

Further Details

(Chap. 1, note 28) Zack Whyte

Zack Whyte's was a band of greater significance in the development of jazz than is generally realized today. Zack Whyte (ca. 1898–Mar. 10, 1967) played with Horace Henderson in the early '20s and started his own band sometime around 1924. Only a handful of recordings of the band were released from a session in 1929, a couple of years before what was likely its peak. In 1931, the Chocolate Beau Brummels were joined by Roy Johnson's Happy Pals and the bands of Blanche Calloway, Bennie Moten, and Chick Webb for a "battle of the bands" tour. Sy Oliver is recorded as having remembered that each band was the winner on different nights. See Albert McCarthy, *Big Band Jazz* (New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1974), 160. When Oliver joined as a trumpet player in 1928, they were using "head" arrangements. It was while with Zack Whyte that Oliver began to arrange, and it was in this band that he forged the sound that he had so much success with later as arranger for Jimmie Lunceford.

The personnel of the band included Andy Anderson, Buster Harding, Earle Warren, and Leroy "Snake" White. All are known to have had various connections with Dameron in the earlier years of his career.

/Is/

(Chap. 2, note 1) Harlan Leonard's Kansas City Rockets

Along with Jay McShann's orchestra, Harlan Leonard's Rockets were one of the premier bands from Kansas City after those of Count Basie and Andy Kirk. Like the Basie and Kirk organizations, the Rockets had a long history. In 1923, after graduating from high school, Harlan Leonard began his professional career with George E. Lee and some lesser local bands. Eventually, he was leading the reed section of Bennie Moten's band. Moten's band was one of the most important bands of the Southwest in the '20s and early '30s, and during those years achieved national prominence, the first Southwest-territory band to do so. After Moten's death in 1935 it became the foundation of the Count Basie Band. Indeed, musically it had been Basie's first band, and it certainly was the laboratory where he developed his unique and subtle skills as a band leader.

Harlan Leonard was present on eleven recording dates with Moten between 1926 and 1931.

Leonard was not a soloist but was one of the “well-schooled” players who anchored the band. Many of the early big-band musicians speak of there being two types of players: those who were good readers with “legit” technique and those who were good improvisers but whose technique was unconventional and, at times, unreliable for precise section work without the leadership of properly trained colleagues. It was the opinion of many musicians of the time that it took a balance of both types to make a really good band.

The next phase of Leonard’s career involved an important, if painful, dynamic in the evolution of jazz orchestras, the change from a “commonwealth” system to a more business-oriented “payroll” system. From Harlan Leonard’s point of view, “The old commonwealth plan which worked so well in the tough years and enabled us to build the band, went by the boards once Moten became a national figure. He went over to a pay-roll plan and syphoned off the gravy for himself. . . . A group of us broke with Bennie, turned in our notices and left to reorganize a band which we felt stuck closer to the old Kansas City Style.” This group consisted of Booker Washington and Ed Lewis , trumpets; Thamon Hayes, trombone; Leonard, alto saxophone; Woodie Walder, clarinet and tenor saxophone; and Vernon Page, sousaphone. The new group was organized under the commonwealth plan, led by Thamon Hayes and named, appropriately, the Thamon Hayes Orchestra, a.k.a. the Thamon Hayes Skyrockets. Six new players were recruited: Vic Dickenson, trombone; Charles Goodwin, guitar; Baby Lovett, drums; Richard Smith, trumpet; Jesse Stone, piano and arranger; and Herman Walder, alto saxophone. The band rehearsed and, after winning a cutting contest with their old boss Bennie Moten, managed to work steadily until an unfortunate booking at the Club Morocco in Chicago.

Apparently unaware of the Chicago A. F. of M. local’s rules regarding bands visiting from out of their jurisdiction, the band members expected to be able to stay at the Morocco indefinitely, provided they did good business, which they did. However, at the end of two weeks they were told by union officials that they had to leave town. Perhaps there had been some other tensions in the band, perhaps not, but two of the most important band members, Thamon Hayes and Jesse Stone, left in the wake of this frustrating development. Now under the leadership of Harlan Leonard, the band hobbled along for a while, but after another frustrating experience in Chicago it disbanded. Undeterred, Leonard organized a new band in 1936

by recruiting musicians from the commonwealth band led by the highly regarded saxophonist Tommy Douglas, as well as several recent graduates of Lincoln High School. Lincoln was one of the several important public schools in the history of jazz. It provided training for Harlan Leonard himself, as well as bassist Walter Page, trumpeter Lamar Wright, and saxophonist Charlie Parker, among many others.

The new edition of the Rockets had a strong rhythm section anchored by the veteran Kansas City drummer Jesse Price. At different times either Billy Hadnott or Winston Williams played bass. Hadnott and Williams were making names for themselves in KC for their solid playing in the Walter Page style, and Williams went on to be one of the transitional swing-to-bop bassists. Electric guitarist Efferge Ware, one of the pioneering guitarists of the Southwest, and pianist William S. Smith rounded out the rhythm section. For the next couple of years they managed to have success in spite of the decline of nightlife in Kansas City due to the ending of the Pendergast era.

