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ALONG CAME BENNY:

A QUALITATIVE MUSICAL ANALYSIS

OF SELECT BENNY GOLSON COMPOSITIONS

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THESIS

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ABSTRACT

Composer, Arranger, and saxophonist Benny Golson stands as one of the main figures of the post-bop era. Although he was a masterful saxophonist and improvisor, it could be argued that the broad recognition of his importance lies more within his compositions.

This thesis gives recognition to Golson through a qualitative analysis of four of his compositions that have become standard jazz repertoire: “Along Came Betty,” “Stablemates,” “Whisper Not,” and “I Remember Clifford.” Each has characteristics that are Golson trademarks, such as unconventional forms, unusual harmonies and key area relationships, intricate yet singable melodies, and use of half-diminished harmonies. The musical analysis uses a series of tools looking at harmony, melody, and form to uncover unique aspects of Golson’s sound.

These musical analyses will be supplemented with qualitative data collected from interviews with five world-renowned professional jazz musicians who have played Golson’s music throughout their career, in some cases as a member of Golson’s own band. This takes the rare step of combining musical analysis with the documented views of major musicians who have lived this repertoire with Golson himself. Existing literature will be discussed, and a brief biological section will outline Golson’s career accomplishments and achievements.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

Introduction

In the idiom of jazz, artists are typically known for their ability and uniqueness on their instrument, or vocals. A lesser recognized artistic vehicle in the genre is the pen, or ability to compose where uniqueness is an equally essential quality. Some skilled musicians were proficient at their main instrument and their compositional voice. Benny Golson is one of a small group of jazz musicians whose composition work was as significant as his saxophone.

Saxophonist, bandleader, and composer Benny Golson (b. 1929) was one of many prominent musicians to rise to success from the Philadelphia jazz scene. Golson started his career playing for bands under the leadership of "Bullmoose" Jackson, Earl Bostic, and Dizzy Gillespie (Priestley, 1999, p. 499). Golson's earliest inspiration as a composer came from his time with pianist Tadd Dameron (Strunk, 2009, p. 55). Golson later went on to write compositions for Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, Miles Davis's quintet, and many other popular musical configurations. Many of these compositions have lasted the test of time and have become well-known literature within the jazz canon. Compositions such as "Stablemates," "Along Came Betty," and "Whisper Not" are a few that Golson was made famous for (Priestley, p. 502).

Several major sources (outlined in this study) make the cases that Golson has built an impressive career that contributed to jazz history. However, there is no in-depth musical analysis of his works.

There is a noticeable lack of published public musical analysis of the music of Benny Golson. A great effort to get Golson's name back into jazz enthusiast's minds was made by Jim Merod who helped publish Golson's autobiography *Whisper Not* in 2016. Golson appears to have slipped under the radar in terms of scholarly documents, specifically with dissertations and theses. The biographical work has already been done on Golson and now it is time to fill the need for musical analysis.

One person's analysis may reveal the inner workings of a musical work or works, however gathering and analyzing a collection of several perspectives can give a more expansive view. With more interpretations of the compositions, more data will become available to help uncover the unique aspects of Benny Golson. For this reason, for this project, I have gathered the interpretations of professional musicians who have established themselves within the idiom of jazz and who are familiar with Golson and his compositions. The data from the interviewees will supplement the musical analysis, giving a comprehensive perspective on some of Golson's compositions.

Problem Statement

The history of jazz and its evolution contains a seemingly endless amount of musical analysis from some of the genre's most prominent voices. However, there is a perceivable lack of musical analysis of the music of Benny Golson. Within the last five or so years, a significant effort has been made in giving Golson some of the recognition many jazz connoisseurs believe he deserves as seen through the release of his autobiography, *Whisper Not.* Although this is a

substantial step forward for uncovering the importance of Golson's career, there is no musical analysis. The same case applies for any other documentation of Golson, with most of the existing literature being biographic and discographic. The analysis tool can be used pedagogically, teaching the history of Golson's writing methods and the music theory and complexities behind them.

Purpose Statement

Because so many jazz musicians know or have heard of Golson and his iconic compositions, some of his music is being considered to have entered the standard jazz repertoire. Through analysis, this project addresses the aspects of uniqueness from each composition. The unique elements are combined with analytical points taken from interviews conducted with professional musicians. Each musician was asked to input their thoughts and opinions on unique aspects of and compositional style of four of Golson's compositions "Along Came Betty," "Stablemates," "Whisper Not," and I Remember Clifford." Interview data combined with analysis helps address the problem of lack of presentation of analysis of Golson's work.

Methodology

A combination of historical and mixed method research consisting of qualitative research and musical analysis is used in this paper. The original research is supported with a historical and cultural background of Benny Golson. Extensive research of Benny Golson discovered a great deal of existing literature. Much of that literature focuses on Golson's significance as a writer in today's jazz world (Reed, 2012). Most findings accomplish the same thing, recognizing his success as both a composer and as a saxophonist. However, they mostly do not go beyond the praise of Golson as a public figure and do address the questions of how and why he is successful (Priestley, p. 501). The purpose of this original research project is to analyze Benny Golson's

success as a composer by discovering why his compositions are interesting and unique. There was a need for historical research to demonstrate the lack of existing literature that helps proves Golson's success as a composer.

The qualitative research study is a series of interviews; interviewees were found with a using specific criteria. The interviewee must 1) live in New York and have been performing professionally for at least 20 years and 2) know the compositions of and/or frequently play the compositions of Benny Golson. The interviewees are bassist Marcus McLaurine, pianist Bill Charlap, trombonist John Mosca, pianist Bruce Barth, and pianist Mike LeDonne. The interviewees were asked about the following compositions: "Along Came Betty," "Stablemates," "Whisper Not, and "I Remember Clifford." Each interviewee was posed a series of questions similar to the following list:

-How do you approach these compositions as a player?

-How do you approach these compositions as a listener?

-What to you is unique about these tunes?

-Is there anything about the melody that you find distinctive about this tune?

-Is there anything about the harmony that you find distinctive about this tune?

-Is there anything about the form that you find distinctive?

-How do you remember the melody and chord changes to these compositions?

-Do you have a method for improvising over these compositions?

-Are there any parts in this tune that are particularly challenging or unconventional?

- Is there a particular spot that is melodically interesting or unconventional to you?

-Why do you think that students are learning these compositions to play in the jam session setting?

This thesis is organized into three analysis sections, first by the compositions then by the interviews, followed by a qualitative analysis. The method of musical analysis is varied and features a showcase of different tools used such as harmony, melody, and form. Within those three major categories, efforts were focused on highlighting Golson's unique ability to stray far from the conventional traditions of jazz writing while simultaneously fitting within the genre. For each composition, a comprehensive analysis of harmony, melody, and form is given to bring to the forefront Golson's unique writing characteristics. These characteristics are tonal ambiguity, unconventional harmonic rhythm, rhythmic variety, unique melodic development, clever voice leading, blues language, frequent use of harmonic substitutions, and more. The data collected from interviews is categorized into its own chapter and analyzed for the important content that directly supplements the musical analysis of the previous chapter.

Chapter one from Ingrid Monson's book *Saying Something* is used as a model for this project. Monson conducted a similar study with a series of professional jazz musicians, interviewing them about interaction within a rhythm section. In chapter one, she discusses her own methods and strategies for conducting successful qualitative research interviews. The section in which she talks about how important it is to adapt your questions to the interviewee is a direct influence. In the case of these older jazz musicians, it's important to be prepared to speak off script and improvise questions from where the conversation goes. She stresses preparing by conducting research about the interviewee before going in. She also believed that depending on her inflection of voice and the way that she phrased her questions could alter the answers of her interviewees. She further explained that some older jazz musicians may be less willing to open depending on how rigid and formal the interview may be. Her contact method and the setting she

conducts the interviews has a direct influence upon this project as well. She reached out to the musicians by going to their shows and asking them in person either before or after. It worked to her advantage because it showed the musicians that she cared enough to listen to their show in addition to using them for her research.

Research Questions

-Why have Benny Golson's compositions lasted if they have?

-How does Benny Golson's writing process set him aside from other composers of his generation?

-How have Benny Golson's compositions entered their way into the standard jazz repertoire of 2023?

-Why is Benny Golson seen as a novelty by being a prolific composer and saxophone player?

-Why do jazz players in 2023 feel as though they need to learn Benny Golson's compositions?

-What makes Benny Golson's compositions stand out from the compositions of Wayne Shorter, Charles Mingus, or John Coltrane?

-What makes Benny Golson's compositions unique?

-What makes modern musicians keep playing Benny Golson's compositions?

-How can Benny Golson's compositions be used as an educational tool?

Biographical

He began his musical journey by studying briefly at Howard University in Washington, DC. Golson's music career took off when he left University after only three years (Strunk, 2009,

p. 55). His first professional gig out of school was performing tenor saxophone with bandleader "Bullmoose" Jackson in 1951 (Priestley, 1999, p. 499). While in Jackson's band, he met one of his earliest compositional influences, pianist/composer Tadd Dameron (Strunk, p. 55). Golson's inspiration from Dameron encouraged him to make writing a big part of his future career. After his time with Jackson, he moved on to make a name for himself by joining bands under leaders such as Earl Bostic, Johnny Hodges, and Dizzy Gillespie (Strunk, p. 55). At the time Golson's performing career was blossoming, so was his compositional career. While with the Gillespie band, Dizzy encouraged Golson to write arrangements for the band (Frost, 1958, p. 19). Golson's success with writing for the Gillespie band opened a world of potential, getting him work writing and arranging for James Moody, Al Belletto, Maynard Ferguson, Dinah Washington, Carmen McRae, Benny Goodman, and Miles Davis (Lees, p. 23). Golson wrote one of his most famous compositions "Stablemates" which was premiered by Davis on the album *Miles* in *1955 on the* Prestige label (Strunk, p. 56). This composition was just the start of Golson's compositional career, and its success was foreshadowing his future accomplishments in the idiom.

In 1958, his compositional career gained wider recognition when he spent time composing and arranging for Art Blakey's "Jazz Messengers." During his time with this group, he produced pieces such as "Blues March," and "Along Came Betty" (Priestley, p. 502). These two compositions were featured on one of the group's most popular albums Moanin'. His career continued upward when in 1959 he formed The Jazztet with trumpeter Art Farmer (Lees, 1960, p. 20). Despite this group's financial adversities, they faced, Farmer and Golson continued the group for the good of the music. Golson truly discovered himself as a writer with the Jazztet unlike other groups he has arranged for. Golson enjoyed every time he composed for this group. It provided him with freedom to try new things and experiment in a professional setting (Lees, p.

23). Until 1962, the Jazztet's popularity and success was a vehicle that Golson used to let the world hear his compositional voice.

Golson's composing career continued to unfold and develop away from jazz. His first trip to Europe in 1958 proved to be beneficial when his compositional skills were requested. Some of his first film scoring work happened in London, England in 1958 where he was invited to compose the score, conduct, and supervise a German art film (Title Unknown) (Wilmer, 1966, p. 22). This was the first glimpse into a new direction of his composing career. Ten years later he continued in that direction where he settled in Hollywood after taking inspiration from Quincy Jones and Oliver Nelson (Priestley, 503). Golson's career in Hollywood flourished with success. He found work composing music for pop singers, film, television drama, advertising agencies, and more. Golson worked for Paramount Studios, composing for the films *Mission Impossible* and *Mannix.* He also worked for Twentieth Century Fox, writing for the TV shows *M.A.S.H.* and *Room 222* (Priestley, 503).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

BACKGROUND

Benny Golson is one of few musicians whose skills on his instrument are equal to his skills in composition. From a young age, he was able to find his style within music and how to express it. Growing up with one of the most influential jazz tenor saxophonists, John Coltrane, had an influence on his interpretation of saxophone playing. Golson's unique improvising is enjoyed by many, but the popularity of his compositions has created his legacy. "Along Came Betty," "Stablemates," "Whisper Not," and "Killer Joe" are a few of his many compositions that have been considered to have entered the standard jazz repertoire. These songs are used as an educational tool in how to successfully navigate jazz harmony, forms, and melody.

Problem Statement

Though it appears these compositions have a place in the lineage of jazz composition, more attention is given to his performance career rather than his writing career. Golson's skill sets have earned him frequent recognition of his career accomplishments. However, writings often place him into the category of being a novelty, one who plays and composes both at a high level. Although this is sufficient for a magazine or newspaper article, the next step that should be taken is to examine the contributions he has made to canon of jazz composition and uncover the significance of his career as a composer.

For this project, my research is focused on his composing career and have found a representative collection of related literature. In this review, the literature is organized into chronological order of the period in which they were written. Each piece of literature consists of a biographical survey of Golson's life up until the point when it was written. They each are slightly different in method, but all achieve the same purpose; to examine the career and accomplishments of Benny Golson.

With no musical analysis, Golson's significance as a composer can be supported by details and specifics of his career. His methods, philosophical insights, and beliefs are templates that outline his compositional style. His accomplishments and achievements serve as contributions, as they reflect his success. His individuality contributes to the unique sound that is Benny Golson. That sound can be described as the way that he combines harmony, melody, and form.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERTURE

Published 1950-1990

Golson's level of skill at composing and performing at such a young age has caught the attention of jazz enthusiasts. Henry Frost chose to turn the spotlight on this young, up-and-coming artist by examining Golson's career in chronological order, presenting his achievements in the fields of composition and performance. Frost had several reasons for choosing to write about Golson. He found that musicians who specialize in composing and arranging make up one of the most intriguing sub-categories in the genre of jazz (Frost, 1958, p. 19, para. 1). The number of musicians who can play well out-numbered those who can write well, but Golson, who can do both exceptionally well, showed signs of an especially promising future (p. 19, para. 3-6).

Frost found Golson's compositions to be "truly original," and that his work had an "intense, probing quality." Frost said, "Listening to it many times will bring enjoyment and understanding" (p. 41, para. 5). In addition, Frost also found that Golson's creations are not "cute," not oft-repeated riffs, but longer gracefully constructed lines (p. 41, para. 5-6). Frost also mentioned that Golson's "infatuation" with his earliest influence, Tadd Dameron, is evident in his compositions (p. 41, para. 7).

Frost's article had a focus on Golson's composing career that features an underlying commentary. Frost's findings, or claims, could benefit from the support of musical examples, and therefore aren't supported sufficiently. He developed a pattern of stating reasonable claims, followed by neglecting to support them with any factual evidence.

Frost's article is referenced in several other texts about Golson. His intentions with this article were clearer than other similar magazine articles. It was clear he wanted to examine the composing aspect of Golson's career. It is a sufficient balance between general biographical and compositional information without an influx of tangential information.

Golson's success as a composer comes largely from the ability to write for a particular group. Lees examined the success of The Jazztet, a new jazz group co-led by Golson and trumpeter Art Farmer (Lees, 1960, p. 20). Lees suggested that Golson and Farmer, although gentle in nature and kind human beings, drove a very well-planned group with a firmness of purpose (p. 21). They showed an awareness of publicity and its importance. The article highlighted the achievements of the two individuals and the new group. Lees found that the Jazztet faced great financial adversity, but because of the individual success and rigor of the two leaders the group survived (p. 21).

Through brief biographical backgrounds and character development sections, Lees illustrated how good of leaders and humans Golson and Farmer are. The middle features brief interview sections from Kay Norton, the manager of the Jazztet, to supplement the band's leadership and success information. In addition, Lee included interviews with Golson/Farmer to supplement their biographical sections. He tied it all together by featuring Farmer and Golson's mission as musicians in this group, which is to present beautiful melodies, have fun playing the music, be appreciated by their peers and more.

Lee found that Golson and Farmer's positive and supportive characteristics were responsible for a great part of the group's success. They wanted publicity for their players in the group rather than money and gave it back to the jazz community by playing free concerts. Lees found that Golson and Farmer wanted to play their music because they wanted people to know who they were as a person through their compositional voice (p. 21).

Lees' article, although focused mostly on the Jazztet, provided insight into Golson's characteristics as a bandleader. These characteristics are important in the construction of Golson's career and legacy. The Jazztet provided a way for Golson to showcase his compositions. The success of the Jazztet was an indirect reflection of Golson's success as a composer.

The time Benny Golson spent working in Europe was an important factor to his future career accomplishments in composition. Wilmer's *Downbeat* article examined how Golson's time in London impacted his musical development (Wilmer, 1966, p. 22). Golson's passion for writing is surfaced by a biographical overview of his career as a composer. Musicians working overseas became an area of interest for of jazz historians and writers, presenting the question of:

Why would a successful musician like Benny Golson need to travel to Europe when he is so successful in the U.S.?

This article puts into perspective how influential of a writer Benny Golson was. The demand for his compositions in different countries is a testament for his abilities. Wilmer's findings provided a new perspective on Golson's career from a commercial standpoint, rather than idiomatic, giving Golson's compositional career more recognition. Wilmer pointed out that Golson was becoming successful writing music outside of jazz and that his writing skills were being utilized in film scoring and television as opposed to casual listening. Golson mentioned that traditional jazz will always mean a lot to him, as it is what started his writing career, but he is excited for the future of composing popular new music (p. 22).

It is evident that Wilmer asked Golson to compare working in the U.S. to working in Europe, what type or types of music he likes to write, and what his writing process looks like. She found that Golson enjoyed working in Europe for many reasons, but one that stood out is that musicians had more freedom in their artistic choices and that their work ethic was highly valued (p. 22).

In addition, she asked about his writing process and brought attention to a few important aspects. The first was Golson's way of choosing whether a composition of his was suitable for the public. Golson claimed that he would write several songs per day but only choose ones that were heartfelt and contained the best melodies. His careful attention to melody is an aspect of his composing method that contributes to his unique sound.

Published 1990-2010

Benny Golson possesses a characteristic of creativity and individuality that is described by David Rosenthal as beauty. David Rosenthal's *Hard Bop: Jazz and Black Music 1955-1965*

mentioned Benny Golson. Golson is placed alongside Art Farmer, Tommy Flanagan, Barry Harris, Benny Golson, and Gigi Gryce's to examine their association with sub-genre of bebop jazz. Rosenthal in the chapter discussed the lives of each of these musicians and how their individual contributions to hard bop were significant to the development of jazz during the period of 1955-1965.

