CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since the latter half of the twentieth century the creation of jazz music in the Nordic countries has evolved from a largely imitative practice, to a now often-acknowledged position at the vanguard of artistic innovation.[1] A number of the improvisers from the Nordic lands, especially those active in the 1970s and 1980s, are now widely respected for the creation of unique approaches to both the compositional and improvisational elements of jazz music. This uniqueness has been most publicly profiled by the German record label ECM, which, during the 1970s and 1980s, released a number of now seminal recordings of the subject musicians of this thesis, all of whom have been instrumental in developing these distinctive improvisational mannerisms, now often referred to as 'The Nordic Sound'. The musical approaches that many of these artists adopted stood in stark contrast to the majority of improvised music occurring in other parts of the world at that time, and was notably less directly referential to the canon of American jazz music. For many listeners, aesthetic choices such as the notable preference for straight 8th feels over the jazz swing feel heralded a decidedly eurological musical aesthetic, or at least this was widely interpreted as such, and was seen as a breakaway from the dominantly African-American musical innovations being developed by the majority of the American jazz artists at that time. Jan Garbarek, Edward Vesala, Terje Rypdal, Bobo Stenson, Arild Andersen and Jon Christiansen, to name just a small yet significant handful, are all Nordic musicians who have built international performing careers based upon this interpretation as innovators of a specifically eurological jazz music.

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[1] In this thesis the term 'Nordic' is employed so as to encompass the nations of Iceland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland and the Faroe Islands. The often-misused term 'Scandinavian' will only be used in reference to Norway, Sweden and Denmark whose common ethno-graphic heritage relates geographically to the Scandinavian Peninsula, which is the domain of present-day Norway and Sweden.

This thesis addresses such Nordic improvised music in both its artistic and its sociological contexts, with a focus on the music of two of the most influential ensembles of this formative period, between the mid 1970s to late 1980s. The music of the Scandinavian quartet led by the American pianist Keith Jarrett, and the various ensembles directed by Finnish drummer and percussionist Edward Vesala form the main focus of this thesis. It is the aim of this work to show how these artists created an aesthetic that was interpretable and significant to both a particular, regional narrative of cultural identity, and, simultaneously, a more universal narrative of jazz as a globalised improvisational practice that can incorporate and reference many styles of music. It will be shown how these artists placed musical universality at the forefront of their music's meaning, even while simultaneously employing expressive devices with a high degree of cultural specificity.

Vesala's music is perhaps the most fiercely plural approach out of the two subjects addressed in this thesis. His art is a unique blend of free jazz, composition techniques from Western art music, and a variety of folk music forms originating from a number of different cultures. More than most other jazz musicians at that time, or indeed since, Vesala was particularly successful at achieving a re-synthesis of these influences, yielding a music which, rather than being a 'fusion' form where these disparate elements were brought together to stand in contrast with each other, told one unified yet multifaceted story of musical identity.[2] Above and beyond the focus of any singular work, the totality of Vesala's perspective was one of universalisms. Vesala's art was, simultaneously, a continuance of tradition and an iconoclasm. His music is, possibly, the most successful example in jazz of a unified and balanced conception of musical confluence.

Vesala's music is, however, no mere collage of his musical interests. Throughout this thesis I will show the ways in which Vesala's music connected with specific

[2] The contrasting nature of 'fusion' and 'confluence' terminologies is discussed in more detail in chapters four and five.

narratives of a tangibly Finnish cultural identity, and also narratives existing within jazz music generally during the period in which he was active. While not extremely well known outside Europe, Vesala is generally considered to have been at the vanguard of Finnish musical innovation, and was to become one of the most important role models for many Finnish musicians of the forthcoming generations, as well as many jazz artists who likewise sought a plurality of socio-cultural interpretation.

Jarrett's band, in contrast, was influential in no small part due to the pianist's high profile as an internationally acclaimed performer, Jarrett having played with Miles Davis, Charles Lloyd and many other important American jazz improvisers preceding the formation of the European Quartet. Keith Jarrett's European Quartet brought Nordic improvisers to a global audience and this success, in turn, inspired further generations of Nordic musicians, who would allow themselves to be influenced; both directly by the musicians involved in this ensemble, and also by the nature and choice of source material that these musicians employed. The success of this ensemble abroad is likely the singular most important event influencing the understanding of jazz and improvised music as a specifically Nordic cultural commodity with the wider understanding of Nordic cultural identity domestically. This is the perspective of this thesis that these two ensembles are to be deemed as the two most influential factors in the establishment of a eurological jazz vernacular.

Also addressed, throughout this thesis, are a number of younger jazz artists whose music is highly influenced by the primary subjects of this research. Specifically requiring introduction is, firstly, saxophonist and composer Trygve Seim whose compositional approach is tangibly influenced by Vesala, while his saxophone playing often audibly references Garbarek, albeit with a much darker timbral sense. Seim has released a number of recordings under his own name and in collaboration with others, mostly on Manfred Eicher's ECM label. Seim is also a member of the Norwegian quartet *The Source*, whose annual Christmas concert in Oslo, entitled *The Source of Christmas*, features an ever-expanding plethora of mostly Oslo-based musicians, many of whom have emigrated from

other nations. *The Source of Christmas* is a celebration of the plurality and diversity of the Norwegian musical environment. Secondly, Norwegian trumpeter Arve Henriksen is mentioned in this research in a number of contexts. Henriksen approaches the trumpet in minimalist way, leaving much space between phrases. He is highly influenced by American trumpeter Jon Hassell, and, like Hassell, is often to be heard working in collaboration with electronic musicians. Henriksen has made a number of records on both the Runegrammofon and ECM record labels. The pianist Christian Wallumrød is another whose work is being released by ECM. Wallumrød presents us with a uniquely confluent form of jazz-related music, his compositions often adopting structures that are more related to Baroque music than the American traditions of jazz. Wallumrød's various ensembles are composed of musicians who are trained in various disciplines including jazz, Classical music and Norwegian folk music. Finally, Finnish guitarist Raoul Björkenheim is also mentioned and quoted in this research. As a young man, Björkenheim was recruited by Vesala for his *Sound and Fury* ensemble, and this experience appears to have been a formative one for the guitarist. Currently, Björkenheim is performing regularly with some of the most creative improvising musicians from around the globe, notably his Nordic trio entitled *Scorch Trio* whose music is at once highly visceral yet undeniably intellectual. Björkenheim's guitar style is highly influence by Rock musicians, as well as the American jazz tradition and also twentieth-century compositional practices, much as in the case of Vesala himself and, like Vesala, Björkenheim's approach is highly unique and his playing is immediately identifiable.

This thesis aims to highlight the functioning of this music within a larger social and aesthetic discussion by way of interviews with currently practising Nordic improvisers—including Vesala's wife and musical collaborator, Iro Haarla, and also a number of artists who have been strongly influenced by him—as well as extensive research into the body of writings that already exists and detailed

analysis of certain specific works.[3] This thesis is certainly about the music of Edward Vesala, Jan Garbarek, Keith Jarrett, Jon Christensen, Iro Haarla and their collaborators, and considerable space is thus assigned to the discussion and analysis of specific musical works, but, perhaps more importantly, it is about the intersection of culture and how communities negotiate identity formation within a contemporary artistic framework. Most importantly this thesis attempts to view improvised music as a quasi-didactic form that can abstractly describe, especially for those within the societal group who are the informed listeners, the often-intangible confluences between multiple cultural traditions. Furthermore this art influences social conditions, and, in particular, notions of communal identity, simultaneously responding and reacting to these conditions as well as commenting on them.

I intend this thesis to demonstrate how improvised music, during a period of globalisation and social change, as one aspect of the greater mechanism of a region's cultural life, is an influential part of a particular culture's attempt to maintain authorship of their narrative of specific identity, and control/'ownership' of their social imagining. Yet, at the same time as preserving certain aspects of the culturally particular narrative, the plurality of this art can advocate an intersection with certain external cultural expressions that stand to contribute to the community's cultural life.

Chapters two and three of this thesis deal primarily with the regionally-specific narratives that surround this music. In particular, chapter two addresses significant historical developments, and notable interactions, that led to the current position occupied by jazz in the contemporary condition of Nordic society. Following on from the historical and formative environments that contributed to the creation and understanding of this music, chapter three of this work will consider examples of these artists' music through a number of theoretical frameworks that I argue shed light upon the interpretation and

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[3] See table of interviews in the appendices of this thesis. These interviews were conducted with the approval of the University of New England Human Research Ethics Committee Reference No. HE09/136.

meaning of the music within regional identity narratives. These theoretical frames, such as dialectics, narrative and the scholarship of folkloristics, are all employed to consider the relations between certain works of improvised music and their interpretation as depictions of identity and social condition/change.

I will aim to show a parallel between the sociological 'work' of much folkloric cultural practice, and that found in the work of the artists discussed in this thesis. It is my suggestion that some of the works of improvised music addressed here are modern narratives about change and identity, discussed via the crafted manipulations of abstract forms; further, that these narratives assume a similar functionality in contemporary society, as did many folkloric narrative forms in the past. Therefore, I argue that this process can influence and advocate change within society via these abstracted forms. This is not to state that this music is necessarily itself a form of folklore, as that is something I consider a debate for those who practise the scholarship of folkloristic research. Alternatively, it is my contention that similar relationships can be perceived between a community and practitioner of a given folkloric tradition as exists between a modern audience and performers of jazz music.

It is also within chapter three that the notion of narrative itself is addressed as it might pertain to the subjects of this thesis. It is important to note that in the context of this discussion a narrative need not be confined to any specific artist or specific work. It is possible, within the shared language and group-driven continuous revision of the aesthetics of improvised music, to see whole communities of artists as working together to construct a newly relevant narrative. In this instance no single voice is the author but, rather like mythology and folktales, the story is passed around orally until it assumes a recognizable and convincing role relevant to the identity of a given community. Such has been the development of jazz music since its inception and this process is audibly continuous in the Nordic countries; specifically, that the expressive content of certain significant artists is extended and developed by forthcoming generations of musicians in an attempt to author and/or influence these communal

narratives of identity that exist as interpretive frameworks connected to this artistic practice.

In essence, the various constructs of human grouping—such as communities, nations, sub-cultures and the like—are all constructs of an imagining of the evolving group identity.

> The nation: it is an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives an image of their communion.[4]

For this study, this is an important intersection between creative practice and the academic discussion of social identity as a narratological act. The nation has, perhaps unfortunately, become a dominant categorising tool in the general public's understanding of jazz music since the global spread of the music, and it will be shown how the music of the subjects of this thesis have operated within such an understanding. This becomes a tale about a people's ownership over their own (renewed) self-definition, and the right of individuals to participate in the creation of this 'image of their communion'. Folklore—and by reflection this improvised music as viewed through the lens of all evolving folklore—is an inherently collective act, where meaning is not necessarily a constituent definable element of the artist, or even their works, but is rather the by-product of audience interpretations informed by these narratives.

