The versatility of the saxophone as presented through a series of compositions

by

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Abstract

The saxophone is used in many different styles, instrumentations, and medians, which undoubtedly makes it a very versatile instrument. This report comprises a series of compositions that have been written to highlight various attributes of the saxophone. The result of these features will allow the reader to have a further understanding of the saxophone as a solo instrument as well as in a variety of different ensembles.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

A composer's inspiration is derived from all aspects of their musical lives. From the instruments they play, the ensembles they are in, their educators and mentors, and the music they studied. All of these shape and give foundation to the compositions of a composer.

Being a saxophonist, I am definitely aware of how technically demanding our pieces are. Out of all of the musicians that I have known, saxophonists are definitely some of the most driven and hard-working people that I have ever had the pleasure of working with. The saxophone is frequently utilized in 20th century repertoire and beyond. This mentality is the main driving force for my compositions.

This report presents five compositions that I have written during my time here at Kansas State University. They are *Sharp Silence, 5 Stages of Grief, (555) 259-2548, Dissimiles,* and *Tango?*. I explain the musical aspects for each piece from an analytical and emotional standpoint and discuss important musical features that were on the forefront of my mind as I composed. The main goal of this report is to convey the versatility of the saxophone through a series of compositions that I have written. I will occasionally reference other composers and their uses of the saxophone, but only to highlight similarities that are present in my works as well.

A common theme that I will constantly reference is the use of the saxophone itself. Every piece presented in this report incorporates the saxophone, whether as the feature or in an ensemble roll. The saxophone is obviously an important part of my life, which is why I write so much saxophone music. However, this does not mean that there will not be other instruments presented here. I incorporated as many different instruments as I could, partially to demonstrate that the saxophone can be used within any genre and instrument ensemble/setting.

Chapter 2 - Sharp Silence

The saxophone quartet is one of the most important components in the saxophone world. Composer Jean-Baptiste Singelee wrote works for four saxophones in the 19th century. These included *Allegro de concert*, *Quatuor en 4 Parties*, and *Grand Quatuor Concertant en 3 Parties*. In 1878, the Gilmour Band featured a quartet of saxophones which included Edouard Lefèbre, a soloist in the band. Lefèbre went on to form his own saxophone quartet in 1905 with a repertoire of transcriptions. The main reason for the recognition of this ensemble was because of Marcel Mule, who was the second Professor of saxophone at the Paris Conservatoire after Adolphe Sax himself. In 1928, he founded *Le Quatuor de la Musique de la Garde Républicaine*, later known as *Le Quatuor de saxophones de Paris*, and then the Marcel Mule Quartet.[1]

Sharp Silence was written for saxophone quartet and was composed with the intention of incorporating the full ability of the saxophone into a three movement work. Extended techniques such as slap tonguing and altissimo are prominently featured in the first movement alone. The listener may achieve a sense of security with friendly bits of melody, only to be shocked by disjunct melodic lines and abrupt meter changes. The piece uses percussive elements and dramatic silences, emphasizing the statement that silence is an integral part of music.

The beginning of Mvt 1 holds true to the name of the piece. Immediately, the first thing the listener hears after the introductory four staccato eighth notes is 4 beats of silence. This is the overarching theme of the piece and will later signify the return of the A section. This movement uses a combination of call and response and surprise interruptions that sets the tone

[1] "The Saxophone Quartet." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saxophone_quartet. February 19, 2017. Accessed February 23, 2017.

for the remaining two movements. Slap tongue is used in a motivic manner, providing a sense of unity, as the piece does not use many recognizable harmonies and is mostly rhythmically driven (as most of my pieces tend to be).

Since its invention during the mid-nineteenth century, the saxophone has pushed the boundaries of traditional classical music. Adolphe Sax invented the saxophone in 1838 in order to bridge the gap between the brass family and the woodwind family. It had the technical ability of a woodwind instrument, the timbre of a stringed instrument, and the projection of a brass instrument. This allowed the instrument to be used in various types of ensembles and musical settings. By the early twentieth century the saxophone achieved tremendous popular appeal with its inclusion in vaudeville acts, jazz, and the variety popular music of the day, where saxophonists discovered ways to produce new and entertaining "sound effects" to add to their shows.[2] Many of these techniques, including slap tonguing, growling, and atypical vibrato, were considered to be very inappropriate from a pedagogical standpoint. Sigurd Raschèr was one of the first prominent saxophonists to incorporate extended technique in his classical playing. He often incorporated the slap tongue in his performances and was responsible for extending the saxophones ranges by over two and a half octaves above from where it was.

The slap tongue is the main extended technique heard in movement 1. A technique used in playing single-reed wind instruments. Using the length of the tongue, slightly arched, the player presses hard against the reed, at the same time sucking so as to create a vacuum between reed and tongue; he then draws the tongue sharply away so that the vacuum is broken and the reed is released, producing a dull slapping sound. The technique may be used alone, in which

[2] Bruce Vermazen, That Moaning Saxophone: The Six Brown Brothers and the Dawning of a Musical Craze (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 64.

case the pitch of the note being fingered is only faintly heard (this is particularly effective in a low register), or to give a loud percussive attack to notes blown in the usual way.[3]

As shown in Figure 2.1, the majority of the slapped pitches in this piece occur in the lower register of the instrument so that the sound produced resonates at a louder volume than an "unpitched" slap tongue.

They also occur at a louder volume as to demonstrate the extended technique at its full potential as opposed to a softer volume which would be harder to control from a technical standpoint, and not as effective. The reason behind this is based on the structure of the instrument. When a low note is played, all or most of the keys are pushed down, which causes sound to be acoustically louder. Obviously, the actual pitches are not the most important aspect here, but the timbral effect that they create. If every player in the quartet played a slapped pitch on a low Bb for every single instance of a slap tongue, it would create the timbral effect of a low slapped pitch. The listener would just hear a low slapped pitch and not necessarily be able to hear the exact notes being played. However, I included slapped pitches other than Bb because even though it isn't as important as the overall timbral effect, the dynamic fortissimo does allow the listener to hear different pitches as they are so distinct in their rhythmic separation.

