pullig)

Examples of Jones’s application of upper-structure triads are demonstrated in voicings and vertical sonorities across Jones’s repertoire of compositions and arrangements. While these two concepts are meant to apply strictly to his voicing techniques, there are occurrences in Jones’s small-group performances that indicate that he may be utilizing these concepts in his improvised solos as well.

Compositions

An example of Jones’s use of upper-structure triads can be observed in his composition “61st & Rich’ It,” displayed in Example 99 below. The musical excerpt derives from one of Jones’s lesser-known entries in his expansive library of music. The composition was written as a tribute to Richard Davis, the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra’s original bassist. At measure 225, a full ensemble shout chorus exemplifies

---

307 Ibid., 109.
Jones’s use of dense and rich harmonies that are heavily rooted in the Basie tradition of swing.

In the brass section, Jones employs major and minor triads over the underlying chord progression. The various upper-structure triads are indicated above each underlying chord. In the example below, the roots of the major and minor triads utilized in the trumpets are a major second, minor third, tritone, raised fifth, and major sixth interval away from the roots of the original chords. For example, in measure 225, Jones builds an F major triad in the trumpet voicing while a B7b13 is voiced in the trombones. The F major triad is a tritone away from the root chord. The notes of the F major triad [F, A, C] provide colorful extensions against the underlying harmony. The F creates a #11, the A acts as the 7th, and the C functions as a b9. Additional examples of upper-structure triads can be seen in Example 99 above.

**Improvised Solos**

Examples 100-104 demonstrate Thad Jones’s use of upper-structure triads in selected improvised solos. See Appendix C for full solo transcriptions. Jones rarely utilized patterns or exercises in his music; instead, he heavily relied on spontaneous creation. It is evident that Jones was fully aware of the harmonic possibilities of dominant chords based on his frequent use of the upper-structure triads found in the compositional analysis.

![Upper-Structure Triads](image)

Ex. 100: Upper-structure triads in “Straight No Chaser,” mm. 4-6
Ex. 101: Upper-structure triads in “Straight No Chaser,” mm. 61

Ex. 102: Upper-structure triads in “Blue Room (1956),” mm. 22

Ex. 103: Upper-structure triads in “Blues De Funk,” mm. 34

Ex. 104: Upper-structure triads in “Lady Luck,” mm. 7-11

In the context of Jones’s improvisational style, it is unlikely that he deliberately employed upper-structure triads in solo performance situations. However, his creative vision was so strong that it naturally guided him towards the sounds he conceived in his head. While the above examples exhibit Jones’s use of upper-structure triads in his solos,
it is possible that it was purely coincidental. Nevertheless, it further validates that Jones was highly informed of harmonic possibilities. In addition, the provided examples continue to demonstrate that Jones’s compositions and improvisations are influenced by one another.

Summary

Trumpeter Cecil Bridgewater provides his perspective on Jones’s unique harmonic conception during a personal interview:

He could play any note at any given time and could make it work. I realized maybe his melodies were written off of the upper partials of the chords. So, if he’s using, I don’t know … a C7 with a raised nine and a raised eleven, he would write the melody off of the eleven. A lot of his tunes were unusual, and I realized that he would often play in that way.  

Based on the analysis of Thad Jones’s compositions and improvised solos, Bridgewater’s statement regarding Jones’s approach to harmony certainly holds true. When soloing in small-group formats, Jones often abandoned the chord progressions at certain moments. He performed complex, intricate lines, filled with dissonance which inevitably resolved to colorful alterations or extensions over the standard progression of a piece. Rather than utilizing the standard chord progression when composing and arranging for a big band, Jones often preserved the original melody, which was often simple and diatonic. Harold Danko elaborates: “… there might be a simple melody, but it was harmonized in a way that you wouldn’t think of.”

310 Harold Danko, personal phone interview (Greeley, CO & Rochester, NY: 12 February 2020).
Jones harmonized his melodies to make use of many colorful alterations and extensions in his voicings, similar to his approach when improvising. As Bridgewater previously explained, Jones often based melodies off the upper extensions of a chord. Simply put, Jones’s linear approach in his improvisational style parallels his vertical approach in his compositional and arranging style.

Many harmonic devices are characteristic to Thad Jones’s compositional and improvisational style. Throughout Jones’s career as a composer and performer, he strived to innovate and progress his music. Jones employed numerous harmonic devices with the intent to create, innovate, and experiment and he did not succumb to preconceived patterns. The harmonic devices discovered through the analysis of Jones’s music uncovers only a small fraction of his unique harmonic conception. In a 1974 issue of *DownBeat*, Jones briefly discussed an aspect of his writing process:

Subconsciously I have a total idea of what I want to say musically. I try to write like I’m building a house, adding as I go, maybe bypassing one section and coming back to it, rather than go from level to level. I try to give it a total picture. I have no idea what it’s going to sound like. All I’m interested in is putting it down and at least presenting the idea … One thing should be made pretty clear: anything that’s written will sound good if it’s played right … I’ve played some of the worst music in the world, but if you give it a conscientious effort, you can give a little more than what’s written down. Put a little of yourself into it, and automatically the notes come out sounding a little bit better.\(^{311}\)

Jones found great comfort in approaching his music with a “trial and error” mentality. He did not have the privilege of formal music training in his formative years and it is a good thing that he did not. Jones never restricted or confined himself to rules, which enabled him to discover the abundant harmonic possibilities that he could employ in his music.

\(^{311}\) Smith, “Thad Conducts An Interview,” 14–15.
Section IV: Sound Conception

The analysis of sound is somewhat challenging to quantify. It is theoretically possible to identify certain jazz musicians by listening to a sample of his or her sound,\(^{312}\) which supports the notion that the analysis of sound can be categorized into quantifiable attributes. Jazz historian Paul Berliner explains that “finding words to describe musical subtleties like tone color and affect is a challenge that the verbally agile and creative jazz musician meets with the descriptive language of personality and emotion found in poetry.”\(^{313}\) Nevertheless, it is a discernable, all-encompassing marker of an individual artist’s [and ensemble’s] identity.\(^{314}\) Various elements contribute to an artist’s sound profile, including timbre, articulation of pitches, pitch inflections, and the accentuation and manipulation of pitches.\(^{315}\)

Sound conception can also be analyzed through musical characteristics that derive from melody, rhythm, and harmony. The previously included analyses of Thad Jones’s melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic conception serve as a foundation for determining Jones’s overall sound conception as both a composer and trumpet performer.

According to Laurent Cugny, the concept of sound can be broadened to incorporate common devices performed by instrumentalists; including phrases, rhythms, articulations, turns of style, etc.\(^{316}\) The analysis of Jones’s sound conception in his compositions, arrangements, and solo improvisations can be quantified utilizing a

\(^{313}\) Berliner, *Thinking In Jazz*, 126.
\(^{314}\) Ibid., 125.
\(^{315}\) Ibid., 122
collection of the attributes listed above. Jones describes his concept of sound in the liner notes of his 1979 album, *Eclipse*:

> Sound is the blending of all tonal qualities combined with a unity of thought, that is projected through the different instruments in the collective form of harmonies, melody and rhythm. This homogeneous mixture creates a most palatable diet for the ear and the senses, indeed.\(^{317}\)

The “Thad Jones Sound” is unmistakable and very personal.\(^{318}\) There are several techniques which Jones uses in a repeated, consistent manner which contribute to what the listener instantly recognizes as the “Thad Jones Sound.”\(^{319}\) In addition to the melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic characteristics that contribute to Jones’s personal sound, the following elements are essential in order to describe Thad Jones’s distinct sound conception: small-group sound; sheets of sound; Basie sound; as well as freedom and joy.

**Small Group Sound**

Before Thad Jones and Mel Lewis joined forces to form the Thad/Jones Mel Lewis Orchestra and before Jones was sought out by Count Basie to join his Orchestra, Jones was regularly found at the Blue Bird Inn in Detroit, performing in the house band led by saxophonist Billy Mitchell. Jones performed in Billy Mitchell’s quintet for two years for six nights each week. Jones crafted his technique, defined his style, and developed his personal sound at the Blue Bird. Miles Davis, who lived in Detroit for five months from autumn 1953 to February 1954, frequently performed at the Blue Bird.\(^{320}\) Pianist Roland Hanna remembered Davis’s reaction to hearing Thad Jones perform,

---


\(^{318}\) Caffey, “Thad Jones Composition & Scoring Techniques,” 17.

\(^{319}\) Ibid.

\(^{320}\) Macías, “‘DETROIT WAS HEAVY’: MODERN JAZZ, BEBOP, AND AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPRESSIVE CULTURE,” 44–70.
explaining that “Davis would stand under the air conditioner with tears running out his eyes when he heard Thad play.”

On the bandstand, Jones dared to experiment spontaneously; he used his opportunity at the Blue Bird as a vehicle for exploration. It was there that his conception of melody, rhythm, and harmony evolved and transcended into his identifiable modern sound. Performing in small groups was a priority for Jones long before composing took precedence. Jones elaborated as he recalled his earliest years with the Basie Orchestra: “I was a free spirit. I wasn’t writing then – my whole life was dedicated to playing. I wanted to solo, having played in small groups.”

During Jones’s tenure with the Count Basie Orchestra, he remained heavily involved recorded and performed with various small groups. Jones’s progressive approach and modern sound attracted notable players such as Sonny Rollins, Thelonious Monk, Sonny Stitt, Sarah Vaughn, Tommy Flanagan, and many others. Jones produced some of his most successful records to date while also working with the Basie Orchestra. The esteemed Blue Note record label issued three albums under Jones’s direction and ventured to bestow the title *The Magnificent Thad Jones* to one of the releases. In the album liner notes, Leonard Feather remarks on the album and its title:

I am confident that a hearing of these performances will convince you that the adjective [Magnificent] applied to Thad Jones for the name of this album was the most fitting one that could be used in the circumstances. I might even close by adding a further definition of the word magnificent – characterized by sensuous splendor and sumptuous adornment, also characterized by grandeur or majestic beauty.

---

323 Leonard Feather, notes to Thad Jones, *The Magnificent Thad Jones* (1956), CD, Blue Note CDP7-46814-2.
Although Jones felt pure joy in small groups, he eventually felt restricted in his continued search for harmonic possibilities in the quintet and sextet formats. Jones shared his thoughts on small groups and big bands in a 1970 issue of *DownBeat:*

Ain’t nothing special about a big band but music. More music. Small combos have to be trying to play like a big band. The epitome of everything we’re trying to do musically – sound, fury, distance, dissonance, space – happens in a big band. The small band doesn’t have the tools; only a little of it, and wants more … We can be happy for a moment in a small ensemble, but we can’t sustain it harmonically. We live in harmonies. Putting it together to make it last. And the only way to make it last is to expand it. If we communicate this to people, I’m happy.\(^{324}\)

Drummer Mel Lewis added to Jones’s statement, saying:

The big ensemble is what is special. A small band is a group of soloists with a light ensemble sound. The solos are the excitement, but a big band has that sheer wall of sound.\(^ {325}\)

Jones’s conception of sound in his big-band writing is directly transferred from the conception he achieved as a small-group performer. He was interested in preserving a small-group feel, while attaining an enormous sound. Jones’s melodies were filled with blues, bebop, and angularity with a mixture of simple and complex rhythms. He composed intricate background lines and solis that resembled his own improvisational style. At times, instead of utilizing the full ensemble or even individual sections, he placed 1-3 horn players on the melody to capture the essence of a small-group sound. Jones’s compositions “Mean What You Say,” “Consummation,” and “Three and One” exemplify this technique. At other times, Jones asked the rhythm section trio to vamp as an introduction before the main ensemble entrance.