Rosenthal opened the chapter with a claim from Mark Gridley's book *Jazz Styles,* saying that Gridley grouped these musicians together and classified them as hard boppers (Rosenthal, 1992, p. 85). He continued by grouping these musicians together by them all containing a presence of beauty in their craft, whether it be composing or performing. He recognized that his choice of the word 'beauty' was ambiguous and in need of defining (pp. 85-86). Rosenthal first defined beauty with Barry Harris' words, "tunefulness and lyricism" (p. 85). Rosenthal classified Harris' definition as "clear enough." On page 86, he then further defined beauty by using a quote from composer Tadd Dameron. Dameron said to his band in 1956 "When I write something it's with beauty in mind. It must swing, sure, but it must be beautiful" (p. 86).

Rosenthal found that the previously mentioned musicians are associated with hard bop for two reasons: 1) they collaborated with hard-boppers, and 2) the "breadth" and "diversity" of hard bop helped their styles develop (p. 85). Rosenthal also said that they all had a "gentle, thoughtful elegance" (p. 85), providing the reason why Rosenthal picked these musicians for this chapter and could be considered the criteria.

Rosenthal proceeded by going through each musician and presenting their achievements and career highlights. He performed a recollection of pre-existing sources but with an added personal claim and goal. Instead of covering an exhaustive biographical list for each musician, he examined the parts of their lives that supported his claim of their presence of musical beauty.

Rosenthal introduced Golson as a composer who wrote “richly voiced, vibrantly melodic, modern jazz originals” (p. 86). He then claimed that Golson is one of few modern composers whose compositions have entered the standard jazz repertoire (p. 92). He directly supported this claim with evidence consisting of a short analysis of “Stablemates.” He commented on the unique form of this composition and mentioned one of Golson’s first steps in the writing process; having a solid set of chord changes first (p. 92). The short analysis and composition method details helped support a difficult claim to physically prove without thorough musical analysis.

The author’s inclusion of Golson is worthy of discussion. Rosenthal felt passionately about Golson’s career, and that it is important within the sub-genre of hard bop jazz. He demonstrated Golson’s contributions by providing details to support Golson’s presence of beauty. To end the chapter, he left the reader with a striking new thought. Benny Golson and Art Farmer may have been a representation of what jazz would have been like had the radical developments of bebop protest music not occurred (p. 100). This thought opened a new perspective on Golson’s role as a composer and tied in political and racial tensions, bringing a whole new meaning to what could be considered his contributions to jazz composition.

Golson possessed a unique characteristic of always moving creativity forward through a series of methods and beliefs. In 1995, Jim Merod conducted an extensive interview with Benny Golson titled *Forward Motion.* Golson and Merod believe that this conversation is a reflection and discussion of modern jazz musicians, and that creativity is always about moving forward (Golson, as told by Merod, 1995, p. 89). They found that modern jazz musicians, specifically tenor saxophone players, lack a certain forward momentum that musicians like Golson and Coltrane possessed during their early years. Merod and Golson used Sonny Rollins as an example as some who was never satisfied with their work as a musician and was always trying to

create something new (p. 89). They also spoke of Coltrane's drive for musical creation and refined what one might call his "obsession" as total dedication (p. 62). Golson and Merod felt young tenor saxophone players don't have the same dedication to the art and creativity as their heroes, and therefore aren't comparable. This served as a basis for their conversation, however, they strayed from this topic.

Merod's conversation style interview with Golson contained a few major talking points but with left freedom and space for Golson to talk. Around pages 80-83, their conversation visited the topic of Golson's style and methods of composition. Merod mentioned that he thought that Golson's music sounds like it has a Thelonious Monk influence. Golson argued that he doesn't think of Monk while composing and doesn't think that way as a composer. He didn't emulate other artists' style while writing, nor did he think of the saxophone while writing (p. 80). This conversation went on for quite some time but provided support for Golson's aspirations and forward motion as a writer.

Golson claimed his dominating element when composing is melody, and that his compositions must have melodic direction to be memorable (p. 80). Golson explained that music is a servant for him, and that notes do what he tells them to do like words or phrases in a language (p. 81). He also believed that compositions must have a series of climaxes that work in balance with each other, all fitting into a grand scheme, and happening at different levels of intensity (p. 82). These compositional methods act as philosophical beliefs that drive Golson's individuality and creativity.

Merod's method behind the conversation produced a wide spread of data that allowed Golson the opportunity to talk about the wisdom behind his writing. This aspect of his composing career is something not often mentioned in other pieces of literature about Golson.

Merod's conversation gave readers a new perspective on Golson's personal beliefs and methods and helps provide context for the creativity surrounding his compositions.

The city of Philadelphia is often overlooked in discussions of the development of African American music. George Allen's doctoral dissertation, *Contributions of Philadelphia African American musicians to American jazz music from 1945 to 1960,* examined the uniqueness and originality of Philadelphia's often overlooked development in Black American Music (Allen, 1998, p. 1). Allen had three research questions:

1. What characteristics of Philadelphia helped contribute to the development of jazz?
2. Why was 1945-1960 so important to Philly jazz?
3. Who were the most influential figures in the Philly jazz scene that changed history?

The history of jazz rarely mentions, to the extent Allen believes is necessary, how important Philadelphia was. Within Philadelphia during the specific time Allen was looking at, there were very important cultural, social, and political happenings that greatly affected the history of New York jazz as academia knows it. Allen researched how much it impacted the history and noted the contributions made by iconic Philadelphian jazz musicians at the same time.

In the introduction section, Allen finds that during his time with the Jazz Messengers, Golson composed some of his finest compositions (Allen, 1998, p. 25). Within the culture of the Jazz Messengers, they are some of the most well-known hits of the band's running years. Allen then included quotes, first about Golson's composition "I Remember Clifford," and then about composing. He included a Golson quote from a Voce interview in 1982, "Each note has to mean

something to me now, but when I was younger [,] I just turned them out one after another" (Allen, 1998, as cited in Golson, 1982, p. 25).

Allen also was sure to include a quote about Golson's influences, two of which being Brahms and Chopin, crediting their melodic characteristics (p. 25). Allen concluded this section with specific attention to composing. He says that Golson's compositions have "become canons in African American Classical Music" (p. 26).

Allen's dissertation provided cultural and historical context for Golson's career. The introduction prepared the reader by providing the outstanding careers and accomplishments of Golson and a few other successful Philadelphia jazz musicians. It also helped provide the basis for his original research by suggesting that Philadelphia had a lot to offer jazz musicians, and that Philadelphian jazz musicians have distinction.

Allen's related literature section then provided a cultural and historical background of Philadelphia by examining the adversities and advantages of African American musicians who started their careers in Philadelphia. Allen classified the city as having characteristics that helped and hindered musicians. Characteristics that helped the musicians were the abundance of playing opportunities for young and inexperienced players, the large number of jazz venues that brought in professional acts, and the presence of the Local 274 musicians' union. The musicians were constantly set back by the inevitable threat of racism and segregation. With these characteristics, the reader can contextualize the lives of the musicians who Allen interviewed.

Golson created a long, successful, and diverse career that stands apart from many others, in part, because of his influential compositions. Strunk's article, "Benny Golson" in the *New Grove Dictionary of Jazz* describes Golson's work as a performer, composer, and arranger. It did

so by describing musicians he worked with, bands that he played with or led, and compositions he wrote.

Strunk summarized the work of others and cited them accordingly at the end of the article. He reported Golson's career in chronological order in a few concise pages. Strunk started with Golson's early career bands and compositions, then covers mid-career bands and compositions from 1959 onward, then covered Golson's time in Hollywood and film-scoring followed by his move back to New York. Lastly, Strunk wrapped up with briefly describing Golson's improvisational style on the tenor saxophone.

Strunk mentioned a few aspects of Golson's composing career that are worthy of being a part of this dictionary. Golson "composed several pieces that would become jazz standards" (Stunk, 1999, p. 55), such as "Stablemates," "I Remember Clifford," and "Whisper Not." Stunk also mentioned that the Jazztet, co-led with trumpeter Art Farmer, was a vehicle for Golson's writing (p. 55). Golson's writing for the Jazztet accomplished two things simultaneously, a convenient way of sharing his new music with the world and providing something for the group to play and record.

For being a relatively modern text (1999), Strunk mostly talked about Golson's performance career and very briefly touched on composition. Acknowledging that the entries must be brief, Strunk could have elaborated by providing more details about Golson's significance as a jazz composer.

Golson's possessed an individuality that is recognized within the culture of African American composers. Priestley's article in *International Dictionary of Black Composers* provided a detailed overview of Benny Golson's career as a composer only. Priestley examined the fruitful career of Golson, placing him alongside some of the most successful African

American composers of all genres. He wrote about Golson's awards and distinctions, major accomplishments, teaching careers, and a short analysis of selected works that highlighted his individuality.

Priestley found that Golson's career has contributed to the idiom of jazz enough to deserve recognition in a national publication (Priestley, 1999, p. 503). Golson's reputation in the history of jazz was created through the unique characteristics of his compositions. They left a mark in jazz history and are influencing the development of modern jazz by being played now more than ever.

Priestley presented the information in several ways. First was a biographical section highlighting his: composing and performing career, education, teaching career, and honors and awards. Next the author provided a music list organized by the categories of collection, jazz ensemble, orchestra, incidental and commercial music. After the discography was a list of publications categorized by articles and television.

Priestley found that Golson's compositions during a specific period had so much individuality that they made an immediate impact on the world of jazz, and that they laid the foundation for his reputation (p. 503). Priestley then provided excellent support by presenting a short analysis some of Golson's most famous compositions. He analyzed "Blues March," talking about form and similarities in the march feeling to "Along Came Betty," and "Whisper Not." He then talked about some harmonic elements that further supported Golson's individuality. Lastly, he examined Golson's composition "Killer Joe," bringing up a new perspective. Priestley found that "Killer Joe" was heading in the direction of modal jazz (p. 503). This was a very interesting insight that he backed with evidence from a musical example of a chord in the song.

Priestley included an underlying narrative that supported Golson's significance to jazz composition through the presentation of success and individuality. Priestley provided analysis and evidence to support his claims, thus actively demonstrating the contributions Golson has made to the idiom. This article paid respects to the traditional roots of African American classical music by calling attention to the culture's leading composers. Golson's legacy as a composer is enriched with the inclusion of him in this dictionary.

Published 2010-Present

In 1996, Golson was named a National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master. In 2012, the NEA association interviewed Golson in part of a series to explore going behind the scenes with some of the nation's greatest living artists (Reed, 2012). Reed's reason for interviewing Golson was like his inclusion in *The International Dictionary of Black Composers,* or *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz.* His long successful career for of playing the saxophone and composing both at a sophisticated level gained him distinction.

Reed kept the interview open ended, allowing for Golson to stretch and answer comfortably. However, she did have some questions and directions she wanted to go in. It was clear that she went into the interview with the goal of examining his compositional career, as she examined some great information about his compositional career. She started the interview by claiming that Golson is "probably the most important living composer in jazz today" (2012).

Following this claim, Reed pointed the interview in the direction of composition. She asked, "When you started writing Benny, did you know this is what you wanted to do?" Golson's answer provided insight into how it was a different satisfaction and provided an analogy. He said that when composing, you have time to change a B Flat to a B Natural, but when playing you already said what you said and there is no changing that. "…when I write, I don't think about

playing. When I play, I don't think about the writing" (Golson, as told to Reed, 2012). This prompted Golson's discussion of the story behind his composition "Stablemates." He claimed that this composition is what got him started as a composer. It being enjoyed and recorded by the trumpeter Miles Davis was instrumental for his composing career and he credits it as such.

Reed then steered the conversation further in the direction of composing by talking about his time with Art Blakey and his famous Jazz Messengers. Golson said that the audience and the people decide what determines a song's success by the CDs that they buy and they money they spend to come hear you play it (2012). Golson continued the conversation by telling the story behind the Jazz Messengers most popular song and album "Moanin'." Reed prompted Golson to talk about how if it had not been for Golson, Bobby Timmons would have never written the song that gained them the popularity they had. This part of the conversation continued into a conversation of march feeling in jazz. Reed allowed him to talk about his introduction of the march in his popular composition he wrote for the Jazz Messengers, "Blues March."

Towards the end of the interview, Reed asked Golson about if he thought his melodies have a distinct sound. "Is there something that makes a Benny Golson tune a Benny Golson tune?" Golson's answer is strongly rooted in his belief of a sound melody. He credited Puccini, Brahms, and Chopin's sense of melody to be influences of his. He said that a melody needs to have something that you can grab a hold of, and something you can remember, and that you should be able to go away humming it (2012). This question from Reed also allowed for him to address the common question he gets about inspiration. He answered with many things including nature, children at play, his wife Bobbi Golson (2012).

Reed's casual style of interviewing was interpreted more as a conversation. It allowed for Golson to answer the questions with his natural ability to tell stories. This led to the claim she

made at the beginning being overshadowed by a significant amount of the interview, as it was not about composition. However, she did provide ample support by examining intricate details of his composing aspirations, influences, and achievements.

Golson's career as a composer was shaped by many different people, events, and aspirations. Golson and Merod wrote the autobiography of Golson with a section that features an accurate chronology of the formation Benny Golson's career as a composer (Golson, 2016, p. 6). They broke this part of the book into one-to-three-page chapters. Part VI: Music and Writing is split into five chapters: Writing, Lessons, "Stablemates," "Along Came Betty," and "I Remember Clifford." Golson's achievements in the idiom of jazz, specifically within composition and performance, are significant enough to be deserving of documentation.

The first chapter called *Writing* covered his early composing and early lessons. The second chapter called *Lessons* covered his melodic concepts and goals as a composer as well as his overall process from start to finish (methods, struggles, inspiration, influences etc.). The third chapter called *"Stablemates,"* covered the story behind this famous composition and its legacy. The fourth chapter called *"Along Came Betty,"* covered the story behind this famous composition and its legacy. The fifth chapter called *"I Remember Clifford,"* covered the story behind this famous composition and its legacy. All the information from this part was collected from personal recollection of experience and memory from Golson.

The first chapter called *Writing* talked of Golson's beginning compositions and struggles with inexperience. Golson reflected on his time with Tadd Dameron who he credited for pointing him in the right direction. Dameron showed Golson "what not to do" with composing (Golson & Merod, 2016, p. 202). Golson's early career experiences and events give the reader an insight

into how he was shaped by the influence of Dameron. It implied the hard work and dedication Golson had to put in to become successful.

The next chapter, *Lessons,* began with stating Golson's goal, which is to write songs that stand out (p. 204). Golson said he is not a "scale-line" thinker in terms of melody. He instead chooses each melody note with care, keeping in mind the intervallic relationship between each pitch (p. 204). Golson said he enjoyed writing ballads and the amount of emotion and personality that goes into writing them. He revealed that 65% of his compositions were ballads (p. 205). When writing them, he thinks of personalities. Two that he specifically mentioned were trumpeter Art Farmer and vocalist Shirley Horn (p. 206). Golson's choice to share these specific processes gave insight into his aspirations as a writer.

The remaining three sections of Part VI were the stories behind three of his compositions, "Stablemates," "Along Came Betty," and "I Remember Clifford." These compositions have gained enough recognition, popularity, and respect due to their adventurous harmony, melody, and forms. The life events behind each composition have shaped Golson's life and the legacy of each song. Merod and Golson's choices of what to include and exclude from this part of the autobiography says a lot about how Golson wants to be remembered.

RESEARCH PROPOSAL

The research that I have previously done focused on Benny Golson's contributions to the canon of jazz composition. There is more research to be done as modern jazz musicians are contributing to the evolution of jazz through preserving the legacy and timelessness of his compositions. I agree with most of the author's viewpoints when saying his compositions have entered the standard jazz repertoire, but I want to go further and ask: *Why* and *How* have they?

To accomplish this, I am proposing an original research project involving qualitative research interviews. The project consists of going to New York City and asking accomplished jazz musicians about Benny Golson's compositions. The purpose of this study is to gain insight into Benny Golson's contributions to jazz composition by looking through a melodic performance perspective of a working musician. By interviewing musicians, I will be able to ask them about why they think Golson's compositions are unique, and how they think he has contributed to jazz composition.

At many jazz jam sessions that I have attended, one (or more) of Golson's compositions have been played. In addition, some today's biggest jazz artists have recorded Golson's compositions including but not limited to Nicholas Payton, Ambrose Akinmusuire, and Walter Smith III. Golson's compositions are treated in college jazz programs as educational tools, teaching how to successfully navigate harmony, melody, and form. Each composition from Golson's library contains a unique blend of those three elements, difficult enough to be treated as an etude. The questions will be centered around the term I coined called 'Golson's Sound.' It is the elements of harmony, melody, and form that make up Benny Golson's unique compositional traits.

The participants for the project will be New York jazz musicians who have been living and gigging in the city for at least 10 years. The age, gender, and instrument can and will vary. The method will be an interview, most likely in person. If not available, then via phone or computer communication such as Zoom or Skype. The questions asked will be based off the following research questions:

-Why have Benny Golson's compositions lasted if they have?

-What musical experiences do musicians gain from performing a Golson composition?

-What aspects of Golson's compositions do musicians enjoy?

-What can a musician learn from performing or learning a Golson composition?

-How have Benny Golson's compositions entered the standard jazz repertoire of 2023?

-Why do jazz players feel as though they need to learn Benny Golson's tunes?

-What makes Benny Golson's stand out from other composers, in terms of compositional elements such as harmony, form, and melody?