Included in the six titles recorded by the Rockets at their first recording session was “Hairy Joe Jump,” retitled “Southern Fried” after a lawsuit brought by Al Capp and the syndicators of the *Li'l Abner* comic strip, over the reference to one of their characters. “Southern Fried” became a swing standard recorded later with notable success by Charlie Barnet and others.

{Sources: Ross Russell, *Jazz Style in Kansas City and the Southwest* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971), 105–6; Anatol Schenker, program notes, *Harlan Leonard and His Rockets* (CD) (Classics no. 670); Leonard Feather, program notes, *Harlan Leonard and His Rockets* (phonodisc) (RCA Victor LPV-531); McCarthy, *Big Band Jazz*.}

/s/

(Chap. 2, note 18) “Rock and Ride”

Example A1 shows the piano part for “Rock and Ride” Dameron gave to Mary Lou Williams. The part in the Mary Lou Williams Collection shows the original coda crossed out in pencil and a shorter simpler ending. Here the shorter ending is indicated as “revised coda.”

The first turn-around in the tune itself, at measures A-7 and A-8, extends the chromatic root

motion of F #7 to F7, found in the introduction, to G7-F #7-F7. At letter B there is a four-bar interlude that sets up the solos. Here the chromatic sequence is extended upward to A b 7 as well as below the F7 to E7.

In the final chorus, the turn-around at the first ending combines whole-tone root motion with bVI7-V7 and bII-I motion in the sequence A b 7-F #7-E7-B7-B b 7-F #7-F7. The bridge of this chorus has an exchange in which the first two measures are given to the drums and the next to the ensemble. Here he uses the chromatic lower neighbor to develop this harmonic motif further, with the chords moving from E b to D and back again. Finally, the coup de grace (in the original, recorded version at least): the coda, which reprises the developed turn-around from earlier in letter F, and one more A section, which concludes with the cadence G7-F#7-F7-B7-B b 7 and a final three note “stinger” from the horns.

<Insert ex. A1 here>

/s/

(Chap. 2, note 21) Use of Pentatonic Scales

The use of pentatonic scales and their harmonic implications is an important topic in twentieth century music. It certainly goes beyond Ellington and Gershwin, and we should probably add Isham Jones, since Dameron arranged some of his songs as well. However, since Dameron stresses Ellington’s influence on his work, it makes sense to limit this discussion and not go too far afield.

Perhaps the best-known example of this in Gershwin’s work is the A section of “I Got Rhythm,” which is entirely composed in major pentatonic. Ellington, who makes very creative use of pentatonic scales throughout his work, does much the same in the first two phrases of “In a Sentimental Mood.” Elsewhere, as in the first eight measures of “Any Time, Any Day, Anywhere,” Ellington uses only four of the five pentatonic notes, saving the fifth for the end of the second phrase. In “Clouds in My Heart,” in the key of B b , Ellington uses the major pentatonic based on F, the fifth or dominant step of the song’s key, over the tonic harmony. In measures 3 and 4 the song’s harmony shifts to the subdominant E b , based on the fourth step of the key. Here Ellington uses the B b pentatonic, centered on the fifth of the E b chord,

thereby maintaining the subtle tension between the notes of the melody and the underlying harmony. Although “Any Time, Any Day, Anywhere” and “Clouds in My Heart,” are obscure today, they were recorded by Ellington in 1932 for Brunswick and would most likely have been known to the young Dameron.

/s/

(Chap. 2, note 22) My Dream

The melody—in thirty-two-bar AABA form and in the key of F—is built around the sixth of the tonic chord, with the first phrase and all but the last note of the second falling within an F major pentatonic scale. The notes he uses also fit with the Eb7 chord in the second measure, which serves as a colorful substitute for the dominant or C7, in this case. The last note of the second phrase is an E, which is outside of the F pentatonic scale. It is also outside of the accompanying harmony but related to it as a member of the appropriate diminished scale. In the next phrase a C# is introduced on the first beat. This is not only outside of the chord but outside of the key, the note one half step above the dominant, C. When it is first heard, the ear understands it to be an accented approach-tone to the D, which is in the Gmi7. Dameron comes back to this note in the final phrase of the section, where it is a flatted ninth over the chord root C. The entire passage comes to rest by returning to D, the sixth of the F major chord. What is most telling in all this is that one’s ear can follow the melody without difficulty, and anyone comfortable with singing can sing along with Darwin Jones quite easily. For all of this sophistication, the melody sounds simple and straightforward.

/s/

(Chap. 3, note 13) Mary Lou

The ensemble, without drums, begins this conversation in the introduction, as a two-bar melodic statement answered by a two-bar piano improvisation. The first chorus begins with the entrance of the drums, and the piano takes the lead in the exchanges. The interlude is also cast in this call-and-response mode, with the ensemble leading off in a pair of two-bar exchanges and the piano finishing the section with

an additional four measures, with a simple background in the ensemble. This leads to a one-chorus trumpet solo, with ensemble background, in Harold's part. Mary Lou takes a chorus all by herself, and then the band returns to the "conversation," with a series of exchanges in the last chorus that end with a return to the opening motif.