A great deal of this position rests on the awareness of the audience as 'readers' of these musical narratives. These readers may—or may not—be in an informed position in regard to the musical 'texts' and this will result in differing forms of interpretation. In the appropriate context, however, these processes have the potential to resist new elements from outside the imagined group, or from class strata above, to advocate approval for sub-cultures and varying external

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[4] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York: Verso, 1983), 5.

expressions with whom the community comes into contact, and to inform and remember unique, half-forgotten, or rarely seen, expressions of identity. This is, in essence, a discussion about the way in which certain cultural practices exist to resist, to negotiate or to filter cultural advances from other external or ascendant cultural bodies.

Chapter four of this work introduces the concept of confluent music. The most important thing to understand about the use of confluence in a musical context is that it is not a style, a noun or another genre label. Confluence is most appropriately an adjective, and possibly a verb, of process; one describing a consolidated re-synthesis of multiple musical tributaries. In some respects, confluence can be understood as an updating and loosening of ideas that were brought into the rhetoric of improvised music most significantly with the Third Stream movement of which Gunther Schuller was probably the most prominent exponent from the 1960s onward. The position of this research is that the Nordic confluent music addressed in this thesis can be accurately understood as an extension of the inherently multiplicitous history of jazz music, of which Third Stream was one significant component. Further, considering the related nature of the musical material addressed by these two musical communities (namely Western art music and jazz in a musical context where composition is raised to an at least equal position of importance to improvisation), that the discussion of Nordic confluent music stands to gain a great deal by probing such a connection.

Third Stream itself is often considered (especially among jazz-centric observers) as a failed movement, despite the fact that a number of the musicians involved in Third Stream music are still active, and in many cases teaching the next generation of jazz composers in various universities, lecturing in composition and similar areas.[5] The earliest expressions of the idiom were predominantly an attempt to fuse Western classical music and jazz traditions; a move that was basically rejected by both communities. Later in the evolution of the concept,

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[5] Ran Blake, 'Third Stream and the Importance of the Ear', *College Music Symposium, Journal of the College Music Society* 21 (1981), 1.

Third Stream practitioners, such as Ran Blake, expanded the then definitions to include folk music forms and almost anything else.

> When Gunther Schuller and I founded the Third Stream department at the New England Conservatory, I broadened Schuller's original definition very slightly. Why must the two tributaries represent only classical and jazz? Why not substitute one of the many styles and traditions of ethnic music? What would one label the vital percussive tribal music of Nigeria blended with the cries of the Ainu from northern Japan? About two years later my colleagues and I went a step further towards a clearer definition by describing Third Stream music as a label for an anti-label music. [6]

In a way, this move rendered the rather unfortunate terminology of Third Stream too diffuse to sustain itself as a notion of genre or idiomatic categorisation. As a framework for analysis and scholarship, though, confluent music, as an extension of Third Stream thought, provides a useful metaphor for discussing musical pluralities, as it attempts to describe the foundation of the art rather than its final aesthetic construction.

By dictionary definition, confluence, as a noun, signifies the junction of two rivers, and notably that of two rivers of approximately equal width. Thus confluent music as used in this thesis is music that exists at—or beyond—the point where many tributaries of tradition unify and become a new force. I conceive the music examined in this thesis as a product of dialectic approach; as one that re-synthesises a new and complete vernacular unto itself (yet not necessarily a new genre); as one created from a variety of sources; and as an approach completely congruent with the plural, individualistic history of jazz.

When this idea of confluence is used to discuss some of the improvised music in Europe, particularly Northern Europe, I believe it becomes very useful. It allows, for instance, the notion that artworks that are superficially quite varied can be

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[6] Ibid.,1.

contrasted in terms of the way they address these confluences, and the narrative they provoke regarding artistic and cultural plurality.

It should also be noted that while the idea of confluence finds certain foundation in the Third Stream scholarship of Gunther Schuller and his contemporaries, the music discussed in this thesis is, however, intrinsically different to the bulk of American music that has been described as Third Stream. While a significant part of the aesthetic of Third Stream music is its duality—and while this thesis will discuss in great detail the dualities of both an artistic and social nature that have given rise to (and are henceforth provoked by) this Nordic jazz music—the quality that sets this music apart from the American Third Stream movement is the manner in which this music has negotiated interpretive frameworks within both of the narrative streams important to this thesis.

Chapter four of this thesis will define and position this notion of confluence while discussing the history and work of the Keith Jarrett European quartet, Edward Vesala, Christian Wallumrød, Trygve Seim and the Third Stream movement. I do not wish to divorce this Nordic confluent music from its jazz roots, but instead to show these artists to be a contemporary, diasporic, incarnation of the confluent potential of jazz music as cultural, as well as musical, practice. The significance, therefore, of these artists, is not to be found solely in their musical multiplicities—as jazz has always embraced multiplicities of expressions and internal dialectics—but in the unique ability of these musicians to give back to their audiences and their communities a focused and renewed realisation of identity through jazz. As a result they have created an expression of the music re-invigorated and made meaningful by a new social context.

In chapter five of this thesis the globalised narratives connected to this music are addressed. However, while the focus thereby shifts to a more wide-ranging context for the discussion of this music, the way in which the global implications of the music interact with the afore-examined localised narratives is still centrally important. By addressing the universality of this music, this thesis will show in what ways this art challenges and comments upon certain internal

discourses within its own societies. By observing the various ways these artists create expressions of a variously specific or universal nature, one can illuminate the processes whereby, as cultural practice, this music helps to negotiate the manner in which society changes. The multicultural evolution of Northern European society plays a large role in this matter, as does present globalization in general.

This music can therefore potentially be seen both to resist that which the individual artists or communities understand as destructive to cultural practice and identity and, at the same time, to embrace that which might be understood as of benefit or having commonality, delivering new cultural forms, filtered through artists in a manner that is meaningful to the wider community, or at least for subcultures within a given community. This conceptualising reinforces the notion of this music as a folkloric act, for even if the music itself contains no references to folk culture—and it may be that works of art can become more significant to this discourse, if they do not—it might still be functioning as part of a narrative about societal change. For example, Vesala's music most definitely contains elements that could be considered Finnish in character, however, it quite openly seems to support a move toward increased multiplicity in the defining of cultural forms, rather than promoting any cultural particularity. Jazz has always strongly asserted its dual identity—both of the individual and the community—and here is cultural practice completely congruent with the "jazz tradition" as it pertains to this authorship of dual identity narratives.

Chapter five of the thesis therefore investigates the history and development of the global diaspora of jazz music as it pertains to identity narratives. This work hopes to provide an alternative to notions of nationality and particularity in Nordic jazz music by demonstrating the inherent multiplicities of these artists. I intend this to show how it is interaction rather than exclusivity that allows such artists to influence the continuous re-shaping of cultural identity, and that these images of identity can potentially be more significant than geography or even language to communal groups connected by ideas and modes of aesthetic expression.

As in chapter three's contextualisation of regionally specific narratives, chapter five, then, will investigate and analyse certain expressive realisations of universalism in the context of the global spread of jazz music. Both specifically applicable and potentially viable academic frameworks for the analysis of the music in this context will be addressed, as will certain technical musical devices that have provoked interpretation via these more universal narratives. The compositional devices employed by Vesala and Haarla are especially significant to this part of the discussion. The reader may note, however, that I have avoided the utilisation of all but one notational example from the scores of the Vesala/Haarla pieces.[7] This is at the request of Haarla herself who must contend with a problem involving a lack of rights over the music from the *Sound and Fury* ensemble, which although Haarla is fundamentally one of the creators of this work, has unfortunately lost legal control of these works following Vesala's death. Therefore, out of respect to Haarla, I have tried to describe these works, and significant elements of their structure, without resorting to specific notational examples from the original scores.

Vesala's fiercely individual, almost separatist, stance will be considered in relation to the then contemporary debates regarding the identity of jazz playing out in socio-cultural context of the jazz community itself. Points of convergence with folkloric narratives underwrite many areas of the present thesis. Of particular interest in this chapter is the conception of outlaw figures as the assertion of the identity of the individual in the face of certain cultural imperialisms. It is not a fresh observation that this music has remained vibrant and meaningful in no small part by harbouring certain radicals who make strong rebellious/anti-conformist statements, both on a music level and in terms of traditional identity narrative. This is significant to Vesala's relationship to the dissonance between a maturing global diaspora of jazz improvisation and the neo-classicism movement of the American jazz traditionalists that was emerging during Vesala's most fruitful period. Vesala, in complete congruence with his

[7] Other forms of representation and description do, however, appear.

formative experiences as a performer of free jazz music, was outspokenly opposed to such codification of the art form. Many of the socio-cultural implications of free jazz music will be addressed, as will the long-standing relationship between the free jazz idiom in Europe and communities' struggles to maintain control over the authorship of cultural identity.

In chapter six, the conclusive chapter of this thesis, it will be shown how it was the negotiation of the dual narratives of both a regional identity and musical universality that rendered this music so particularly significant in the history of jazz, and moreover the development of a confluent approach to musical contemporary improvisatory practice. Specifically, it is these artists' ability to sustain these two narratives simultaneously within their musical aesthetic that has provided an important precedent, and a condition of continuing social meaningfulness, for the ensuing generations of confluent improvisers from the Nordic lands.

Iro Haarla, Jan Garbarek, Jon Christensen, Edward Vesala, and in fact all of the artists discussed in this thesis, have contributed music to our world that has achieved a great deal in terms of broadening perspectives, not only that of the informed 'readers' in the dedicated jazz audiences, but also that in the greater Nordic social consciousness. Many of these musicians began their careers in an environment where jazz and improvised music were mostly regarded as foreign artefacts, and audiences were, at best, ambivalent. As will be shown in chapter two, within only a few decades jazz has evolved to become something that many Nordic people can, and do, relate to as a part of their identity; not the American jazz, but a confluent form of music that synthesizes elements from jazz and free improvisation, Western art music, folk music and even contemporary forms such as electronic music. It is the position of this thesis that the pluralistic aesthetics of these mavericks of Nordic jazz music, who had the vision to draw their inspiration from many streams, yet the artistic focus to express these confluences through a consolidated, unified expression of musical universality has did much to widen the understanding of jazz music as a culturally plastic art

form capable of intersecting with various levels of cultural expression and social meaning.