Methods Sources

This research project can be guided by two method sources, Chapter One of Ingrid Monson's *Saying Something,* and Chapter Seven of Frierson-Campbell and Froehlich's *Inquiry in Music Education*. These sources help provide a guideline for a qualitative research project like this. The purpose of Monson's study was to "develop an ethnomusicological perspective of jazz improvisation centered on interaction in this multiple sense. Monson states that there are several analytical levels of interaction in music including 1) "the creation of music through the improvisational interaction of sounds," 2) the shaping and developing of "social networks" and communities through musical creation, and 3) "the development of culturally variable meanings and ideologies that inform the interpretation of jazz in American society" (Monson, p. 2). It is essentially a study on the interaction between rhythm section players with a focus on the influence of race and culture.

The purpose of chapter seven from *Inquiry in Music Education* is to "describe how research purposes and questions emerge from an interpretive perspective" (Frierson-Campbell & Froehlich, 2022, p. 141). To also be able to summarize certain qualitative research traditions such as basic qualitative research, ethnography, phenomenology, case study, grounded theory, and

narrative research (p. 141). The last part of the purpose is to outline and describe "the conceptual and theoretical aspects of a proposal for qualitative research" (p. 141).

Monson's chapter can be used as a model to conduct interviews, as she experienced both adversity and success. She was very inclusive of all aspects of the process that she went through which is very helpful for a researcher. Frierson-Campbell and Froehlich provide a thorough explanation of qualitative research as well as guidance on how to ask good questions. In addition, Frierson-Campbell and Froehlich provide a list of other sources to turn to at the end of the chapter.

CONCLUSION

Golson's admirable career as a jazz composer was consequential to the legacy of the canon that encompasses jazz composition. Starting early in his career, he developed a unique sound in the way that he composes. This sound was heard in compositions from him including "Stablemates," "Along Came Betty," and "Whisper Not." These compositions, as well as many of his others, impacted the genre of jazz to the extent in which they have become standard repertoire. Their unique harmony, melody, and forms serve as modern educational tools teaching both tradition and contemporary interpretation. The sound and characteristics of Benny Golson are often overlooked by jazz enthusiasts. It is easy to say who in the history of jazz is significant, but much more difficult to say why. Writings are quick to put Golson in the category as a legend but are reluctant to provide thorough and exhaustive information as to what about him is legendary.

In addition to the literature I have reviewed, further research can be done to provide more for Golson's contributions to jazz composition. Rather than trying to find answers in the past, they may lay in the field of the modern jazz scene. Established players who are using Benny

Golson's compositions in their career are elidable candidates to inquire. They would be able to provide insight into their thoughts on the significance to his music. There is a reason why Golson's compositions are called at jam sessions frequently, recorded by modern jazz artists, and used in practice. When asked, Golson couldn't answer why, but had suspicions related to his careful attention to melodic choices. The answer isn't obvious and can't be stated concisely. However, with time it becomes clearer through with the aid of research and analysis.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF SELECT COMPOSITIONS

STABLEMATES

Golson's 1955 composition, "Stablemates" has been recorded by many famous jazz musicians, steadily becoming an integral part of standard jazz repertoire. This unique composition frequently appears in jam session communities, allowing for musicians to showcase their abilities of playing over unusual forms and harmonic progressions. This analysis is broken down into three areas: Form, Melodic, and Harmonic.

Form

"Stablemates" has a unique form that is technically demanding of both the listener and the player. It features a three-part form: a fourteen measure A-section, eight measure B-section, and a second fourteen measure A-section. The fourteen-measure A-sections make it notable for improvisors because of the lack of four- and eight-measure phrasing. The A-sections of "Stablemates" can be split up many ways, but Golson's melody suggests splitting them into ten then, four measures (See figure 1.1). Another phrase split option could be a four-bar phrase, then an extended six measures, then four measures.

Figure 1.1

On the 1958 album *Benny Golson and the Philadelphians*, drummer Philly Joe Jones leads the band into a straight-eighths feel for the last four measures of the A-section, further defining the form. In Figure 1.1, the last measure of blue highlighted material before the red highlighted material plays an interesting role in the form. There is a break on beat one of m. 10, and horns enter on beat three bringing the band in on beat one of measure eleven. M. 10 could be considered a buffer measure for the split of the phrase. The melodic material does not belong to the phrase highlighted in blue and serves the purpose of a pick-up to the new phrase highlighted in red. Despite the pick-up creating a five-measure phrase, it doesn't give the feeling of being longer than four measures.

Melodic/Rhythmic

Golson's melodic choices for "Stablemates" includes elements such as repetition, rhythmic variety, small intervals, suspensions, anticipations, and unique voice leading.

The melody of Stablemates is mostly made up of smaller intervals like major and minor thirds, fourths, and the occasional fifth. The melody begins with an upward minor third that continues by a going half step making it a major third. Measure two contains the largest interval of the melody, an upward augmented 5th from Eb to B. To contrast that upward leap, the melody makes its way back down, descending by a fourth. The intervals get smaller over the next few measures: a minor third in m. 3, then a minor second in m. 5. As the line goes back upward, the intervals widen again, going to a major second from m. 5 to 6 then a fourth going into m. 7 (see figure 1.2). This pattern of contracting and expanding intervals continues for the rest of the A section.

Figure 1.2

Over the bridge, Golson alternates between major and minor thirds through mm. 15-21. frequent repetition of these intervals demonstrates his compositional ability to alter melodic material.

This intricate melody also includes a significant amount of repetition. Starting with the pickup into the first measure, Golson states a very clear motif with eighth notes on beat four. Measures 1-4 contain the same rhythm, two eighth notes on beat four (See figure 1.3). He then

moves to a quarter note triplet pickup into m. 6, which becomes the next repeating motif. He uses the quarter note triplet in m. 7 into m. 8, and m. 11 into 12 (See figure 1.3).

Figure 1.3

In mm. 5-7, Golson utilizes quarter note triplet pickups to the next measures. However, in m. 6, the half note followed by the quarter tied to eighth notes creates a half-note-like triplet phrase going into m. 7. Depending on how the melody player phrases this section, this measure can be interpreted as 3 over 2 with quarter note triplets surrounding it. This moment of a slight polyrhythmic hint gives the melody a moment of singsong-like melodicism.

To continuing studying rhythmically, Golson's melodic material for the A sections is comprised of two and three note groupings. The melody at m. 1 begins with a three-note grouping into the upbeat of four. This is followed by another grouping of three crossing over the bar line into m. 2, with a third starting on beat three of that measure. The three-note grouping is broken up at m. 3 on beat four where the first two-note grouping is presented and repeated. For the rest of the A section a similar alternating pattern of these groupings can be seen, as shown in Figure 1.4. Golson's note groupings give the melody a lyrical quality. Each grouping is rhythmically different, giving a sense of familiarity in the repetition.

Figure 1.4

On the bridge, Golson exercises rhythmic variety. In m. 15, he creates an off-beat rhythm in the first four measures while developing a repeating motif. He then contrasts the active rhythm in first four measures by placing longer notes in the second four bars. This compositional effect accomplishes two things: variety and space in terms of rhythm, and an even eight-measure B-section that breaks up the unsymmetrical A-sections.

Golson uses Ab as a pivotal pitch throughout the entirety of the melody. The melody doesn't rise farther than a 5th above Ab, or a 6th below. Golson first reaches Ab by an enclosure in mm. 2-3. He then repeats the motif, then uses Ab to launch toward Db over a Gbmaj7 in m. 7. Golson lands the melody once again on Ab over the F-7, then stepwise voice leading descends to Eb over the Dbmaj7 (see figure 1.5).

Figure 1.5

Figure 1.6

As seen in figure 1.6, the melody of the bridge can be interpreted as being mostly in the key of Ab as well, with a measure of A. Measures 15 and 16 are primarily Ab major (the relative major of F minor). In m. 17, Golson's melody can be interpreted as Ab melodic minor. Playing this tonality over G7+5 highlights an altered sound. Golson wraps up the melody of the bridge by bringing back the B-to-Ab motif from mm. 3-4 to m. 19. However, this time it is disguised in a new rhythm. The Ab now acts as an anticipation as the lowered 7th of the Bb7 in m. 20. The

same instance occurs two measures later with the C natural on the and-of-four anticipating the Ab7 of m. 22.

Throughout the A section, Golson's melodic figures impose several interesting moments of tension, resolution, and voice leading: he never fully resolves to a 3rd or root of a chord. There are a few examples of Golson resolving to the 5th when arriving to the tonic major 7th of a new key. The 5th doesn't help establish the key well, but Golson's use of 5ths is natural and functional. In mm. 2-3, the Ab becomes the 5th of the new key Db major in m.4. In mm. 6-7, the Db similarly becomes the 5th of the new key of Gb major. In m. 9, the beginning of the iii-VI-ii-V-I in Db major, Golson in m. 9 resolves to the flat 3 over Fm7. This resolution, although a 3rd, doesn't feel grounded because of the pull of the iii-chord wanting to go to VI. When arriving to Dbmaj7 chord at end the A section, Golson's melody ends, resolving to the 9, Eb. One of the only resolutions to a chord root is in m. 5 where the melodic Ab is over Ab-7. However, this moment is like m. 9. This Ab-7 chord is ii of the new key of Gb major and Ab feels like it needs to resolve down to Gb (see figure 1.7).

Figure 1.7

Golson's note choices and how they relate to the chord changes reveal interesting melodic moments. There are a few instances of Golson utilizing the sharp 5 or flat 13 alteration over some dominant chords followed by a quick resolution. The and-of-four in measure 1 shows a quick +5 down to 1 of the first chord in next measure. In measures 12-13, he uses the +5 again over Ab7 and then resolving down by a half step to hit the 9 of the next chord.

Golson's melody demonstrates the use of suspensions, anticipations, and implications. As seen throughout the entire A section, Golson frequently places melodic entrances on the and-of-four, often creating a suspension of a tense note or the early introduction of a chord tone. These types of entrances can be seen in mm. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, as well as in the bridge. In mm. 3-5, the melody enters for a moment what appears to be Ab minor. It strongly implies minor because of the twice repeated B to Ab on strong beats. In Ab minor, this is b3 to 1. Over Db major 7, it is b7 to 5, and over C7+5 it is major 7 to +5. Switching the qualities of the 7ths in this situation creates intense dissonance. The resolution to the tension occurs in measure 5 at the arrival of Ab minor, however by this time the melodic material has moved on from implying Ab minor. In the following measure, Golson applies a subtle anticipation of Gb major over Db7. There is no use of one of the most important notes in the chord, B, nature and instead a Bb. The melody over Db7 is chord tones 6-5-1. Over Gbmaj7, it is chord tones 3-2-5. The use of both chord tones 3 and 5 strongly ground the listener in Gb major.

Harmonic

Golson's pairing of harmony with the melody adds to the level of intricacy of the song. In comparison to American Song Book jazz standards, Golson's style of writing can be interpreted as unconventional. Golson's harmonic rhythm of "Stablemates" starts quickly with two chords per measure and wraps up the section with a slower four measure ii-V-I. Most

standards operate the oppositely, starting with a slower harmonic rhythm at the beginning of the section and a quick (usual) four chord around at the end.

Stablemates mostly resides in the key Db major but visits several key centers. In the first measure, Golson exhibits a technique seen in some of his other compositions: by m.3 , the established key is Db major, however in m. 1 there is a ii-V to the key of D. There is no D major tonal resolution; instead, Golson moves immediately to Db major - setting the tone for the rest of the progression.

Golson frequently uses tritone substitution for dominant chords as seen in the progression of "Stablemates." In m. 4, Golson substitutes C as a tritone substitute for Gb (IV7 of Db major). The use of this substitution makes a better transition to Gb major. In addition, the C7+5's function plays an interesting role for voice leading to and from the surrounding chords. The IV dominant (acting as a tonic minor) is still effective because the melodic F of Dbmaj7 resolves to E, essentially changing its quality to minor. However, C7+5 wants to resolve to F. The +5, G#, normally would resolve up to A, but instead stays on G# or Ab in the following measure where the chord is Ab-7. In Golson's progression, this functions as whole tone or altered tonality.

The next examples of substitutions happen during the bridge. In m. 16, Golson substitutes the V chord in F minor for its tritone Gb7. Then to get back to Eb major from the bridge, in m. 19 he substitutes the III7 chord for its tritone, B7, as well as the II7 chord in m. 21 for its tritone, A7. Using these substitutions during the turnaround to Db creates the harmonic effect of descending dominant chords.

The bridge of "Stablemates" can be harmonically interpreted in many ways. A way that made the most sense to me is highlighted in figure 1.8 A. The first two measures of the bridge are in F minor. The next six measures of the bridge are a turn-around to Db major. Interestingly,

the way the Golson wrote this bridge opens the possibility of other interpretations. Another way of looking at it is that the first two measures are in F minor, then the next two measures are in F major but with a dominant II7 chord (Figure 1.8 B). Then the last four measures of the bridge are the bVII7 VI7 bVI7 V7 to Db. In one more way of looking at these eight measures, one could argue that the bridge is in the key of Db. The first measure (F-7) is the iii-7, the second measure (Bb7) is VI7, and then the progression continues to Db with bV7#9 to VII7 then bVII7 (Sub.) to VI7 and lastly bVI7 (Sub.) to V7. There is no single interpretation of this harmonic progression, however Golson's unique choices open a vast field of possibilities.

Figure 1.8A

F Major: II7 V7
F Minor: i-7 V7 (bII7) Tritone sub
F-7 F#7 G7+5 C7
15 16 17 18
Db major: bVII7 (III7) Tritone sub VI7 bVI7 (II7) Tritone sub V7
B7 B♭7 A7 A♭7
19 20 21 22

Figure 1.8B

Db major: bV7#9 VII7
F Minor: i-7 V7 (bII7) Tritone sub
F-7 F#7 G7+5 C7
15 16 17 18
bVII7 (III7) Tritone Sub VI7 bVI7 (II7) V7
B7 B♭7 A7 A♭7
19 20 21 22

ALONG CAME BETTY

Form

Benny Golson wrote the composition “Along Came Betty” while playing with Art Blakey’s Jazz Messengers. The song was recorded on their 1959 album *Moanin’,* featuring two other Golson compositions “Are You Real” and “Blues March.” Like “Stablemates,” “Along Came Betty” has a lot to offer listeners and players in terms of form, melody, and harmony.

“Along Came Betty” features a slightly unconventional form in comparison to American Songbook jazz standards. It follows an A-B-C roadmap, totaling thirty-four measures in length. It has a sixteen measure A-section, an eight measure B-section, and a ten measure C-section. The A and B sections are symmetrical and divisible into four and eight measure **phrases**. The melody at C suggests two four-measure phrases with **two-measure tag ending**. This section can be compared to Arthur Schwartz and Howard Dietz’s composition “Alone Together.” **OMIT? [Not sure why this is necessary] The A-sections of this popular song feature similar four measure phrases with two measures added on the end. Golson’s “Along Came Betty” shares harmonic similarities as well. Both compositions spend most of the time in or leading to a minor key but end in a major key in the additional two measures. Golson’s leads up to Ab minor but ends in Ab major and Dietz and Schwartz’s lead up to D minor but ends each a section in D major.**

Melodic/Rhythmic

“Along Came Betty” features a strong melody that floats over top of the ambiguous harmony Golson paired it with. This composition includes a mix of development, repetition, lyrical melodicism, and clever voice leading. Golson opens the theme in measure one with a quarter note on beat three and two eighth notes on beat four tied over into a whole note in the

next measure. This motivic statement is also the beginning melodic statement to another one of his popular compositions “Killer Joe.” This small fragment of melody is foreshadowing for a theme that materializes through the rest of the song. Like “Stablemates,” Golson uses several rhythmic anticipations throughout the melody. Measures 1-2, 5-6, 9-10 are examples of and-of-four melody notes tied over into a held out note in the next measure. Golson uses this effect to highlight the multifunctionality of the melody note he chose.

Looking at the anticipations analytically can help gain insight into how each note functions in the key centers Golson chose to briefly visit. As in “Stablemates,” Golson is again utilizing the interval of a third. The first four measures are alternating between Ab major and A major, respectively (see figure 2.1). Golson chose the note Db to act as a common tone over the alternating chord changes in mm**.** 1-4. When it hits on the upbeat of four in m**.** 1, it is the minor 3rd of the Bb-7. The note stays the same in m. 2, but then becomes the major 3rd of the key those chords are implying. The same pattern applies in mm**.** 9-12 now alternating between the keys of E major and F major, respectively.

Figure 2.1

Golson exercises melodic development through the lyrical theme of “Along Came Betty” (see figure 2.2). The first 16 measures are like a Songbook melody. Golson states the initial theme: a three-note melody in the m. 1 tied to a long note. He then develops it over the next eight measures and brings it back to its original form. Measures 3-4 have more eighth notes, and the

entrance of the motif is now on the upbeat of two. Measures 5-6 now have the most eighth notes added with the motif entering on the upbeat of one. Each phrase, no matter how many notes have been added, has not changed the duration of the held out note at the end. By mm**.** 7-8, the development has turned the corner. The eighth notes on beat three are now a quarter note, which turns its back into the opening rhythm on beat three to round out the eight-measure phrase. With the adding of triplets and eighth notes to each phrase, the original idea is still present because of the strength of the motif.

Figure 2.2

When the new phrase starts halfway through the A section at m. 9, this is not the beginning of a new section. Instead**,** Golson revisits the theme from the beginning and develops it further, now in a new key and in a different melodic direction. The new melodic material serves as a lead up to the B-section which features a drastic change in key centers. The first sixteen measures of the composition could be broken down into four-measure segments to show the development and theme of the melody, in a sort of form within a form. Measures 1-4 could be an A section, mm. 5-8 a B section, mm. 9-12 the A' section, and mm. 13-16 the C section (see figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3

The B-section of “Along Came Betty” is evidence of Golson’s use of lyricism in the melody. The entrance into this new section starts with an anticipation on the and-of-four, beginning a conversational element between eighth notes and long notes. This first instance in m. 1 of the B-section starts small like the A-section melodies. To continue the conversational element, the second measure has an ascending line of eighth notes, continuing to increase in amount, that land on a half note in the third measure. To contrast the half-note in the third measure, another longer string of eighth notes, starting on the upbeat of three, continues through a full measure finally landing on a whole note in the fifth measure. To finish out the B-section, Golson writes one last ascending eighth note line entering on the upbeat of one in the sixth measure leading into a quarter note triplet figure that lands on a whole note. The juxtaposition of dancing ascending and descending eighth notes combined the frequent rest of grounding long

notes contrasts the A-section greatly. The melody of the B-section builds in a similar way to the A section; however, the construction of the lines heavily implies that lyrics could be a factor in the overall shape.