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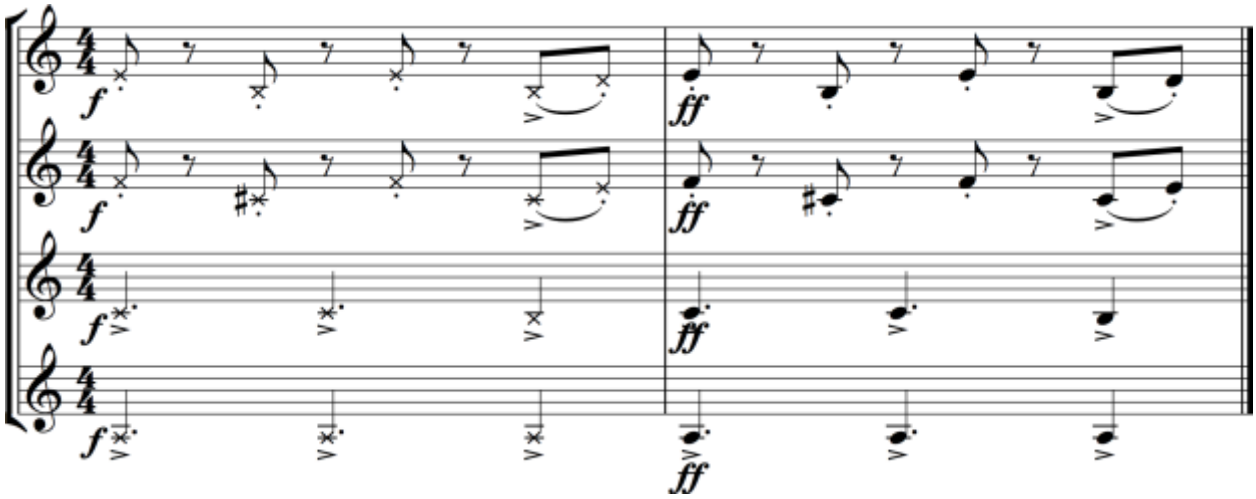
[3] Alyn Shipton. "Slap-tonguing." *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*, 2nd ed.. *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed April 20, 2017, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/J413100

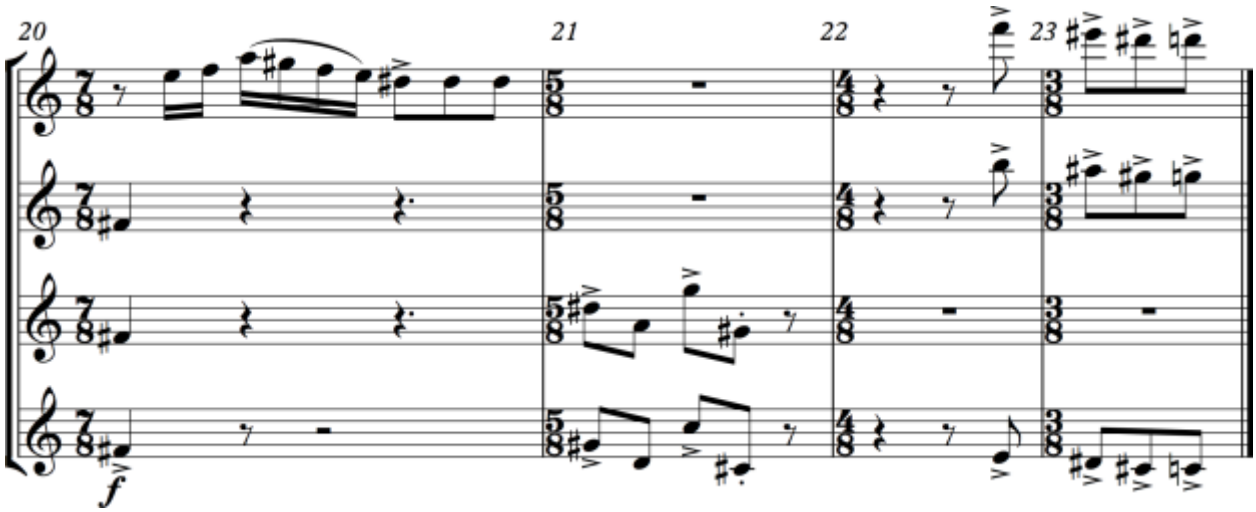
Figure 2.1 - End of Section A (mm.33-34), Mvt. 1



The main element to movement 3 is its rhythmic drive. It uses elements such as meter and rhythmic acceleration to give the feeling of continuous motion. I chose 7/8 as the primary meter because of its ability to keep the listener interested without having to constantly change meters and because of the "groove" that it puts forth. Any rests that occur are very abrupt and brief as they are only meant to emphasize silence or transition to the next section.

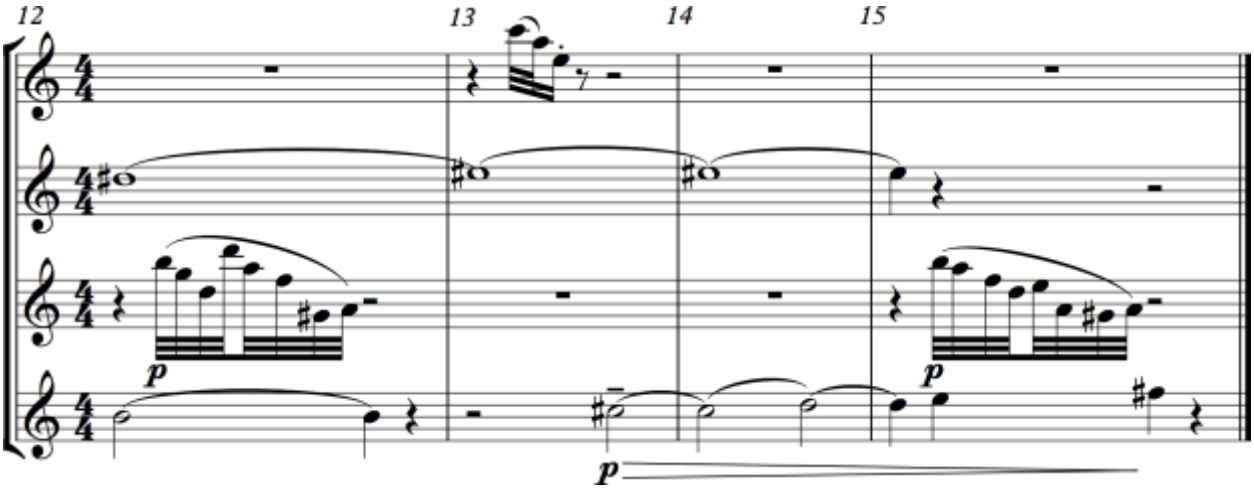
Harmonically, the movement is in B major, which remains constant throughout. Interestingly enough though, the very last note is notated as a Bb instead of an A#. A listener would not be able to hear the difference, as Bb and A# are enharmonic equivalents. But when reading the score, it definitely poses the question as to why the last note was written like this. As I wrote this ending, there were two possible scenarios on how to write the last note. The first was to just write an A# and stay true to the key. However, as a saxophonist, I can say first-hand how most saxophonists are not accustomed to seeing an A# written. This brought me to the second scenario on which I just write a Bb (which is the enharmonic equivalent of A#) so that it is easier to read from a performers standpoint.