The Thad Jones/Mel Lewis orchestra immediately distinguished itself from other big bands of the time with the amount and nature of solo space regularly afforded

\(^{324}\) Bourne, “Soulmates,” 15.

\(^{325}\) Ibid.
its musicians. Prior to the formation of the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, big-band solos were relatively brief and allowed improvisers limited time to develop. The rhythm section players approached accompanying soloists with an inherently small-group sound and dynamic level. While common to modern jazz orchestra performances today, this was a radically different approach in 1966.326

After venturing into ambitious harmonic territory in his solos and shout choruses, Jones employed open solo sections that provided improvisational freedom for his band members. Unlike most other big bands of the era, Jones’s solo sections were formatted in a way that was reflective of small groups. They were unrestrictive and enabled musicians to unleash their musical expression without any limits. Rufus Reid discusses the small-group feel that Jones achieved whenever he performed in front of the Jones/Lewis Orchestra:

When he was in front of the band it was magic. When he soloed it was like a quartet, always. The whole band … it was like a small big band, the concept of the band. As a trumpet player, I always loved the way he played because it was just different. He didn’t sound like anybody I knew and I’ve had the good fortune to play and record with Freddie Hubbard and Art Farmer and Clark Terry … Woody Shaw and Thad is just different. His sound was different. Just the way he approached music was different.327

Jones’s small-group experience ultimately shaped the sound of the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra. He constructed his compositions and arrangements to achieve the feeling of majesty that he graciously possessed. Thad Jones’s musical output evolved into a composers-arrangers paradise based on improvisation and exciting rhythms, instead of the sometimes confusing and upsetting cacophony of the Avant Garde in jazz.328 According to Leslie Gourse, “The Jones/Lewis band played art music

326 Lisik and Allen, 50 years at the Village Vanguard, 194.
327 Rufus Reid, personal phone interview (Greeley, CO & Teaneck, NJ: 30 March 2020).
328 Leslie Gourse, “In the Heyday of the Studio Musician, Thad Jones and Mel Lewis Start a Big Band at the Village Vanguard,” JSTOR: The Massachusetts Review, Vol. 39,
derived directly from the big ‘pure’ jazz bands, and it had a tone and style so modern as to qualify as revolutionary."^{329}

Sheets of Sound

Jazz historian Ira Gitler first coined the term “sheets of sound,” in the liner notes to saxophonist John Coltrane’s 1958 album, *Soultrane*.^{330} “Sheets of sound” is a term used to describe a frenetic approach to improvisation where the attempt to include every possible harmonic implication of a given chord is sought. For example, envision a dominant chord that is present in one full measure of a piece. The method of playing every possible scale and/or arpeggio in its entirety over the four beats equates to a sheets of sound approach. A chord such as a dominant chord would include many possible harmonic opportunities, such as the mixolydian mode, tritone substitutions, the lydian-dominant mode, the altered scale, the melodic minor scale, the whole tone scale, octatonic scales, etc. Although harmonic implications are involved in the production of the sheets of sound approach, the effect is primarily implemented to create texture, dissonance, and contrast.

In order to successfully execute the sheets of sound approach, it is crucial for a soloist to find rhythmically creative methods for the purpose of including the many available notes in their improvised phrases. Thad Jones admired John Coltrane, especially as his younger brother Elvin shared a deep musical relationship with him. Jones discussed Coltrane’s influence on him in a 1985 issue of *DownBeat*:

---

329 Ibid.
330 John Coltrane, *Soultrane* [1958], LP, Prestige LP7142.
Coltrane played in sheets of sound; I think when you get sheets of sound coming from 16 and 17 men all at once with that force, it’s a very exciting thing. And in addition to the sheets of sound, you hear the whole harmonic structure all at once; you hear sounds that you never heard before and then you watch the men that are playing it and they obviously enjoy what they are doing so much.\textsuperscript{331}

Jones’s approach to sheets of sound is evident in his stylistic approach to composition and improvisation. While sheets of sound is commonly associated with the latter, the concept is applicable in the context of composition as well. In improvisation, sheets of sound is achieved when many possible notes are executed in a short span of time. In the compositional framework, particularly regarding big bands, sheets of sound involves the implementation of many available extensions and alterations when constructing vertical sonorities. As a result, thick clusters of dissonant and colorful sounds are produced. Jones embraced dissonance and tension. In an article published by \textit{Jazz Journal International}, author Chris Sheridan labels Jones’s sound as “multi-colored backdrops.”\textsuperscript{332} Sheridan further adds,

Thad conceives the mobile, harmonically fascinating parts which give light and shade, emphasis and commentary to solo and theme alike. Instead of a riff-type theme punctuated by section riffs, there is an intricate web of sound and color.\textsuperscript{333}

The examples below demonstrate Jones’s use of the sheets of sound effect in his compositions and improvised solos.

\textbf{Compositions}

Jones often employs as many as eight or more notes in his vertical sonorities. For instance, in measure 144 of Example 105, Jones voices the G\textsuperscript{b7\#9} chord with the

\textsuperscript{331} Gitler, “New York’s Big Band Community: A Discussion with Thad Jones, Mel Lewis, Clark Terry, Duke Pearson and Ira Gitler,” 19.
\textsuperscript{332} Sheridan, “Greetings & Salutations,” 7.
\textsuperscript{333} Ibid.
following chord tones and extensions: root, 3rd, 5th, 7th, b9, #9, #11, and 13. Jones packs his chords with an abundance of color and he is successful in shaping his voicings in a way that best supports the melody.

Ex. 105: Sheets of sound in “Mean What You Say,” mm. 144-146

Ex. 106: Sheets of sound in “All My Yesterdays,” mm. 44-47
Improvised Solos

The examples below exhibit Jones’s sheets of sound approach in his solo improvisations. Jones’s technical facility on the cornet is also demonstrated. While the sheets of sound method is often associated with instruments such as the piano and saxophone, Jones proves that the cornet is an instrument capable of achieving the effect as well.

Ex. 107: Sheets of sound in “Oh Karen! O,” mm. 22-23

Ex. 108: Sheets of sound in “Straight No Chaser,” mm. 31-42

In Example 107, notice how Jones employs every single available note within the span of four beats. The quick pace of the rhythm and notes create a unique textural effect.
Speaking of Sound

Thad Jones’s sound conception was significantly influenced by his nine-year stint with the Count Basie Orchestra. His experiences performing, composing, and arranging for the Basie Orchestra taught Jones the foundations of a compelling laid-back swing feel. The foundations of “Basie Swing” include a relaxed but powerful rhythm section with a driving ride cymbal beat and crisp hi-hat. This rhythm section feel underpins the saxophones and brass sections, which are tight and always on the back of the beat.\(^3\)\(^3\)\(^4\) Upbeats are played as late as possible, locking in with the tight ride cymbal skip beat. An accurate description of the Basie time concept comes from the legendary Basie alumnus Frank Wess, who once said, “that accent is not on the upbeat of four, it’s just before one!”\(^3\)\(^3\)\(^5\) Basie’s influence impacted Jones’s approach to loosening his time feel. Jones reflected on his experiences with Basie in an issue of *Crescendo International*:

> Playing in Count Basie’s band between ’54 and ’63 was a truly beautiful period in my life … Just to watch this man was an experience – to see how he controls a band in this way. And then to listen to his tempos and absorb the whole Basie time concept. When he sets a tempo, that’s the only tempo this piece can be played in. Don’t even think about it, just play it, because that’s where it is. I don’t know how he does it; it’s phenomenal.\(^3\)\(^3\)\(^6\)

Marvin “Doc” Holiday, a saxophonist and one of the original members of the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, adds,

> He [Thad] and Snooky Young were just prime examples of that Basie band: the time concept, that business of being able to feel what the phrasing should be and how far to push it or how far to pull it back and how to keep the flow of the feeling going.\(^3\)\(^3\)\(^7\)

\(^3\)\(^3\)\(^5\) Ibid.
\(^3\)\(^3\)\(^6\) Tompkins, “The Thad Jones Story,” 14.
\(^3\)\(^3\)\(^7\) Zev Feldman & Chris Smith, notes to Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, *All My Yesterdays: The Debut 1966 Recordings at the Village Vanguard* (2016), CD, Resonance Records HCD-2023, 63.
Jones’s strong admiration for Duke Ellington led him to discover cornetist Rex Stewart, whose bent notes and half-valve effects left the biggest imprint on Jones until he found his most significant influence, Dizzy Gillespie.\textsuperscript{338} Jones employed various half-valve effects to lay back in the time and relax his overall rhythmic and swing feel. This can be observed in his improvisations and in various trumpet section parts in his compositions and arrangements.