Golson's B-section melody, in addition to possessing lyrical qualities, also demonstrates a descending chromatic voice leading line. The first is the D natural that begins on the anticipation entrance to the B-section. This is the 9th of the C-7 chord it is over, resolving down through a Db over the F7, flat 13, in m. 18, to a C in m. 19 on beat one, the b3 of A-7. The C after some eighth notes resolves down through B natural, the natural third, over a G-7 chord to a Bb in m. 21. The Bb in m. 21 is the flat five of the E-7b5. Finishing out the B-section, the Bb continues downward in the next measure through a quick A over the A7b9 to an Ab over the F-7 in the next measure. Lastly, the Ab moves downward to a G then steps down to F over the final chord of the B-section, a Bb7 (see figure 2.4). Whether intentional or not, this type of voice leading naturally helps create a melody that outlines the harmonic movement happening behind it but still allows it to be singable.

Figure 2.4

Harmonic

The many key centers of "Along Came Betty," provide an interesting harmonic environment, but also a challenge for the improviser. Like "Stablemates," there are few grounding moments in which an improviser can settle in one key center or chord for an extended amount of time. "Along Came Betty" has very quick moments of landing at a key center before it moves on quickly to the next. An example would be in mm. 4-6. After four measures of alternating major key centers, it lands in A major at m. 5. The improvisor only has four beats of time to establish themselves in A before thinking about going to G in m. 6 (see figure 2.5). The same situation happens through various keys in measures 12-14, 18-19, 20-23, and 28-30.

Figure 2.5

As previously mentioned, Golson in the A-section utilizes a harmonic progression of alternating between two major keys in an unconventional way. This is accomplished by using the only ii and V chords of the target while prolonging the resolution. With the Bb-7 at the top and Golson's use of the 3rds of the chords, this can mislead the listener by implying that the composition is not in Ab major, but Bb minor. This side-stepping harmony, ii-V progressions in half steps, was first seen in the opening measure of Golson's "Stablemates."

In addition to several other examples of side stepping ii-V progressions, Golson took advantage of using another form of chromaticism, tritone substitution, in “Along Came Betty.” After reaching A major in m. 5, Golson continues the harmonic movement downward chromatically. From A, it goes down to Ab7+5 which is the tritone substitution for the V chord of G major, D7. Once in G major, Golson continues the descending chromatic movement by going down another half step to F#7, the tritone substitute for IV7 of G major, C7. This downward motion works well in terms of voice leading and fluent harmonic movement. From here, Golson repeats the cycle of side stepping ii-V harmonies with F#, now becoming the ii chord of E major alternating with F major. Another example of tritone substitution comes towards the end in the C-section. In measure 31, the last progression of the cycle, Golson substitutes Eb7 for A9 (see figure 2.6). The reason for the substitute is Golson’s melody in that measure contains mostly A9 notes: F# and E natural. Instead of having a dissonant cluster of the #9 and b9 of Eb7, the tritone revalues those notes and continues the theme of descending chromatic chord movement.

Figure 2.6

Leading up to the B section, the harmony moves differently. Three measures before the B section begins, Golson heads towards Bb major. Starting in m. 14 in Bb major, the movement is V of iii-7 to iii-7, then to VI7. Then at the start of B-section, VI7 goes to ii-7 then V7 of Bb. However, instead of completing the cadence Bbmaj7, Golson instead moves quickly to G minor,

the relative minor of Bb major. In the eighth measure of B Golson uses ii-7b5 to V7, borrowing from D minor. To finish off the B-section, Golson set up a ii-V to Eb major but instead turns the V of Eb, Bb7, to minor, starting the cycle of alternating major keys over again. Golson employed one last harmonic maneuver one by borrowing ii-7b5 from Ab minor when writing the final cadence and wrote iii-VI-ii-bII7-I going to Ab major. This is a crucial moment in the composition where the progression follows through to the targeted key and gives a sense of solidity. Although asymmetrical in length, the C section wraps up the ambiguity of the overarching progression and gives finality to the paired melody.

WHISPER NOT

Golson's composition "Whisper Not" made its first appearance on his 1957 debut album as a leader entitled, *The New York Scene.* The record featured Golson's arrangement of the tune with a front line of French horn, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone, trombone, trumpet, and a rhythm section of piano, bass, and drums.

Form

In contrast to other selections studied here, "Whisper Not" most closely follows the classic repeating form of AABA. Each section is eight measures, totaling to thirty-two measures in length.

"Whisper Not" has a notable feature: a big band-style shout chorus that is typically played after solos (see figure 3.1) on the final head presentation. This shout chorus replaces the first two A sections but uses their original harmony, then the normal B-section melody returns. The addition of a shout chorus, particularly in this case, gives the composition a natural arrangement. It introduces a new time feel, new melodic material, and cuts down the repetition. Typically, a shout chorus involves short melodic material that converses with the drummer, allowing them to solo in smaller sections. Golson's shout chorus on "Whisper Not" doesn't follow the convention. The rhythm section changes feel into a march while the horns state the new melody. The march feel is short and punchy quarter notes played by the rhythm section, like the feel of Golson's "Blues March." Golson writes a complimentary melody that contains arpeggiating triplets paired dotted eighths-sixteenths rhythms. The shout chorus becomes an integral aspect of the arrangement, so much so that it became part of the composition. The notation of the shout chorus differs from its performance. The dotted eighth followed by a sixteenth rhythm is notation used to indicate a heavy swing feel with the dotted eighth being long

and the sixteenth note short. In the shout chorus of "Whisper Not," the lengths are reversed. The dotted eighth is played with separation and a short as possible and the sixteenth is longer. This articulation set pairs well with the march pattern played on the snare drum.

Figure 3.1

Melodic/Rhythmic

Golson's "Whisper Not" closely resembles "Stablemates" in terms of devices used for melodic material. In the A-sections, Golson creates a simple motif for a melody and works around the composer's rule of three: to not repeat a melodic fragment more than three times before developing or moving on. Golson's motif starts as a pickup into the first measure as eighth notes on beat four tied to a dotted half note. This same figure is repeated two more times, then developed into a sixteenth note triplet figure on beat four. Although the value of the notes is different, they take up the same space and serve the same purpose of a pick-up for the next measure. The structure of repeat for this motif is different as it works in pairs. Mm. 1-2 are one motif and mm. 3-4 are another (see figure 3.2). However, all four measures can be interpreted as the same motif but developed in two stages. Like Stablemates, these repeating motifs gain their effectiveness while the harmony is moving underneath. With the chords changing under a

sustained note or repeated figure, the function of each melodic fragment changes and helps solidify the melody.

Figure 3.2

Golson makes frequent use of triplets in the melody of “Whisper Not” in a similar way to “Stablemates.” The triplets used in “Whisper Not” are treated as pickups into the next measure, often tied to a note before and/or after. These lyrical pick-ups occur in the bridge in mm. 18-20, using both an eighth note triplet as well as quarter note triplets, respectively (see figure 3.3). Golson uses triplets in a few other places with different functions. As previously mentioned, the motif in the A-sections has a sixteenth note triplet beamed to an eighth note on beat four. Typically, this figure functions only as an ornament-an alteration to a melodic passage that involves stylistically changing the rhythm and notes-to a preexisting melody. Golson chose to

incorporate this ornamental figure as a part of the melody that lies on a strong beat over an important chord.

Figure 3.3

"Whisper Not" subtly introduces the blues into the melody in a few instances. In mm. 17-18, Golson is implying C minor blues language over the A-7b5. The figure in these measures is made up of almost the entire C minor blues scale: 1 b3 4 #4 5 b7, with the missing tone being the b7. One of the most important notes in the scale, the #4, is tied over into the next measure. It's function in m. 17 is the #4 of the C minor blues and it resolves to being the 3 of the D7 in the next measure. Typically, a blues moment like this would happen over the dominant chord to the minor key it's going to, and the melody or soloist would use G minor blues. Golson's use of this is unconventional because it doesn't resolve to the minor key center it is going to but instead resolves over the dominant chord in the middle of the progression. This moment of blues is disguised by the chords around it. Other examples presence of the blues in Golson's melody happen at the end of each A-section. In mm. 5, 13, and 29, Golson uses the blues in a more grounding and conventional way. Over the D-7 and D-7/C, the melodic fragment is made up from the D minor blues scale but similarly to the last example does not include the b7. On beat four, the fourth degree of the D minor blues scale is tied over and it becomes the b3 of the E-7b5

then becomes the b7 through the A7 and makes finality over the final D-7. This is a classic blues lick that might be more prevalent in Golson's own improvising than is compositions.

The melody of "Whisper Not" in mm. 5-6 create a natural rhythmic accompaniment highlighted in figure 3.4. The quarter note on beat one followed by the upbeat of then lastly beat four create a figure that the rhythm section can pick up on, creating a natural arrangement to the composition. The rhythmic figure goes over the bar line into m. 6 with beat four tied into a dotted half note on beat one. The duration of the held out note G is four beats in length, giving the melody space and the illusion of the time being turned around.

Figure 3.4

Harmonic

Like "Stablemates" and "Along Came Betty," "Whisper Not" visits a variety of key centers. In "Whisper Not," the unique aspect of the composition comes through in the harmonic rhythm of each visited key center. Golson considers the overall key of the composition to be C minor. Both the A-section and B-section's ending cadences lead back to C minor. Looking at the A-sections, Golson's first chord is C-7. This is the start of a what becomes a pattern in the harmonic progression of the entire composition. From the C-7, a descending bassline begins with chords changing every two beats. The tonic of the minor walks down two whole steps into the

ii-7b5 of the new minor key it is headed to. In mm. 1-2, the root from C-7 walk down to a minor ii-V in G minor, then in mm 3-4 the root from G-7 walk down to a minor ii-V in D minor. Lastly, in mm. 5-6 the pattern appears to continue by the root walking down from D-7. Instead of continuing the pattern down to C minor, Golson chooses to stay in D minor for the last four measures of the A-section. The last measure's V7 to C minor (G7) strongly establishes the home key of C minor.

The last four measures of the A-section visit several different key centers and tonalities that an improvisor can explore. The last measure of the A-sections briefly visits a new, contrasting key center. The F-7 in mm. 8 and 16 give improvisers a new quick moment of tonicizing Eb major. Although very brief, the F minor opens the world of Bb dominant language that can be applied over almost the entire measure. This proves to be quite difficult when trying to catch the moment of Eb and trying to catch the one chord turn around back to the home key of C minor.

In addition, mm. 7 and 15's ascending whole step movement could be seen as another hurdle for improvisors. Those measure's chords are D-7 for two beats and E-7 for two beats. Each minor seven chord can be treated different: as a stand-alone minor chord or as a ii chord for a dominant. Either way they are interpreted, the whole step movement of these minor chords is an important change to be made in terms of notes. G dominant language can be used over the D-7 and A dominant language can be used over the E-7. Thinking in terms of dominant can open many new possibilities of what to play and is likely a method that Golson would utilize.

"Whisper Not" features the frequent use of the half-diminished chord or minor seven chord with a flatted 5th degree. This chord functions as the ii chord in a minor ii-V-I and is half diminished instead of minor. Golson uses this chord a lot in "Whisper Not" because of the song's

key being so heavily grounded in C minor. This chord and sound can be treated many ways depending on the context it is in. Musicians can treat the half-diminished chord as it is and apply scales and arpeggios over it accordingly. It can also be treated as a minor 6th chord with the 6th degree in the bass with a different set of scales and arpeggios played over top of it in accordance with the new bass note. Lastly, it can function as a dominant chord with the 3rd degree in the bass. This opens the possibility of many new scales and sounds that can be imposed. An example in "Whisper Not" happens in m. 2 of the A-section where the chord changes are A-7b5 to D7b9. This A-7b5 can also be interpreted as a C-6 or an F9.

I REMEMBER CLIFFORD

Golson’s 1956, “I Remember Clifford,” is a jazz ballad written in honor of the tragically short life of trumpeter Clifford Brown. Although written by a saxophonist, this ballad has become standard repertoire for jazz trumpet players. This carefully constructed dedication piece remains as a homage for trumpet players to the great Clifford Brown.

Form

Starting with the roadmap, “I Remember Clifford” follows a commonly used ballad form of AABA. Each A-section is eight measures long, making the form a symmetrical 32 measures with an additional six-measure section acting as an intro and outro. Recordings of the tune from *Meet the Jazztet* and *Benny Golson and the Philadelphians* feature versions where the six-measure intro is included at the end of the form. These versions also feature a lack of a soloist that plays over the form. Art Famer and Lee Morgan played the melody, embracing it liberally, but didn’t break free from the structure of the tune to improvise. This allows for the players and audiences to focus on the melody.

Melodic/Rhythmic

Golson’s uses a series of devices to construct this melody including repetition, lyricism, resolutions, and harmonically tense notes. His use of repetition in this composition is slightly different, using similar pick-up rhythms into next sections and phrases. For instance, in m. two into three there is a pick-up of eighth notes starting on the upbeat of three. He uses this same pickup in mm. four into five, six into seven, thirteen into fourteen, eighteen into nineteen, twenty-two into twenty-three, and in several more places including the coda and intro/outro (See Figure 4.1). The notes are different in each example, but the rhythm is the same. This effect connects each phrase to the next.

Figure 4.1

Golson's use of triplets in the melody brings out a strong sense of lyricism. In m. 1 going into m. two of the first A, he ties a half note to a quarter note triplet that leads into an eighth note triplet on beat one of m. two (See Figure 4.2). Golson's use of a triplet figure like this implies he is going for a very specific melodic line. The use of triplets is a common occurrence throughout the rest of the tune continuing the seemingly lyric driven melody.

Figure 4.2

A pivotal moment in the composition happens in mm. 3-4 involving strong tension and resolution. In m. 3, the composition is on the V chord of Eb major. From the V chord, Golson writes a diminished walk up passing through B°7 and landing in C minor. The fully diminished chord is pulling towards C minor and the ear wants it to go there. The melody he writes with the movement of these chords pairs to create tension over the B°7. He outlines the half step move up, then encloses C using the notes of C harmonic minor (See Figure 4.3). The melody and the harmony in this moment combine to create a peak precisely placed in the middle of the A section.

Figure 4.3

Throughout the rest of the composition, Golson doesn't shy away from using an entire palette of note choices. The dissonance followed by release is a desired effect by Golson and a tool he uses to achieve emotional gravitas. In m. 2 of the B-section, Golson uses a tone that works as an anticipation. He places a Db over a G-7 which anticipates the C7b9 on the next beat with the Db being the flat nine. He resolves this flat nine down a half step to the tonic displaced down an octave. In the very next measure, Golson uses an altered dominant chord for the first time getting back to Eb major. Over Bb7alt, he uses F# (b13) and B (b9). He resolves the B down to a Bb over Ebmaj7 giving the tension its much-needed resolution. There are not many other instances of sharp dissonances like this in "I Remember Clifford," but when they do appear they are very effective.

Golson uses a new set of devices in the B-section of “I Remember Clifford,” anticipation and altered chord tones. Up until this section, the melody is constructed with mostly chord tones and diatonic notes. With the change in section comes a change in tonality as well as note choice for Golson. In m. 20, Golson executes an anticipation with the Db on beat two. The note falls over G-7, making it the very dissonant #11 over a minor chord. Then the note resolves into the chord that falls on beat three, becoming the b9 of the C7b9. However, by the time the chord hits, the Db has already passed, giving the illusion of an anticipation. Just a few measures later in m. 21, Golson writes non-diatonic chord tones for the second time, a #5 and a b9 over the V chord going back to Eb major. These powerful tonal colors help distinguish the otherwise similar sounding sections of this composition.

Harmonic

Golson choice of harmony of the A-sections employs an ascending guide tone line starting from a few different pitches. Many ballads in the American Song Book have repetitive I-bii°-ii-V cycles in either minor or major keys. Golson’s “I Remember Clifford” has a unique ascending chord pattern from major going to minor. The sound of each of the chord tones rising instead of falling is what makes for such a unique sound. In m. 7, the ascending line starts on the 5th of the Ebmaj7, Bb. From there, over the G7 it goes up to B natural. Then in m. 8, C over the Abmaj7, staying on C over the A diminished and then going up to D over Bb7. It stays on D over the B diminished and then finally rises to C over the C-7. A similar line can be followed starting on the 3rd of Ebmaj7, passing up through Ab then A in m. 8, Bb then B in m. 9, and finally C in m. 10.

Golson uses diminished passing chords in “I Remember Clifford” that also function as dominant. In mm 8-9, Golson chooses to walk up chromatically from Abmaj7 to A diminished 7.

The chord in the next measure is Bb7 which is the V of Eb major, the home key. Instead of writing a F7, Golson uses A diminished the shared family of F7b9-Gb, A, C, and Eb diminished- to get to Bb instead to keep the chromatic ascending bassline moving upward. The same instance happens in m. 9 with the B diminished 7 acting as the V chord to the relative minor to the home key, C minor.

The G7 in the first measure of the A-section plays an interesting role in the harmonic progression. The A-section starts in the home key of Eb major and works its way upward toward the relative minor, C minor. Along the way, Golson passes through IV and V7 of the home key. Typically to get to IV, the one chord needs to become dominant. The tendency tones of I7, b7 and III, want to resolve down and up to the 3rd and root of the IV, respectively. Golson uses the dominant submediant or III7 of Eb major to get to IV. The submediant in this case serves as a prolongation of I, or Ebmaj7. The G7 gives the illusion of augmentation to the Ebmaj7. With the root movement going from Eb to G, there isn't a drastic change in tonality and share several common tones except for the Bb. The movement from Bb to B natural turns the Eb into essentially an Eb+5. This sound is nearly as equally pulling as dominant. Bebop era improvisation frequently features the sound of +5 over a V7 chord to achieve a slightly different tension and resolution. The sound of augmentation is characterized in the sounds of secular music. Religious practices that use music often feature chord progressions similar in style due to their powerful tension that is followed by an equally as intense release.