The overarching unifying element is the ABA form in the key of F. The exact harmonic sequences of the three main sections—the opening chorus, the solo section, and the concluding ensemble—differ significantly. In addition, other than the opening motif, which returns in the coda, the melodies presented are unique to each section.

Dameron seems to be making a musical argument in this piece for the association of three different harmonic "holding patterns." Holding patterns could be defined as harmonic sequences giving the rhythmic feel of a harmonic progression while not substantially altering an essential harmonic state. They are often used as vamps, as well as in the chord progressions of tunes. The use of an extended ii-V-ii-V sequence, as in the first four bars of "Honeysuckle Rose," is a good example. In this instance, the dominant harmony is held out, while rhythmic motion is still expressed in the alternation between the two chords.

The first of the three "holding patterns" in "Mary Lou" is the I-II7 pattern (found later in Dameron's "Dameronia," as well as in Thelonious Monk's "Well You Needn't" and "Epistrophy"), which opens and closes the piece. The second is the I-vi-ii-V turn-around sequence, which replaces the first pattern in the ABA form of the solo section. This pattern is found in many, many tunes. A good example would be the A sections of Rodgers and Hart's "Blue Moon." The third is the diatonic parallel motion sequence I-ii-iii-ii, which is used in the closing ensemble exchanges with the pianist. Good examples of the use of this "holding pattern" would be Benny Carter's "When Lights Are Low" or Duke Ellington's "Just Squeeze Me."

This "musical argument" for the validity of a variety of harmonic accompaniments that can be used in place of each other is one of the harmonic innovations in jazz of the 1940s and 1950s. Not only did the musicians of that period use these variants to bring freshness to well-known melodies, but they used them to generate melodies of a new style. Dameron was one of the composers at the forefront of this approach, and Williams had already been moving in this direction. Both would explore these techniques

throughout the 1940s.

/s/

(Chap. 4, note 4) Sabby Lewis

Born William Sebastian Lewis on Nov. 1, 1914, in Middleburg, NC (died. July 9, 1994), Sabby Lewis settled in Boston in the early 1930s and became a local hero there over the years. He started the first of his many bands in 1936 and was a successful bandleader for over four decades. Sabby Lewis is also remembered for nurturing talented young musicians. At one time or another his personnel included Buddy Anderson, Cat Anderson, Jimmy Crawford, Alan Dawson, Paul Gonsalves, Joe Gordon, Roy Haynes, Lenny Johnson, George “Big Nick” Nicholas, Bill Pierce, Sonny Stitt, and Tony Williams—three generations of outstanding players. Alto saxophonist Rudy Williams, who would later play in Dameron’s bands, played with Lewis around 1940, along with Tadd’s good friend Freddie Webster.

/s/

(Chap. 5, note 9) “Lady Bird” Arrangement for Gillespie

As stated in the chapter, Dameron treats the “Lady Bird” arrangement recorded by Gillespie as a complete composition. The tune that was copyrighted appears only at the beginning and is followed by the ten-measure interlude mentioned above. He then keeps with this thirty-two-bar strophe of two nearly identical sixteen-bar sequences for another sixty-four measures, plus a coda. These are ostensibly sections for a soloist, but the soloist has to work around very strong backgrounds. In these sections Dameron develops his composition by working with the phrase structure of the original melody in different ways. For Gillespie’s trumpet solo, the trumpet improvisation is answered by new melodies from the band. There is a sudden change of key from A \flat to E \flat , and a second, eight-bar theme used by Dameron in all of his treatments of “Lady Bird,” is introduced; this is answered by the tenor saxophone of James Moody. The exchange between the ensemble and Moody is repeated and resolves into a six-bar coda. The whole piece is short and condensed, yet complete and satisfying because of the intricacy of its structure:

1. Six-bar introduction

2. Statement of the theme
 - 2a. Repeat of theme resolves into
 - 2b. Ten-bar interlude
3. Eight-bar trumpet solo over ensemble background
 - 3a. Four-bar ensemble melody answered by trumpet solo
 - 3b. Repeat of 3. and 3a.
4. Key change and eight-bar ensemble melody answered by eight-bar tenor sax solo
 - 4a. Repeat of 4. resolves into six-bar coda.

/s/

(Chap. 5, note 28) Gottlieb photos of Mary Lou Williams's party

This photo appeared in *Down Beat*, Aug. 27, 1947, p. 2:

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/ihas/loc.natlib.gottlieb.09281/default.html>

/s/

These are some of Gottlieb's other photos from the party:

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/ihas/loc.natlib.gottlieb.09311/default.html>

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/ihas/loc.natlib.gottlieb.15931/default.html>

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/ihas/loc.natlib.gottlieb.09291/default.html>

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/ihas/loc.natlib.gottlieb.09271/default.html>

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/ihas/loc.natlib.gottlieb.15921/default.html>

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/ihas/loc.natlib.gottlieb.15961/default.html>

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/ihas/loc.natlib.gottlieb.16011/default.html>

/s/

There are more from this set, but the ones posted are all that could be located at the time of this writing.