Thad Jones’s distinct sound stems from various sound manipulation techniques. Jones incorporated specific embellishments, articulations, and inflections that became signatures of his personal sound as a soloist. These devices were also associated with the sound of the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra. Leon Petruzzi’s Ph.D. dissertation \textit{Lead Trumpet Performance in the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra: An Analysis of Style and Performance Practices}\textsuperscript{339} includes a table of stylistic inflections that Jones often used to shape his music in order to achieve his sound conception. Table 1 is adapted from Petruzzi’s study and includes stylistic inflections that occur in Jones’s improvised solos, compositions, and arrangements.

\begin{table}
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Inflection} & \textbf{Description} & \textbf{Example} & \textbf{Occurrence} \\
\hline
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Stylistic Inflections in Thad Jones's Improvised Solos}
\end{table}


\textsuperscript{339} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{339} Petruzzi, \textit{Lead Trumpet Performance in the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra: An Analysis of Style and Performance Practices}.
Table 1. Stylistic Inflections\textsuperscript{340}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Musical Notation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bend</td>
<td>A device where the pitch of a note is lowered and then returned to its point of origination.</td>
<td>![Bend Notation]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>A downward glissando following the end of a note. May be long or short.</td>
<td>![Fall Notation]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flip or Turn</td>
<td>After the note is sounded, the pitch is raised and then lowered leading into the next pitch.</td>
<td>![Flip or Turn Notation]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghost(ed) Note</td>
<td>A weakly articulated note, with no discernible pitch. Note is implied more than actually played.</td>
<td>![Ghost Note Notation]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gliss or Glissando</td>
<td>A sliding effect between or following notes accomplished with embouchure, valves, slide, or keys [depending on instrument type] partially depressed.</td>
<td>![Gliss or Glissando Notation]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace Note</td>
<td>A note approached by a quick “scoop” from a half-step below or above.</td>
<td>![Grace Note Notation]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcato</td>
<td>A note, chord, or passage is to be played louder or more forcefully.</td>
<td>![Marcato Notation]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plop</td>
<td>A short gliss/fall leading into a note from above.</td>
<td>![Plop Notation]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scoop</td>
<td>A short gliss leading to a note from below.</td>
<td>![Scoop Notation]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smear</td>
<td>A short gliss between notes.</td>
<td>![Smear Notation]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staccato</td>
<td>A note sharply detached or separated from the others.</td>
<td>![Staccato Notation]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{340} Ibid., 42–43.
The use of stylistic inflections in Jones’s compositions and improvised solos provide contrast and shape to his phrases and melodic and rhythmic lines. Jones employed inflections such as falls, ghosted notes, grace notes, glissandos, and scoops with the intention of supplementing his music with expressive qualities, which in turn added great depth to his music and contributed to the overall groove and swing feel. In the context of composition, inflections are not uncommon in big-band music. Inflections are not often notated in the music, but rather implied or interpreted at a later time. The majority of Jones’s compositions include specific stylistic inflections written in each of the parts. Through Petruzzi’s research it is evident that each lead trumpeter who has performed with the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra portrayed Jones’s inflections quite differently, which contributes to the distinctive personal quality of Jones’s sound.

Jones utilizes various stylistic inflections in his improvisational style, which may be observed through transcriptions from his small-group recordings. Jones often employed inflections to support melodic devices that he regularly utilized in solos, such as angularity and wide interval jumps. In order to support the technical difficulty of executing large intervals on the cornet, Jones sometimes made use of glissandos and falls. Jones’s use of stylistic inflections animates his lines, adds character, and communicates his personality through his horn. Below are several examples of stylistic inflections observed in his compositions and solo transcriptions. Additional examples are provided in Appendix C.

**Compositions**

Example 109 is an excerpt from the lead trumpet part to Jones’s composition “Second Race.” Jones employs various stylistic inflections, including marcato notes,
bends, glissandos, and ghosted notes. The marcato articulations supplement the intensity and drive of Jones’s phrases. The ghosted notes, glissandos, and bends contribute to the heavy swing feel. Nearly every note is assigned a specific articulation or stylistic inflection, which indicates that Jones had a specific sound concept in mind.

Ex. 109: Stylistic inflections in “Second Race,” mm. 44-64

Ex. 110: Stylistic inflections in “Low–Down,” mm. 33-41

The inflections shown in Example 110 further exhibit Jones’s ability to animate his phrases. The glissando and smear indicated in the lead trumpet part of Jones’s composition “Low–Down” provides a raw sound quality to the phrases. Jones’s use of the
“turn” in measure 41 can be attributed to his bebop influences and forward direction of the line.

Ex. 111: Stylistic Inflections in “Don’t Git Sassy,” mm. 43-52

The scoops that Jones employs throughout the main theme of “Don’t Git Sassy” enhance the bluesy nature of his composition. The long fall in measure 45 contributes power and energy to the final phrase of the melody and provides excitement as the melody transitions to the solo section.

Ex. 112: Stylistic inflections in “Little Pixie II,” mm. 1-8

Example 112 displays the opening theme to Jones’s composition “Little Pixie II.” Jones incorporates various articulations in the saxophone melody, including swung and straight eighth figures. The balance of short and legato phrasing provides contrast and creates an element of surprise.

Improvised Solos

The examples below reflect stylistic inflections that are observed in Jones’s performance style across several small-group recordings. Jones employs sonic devices that parallel the inflections in his compositions, which supports the notion that his improvisational and compositional style are interconnected.
Jones’s solos on “Blues De Funk” and “Blue Room,” shown in Example 113 and 114, demonstrate his use of grace notes, glissandos, falls, ghosted notes, turns, and varied articulations that ultimately shapes the personal quality of his sound. The inflections provide substance by enhancing the blues and bebop elements presented in Jones’s improvised phrases.

Ex. 113: Stylistic inflections in “Blues De Funk,” mm. 12-27

Ex. 114: Stylistic inflections in “Blue Room (1956),” mm. 32-36

Ex. 115: Stylistic inflections in “Evol Deklaw Ni,” mm. 1-9
Example 115 above displays Jones’s solo on his contrafact of “Love Walked In.” He begins his solo with a short motivic sequence with “plops” attached at the end of each phrase. Jones utilizes plops as a method of employing a subtle delay in the time, thus causing a laid-back feeling. His use of the half-valve inflection in measures 5 and 6 continues to support a laid-back time feel that is resemblant of the typical Count Basie time feel. Jones half-valve technique disturbs the clarity of the intonation, which causes a brief moment of tension.

Ex. 116: Stylistic inflections in “Sput ‘N’ Jeff,” mm. 1-4

In Example 116, Jones begins his solo on “Sput ‘N’ Jeff” with successive staccato eighth notes and gradually shifts to swing articulation. This continues to highlight his method of integrating contrast in his melodic phrasing. The balance of staccato and swing articulation displayed in Jones’s solos and compositions is characteristic to his unique and personal sound.

Various stylistic inflections are analyzed and observed across Thad Jones’s compositions and improvised solos. The method in which Jones incorporates stylistic inflections significantly contributes to his sound conception and the character of his music. The application of inflections and other sonic devices infuses life and personality into his music. This in turn supports the expressive, emotional, and energetic quality that is linked to his distinctive sound.

Freedom and Joy

Certain attributes of Thad Jones’s improvisational and compositional style can be quantified into discernible markers of sound; however, a personal and emotional element
significantly contributes to his sound that simply cannot be studied in music theory books. Jones instilled a sense of freedom in his music that exudes feelings of happiness, exhilaration, and joy. Although his experience in the Basie band was generally positive, he felt a sense of restriction that prevented him from continuing to embrace the personal sound he was developing as a soloist in small groups. Two years prior to forming the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, Jones shared his feelings of freedom in a big band with Bill Coss:

You know, most musicians require freedom to develop. A big band doesn’t offer you that. Like that little “Pop Goes the Weasel” solo I played on “April in Paris.” It was successful on the record so, naturally enough, Basie wanted me to play it every time on the number … God how I hated it. I remember one time in Philadelphia at Peps, and the band played the number, and I played a different solo. Almost immediately someone in the audience asked Basie to play “April in Paris.” They didn’t recognize it without that little solo. That’s one of the reasons I left the band.341

Thad Jones and Mel Lewis formed their big band with an alternative mindset that most other bandleaders of the time lacked. They both desired to create an ensemble that permitted the freedom associated with small groups. Peter Keepnews remarked,

[Mel] Lewis has said, in talking of the big band, “what makes the big band is its freedom.” There’s a looseness in the way Thad and Mel run things and a willingness to let the players stretch out and experiment; this is one of the things that set their big band apart from most others.342

Thad Jones explains his approach to freedom in an issue of Crescendo International:

… musicians in most regular big bands feel restricted. But see, what we do, that the bands in that particular day didn’t do: we open the arrangement up and give complete freedom on the inside of it. The only discipline is that involved with playing the outside part of the music – the framework that must surround this freedom … Our musicians don’t feel that they’re being restricted as much.343

341 Coss, “Horns of Plenty,” 40.
342 Peter Keepnews, notes to Mel, Mel Lewis and Friends (1976), LP, Horizon, SP-716.
Freedom allowed the musicians to experiment and explore the possibilities of sound. Similar to Duke Ellington, Jones composed and arranged his music with consideration given to the individual band members. By doing so, the personalities and individual traits exuded by each musician blended into the orchestra’s overall sound.

Jones discussed his approach to individuality in his writing process:

I approach any arrangement very cautiously; I’m a little bit fearful. I’ve been writing for a long time, but I never know exactly what it’s going to sound like. I have an idea of how I’d like it to sound; however, one never really knows. So if you don’t approach it with respect and caution, you’re apt to get involved in something that just won’t be there.344

One also has to take into consideration the musicians involved. When you say, notate a chord, you have to think about the different qualities of sound among the players and how that’s going to sound with that vibration. Some guys play a little louder than others; so you have to place them on notes that suit them best. This is all part of it. Everything comes from just knowing the people that you work with. That’s probably one of the things that made Ellington so successful: he always wrote in a very special way. His arrangements deal with the actual people in the band.345

When Jones composed and arranged music for the orchestra, he had no interest in any particular sound. Despite the specific notation, dynamics, and articulation markings, Jones did not intend for precision. During any given performance, Jones was more concerned with allowing the band to translate the music in relation to how they felt that day. Jones shared his concept in an interview with George Washington Shaw, Jr.:

Each day brings a different sound and different feel to the music. The notes don't geographically change their location, but the feeling; and the way to express that note changes. I'm aware of that little change inside of me, and I try to express that thought to all the guys on the bandstand. All of a sudden, it seems as though our communication expands, and we become very conscious of what's taking place. We accept it and flow in that direction together. That's why I make a conscious

344 Tompkins, “The Thad Jones Story,” 15.
345 Ibid.
effort to make everyone aware of that constant change in us every day. We try to express it in the music.\footnote{Shaw Jr., \textit{Relationships Between Experimental Factors and Percepts of Selected Professional Musicians in the United States Who Are Adept at Jazz Improvisation}, 635–636.}

Jones elaborated on his conception of sound in a 1968 issue of \textit{DownBeat}: \footnote{Gitler, “Thad’s Thing,” 19.}

> I have always been interested in the overall sound rather than any one particular sound. What I strive for is uniformity in sound – an overall personal thing. I think of the musicians personally. You have to gear your writing to two different people, and still try to retain your overall technical sound. I try to write for each individual – what I figure they might like for a little background, how they might like it worded here and there. I’m trying to enrich the voices a little and utilize the personal sound of each guy maybe a little bit more. Writing for one band has helped this.\footnote{Lisik and Allen, \textit{50 years at the Village Vanguard}, 87.}

As a result of Jones’s unique approach to freedom, his music emanates various emotions. Many would agree that Jones’s music conjured the sound and feeling of joy more than any other. Pianist and composer Jim McNeely can attest: “Joy, is the one word common to almost every description of Thad Jones’s music. It is inherently joyous, with the ability to elevate the emotional states of both players and audiences alike.”\footnote{Lisik and Allen, \textit{50 years at the Village Vanguard}, 89. Tim Hagans adds his perspective stating: “Everything that he played or wrote, there was in every chord, I heard the joy of life. Sounds like a strange thing to stay, but everything had this celebration of life in it and that’s what makes it so happy and so touching.”\footnote{Tim Hagans, personal phone interview (New York, NY and Greeley, CO: 3 March 2020).} Pianist Kenny Werner discusses Jones’s music and its connection to the feeling of joy:

> The greatest comment you can get from a novice listener is, “I don’t know what I just heard, but I was just so moved.” Thad’s music does that more than anyone else’s. Anybody in the band, they can play one of Thad’s tunes, start with “Big Dipper” or whichever … and it doesn’t matter that they have been playing it for forty years, a joy creeps into their body.\footnote{Lisik and Allen, \textit{50 years at the Village Vanguard}, 89.}
In an interview with George Washington Shaw, Jr., Jones shares his thoughts on emotion and its role in jazz and music:

I think that for the most part we play what we are. We are like whatever we play. Depending on your outlook of your philosophy of life, you’re playing will reflect whatever your philosophy is. You can't separate a person from the music; it's not possible. If you’re really committed, the music and the man are one and the same thing. Music is just like carrying on a conversation between two or more people. You're going to have moments of highly charged emotion, and at times it's going to be very blissful, very dreamy, very sedate, sometimes very stern, very commanding, but it runs the gamut of about every emotion. If the conversation is extended long enough, you will cover just about all emotions.\(^{351}\)

Long before the formation of the Thad Jones/Lewis Orchestra, Jones imparted a sense of freedom and joy as a soloist in small groups. He never confined himself to preconceived patterns or vocabulary. Jones took chances in his playing and allowed himself to be vulnerable in his musical expression and never held back. He approached improvisation with the attitude of expressing his inner self as freely as possible. Jones explains his concept of freedom further, stating, “… there are certain things I do in certain ways that nobody else does. A schooled musician, I imagine, a more crisp style than mine, but there is a freedom in the way I play. What I do could be wrong at times, but I feel whatever I’m doing.”\(^{352}\)

The sound of joy emits a personal feeling that cannot be measured by musical analysis. The feeling of joy, however, is undeniable whether one listens to a Thad Jones solo on a small-group record or a Thad Jones composition or arrangement with the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra.

\(^{351}\) Shaw Jr., *Relationships Between Experimental Factors and Percepts of Selected Professional Musicians in the United States Who Are Adept at Jazz Improvisation*, 620.

\(^{352}\) Hentoff, “They’re All Talking About the Jones Boy,” 9.
Summary

Author Mark Stryker provides a suitable description of Thad Jones’s sound conception stating, “When you take the scores apart, you see the craftwork, but there’s a soulful resonance beyond technique. Jones tells stories. He gets under your skin where your emotions live. He excites the imagination, elevates the spirit.” Jones’s conception of sound is one that cannot be copied. Tim Hagans explains, “That’s why he’s so special, because it was the combination of this incredible understanding of Strayhorn-Ellington harmony, put on the Basie concept of swing, with Thad’s incredible melodic/horizontal sense. That’s why is music is just so joyous.” Drummer Mel Lewis offers his ideas regarding the conception of sound in the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra:

We’ve read and heard people say we [Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra] really remind them of Ellington or Basie. Well, there may have been an influence of some kind, naturally. But when you sit down with your record collection and put one of your favorite records on after one of theirs, I don’t hear it at all. If you listen, we have our own sound and our own feel. We don’t sound like Ellington or Basie and they don’t sound like us. We sound like the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis band. We have our own rhythm feel, which has to with the human part of the guys who are playing, and with the way the music is written. Thad’s arrangements and voicings are not like anyone else’s and you’ve got to listen a little closer and you’ll see it’s different. It is individual. It’s something else.

Thad Jones developed a distinct sound that is instantly identifiable. The marriage of Jones’s melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic conception discussed throughout the scope of this study, in addition to his sense of freedom and joy, ultimately forms the “Thad Jones Sound.”

---

353 Stryker, Jazz From Detroit, 164.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION AND TRIBUTE

Thad Jones’s contributions to contemporary big-band composition establishes him as a pivotal figure in jazz history. Through his Basie and Ellington foundation, in addition to the creative musical innovations he brought to the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, Jones revitalized the modern big band. As a result of his well-earned stature as a composer and bandleader, Jones’s contributions as a cornet soloist and performer are often overshadowed. Through the examination of Thad Jones’s improvisational style as a cornetist, it is evident that his contributions to modern jazz trumpet performance significantly parallels his compositional style and is thus deserving of equal acclaim.

Despite Jones’s exceptional abilities as a soloist, his humble persona prevented him from realizing that his creative imagination was truly impactful. In a 1974 interview, Jones stated,

I look for a form of contentment. I don’t consider myself an instrumentalist, though at times I feel like I could stand up with anybody and not embarrass myself. I try to meld in a communication bag with the people I’m playing with, to be able to have a happy and free interchange of ideas with the group. Nothing forced or pretentious, just an open giving relationship. That’s a lot more creative than individual effort. It’s like forming a chain of hands, reaching out to people.356

While Jones expressed modesty when speaking of his own ability as a soloist, many had differing views. John Mosca adds his perspective stating, “Thad still doesn’t get his due as a trumpet player. He’s one of the greatest pure improvisers in the history of this

356 Smith, “Thad Conducts An Interview,” 15.
music." Jerry Dodgion adds, “When we sounded good, it was because Thad played. Thad was a true improviser in the band. He had the magic and we were his followers. It was unbelievable that he didn’t realize he was so good.”

Thad Jones’s unique improvisational style is a culmination of his conceptual approach to melody, rhythm, harmony, and sound. His method of employing angularity, motivic development, rhythmic forward motion, bebop, hard bop, blues, sheets of sound, and freedom among other devices sets Jones apart from his contemporaries. The most important factor of his improvisational conception was his spontaneous and unpredictable nature. Jones briefly described his thoughts on spontaneity in a 1985 issue of DownBeat:

Jazz, to me, has been the most vital and progressive music of the last 200 years. A jazz musician of the caliber of Freddie Hubbard or a Miles Davis can create more in two minutes, spontaneously, than some orchestras can in 25 minutes. That’s a marvelous gift that shouldn’t be allowed to die and wither. It should be nourished – especially in America, where jazz was really born.

Regarding Duke Ellington, Thad Jones once remarked: “Ellington represented something to me like the end of the rainbow, the musical prodigal.” The “end of a rainbow” is often used to suggest the endless possibilities that await on the other side; something that is highly sought, but rarely attained. Jones was certainly successful in attaining what seems like endless possibilities in his musical endeavors, or at least he contributed significant effort in his attempt at achieving the task.

---

357 Lisik and Allen, 50 years at the Village Vanguard, 96.
358 Ibid., 98.
359 Deffaa, “New Directions for the Basie Band,” 18.
360 Smith, “Thad Conducts An Interview,” 14.
In a 1979 interview, George Washington Shaw, Jr. asked Jones the following question: “If you could go back and change anything you wanted to, would you change anything?” Jones responded,

Not one thing. Everything was just like it was supposed to be, and I think God intended for it to be that way. If he didn't, it would probably have developed in another direction. If God intended for it to be, that's the way it is. Everybody embarks on the course that is best designed to give them the knowledge that they need for life. When you sum it up, there were some truly grand moments, some really majestic times.  

Through his tenure with the Count Basie Orchestra, his numerous small-group records on prominent labels such as Blue Note and Debut, his contributions to the future of big-band music through his innovations with the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, and his experience leading the Danish Radio Big Band, Thad Jones’s legacy is one that holds an inimitable place in the history of jazz.

---

361 Shaw Jr., Relationships Between Experimental Factors and Percepts of Selected Professional Musicians in the United States Who Are Adept at Jazz Improvisation, 643.
A Tribute to Thad Jones

David Baker:

Thad Jones is one of the most admired and respected horn players in the business. The beautifully warm and ultrapersonal sound, the unflagging imagination, the great rhythmic diversity and efficacy, the dazzling technique, and the relentless swing are identifying characteristics of the playing of BIG BAD THAD.362

Count Basie:

Thad’s things were always very exciting. And you never knew what he was going to write next. He wrote some things that were just fantastic. And he can play that horn the same way. I’ll always remember one little thing he used to play on the horn, “Mama Talking Soft.” That really knocked me out. Anytime Thad brought something in there, you’d better watch it, because he always had something happening.363

Michael Brecker:

Thad Jones has also been an influence, not so much with his licks, but in his musical and compositional approach – the way that he composes while he plays.364

Bob Brookmeyer:

Something in Thad encouraged me to write, to progress forward … I have some Count Basie with Thad that’s unbelievable. The middle ‘50s and on, good lord he could play the trumpet, and also, just where he went! There’s no way you can figure out where Jones got those notes because they didn’t come in any book or from anybody you knew. It’s like he pointed the horn up and the angels started dropping notes in that nobody had ever used before. So every note was fresh, and different, and you just turned your head and thought, man how does he do that?365

Cecil Bridgewater:

I started tracking him through Thelonious [Monk]. He sounded like Monk playing the trumpet. You know the angular kind of things … but I heard this trumpet and I was like

364 Shaw Jr., Relationships Between Experimental Factors and Percepts of Selected Professional Musicians in the United States Who Are Adept at Jazz Improvisation, 265.
... I had never heard anybody play like that ... He was just a sponge. Everything and anything that would happen ... he would gravitate towards it and make it happen.\textsuperscript{366}

\textbf{Eddie Daniels:}

Thad was very warm and sweet. He had a lot of humility. I loved him. He was not egotistical about his own playing. In fact, he was shy about it and was always willing to give the other guys solos. Here you had a leader who could play the shit out of the trumpet, was very creative and had his own voice, yet he was giving all of the guys in the band chances to play.\textsuperscript{367}

\textbf{Harold Danko:}

On the quartet record I did with him, we did “But Not For Me.” Thad plays a solo ... and if you listen to my solo after that, I take a lot of time to start ... because, what’s going through my mind is ... HOLY SHIT! I just heard a transcribable solo ... I should start to transcribe this solo that I just heard. Why am I soloing? If you hear that ... I just hesitated to start because I was just kind of still processing what I had just heard.\textsuperscript{368}

\textbf{Jerry Dodgion:}

Thad. He could write so beautifully. He could play so beautifully and never play the same way twice. A true improviser. His improvising had no boundaries. Bar lines or key signatures – he could play any note and it was great. I remember when I tried to improvise, I’d end up on a major third on a minor chord or something. That’s about as bad as you can get, but when he would play it [a major third on a minor chord], it was music. He made music out of it, like wow!\textsuperscript{369}

\textbf{Tommy Flanagan:}

Thad was really an advanced musician for his age [age 26]. The way he wrote compositions was just extraordinary, his gift for melody and ideas for orchestration. Oh, what a trumpet player he was — and cornet player. His talent was so apparent in writing and composing that they forget what a great trumpet player he was. He was very individual; I mean, he had a voice that was just as distinct as any of the top trumpet

\textsuperscript{366} Cecil Bridgewater, personal phone interview (Greeley, CO & New York, NY: 6 February 2020).