"I Remember Clifford" is constructed with foundational aspects taken from the American Songbook, however, it is just different enough to give it distinction. A very important difference is the harmonic rhythm of the key centers. As previously stated, the A-section begins in Eb major then heads toward the relative minor, C minor. The timing of arriving to C minor compared to

ballads in the American Songbook could be considered early. Ballads often start in either minor or major and stay in that key center for an entire section. Then at the start of a new section, typically the bridge, they change to the relative minor, or sometimes parallel minor or major depending on the starting key center. Golson modulates to the relative minor from the major by m. 4 of the A-section. He then begins a descending bassline pattern like in “Whisper Not,” passing through G minor and heading for D minor. Golson’s B-section is different as well, starting with a minor ii-V to G minor. This is the iii of Eb major, where he then does a iii-VI-ii-V to Eb major. This pattern of starting in major and passing through the relative minor to other distantly related minor keys is an achieved sound that sets Golson apart from many other composers of the genre.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS

MARCUS MCLAURINE

The interview with McLaurine begins with the question: How to you approach Golson's music as a player? McLaurine immediately dives in and starts with something slightly tangential to the question. He says, " Benny Golson's music is always harmonically challenging, but it always makes sense." McLaurine believes that as challenging as they can be, they never lose sight of the function of harmony. "He's not writing for the sake of being hard" he says and continues with saying that Golson's music is fun to play at the same time, "'Whisper Not' is just a fun tune to play." He continues his thoughts with bringing up the point that some musicians write music for it to intentionally be challenging. McLaurine briefly mentions being in contact with Golson over the many years and comments on his intellectual, yet soft spoken personality and how it transposes into deliberation in writing.

McLaurine continues talking about Golson being deliberate and uses the composition "Along Came Betty" as an example. He says, "Melodically, it's just a unique song. [And] in the way it moves harmonically." McLaurine continues by talking about Golson's use of half-diminished chords. "I love that chord!" he exclaims. "He utilizes that chord a lot in his writing." He then mentioned the appearance of the same chords in "I Remember Clifford," further proving his point of Golson's frequent use of the half-diminished sound.

"One tune that really challenging that he wrote… that you really have to think about, to me, for me I have to think about, is Stablemates." McLaurine believes that it is one of those

types of songs that you have to spend time with. He says, "It's not like your regular AABA…" and continues "just the way he has set it up melodically and harmonically, you really have to spend time with it." As a teacher, he believes that it is a composition that you never stop studying and that there is always something new to be learned from it. He applies this same belief across all the compositions from Golson's library.

"[he is a] very thoughtful, intellectual guy" he says about Golson, reminiscing about his opportunity to play with him and jazz guitarist Kenny Burrell in Woodstock, NY. McLaurine stresses Golson's kind personality and lack of ego, feeling it is worth mentioning how great of an experience it was working with Golson in a professional setting. He believes Golson is a great musician, both compositionally and on the horn. "He wanted to challenge himself, and you can see it" says McLaurine, explaining how thinks Golson was always trying to improve his own musicianship by writing innovative compositions.

"His music, those are like jazz standards…those are standards" McLaurine claims. "If you can negotiate those changes, if you can really play those changes, then you will get the respect that you will be looking for." McLaurine believes that musicians use Golson's compositions as a way of evaluating skill level in another musician. From his professional experience in the New York jazz scene for over 30 years, he knows how frequently Golson's compositions are being played and warns younger musicians to be prepared to play them and learn to properly navigate the form, melody, and harmony. "That's where the rubber meets the road, those tunes," says McLaurine as he concludes this idea.

The interview enters a new area of discussion where McLaurine explains his belief that his students need to learn these compositions on piano. "His songs are very pianistic. You have to really know that ii-V progression because his tunes are full of them." He then continues with

talking about how he believes it is "slick" how Golson utilizes half step ii-V movements. "It's very common in his writing. That half-step ii-V movement." He finishes by stating that knowing how to hear the half step movement is crucial in the success of playing Golson's music. Talking about Jimmy Heath, John Coltrane, and Benny Golson, McLaurine says "They're all coming from the same place. They're very thoughtful, and they all had like a strong harmonic sense. You know, I'm sure that uh, they all had a really strong sense of the, like I said, the piano."

"There's always like, a key… you dig"? McLaurine wasn't talking about musical keys, but metaphorical keys that unlock locks. "There's a key to negotiating it […]" talking about "Stablemates." McLaurine believes that to traverse the half step ii-Vs and other harmonic obstacles in compositions like "Stablemates," you must find a way to open the metaphorical lock of the passage. Once you start to figure out how to unlock this said lock, things start to open and become clearer in terms of navigating form and harmony. "You can't just say, 'oh I'm [going to] just play some blues over this...', nuh-uh, you gotta think about what you're playing" talking about the player's requirement to do their homework before jumping in on one of Golson's compositions. McLaurine believes you must sit down with them and really get to know them before trying to traverse them.

The interview concludes with McLaurine talking about spots in "Stablemates" that give him trouble when he works on them. He talks about the chromatic movement from the tritone substitutions over the bridge and how it helps him to slow down the tempo and work through it chord by chord. "Really understand each chord, and each harmony, and really understand what's going on. If you can really play it slowly, then you can play it fast" concluding about the bridge of "Stablemates." He compares this passage to John Coltrane's "Giant Steps," comparing the similarities of slowing down the harmonic progression and deeply studying each movement so

that the player can hear it. “If you try and play it fast, you don’t hear. It goes by too fast.” Concluding the comparison of Coltrane and Golson, McLaurine says “These guys, [are] doing the same harmonic movement, you know, because them came up in the same place, and I’m sure they, like you said, spent a lot of time together.”

BILL CHARLAP

“These are magnificent compositions that embrace Charlie Parker’s music. It’s bebop and beyond,” Charlap says to begin the conversation. Charlap believes that the harmonic framework is a perfect canvas and says “you couldn’t and wouldn’t change one bass note or one chord quality. It’s built in such a way that its absolutely fully formed.” He continues by explaining the chords that Golson uses are the basic sounds of key centers; major, minor, augmented, and diminished. Charlap explains how Golson achieves harmonic clarity in the rhythm and construction of his chord progressions. “If you just try to play good on them, you’ll sound great” Charlap says about the chord changes. He further explains that if the improvisor focuses on being meticulous about making sure that what they play relates and works with the harmony, Golson has already provided an inspiring canvas for them to work with. “It’s all just built for you,” he says, explaining the compositions in terms of sounds rather than individual chord changes and turn arounds.

“They’re these long lines. They’re not very rhythmic!” Charlap begins this new segment in the conversation by shifting focus to melody. His transitional remark starts by contrasting Golson’s melodies to Charlie Parker’s melodies and uses “Donna Lee” as an example. “They’re long,” he says, and starts singing the melody to “Whisper Not.” Charlap compares Dizzy Gillespie’s “Con Alma” with Golson’s melodies and states that they are both almost like

background figures but demands that they are not. “They’re these long lines! They are very much front and center lines” he punctuates to rebut his previous statement. “They’re like big clouds moving through the sky slowly. They’re not like little pointillistic…”*starts singing “Moose the Mooche” (Parker).* He sings the Charlie Parker melody to verbally demonstrate what Golson’s melodies are not; rhythmic drum-solo-like melodies.

“And this makes them similar to a great writer like Kenny Dorham or Horace Silver, they are composed in such a way that they incorporate the rhythm section.” Continuing talking melodically, Charlap steers the conversation in the direction of the arrangement of each composition beginning with “Whisper Not.” He begins by singing the melody to “Whisper Not,” vocalizing a heavy rhythm section hit on the and-of-one and beat three. This rhythm is notated in modern day lead sheets of this composition and has incorporated its way into the arrangement of the way it is played. He continues by doing the same with “Stablemates” and “Along Came Betty,” singing the commonly played rhythm section hits in the lead sheets of both compositions. Talking about the anticipations in the melody of “Along Came Betty,” “it’s built for the rhythm section.” He describes Golson’s writing as what he calls a “quintet score,” meaning each player in the group has a part to play as opposed to just playing the song. He concludes this section of the conversation by saying even if parts aren’t written out for each member of Golson’s band, the rhythm section’s involvement is intrinsic to the performance. Charlap explains that to him, this is an essential part of jazz composition in the small group setting. He compares Golson to someone who he believes is one of the top composers in that vein, Thelonious Monk. He compliments Monk’s ability to write something that always encompasses the rhythm section. He calls this interaction in Golson and Monk’s music “imaginary counterpoint.”

"It's so lopsided, but it's so right," Charlap says, chuckling, paraphrasing Miles Davis when he first received "Stablemates" from Golson. '"Stablemates' is particularly interesting in that its… 10 bars…(*counts lead sheet)*… 4 bars… (*counts more)*… 8 bars, then another 14 bars." Charlap was asked how he divides up the fourteen-measure A-section in terms of the melody as well as in terms of improvising. His answer was the same for both; believing that the harmonic progression and the melody is split into 10 measures then 4. "I think that he just allowed it to happen," he says after summing the composition up to be 34 measures rather than the common traditional 32 measures. He refers to the last four measures of the A-section as a codetta, a brief dominant-tonic cadence added at the end of a phrase. Charlap talks about getting into the B-section and describes how depending on the harmonic rhythm of the last measure of the A-section, it could be "in a little bit of an illusion, like Brahms." He further explains with the first chord of the B-section being F-7, to get there effectively the Gb7 (tritone of C7) belongs on beat two of the last measure of the A-section. However, he explains that altering the harmonic rhythm of where the Gb7 falls can give the arrival of the bridge a different gravitas.

"I Remember Clifford sounds like a solo to me," says Charlap shuffling to the lead sheet of "I Remember Clifford." Charlap begins this next segment of the conversation by reciting his vast knowledge of Clifford Brown. This knowledge of Clifford Brown is crucial to the composition of "I Remember Clifford," a musical eulogy written for the trumpeter. Charlap professes Brown's innate ability to play chord changes at fast tempos but pays special attention to his ability to play ballads. He believes this is something Golson had in mind when writing this song for Brown. "He [referring to Golson] really wanted it to be finely wrought, like a jewel. Which is how Clifford improvised, and how he played. And, you know, it really sounds like a solo." He continues explaining by saying that to him, it sounds like a written-out perfectly

developed solo. “You can really hear that he was hearing the trumpet when he wrote ‘I Remember Clifford.”’ He confidently believes that it doesn’t sound like it was written for the saxophone. As the next question was being asked, he cuts in and feels it was necessary to mention “there is a prayerful quality, of course. It is an elegy, ultimately, and it is a requiem, ultimately, and so there’s something that’s got a bit of the church in it.” He then proceeds to play the chord progression of “I Remember Clifford” on the piano, making sure to highlight the secular ascending bassline that passes through several major and minor keys.

“There’s something about love of the progression. There’s something about the love of the key center and the exploring of the key regions…” Charlap answers, after being asked about the characteristics of Golson that can heard in the chord progression of “I Remember Clifford.” “It feels, and this is true of any great composer, like it always existed. You can’t imagine a world that didn’t have Stablemates in it.” He continues this thought with a series of rhetorical questions: how could a world exist without Mozart’s “Symphony in G Minor,” Parker’s “Confirmation,” Coltrane’s “Giant Steps,” and he stressed most importantly, the blues. He concludes, explaining “I Remember Clifford’s” sense of rightness. He stresses that there was no other choice that had to be made and recognizes that it likely didn’t come to Golson quickly and took a great deal of time. Charlap believes despite how long it took Golson knew when the melody was right.

“In Benny’s music, the melody and the harmony [are] cast. It’s not one written on top of the other, they belong to each other.” As he explains further, he uses “Stablemates” as an example to show that the melody is what makes the composition beautiful. Using just 3rds and 7ths of the clearly written harmony underneath of the melody reveals a beauty to Golson’s music. His melodic lines contain a lot of the colorful notes that can fit well over top of the chords.

Charlap stresses that they are not melodies written on the harmony but with the harmony and in the harmony. “The melodies and harmonies are not fused together and are not welded together,” he says about Golson’s music, paraphrasing what composer Arnold Schoenberg said about George Gershwin.

JOHN MOSCA

“Benny Golson, of course, he falls into the huge category of people who are directly influenced by Dizzy [Gillespie].” Mosca begins the conversation by bringing up who he believes is one of Golson’s biggest compositional influences. He then jumps right into the reasons, with the first and foremost being Golson’s time writing for Gillespie’s big band. Mosca considers Golson to be what he calls a “first generation,” where he got to play with and really know Gillespie. “And it shows, I mean you know, especially the way he uses half diminished chords, that’s, you know, really right out of Dizzy’s palette” Mosca says as he continues illustrating Gillespie’s influence on Golson. He believes that this a characteristic that is universal in the library of Golson’s compositions. Mosca begins to explain how Golson has his own way of using half diminished chord that are different from the way that other composers use them. Golson uses them in parallel, meaning he will write a ii-V using half diminished then write a ii-V with a regular minor. An example would be in the last 4 measures of the B-section of “Along Came Betty,” where Golson writes E-7b5 (half diminished) to A7b9, then immediately F-7 to Bb7. The unresolving ii-V progressions with half diminished is a characteristic Mosca believes is present in Golson’s music.

“But I think one of the characteristics of it [Golson’s music,] I have to say is the melodic material that gives away the changes so well,” says Mosca, steering the conversation in the

direction of another characteristic of Golson's music. He continues by presenting the situation of a Golson composition being called to play and the musician not knowing it. He believes well trained ears, if the player sticks with it and really listens, can detect a lot of the harmony from the melody. "Although, uh, Stablemates would be the exception to that, that's kind of harder to hear right off, you really kind of have to know what's happening."

"This is a guy who is really serious, if he could internalize something that completely, so that he actually thinks, in that state he was in, that it was his own… that's a degree of musicianship that's extreme, I think. It's really a high degree of musicianship to be able to have that happen." Mosca begins the new segment of conversation by reminiscing one of Golson's famous composition stories. The story he is referring to is when Golson was living in Los Angeles, California and doing a lot of film scoring work. Mosca explains that one night a melody came to Golson in his sleep, and being the diligent committed composer he is he pulled himself out of bed to the piano to write down the melody he was hearing, otherwise it would be gone by morning time. Finishing the story, Mosca is chuckling as he explains that Golson had dreamed then rewritten the melody of the verse to Hoagy Carmichael's "Stardust." He believes that for Golson to have written one of the most famous melodies in the American Song Book and to have believed it was his own requires a very high level of musicianship that he uniquely possesses.

"When you play through a bunch of the tunes, it does seem, you know, you can tell it's the same guy," continues Mosca. He compares Golson to Duke Ellington, Billy Strayhorn, and George Gershwin, mentioning they are all great composers who have a palette they choose from. "Once they find their stride…" he says, beginning to tie his idea together. He finishes this segment with his belief that great composers find the sound of themselves through diligent study of the art of composing. He mentions the importance of looking into the early writing of some of

the best composers and observing how different it is from later career works. Mosca believes that most composers start off their careers "fishing" for ideas but recognizes this is how they start.

"Along Came Betty was the audition tune for [Art] Blakey's band [The Jazz Messengers.]" Mosca was asked if he considers these compositions to be a part of the standard jazz repertoire. Referring to "Along Came Betty" being used as a tool to determine if a player was ready for Art Blakey's world-famous Jazz Messengers, Mosca says "it doesn't get much more standard than that." He explains further that the popularity of the Jazz Messengers was wide enough and so many horn players wanted to be in the band that "Along Came Betty" became a song that most people knew.

"I'm a Barry Harris guy, and so, I look at all these ii-Vs as scants, they're all really dominants, its V-V." Mosca was asked as a player how he approaches Golson's music. His answer began with his belief that the answer is going to be dependent on how each player approaches any song they are trying to learn. With Mosca being a student of the jazz piano giant Barry Harris, his answer of how he approaches them is of significant value. "I'm really almost crossing out all those minors and thinking dominant," he says, explaining that the speed of Golson's harmonic rhythms doesn't provide enough time to think of the minor chords. "If you're thinking of ii, you've already locked yourself out." He believes that Golson's playing supports his theory. If listen to the way he improvises on tenor, he doesn't necessarily believe Golson is locked in into the minor sound over the ii chords.

Mosca grabs the lead sheet for "Whisper Not" and points to the B-section. He begins talking about the way he thinks of the B-section and mentions how important it is for him to differentiate his playing there as opposed to the A-sections. He brings up the half-diminished chords again, this time stressing how important it is for him to play D7b9 over the entire ii-V to

G minor in the first four measure of the B-section. He contrasts this to the C-7 that walks down through C-7/Bb to A-7b5, in the first measure of the A-section, saying how he thinks of this as C-7 to C-6 with the 6th in the base. “Which is what that chord used to be called, before Dizzy [Gillespie] kind of laid it out that way.” Mosca thinks of playing this way over these chords to differentiate the A-section sound from the B-section sound. He thinks of the B-section as a true bridge, which needs a distinct change in harmonic texture. To achieve this harmonic texture, he plays contrasting D7b9 material instead of C-7 material over the A-7b5. “So, I’m trying to make those differences more apparent, so that the form of the tune doesn’t get disguised.”