These photos, including one not in the links below, can also be found at

<<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html>> by entering Tadd Dameron's name into "Search All Collections." A portrait of Dameron taken around the same time appeared in *Down Beat*, Sept. 10, 1947, on page 6. The photo in the magazine is cropped to show just Dameron's head. It is in a column titled "Posin'," by Bill Gottlieb. In it Gottlieb asks Howard McGhee, Dizzy Gillespie, Tadd Dameron, Charlie Parker, and Barbara Carroll, "What is bop?" Dameron, identified as "arranger-bandleader Tad Dameron, who writes much of dizzy's stuff," responds, "Be-bop is music that's fresh and alive. It leads the way for new sounds in music. Instead of straight chords, it weaves chords late into the main chord. Right now, it's just the beginning. Soon be-bop will become the most beautiful of all music, more beautiful than symphony music. Highly commercial, too. The movies have begun to use it and soon everyone else will." Dameron's first name was still being spelled Tad.

/s/

(Chap. 5, note 32) Bill Gottlieb photos of recording session

Tadd Dameron Sextet Blue Note recording session at WOR Studios, New York, Sept. 26, 1947:

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/ihas/loc.natlib.gottlieb.07521/default.html>

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/ihas/loc.natlib.gottlieb.14481/default.html>

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/ihas/loc.natlib.gottlieb.06541/default.html>

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/ihas/loc.natlib.gottlieb.01711/default.html>

/s/

(Chap. 5, note 37) "Half-Step Down, Please"

Oddly, this piece was not copyrighted until 1964, even though it was released at the time on Victor, a major label. Further, the tune was copyrighted by BVC. The author suspects this was another of Tadd's attempts—successful in this case—at getting around Richard Carpenter's stranglehold on his rights.

However, the lack of a deposit in 1947 may have just been an oversight on the part of BVC. The deposit lead sheet, in C without chords, is full of mistakes, but close enough.

"Half-Step Down Please" is built on a descending progression reminiscent of Rodgers and Hart's

“Lover”:

D ♭ 6 | G-7 C7 ♭ 5 | C ♭ 6 | F-7 B ♭ 7 ♭ 5 |

A6 | E ♭ -7 A ♭ 7 ♭ 5 | D ♭ maj7 | E ♭ -7 A ♭ 7 ||

The bridge, which is unique to this tune, continues developing the chromatically descending progression.

A ♭ -7 D ♭ 7 | G-7 C7 | F♯-7 B7 | Ema7 |

E-7 A7 | E ♭ -7 A ♭ 7 | E ♭ -7 | A ♭ 7 D7 ♭ 5||

/As/

(Chap. 6, note 6) The Royal Roost Bands

The personnel of Dameron’s bands in this Royal Roost period is a topic of interest not just to fans of his music; the quality and the variety of the players make it a fascinating issue more generally. The stalwarts of these bands were Curley Russell and Kenny Clarke. They are present on every Dameron studio recording and broadcast, from Aug. 1948 through Apr. 1949. Before Clarke, who was in Europe during the summer of 1948, Max Roach was the drummer on most if not all of the dates. Saxophonist Allan Eager was on the dates up through Nov, 1948, but starting in 1949 he was no longer present. Trombonist Kai Winding was a “Bop Concert” regular in the spring and was part of the Dameron band that opened at the Roost at the end of June. At some point in the summer he was replaced by Fats Navarro. Navarro was in the band from sometime in Aug. 1948 through the broadcast on Oct. 10, 1948. He recorded with Dameron only once more, on the Jan. 18, 1948, studio date for Capitol. According to Dameron:

Fats used to do things—now that I look back at it, I believe he did them on purpose—so I’d fire him. Then I’d try someone else for a while and get so disturbed I’d go back to him and hire him back. Each time I did, he’d ask for a raise. Of course, I’d have to pay it to him. I fired him again. Then I went back to him, and he wanted more. I told him, like I always told him, that he was too expensive. He told me, like he always did, that he didn’t want to play for anyone else. But that was it, as far as I was concerned. I told him he was drawing leader’s salary, and it was about time for him to be a leader. (Bill Coss, “Tadd’s Back,” *Down Beat*, Feb. 15, 1962, 19)

On the Oct. 30, 1948m broadcast, Kai Winding returned to replace Navarro as the brass player on

the front line. Winding stayed on into 1949 and was part of the Big Ten in the beginning of that year. However, in the Feb. 12 broadcast from the Roost, Ted Kelley is the trombonist, and on the Apr. 21 date for Capitol, J. J. Johnson takes Kelley's place. Wardell Gray puts in an appearance as the third man on the front line on the Sept. 4 broadcast. He may also have played at the Roost with Dameron on some of the Aug. dates, but this is not entirely clear—Grey was a member of Count Basie's band at the time. Wardell's presence on the broadcast and the Blue Note recordings may have left the impression that Gray played with Dameron more than he actually did. Milt Jackson also played on the Sept. 4 Roost broadcast but seems to have been only sitting in. However, Jackson and Dameron would work together in the recording studio later, in the 1960s. Alto saxophonist Rudy Williams, who played on the first of the Babs Gonzales sessions, is in the band for the four broadcasts in Oct. that feature Fats Navarro. Williams was among the first saxophonists to be aware of Charlie Parker back in his days with Jay McShann. Williams was with Sabby Lewis when both bands were playing at the Savoy in the early 1940s, and he would stay by the bandstand on his break to listen to Bird (Arthur Howard, friend of Rudy Williams present at the Savoy at the time, interview with the author, spring 2002).