1.1 Methodology and Literature Overview

This thesis combines ethnographic research with a variety of analytic frameworks in order to discuss the sociological interactions of jazz music in the context of Nordic society. This qualitative research seeks to probe the nature and quality of various levels of interpretation ascribed to this music within the limited context of a Nordic cultural environment. As an Australian born and educated writer, who has subsequently spent the majority of his working career in the Nordic countries, sometimes working with the periphery subjects of this thesis and/or the interviewees, my position is a mixture of objectivity and subjectivity. It has, therefore, become necessary to bring to this research as much academic discourse as possible in order to contextualise analytical procedures within a greater paradigm of scholarship. Such a process is presented in logical succession in chapter three of this thesis, where folkloristic scholarship is discussed subsequent to a qualitative analysis of interpreted narrative of a Garbarek improvisation. The objective of this method is show such narratives as relative to a field of inquiry that gives contextualisation and scholarly precedent to such narratives within a limited, specifically regional understanding.

Ten interviews were undertaken with musicians in the Nordic countries who are either contributors to the art works being examined or who are emerging artists whose own works are influenced by the primary subjects of this research. Interviews were undertaken mostly in person, as approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of New England; however in some cases discussions or follow up questions were conducted via email and letter. These interviews do not, however, solely comprise the primary findings of this research. The analytical methodology of this study combines these interviews with other published interviews of these artists, critical responses by prominent observers and theoretical discourse by way of scholarship. In addition, and in keeping with the best traditions of jazz analysis, this research grounds these

various findings and scholarship within the art works themselves through the starting point of the transcribed solo. Therefore, from each of the scholarly fields utilised in these analyses, only those aspects of these substantial areas that illuminate the interpretation of the specific transcribed or otherwise analysed works are employed. All the transcriptions in this thesis are my own work and have been transcribed directly from the original recordings. While only relevant excerpts are presented in the body of this thesis, complete transcriptions are provided in the appendices in order to provide musical context for those extracts that are under analysis.

This thesis is, in essence, a two-part study of two contrasting realms of meaning. There is a unified method to the research and subsequent analysis of these two areas of inquiry. Each investigation began with establishing a historical contextualisation of the emergence of each narrative, which was then identified and analysed within the appropriate works and subsequently positioned within one or more supporting scholarly frameworks. An attempt has been made to apply this method simultaneously to both the sides of the performer/audience relationship. Where appropriate, similar aspects of the related scholarly and historical contextualisation are applied both to the music itself, via a transcription and analysis method, and to conditions that are conducive to the realisation of various aspects of meaning in a socio-cultural context. This, by design, inherently allows for further research and the future development of the analysis of related works within each of these areas of academic scholarship.

There is no great body of works published in English, or any other language, that concern the specific subject matter of this research. Some relevant scholarship has, however, been published regarding jazz as evolving expression of identity within cultural contexts that are relatively new to the art form. An overview of some of the literature that is particularly pertinent to this thesis is provided in the next few paragraphs. This is by no means a comprehensive review of relevant literature, alternatively, the following examples are an attempt to position this research in relation to a small number of publications with particular significance to this research.

Paul Austerlitz's book. *Jazz Consciousness: Music, Race, and Humanity* frames jazz as an inclusive act that can incorporate other genres, cultural perspectives and identities beyond its origins as an American art form with a strong African-American identity.[8] It is of great relevance to a fundamental perspective of this study, and includes a chapter that specifically discusses the Finnish cultural connection to jazz music and fusion attempts with Finnish folk music. This book shows jazz as a musical diaspora that intersects with existent musical traditions, is influenced by these traditions and then, in turn, influences these musical environments themselves. At a most basic level it is this process which then allows jazz music 'access' to a culture's narratives regarding identity. Austerlitz's study shows that this process is one that is occurring in many cultural contexts throughout the world, and that this condition is intrinsic to the working methodologies of a global jazz music.

American folklorist William Bascom's seminal article 'Four Functions of Folklore' is vitally important to this research in chapter three.[9] Bascom lays the foundations for a discussion of the 'work' of folklore, something that intersects with the music addressed in this thesis at the point where it informs a specific narrative of cultural identity. Bascom's work is brought in to contextualise this idea of narrative in relation to the scholarship of folklore. The intent in utilising Bascom's work in such a manner is to ground the argument for jazz music as a system of cultural narration in the most fundamental scholarship of folkloristics.

Ran Blake's essay 'Third Stream and the Importance of the Ear' is a more contemporary reading of the movement pioneered by Gunther Schuller, and includes Blake's somewhat expanded understanding of what constitutes a Third Stream work.[10] Blake's definition of Third Stream falls not too far from a concept

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[8] Paul Austerlitz, *Jazz Consciousness: Music, Race, and Humanity* (Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2005).
[9] William R. Bascom, 'Four Functions of Folklore', *The Journal of American Folklore* 67/266 (1954), 333-349.
[10] Ran Blake, 'Third Stream and the Importance of the Ear', 139-146.

of confluence, and it is likely that he was attempting in this essay to breath new life into the movement at a stage when many onlookers, and even some musicians, were abandoning the ideology. This essay, for my research, is one of the most useful of all those regarding Third Stream music, as Blake expands the definition of Third Stream to include all music forms, not just the jazz and Classical traditions for previous Third Stream manifestos. He views Third Stream as a verb more than a noun, a process more than a style, one that can incorporate diverse musical viewpoints simultaneously in a process of plural expression.

David Borgo's essay 'Negotiating Freedom: Values and Practices in Contemporary Improvised Music' deals mostly with conception and realization of an aesthetic of freedom in free jazz and improvised music.[11] He devotes a reasonable amount of space to European improvisers both those who embrace the African American jazz tradition and those who favour a more Eurological approach to improvisation. This section, in particular, is relevant to the positioning of this research, especially a quote from English guitarist Derek Bailey that Borgo claims, 'betrays a Eurological perspective',[12] where Bailey describes his music as 'non-idiomatic improvisation' and a 'search for a styleless, uncommitted area in which to work'.[13] Without actually discussing communities in such terms, Borgo's essay nevertheless highlights a number of situations where there is a negotiation between differing communities with interrelated identities. The introduction to this essay also includes overtones of semiology with a quote from John Corbett, who states: 'A compromise between order and disorder, improvisation is a negotiation between codes and their pleasurable dismantling'.[14]

The Other Side Of Nowhere: Jazz, Improvisation and Communities in Dialogue is a collection of essays containing a number of contemporary readings regarding the

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[11] David Borgo, 'Negotiating Freedom: Values and Practices in Contemporary Improvised Music', *Black Music Research Journal,* 22/2 (2002), 165-88.
[12] Ibid., 171..
[13] Ibid.
[14] John Corbett, cited in Borgo, 'Negotiating Freedom: Values and Practices in Contemporary Improvised Music', 165.

interaction between sociological contexts of musicians and the music they produce.[15] Particularly, 'Transmissions of an Interculture: Pan-African jazz and Intercultural Improvisation' by Jason Stanyek, 'Improvised Music After 1950: Afrological and Eurological Perspectives' by George E. Lewis and 'The Discourse of a Dysfunctional Drummer: Collaborative Dissonances, Improvisation and Cultural Theory' by Eddie Prevost are relevant to the positioning of this research. This collection is divided into three sections, the third of which, *Social Practice and Identity,* is most significant.

Walter Fisher is one of the most important writers in narrative theory. Fisher's *Human Communication as Narration: Toward a Philosophy of Reason, Value, and Action (Studies in Rhetoric/Communication)* investigates the power of narration as a negotiator of systems of reason and value in societies.[16] He takes a broad view of the nature of narration, framing many aspects of human communication through the narrative lens, something that attracted much criticism when the study was published.[17] Fisher's narrative theory asserts that: 1) People are essentially storytellers; 2) we make decisions on the basis of good reasons; 3) history, biography, culture, and character determine what we consider good reasons; 4) narrative rationality is determined by the coherence and fidelity of our stories; and 5) the world is a set of stories from which we choose, and thus constantly re-create, our lives. In the context of the research for this thesis, these concepts are particularly applicable to the way in which we incorporate music into our cultures and identities, and how music can itself constitute part of a constantly evolving narrative of such identity.

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[15] *The Other Side Of Nowhere: Jazz, Improvisation and Communities in Dialogue,* ed Daniel Fishlin and Ajay Heble (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2004).
[16] Walter Fisher, *Human Communication as Narration: Toward a Philosophy of Reason, Value, and Action (Studies in Rhetoric/Communication)* (South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1989).
[17] William F. Woods, 'Human Communication as Narration: Toward a Philosophy of Reason, Value and Action by Walter R. Fisher', *College Composition and Communication*, 40/2 (May, 1989), 236-238.

Mike Heffley's book *Northern Sun, Southern Moon: Europe's Reinvention of Jazz* concerns itself with the way European jazz music has divorced itself from its American roots and traditions.[18] He mostly discusses jazz in Britain and Germany, plus some artists from Scandinavia, showing how Europeans used free improvisation and other new influences to create a unique dialect of jazz music. This seminal book is useful to the positioning of this research because it helps to place Nordic jazz music in a European context. Although Heffley writes rather little about Nordic musicians directly, his conclusions are nevertheless largely applicable.

Caroline Walker Bynum's *Metamorphosis and Identity* was a great source of inspiration while conceptualising the basis for this thesis.[19] Walker Bynum writes of the concept of metamorphosis in folkloric literary and oral traditions, showing how metamorphosis stories, such as werewolf legends, provide a narrative about identity and change. She discusses how this folklore serves as a vehicle for negotiation regarding the intrinsic and the transient elements of personal and communal identity. This work is extremely useful when considering improvised music through the frame of folklore. Bynum writes: 'The question of change is of course the other side of the question of identity. If change is the replacement of one entity by another or the growth of an entity out of another in which it is implicit, we must be able to say how we know we have an entity in the first place'.[20] There are many connections here with other aspects of this research such as orientalism, which Bynum considers an aspect of 'wonder'. She addresses hybridity, and how it differentiates itself from metamorphosis, to a large degree in this work, and this is highly applicable to the research in this thesis regarding confluence in music.

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[18] Mike Heffley, *Northern Sun, Southern Moon: Europe's Reinvention of Jazz* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
[19] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (Brooklyn: Zone Books, 2001).
[20] Ibid., 19.