“The original arrangements [have] become a big part of the piece…” Mosca adds, continuing his explanation of how he thinks of playing these compositions. He mentions there are several tunes out there that are treated the same way and that sometimes it can be a weakness. He uses trumpeter Miles Davis as an example, arguing that the way Davis played songs on his records became the way that people would play those tunes in the live jazz scene. Another example he uses is Sonny Rollins’ recording of Vincent Youmans’ “Without A Song,” explaining how most players use the same chord changes as Rollins on his famous album *The Bridge*. He stresses that those chord changes are not the original chord changes written by Vincent Youmans and that Rollins has such a profound impact on the jazz scene that players followed his lead. Mosca admits he likes the changes that players adapt when following the lead of the veterans of the music such as Rollins and/or Davis. He believes that the chords change for the good of the composition. These examples were used to show what that Golson’s music doesn’t need to be changed and that there is no desire to alter anything he wrote. “His tunes, people don’t mess with,” talking about Golson. “I actually like that about the language. That means that everybody’s done the same homework. I don’t find that stultifying...” Mosca explains. The

conversation continues by talking about the iconic march-feel shout chorus in “Whisper Not.” Mosca believes it is part of the tune that shouldn’t be ignored when learning it, and that the audience also will enjoy hearing it because of the greatly contrasting content from the previous melodic material.

BRUCE BARTH

“There’s going to be something a little harmonically interesting, that you can’t really say ‘wow, I know another tune with similar changes,’ no. It’s not the case.” Barth begins the conversation broadly talking about the harmonic intricacies of Golson’s compositions. He then starts talking about “Stablemates,” saying “for me, it’s a really compelling progression. It has a strong sense of direction.” He feels that the progression is satisfying to play and believes that this is something that is partly what makes a composition a ‘standard.’ He dissects the term standard and shares his personal feelings, saying “if they didn’t enjoy playing it, they wouldn’t keep playing it, wouldn’t keep calling it.” He believes that “Stablemates” has a logic to it. In just a few seconds, Barth whittles down the lead sheet into a quick one sentence harmonic analysis of the A-section. “This A-sections beautiful. The chromatic ii-V in Db, then going to Gb briefly, and then an extended iii-VI-ii-V, back to Db… we could analyze it, but there’s just something about the way it feels and sounds.”

“The changes are going by pretty fast, then suddenly its one bar per change.” Barth continues by illustrating the large amount of movement during the first eight measures of “Stablemates.” He continues by describing the extended iii-VI-ii-V as a moment that is “relaxing in harmonic intensity.” Referring to Herbie Hancock’s trio recording of “Stablemates,” Barth believes this song serves as a vehicle, adding that he thinks it is one of Hancock’s greatest

recordings. Describing Hancock's arrangement, Barth talks about the C major vamp added to the front of "Stablemates" as well as the alternating between two keys a half step apart during the end vamp. "Herbie [Hancock] had no need to really re-harmonize. There's no major reharmonization, that was not Herbie's nature anyway." Barth is making the point that Golson's music doesn't often require reharmonization, even from one of the true piano giants of the jazz genre. He continues talking about Hancock's recording of "Stablemates" by paying close attention to the phrasing of the melody. Barth is sure to mention how much harmonic substance the melody contains, and that Hancock's phrasing compliments it greatly.

"Just to get them in my ear, I don't really think that analytically," says Barth, introducing a new conversation point. Barth was asked, as a player how he approaches Golson's music. Barth begins talking about his personal thoughts on some of the tricky spots in Golson's music, specifically "Stablemates." However, because of similar harmonic devices used by Golson, the concepts Barth talks about can be applied to several other compositions by Golson. "Chromatic ii-Vs can always be a little bit tricky in general. Just to play them creatively, to play them musically, and not necessarily repeat the idea." He continues by talking about how he practices over Golson's commonly used device, adapted from Miles Davis, the chromatic ii-V. "It's nice to practice not always playing parallel ideas," he adds talking about the end of the B-section of "Stablemates." This section is four measures of dominant chords descending in half steps, one measure each in length. Barth explains this section can be problematic for the improvisor in terms of creativity. He suggests the improvisor practice playing lines that continue in one direction and that work through the chord changes. This is opposed to the improvisor playing an idea that changes with each chord and lacks a general direction and sense of deliberation. "It's almost like lighting on the stage." Barth begins sharing a metaphor he heard from the

saxophonist Steve Wilson. Barth recalls the lights on stage being compared to chord changes. "Let's say someone is giving a speech, maybe a monologue, and the lighting changes. That's like the color, the chord change is like the lighting." He explains that just because the lighting changes doesn't mean you change the direction of what you are saying. "You're not going to let a change in chord alter the direction that your line is going." Barth shares a practice tip for going against the direction of the chord changes. Rather than having a descending line over descending dominant chords, maybe have an idea that is ascending instead. He suggests playing a scale or mode to assist in contrary motion. To conclude this portion of the conversation he believes that these are important elements to practice to executing Golson's music with musicality, precision, and creativity.

"And the nice thing about Benny Golson tunes is that they feel very organic. We just want to play them." Barth continues expressing how important he believes it is to internalize the sound of the chord changes. "Even if you play a tune like 'Along Came Betty' enough, you're just going to hear how the changes move." He continues this thought with explaining his belief of harmony being more than a color but having structural properties that are foundational to the way improvisors approach the composition. As regimented as he believes the harmony is, he also stresses that as improvisors it is important to not be beholden to the chord changes on songs that have well thought out harmonic structures such as Golson's music.

As a teacher, Barth has a lot to say for the importance of learning Golson's compositions as a part of musical development. "I think people spend too much time playing the tune from start to finish, rather than just zeroing in on the spots that are challenging." Barth begins this next segment of the conversation by examining common pitfalls of his students, the first and foremost being not learning songs thoroughly. Golson's music requires careful attention and a necessary

level of comfort to playing in all 12 keys. Barth believes his students must "make friends with the chord changes," a term he created. He believes students need to spend time becoming familiar with every key center to be able to express what they have to say over a tune like "Stablemates." He stresses it is important to isolate sections of tunes or certain moments in the progression to get comfortable with it. Golson's music serves as a great example of a tune where sections can be isolated.

"With Benny [Golson,] it always feels completely natural." Barth transitions into a comparison of Golson with modern day jazz composers. Barth feels Golson's ability to compose with a natural feeling is a hallmark of somebody who is writing from feeling and sound. He contrasts Golson's compositional style by arguing that composers today approach writing intellectually. "A lot of them start with difficult harmonies and then they kind of shoe-horn an abstract melody into those changes. And, with Benny there's always a strong melody." He admits he is speaking generally but feels strongly about the lack of melodies that speak. As players and listeners, Barth believes strong melodies are what speak the loudest.

"They go hand-in-glove, so to speak," Barth says, referring to Golson's pairing of melody to harmony. The conversation moves in the direction of answering the question: which came first, the melody or the chord changes? Barth speculates that Golson wrote them together because of how beautifully well they fit. "I can't picture a different melody over Along Came Betty. Just like I can't picture a different harmonization of "Stablemates." He believes that in these compositions, as well as Golson's music in general, the melody and harmony are very well integrated, which is another indication of a strong composer.

Barth steers the conversation in the direction of the 'sound' of Golson as a composer with a great story. He begins with introducing the pianist and composer Stanley Cowell. Barth recalls

that Cowell wrote some new compositions and presented them to Thelonious Monk, saying they sound like his. Monk replies, "That's impossible because all my tunes sound different from each other." Barth continues, explaining that Monk felt each of his compositions were unique and different from each other. He believes this story is important because he feels the way Monk feels about Golson's music. "Each tune has its own little world and rules. They're all quite distinct from each other." Barth then explains what some common characteristics in Golson's music are, starting with re-mentioning the chromatic ii-Vs like in the beginning of "Stablemates." He believes one of Golson's most defining characteristics is his use of chromaticism in his chord progressions as well as descending basslines.

Along the lines of characteristics, Barth mentions, "I like the soulfulness," when talking about "Whisper Not." In tandem with soulfulness is the blues which Barth is sure to mention as well. Golson's use of blues, specifically in "Whisper Not," is considered sophisticated to Barth. "There's nothing wrong with a down-home blues, like Bobby Timmons, but I think with Benny Golson it's a slightly more erudite blues." He argues the presence of the blues in the melody of "Whisper Not" is very much there, but stresses Golson's cultivated execution.

The conversation concludes around Barth commenting on Golson's frequent use of half-diminished chords. Contrary to John Mosca's belief, Barth thinks of half-diminished chord as the minor IV chord in third inversion. "They're actually think IV-V like in classical music," he explains. This alternate way of looking at the half-diminished chord imposes a new compositional function with each ii-7b5-V7b9 really being a iv-6/VI-Vb9.

MIKE LEDONNE

"He'll put down ii-V-I changes, but he'll put different roots under them that kind of hide the fact that they are just ii-V-I changes." LeDonne starts the conversation by diving right into what he finds unique about Golson's music. He explains what he means by jumping to some general examples. Golson would put chords over their 3rd or frequently use unusual root movements in his compositions that hide or disguise the basic functionality of what is going on in the harmonic structure of the composition. LeDonne explains that with these, it takes a little bit of study to recognize what is really going on. "They're not obvious in the way he puts it together. And that's part of what makes his music really interesting." LeDonne concludes this beginning segment with another example, Golson's substitution of half diminished chords for dominant chords. "He might put an A-7b5 where there would have been an F7. And it gives his music a kind of mysterious quality that makes it unique." From his time with Golson, LeDonne knows that Golson can hear and think of unconventional harmonic choices.

LeDonne dives into Golson's "Killer Joe" as an example that further proves his point. "It's a funny bridge, it sounds like a lot of different chord movement, but is actually just two chords that go up and down in half steps." LeDonne continues, talking about the melody of the B-section of "Killer Joe." In this composition, the construction of the melody of the B-section is an ascending diminished scale in half notes and whole notes. LeDonne explains that the movement of the melody over the chords that Golson chose gives the illusion of complex harmonic movement. "But it really isn't," LeDonne punctuates. He explains that Golson alternates between two dominant chords A7 and Ab7 but changes the appearance of them by changing the bass note. The notes of the chord are nearly all the same except for the bass note.

Continuing talking about "Killer Joe," LeDonne illustrates another point regarding Golson's training and upbringing. He points in the last measure of the B-section of "Killer Joe"

at the A7 going back to C7. “You can’t do that,” says LeDonne, reiterating what Golson’s professors told him while at university for composition. Golson’s professors questioned the functionality of the A7 going to C7 and told him it wasn’t a good resolution, to which LeDonne recalls Golson saying, “Why not?” He continues explaining that Golson, like Duke Ellington, didn’t want to know the common way of composing; and instead wanted to pursue his way to do it. As a result, LeDonne finds many similarities in Golson’s music to Ellington’s music. “It’s his own. And you can hear that. You can hear that almost immediately in every one of his tunes.”

“Obviously, like, he loved half diminished chords,” says LeDonne beginning a new segment of the conversation. He begins to give his interpretation of Golson’s frequent use of half diminished chords. “A lot of times, an E half diminished will really be a G-7,” says LeDonne, explaining that there are a lot of ways to look at Golson’s music. LeDonne says that in the twenty years that he played with him, he started to think of chords the way that Golson did. “When you play these tunes over and over again, I’ve found endless ways to interpret those chords.” He stresses that the chords need to be made what they are on the sheet and in the composition, but that there is a lot of freedom with what the grouping of notes can be redefined as. “One chord could be, that *sound,* could be many things. Many different chords.” He continues explaining that in this ‘Golson’ way of thinking, it can be a way of keeping a tune “fresh,” meaning creative and explorative. LeDonne continues the conversation from the perspective of a rhythm section player in Golson’s band, singing his praise for bassist Buster Williams. LeDonne credits a lot of creative interpretations of Golson’s chord choices to Williams as he says, “he also puts some interesting bass notes under Benny’s music which opens things up, too.” LeDonne concludes this segment with mentioning Golson’s fondness of structure with a level of openness that can only be achieved by well-trained musicians.

"If you're going to go somewhere with it, it should make sense," says LeDonne, steering the conversation down a new path. LeDonne recalls that during his time in Golson's band, he remembers how much Golson wanted the core of the harmony to be played and understood. "I don't think he minds where it goes, but he wants to know that you got the basic harmony together." LeDonne continues explaining that Golson is very supportive of when the music goes somewhere out of the written harmony that works functionally.

"He is the most supportive, enthusiastic, and humble leader I've ever played with," states LeDonne, transitioning into a new segment about Golson's personality as a musician. LeDonne feels strongly that the compassion Golson exhibits as a bandleader is complementary to his work as a composer. "He wants to help each person in his band shine," LeDonne says, talking about what it was like to perform with Golson on a regular basis. He is sure to mention that Golson's admiration for great musicianship is apparent in the way that he approaches being a leader of a band he writes for. "I've never known anyone to be that engaged with the soloist on the bandstand, and truly be swooning." LeDonne continues explaining that Golson never used to walk to the side of the bandstand to let the band play. Golson would sit down on stage and look at the soloist while they were playing, "and you know what that does, it makes the whole audience look at you." He explains that Golson's engagement with the audience is so strong that it is helping the band by pointing out the highlights of a performance. LeDonne stresses that this is successful for both the audience as well as the musician who is playing in that moment. He believes that the level of engagement that Golson exhibits is enough to push the musician beyond what they dreamed is possible in their playing. "It frees you up, it inspires you, and you get all this positive energy flowing through you, and the sky is the limit to where you can go when you feel that secure."

"He's a brilliant man, when you look at his melodies, how beautiful they are and how perfectly they develop through each tune." The next segment begins with LeDonne being asked, 'do you believe Golson's melodies are constructed first then harmony, or the harmonic progressions first then melody?' LeDonne begins with his thoughts about Golson's compositional process, starting with Golson at the piano. "If you ask me, I think it's just instinctual," referring to how Golson writes at the piano. LeDonne speculates that Golson starts by finding motifs and other little phrases then the harmony naturally unfolds from it. "I don't think he sits there with a slide rule and a graph chart [and] figure[s] out mathematically where things are supposed to go." LeDonne strongly believes that Golson hears all his music very deeply, and because of that there is always going to be a unique product from him. "The melodies are so singable. They're real melodies, they're not just the tops of the chords, you know?"

He begins a new topic of conversation of originality by bringing up the composition "Stablemates," saying "there's nothing that ever existed like that tune." LeDonne knows that Golson had been writing from the very beginning even before his recognition in the jazz scene. He recalls a humorous story told to him by Golson and explains that before "Stablemates," Golson could have stood in Times Square, New York trying to give away his compositions and no one would have paid attention to him. Then Golson's Philadelphia best friend John Coltrane brought it to Miles Davis who recorded it and according to LeDonne "put Benny on the map." LeDonne drives the point of timelessness in this composition by explaining that even to this day, musicians are recording and playing on it. "I guess you could say it's one of those tunes that shows whether you can actually play or not. Because it is not easy." He continues explaining that

despite the melodies being beautiful and singable the harmonies are what prove to be the area of most difficulty, “the devil is in those harmonies,” he jokes.

“It’s more than bebop, it’s more than any era. Those tunes are timeless. They’re just some of the greatest classic songs of all time.” LeDonne transitions from “Stablemates” to the other pile of tunes from Golson’s library. He brings up one of staples of standard jazz repertoire, the American Song Book, and raises Golson’s compositions to a similar stature. Although they don’t have lyrics and can’t technically be a part of the American Song Book, LeDonne believes they are American classic songs. “If you don’t know, maybe his top ten tunes, you don’t really play jazz music[…] because they have a whole world in there, a whole new world.” LeDonne stresses that no one wrote compositions like he did and compared Golson to jazz writing giants like Horace Silver and Wayne Shorter.

LeDonne begins a new segment talking about Golson’s tenor playing. He believes that, like his compositions, it is unique to Golson and unlike anyone else. LeDonne does think it is important to mention who his main influences on the tenor were, Lucky Thompson, Don Byas, and most importantly Arnett Cobb. He recalls the story Golson tells in his autobiography of going to see Lionel Hampton’s big band in concert. At the concert, Golson witnessed Cobb playing a solo over the famous tenor saxophone feature and Hampton composition “Flying Home.” LeDonne believes the heavy blues element in Cobb’s playing directly influenced Golson and ties together the music he writes with a common element, soulfulness. “They’re soulful, those tunes. They’re advanced and they’re deep, but they’re soulful,” he says, talking about Golson’s compositions. He concludes this segment of the conversation by mentioning how many of Golson compositions are in minor keys, which he believes is the soulful key, terminology he coined from vibraphonist Milt Jackson.

"You can never just let it go," LeDonne says after talking about Golson's later reharmonization of his composition "Are You Real?" LeDonne at one point considered this composition to be one of Golson's easier tunes of the set, with only an extended form from a tag. Golson reharmonized it after his time with Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, and LeDonne used the difficulty of the new set of chord changes to illustrate a point about Golson's music in general. "All of his tunes, you gotta keep your thinking cap on. All the time." LeDonne warns about never losing track of where in the harmony the player is and stresses the importance of paying close attention to what the overall map of the composition is.

"The music is so tied to their character, to their humanity, to the way they see life to the way they deal with life." The concluding moments of the conversation are centered around LeDonne's personal reflections of Golson's contributions to the music. In LeDonne's opinion, Golson's music contains no academia, only heart and soul. "It's all from the heart, from his ear, and from his own mind, and [is] instinctually brilliant." LeDonne truly considers Golson to be a genius, and certainly does not use the term lightly. He deeply believes not many people write on Golson's level, and not many people have made that much of an impact on any music. Golson contains what LeDonne refers to as "old school craftsmanship," what very few of composers today have. "He's right up there with those guys, he's right up there with the greatest," putting Golson up next to the two of greatest jazz composers of all time, Duke Ellington, and Horace Silver. He continues, introducing an element in which he believes Golson has over many other composers which is longevity. He argues that Golson's compositions got better as he continued writing throughout his career, and luckily for Golson's legacy, he never stopped writing. "You know, he's got his top ten or twelve tunes that everybody plays, but there's a whole lot more to Benny Golson than just that small group of tunes that everybody plays."