Drummer Clem DeRosa, quite young at the time, got to play with the band in the fall of 1948. Kenny Clarke was a friend and something of a mentor to him at the time and would let him sit in during the last set of the evening. DeRosa remembers others sitting in with Tadd's band, including (not surprisingly) Miles Davis, Don Byas, and Lester Young (Clem DeRosa, interview with the author, Jan. 4, 2008). This practice of having visitors join the band probably explains the presence of Milt Jackson on the Sept. 4 broadcast transcription.

Regarding the Big Ten, with the exception of a broadcast on Feb. 12, in which Leonard Hawkins is in the trumpet chair, Miles Davis is in the band for all the broadcasts and the remaining Capitol session. Dexter Gordon made his final recording with Dameron on the first of the Capitol sessions and was replaced by Benjamin Lundy for the rest of the Big Ten recordings. On the first Capitol session, Diego Ibarra and Vidal Bolado play bongos and conga, respectively. After that the percussionist is Carlos Vidal, who plays conga drum only and is not present on the second Capitol session in Apr. The rest of the band—Sahib Shihab on alto sax, Cecil Payne on baritone sax, John Collins on guitar, Curley Russell, and Kenny

Clarke—is stable throughout the winter and spring until the group is disbanded at the end of Apr.

Although he did not make any of the record dates, Charlie Rouse was also in and out of Dameron's Royal Roost groups. Rouse recalled working at the Roost with "Fats and Tadd and Shadow Wilson." This would most likely have been in the summer. Later he may well have played some of the gigs with the "Big Ten" or with the Cleveland/Sharon, PA, band. "I seem to remember I played in a big band with Tadd," Rouse said, "could have been 10 pieces. It would have sounded big with the way Tadd wrote."* Another saxophonist who worked with Dameron at this time was Allen Eager's roommate Jimmy Ford, who was photographed in Tadd's band at the Roost along with Tadd, Fats, Curley Russell, and Kenny Clarke.

There are also the singers involved in Dameron's music in this period. Indeed, singing is often a part of his music, something that sets him apart from much of the bop movement, certainly from his peers Charlie Parker**, Bud Powell, Thelonious Monk, Kenny Clarke, and Max Roach. Only Dizzy, among the other founding fathers of modern jazz, finds singing essential. Not counting Anita O'Day, whom Tadd accompanied in his capacity as leader of the house band at the Roost, there were three singers we know of who recorded with Dameron in this period: Kay Penton, Kenny Hagood, and Rae Pearl. As noted above, Kay Penton, who sang on the 1947 V-Disc and Savoy sessions and worked with Dameron on Fifty-second Street in the fall of that year, can also be heard on the Apr. 21, 1949 Capitol session. Quite possibly she sang with the band on and off during the Royal Roost period.*** Kenny "Pancho" Hagood had been with Dizzy's big band from the fall of 1946 through the European tour in the winter of 1948, possibly longer. In the beginning of July 1948, he became the emcee at the Roost. He is heard on two broadcasts, Aug. 29 and Sept. 13, each featuring a Dameron song, "Kitchenette across the Hall" and "I Think I'll Go Away," respectively. Hagood also recorded with the Miles Davis nonet on Capitol. Not much is known about Rae Pearl, who sings wordlessly on the studio recording of "Casbah" for Capitol. There is a photograph of her, clearly taken for publicity, in the notes for the Classics compilation of Dameron studio dates from the late 1940s (Anatol Schenker, program notes, *Tadd Dameron 1947–1949* (CD) (Classics no. 1106, Classics Records). Pearl is said to have recorded as Rae Harrison later for Sam Wooding's Gemini label (<http://www.allmusic.com/artist/rae-pearl-p733006>).

* Charlie Rouse, interview with the author, Oct. 2, 1987. Rouse may be confusing playing at the Royal Roost with the Sept. 26, 1947, recording session for Blue Note, at which both Navarro and Wilson were present.

** While Parker did appreciate and encourage singers, Earl Coleman and Jackie Paris among them, vocal music was not an integral part of his larger concept.

*** Penton also recorded with Benny Goodman in 1945 and pianist Teddy Wilson did so in 1946 and 1947. She recorded later in the 1950s under her own name for Mercury.

/s/

(Chap. 6, note 13) “I Think I’ll Go Away”

“I Think I’ll Go Away” presents an interesting challenge to the arranger. There is an almost stifling rhythmic repetition in its phrases. Fourteen of the fifteen phrases that make up the song are two measures long, and all share the same basic rhythm pattern (ex. A2a.), the exception, or variation, only serving to intensify the monotony (ex. A2b.)

<Insert ex. A2 here>

Despite appearances, Dameron has not taken leave of his good judgment here. The final four-bar phrase releases the tension built up by all the repetition. The arranging problem comes when, as in the V-Disc version, the accompaniment replicates this rhythmic monotony. Dameron corrects this in his Blue Note arrangement for Kenny Hagood, where he varies the obligato phrases rhythmically, carrying them across the phrases and even leaving them out on occasion.