\textsuperscript{367} Lisik and Allen, \textit{50 years at the Village Vanguard}, 98.

\textsuperscript{368} Harold Danko, personal phone interview (Greeley, CO & Rochester, NY: 12 February 2020).

players I know. I can tell Thad immediately when I hear him, just as I can Dizzy or Roy or Clark Terry. He’s just in the forefront of those trumpet players.\textsuperscript{370}

\textbf{Tim Hagans:}

Everything that he [Thad] wrote came from [and you can hear this in the lead lines, whether it’s a sax soli or whether it’s the lead trumpet part on a shout chorus] – all of those melodies are coming from the way he improvised. That’s why he’s so special, because it was the combination of this incredible understanding of Strayhorn/Ellington harmony, put on the Basie concept of swing, with Thad’s incredible melodic/horizontal sense. That’s why is music is just so joyous.\textsuperscript{371}

\textbf{Billy Harper:}

Technically on the trumpet he could play anything. His style of trumpet playing and the way he played through changes … he would play a group of fast notes, and then he’d be lyrical. He wouldn’t blow through the changes like Freddie [Hubbard] or any of the modern plays that we idolize in the trumpet world. He’s [Thad] very … kind of different in that way in terms of the way he played lines … Thad’s personality was what contributed to the sense of joy that was brought out in his music. He was always a very joyful kind of guy and if you were ever around him, everything was sort of up and happy. That’s the way he was and that’s the way his music came out.\textsuperscript{372}

\textbf{Earl Gardner:}

The band definitely played better when Thad soloed more. He inspired you. It was a bonus. You became an audience member when he was about to play a solo. On one of the tours, Thad hadn’t played on anything in about a week. I pointed that out to Mel and we decided to make a set full of tunes that Thad played on: “Three and One,” “Cherry Juice,” “Love Walked In” and five or six other tunes. He looked at the set list and said, “Where did you come up with this? I’m playing on every tune.” I said, “Yeah, I know. You haven’t been playing very much and it’s time for you to play!” He just laughed and we actually did the entire set, which made us happy because we got to hear him play. I never got to hear him play as much as I wanted. That’s the way he was. He wanted to let everyone else blow.\textsuperscript{373}


\textsuperscript{372} Billy Harper, personal phone interview (Greeley, CO & New York, NY: 12 February 2020).

\textsuperscript{373} Lisik and Allen, 50 years at the Village Vanguard, 98.
Benny Golson:

What I like about Thad is that he does the unexpected but somehow, knowing him, the anticipated. It keeps the music an adventure. His music is a delight to play, but it sure is hard.374

Clay Jenkins:

He had a beautiful and very unique style of improvising that was appreciated by other established artists including Thelonious Monk, Charles Mingus, and Miles Davis. Thad was one of the only jazz trumpet soloists who also excelled as a composer of tunes and as a wonderful arranger. I was very impressed at how Thad’s playing was mirrored in his compositions, and vice versa. His improvisations as well as his compositions exemplify his depth of swing, melodic and harmonic content, rhythm, playfulness, romance, dynamics, timbre, space, and respect for the Blues Legacy. Thad Jones’ musicality has been one of my strongest inspirations as a musician.375

Elvin Jones:

…I learned from my brothers Hank and Thad…We don’t see each other that much, but we’re close, particularly in times of crisis, when there seems to be a kind of telepathy between us. To me, they’re both perfect. I don’t know anything bad about them. Hank is the greatest pianist in the world and Thad is the greatest trumpet player.376

Hank Jones:

Thad was a genius. A lot of people don’t give him credit for being the trumpet player that he was. Everybody recognized that he was a great arranger. But he regulated the solo work to the guys in the band. In the Thad Jones–Mel Lewis Orchestra, there were four trumpet players, and they were all soloists. So they got to play the solos and Thad just conducted.377

Mel Lewis:

Thad is probably one of only two or three other people who play trumpet or cornet who can sustain a whole evening by himself with just a rhythm section. I don’t know anyone other than Dizzy, Freddie Hubbard, Clark Terry, and possibly Woody Shaw who can do that. Thad is a unique player who’s incredibly inventive. Everybody knows his arranging abilities, and when he plays it all comes right out of the horn. What he can put on paper he can play on his horn. Even though he’s my partner, buddy, friend, and brother, I say

he’s one of the greatest trumpet players of all time and maybe now some people will pay attention to that fact.378

**Nick Marchione:**

When it comes to playing Thad’s music, we’re talking about someone whose writing from the perspective of a great jazz player, a great writer – bringing harmonic and bebop knowledge to that vain, but also – Thad heard very “out” lines. When he soloed, his lines were great, but a little different than anyone before him and quite frankly anybody since. And he wrote like that. To play his music, you not only have to have an understanding of where he came from [I own all of his small-group records], listening to those records and hearing where he came from – that’s how he’s writing for the band. Even those it’s harmonically dense and difficult and angular, you [in regard to the trumpet section] need to make it seem like it’s just flowing out of you.379

**Tom McIntosh:**

For me, Thad was one of the most brilliant musicians to come along on all fronts. His playing was exquisite. He was next to Dizzy Gillespie as the best trumpet player in jazz. And he was an excellent, superb arranger.380

**Paul McKee:**

If you listen to Thad Jones, Thad’s soloing is very much like his writing. The quirky angular melodies that you encounter in his charts, he plays, so he’s being honest. He’s representing himself.381

**Jim McNeely:**

… Thad himself. He’d play a solo and it was unmistakably Thad Jones. Here’s a guy who had started out building a career as a small-group guy playing a lot of quintet records, but even then, his tunes were always very interesting, as were some of the arrangements of other tunes that he would do. They always had a very interesting character about them. But then he went with Basie and started to get a reputation as a writer. But then, with his

---

378 Mel Lewis, notes to Thad Jones, *Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Quartet* (1977), LP, Artists House AH3.
band, his own soloing was a very important part of the whole thing, too. One of the things I used to enjoy when I’d play with him in is band was just hearing him play.\textsuperscript{382}

**John McNeil:**

Thad Jones is widely recognized for his writing and arranging, but he’s seldom given his due as a small-group soloist. If you ask a jazz musician to name a Thad Jones solo, they’ll probably point to the “Pop Goes the Weasel” quote on Count Basie’s “April In Paris.” After that, many would be at a loss. Jones was a terrific instrumentalist (he played lead with Basie on a few tunes, on cornet!) and one of the most creative soloists I’ve ever heard, recorded or live. Thad told me that ideas were there to be developed, just like they would be if you gave a speech. He influenced many, of course, and his playing and advice was what helped me learn to play as I spoke and to be myself.\textsuperscript{383}

**Charles Mingus:**

I just heard the greatest trumpet player that I’ve heard in this life. He uses all the classical techniques and is the first man to make them swing … his brother Elvin is just about as good on drums. The cats call Thad Jones (Hank Jones’ brother) the Messiah of the trumpet. Thad was too much for me to believe. He does things that Diz and Fats made difficult for the trumpet. I mean the things they didn’t quite make, yet you respected because you knew no others would even attempt them. The things Miles never made. The things Diz heard Bird do, and Fats made us think were possible. Yet we wait and wait, and a Clifford Brown comes along and reminds us today, that this is the way Fats would play those things if we heard him a week later when or if he practiced instead of junked. Here is a man who practiced while Fats goofed and thought while Brownie copied. Here is Bartok with valves for a pencil that’s directed by God.\textsuperscript{384}

**Bob Mintzer:**

Thad was a visionary. He took what was already there and molded it into this lush, beautiful sound that was all his own and such a reflection of his warmheartedness and great personality. Thad was super warmhearted. Gracious, Jovial. Engaged. Inspiring … He was a consummate musician and I loved his sound and feel. It all just tugged at your heartstrings and it went right to your gut.\textsuperscript{385}

\textsuperscript{382} Zev Feldman & Chris Smith, notes to Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, *All My Yesterdays: The Debut 1966 Recordings at the Village Vanguard* (2016), CD, Resonance Records HCD 2023, 15.


\textsuperscript{384} Charles Mingus, letter to Bill Coss, *The Fabulous Thad Jones* (1954), LP, Debut Records, DLP12.

\textsuperscript{385} Lisik and Allen, *50 years at the Village Vanguard*, 99.
John Mosca:
To me, Thad did with Dizzy’s music, what Dizzy did with Roy Eldridge’s music. In other words, he broke it apart and reassembled it into something that was completely unique to him. And you wouldn’t think that would be possible with Dizzy. It’s almost like dealing with Picasso if you’re a visual artist. Can you refine this even further? Well, you can if you completely turn it over inside out, like Thad could do … His outside the chord choices are totally his own. And his rhythmic content is his own. His sound is definitely his own. He doesn’t sound like anybody. It’s almost like Sonny Rollins and Bird. Sonny Rollins come right out of Bird. He absorbed Birds music like nobody else did, but he’s totally his own man.386

Dick Oatts:
I think Thad’s apart of everybody because they’ve all played his music, you know – but I think of a lot of young trumpet players are starting to become aware of him. Taking more chances. Sean Jones and Terrell Stafford. Scott Wendholt especially … There was such an evolution of Thad. He was such a free spirit. I have to say he was pretty unique. I think he gave the Vanguard band and the Mel Lewis band the art of how to play the music with joy, depth, and love. I don’t think that any other band would have given me that same feeling. I wouldn’t have stayed with any other band for as long. Thad is the kind of guy that can start on any note and make it right. There were no wrong notes … he was so creative.387

Jimmy Owens:
Thad was an outstanding trumpet player with a keen harmonic sense. His writing was very unconventional because he was self-taught. From the very first night I rehearsed with the band I knew Thad had a very special gift. He wrote his compositions for small band, but the ones he wrote for big band worked just as well for small band.388

Horace Parlan:
I have never played with anybody like Thad. His talent is contagious – and he gives me lots of playing space, which is very unusual for a big-band leader.389

Thad Jones Archive; William Paterson University:
Jones’ playing was overshadowed by his reputation as a composer and arranger, but the two were inextricably connected. Charles Mingus described Thad as ‘the greatest

386 John Mosca, personal phone interview (Greeley, CO & Wayne, New Jersey: 22 April 2020).
387 Dick Oatts, personal interview (Greeley, CO: 10 March 2020).
388 Jimmy Owens, notes to Thad Jones, One More: The Music of Thad Jones (2004), CD, IPO Recordings Inc.
389 Jack Lind, notes to Thad Jones, Eclipse (1979), CD, Storyville 101-8372.
Trumpeter that I’ve heard in this life,’ giving an idea of his imaginative style and virtuosity. Thad’s improvisations in these small groups feature a rhythmic adeptness and an ingenious thematic coherence that are hallmarks of his arrangements.\footnote{390}