“But I think Golson really shines as a composer,” concludes LeDonne. He illustrates a lineage of players who all are like Golson, in that they are players and composers. Dizzy Gillespie, Horace Silver, and even Duke Ellington. Even though all these musicians have a voice on their instrument and in their compositions, LeDonne believes Golson’s voice speaks the loudest and clearest and has stood the test of time.

CHAPTER V

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

This project involves not only detailed analyses of these Benny Golson compositions by the author, but also engages interview subjects who have had direct professional connections to Golson, creating a rare documentation of verbal analysis by Golson's own associates. The five participants were chosen because of their years of professional experience in the New York jazz scene, experiencing Benny Golson's musical influence on players across generations. Mike LeDonne was a member of Benny Golson's personal band for nearly 30 years, including many tours and recordings. Marcus McLaurine has had the opportunity to share the stage with Golson many times and uses his compositions to teach a long running studio of professional bass players in the greater New York area. Bill Charlap is an acclaimed jazz pianist with multiple Grammy nominations and a reputation for his exceptional artistry and deep knowledge of jazz standards. He has had many interactions and collaborations with Golson, and has great insight into harmony, song structure, the history and origin of the sounds from jazz. Pianist Bruce Barth has had a full career of jazz piano that is very inclusive of the music of Benny Golson and has alternative methods to studying it. John Mosca, also someone who has had a lifelong career of jazz, shared valuable insight into the melody and harmony of the music of Golson because of his time spend studying with Barry Harris.

These participants were each asked the same questions, but often went off script, straying from the predetermined topics due to the flexible nature of the conversation. Despite the conversational element of the interviews visiting diverse topics, there was a small number of topics discussed by each participant that served as defining aspects of Benny Golson's life as a

composer, revealing a series of common themes. These common themes were 1) Golson's compositional influence; 2) his compositional process; 3) his deliberate use of harmonic devices such as half diminished chords, and 4) Golson's personality and its connection to his composing. These themes are also connected through Chapter II: the existing literature and Chapter III: musical analysis.

Compositional Influence

Golson's compositional influence is a topic that was frequently mentioned by each participant as well as Golson and Merod's *Whisper Not.* Marcus McLaurine began the interview by stating Golson's origins in terms of other musicians of his caliber, Jimmy Heath and John Coltrane, both of whom were Philadelphia colleagues in Golson's formative years. McLaurine's knowledge of Philadelphia musicians leads him to believe that Golson as well as his fellow saxophonist neighbors all had a strong harmonic sense from the very beginning. He believes that their common upbringing, playing together, practicing together, and being together played a part in their influencing each other, both on the saxophone and as composers. *Whisper Not's* first chapter entitled "John Coltrane," shows the start of a lifelong friendship and bond between him and his first major musical influence. McLaurine said, "These guys, [are] doing the same harmonic movement, you know, because they came up in the same place, and I'm sure they spent a lot of time together." Bruce Barth compares Golson's "Stablemates" to Coltrane's "Giant Steps" when practicing and learning. They are both composed in such a way that requires dedicated practice and could be considered a form of harmonic etude.

Bill Charlap began the conversation by mentioning an obvious influence of Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker, saying "These are magnificent compositions that embrace Charlie

Parker's music. It's bebop and beyond." He believes Golson's long lyrical melodies come from the sounds of Gillespie and compared his composition "Con Alma" to Golson's "Along Came Betty." John Mosca deducts the same Gillespie influence on Golson by pointing out Golson's playing and arranging for Gillespie's big band. Mosca believes that Golson's frequent use of half diminished chords is "right out of Dizzy's palette." The musical analysis of "Whisper Not" and "Along Came Betty" in chapter III combined with the full harmonic analysis of these two compositions included in the appendices shows Golson's frequent use of the half-diminished chord. The analyses provide insight into how much Golson was writing in the minor key, another element of his writing that Mike LeDonne believes to be an influence. "A lot of his tunes are in minor keys. That's what Bags [Milt Jackson] used to say, was that's the soulful keys." LeDonne in his interview spoke to Golson's influences on the tenor saxophone. He believes Golson's soulfulness in writing in minor keys comes from the tenor saxophone playing of Arnett Cobb and Don Byas. "They're soulful, those tunes. They're advanced and they're deep, but they're soulful," he said, talking about Golson's compositions. In addition to frequently writing in minor keys, the soulfulness also comes from Golson's love of the blues. LeDonne said, "The blues is big for Benny. He loves greasy blues. You know, that's what really ties all his music into the real jazz sounding music."

Compositional Process

Bill Charlap began the interview by enforcing the fact that Benny Golson's music is constructed with the basic sounds of key centers; major, minor, augmented, diminished (fully and half). Further explaining his point he said, "If you just try to play good on them, you'll sound great." Charlap's insight into Golson's compositional process continued with his observations in

terms of sound rather than theoretical devices. The sounds he then referred to were Golson's long lines and innate ability to construct melodies, specifically non-rhythmic oriented melodies. Charlap used "Whisper Not" as an example and demonstrated by singing during the interview the length and simplicity of the phrases. "They're these long lines. They're not very rhythmic" exclaimed Charlap, where he then directly compared the sound of "Whisper Not" Charlie Parker's "Donna Lee." Golson stresses in *Whisper Not* how important melody is to him in song writing. He states melody is "perhaps the essential factor in a song's longevity. Intervals frame melodies, create drama, and carry lyric power" (Merod, 202). Examples of Golson's melodic construction can be seen in the analysis of "Along Came Betty" in Chapter III. The B-section in "Along Came Betty" features a blend of ascending/descending eighth notes and long notes. The visual analysis of the shape of these melodic figures shows the lyrical aspect of Golson's melody writing. Bill Charlap and Bruce Barth both mention the topic of originality and uniqueness in their interviews, both saying they couldn't imagine Golson's compositions being written any other way. "You can't imagine a world that didn't have 'Stablemates' in it," said Charlap; "I can't picture a different melody over 'Along Came Betty,'" said Barth.

Barth believed Golson's defining characteristic as a writer was his pairing of bass notes with the melody in an interactive counterpoint. Part of what makes a strong composer, in Barth's opinion, is the ability to integrate harmony and melody. Barth feels that a lot of modern jazz music is very forced and written without feeling, a stark contrast to Golson's writing sentiment. Mike LeDonne also spoke about interpreting Golson's choice of bass notes. "When you play these tunes over and over again, I've found endless ways to interpret those chords." He shared information about some of Golson's tricks as a composer to disguise the basic functionality of what is going on in the harmonic structure of the song. This trick is what LeDonne believed was

"part of what makes his music really interesting." The trick was composing with a bass notes line and changing the spelling of chords to keep the bass line organic and flowing. LeDonne continued the conversation from the perspective of a rhythm section player in Golson's band, singing his praise for bassist Buster Williams. "He also puts some interesting bass notes under Benny's music which opens things up, too." LeDonne said. Golson would sometimes put chords over their 3rd degree or completely re-spell them as something different to achieve a specific bass note. This ingenuity LeDonne believed was brilliant and was something that could only be achieved while composing at the piano.

Although Golson has a set of tools he uses for composing, each tune he wrote is uniquely different from each other. LeDonne and Barth both commented on the uniqueness of each composition and how different they are from each other. Barth said "each tune has its own little world and rules. They're all quite distinct from each other." LeDonne compared Golson's writing to Duke Ellington's and found a lot of similarities. LeDonne believed that, like Ellington, Golson didn't want to write like everyone else and as a result each composition is his own. "And you can hear that. You can hear that almost immediately in every one of his tunes."

Bruce Barth and Marcus McLaurine had similar ideas when speaking to Golson's writing process. They both felt that Golson wasn't writing challenging music for the sake of being challenging. McLaurine felt Golson always tried to challenge himself instead as a writer to come up with something truly unique and innovative. In *Whisper Not,* Golson speaks of his own process of writing and how most of his life he has tried to figure out how and what *not* to write. "Slowly, I discovered what *not* to do. That lesson is of incalculable value. My apprentice compositions were a wasteland, but they helped me learn where I wanted to go as a writer" (Golson & Merod, p. 202).

Use of Half Diminished Chords

A common theme that emerged in all five interviews was Golson's use of the evocative and comparatively rare sound of the minor seven flat five or half diminished chord. Although the participants weren't asked to comment on this specific musical element of Golson's compositional process, each mentioned how important it was to the sound of Golson's writing. McLaurine began the interview with how much he enjoyed Golson's frequent use of the half-diminished chord and used "I Remember Clifford" as an example of their appearance. Mosca and Barth shared similar ideas of thinking of half diminished chords differently. "When I'm playing at the beginning [of "Whisper Not"] when I'm playing that C minor which is kind of a real C minor, I often think of the following A half diminished that comes right after that as C minor 6th." Barth thought of half diminished chords in a slightly different way. He thought of a ii-7b5-V7b9 as a iv-6/VI/V7b9. This is basically how Mosca thought of them, but Barth was thinking of the whole progression as a IV-V-I in a minor key, rather than chord by chord. LeDonne's brief mention of half diminished chords in Golson's music said they performed a different function than both Barth and Mosca. He said, "he might put an A-7b5 where there would have been an F7. And it gives his music a kind of mysterious quality that makes it unique." LeDonne also believed a lot of the time Golson would write a half-diminished chord instead of a minor seven chord, or ii-7. "Obviously, like, he loved half diminished chords" concluded LeDonne.

In chapter III, a short musical analysis was done on the different interpretations of half diminished chords in Golson's "Whisper Not." The composition features the frequent use of the half-diminished chord or minor seven chord with a flatted 5th degree. This chord functions as the ii chord in a minor ii-V-I and is half diminished instead of minor. Golson uses this chord a lot in "Whisper Not" because of the song's key being so heavily grounded in C minor. This chord and

sound can be treated many ways depending on the context it is in. Musicians can treat the half-diminished chord as it is and apply scales and arpeggios over it accordingly. It can also be treated as a minor 6th chord with the 6th degree in the bass with a different set of scales and arpeggios played over top of it in accordance with the new bass note. Lastly, it can function as a dominant chord with the 3rd degree in the bass. This opens the possibility of many new scales and sounds that can be imposed. An example in "Whisper Not" happens in m. 2 of the A-section where the chord changes are A-7b5 to D7b9. This A-7b5 can also be interpreted as a C-6 or an F9.

Bill Charlap's interview started by him stressing how important he thought it was that Golson's music was constructed from a palette of basic sounds from the musical language including but not limited to major, minor, augmented, and diminished, both half and fully. This part of the interview, although it contains no theoretical examples, shows how Golson uses a full palette of colors when composing. The half-diminished sound lies naturally and diatonically within the major scale and isn't something derived from skill or practice.

Personality

Regardless of whether each participant was able to play with Golson in their career, it was evident through his music his spirit as a human being. Mosca in his interview said, "this is a guy who is really serious, if he could internalize something that completely, so that he actually thinks, in that state he was in, that it was his own… that's a degree of musicianship that's extreme, I think. It's really a high degree of musicianship to be able to have that happen" referring to Golson. Mosca mentioned a story told in *Whisper Not* as well of Golson waking up in the middle of the night to jot down an "original" melody, that in the morning he realized was Hoagy Carmichael's *Stardust.* Mosca believed for someone to recreate that melody and believe it

as their own takes someone with a very high level of musicianship who is seriously dedicated to their craft.

Barth believed Golson's personality came through in the music through Golson's soulfulness. His example was the blues triplet figures in the A-sections of "Whisper Not." Barth considered this use of blues sophisticated and what adds the personality in Golson's music. "There's nothing wrong with a down-home blues, like Bobby Timmons, but I think with Benny Golson it's a slightly more erudite blues." He finished by saying how he believed Golson's use of blues in "Whisper Not" was cultivated in execution. In chapter III, a short analysis was done of Golson's blues influence in "Whisper Not*.*" In mm. 5, 13, and 29, Golson uses the blues in a more grounding and conventional way. Over the D-7 and D-7/C, the melodic fragment is made up from the D minor blues scale but similarly to the last example does not include the b7. On beat four, the fourth degree of the D minor blues scale is tied over and it becomes the b3 of the E-7b5 then becomes the b7 through the A7 and makes finality over the final D-7. This is a classic blues lick that might be more prevalent in Golson's own improvising than his compositions.

Much of Bill Charlap's interview was spent talking about Golson's "I Remember Clifford." The conversation allowed for Charlap to comment on Golson's personality through his composition written for Clifford Brown. "There is a prayerful quality, of course…It is an elegy, ultimately, and it is a requiem, ultimately, and so there's something that's got a bit of the church in it," said Charlap, explaining Golson's ability to compose a piece of music that expressed a deep love for Brown. Golson's compassion for his musical colleague was strong enough for him to compose a composition that has enough timeless emotional gravity for current professional musicians like Bill Charlap to notice.

Mike LeDonne was unlike the other musicians interviewed because was a member of Golson’s band as his pianist for over 20 years. LeDonne experienced Golson as a bandleader firsthand and can see how his compositions come to fruition. LeDonne’s comments on Golson’s genius in writing was a direct reflection of how he feels of him as a person. He felt Golson was the most compassionate bandleader he has ever worked for. “I’ve never known anyone to be that engaged with the soloist on the bandstand, and truly be swooning.” LeDonne recalled Golson’s ability to push his musicians through respect and encouragement that elevated the music to a new level each time they played. “It frees you up, it inspires you, and you get all this positive energy flowing through you, and the sky is the limit to where you can go when you feel that secure.” Golson encouraged musical and specifically harmonic exploration of his music, despite LeDonne not feeling the need to alter the music. "The music is so tied to their character, to their humanity, to the way they see life to the way they deal with life.”

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

Benny Golson's music possesses a distinct quality that can be heard throughout his compositions. That quality can be defined not through his harmonic or melodic techniques, but through a combination of emotional depth, personal narrative, intricate yet singable melodies, and challenging harmonic progressions. Beyond the notes and rests on the lead sheet lies a dauntingly large amount of additional musical instruction. Study and analysis of the music can uncover how to phrase the melody, how to articulate certain notes to capture a different sound, and how the overall composition is played as an arrangement. Golson's music has a natural set of guidelines that exist within each of his compositions, helping each player interpret the harmony, melody, and form.

Bill Charlap remarked he couldn't imagine Golson's music being any different than the way it is and has always been especially regarding the harmony. Golson has constructed true masterpieces that, despite the unconventional nature of their harmonic progressions, all work very well. Golson's intellect in the craft allows him to achieve creativity and playfulness while simultaneously minding the necessary harmonic requirements. A few examples are his use of chromatic half-step ii-V-I's, descending basslines, and multiple brief key center explorations. These harmonic devices are appealing for eager improvisors not only because of their difficulty, but also because of the emotional depth that comes with them.

Golson's melodies are another factor that sets him aside from most other composers of his generation. The tandem construction of harmony and melody, them belonging to each other and not written one at a time, is a lesson for anyone pursuing composition, whether it be jazz or

any genre. Each melody of his is a unique blend of rhythmic variation, melodic development, repetition, and motivic development that combine into a singable, organic line. Golson's melodies don't have words but are written in a lyrical way where poetry could easily be applied. His use of triplets and tying of phrases over bar-lines strongly imply the human voice as the melodic instrument.

The form of each of these compositions comes naturally with each harmonic progression and melody, bringing them together in a unified concept. They have a natural flow, such that players typically don't need to be counting each measure. Golson's forms are occasionally unconventional lengths; however, he constructs them with a clear unmistakable melody and harmony pairing that make, as an example, an extra two measures at the end of a 32-bar form seem correct, or a 14-measure A-section, like in "Stablemates," feel heavily grounded. These unusual forms and markers feel more natural as Golson's music is studied and internalized.

Perhaps the centrally important factor in Golson's music is Benny Golson himself. Mike LeDonne's interview shares his personal experience as Golson's pianist for nearly thirty years. LeDonne spoke at length about how wonderful it was to work with Golson as a leader, because of his encouragement and support that drove the band beyond their playing capabilities. This is a factor worth mentioning when analyzing a legendary composer who also performed their own music regularly in the world's most famous clubs and concert venues. LeDonne in the highest terms of Golson as a person. Musicians wanted to play with Golson not only because his music is uniquely special, but also because Golson is such a great person and leader. His spirit is directly reflected into his music and into everyone who plays his music as well.

Golson's up bringing in Philadelphia during the 1940's was, to say the least, very difficult. African American families were struggling with everyday life tasks both within and

outside of their homes. Golson grew up when it was dangerous and difficult to be an African American kid. LeDonne's interview, Allen's *Contributions of Philadelphia African American Musicians to American Jazz Music From 1945 to 1960*, and Merod/Golson's *Whisper Not* all chronicle his time on the road as a musician when there were white hotel rooms and bathrooms and colored hotel rooms and bathrooms. He was a musician during the period when the local white only AFM Musician's Union gave what were supposed to be his gigs to white people. Golson has seen the effect of the Civil Rights Movement and how it changed racism back then to how it changed it now. Golson, living in a predominantly white male society, has lived through times no man should and came out the other end smiling. LeDonne's interview mentioned that Golson achieved the ultimate win towards racism. He faced and experienced it all firsthand and still managed create a sixty-plus year career that positively altered the history of jazz. The best of it all is that he is grateful, happy, and at peace with not a hateful bone in his body.

While I may not meet interview criteria set for this project, I believe my insights into this music are valuable and contribute to its enduring appeal and originality. The criteria were established to include musicians from a generation who has lived the music of jazz for most of their lives. They've witnessed and played compositions from all the greats, gaining first-hand insight into the composer's intentions. With my career still unfolding, I have yet to experience the emergence of a composer/musicians like Golson. He stands as one of the rare few whose compositional voice resonates across generations, embodying timelessness.