All the above works of scholarship have contributed to the core approach of this thesis and the fundamental lines of inquiry that this research has subsequently perused. Taken together they can been understood as defining a focus and territory for the appraisal of jazz music in Nordic society as a catalyst for contemporary understandings of identity.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL CONTEXTUALISATION OF A PARTICULAR NARRATIVES

The condition of jazz music coming to inhabit a meaningful position within the contemporary spectrum of narratives of identity in Nordic societies has not arisen autonomously. It is, instead, the result of many decades of interaction with significant progenitors of the music and/or the aesthetics of their various works, which allowed for jazz improvisation to become a schema upon which culturally particular markers of identity may be trellised. Despite the fact that jazz recordings had been available in Europe as early as the 1920s, the most significant transmission of jazz music to the Nordic countries came mostly through visiting Americans. The relatively early integration of jazz and traditional folk music has greatly helped this improvised music to become more meaningful in wider Scandinavian society. Even in this regard, however, significant post-war American visitors sometimes provided the catalyst. Norwegian singer Karin Krog points to the saxophonist Stan Getz as one catalyst:

> I think we have to go back to the 1950s, when Stan Getz visited Sweden and recorded a tune called *Ack Varmeland du Skona*, which is a Swedish folk tune from Varmeland, and it became quite internationally renowned.[21]

Getz renamed the tune *Dear Old Stockholm,* and it subsequently was adopted as part of the standard repertoire of many jazz musicians, both in Europe and the United States. From a Scandinavian perspective, early intersections between folk music and American jazz such as this set the precedents for a dialogue between the indigenous folk music and the new jazz from abroad.

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[21] Karin Krog, cited in Alyn Shipton. *A New History of Jazz* (London: Continuum, 2001), 845.

Still today the highest selling jazz recording ever in Sweden is *Jazz På Svenska* by the pianist Jan Johansson.[22] Johansson had met Getz while still at university and abandoned his studies in order to play with the American saxophonist. The early sixties recording *Jazz På Svenska* consists entirely of arrangements of Swedish folk songs for piano and contrabass. These all performed in a style that more or less adhered to the then established jazz idiom, and included improvisations by both musicians. This recording was subsequently followed up by *Jazz på Ryska* and *Jazz på Ungerska*, featuring similar treatments of Russian and Hungarian folk music.[23] Notably, Johansson's response to the sucess of *Jazz På Svenska*, an album with a strong apparent Swedish identity, was to apply the same principles to non-Swedish folk music, thereby participating in an emerging narrative regarding the universalism of the jazz improvisation schema.

In the early twentieth century the Nordic countries were in many regards very isolated: this is especially true of Norway with its geographic and (then) financial limitations. Denmark was, by contrast, in a better position to connect the Nordic societies to modernisms in art and music that were emerging in the United States and continental Europe. Denmark ostensibly acted as a gateway, and, as early as the 1930s, was host to a number of touring innovators of this music, such as Louis Armstrong, Coleman Hawkins and Duke Ellington. This had far-reaching ramifications for the Danish music community with many musicians, such as the violinist of now-international repute Sven Asmussen, becoming quite proficient in the stylistic expressions of the American jazz vernacular.[24] Danish musicians were among the first Europeans to adopt the new music and, even today, Danish jazz has a reputation for being among the most successful within the American traditions of this art form. The most important ramification of this process, in relation to the specific narratives of Nordic identity that we interpret within the contemporary Nordic jazz music, is that the music now came to inhabit these

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[22] Alex Henderson, 'Jan Johansson' *All Music Guide* - http://www.allmusic.com/artist/jan-johansson-p8869/biography (accessed 20 December 2010).
[23] Ibid.
[24] John David White and Jean Christensen, eds. *New Music of the Nordic Countries* (New York: Pendragon Press, 2002), 67.

lands; jazz music was now a permanent feature in the cultural makeup of the Nordic countries, and no longer just a foreign object passing through. Rather than Nordic musicians having to migrate to the United States, or at least France, they could now remain in the North, and even develop their music making, while still having opportunity to connect to the traditions and innovators of the art form. For the metamorphosis of jazz in Europe generally, and certainly in Europe's more outlying regions, this is of considerable importance. It is notably those musicians who chose to base themselves and their careers at home in the North who, tangibly more so than those who expatriated, led the development of a unique identity within the jazz schema.

With Germany's invasion of Poland on the 1st of September 1939 Europe found itself at war. Perhaps surprisingly, given the grave times and subsequent disruption to daily life that ensued throughout the continent, jazz was to become imbued with increased meaning and sociological significance. In many instances jazz music emerged as a symbol of political resistance to the oppression by rising Nazi ideology. In Jean Christensen's account of the New Music of Denmark she describes how this emergence manifested.

> In an odd twist, jazz flourished in Denmark during the occupation—enough so that the period in the 1940s is often referred to as the 'Golden Age of Danish Jazz'—partly, it has to be said, in open defiance of the condemnation of the music by the Nazi government.[25]

With this occurrence jazz music came to inhabit a position of significance in relation to the singular most important socio-political event of twentieth-century Europe. The music thus came to symbolise not only resistance to the Nazi movement, but also more generally intersected with emerging narratives of individuality, freedom and identity. In many ways jazz music in Europe became politicised by the events of World War II.

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[25] Ibid., 67.

Strangely enough, some in the Nordic countries still regard jazz as a corrupting foreign impurity. This is despite a number of Nordic jazz musicians having become well respected figures in the European art world, with their work recognised domestically and also abroad, and there now being a wide acceptance within the general community of jazz music as a contemporary cultural commodity of the Nordic peoples. As recently as 2010, Swedish politician Jimmie Åkesson, whose far-right-wing party won an unexpectedly large number of votes at the election in that year, spoke publicly on what he perceived to be the corrupting influence of jazz music in Sweden, and so he called for a national ban to be placed upon the music. His statements, which can only be described as amazingly far-fetched, provoked reactions of both humour and anger from the Nordic arts community.

> *Detta är en osvensk musiktradition som inte hör hemma i Sverige, jazzmusiken leder svenska ungdomar in i ett icke-svenskt leverne, Jazzen är dessutom en inkörsport till icke-skandinaviska relationer. Svenska ungdomar som lyssnar på den här musiken förleds lätt av det djuriskt rytmiskt erotiska i den. Över hela Sverige har jag hört om sammankomster där sån här "djungelmusik" spelats, efter ett par timmar är de unga männen aggressiva och kvinnorna överkåta, och det slutar nästan alltid i bråk.*[26]

> This is an un-Swedish music tradition that has no place in Sweden, Swedish jazz music leads young people into a non-Swedish lifestyle, jazz is also a gateway to non-Scandinavian relations. Swedish youth who listen to this music are easily deceived by the animal-like rhythm of the erotic. All over Sweden, I have heard of events where this kind of 'jungle music' is played, after a few hours the young men are aggressive and the women were horny, and it almost always ends in a brawl.

Although these images would seem ludicrous to anyone who is in regular attendance at the rather quiet and gentile jazz clubs in Scandinavia, this is not an isolated statement in the political rhetoric of the current ultra-conservatives of

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[26] Jimmie Åkesson cited in 'SD vill ha förbud mot Jazz' *Dagens Svenskbladet* http://www.svenskbladet.se//politik/index.php?alias=sd_vill_ha_forbud_mot_jazz.html (accessed 24 January 2011) . Translation mine.

the Nordic countries. In Finland there have been similar statements by the conservative party, *Perussuomalaiset* (Basic Finns).

> *Perussuomalaiset on ainoana puolueena kertonut taidelinjauksensa. Konkreettisesti se merkitsisi kuvataiteessa sitä, että yhteiskunnan tukea ei annettaisi Kiasmalle eikä muuhunkaan nykytaiteeseen. Sen sijaan suomalaisen kansallisuusaatteen rakentajaa, klassista taidetta pitäisi Persujen mukaan opettaa kouluissa. Esimerkkeinä on annettu taiteilijoiden nimiä kuten Akseli Gallen-Kallela ja Albert Edelfeldt sekä musiikin puolelta Jean Sibelius.*[27]

> Basic Finns is the only (Finnish) party who has announced their views about art. In visual arts, they suggest that the society shouldn't support the Kiasma art gallery or any other form of contemporary art. Instead of that, the classic art from the era of Finnish Nationalism should be taught in schools. As an example they have named artists such as Akseli Gallen-Kallela and Albert Edelfeldt and the composer Jean Sibelius.

Of course, while very few Swedish or Finnish people would have taken seriously such an outrageous opinion, it is interesting to note that, not only is jazz music understood as a force with strong social meaning and influence, but also it is still challenging those who seek to control and to direct artificially the evolution of culture and communal identity from above. To those who prize purity and wish to 'return' these Nordic countries to a homogenic monoculture, which, it may be argued, never actually existed, jazz music and the pluralities that it implies stands as a strong opposition. Perhaps this is not as surprising as it first seems that jazz music has been dragged into such debates when one observes that the political narratives on which these politicians are basing much of their rhetoric are themselves from a distinct lineage of which World War II was a significant focal event.

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[27] Timo Soini cited in Merja Sundström, 'Perussuomalaisten kulttuuripolitiikka ällistyttää' *Mtv3 Kulturri* http://www.mtv3.fi/uutiset/kulttuuri.shtml/2011/03/1283090/perussuomalaisten-kulttuuripolitiikka-allistyttaa (accessed 15 March 2011), translation by Anni Kiviniemi.

After the war, Scandinavia, and Europe in general, became a haven for African American jazz musicians who wished to live as well as work in Europe. The European festival and club circuit was then emerging as a profitable alternative to performing in the United States, and it is still so today that Europe provides one of the most financially well-supported touring circuits in the jazz world.[28] Beyond these practicalities, Scandinavia offered these musicians a welcome respite from the social stresses of class and race relations in the United States at that time. However it is notable that for most musicians the financial and performance opportunities were often the most important deciding factors. Maxine Gordon, Dexter Gordon's wife, recalls one pertinent conversation:

> Dex said to me, "I'm not ex-anything. Red Mitchell left the U.S. on account of the Vietnam War. He spoke up against U.S. policy, and went to Sweden. But for me, I had a gig in Europe, and before I looked up, it was fourteen years later. It wasn't political."[29]

Dexter Gordon, Ben Webster, Bud Powell and Kenny Drew are but a few of the many American innovators who came to call Scandinavia their home, the majority of them living in Denmark as a result of this post war jazz boom that attracted not only musicians but many practitioners of various art forms to Copenhagen.[30] As a result of this proximity, many opportunities to hear the most important musicians in the American jazz tradition were opened up to young, aspiring improvisers from all the Nordic countries. In addition, a number of jazz festivals in the neighbouring countries of Finland, Sweden and Norway were soon also established, producing an environment where Nordic musicians could interact with their American counterparts.[31]

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[28] Alexander Gelfand, 'Scandanavian Invasion' *Jazziz* 11 (November 2005), 35.
[29] Maxine Gordon, "Maxie Gordon: The Legacy of Dexter Gordon" http://www.allaboutjazz.com/php/article.php?id=41600&pg=4 (accessed 11 July 2012).
[30] http://www.herbertgentry.com/AboutHerb.php (accessed 12 December 2010).
[31] R.E. Steele, B. Thompson, M.A. McDaniel, and David C. Driskell, *Tradition Redefined: The Larry and Brenda Thompson Collection of African American Art*: (Maryland: David C. Driskell Center, University of Maryland, 2009), 12.