**Rufus Reid:**

[Thad] was a much better improviser than a lot of people would ever know. He was amazing. His entrances and the choice of notes were always unpredictable. It was a lot of fun to hear him. He thought compositionally all the time. He would write things that were thrilling and surprising to hear and that’s also the way he played.\footnote{391}

**John Riley:**

Thad found an amazing way to create music that is accessible, vibrant and fun – that even a novice or civilian listener can enjoy. But the music still has depth, a surprising quality that musicians are drawn to and enjoy the challenge of playing. It always feels great, but there is also a harmonic sophistication that draws the musicians into it. Although some of it is very challenging, it sounds like it’s coming from an organic place, not from somebody’s head, and that seems to capture the civilians in the audience and the musicians, as well.\footnote{392}

**Maria Schneider:**

Thad inspired me, most definitely. The thick voicings, the exuberance of his music, the sheer power, the density of it, the way he harmonized moving harmony. Also, the architecture of the arrangements: the lead notes that would slowly get higher and higher … There’s a brilliant overall architecture in between all the magnificent intricate lines he wrote that gave his pieces much of their power and excitement.\footnote{393}

**Marvin Stamm:**

When Thad put that horn to his mouth and played, you just said, “Oh My God, where did that come from?” I don’t think Thad’s playing on recordings ever represented him like the nights we heard him play at the Vanguard. He could play so many things that were difficult to even imagine someone conceiving – and then executed them with such ease. Technically speaking, if you wrote these solos on paper then tried to play them, you could practice, and practice and it would never come out sounding like Thad. He was original in every way.\footnote{394}

\footnote{391} Lisik and Allen, \textit{50 years at the Village Vanguard}, 96.
\footnote{392} Ibid., 87.
\footnote{393} Ibid., 90.
\footnote{394} Ibid.
Scott Wendholt:
Thad’s charts have the best inner part writing that I’ve ever seen. It’s definitely what
arrangers should strive for. I really appreciate how the parts are integral in all the books.
Thad must have been in tune with the fact that the cats have to be involved to not get
bored. Because you don’t get to solo that much in a big band, even if you are featured a
fair amount. If you’re engaged more of the time, you’re going to put more in your
music... So many people speak about him with an almost mystical regard. The energy
and spirit that he must have had... These are the stories and moment’s where I wish I’d
known Thad.396

Kenny Werner:

The greatest comment you can get from a novice listener is, “I don’t know what I just
heard, but I was just so moved. How can I hear that again?” I don’t think there is any
better hope in jazz than people that create that situation... Thad’s music does that more
than anyone else’s. Anybody in the band will tell you they can play one of Thad’s tunes,
start with “Big Dipper” or whichever. And it doesn’t matter that they have been playing it
for forty years, a joy creeps into their body. So this is something beyond, something that
would’ve happened the first time they played it. To be able to do that for the music never
gets old, there has to be another element there. Maybe it’s a mystical element, maybe a
spiritual element. Thad’s music has that quality. Open the page and the joy comes out
like perfume. It doesn’t matter how many times you hear it or play it, it has that same
impact. There is some mysticism or spirituality in that.397

395 Ibid.
396 Ibid., 99.
397 Ibid., 89.
Music should not be confined to one narrow road.

—Thad
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books / Dissertations/ Theses


**Magazines / Journals / Newspapers**


**Online Databases / Websites**


Kernfeld, Barry. “Jones Family.”  


Interviews


**Album Liner Notes**


Kirchner, Bill. notes to *The Complete Solid State Recordings of the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra*. CD Mosaic Records MD5-151, 1994.

Lewis, Mel. notes to Thad Jones, *Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Quartet*. LP, Artists House AH3, 1977.


Mingus, Charles. notes to Thad Jones, *The Fabulous Thad Jones*. LP, Debut Records DLP12, 1954.


**Musical Scores**


———. Rehearsal Notes to *Big Dipper*. New York: Kendor, [c2016].

———. Rehearsal Notes to *Don’t Git Sassy*. New York: Kendor, [c2016].


———. *All My Yesterdays*. New York: Kendor, [c1965].
— All Of Me. New York: Kendor, [c1982].

— Big Dipper. New York: Kendor, [c1972].


— Cherry Juice. New York: Kendor, [c1977].


— Kids Are Pretty People. New York: Kendor, [c1963].

— Little Pixie II. New York: Kendor, [c1966].

— Little Rascal on a Rock. New York: Kendor, [c1976].

— Low Down. New York: Kendor, [c1965].

— Mean What You Say. New York: Kendor, [c1964].


— This Bass Was Made for Walking. New York: Kendor, [c1980].

— Three and One. New York: Kendor, [c1970].

— Tip Toe. New York: Kendor, [c1963].


— US. New York: Kendor, [c1972].

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Small Groups

Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker Quintet: *The Quintet: Jazz at Massey Hall*
Debut DLP 2
May 15, 1953: Toronto, Canada

Billy Mitchell Orchestra: *Sonny Wilson Sings/Billy Mitchell Plays*
Dee Gee 4000
1953: Detroit, MI

Billy Mitchell: *Swing…Not Spring*
Savoy SV-0188
1953: Detroit, MI

Clifford Brown and Max Roach: *Brown and Roach Incorporated*
EmArcy MG 36008
August 5, 1954: Los Angeles, CA

Thad Jones Quintet: *The Fabulous Thad Jones*
Debut Records DLP 12
August 11, 1954: New York, NY

Thad Jones with Strings: *Autobiography in Jazz*
Debut Records DEB
September 17, 1954: New York, NY

Charles Mingus: *The Jazz Experiments of Charles Mingus*
Period SLP 1107
December 1954: New York, NY

Thad Jones Quartet: *Jazz Collaborations*
Debut Records DLP 17
March 10, 1955: Hackensack, NJ

Al Cohn: *The Jazz Workshop (Four Brass, One Tenor)*
RCA Victor LPM 1161
May 9, 1955: New York, NY
Billy Mitchell Quintet: *Swing...Not Spring*
Savoy Records MG 12062
1956: Detroit, MI

Leonard Feather: *Leonard Feather's East Coast Jazz Stars*
MGM E3390
1956: New York, NY

Thad Jones Sextet: *Detroit-New York Junction*
Blue Note BLP 1513
March 13, 1956: New York, NY

*Metronome All Stars 1956*
Clef MGC 743
June 18, 1956: New York, NY

Thad Jones Sextet: *The Magnificent Thad Jones*
Blue Note CDP7 46814-2 [CD]
July 9, 1956: Hackensack, NJ

Dick Hyman: *Hi-Fi Suite*
MGM E3494
July 11, 1956: New York, NY

Thad Jones: *Mad Thad*
Fresh Sound FSRC CD57
December 12, 1956: New York, NY

*The Jones Boys*
Period SLP 1210
1957: New York, NY

Thad Jones Sextet: *The Magnificent Thad Jones Vol. 3*
Blue Note BLP 1546
February 3, 1957: Hackensack, NJ

Thad Jones: *Olio*
Prestige PRLP 7084
February 16, 1957: Hackensack, NJ

Frank Wess & Kenny Burrell: *Steamin’*
Prestige PRLP 7118
June 21, 1957: Hackensack, NJ
Sarah Vaughan: *After Hours At The London House*
Merc MVS2-38 832572-2 [CD]
March 7, 1958: Chicago, IL

*Keepin’ Up With The Joneses*
Metrojazz E1003
March 24, 1958: New York, NY

Sam “The Man” Taylor: *Jazz For Commuters*
Metrojazz E/SE 1008, FSRC CD533
October 15 and 22, 1958: New York, NY

Thelonious Monk Quintet: *Five By Monk By Five*
Riverside RLP 12-305
June 1, 1959: New York, NY

Herb Geller: *Gypsy*
Fresh Sound FSRC CD 1644
June 9, 1959: New York, NY

Frank Wess Septet: *Opus De Blues*
Savoy Records MG 12142
December 8, 1959: Englewood Cliffs, NJ

Curtis Fuller Sextet: *Imagination*
Savoy Records MG 12144
December 17, 1959: Englewood Cliffs, NJ

Thad Jones: *Motor City Scene*
Mosaic MQ 5-172
December 24 and 31, 1959: New York, NY

Thad Jones All Stars: *The Best of Birdland Vol. 2*
Roulette RB-2
May 12, 1960: New York, NY

Bob Brookmeyer: *Jazz Is A Kick*
Mercury MG 20600
June 1960: New York, NY

Elvin Jones: *Elvin!*
Riverside RLP 409
Frank Wess: *Yo Ho! Poor You, Little Me*
Prestige PRLP 7266
January 24, 1963: Englewood Cliffs, NJ

Bill Evans: *Conversations with Myself*
Verve Records V6 8526
February 6, 1963: New York, NY

Johnny “Hammond” Smith: *Open House*
Riverside RM 482
1963: New York, NY

James Moody: *Great Day*
Argo Jazz LP 725
June 17 and 18, 1963

Billy Mitchell Quintet: *A Little Juicy*
Smash MGS 27042
August 1 and 6, 1963: New York, NY

Pepper Adams: *Pepper Adams Plays The Compositions of Charles Mingus*
Jazz Workshop WS219
September 9, 1963: New York

Ben Webster and Joe Zawinul: *Soulmates*
Riverside M476
October 14, 1963: New York, NY

Sonny Stitt: *Stitt Goes Latin*
Roost LP2253
November 6, 1963: New York, NY

Sonny Rollins: *Now’s The Time*
RCA Victor LPM 2927
January 20, 1964: New York, NY

McCoy Tyner Sextet: *Today And Tomorrow*
Impulse Records A-63

Oliver Nelson: *More Blues And The Abstract Truth*
Impulse Records A-9101
David Grusin: *Kaleidoscope*
Col CL 2344
November 23, 1964: New York, NY

**J.J Johnson: J.J!**
RCA Victor LPM 3350
December 8-9, 1964: New York, NY

**Sonny Stitt: Broadway Soul**
Colpix CPL-499
February 13, 1965: New York, NY

**Elvin Jones: And Then Again**
Atlantic Records ATL LP 1443
March 18, 1965: New York, NY

**Elvin Jones: Midnight Walk**
Atlantic Records ATL SD 1485

**Thad Jones/Pepper Adams Quintet: Mean What You Say**
Milestone MLP 1001
April 26 and May 4 and 9, 1966: New York, NY

**Thad Jones/Howard McGhee/Kenny Dorham: Live at the Newport Jazz Festival**
Europa Jazz EJ 1039
July 4, 1966: Newport, RI

**Jonathan Klein: Hear, O Israel – A Sabbath Concert in Jazz**
Seesaw Music NFTY-101
1967: New York, NY

**Herbie Hancock: Speak Like A Child**
Blue Note BLP 4279
March 6, 1968: Englewood Cliffs, NJ

**Stanley Turrentine: Another Story**
Blue Note BST 84336

**Dexter Gordon: Ca’PURANGE**
Prestige PR 10051
June 28, 1972: New York, NY
Dexter Gordon: *Tangerine*
Prestige PR 10091
June 28, 1972: New York, NY