Figure 2.2 – Abrupt Rests (mm. 20-23), Mvt. 3



Movement 2 incorporates the use of long dissonant tones (the word dissonant in reference to its use in common-practice tonal music) that are interrupted right from the beginning by a two 32nd note to 16th note motif. This motif is immediately expanded to more successive 32nd notes and is the most noticeable aspect within an onslaught of dissonant tones. I chose dissonance from a musical standpoint because it enhances the jarring nature of the piece overall, making it on of the most important factors.

Figure 2.3 – 32nd Note Motif (mm. 12-15), Mvt. 2



Chapter 3 - 2 Inventions

The next piece that will be discussed in this report uses a different type of compositional technique that was prominently used in the 20th century. Arnold Schoenberg spearheaded the move away from tonality and began writing atonal music around 1908. By 1923, he had fully developed a "12-tone" system of pitch organization, in which the composer arranges all twelve unique pitches into an ordered row and performs various manipulations on that row to generate pitch content for a composition.[4] This system is usually referred to as serialism.

A fundamental concept of set theory is the use of numbers to model pitch classes, which are made into sets. More exactly, a pitch-class set is a numerical representation consisting of distinct integers.[5] In common practice tonal music, we generally do not use all twelve notes that are available. Usually, only seven of the twelve notes are used, which would make a scale. However, in non-common-practice chromatic music, a composer can use any groups of a given "set" to make music. Sets use numbers (integer notation) to show the amount of half steps in each interval between the notes in a set. Integer notation labels those 12 notes with numbers 0-11, instead of letters. In fixed integer notation, C=0 and B=11. Sets can be moved and transposed just like the notes of a scale, allowing the composer to use any number combinations to write their music.

(555)259-2548 is written for Bb trumpet, alto saxophone, and electronics. This piece utilizes different compositional techniques from both the 20th and 21st centuries. Time is

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[4] "Music Set Theory." Jay Tomlin Online. Accessed February 29. http://www.jaytomlin.com/music/settheory/help.html.

[5] (Rahn 1980, 27).

measured in seconds rather than using a time signature, much like Messiaen used in his *Quartet for the End of Time*. This was used quite a bit after Messiaen and inspired composers such as Krzysztof Penderecki in his *Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima*, which also used seconds as a way to measure musical time.

The primary structure of the piece uses a form of pitch-class sets that are based around the two set numbers, 259 and 254. Both of these numbers are just where they fall on the set list 0-351 as shown in Table 3.1. These are also known as the set numbers 7-25b (0235679) and 7-23 (0234579). These sets combined with pitch-classes 5 (F) and 8 (G#), give the name a format of the phone number *(555)259-2548.* The inner numbers represent the set numbers and the outer numbers are the pitch classes 5 and 8. The use of these two pitch classes represents a minor third (F and Ab), which are eventually resolved to a perfect fourth at the end.

Table 1 – The Table of Pitch Class Sets #254-259

#	Set Name	Prime	Interval Vector
254	7-23	0234579	354351
255	7-23B	0245679	354351
256	7-24	0123579	353442
257	7-24B	0246789	353442
258	7-25	0234679	345342
259	7-25B	0235679	345342

Many electronic techniques were used in this piece to enhance the overall experience. The beginning of the electronic part starts off with a paul-stretched siren pitched to an A. Paul-stretching determines how much longer the processed sound will be relative to the original. This is followed by another siren pitched to the note of Eb, a tritone away from A, which creates an eerie and unsettling beginning. 20 seconds in, the trumpet enters on a sustained F, switching between octaves. This progresses 15 seconds later with a rhythmic acceleration of the pitch going from half notes all the way to 16th notes. The saxophone enters at 25 seconds with the first statement of set number 259 in a rhythmically disjunct fashion. This allows a major contrast between the electronics and the trumpet versus the saxophone. The trumpet then enters with the first appearance of set 254, in the same irregular fashion as the saxophone. This continues for the remainder of the piece as both voices get more frantic only to end on a unison G# (pitch class 8) that fades into the conclusion.

The second movement of this piece is called *Old Tech.* It uses a lot of similar aspects from the previous movement such as the use of stretched frequencies, jarring saxophone and trumpet interruptions, and older electronic sounds centered around a video arcade from the 1980's and 90's. The electronic element is probably the most important part of the piece. Without it, there would be a lot of silence and abrupt saxophone and trumpet sounds. The electronic sounds were finalized through the program Audacity, which allows the user to manipulate and alter individual sound waves. The concept of the electronic elements is based on the sounds of the telephone. Namely, dial tones and the old dial up sound that was made when a person who try to make a phone call while someone else in the house was using the internet.

The dial tones themselves are special because they actually sound the numbers **259-2548**, which was actually the original inspiration of the piece. I added the **(555)** because I didn't

want anyone to try to call the number. Even the dial-up internet sound features some elements of the **259** set by pure coincidence. The piece concludes with the two paul-stretched sirens resolving to a perfect fourth as opposed to the tritone at the beginning. This gives the listener a sense of completion because in electronic music, resolutions can be tricky to hear. The perfect fourth allows this sense of resolution to be obvious.

Chapter 4 - 5 Stages of Grief

All of the pieces that have been presented so far are a part of the category called absolute music. Absolute music (sometimes called abstract music) is music that is not explicitly about anything. It is often described as music for the sake of music. The opposite of absolute music is called program music. It is a type of art music that attempts to musically render an extra-musical narrative. The narrative itself might be offered to the audience in the form of program notes, inviting imaginative correlations with the music.[6] *5 Stages of Grief* is the first and only piece in this collection that isn't absolute music and focuses more on the programmatic aspect, which is why it is important to describe the difference between these two types of musical writings. This piece focuses on the emotions from the widely known concept, the five stages of grief. The movements are intentionally short in duration. My reasoning behind this was to emphasize that even though periods of grief may seem like they last forever, in reality, they are only a small fraction of our lives.

Mourning occurs in response to an individual's own terminal illness, the loss of a close relationship, or to the death of a valued being, human or animal. There are five stages of grief that were first proposed by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross in her 1969 book *On Death and Dying.*[7] The stages of grief and mourning are universal and are experienced by people from all walks of life, across many cultures. People who are grieving do not necessarily go through the stages in the same order or experience all of them. However, the point of this piece is to convey each of the

[6] "Absolute vs Program Music." Music in History. Accessed February 23. http://www.music-in-history.com/eng/absolute-vs-program-music.html.