Later in the story of the migration of jazz music to Europe, there came the free jazz movement, which across the Atlantic Ocean found fertile ground for proliferation and diversification. For many European performers, the liberties that came with the free jazz movement, which had begun to gain momentum in the United States during the 1960s with musicians Ornette Coleman, Don Cherry and others, were a signal that it was not only possible to play this new improvised music from the United States, but that it was a legitimate venture to play it in one's own, unique manner. SIgnificantly, the American free jazz music had found fertile ground in the protest movement and was increasingly being seen as vehicle for socio-political activism especially within the African American community. As Andrew Hurly Wright describes:

> The 1960s saw an increasing politicization among many American musicians and critics, particularly in the second half of the decade. This tendency was often paired with a marked preference for free jazz. Since the notion of freedom was being raised within the contexts of both avant-garde jazz and civil rights movement, it is not surprising that the one found reflection in the other. Increasingly, however, a newly critical sociologically grounded jazz discourse began to discern links between (free) jazz aesthetics and the politics of African American emancipation.[32]

This discourse relating to free jazz further reinforced the notion of jazz as a medium for the expression of a specific identity or a particular perspective. Free jazz prized pure expression as the foundation of improvised music and it often rendered many of the idiomatic features of previous jazz styles optional; and, in addition, it tended to the omission of many prohibitive aspects of jazz such as complex harmonic progressions, and significantly the 'swing' rhythms, or at least the literal expression of them, which had implied a significant degree of American cultural specificity. Louis Sclavis, the clarinetist, pondered this in a recent interview:

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[32] Andrew Wright Hurley. *The Return of Jazz: Joachim-Ernst Berendt and West German Cultural Change* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), 75.

> The important moments are those that tell you that you have the right. Earlier forms of jazz were so shut off. Without the proper key you didn't get access easily. When free jazz came along, these musicians were telling us we have the right to do this.[33]

With an absence of reserve that was not before possible, many European musicians were increasingly of the opinion that they no longer needed to look to the United States, the homeland of jazz, for their validation. The North American early pioneers of the free movement, similarly to the bebop era jazz musicians before them, found a level of acceptance and opportunity, especially in Scandinavia, that was a relief from the scepticism at home during these formative years of free jazz. Mike Heffley's important book regarding European jazz describes how:

> Europe's northernmost venues had the distinction of hosting and recording some of the first European performances of the American free-jazz groundbreakers. Cecil Taylor played the Jazzhouse Montmartre in Copenhagen with Albert Ayler and Sunny Murray in 1962; the same year, Archie Shepp and Bill Dixon played in Helsinki, Finland.[34]

Even today, free playing is something that most young musicians in the Nordic countries very regularly practise. Whereas, in the United States, one might find the different schools of jazz style more segregated, in the Nordic countries musicians whose main interest might be, for instance, bebop will still often be found participating in free playing. There is not so much a consciousness, as sometimes exists in more traditional communities of jazz players, that this purely improvisational music lies outside of 'the tradition'. While some may view free improvisation as a rejection of tradition in the United States, in Europe it is firmly understood not only as part of the jazz tradition, but as part of the European relationship to that tradition.

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[33] Louis Sclavis, cited in Julian Benedikt, dir. *Play Your Own Thing*, (Euro Arts 2055748, DVD, 2007).
[34] Mike Heffley, *Northern Sun, Southern Moon: Europe's Reinvention of Jazz,* 70.

The foundation was, therefore, quite strong for a specifically 'eurological' response to more modern forms of jazz music when composer and pianist George Russell came to Scandinavia in the late 1960s to perform with the young musicians Jan Garbarek, Terje Rypdal and Jon Christensen. Russell was himself instrumental in urging Garbarek and his colleagues to follow a more individualistic path and aesthetics based on personal cultural relationships; in turn leading these musicians towards an approach that didn't rely so heavily on the American tradition. The Norwegian bass player Arild Andersen was one of the Norwegian musicians to study with Russell during this time.

> George Russell was staying in Oslo for a while, so we went, had some lessons, and he was teaching us the book, the chromatic concept of tonal improvisation, the Lydian Chromatic concept, and he came and sat in with us and also had a big influence on how to approach more free-rail playing. It's all up to your aesthetic judgement, you have the freedom to play any notes you want.[35]

The trumpeter Don Cherry was also important in this regard and, with an interest in ethnic music a strong element of his own persona, he spurred on Garbarek and colleagues to investigate their own regional musical heritages as source material for improvisation. Stuart Nicholson, in his book *Is Jazz Dead, or has it Just Changed Address,* claims that Cherry 'encouraged these musicians to allow their Nordic background to help shape their musical outlook' and that Cherry had 'brought the avant-garde tradition, but also the inspiration from Indian Raga, African music [and] Turkish folk music with oriental scales'.[36] This influence from Cherry gave rise to a general interest in folk music of all kinds and a certain tinge of orientalism in Nordic jazz music seems a consistent thread between many musicians of this generation. This was the grounding for much of the plurality in these musicians forthcoming art, an introduction to the particularity as a gateway to universalism. Saxophonist Jan Garbarek describes this universalism as an inherent characteristic of the musical physics:

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[35] Arild Andersen, cited in Benedikt, dir. *Play Your Own Thing* (Euro Arts 2055748, DVD, 2007).
[36] Stuart Nicholson, *Is Jazz Dead?* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 206.

> I realized that folk music from all over the world seems to be so related, you know, so many common factors really, present wherever you go. It is so obvious as it relates to the overtone series, it relates to the size of our bodies and the way we perceive things, and the physical world around us. And from all this comes folk music.[37]

Today, Garbarek, more so than many other improvisers, has come to epitomize a sort of pan-cultural improvisational approach. He himself went on to play and perform with a variety of musicians from many different disciplines and cultural music traditions including Norwegian folk singer Agnes Buen Garnås, Tunisian oud player Anouar Brahem and Pakistani Khayal vocalist Bage Fateh Ali Khan. This universalism will be explored in much greater depth in the fourth and fifth chapters of this thesis.

Many of the Nordic jazz musicians addressed here became internationally recognised for their ability to create an art that is not only skilfully executed but also unique. Today many, such as the outspoken jazz journalist Stuart Nicholson, believe that this Nordic jazz may be among the most progressive improvised music currently being created. Nicholson unabashedly positions his view of the future of this music in various non-American, and non-metropolitan, cultural contexts.

> Today, the different global styles around the world hold the key to the future of jazz as they interact with the global American styles. As musicians adapt aspects of these global styles that they feel might work for them, various concepts and approaches are tried and either rejected or adapted in the constant quest to produce new contexts that broaden the expressive potential of the music. Where once the dynamic for this change and evolution in jazz came from within America, it is now shifting to its global communities around the world. As just one example, the Nordic tone's "chastity and formal simplicity" offers a different approach to playing and hearing jazz, its

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[37] Jan Garbarek, cited in Benedikt, dir. *Play Your Own Thing*, (Euro Arts 2055748, DVD, 2007).

> rural lucidity and folkloric allusions providing a contrast to the intensity of urban, big city life.[38]

In contrast the American neo-classicist movement that emerged in the 1980s in the United States, which promoted a return to the historical roots of the jazz tradition, might well be understood as a disruption to the developmental evolution of American improvised music. As a generalisation, a majority of the Nordic jazz musicians who established this particular Eurological style, have been able to look past the American neo-classicism, and so continue jazz music's tradition of innovation and individuality that, up until that point, had defined the art form as one of the most creative musical expressions of the twentieth century. It is perhaps unsurprising then that Nordic jazz musicians have since, in turn, influenced other jazz musicians from the United States and all over the world.

Instrumental in presenting Nordic jazz to a global audience, and influential in the development of certain aesthetics within the music, is the German record label ECM owned and operated by Manfred Eicher. Eicher was very successful in creating a distinct image of Nordic jazz in the public imagination. He is in many ways the one most responsible for the interpretation of this music in the context of a narrative of cultural particularity, as he was able, continually and repeatedly, to associate the sound-art of these musicians with an established aesthetic that could also be represented in the visual artwork that he attached to his recordings. This image, one that Michael Tucker calls 'The Idea of North',[39] has been the driving force behind many of the jazz recordings of ECM, an independent company that began by recording European musicians who were generally unrecognised in the American-orientated jazz market, and it has done much in assisting their transformation from marginal artists to internationally recognised innovators of improvised art music. This 'Idea of North' was central

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[38] Nicholson, *Is Jazz Dead?*, 222.
[39] Steve Lake and Paul Griffiths, eds. *Horizons Touched: The Music of ECM* (London: Granta Books, 2007), 29.

to the success of ECM, and built upon already established archetypes of Nordic identity.

> The idea of North as a place of regenerative potential, of wilderness and mystery, can be traced back to Classical legends of Ultima Thule and of the Hyperboreans of the Far North, as well as to such Roman texts as *Germanica*, Tacitus's short but striking treatise on the strength and independence of the Northern tribes.[40]

This concept has informed art and music from and about the Nordic countries for many centuries and it can be found in the work of notable composers such as Jean Sibelius and, earlier, Edward Grieg, as well as the visual artists Gustaf Fjaestad and Edward Munch.

Most certainly one can perceive a certain 'searching for meaning' within the music Eicher chooses to record, also a congruency with the history of Nordic thought as much as landscape or certain cultural artefacts. Also from Tucker:

> Such an 'idea of North' relates to the often angst-driven quest for meaning in the work of many avant-guard artists and thinkers from the Nordic lands, from Kierkegaard, Ibsen and Munch, from Strindberg, and Södergran, Lagerkvist and Ekelöf to the mid-twentieth century artists and writer Asger Jorn and the contemporary Norwegian painter and printmaker Frans Widerberg.[41]

Manfred Eicher himself commented on what he saw as the unique approach of saxophonist Garbarek, one of the most prolific recording artists on his label.

> Even though (Garbarek) was influenced by a lot of American musicians and one could see the influence of Coltrane, Archie Shepp, and Albert Ayler on his early recordings—he very often says this in his interviews—there was a kind of European "speech" and an idea that this could be something else. The sounds and ideas, what kind of

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[40] Ibid., 30.
[41] Ibid., 32.

> harmonies to choose, that had to do with the surroundings. I just think people who live at that time in Scandinavia, somehow the musicians understood solitude and they probably lived in solitude. They understood transparency and clarity and somehow formulated a certain kind of approach towards music that was entirely different to an American living in New York. But that had to do with the sociological context.[42]

The resultant sense of brevity, and of space, combined with an almost brittle, starkness of timbre that is clear in its harmonic relationships rather than coloured is something that is a distinct product of this particular identity, or as Eicher sees it, a certain understanding of solitude.