Elvin Jones: *Mr. Jones*
Blue Note BN LA110-F
July 12, 1972: Englewood Cliffs, NJ

Thad Jones w/ the Louis Van Dyke Trio: *North Sea Jazz Sessions, Volume 1*
Jazz World JWD102.201
December 8, 1974: Hilversum, The Netherlands

Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Quartet: *You Made Me Love You*
Kiva/Elec KV-204
November 14, 1975: Tokyo, Japan

Junko Mine: *A Child Is Born*
All Art (Jap) K18P-9413
November 25, 1975: Tokyo, Japan

Mel Lewis Quintet: *Mel Lewis and Friends*
Horizon A&M, SP-716
June 8-9, 1976: New York, NY

Kenny Drew Quintet: *Life Flite*
Steepchase SCS-1077
February 6, 1977: New York, NY

Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Quartet
Artists House AH3
September 24, 1977: Miami, FL

Heiner Stadler: *A Tribute to Monk and Bird*
Tomato Tom-2-9002
January 17, 18, 19 and 25, 1978: New York, NY

Hank Jones Quintet: *Groovin’ High*
Muse MR5169

Dexter Gordon Quartet
Storyville Dan 101-8365
March 5, 1978: Copenhagen, Denmark
Bob Brookmeyer Quintet: *Back Again*
Sonet (Swd) SNTF-778
May 23, 24 & 25, 1978: New York, NY

Horace Parlan Quintet: *Glad I Found You*
Steeple Chase SCS1194
July 30, 1984: Copenhagen, Denmark

Thad Jones Quartet: *Three and One*
Steeple Chase (Dan) SCS-1197
October 4, 1984: Copenhagen, Denmark

Joe Williams & Friends: *I Just Want to Sing*
Delos DMS-4004
June 29 & 30, 1985: Los Angeles, CA

Big Bands

Count Basie Orchestra: *April in Paris*
Verve Records MGV 8012
July 26, 1955 & January 4 and 5 1956: New York, NY

Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra: *Presenting Thad Jones/Mel Lewis & “The Jazz Orchestra”*
Solid State SS-18003
February 7, 1966: New York, NY

Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra: *Live at the Village Vanguard*
Solid State SS-18016
April 18, 1967: New York, NY

Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra: *Jazz Casual*
Koch Jazz KOC-CD-8563
April 22, 1968: San Francisco, CA

Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra: *Live At The Village Vanguard*
Solid State SS-80439
April 28, 1967: New York, NY

Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra: *The Big Band Sound of Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Featuring Miss Ruth Brown*
Solid State SS-18041
July 18, 1968: New York, NY
Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra: *Monday Night*
Solid State SS-18048
October 17, 1968: New York, NY

Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra: *Central Park North*
Solid State SS-18058
June 17-18, 1969: New York, NY

Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra: *Basie 1969*
TCB (Swi) 02042
September 11, 1969: Switzerland

Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra: *Consummation*
Blue Note BST-84346
January 20, 21, 28 and Ma 25, 1970: New York, NY

Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra: *Live In Tokyo*
Denon Jazz YX-7557-ND
March 12-13, 1974: Tokyo, Japan

Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra: *Potpourri*
Philadelphia X-598
June 1974: Philadelphia, PA

Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra: *Greetings and Salutations*
Four Leaf FLC-5001
June 27 and 28, 1975: Stockholm, Sweden

Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra: *Suite For Pops*
Horizon A&M SP-701

Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra: *New York City, Autumn 1975*
Jazz Collection JCD-11
1975: New York, NY

Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra: *New Life*
Horizon A&M SP-707
July 22, December 16-17, 1975 and January 8, 10, 1976: New York, NY

Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra: *Rhoda Scott in New York*
Barclay 90068
June 2 and 3, 1976: New York, NY
Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra: *Live in Munich*
Horizon A&M SP-724
September 9, 1976: Munich, Germany

Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra w/ Monica Zetturlund: *It Only Happens Every Time*
EMI 7CO62-35454
August 20 and 21, 1977: Helsinki, Finland

Danish Radio Big Band Orchestra: *By Jones, I Think We’ve Got It*
Metronome MLP-15629
March 21 and 22, 1978: Copenhagen, Denmark

Danish Radio Big Band Orchestra: *A Good Time Was Had By All*
Metronome MLP-15644
March 21 and 22, 1978: Copenhagen, Denmark

Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra: *One More Time*
Poljazz ZSX-0697
October 26, 1978: Warsaw, Poland

Thad Jones: *Eclipse*
Metronome MLP-15652
September 17 and 18, 1979: Copenhagen, Denmark

Thad Jones: *Jazzhus Slukefter*
Metronome MLP-15669
September 15 and 16, 1980: Copenhagen, Denmark

Thad Jones and the Count Basie Orchestra: *Way-Out Basie*
Philips 32JD-160
November 11, 1985: Tokyo, Japan

Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra: *All My Yesterdays*
Resonance Records HCD 2023
2016: New York, NY
APPENDIX A

FOREWORD: CLAY JENKINS
Clay Jenkins
Professor of Jazz Trumpet
Department of Jazz and Contemporary Media
Eastman School of Music

September 20, 2020

I have known Shawn Williams for about 10 years, since he began his master’s degree in Jazz Studies at the Eastman School of Music. I have so enjoyed Shawn’s development from a talented young graduate from California State University Northridge to a very accomplished and informed jazz performer.

I was excited when Shawn informed me that his Doctoral Thesis would involve the musicality and the legacy of Thad Jones. I got to know Mr. Jones briefly when he was leading the Count Basie Orchestra, and I learned more about him through my close association with Snooky Young. I am honored that Shawn asked me to write a short piece on why I feel that this is such an important topic.

I became interested in the life and music of Thad Jones when I first started playing his big-band charts as a college student in the early 70’s. I loved the recordings of the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra as well as the individual players including Snooky Young, Joe Henderson, Billy Harper, Pepper Adams, Harold Danko, Mel Lewis, Bob Brookmeyer, etc. I then heard recordings of Thad Jones playing his tunes with small groups and I realized that Thad was an amazingly versatile artist. He had a beautiful and very unique style of improvising that was appreciated by other established artists including Thelonious Monk, Charles Mingus, and Miles Davis. Thad was one of the only jazz trumpet soloists who also excelled as a composer of tunes and as a wonderful arranger. I was very impressed at how Thad’s playing was mirrored in his compositions, and vice versa. His improvisations as well as his compositions exemplify his depth of swing, melodic and harmonic content, rhythm, playfulness, romance, dynamics, timbre, space, and respect for the Blues Legacy. Thad Jones’ musicality has been one of my strongest inspirations as a musician.

I am very proud of Shawn for taking on this project to honor the legacy of Thad Jones. I am quite sure that his thorough research and scholarship will serve him well as he continues his life as an artist and as an inspiring teacher.

Sincerely,

Clay Jenkins
APPENDIX B

DEFINITION OF TERMS
**Angularity:** Wide intervallic leaps played in succession within a phrase structure.

**Call-and-response:** The performance of musical phrases or longer passages in alternation by different voices or distinct groups, used in opposition in such a way as to suggest that they answer one another; it may involve spatial separation of the groups, and contrasts of volume, pitch, timbre, etc.\(^{398}\)

**Antecedent and Consequent:** The names given to a pair of musical statements that complement one another by virtue of a rhythmic symmetry and, more important, a harmonic balance established by their juxtaposition.\(^{399}\)

**Density:** A segment that contains main complex musical events at once; a segment that contains several melodies simultaneously occurring; a segment that contains many aired, distinct musical voices on a number of different notes in a way such that the music is not easily simplified.\(^{400}\)

**Ghost Band:** A band that performs under the name of a deceased leader. The repertory of such a group consists largely of the original band’s arrangements, though it may also include items written in a similar style; some groups attempt to retain musicians who worked as sidemen for the leader concerned. Notable examples of ghost bands have been under the name of Glenn Miller and orchestras named after the Dorsey brothers; Duke Ellington’s band was taken over in 1974 by his son Mercer Ellington, and Count Basie’s orchestra has continued since the latter’s death in 1984 under the leadership of Eric Dixon, Thad Jones (1985–6), Dixon again, Frank Foster (1986–95), and Grover Mitchell (from 1995).\(^{401}\)

**Linear Approach:** A harmonization technique emphasizing the contour of and interest of the individual lines; the lower voices often move in contours independent from the lead voice.\(^{402}\)

**Polymetric Invention:** In its most basic form, polymetric invention creates a recurring cycle of rhythmic counterpoint. Within the same time span, the basic beats of different meters crossover one another, creating syncopation and temporarily increasing the

---


music’s instability and tension. They then coincide with one another, resolving the tension.403

**Sequence:** A sequence occurs when a melodic fragment is immediately followed by one or more variations on that same fragment. Sequences may be long or short, and they may be melodic, rhythmic, harmonic or based on a provocative interval. Sometimes the sequential occurrence of the motive is simple and transparent. Other times it may be heavily decorated and disguised, perhaps escaping the conscious awareness of the listener, but it is nevertheless sensed in some subtle way.404

**Sheets of Sound:** A term coined by jazz critic Ira Gitler in 1958. The term is used to describe saxophonist John Coltrane’s innovative method of employing extremely dense and complex lines that mostly consist of rapid arpeggios and scalar patterns performed in succession.

**Sonority:** A sonority a vertical combination of any number of pitches. Parallels with voicings, which refers to the vertical spacing of the tones in a chord.