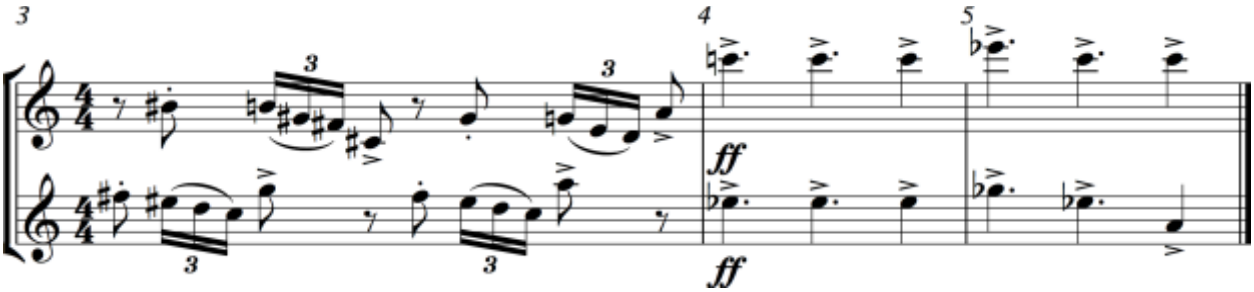
[7] IBID

emotions as they are in the most common order. It is written for two alto saxophones, although it could be played by any combination of two-of-the-same saxophones, as the written range of all four saxophones is about the same for a high caliber player.

Denial

The first movement is titled *Denial* and represents the initial feeling of loss. Often times, when a person is going through these stages, denial can be the longest lasting of all five emotions. The first few measures set the mood for the rest of the movement as it opens with competing sixteenth note triplets. They trade off back and forth for a few measures until both saxophones complete the line on two dotted quarter notes at fortissimo (Figure 4.1). The entire A section (which is only about 20 second of music) continues this trend of back and forth motion between saxophones.

Figure 4.1 – Opening Statement (mm. 3-5)



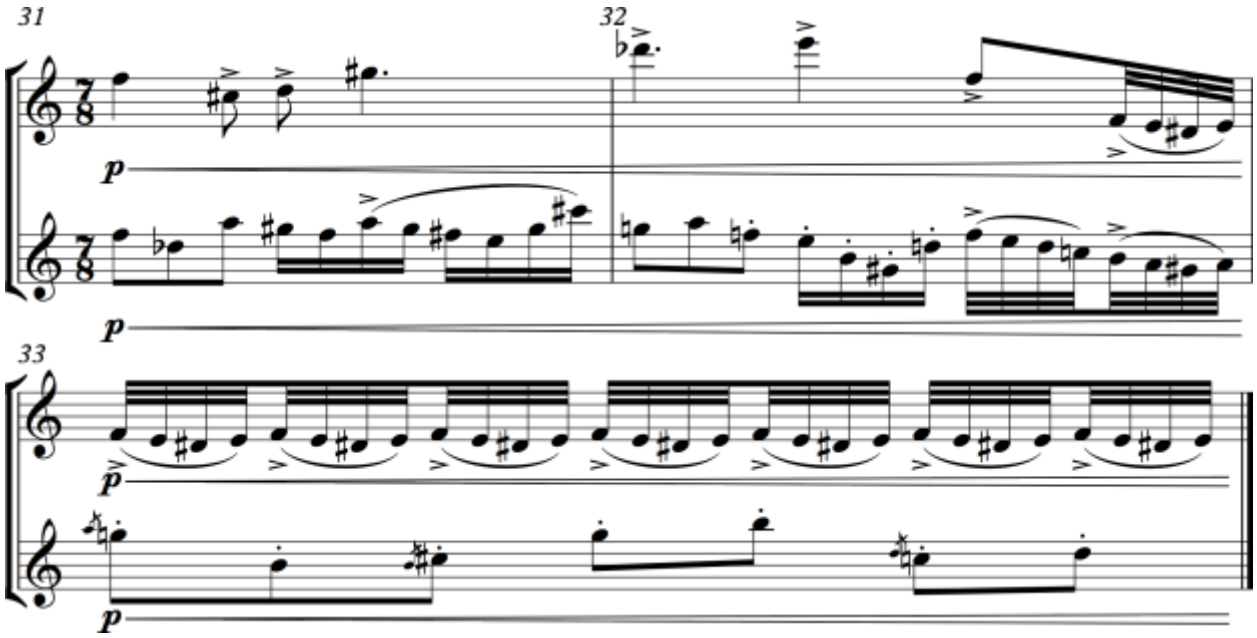
The imagery that I was envisioning here was how when a person is in that state of denial, they are constantly going back and forth with themselves. Part of them wants to accept the situation, but the other half still has not come to terms with the loss. In a larger picture, the B

section of *Denial* is a definite contrast to the A section. The tempo decreases dramatically and more long tones and apparent dissonances (again in reference to common-practice tonal music) come to light. I did this to emphasize the true conflict that one might be feeling when in grief as one would be fighting back and forth as the two saxophones appear to be doing rhythmically and harmonically.

Anger

Anger is probably one of the most uncontrollable and unpredictable emotions. In this context, the movement *Anger* definitely conveys the feeling of aggression and gives the listener the impression that the music is losing control. The beginning emphasizes loud, accented long tones placed on beats where you wouldn't expect them, appearing everywhere but on the down beats. The listener is immediately put in a state of unease, as they are not able to settle into any sort of consistent meter. This begins to unfold as the rhythmic drive of the piece increases to what would appear to be out of control thirty-second notes. Here, I was trying to emphasize how dangerous anger can be. No one really has any control of their emotions when they are angry and more likely than not, anger will spiral out of control. Figure 4.2 illustrates an example of the rhythmic acceleration that is considered to be the main theme of this movement. Everything here is getting faster, louder, and more out of control, paralleling the eruption of anger.

Figure 4.2– Rhythmic Acceleration (mm. 31-33)



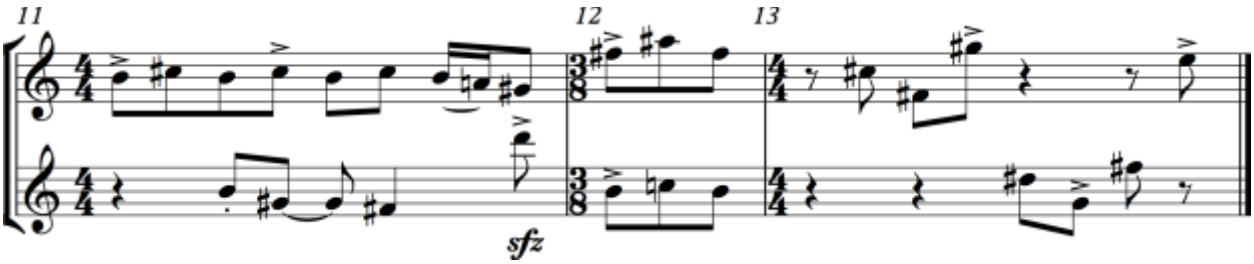
Bargaining

When I think of bargaining, I think of the feeling of helplessness. The normal reaction to feelings of helplessness and vulnerability is often a need to regain control. We tend use the phrase "if only." If only we had sought medical attention sooner. If only we had tried to be a better person toward them. Whatever happened is already passed, but we try to think of things we could have done better, thinking that maybe the person or whatever was lost, will all of a sudden appear in front of us.