ECM remains a trade enterprise as much as it is an artistic one, and while ECM may well be accused of serving their own commercial interests first and foremost—above any call to portray accurately the identity of Nordic people through improvised art music, or even the personal identity of the musicians themselves—it also must be acknowledged that, in order to survive and continue in the commercial environment of music marketing, certain concessions to a fetish-driven consumer-based market must be made. ECM, with their minimalist cover art to match an often minimalist music, have fully succeeded in creating such a fetish object. Today, many purchasers of jazz records will buy an ECM release purely because of this aesthetic, without prior knowledge of the music or musicians contained within, something that can be said about very few record companies indeed, in any genre, in a market where the sale of CDs or LPs rather than digital downloads is increasingly difficult. This has allowed Eicher to elevate the careers of a number of musicians whose music, it must be said, might never have reached the audiences they have without an ECM release. This, in turn, has not only generated a great deal of interest in Nordic jazz all over the world but domestically it has also helped Nordic governments come to view improvised music as unique way of promoting Nordic culture abroad.[43]

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[42] Manfred Eicher cited in Nicholson, *Is Jazz Dead?*, 207.
[43] Per Mangset and Bård Kleppe, 'Norway' *Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe*, 12th edition (European Union: Council of Europe, 2011), 4.

There has developed an environment of support for improvised music in the Nordic countries so that, while many would say still falls short of what is required to sustainably develop that music, it is generally unequalled anywhere in the world. Festivals not only of jazz, but also of other, more eclectic forms of improvised art music exist in relative abundance and almost every medium to large size city has a jazz club. In many of these countries both the festivals and the jazz clubs receive an amount of government support to allow them to compensate the artists adequately for their work. Musicians can apply for individual funding to tour and in some of the more wealthy countries, such as Norway, funding is also available for recording purposes. Norway epitomises this practice more than any other nation, and, thanks to arts and cultural funding schemes that are irrevocably linked to the high taxes upon the oil wealth of the country, have fostered one of the most productive jazz communities in Europe. Hans F. Dahl describes the motivation for such support:

> The arts in Norway are considered a public good and are therefore heavily subsidized, in order to make them available to the greatest number of people, to maintain Norway's national cultural standard on a par with neighbouring countries, and to keep cultural traditions unbroken by preventing sudden ruptures in cultural production.[44]

Dahl, in his article on Norwegian cultural policy, illuminates a meeting of forces, a combination of not only privileged financial means, but also a socialist ethic of accessibility, combined with a certain nationalistic pride in the presentation of Norwegian culture among neighbouring nations whose close proximity promises that mutual awareness is well nigh omnipresent. However, without a generally acknowledged relationship between jazz music and Norwegian identity this condition of support could never have occurred. It is only by intersection with a culturally specific narrative of national/community identity that such a conducive environment can exist.

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[44] Hans F. Dahl, 'In the Market's Place: Cultural Policy in Norway,' *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* 471 (Jan. 1984), 123.

There are collaborative practices here that go beyond artistic discipline, further strengthening this narrative of jazz as an element of Nordic identity. Cross discipline interactions are something regularly witnessed on the stages of Nordic festivals. Accordion Frode Haltli spoke on the topic in interview:

> I think Norwegian music life has gained a lot from coming from a young nation. We have not the heavy institutions or ready-made paths that you may find more in Central Europe or even in Sweden and Denmark! My friends come from all music forms, all art forms, and in Norway classical musicians are not afraid to play on the same stages as free improvisers or dancers.[45]

In short, the improvising musicians of these Nordic nations of Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and, to a lesser extent the smaller outposts of Iceland and the Faroe Islands, operate a collective community where cultural exchange is promoted and diversity is celebrated, and quite simply this has provoked some of the most creative and socially meaningful improvised music of the last few decades.

Differing approaches to the education and training of young musicians have been steadily unfolding in the Nordic countries, allowing for a condition of such multiplicity to develop within the music and arts community. In the 1980s, a number of Nordic universities, as in many parts of the world, began offering jazz programmes in which young musicians could study the art form and often gain a university degree in the process. Scandinavia has quite a substantial history of experimentation in education and, significantly, there developed a variety of differing forms of jazz education, which, in essence, offered a young student many options as to how he or she would be developing themselves as musicians. Even today, the various universities in Scandinavia may be placed in differing areas of the jazz education spectrum, both for the stylistic aspects they choose to

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[45] Frode Haltli, cited in Daniel Rorke, 'It's OK to Listen to the Grey Voice' B.Mus (Hons.) Diss. Sydney Conservatorium of Music, The University of Sydney, (2006), 86.

focus upon and for the methodology they adopt for such learning.[46] For instance, in Copenhagen, quite in keeping with their strong historic connections with the American tradition, the *Rytmisk Musikkonservatorium* is known for teaching a programme that emphasizes repertoire and the skilful mastery of jazz forms, while the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki is also widely acclaimed for success in this field. Alternatively, in small central Norwegian city of Trondheim, NTNU Jazzlinja, a school known for developing highly individual and idiosyncratic improvisers, there is no suggested repertoire at all, and the emphasis is instead put upon creating a fertile environment for collaboration between students. It is the students' own creative impulses that very often direct the nature of the music studied and performed there. What one tends to find is that Nordic music students will migrate from place to place to study, depending upon what form of improvised music they wish to focus.

Musicians in Finland have a unique combination of these possibilities for study. On one hand there is the Sibelius Academy, Finland's premier jazz school with a strong stylistic focus on bebop and the jazz tradition, for this was Finland's first jazz school to offer a university degree, and in many ways it assumes responsibility for interaction with the foreign jazz environment, with many master classes and visiting lecturers. A publication for the Finnish Music Information Centre frames the Sibelius Academy's position:

> The primary goal of the Academy's jazz department is to produce musicians of an international artistic standard. The students entering the Sibelius Academy are almost without exception already working musicians.[47]

On the other hand, there is the Pop/Jazz Conservatoire in Helsinki where musicians who are interested in a wider array of musical approaches can study rock, folk music, electronic music and interact with other musicians from

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[46] Interview with Antti Kujanpää, 12 January 2011.
[47] Jari-Pekka Vuorela and Jari Muikku. *What about Jazz in Finland?* (Helsinki: Finnish Music Information Centre, 1990), v.

different disciplines. Both schools have produced some wonderful players, with many lecturers teaching at more than one institution.

However, one of the most influential aspects of jazz education in Scandinavia is to be found outside the universities. It is simply the access that younger musicians have to successful musicians of the previous generation, and this is something that is in many ways a product of the diminutive population. What one finds in the Nordic countries generally, is that the places where jazz and improvised music are performed are very small, and the musicians themselves are most often to be found mingling with the audience during the set break. What this means is that jazz, dominantly developed via an oral/aural traditions, can still be passed down through word of mouth—outside institutions with imposed curricula and philosophies, and without the distance of stardom and subsequent separation that can be seen with many successful American musicians of previous generations. These neo-communal systems for the transmission of culture in music are in essence intact, mostly due to the absence of large population pressures. This is a condition much in keeping with the early developmental stages of American jazz, and is a significant factor in the perpetuation of creative music in the Nordic countries as well as a the continuation of intersection with a narrative of culturally specific communal identity.

2.1 Keith Jarrett's European Quartet

From a retrospective viewpoint, there is no doubt that the European ensemble of American pianist Keith Jarrett was one of the most important events in the history of Nordic improvisation. This group remains an important inspiration for the following generations of Nordic jazz players and the distinctive improvisational mannerisms of the four musicians, Jarrett, Jan Garbarek, Palle Danielson and Jon Christensen, have resulted in the adoption of new expressive gestures, not only among Nordic musicians but also within the jazz and improvised music communities globally. Drummer Per Oddvar Johansen describes, within Norway, a music culture in a state of excellent health:

> I believe that there has developed, in Norway, a culture for trying to find your own voice in art in general. This is at least very present in the music scene (although pop-music in this country is with some odd exceptions an attempt to copy American music). This is to a large degree thanks to some pioneers (Jan Garbarek, Jon Christensen, Arild Andersen, Terje Rypdal, Svein Finnerud, Bjørnar Andresen and others) who have shown that it's possible to make music without trying to make a copy of what others have been doing before you. Instead of that, they tried (and I'm talking about jazz) to make what they believed to be the continuation of the music they where inspired from. And by stroke of luck, these musicians met with someone to help them make their music known to an audience, thus making it possible to continue making this 'experimental' music.[48]

One of the most significant events in the introduction of a particular Nordic voice in jazz music to international audiences was the formation of Keith Jarrett's European Quartet. As this group's success bolstered the music abroad, so did it also strengthen its influence at home in Norway and the other Nordic countries. It is common to observe in the various interviews with Nordic musicians that musicians both old and young, both well established and developing artists, will cite this quartet as one of their most significant influences.

The ensemble's history actually begins before Jarrett officially formed the quartet, as Christiansen, Danielson and Garbarek were, for a number of years previous, performing in a similar confluent style in piano quartet settings with the Swedish pianist Bobo Stenson and also the Norwegian Terje Bjørkland. Drummer Jon Christiensen describes his experience:

> The work I did with Jan Garbarek was based, rather, on his compositions, free jazz and Norwegian folk songs. The band with Bobo Stenson and Palle Danielsson was more of an interplay thing, with long open parts and everybody contributing new ideas all the time. Recording with ECM since 1970, I met all these musicians who, from different backgrounds, were all trying to make something new. It felt in a way natural then to meet up with Keith Jarrett, and his

[48] Per Oddvar Johansen, cited in Rorke, 'It's Ok to Listen to the Grey Voice', 92-93.

> melodies and concept, for more interplay. I never saw a piece of written music, He only told me: 'Jon, play what you feel and hear!'[49]

Jarrett should, therefore, be rightly acknowledged for providing an affirmation that these musicians' aesthetic directions were not only unique but also relevant to the jazz art form globally. By directing his band with such freedom Jarrett allowed these artists' already established expressional language, complete with a narrative of dominantly Nordic identity, to come to the fore of the ensemble's group-realised aesthetic. As Christensen suggests, the synergy of Jarrett's compositions with these improvisers, coupled with the bandleader's open approach to allowing the musicians naturally to play in their own manner, brought about a unity in this ensemble of uncommon strength.