Apparently, there is a conflicting copyright claim on “I Think I’ll Go Away,” but since it was never successful, there was never a reason for this to come to light. The song was claimed by both Gil Fuller’s Monogram Music and Tad Music Publishing, which had no relation to Tadd Dameron other than the copyrighting of some of his songs.

/s/

(Chap. 7, note 38) “Lyonia”

“Lyonia,” could be thought of as a piece of “Soulphony.” While not through-composed, it does have a unique structure and is completely written out, with no improvised solos. The form, outlined in fig. 7.1, is similar to the usual AABA or ABAC song-form structures, only more complex. It starts with a simple rumba-related rhythm in the drums and the bass, over which a five measure vamp-like melody is repeated three times, with increasing intensity; first by the saxes alone, then with the trombones added a fourth higher, and finally with the trumpets an octave above the trombones. Next there is a four-bar melody presented by solo trombone, with full band accompaniment, repeated twice (letter A in the Shaw score). Dameron injects rhythmic tension at this point, as the melody is still accompanied by something rumba-like in all of the band except the drummer, who plays a swinging 4/4 time-feel. Then there is another pair of nearly identical four bar phrases, played tutti (letter B), followed by a soft solo saxophone line of three measures that resolves back into the first two bars of the vamp (letter C). The soft solo saxophone line is followed by the five-bar vamp line, played with a crescendo into a sudden “stop-time.” The tension between a rumba feel in the ensemble and the swing of the drums eases considerably in letter B and into C, but it is still there in a subtle way up to the point where the vamp returns and the drum figure returns to calypso.

After the “stop-time” (at letter D), the saxes have a pickup into a sixteen-measure passage that feels like a bridge. This is probably because of the change to E \flat major from the C minor of the previous sections and because of the unity of the time-feel: the entire band is in a swinging 4/4. Next is another sixteen-measure section (letter E). The rhythmic tension between the ensemble and the drums returns for the first eight bars, as the trumpets, in close four-part harmony, bring back the letter A melody. Letter E concludes with eight bars of new melody, stated tutti with everyone swinging. There is a quick decrescendo, and the music from letters A, B, and C returns, with one more five-bar statement of the vamp softly resolving into the final chord, over which the saxes play the first four notes of the letter A melody.

<Insert ex. A3 here>

/s/

(Chap. 8., note 37) Duke Ellington's Opening Theme

It seems pretty clear that “Opening Theme” is a very sophisticated variant of the “rhythm changes” design. While sophisticated reharmonizations of various established harmonic progressions have become part of the “jazz language,” one needs to remember that it is most likely that this piece dates from late 1951 or early 1952. Although the B section of the tune starts off as if it were a “rhythm changes” bridge (|Amin7 | D9 | in the key of B ♭), the harmonic sequence is unique to this composition (ex. A4a). In a larger sense it starts and ends as a “rhythm changes” bridge does, but it does so by taking a significantly different path. As mentioned, the bridge seems to be open for an improvised solo, since there is no melody as such, only a background type of passage.

After the opening chorus there is an eight-bar interlude, followed in the score (letter C) by a chorus with background figures in the A sections, which introduces a chord progression for the first four bars of each A, and a saxophone ensemble passage in the bridge. This chorus does not sound as if it should follow the interlude directly, and it is most likely that a solo chorus or two with just the rhythm section would have been inserted after the interlude. If this is correct, we are left to wonder what the chord changes would have been for these choruses. In the last two sections of the score Dameron applies two different harmonic progressions to the A section, in addition to the dominant drone. One possibility is that the harmonic scheme from the opening chorus would be used. Another would be the well-known “rhythm” sequence or some variant of it.

The letter C chorus introduces the progression for the A section shown in ex. A4b. This progression resembles some of the chromatic variants on rhythm changes that were evolving at the time. In the second A of the last chorus (letter D in the score), Dameron gives the melody to the trumpets, modifying the second half, which he harmonizes as shown in ex. A4c. Here again the connection may seem a bit tenuous to the eye, but the “feminine cadences” in the fourth and eighth measures recall some of versions of the “rhythm” harmonic sequence, most notably that used by Gershwin. The bridge of the last chorus is the same as in the first, and in the last A the melodic modification mentioned above becomes a brief but effective coda, with the last four measures of the eight-bar segment becoming six, which are harmonized as shown in ex. A4d.

<Insert ex. A4 here>

/As/

(Chap. 8, note 43) "Philly J. J."

In the opening statement of the melody, the A sections are half as long as they are in the solos. A comparison of the chord changes in the melody and those used in the solos makes clear both the differences and the relationship between these two segments of the entire work.