In this movement, the "if only" theme is represented by the use of the 3/8 time signature. The time signature reminds the listener of the first movement which also had an asymmetrical meter. Though 3/8 is not an asymmetrical meter, it is used as an interruption of the previous 4/4

meter, and that creates a feeling of asymmetry. It begins with a continuous theme that is meant to represent the struggle to push ahead in a time of grief. The 3/8 measures may be perceived as an interruption of a person's thoughts. Again, they are reminded of the "if only."

Figure 4.3 – 3/8 Measure (mm. 11-13)



Depression

After bargaining, our attention moves squarely into reality. Empty feelings present themselves, and grief enters on a deeper level. This depressive stage feels as though it will last forever. If grief is a process of healing, then depression is one of the many necessary steps along the way. This movement was the hardest to write for me. Not because I relate to the feeling of depression, but because I have not experienced that crippling feeling of emptiness to the degree that has been discussed in this chapter. I have been fortunate so far in my life and it was definitely a challenge to put myself in the shoes of someone who has experienced this loss.

The main theme of this movement is long drawn out tones that listener may think are never-ending. The music doesn't get very loud and it can feel like it is not going anywhere. This

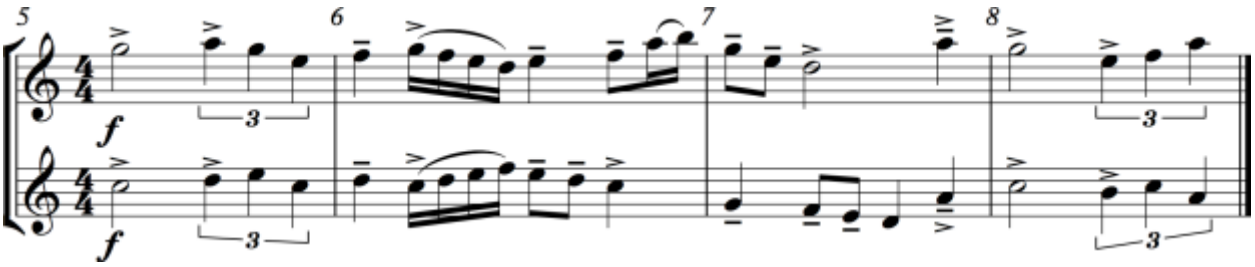
can be perceived as a stage that some people can never leave. It is by far the most excruciating and I personally have witnessed the long lasting damage that comes with it. My end goal for this movement was to leave the listener with many questions left unanswered. The opening theme is never really resolved and essentially trails off in the end, unfinished.

Acceptance

Acceptance is often confused with the notion of being "all right" or "ok" with what has happened. This is not the case. Most people do not ever feel ok or all right about the loss of a loved one. This stage is about accepting the reality that our loved one is physically gone and recognizing that this new reality is the permanent reality. We will never like this reality or make it ok, but eventually we accept it. We learn to live with it.

Acceptance incorporates themes from the previous four movements. It ties together every stage into one experience. Interrupting meter changes, accelerating rhythms, and dissonant harmonies are all reminiscent of the previous movements. There are even some new themes added as the whole point of acceptance is to come to understand all of the emotions that a person has been feeling and relate all of them back to finally accepting what has happened. A new theme that is introduced is the use of quarter note triplets. Previously, there is every other rhythmic value of the triplet, except the quarter-note triplet. The quarter-note triplet reminds me of bell tones. Resonant and almost triumphant. More or less, they allude to a conclusion and resolution.

Figure 4.4 – Quarter-Note Triplets (mm. 5-8)



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Chapter 5 - Dissimiles

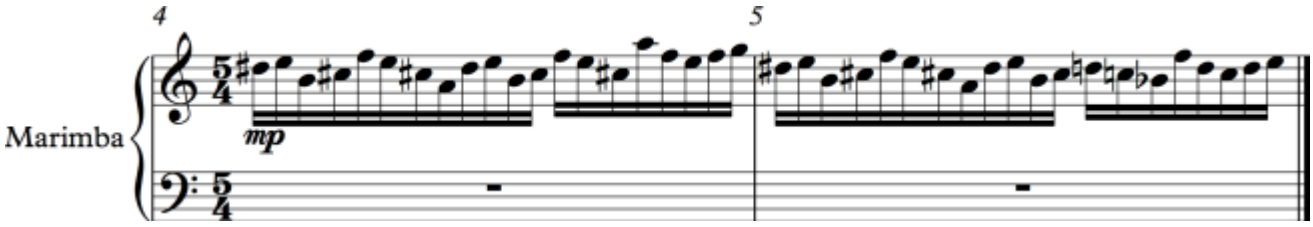
The inspiration for this piece was Paul Creston's music. Paul Creston is considered one of America's premier composers who specialized in piano, chamber, orchestral, and band music. The saxophone was invented circa 1838 by Adolphe Sax, and at the time, the only music written for saxophone at the time was novelty and popular songs. In the 1930's and 1940's, a group of serious classical composers began composing for the saxophone, Paul Creston being one of them. The Creston Saxophone Concerto is written as a traditional three-movement concerto. The outer movements use irregular meters, and the rhythmic ambiguity is aurally interesting. This irregular meter and metric ambiguity are the primary features of Dissimiles. It is what gives the piece its sense of rhythmic irregularity.

Often times, in standard common practice tonal[8]* music, the primary focus centralizes around the concept of melody. It is often times judged based on how "sing-able" the melody can be. That is not to say that other things like rhythm are not important. Rhythm is an important concept, but is often overlooked to an untrained musical ear.

[8] *The word "tonal" is weighted very heavily in academia. The definition of tonality can have many different meanings depending on the genre, time period, or even just the context. In this instance, tonality refers more or less to 19th century western music. This is still obviously a large generalization of the concept of tonal music.

In *Dissimiles*, rhythm is the primary focus. Mm. 4 and 5 are the main rhythmic motif of the piece and present an interesting concept of rhythmic dependency to the listener. This means that because of the fast tempo of the marimba part, there is no real way that anyone could hear all of the individual notes. The listener must hold on to the only thing they can comprehend in such a short amount of time. This allows the performer to have some flexibility when it comes to which sixteenth notes they can play.