Jarrett's ears were surely already attuned to the developing Eurological jazz music. The pianist had been spending a great deal of time in Europe touring with the Charles Lloyd Quartet, and here he was exposed to the European musicians who would later constitute his ensemble. Ian Carr, one of the most important biographers of Jarrett asserts that:

> Perhaps the crucial factor which made Jarrett decide in the early 1970s to record with the European group was his memory of a jam session he witnessed in the late 1960s. Talking of Jon Christensen, Jarrett says: 'Once I heard him play in a free-jazz context at a jam session in Oslo... Jan was playing soprano sitting down, Arild Andersen was playing bass, and maybe Bobo Stenson was playing piano sometimes, and Jon was on drums. I've rarely heard better free playing than I heard that night. It was astounding![50]

This is rather in keeping with the working methodology of Miles Davis, whose electric group was one of Jarrett's earlier and most career defining musical situations. Davis is often known for recording with up and coming groups of

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[49] Jon Christensen, cited in Lake and Griffiths, eds. *Horizons Touched: The Music of ECM*, 142.
[50] Ian Carr, *Keith Jarrett: The Man and his Music* (London: Grafton, 1991), 75.

musicians whom he observed were emerging, unique musical voices and would be making their mark as future innovators of jazz music. These partnerships both allowed Davis to have ensembles on the cutting edge of innovation within the art form and, by lending his experienced and well-respected leadership to the ensemble, he in turn granted a type of legitimacy upon the new music within the public eye. For the young Scandinavians in Jarrett's group, as it was for Jarrett and others in the various Miles Davis ensembles, this was a wonderful career boost in addition to a period of distinct musical development.

Perhaps more than any other factor in the development of jazz music in the Nordic countries in the later half of the twentieth century, the European quartet of Keith Jarrett bestowed a legitimacy on the Eurocentric improvisational mannerisms that the Scandinavians had already begun establishing that was understood and accepted not only by the various audiences and critics around the world, but perhaps most significantly, by Nordic musicians themselves. It had been strongly reinforced via this quartet that it was not only acceptable to play differently than the Americans, but that people respected these divergences from the tradition and greeted the musicians with enthusiasm and interest, and this was perhaps the single biggest developmental boost in Nordic jazz history. 'When I got the chance to play with all those American musicians here in Norway in the 1960s, I was familiar with that kind of jazz. To trust myself to contribute to it as a young drummer from Oslo—not New York!—was a way of growing up'.[51] It was in no small part this reinforcement that has resulted in a continuing Nordic narrative within the jazz idiom. In turn this model for a non-American identity within the idiom has provided many non-Americans, or even non-New Yorkers, with an important canon of innovators who are rightfully credited with much of the liberation of this music into new confluences with musical and cultural forms from beyond its American homeland.

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[51] Jon Christensen, cited in Lake and Griffiths, eds. *Horizons Touched: The Music of ECM,* 142.

In all, the group released two studio recordings and two live albums between the years 1974 and 1979. Even the titles of these albums are indicative of a quasi-folkloristic theme, with *Belonging* and *My Song* presenting an image to the world of a group of artists whose work was an expression of their own personal identities and an intersection with narratives of place and cultural specificity. The compositions were all original works, and overall tended toward the relegation of traditional jazz elements such as swing and blues references for more Eurocentric, pastoral compositional devices, sometimes in close proximity to the emotional spectrum of popular ballads, and with a tangible influence from the European Classical music of which Jarrett was also an experienced practitioner.

Despite the audible influence of Western art-music in Jarrett's style and technique when improvising, Jarrett himself kept improvisational music and classical performance compartmentalised in his conception. 'I am not a crossover artist, I started as a classical pianist, the way all so-called legitimate kids playing the piano start. I was a crossover artist when I made my first jazz album. Now I'm just living in both worlds. But I keep them separate. When I'm an improviser, it's what I do. When I play Mozart, I don't improvise'.[52] Despite this, there is confluence in Jarrett's playing, perhaps as a natural subconscious cross fertilisation of musical ideas, and most certainly the European quartet is a more confluent expression of the jazz piano/tenor saxophone fronted quartet, a well-worn instrumental arrangement in jazz music, than almost all of Jarrett's other improvisational ensembles.

While Jarrett declines to describe the European jazz musician as merely classically influenced crossover music, he does make some concessions toward a chamber music influence when discussing European Jazz:

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[52] Keith Jarrett, cited in Andrew Solomon, 'The Jazz Martyr' *The New York Times* February 9, 1997 http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9C00E0DD153DF93AA35751C0A961958260&pagewanted=3 (accessed 3 February 2011).

> You know rather than saying it's classical, it might be more appropriate to call it European. Because to tell you the truth, it has always has to do with sound. With the higher tuning in Europe and the way German pianos sound, there's a certain kind of clarity that that sound has. Somehow it leads to spaciness, and not even long lines. It's a European angle on jazz and it would come from chamber music.[53]

However, significantly, although one may identify Classical music in the improvisations of Keith Jarrett, folk music in the saxophone idioms of Jan Garbarek or any such confluence in all members of this quartet the important factor is that, as Jarrett states, this is not crossover music. The music is a confluence of influences, but it presents a unified identity, with each musician and the group as a whole creating with the singular voice that this thesis suggests is the essence of confluent music—standing in contrast to notions of crossover or fusion. This is something that will be explored in more depth in chapters four and five. It is these musicians that Jarrett employed that most generally are accredited with the establishment of what is often equivocally generalised as 'The Nordic Sound' or that even less enlightening, and significantly more garish epitaph 'Fjord Jazz'.

It was, however, in keeping with past practice that through Jarrett, as before, it was contact with musicians and art forms of non-Nordic origin that very often provided the catalyst for the music experimentations of these musicians. George Russell and Don Cherry essentially provided an inspiration and working methodology for these musicians, whereas Jarrett's ensemble represented a coming-of-age of these confluent ideas, in an internationally prominent context. Jarrett's ensemble provided a platform on which the fully-formed realisation of these musicians' confluent improvisational styles could be presented to jazz audiences at home, and abroad, as a successful and legitimate expression of a Nordic jazz identity. Russell and Cherry, however, are the two most credited by those Nordic jazz musicians that are the subjects of this research for urging them

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[53] Keith Jarrett cited in Ted Rosenthal, 'Keith Jarrett: The 'Insanity' of Doing More Than One (Musical) Thing' *Piano and Keyboard Magazine* (Jan-Feb, 1997), 25.

in original directions. It was in fact through Russell's group that Jarrett first heard the young Jan Garbarek,[54] however, it was Don Cherry who brought the musicians closer to their indigenous folk music, and encouraged the development of the specifically Nordic sense of identity, of which Jarrett's group became the most high profile realisation. Garbarek himself describes this in detail in Lake and Griffiths' publication regarding the history of ECM records:

> Unlikely as it might seem, Don even had some responsibility for opening a door to Norwegian folk music for me and for Jon (Christensen), Arild (Andersen) and Terje (Rypdal). In this period, the custom in Norway was to invite famous visiting American musicians to do a session at the radio station. And as Don was playing with us, he came up with the idea that we could also invite some folk musician to participate. Now we knew quite a lot of the folk musicians and would hang out with them in the clubs in Oslo, but the idea of playing together hadn't arisen. At Don's insistence, one was contacted, a lady singer, and she came to the radio studio. Nothing at all was prepared beforehand, Don just organised everything in the moment, very smoothly and easily, and we played—the combination of folk music and improvising sounded so right to me. I think from that moment on, the idea of having folk music aspects or folk musicians involved in this music was always there in my mind.[55]

Since this time Garbarek has build a great proportion of his career on projects involving folk musicians from many cultures, and today in the Nordic lands it is a quite natural occurrence to see both projects involving improvisers and folk musicians, and improvisers who incorporate folk music elements into their aesthetic. Even the folk music itself has felt the ramifications of this event with the rise of instrumentalists such as Nils Økland who, although not a jazz musician in any formal sense, is both an educated practitioner of folk music and contemporary improvisational practice, performing on violin and the traditional Norwegian *Hardingfele.*[56]

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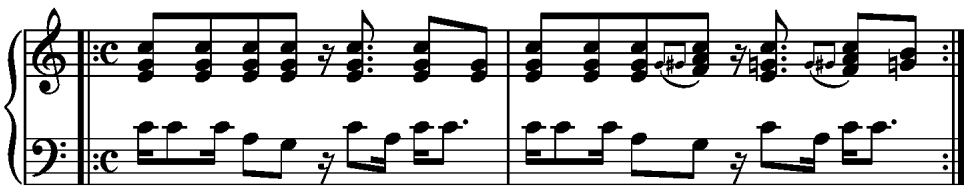
[54] Carr, *Keith Jarrett: The Man and his Music*, 75.
[55] Garbarek, cited in Lake and Griffiths, eds. *Horizons Touched: The Music of ECM*, 22.
[56] The *Hardingfele* or Hardanger Fiddle is a form of violin used mostly in South Western Norway. It is a transposing instrument constructed with a series of

The first recording by Jarrett's European quartet was the studio album *Belonging*, the title track of which is a ballad that features a long improvised piano introduction with strong chamber music overtones followed by a solemn statement of the composition's melody by Garbarek. The largest departure from the jazz tradition in this duet piece is most certainly the rhythmic treatment, with time slowly coalescing during the course of the saxophonist's vibrato-laden rendition of the melody, with reference to the eventual tempo and feel arising briefly in proceeding phrases before being full realised after an extended period. Rhythmic reinvention and individualism play a large role in the compositions on this record: it is a statement about pulse and time that places at the forefront less influence from the African percussionism that had defined much of American jazz. Rather, the piece transfers the spirit and energy of ecstatic African music into a music fabric woven from the afore mentioned aesthetics of classical chamber music, popular music and European folksong.

The Windup, one of the most rhythmically complex compositions on the album, begins with a piano ostinato to which it is difficult to apply any single stylistic appellation. There are overtones of boogooloo,1950s rock and roll, European folk dance and yet the figure is in essence none of the above (see Example 1).

Example 1 Keith Jarrett - Piano Ostinato from *The Windup* Bars 1 - 2[57]



The Windup is a highly idiosyncratic composition that progressively expands into modernity, first during the bridge of the piece that breaks away from the duplet

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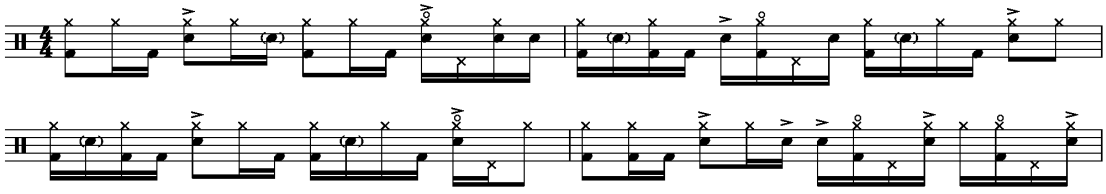
sympathetic resonant strings and subject to a variety of different tuning dependent upon location, player and repertoire.