Melody Changes:

A

|: Cmi6* D9 | B b mi6 C9 | A b b mi6 B b 9 | E b Ma 7 :||

B

B b mi7 | E b 9 A9 | A b Ma7 | A b Ma7 | C-7 | F9 | Fmi7 | E9 ||

A

| Cmi6 D9 | B b mi6 C9 | A b mi6 B b 9 | E b Ma 7 ||

C (melodically different from A)

| Cmi6 D9 | B b mi6 C9 | A b mi6 B b 9 | E b Ma 7 ||

Solo Changes:

A

||: Cmi6 | D9 | B b mi6 | C9 | A b mi6 | B b 9 | E b Ma 7 | E b Ma 7 :||

B

| B b mi7 | E b 9 A9 | A b Ma7 | A b Ma7 | C-7 | F9 | Fmi7 | E9 ||

A

|| Cmi6 | D9 | B b mi6 | C9 | A b mi6 | B b 9 | E b Ma7 | E b Ma7 ||

* Dameron uses the older notation here; most musicians nowadays would call Cmin6 Amin7b5 instead.

/Is/

(Chap. 9, note 3) Dameron Arrangements for Brown/Roach

“What Is This Thing Called Love,” the first track on the album, is a fine example of a Dameron hard bop arrangement. The rhythm section plays an extended vamp over a dominant suspended fourth harmony and a samba-like time-feel, with Brown improvising over a motif repeated by Rollins. Then the time-feel switches to swing, at the same brisk tempo, and Brown plays the tune in the A sections while Rollins takes the bridge. Brown solos first, taking two choruses. Rollins builds his two choruses around the figure he played in the introduction. While this could very well have been Rollins’s idea (it is the sort of thinking that makes him an exceptional improviser), it was most likely Dameron’s suggestion. Rollins does not use the opening motif in his solo in the first, unissued take, and twice in his 1953 recordings Dameron used this device of incorporating an element from the arrangement into a solo: once in “Philly J. J.,” where he has either written or instructed the drummer to set up the figure that is used in the ensemble that is played in the middle of his solo, and then again in “Theme of No Repeat,” when Dameron himself introduces the key motif of the out-chorus melody in his own solo.

After Brown and Rollins have their say, pianist Richie Powell takes two choruses, and then George Morrow’s walking bass is featured for a chorus. Dameron has written an alternate melody for the A that is played as a shout by the horns in the next chorus. Morrow takes the bridge of this chorus. Finally, Max Roach takes his solo, which is followed by the out-going chorus. For this, Dameron has written another shout variant on the A part of the melody. Roach plays over the bridge, and the final A brings back Porter’s original melody, before dissolving back into the vamp used at the beginning, which is faded out electronically.

/As/

(Chap. 9, note 10) “Fontainebleau”

There are some proportional and structural differences between the three recorded versions of “Fontainebleau,” which although relatively small are quite noticeable. A comparison of the three recorded versions can be seen in this way:

Dameron 1956	Dameron 1962	Goodman 1962
Intro: 16 bars	Intro: 12 bars	Intro: 6 bars
“Le Forêt”: 16/5/4/4 bars	“The Forest”: 16/5/4/4 bars	“The Forest”: 16/5/4/4 bars
“Les Cygnes”: 10/7/7 bars	“The Swan”: 10/8/7 bars	“The Swan”: 10/8/7 bars
“L’Adieu”: 4/12# bars	“The Farewell”: 4/13 bars	“The Farewell”: 4/13 bars

In the introduction to the Dameron 1956 version, the first two measures are presented three times, once with just piano and bass, the second time with the addition of the baritone saxophone, and the third time with the other two saxes added. In the Dameron 1962 version these first two measures are played only once. In the Goodman 1962 version, the introduction is shortened even more, and the descending triplet figure is replaced by a line in Goodman’s part that is related to the high accompaniment figure at the beginning of “Les Cygnes.” In the Dameron 1956 version, the tenth measure of “Les Cygnes” is only two beats, and the final bar before the repeat is also only two beats. Oddly, the rhythm indicated in the copyright deposit of the same year is essentially the same as the later versions. The deposit version calls for a sudden stop at the very end, instead of the sustained chord heard in all three versions.

We should note that there is a discrepancy between the naming of the sections in the deposit lead sheet and the score published by Bregman, Vocco and Conn in 1963, following the release of the Dameron 1962 recording. In the Bregman, Vocco and Conn score “Les Cygnes,” or “The Swan,” as it is called there, would last only ten measures. Further, the melody in the next section, by the BVC labeling, begins with a phrase that suggests a rhythmic retrograde of the opening of “Les Cygnes.” The passage that follows this one, in which the lower instruments state the clave in double time, makes for a more convincing transition to the last section.

/s/

(Chap. 10, note 16) “Smooth as the Wind”

“Smooth as the Wind,” while conventional in its structure and harmonies, is yet another graceful and elegant Dameron tune. However, there is one detail that stands out: the harmonic sequence of the bridge. A comparative analysis of 110 compositions shows that Dameron has used the “common bridge” (or some closely related variant) in roughly 30 percent of the tunes that have a bridge. Here he substitutes the key of bIII for the key of IV:

B b -7 E b 9 | C-7 F7 | B b -7 E b 9 | A b Maj7 |

D-7 G7 | E-7 A-7 | D-7 G7 | G-7 C7||

He had also used sequence very similar to this earlier, in “Handy Andy” (aka “Gnid”) and again in “Mating Call.” There is even a suggestion of this in “The Search,” a tune known only in its 1948 copyright deposit form. It is worth considering that after using the common bridge a bit too casually in much of his 1950s work (i.e. “Choose Now,” “Philly J. J.,” “Flosie Lou,” and the alternate solo changes to “The Scene Is Clean”), Dameron wanted to keep the harmonic rhythm of the common bridge while varying the harmonic “color.”