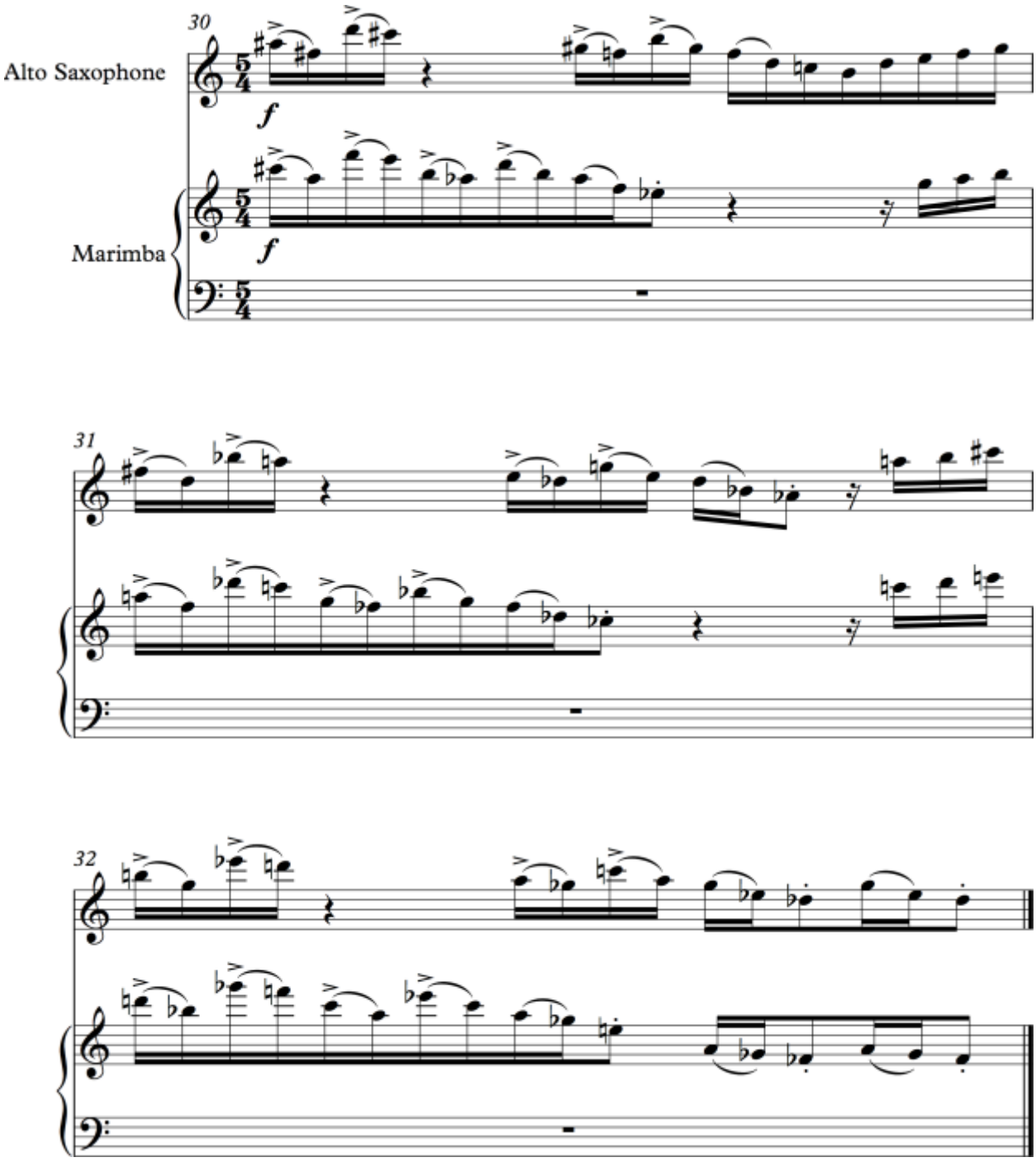
Figure 5.1– Sixteenth Notes in Marimba Part (mm. 4-5)



Because this is the first pitched percussion piece that I have written, I was initially unsure of the limitations of a two mallet marimba player. I would focus on each individual note and try to form some discernable melody within the onslaught of continuous sixteenth notes. This proved to be almost impossible and I realized that if I cannot, the composer, discern all of the notes, then any listener will not be able to either. I realized I was looking at this in a negative light. Instead of focusing on what I could not do, I should focus on how I can work this to my

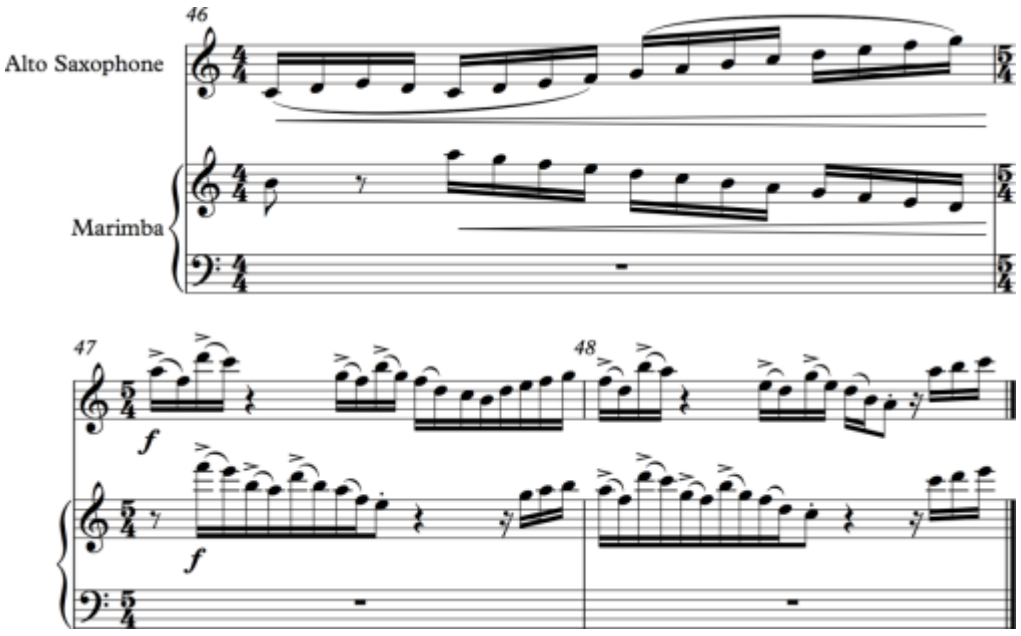
advantage. This opened quite a few doors, as it became easier to write these passing sixteenth note lines, without having to worry about each individual note. This allowed for the focus to be shifted to the overall rhythmic contour of a line. How does this line flow? Is it connected? Are there any points where the rhythmic contour is broken and the listener may be startled? These were questions that were asked as *Dissimiles* unfolded. Many times, the marimba line is interrupted when the line is temporarily dropped down the octave, and then returns to the original scalar line (Figure 5.2). This makes it more interesting as it is more than just a scale, which could be perceived as uninteresting. A good place where these questions were consistently asked were mm. 30-32. Here we see a classic hand off between the saxophone and the marimba, with the intertwining of sixteenth notes every few beats.