**Syncopation:** 1) The momentary displacement by some precise degree of anticipation or delay of the regular or normal accent of a piece of music, into a position between the pulses. 2) The occasion when a strong accent is brought in where a weak one is expected. 3) A displacement, in the manner of a rhythmic contradiction of either the beat or the normal accent of the musical phrase – although the underlying, original metric pulse of the music, as indicated by its time signature, remains recognizable.405

**Tritone Substitution:** A dominant chord type with a root situated a tritone away from the normal V7 chord in a V7–I resolution.406

**Upper Chromatic Dominant:** A dominant chord type that resolves from a half step above to the tonic or transient tonic that follows.407

**Upper Structure Triads:** An upper-structure triad voicing is a complex sound. It projects two simultaneous harmonic impressions. First and foremost, all notes of the voicing collectively create a sound that clearly represents the given chord symbol. At the same time, the three upper notes form a triad in close position (including, possibly, various inversions). These upper notes have their own separate and clearly identifiable triad sound, while simultaneously functioning as chord tones and/or tensions of the given chord symbol. Upper-structure triad voicings are used when the write wants a powerful sound containing a high level of resonance.408

---

403 Berliner, *Thinking In Jazz*, 153.
405 Ibid., 58-59.
407 Ibid., 209.
APPENDIX C

SELECTED SOLO TRANSCRIPTIONS
Airmail Special

Album: *Jazz For Comrades* (1958)

Personnel: Thad Jones (coo), Sonny "The Man" Taylor (w), Buddy Johnson (ts), George Auld (ts), Billy Bauer (g), Lee Anderson (p), Barney Richmond (b), Herbie Lovelle (d)

Composed by: Jimmy Mundy
Thad Jones’ comet solo on:

**All Of Us**

Album: *Midnight Walt* (1966)

Personnel: Thad Jones (c-a), Hank Mobley (m), Abdullah Ibrahim (p), Steve Jones (el-g), Don Menza (t), Elvin Jones (d)

Composed by: Art Modin
Thad Jones' comet solo on:

All Of You

Album: After Hours at the London House (1957)

Personnel: Thad Jones (cjr), Sarah Vaughan (vox),
Ezra Weis (tb), Ronald Bright (p),
Richard Davis (b), Roy Haynes (d)

Composed by Cole Porter
Bitty Ditty

Personnel: Thad Jones (vcl), Frank Wess (ts, b),
Hank Jones (p), Charles Mingus (b),
Kenny Clark(s)

Album: The Fabulous Thad Jones (1954)

Composed by: Thad Jones
That Jones' comet solo on:

Blue Jelly

Album: Frank Wess Steamin' with Kenny Burrell (1957)

Personnel: Thad Jones (ts), Frank Wess (ts, fl),
Mal Waldron (p), Kenny Burrell (g),
Paul Chambers (b), Art Taylor (d)

Composed by: Sonny Rollins
Thad Jones' cornet solo on:

Blue Room (1953)

Album: Swing!...Not Spring (1953)

Personnel: Thad Jones (corn),
Billy Mitchell (tr), Terry Pollard (g/vib),
Alvin Jackson (b), Elvin Jones (d)

Composed by: Lorenz Hart & Richard Rodgers
Thad Jones' comet solo on:

Blue Room (1956)

Album: Detroit-New York Junction (1956)

Personnel: Thad Jones (vcl), Billy Mitchell (tr),
Kenny Dorso (g), Tommy Flanagan (p),
Oscar Pettiford (b), Shadow Wilson (d)

Composed by: Lorenz Hart & Richard Rodgers
Thad Jones' comet solo on:

Cold Miner

Album: So Hot! Poor You, Little Me (1963)

Personnel: Thad Jones (c-a), Frank Wess (ts, fl),
Guido Millones (g), Buddy Catlett (b),
Roy Haynes (d)

Composed by: Frank Wess

1: 0:35
Ami
That Jones' cornet solo on:

**Friday the 13th**

Album: *The Best of Braxton Vol. 2* (1960)

1 - 2:09

Composed by: Thad Jones
Groovin' High
Album: Leonard Feather Presents - Sep (1957)

Thad Jones' comet solo on:

Personnel: Thad Jones (v), Phil Woods (s),
George Wallington (p), Carl W. Russell (b),
Art Taylor (d)

Composed by: Dizzy Gillespie
H & T Blues

Album: Mean While You Say (1956)

Composed by: Thad Jones

I - 2:52

G\(^{(9)}\)

D\(^{b}\)

G\(^{(9)}\)

E\(^{7}\)

Am\(^{7}\)

D\(^{7}\)

G\(^{7}\)

II - 3:14

G\(^{(9)}\)

D\(^{7}\)

D\(^{b}\)

E\(^{7}\)

Am\(^{7}\)

D\(^{7}\)

G\(^{7}\)

III - 3:33

G\(^{(9)}\)

D\(^{b}\)

E\(^{7}\)
I Got It Thad (And That Ain't Bad)

Album: Sonny Rollins (1956)

Composed by: Thad Jones

Personnel: Thad Jones (c.v.),
Frank Foster (ts), Jimmy Jones (p),
Doug Watkins (b), St. Jones (d)
I Mean You

Album: 5 by Monk By 5 (1959)

Composed by: Thelonious Monk

Performed: Thad Jones (cor), Charlie Rouse (ts),
Thelonious Monk (p), Sam Jones (b),
Art Taylor (d)
I'll Remember April
Album: The Fabulous Thad Jones (1954)

Composed by: Don Raye & Gene DePaul

Thad Jones' comet solo on:

Personnel: Thad Jones (c-a), Frank Wess (ts, fl),
Hank Jones (p), Charles Mingus (b),
Kenny Clarke (d)
Thad Jones' comet solo on:

Let's

Album: The Magnificent Thad Jones Vol. 3 (1957)

Personnel: Thad Jones (corn), Benny Powell (b),
Gigi Gryce (sn), Tommy Flanagan (p),
George Duvivier (b), Elvin Jones (d)

Composed by: Thad Jones
Thad Jones' cornet solo on:

**Mad Thad**

Album: *Mad Thad* (1956)

Personnel: Thad Jones (corn), Frank Foster (ms.),
Jimmy Jones (p), Doug Watkins (b),
St. Jones (d)

Composed by: Quincy Jones
Mean What You Say

Album: Mean What You Say (1956)

Thad Jones' comet solo on:

Personnel: Thad Jones (cor), Pepper Adams (bar),
Duke Pearson (p), Ron Carter (b),
Mid Lewis (d)

Composed by: Thad Jones
More Of The Same
Album: Jazz Collaboration Vol. 1 (1955)

Composer: Thad Jones

Personnel: Thad Jones (cbs), John Dennis (p),
Charles Mingus (b), Max Roach (d)
No Refill
Album: Moto-Car Scene (1959)

Composed by: Thad Jones

Personnel: Thad Jones (ce), Billy Mitchell (ts),
Tommy Flanagan (p), Paul Chambers (b),
Elvis Jones (d)
Thad Jones' comet solo on:

Oh! Karen O

Album: Ca'Paremcg (1972)

Premixed: Thad Jones (co),
Dexter Gordon (tr), Hunt Jones (p),
Stanley Clarke (b), Louie Hayes (d).

Composed by: Ewan MacColl
Osie's Oasis
Album: Osie's Oasis (1955)

Composed by: Osie Johnson
Thad Jones' comet solo on:

Potpourri
Album: Oilin (1957)

Personnel: Thad Jones (c-a), Frank Wess (t, fl),
Teddy Charles (vib), Mal Waldron (g),
Doug Watkins (b), Elvin Jones (b)

Composed by: Mal Waldron
Quittin' Time

Album: Another Story (1969)

Composed by: Thad Jones
Ritmo Bobo

Personnel: Thad Jones (cor), Sonny Stitt (s.a.n.), Cheli Corea (p), Larry Goren (b), Willie Bobo (d), Carlos "Patato" Valdez (agogo), Orvaldo "Ushuhu" Martinez (cowbell, maraca, jambone)

Composed by: Sonny Stitt

288
Thad Jones' comet solo on:

**Scratch**

Album: *Detroit-New York Junction* (1950)

Personnel: Thad Jones (cxe), Billy Mitchell (m),
Kenny Dorsey (g), Tommy Flanagan (g),
Oscar Pettiford (b), Shadow Wilson (d)

Composed by: Thad Jones
That Jones' comet solo on:

**Straight, No Chaser**

*Album: 5 by Monk By 5 (1959)*

Performed: Thad Jones (cor), Charlie Rouse (ts), Thelonious Monk (p), Sam Jones (b), Art Taylor (d)

Composer: Thelonious Monk
Thad Jones' comet solo on:

Subtle Rebuttle

Album: The Best of Braxton Vol. 2 (1960)

Percussion: Thad Jones (snare), Al Grey (bass), Billy Mitchell (tuba), Frank Wess (alto sax), Hank Jones (p), Richard Davis (bass), Olie Jepson (drums)

Composed by: Thad Jones

I - 1:51

\[ \text{Music notation image}\]
Tangerine

Personnel: Thad Jones (corr.), Dexter Gordon (s),
Hank Jones (p), Stanley Clarke (b),
Louis Hayes (d)

Composed by: Johnny Mercer & Victor Schertzinger

I - 3:30

Dm7  G7  C6  F7  Em7  A7(b9)

Dm7  G7  CMA7  A7(b9)

Dm7  G7  C6  F7  Em7  A7(b9)

CMA7  F7(b5)  B7  E7  A7(b9)

Dm7  G7  C6  F7  Em7  A7(b9)

Dm7  Dm7/C  Bm7(b5)  E7  Am7  Am7/G  Fm7(b5)  F7

Dm7  G7  C6  A7(b9)

F - 4:24

Dm7  G7  C6  F7  Em7  A7(b9)
Thad Jones' comet solo on:

The Zec

Album: Swing: Not Spring (1953)

Personnel: Thad Jones (coe), Billy Mitchell (m),
Terry Pollard (p,vb), Alvin Jackson (b),
Elvin Jones (d)

Composed by: Thad Jones
Thad Jones' comet solo on:

Three Flowers
Album: Baby and Tomorrow (1964)

Presented: Thad Jones (corn), Frank Strozier (ms), John Gillmore (ts), McCoy Tyner (p), Bud Vil' (b), Elvin Jones (d)

Composed by: McCoy Tyner
Thad Jones' comet solo on:

What Is This Thing

Album: The Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Quartet (1977)

Personnel: Thad Jones (tr.),
Harold Danko (p), Rufus Reid (b),
Mel Lewis (d)

Composed by: Cole Porter
Thad Jones' comet solo on:

You'll Never Get Away From Me

Album: Gypsy (1959)

Personnel: Thad Jones (vcl),
Bob Celler (tb), Bud Jones (p),
Scott LaFaro (b), Elvin Jones (d)

Composed by: Julie Styne
Zec
Album: Detroit-New York Junction (1950)
Composed by Thad Jones
APPENDIX D

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
DOCUMENTATION
DATE: December 12, 2019

TO: Shawn Williams, MM, MA
FROM: University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [1537403-1] THREE IN ONE: THE STYLE, STRUCTURE AND SOUND OF THAD JONES AS A JAZZ TRUMPETER
SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: NOT RESEARCH
EFFECTIVE DATE:  
EXPIRATION DATE:  

The University of Northern Colorado IRB has reviewed your protocol and determined that your submission does not meet the federal definition of research according to CFR 45 Part 46.102.

(I) Research means a systematic investigation, including research development, testing, and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge. Activities that meet this definition constitute research for purposes of this policy, whether or not they are conducted or supported under a program that is considered research for other purposes. For example, some demonstration and service programs may include research activities. For purposes of this part, the following activities are deemed not to be research:

(1) Scholarly and journalistic activities (e.g., oral history, journalism, biography, literary criticism, legal research, and historical scholarship), including the collection and use of information, that focus directly on the specific individuals about whom the information is collected.

Project activities as set forth in this submission do not require IRB oversight and approval. However, if your procedures change and/or you decide to generalize your findings, please contact the Office of Research & Sponsored Programs to further discuss if IRB approval would be needed.

If you have any questions, please contact Nicole Morse at 970-351-1910 or nicole.morse@unco.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB's records.