/s/

(Chap. 11, note 14) “Just Plain Talkin”

The second chorus of the two-chorus ensemble found in the Goodman version gives a good example of Dameron’s harmonic imagination at work. Harmonically, the melody of “Just Plain Talkin” is a modern-jazz-type of blues, with the opening chord a major seventh instead of the more traditional dominant (ex. A5a). The harmonic design of the second chorus of the ensemble (ex. A5b) sounds almost as radical as it looks, but it still suggests the overall shape of the twelve-bar blues chorus.

<Insert ex. A5 here>

/s/

(Chap. 13, note 11) Dameron and the Schillinger Method

Tadd Dameron told several people that he, like a number of other prominent composers, employed Joseph Schillinger's compositional techniques. Schillinger was a mathematician and composer best known for describing, in great detail, the connection between mathematics and both music and the visual arts. George Gershwin studied with him, as did Tommy Dorsey, Benny Goodman, Oscar Levant, and Glenn Miller. It is said that Miller wrote "Moonlight Serenade" as an exercise while he was studying with Schillinger. Schillinger's principles were the cornerstone of the approach to teaching modern musical techniques developed by Lawrence Berk, the founder of Schillinger House, in Boston, which evolved into the Berklee College of Music.

It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to positively trace the use of Schillinger's methods backward from a finished piece of music, because the sound principles that he describes are evident in any coherent piece of music. Thus, we have no way of knowing for sure whether Dameron truly did follow Schillinger's system. If he did, does this mean Tadd read the complete *The Schillinger System of Musical Composition*, each of whose two volumes is over a thousand pages long? Or did Dameron study with Schillinger, who died in 1943, in the last year or so of Schillinger's life? So far, there is no evidence to support either of these speculations, although neither would have been impossible.

The answer to the question of Dameron's introduction to Schillinger's methods may lie in a recollection of his sister-in-law, Dorothy Dameron. She remembered Tadd saying that he had studied at the Juilliard School (Dorothy Dameron, interview with the author, Aug. 16, 1991). This may just have been one of his idle boasts—Dorothy, who married Caesar Dameron in the early 1950s, seems to have bought the story about Oberlin—but it is interesting to note that in the summer of 1945, Arnold Shaw, executive director of the Schillinger Society, taught an introductory course in Schillinger's system at Juilliard. As stated earlier, we do not know exactly what Dameron was doing that summer, but he could very well have taken the course. His preference for melodic voice leading would have found confirmation in Schillinger's theories, and he may have picked up some techniques that are too subtle to detect readily. In any event, Dameron made a point of saying to various people who met him in the 1950s that he used Schillinger's methods, and an analysis of his work through the lens of Schillinger's concepts may be worth taking up at

some point.

/s/

(Chap. 13, note 13) “Good Bait”

In terms of pitch, the melody is almost classical in its construction. The motif sits successively at the tonic (B ♭), the dominant (F), and the submediant (D) steps of the related major scale, the notes of the tonic major chord. Even though the melody returns to the tonic in the sixth measure, it does not feel finally closed until the eighth, because the B ♭ in the sixth measure is the fifth of the subdominant (E ♭) chord and not the root of the tonic. If we discount the first pick-up note, F, the tessitura of the melody extends beyond the pivotal notes of B ♭ and F by a third in either direction. This sort of symmetry and balance is another feature that would be valued in a “classical” period melody. However, the flatted notes in the second and seventh measures are decidedly modern. The pick-up to the second phrase uses the altered dominant scale, and the final cadence follows the descending chromatic root motion of the accompanying harmony.

/s/

(Chap. 13, note 15) “Lady Bird”

To understand the development of this melody on a rhythmic level, we need to define three related words. The first is *crusic*, which describes a melody that starts on the first beat, or crux, of a measure. Not all phrases start this way. Those that start ahead of the crux—i.e., that start with a pick-up—are called *anacrusic*. Finally, those that start just after the crux are called *metacrusic*. While it is not always the case, the metacrusic phrase can impart a subtle tension to a piece of music, and it is this tension—along with the tension created by centering the melody on the dominant step of the key—that Dameron manipulates in “Lady Bird.”

<Insert ex. A6 here>

The first two four-measure phrases are metacrusic, and both end outside of the home key—the first a minor third above, the second a major third below (see chap. 6). The next two two-bar metacrusic phrases,

which are developed rhythmically from the first measure of the preceding phrases, heighten the rhythmic tension, which is then released or resolved in the final crucic phrase. However, this resolution is tempered by the notes Dameron chooses in his melody. As stated, the melody is centered on the dominant note G: it begins on G and ends on G. The tonic note, C, is only present when it is the upper voice of a chord and not the root. It is used in the third and fourth measures of the second phrase, where it is the 9th and 13th of B \flat min7 and E \flat 7, respectively, and at the beginning of the final phrase, significantly where the rhythmic tension is released, but here as the 7th of the Dmin7. All of this contributes to the feeling of perpetual motion expressed by this melody.