Figure 5.2 – Voice Trade-Off (mm. 30-32)



As a composer, it is our job to convey a message to the listener. However, it is not necessarily our job to make the performer's life difficult. Obviously, that is not something we can always control. Often, the piece is a challenge to the performer because that is the only way for the composer to convey his or her message. In the middle section of *Dissimiles*, the momentum of sixteenth notes is still continuous. However, unless a listener has perfect pitch, it would be difficult to hear that both the saxophone and marimba part have switched to C Major. The intention behind this was the concept of "work smarter, not harder." The message being conveyed here, as mentioned before, is not individual notes, but rhythmic contour. I wanted the listener to pay attention to the rhythmic hand off, not every individual note. Because of this, I wrote this section in C major so the performers could worry less about individual notes and pay more attention to the entire line.

Figure 5.3 – C Major Trade-off (mm. 46-48)

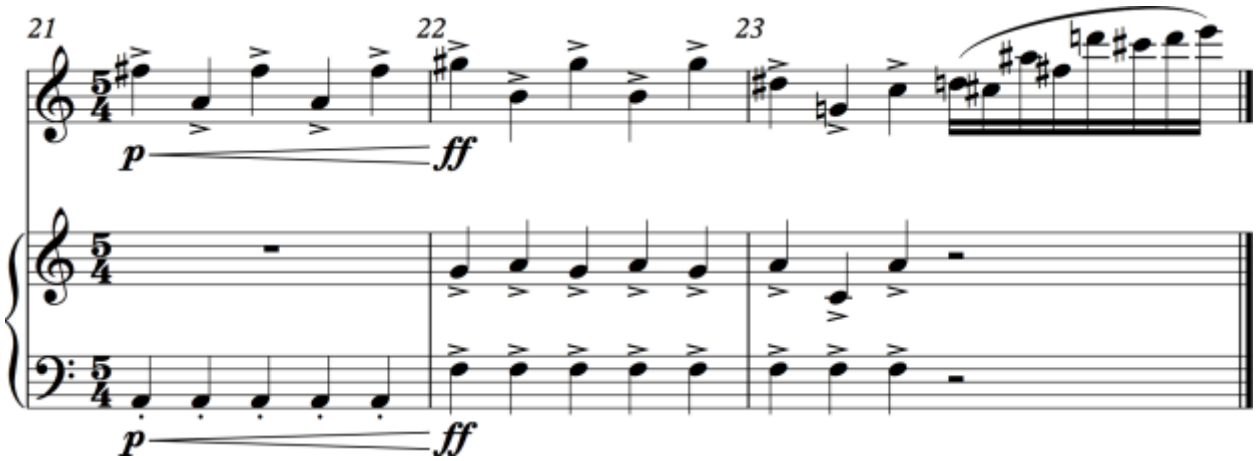


As mentioned previously, some of the compositions presented in this paper include the unlikely pairing of saxophone and some other instrument. Alto saxophone and marimba are arguably the most unlikely duo of this compilation of pieces. That is why I names it *Dissimiles*, which is Latin for the word "unlikely." It is not often one sees a percussion and woodwind duo. An example of a well-known work that features saxophone and marimba is David Maslanka's *Song Book*. It was commissioned by Steven Jordheim and Dane Richeson of the Lawrence University Conservatory of Music and was composed in the summer of 1998.[9] As popular as this piece is, it is one of the very few marimba-saxophone pieces that has proven to be successful. I saw this as a challenge, and thought writing for saxophone and pitched percussion (marimba) would only further support my original statement on the versatility of the saxophone.

It would seem that the saxophone and the marimba have some similarities in their versatility. The marimba has many different types of mallets that can be used for specific genres and styles. Harder mallets are more aggressive in their sound but also offer shorter articulations. Softer mallets have a warmer sound are perfect for tremolo chords and extended whole note passages. Because this piece is primarily sixteenth notes with very few long tones, the marimba player will use a harder mallet so that the sixteenth notes can be properly articulated without it sounding muddled. This will also help the saxophonist because the player will not have to compete with soft mallets that would cause a lot of resonance and make it hard for the saxophonist to be heard. In mm.21-23, the saxophone and marimba have simultaneous quarter notes. Here, if the marimba player were using softer mallets, it would be harder to hear the accents and specific pitches in both instruments.

[9] "Song Book." David Maslanka. Accessed February 26, 2017. Davidmaslanka.com, Song Book, pdf.

Figure 5.4 – Competing Quarter Notes (mm. 21-23)



The saxophone shares quite a few similarities to the marimba in its ability to alter its sound. As mentioned, it has the timbre of a woodwind instrument, the facility of a stringed instrument, and the projection of a brass instrument. This allows the instrument to be used in various types of ensembles and musical settings. This piece is no exception. The saxophone can hold its own when playing side by side with the marimba. Its ability to be able to play at such a wide range of dynamics, allows the saxophone to be heard when the dynamic is at both extremes, but also allows the player to blend with whatever instrument with which it is paired.