Golson is a true inspiration on many levels. From the start of his career, he has stayed true to himself and followed his voice. He avoided the tempting path of influence from his childhood friend and bandmate John Coltrane and instead learned from him by practicing together and encouraging each other. He taught himself how to compose and didn't follow the

typical conventions that music school wanted to teach him. By doing that and following his ear, he wrote some of the defining pieces of jazz music that have ever entered the standard repertoire. Golson has made countless contributions to iconic television and movie soundtracks, orchestral works, and more. Aside from composition, Golson's tenor saxophone playing is worthy of diligent study as well. His big breathy sound combined with a fluid and creative style of improvising was enough to earn him a spot among the music's great improvisors. Golson has singlehandedly created a legacy with his kind-hearted personality, bold tenor saxophone playing, and unique, individualistic compositional style. This legacy will live on for many future generations of jazz connoisseurs to come.

OPPORTUNITY FOR FURTHER STUDY

The design of this paper is focused around the analysis of four of Benny Golson's most popular compositions, "Along Came Betty," "Stablemates," "Whisper Not," and "I Remember Clifford." Golson wrote many more compositions than these four, many of which would be great candidates for analysis, such as "Are You Real," "Terminal 1," "Five Spot After Dark," and "Fair Weather," . There is a considerable lack of transcriptions of Golson's lesser-known music as well. Further study for this project would therefore consist of transcribing Golson's compositions from his discography as a leader and presenting the analysis of them.

One of Golson's biggest influences is trumpeter and composer Dizzy Gillespie. A further study opportunity would be the analysis of the influence of Gillespie in Golson's music. A good place to start is in Thelonious Monk's "Round Midnight," with an introduction written by Dizzy Gillespie that likely could have had an influence on Golson. Musical analysis of the introduction compared to musical analysis of Golson's "Whisper Not" could show compositional techniques developed from Gillespie.

Lastly, an opportunity for further study would be an in-depth look at Golson's tenor playing in comparison to his composing. This would consist of transcriptions of his tenor solos put next to musical analysis of his compositions to see the relation, if any.

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APPEDIX A: Selected Discography

(Adapted from Benny Golson's website)

As A Leader:

Benny Golson's New York Scene (Contemporary C 3552, 1957)

The Modern Touch (Riverside RLP 12-256, 1957)

The Other Side of Benny Golson (Riverside RLP 12-290, 1958)

Benny Golson and the Philadelphians (United Artists UAL 4020, 1958)

Gone with Golson (New Jazz NJLP 8235, 1959)

Groovin' with Golson (New Jazz NJLP 8220, 1959)

Gettin' with It (New Jazz NJLP 8248, 1959)

Winchester Special (New Jazz NJLP 8223, 1959) - with Lem Winchester

Take a Number from 1 to 10 (Argo LP 648, 1961)

Pop + Jazz = Swing (Audio Fidelity AFLP 1978, 1962; reissued with *Just Jazz!*)

Just Jazz! (Audio Fidelity AFLP 2150, 1962)

Turning Point (Mercury MG 20801, 1962)

Free (Argo LP 716, 1962)

Stockholm Sojourn (Prestige PR 7361, 1964)

Tune In, Turn On (Verve V-8710, 1967)

Are You Real (CBS/Sony 25AP796, 1977)

Killer Joe (Columbia PC 34678, 1977)

I'm Always Dancin' to the Music (Columbia AS 458, 1978)

California Message (Baystate RJL 8013, 1980) with Curtis Fuller

One More Mem'ry (Baystate RJL 8026, 1981 [1982]) with Curtis Fuller

Time Speaks (Baystate RJL 8054, 1982 [1983]) with Freddie Hubbard and Woody Shaw

This Is for You, John (Baystate RJL 8092, 1983 [1984])

Stardust (Denon CY-1838, 1987) with Freddie Hubbard

Benny Golson Quartet Live (Dreyfus FDM 36552-2, 1989 [1991])

Benny Golson Quartet (LRC Ltd. CDC 9018, 1990) also released as *Up, Jumped, Spring* (2005)

Domingo (Dreyfus FDM 36557-2, 1991 [1992]) with Curtis Fuller

I Remember Miles (Alfa Jazz ALCR-277, 1993)

That's Funky (Meldac MECJ-30001, 1995) with Nat Adderley

Tenor Legacy (Keystone 70742, 1996)

Up Jumped Benny (Arkadia Jazz 70741, 1996)

Remembering Clifford (Milestone MCD 9278, 1997)

One Day, Forever (Arkadia Jazz 70744, 1996-2000 [2001])

Terminal 1 (Concord CCD-2259-25, 2004)

The Masquerade Is Over (Azzurra Music TBPJAB074, 2005)

The Many Moods of Benny Golson (Arkadia Jazz 70745, 2007)

Three Little Words (Synergie OMG JHAS 609, 2007)

The Best of Benny Golson (Concord OJC-31258, 2009)

New Time, New 'Tet (Concord CJA-31121, 2009)

Horizon Ahead (HighNote HCD 7288, 2016)

APPENDIX B

Benny Golson's Original Lead Sheets of Select Compositions: "Along Came Betty," "Are You Real," "I Remember Clifford," "Killer Joe," "Stablemates," and "Whisper Not."

ALONG CAME BETTY

By BENNY GOLSON

Medium slow bounce

B♭m7 Bm7 E7 B♭m7 Bm7 E7

Amaj7 A♭+7

Gmaj7 G♭7 G♭m7 Gm7 C7

G♭m7 Gm7 C7 Fmaj7

A+7 Dm7 G9

Cm7 F7 Am7 D7

Gm7 Gm7(F) Em7♭5 A7♭9

Fm7 B♭7 B♭m7 Bm7 E7

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B♭m7 Bm7 E7 Cm7♭5 F7 B♭m7♭5

A9 A♭maj7 (FINE) (turnback) (Bm7 E7)

OUT CHORUS
B♭m7 Bm7 E7

B♭m7 Bm7 E7

Amaj7 A♭+7

Gmaj7 G♭7 G♭m7

Gm7 C7 G♭m7 Gm7 C7

Fmaj7 A+7 Dm7 G7 D.S.

Are You Real

Benny Golson

Med. Bounce

Dm7 G7b9 Cm7 F7 Bbma7 Ebma7

Am7b5 D7b9 Gm7 C7 Fm7

Bb7b9 Ebma7 Gm7 C7 Fm7 Bb9

Ebma7 Dm7 G7b9 Cm7 F7 Bbma7

Ebma7 Am7b5 D7b9 Gm7 C7

Fm7 Bb7b9 Ebma7 Gm7 C7 Fm7

Bb9 Bb9/Ab Gm7 C7b9 Fm7

B9 Bb9 Eb (Turnback: Dm7 G7b9)

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B♭ INSTRUMENTS

I REMEMBER CLIFFORD

BY
BENNY GOLSON

Bbma7 C7 C7/G A7 C#o

Dmi7 Cmi7 Bbmi7 Abmi7 Gmi7 Bb/C Bbmi/C

FmA7 A7 BbmA7 Bmi7(b5) E7 C7 C#o Dmi7 Dmi7/C

Bmi7(b5) E7 Ami7 F#mi7(b5) B7 Gmi7 C+7(b9)

FmA7 A7 BbmA7 Bmi7(b5) E7 C7 C#o Dmi7 Dmi7/C

Bmi7(b5) E7 Ami7(b5) D7 Gmi7 C+7 C+7/Bb Ami7 BbmA7

Bmi7(b5) E7 Ami7 D13(b9) Gmi7 C+7(b9) FmA7

Emi7(b5) A+7 Dmi7 Dmi7/C Bmi7(b5) E7 Ami7 D7 Gmi7 C7

TIME STEP MUSIC (ASCAP)

FMA7 A7 BbMA7 Bmi7(b5) E C7 C#o Dmi7 Dmi7/C

Bmi7(b5) E7 Ami7(b5) D7 Gmi7 C+7(b9) FMA7

"KILLER JOE"

MEDIUM TEMPO

By- BENNY GOLSON

C7 Bb7 C7 Bb7

C7 Bb7 C7 Bb7

Emi7(b5) A7 Ebmi7 Ab7

A7 Ab7 Emi7 A7

C7 Bb7 C7 Bb7

C7 Bb7 C7 Bb7

fine

© 1959

STABLEMATES

by BENNY GOLSON

MODERATELY FAST

Emi7 A7 E♭mi7 A♭7 D♭maj7 C+7

A♭mi7 D♭7 G♭maj7 Gmi7 C7

Fmi7 B♭7 E♭mi7

A♭7 D♭maj7

Fmi7 G♭7 G+7 C+7

B7 B♭7 A7 A♭7

Emi7 A7 E♭mi7 A♭7 D♭maj7 C+7

A♭mi7 D♭7 G♭maj7 Gmi7 C7

TIME STEP MUSIC (ASCAP)

Fmi7 B^b7 E^bmi7

3

A^b7 D^bMAJ7

WHISPER NOT

comp. by BENNY GOLSON

Cmi Cmi7(B♭) Ami7♭5 D7 Gmi Gmi7(F) Emi7♭5 A7

Dmi Dmi7(C) Emi7♭5 A7 Dmi7 Emi7 Fmi7 G7

G(B) E♭7(B♭) D(F♯) A(C♯) Dmi7♭5 G7

ALTERNATE PROGRESSION

Cmi Cmi7(B♭) Ami7♭5 D7 Gmi Gmi7 Emi7♭5 A7

Dmi Dmi7(C) Emi7♭5 A7 Dmi7 Emi7 Fmi7 B♭7

Ami7♭5 D7 Gmi Gmi7(F)

Emi7♭5 A13♭9 (FORM G♭ TRIAD ON TOP OF A7) Dmi7♭5 G13♭9 (E TRIAD)

Cmi Cmi(B♭) Ami7♭5 D7 Gmi Gmi7(F) Emi7♭5 A7

Dmi Dmi7(C) Emi7♭5 A7 Dmi (Dmi7(C) A♭7 G7)

1956 TIME STEP MUSIC (ASCAP)

APPENDIX C:

Harmonic Analysis of Select Compositions:

“Along Came Betty,” “I Remember Clifford,” “Stablemates,” and “Whisper Not.”

Along Came Betty

Music by Benny Golson

I Remember Clifford

Music by Benny Golson

Eb Major: IV7 III+7 V7b9 III7b9 III7/bVI

A♭maj7 G+7 B♭7b9 G7b9 G7/B

vi-7 v-7 iv-7 biii-7 ii-7 V7sus4 V7b9

C-7 B♭-7 A♭-7 G♭-7 F-7 B♭7sus4 B♭7b9

Imaj7 III7 IVmaj7 #iv°7 V7 C Minor: vii°7 = (V7b9) i-7 i-7/vii

E♭maj7 G7 A♭maj7 A°7 B♭7 B°7 C-7 C-7/B♭

1 FINE 2 3 4

G Minor: 1. ii-7b5 V7b9 i-7 i-7/vii D Minor: ii-7b5 V7b9 Eb Major: ii-7 V7b9

A-7b5 D7b9 G-7 G-7/F E-7b5 A7b9 F-7 B♭7b9

5 6 7 8

G Minor: 2. ii-7b5 V7b9 F Minor: ii-7b5 V7b9 Eb Major: ii-7 V7+7 iii-7 IVmaj7

A-7b5 D7b9 G-7b5 C7b9 F-7 B♭+7 G-7 A♭maj7

13 14 15 16

G Minor: ii-7b5 V7b9 Eb Major: iii-7 VI7b9 ii-7 V7alt Imaj7

A-7b5 D7b9 G-7 C7b9 F-7 B♭alt E♭maj7

17 18 19 20

C Minor: ii-7b5 V7b9 i-7 i-7/vii G Minor: ii-7b5 V7b9 Eb Major: iii-7 VI7 ii-7 V7

D-7b5 G7b9 C-7 C-7/B♭ A-7b5 D7b9 G-7 C7 F-7 B♭7

21 22 23 24

D.S. al Coda

G Minor: ii-7b5 V7b9 F Minor: ii-7b5 V7b9 Eb Major: ii-7 V7 I6

A-7b5 D7b9 G-7b5 C7b9 F-7 B♭7alt E♭6

©

D.C. al Fine

Stablemates

Benny Golson

D Major: ii-7 V7 Db Major: ii-7 V7 Imaj7 VII7#9 (IV7) Tritone Substitution

E-7 A7 E♭-7 A♭7 D♭maj7 C7+5

Gb Major: ii-7 1 V7 2 Imaj7 3 Db Major: bV-7b5 4 VII7

A♭-7 D♭7 G♭maj7 G-7b5 C7b9

5 iii-7 VI7 6 7 ii-7 8 V7b9

F-7 B♭7 E♭-7 A♭7b9

9 Db Major: Imaj7 10 F Minor: 11 i-7 12 V7 (bII7) Tritone Substitution

D♭maj7 F-7 F#7

13 Db Major: bV7#9 14 VII7 15 bVII7 (III7) Tritone Substitution 16 VI7

G7+5 C7 B7 B♭7

17 bVI7 (II7) Tritone Substitution V7 18 D Major: ii-7 19 V7 Db Major: ii-7 20 V7

A7 A♭7 E-7 A7 E♭-7 A♭7

21 Imaj7 VII7#9 (IV7) Tritone Sub. 22 Gb Major: ii-7 23 24 V7

D♭maj7 C7+5 A♭-7 D♭7

25 Imaj7 26 Db Major: bV-7b5 VII7 27 iii-7 28 VI7

G♭maj7 G-7b5 C7b9 F-7 B♭7

29 ii-7 30 V7b9 31 Imaj7 32

E♭-7 A♭7 D♭maj7

33 34 35 36

Whisper Not

Music by Benny Golson

G minor: ii-7b5 V7 i-7 i-7/VII
C minor: i-7 I-7/VII D minor: ii-7b5 V7
A C-7 C-7/B♭ A-7b5 D7 G-7 G-7/F E-7b5 A7

D minor: i-7 1 I-7/VII 2 ii-7b5 V7 3 i-7 ii-7 Eb major: ii-7 4 C minor: V7
D-7 D-7/C E-7b5 A7 D-7 E-7 F-7 G7

C minor: 5 i-7 I-7/VII G minor: ii-7b5 V7 6 i-7 7 i-7/VII D minor: ii-7b5 8 V7
A C-7 C-7/B♭ A-7b5 D7 G-7 G-7/F E-7b5 A7

D minor: i-7 I-7/VII 10 ii-7b5 11 V7 i-7 12 ii-7 Eb major: ii-7 V7
D-7 D-7/C E-7b5 A7 D-7 E-7 F-7 B♭7

G minor: 13 ii-7b5 V7 14 i-7 15 i-7/VII 16
B A-7b5 D7 G-7 G-7/F

D minor: ii-7b5 V7 18 C minor: ii-7b5 19 V7 20
E-7b5 A13b9 D-7b5 G13b9

C minor: 21 i-7 I-7/VII G minor: 22 ii-7b5 V7 23 i-7 i-7/VII D minor: 24 ii-7b5 V7
A C-7 C-7/B♭ A-7b5 D7 G-7 G-7/F E-7b5 A7

Eb major: ii-7 C minor: V7
D minor: i-7 I-7/VII 26 ii-7b5 27 V7 i-7 ii-7 28
D-7 D-7/C E-7b5 A7 D-7 E-7 F-7 G7

29 30 © 31 32

APPENDIX D

Biographies of Participants

Bill Charlap, appointed Director of Jazz Studies in September 2015, is a leading jazz pianist renowned for his collaborations with artists like Tony Bennett and Wynton Marsalis. Known for his interpretations of American standards, he has recorded albums featuring Hoagy Carmichael and George Gershwin, including a Grammy-nominated 2015 CD with Bennett. Charlap founded the acclaimed Bill Charlap Trio in 1997, received two Grammy nominations, and has been a Blue Note Records artist since 2000. He led the Blue Note 7 for their 70th anniversary celebration and directs the Jazz in July Festival at the 92nd Street Y. Born in New York City and a pianist since age three, he is the son of Broadway composer Moose Charlap and singer Sandy Stewart. In 2005, he and Stewart released the praised CD *Love Is Here To Stay*. Charlap is also married to jazz pianist Renee Rosnes, with whom he frequently performs.

Jazz pianist and composer Bruce Barth has been a prominent figure in jazz for over thirty-five years. Known for his unique sound and storytelling ability, Barth has collaborated with jazz greats and performed extensively worldwide. He has appeared on over 135 recordings, including seventeen as a leader, and has recorded live at the Village Vanguard. His notable works include the albums *American Landscape* and *East and West*. Barth's upcoming trio album, *Dedication*, pays tribute to influential figures and features all original compositions. A dedicated educator, he has taught at Temple University and Columbia University and offers master classes globally.

John Mosca, an accomplished jazz musician and Juilliard School alumnus, has made significant contributions to the jazz world. He was a co-leader of the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra and has been a member of the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Orchestra since 1975. Mosca's performance history includes collaborations with Pierre Boulez, the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, Dizzy Gillespie, Sarah Vaughan, Joe Williams, Stan Getz, Buddy Rich, and the Jimmy Heath Big Band. He has also performed at the United Nations with the Barry Harris Sextet. His extensive recording credits feature numerous albums with the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis/Vanguard Orchestra and two CDs with trumpeter John McNeil.

Mike LeDonne, a celebrated jazz pianist and organist, began his musical journey at age 5 and was performing professionally by 10. After graduating from the New England Conservatory, he moved to New York City in 1979. Over his career, he has collaborated with jazz legends such as Benny Goodman, Milt Jackson, Sonny Rollins, and Benny Golson. Praised by Oscar Peterson, LeDonne has appeared on over 100 CDs as a sideman and released 16 albums as a leader. His 2003 album *The Groover Quartet* highlighted his Hammond Organ skills and topped the charts. Additionally, he has taught at Juilliard and contributed to the Jazz For Teens program at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center.

Marcus McLaurine, a University of Nebraska graduate who studied with Jack Kulawich, is a distinguished jazz bassist. He has toured extensively with Clark Terry and performed with jazz greats like Kenny Burrell, McCoy Tyner, Abbey Lincoln, and the Count Basie Orchestra. His recording credits include work with prominent artists such as Hank Jones, Vincent Herring, and Grover Mitchell. McLaurine also appeared in the film *Cotton Club* with the Cab Calloway Band.