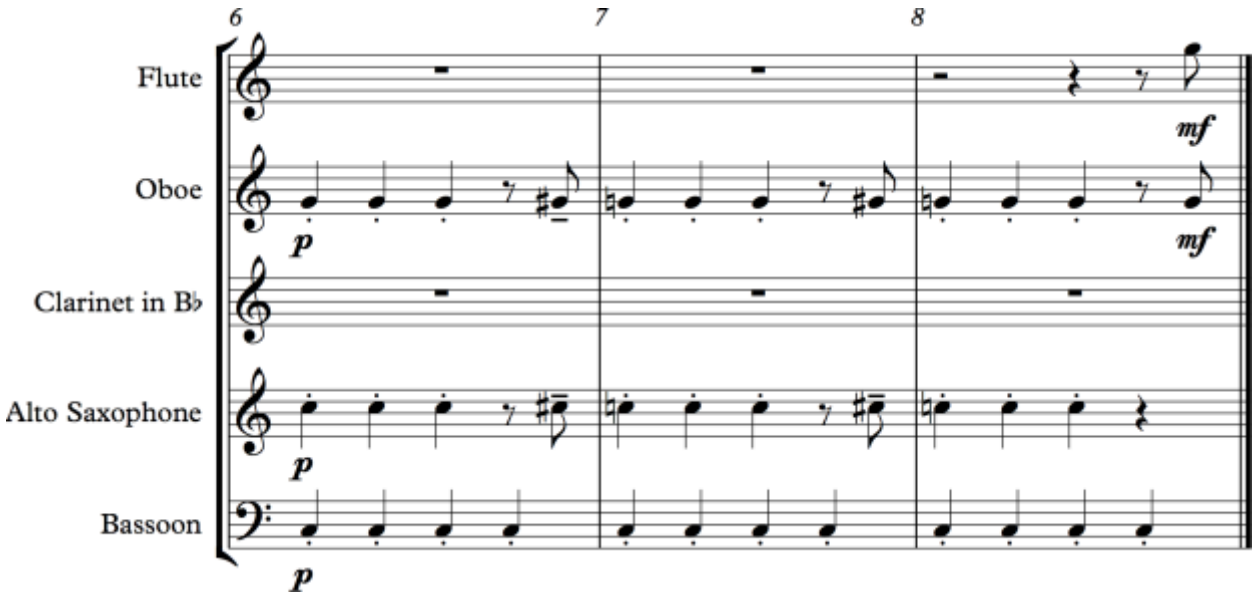
Chapter 6 - Tango?

A woodwind quintet normally consists of the following instruments: flute, oboe, clarinet, horn, and bassoon. The horn, though clearly a member of the brass family, is a part of the woodwind quintet because of its ability to blend effortlessly with woodwinds because of its mellow sound. *Tango?* is a woodwind quintet written for flute, oboe, clarinet, alto saxophone, and bassoon. In *Tango?* the alto saxophone replaces the horn because of its ability to blend effortlessly with other woodwind instruments.

The piece begins with a familiar tango rhythm (Figure 6.1) which is eventually interrupted by surprise dissonances and abrupt silences. The listener is then brought back to the tango feel only to be shocked by unfamiliar harmonies that would not normally be found within a tango. It has a traditional "A-B-A-Coda" form which provides an interesting contrast to the otherwise non-traditional setting. As the tango begins to unravel, the listener may get the feeling that everything is falling apart. This mood immediately changes as the quintet ends on a happy and unexpected major chord.

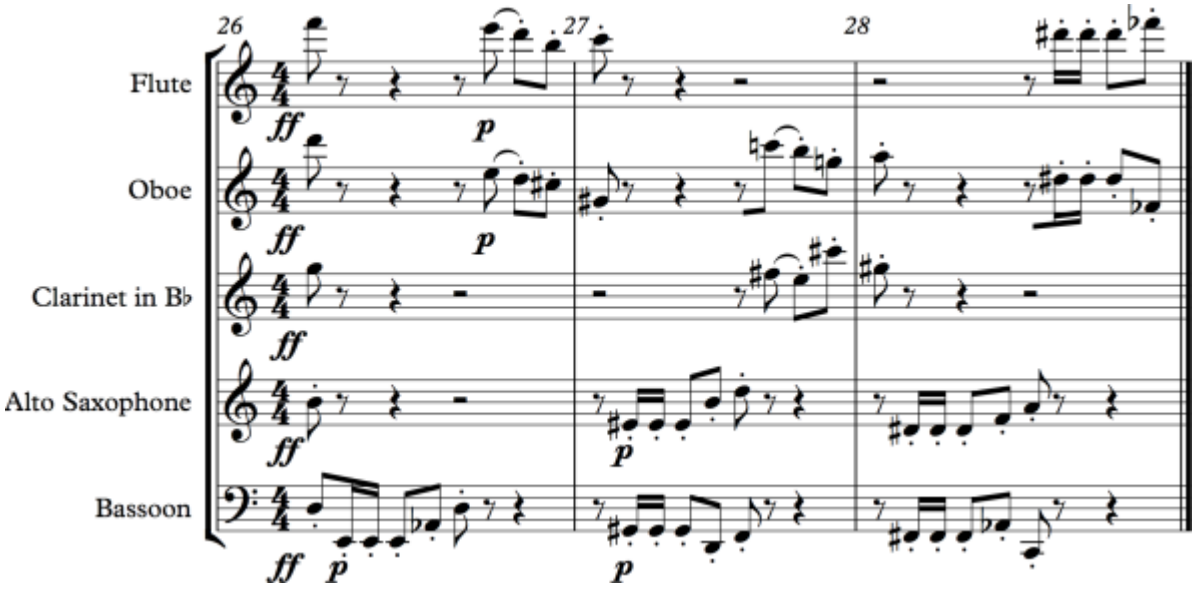
The piece is called *Tango?* because it occasionally features what would be considered to be the typical "tango" rhythm. The beginning starts off with a rush of sixteenth notes in the flute and oboe. The typical tango rhythm then enters, followed by the establishment of the A theme.

Figure 6.1 – Typical Tango Rhythm (mm. 6-9)



The piece remains relatively melodic throughout the first section, only having a few harmonic surprises of major and minor 2nds. They are considered more or less "unexpected" because of how infrequent and brief they are presented. However, around m.26, the piece begins to unravel harmonically. This next section, which could be considered the theme of the A section, incorporated more dissonances than used previously. It is also marked at a piano dynamic level, which dramatically contrasts with the previous section that was consistently at forte. The piece continues with this chromaticism until m.37 where we see a shocking use of unison in all of the instruments. It is shocking because this is the first time where all of the voices are playing the exact same thing and the exact same time.

Figure 6.2 – Section A, Second Theme (mm. 26-28)



Having the unison voices here helps bring together the continuous momentum that the piece has be exhibiting since the beginning. It reminds the listener that the overarching theme is still considered a traditional style tango. Tangos often have moments of independent voices but also consistently have unison sections that allow the listeners to be brought back to the original theme or idea that was presented. In Figure 6.2, the use of unison brings back the tango rhythm that was used at the beginning, even though it had been altered slightly form the original rhythm.

Chapter 7 - Conclusion

The overall goal of this report was to partially demonstrate the versatility of the saxophone through various techniques and instrumentations. As mentioned in the beginning, every piece presented in this report incorporates the saxophone, whether as the feature or in a less substantial roll. From the standard saxophone quartet, to saxophone and marimba, to electronics plus saxophone and trumpet, the saxophone can be used in almost any ensemble setting because of its ability to project like a brass instrument, blend like a woodwind instrument, and use percussive elements (slap tongue) like a percussion instrument.

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