[57] Transcribed by D. Rorke from Keith Jarrett, *Belonging.* 1974, ECM 1050, Compact Disc.

time of the introductory piano figure with increased rhythmic displacement, and eventually in the improvisations, which move away from the composition and into more free improvisational territory. Christensen's percussive placement gives a distinctive rhythmic character to all the performances on the record: his playing sacrifices nothing in terms of ecstasy and intensity while maintaining a distinctly wide timbral pallet, embracing certain tonal shades of a more percussive taint.

The rhythmic 'groove' of pieces such as *The Windup, Spiral Dance* and *'long As You Know You're Living Yours* did much to add to the popularity of the group. The distinctive ostinato from '*long As You Know You're Living Yours* was in fact the subject of a lawsuit between Jarrett and the American jazz-pop group Steely Dan (see Example 2).[58]

Example 2 Jon Christensen from *'long As You Know You're Living Yours* Bars 1 - 4[59]



Jarrett eventually won his claim against the group's singer Donald Fagen, a confessed fan of Jarrett's European quartet, for plagiarising the passage for their piece *Gaucho*. While the rights and wrongs of copyright law are a far cry from the subject matter of this thesis, this example does illuminate the pronounced influence the European quartet had on American jazz-orientated musicians, in particular the rhythmic conception of this group resonated not just in Europe itself, but also back across the Atlantic ocean, in the homeland of jazz. In 1975 the *New York Times* featured an article by Stephen Davis who lauded this first

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[58] John Chesterman and Andy Lipman, *The Electronic Pirates: DIY Crime of the Century* (Michigan: Routledge, 1988), 6.
[59] Transcribed by D. Rorke from Keith Jarrett, *Belonging.* 1974, ECM 1050, Compact Disc.

recording of the ensemble, stating that '*Belonging* is fascinating because it burns with a fire somehow absent in most of the pianist's records with his American band',[60] alluding in part to the rhythmic intensity as well as the overall aesthetic attitude of the ensemble. Of course, simplistic comparisons with Jarrett's wonderful, and extremely influential, American quartet featuring Dewey Redman, Charlie Haden and Paul Motion which the pianist was in fact operating concurrently with his European ensemble, are at best inelegant given the highly contrasting nature of the music being created.

Of the subsequent recordings, the studio follow up to *Belonging; My Song,* is probably the most accessible recording of the group. The two live recordings, *Personal Mountains* and *Nude Ants* somehow do not share the same intensity as the studio releases. *Nude Ants,* in particular, recorded live at the Village Vanguard in New York suffers from documenting the saxophonist Garbarek on a less that perfect evening. 'I liked the tour very much. It was a very nice tour. The group was very powerful... I don't know what it was but I didn't feel quite comfortable... I wasn't so keen on having that album released'.[61] Despite this, *Nude Ants* is a rare glimpse into the functioning of the quartet in a live context and contains more extended improvisations and expansive developmental playing than does *Personal Mountains,* which is a more concise musical statement.

This thesis will examine work from the two studio albums in further detail in the next chapter. What is clear from this research is that *Belonging* and *My Song* may be considered not only the two most consistent examples of the Keith Jarrett European Quartet, but also the two most influential recordings in the development of a narrative of particular Nordic identity in jazz music, and has come to represent a cornerstone of such for subsequent generations of Nordic musicians. Even though the foundations for a Eurocentric dialect of jazz music had already been established by these same musicians prior to recording the famous Keith Jarrett albums, it is these records that more than any others

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[60] Stephen Davis, cited in Carr, *Keith Jarrett: the Man and his Music*, 79.
[61] Garbarek, cited ibid., 119.

imbued these improvisational mannerisms with legitimacy both at home and internationally. What this ensemble represents domestically is the coming of age for jazz music as a medium through which an artist may be interpreted as representing a tangible Nordic persona, an eventual consequence being jazz music moving even closer to a socially accepted aspect of Nordic cultural expression.

2.2 Edward Vesala and Iro Haarla

The Finnish drummer and percussionist Edward Vesala, known within the Finnish music community as 'Eetu', was born as Martti Juhani Vesala in Mäntyharju, Finland on the 15th of February 1945.[62] Largely self-taught, Vesala claims even as a child to have been attracted to the idea of the drums.

> As soon as I started to whistle and sing, I already had it in mind to play the drums. I specifically wanted to be a drummer. Nothing but a drummer. Somehow it attracted me right from the start[63]

Very early in his career it seems Vesala was orientating himself toward an individualistic approach to music making.

> Having to learn everything from zero was a very slow process and the music field was much wider but it was also more instructive. Just aping others, only learning something quickly means that one day your tray will be full, because it is so small.[64]

While somewhat characteristically obscure once translated from Finnish to English, it is worthwhile to attempt to unpack this statement somewhat. It seems that Vesala is here enlightening us as to the nature of his early learning methods. Whereas it is quite common for young jazz musicians to learn the craft and

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[62] Todd S. Jenkins, *Free Jazz and Free Improvisation: Volume 1, A-J* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004), 368.
[63] Edward Vesala, cited in *Edward Vesala - 12 sessiota Eetun kanssa (a documentary),* 1999, Noema Film/YLE TV 2 DVD, translation by Anni Kiviniemi.
[64] Ibid.

syntax of the music through a large degree of mimicry, Vesala seems to consider this a sort of short cut to the point of musical fluidity. It is reasonable to interpret that his analogy to a 'full tray' is an attempt to describe the limitations of working within a musical schema that has already been defined and delimited by another artist. This is in essence 'small' in terms of the idea that to add to such an already defined schema means introducing elements that are potentially incongruent with what is already a system that has an established internal logic. As the composer of one's own such schema new material is potentially more congruent as it is the product of a single musical mind with a musical aesthetic based upon a single experience.

By the mid to late 1960s Vesala was playing professionally in a number of different groups. The musical styles of the various groups with which he associated varied greatly from psychedelic rock with the group Apollo, to folk music with the eccentric folk-rock band Karelia, to Finnish tango with the significant innovator of the genre, M.A. Numminen, to early jazz and funk records with the now well-known Finnish saxophonist Eero Koivistoinen. Vesala's own individual style of playing, however, first truly reached out to an international audience with the 1972 recording *Triptykon* for ECM records which featured a trio with Norwegians Jan Garbarek on saxophones and Arild Andersen on bass. Both Garbarek and Andersen were also, concurrently with Vesala, attempting to create an original voice both on their respective instruments and within their compositions that was less orientated to the American roots of jazz music.[65]

Evident on *Triptykon* is a recognisable element of influence from Western art music, brought most obviously by way of Jan Garbarek's very personal and unique saxophone idioms expressed with a tone that is almost crystalline in its purity, but also through Vesala's often orchestral-percussion-like drumming. Vesala, who had studied music theory and orchestral percussion at the Sibelius

[65] Lake and Griffiths, eds. *Horizons Touched: The Music of ECM*, 33.

Academy in Helsinki from 1965-67,[66] must have been consciously developing this aspect of his drum kit playing with his 'distinctive, crystal tone on the cymbals'[67] complimenting a similar clarity and brilliance of tone in the timbral conceptions of both Garbarek and Andersen. In keeping with Jarrett's description of European timbral sense, shades of classical chamber music pervade the timbral approach of the players, especially that of Vesala's percussionist-like approach to drum sound and saxophonist Garbarek who would go on to perform in many neo-chamber music settings. This aesthetic was something far removed from the more robust, warm timbres often heard from jazz instrumentalists across the Atlantic. Subsequently, *Triptykon* became a significant recording in the canon of eurological improvisation in the late twentieth century.

Triptykon also embraces a significant confluence between Scandinavian folk music and free jazz. Significantly, this recording embraces many of the improvisational aesthetics from free jazz, not only that of the significant American innovators, such as Albert Ayler, but also that art being practised by a number of European musicians on the mainland such as Peter Brötzmann and Peter Kowald,[68] to name just two of what was a sizable group of artists producing records in a number of countries by that time. Drawing a parallel with the famous Norwegian painter, Brian Olewnick describes this group as 'an expressionist trio drawing on both free improvisation and Scandinavian folk tunes, roaring, stumbling, and reeling, evoking an aural equivalent of Edvard Munch'.[69] The closing piece on *Triptykon* carries a title with which any practitioner of Norwegian folk music, and likewise any youth in a Norwegian school band, would be familiar. *Bruremarsj* (Bridal March) is a joyful and quite traditional march, of which a number of versions have been recorded by

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[66] Chris Kelsey, 'Edward Vesala' *All Music Guide* http://www.allmusic.com/cg/amg.dll?p=amg&sql=11:x9m8b5p4tsqj~T1 (accessed 11 July 2010).
[67] Paul Austerlitz, *Jazz Consciousness: Music, Race, and Humanity*, 146.
[68] Mike Heffley. *Northern Sun, Southern Moon: Europe's Reinvention of Jazz*, 20.
[69] Olewnick, 'Triptykon' *All Music Guide* http://www.allmusic.com/album/triptykon-r139069/review (accessed 30 October 2010).

Hardanger fiddle players, many of whom tend toward interpreting the piece with an almost dance-like quality. Garbarek, Vesala and Andersen bring this piece rather brusquely into the modern age by infusing it with a spirit that is audibly of a post-Coltrane, Albert Ayler ethos. This piece is a remarkable example of the methodology of these musicians, that of unifying external cultural influence with more closely experienced musical vocabulary and expressing these dualities with a single identity.

As *Bruremarsj* merely means bridal march there is understandably a plethora of variations and number of distinct folk songs of the same title.

> In his transcriptions from 1905-1910, Ryssdal consistently uses the term *'bruraslått'* [Bridal 'slått' ('slått' being a form of Norwegian folk music often used for dancing purposes)], although he suggests *'bruramarsj'* as an alternative designation for one particular tune. Of 15 transcribed tunes, 12 are clear-cut variants of *'bruremarsj'* tunes in our sound recordings, and two other transcriptions also contain 'familiar' march material.[70]

The specific piece used by the *Triptykon* trio is an old bridal march from North Gudbrandsdal. The transcription below is from a performance by Garbarek at the wedding ceremony of the Norwegian crown prince, during which the saxophonist diplomatically omitted the free jazz aesthetics for the occasion. In a correction made by the national broadcaster NRK after the event Torkil Baden claims Garbarek had informed him that 'Stykket hadde han fra en gammel plate han hadde kjøpt med bilde av Vinstra på coveret. Og inni står det: 'Gamal bruremarsj fra Nord-Gudbrandsdalen'.' (He had the piece on an old record he had bought with a picture of Vinstra on the cover. And inside it says: 'An old wedding march from North Gudbrandsdalen'.)[71] The record in question, a recording by the Norwegian folk music group Lom Spelemannslag is now well

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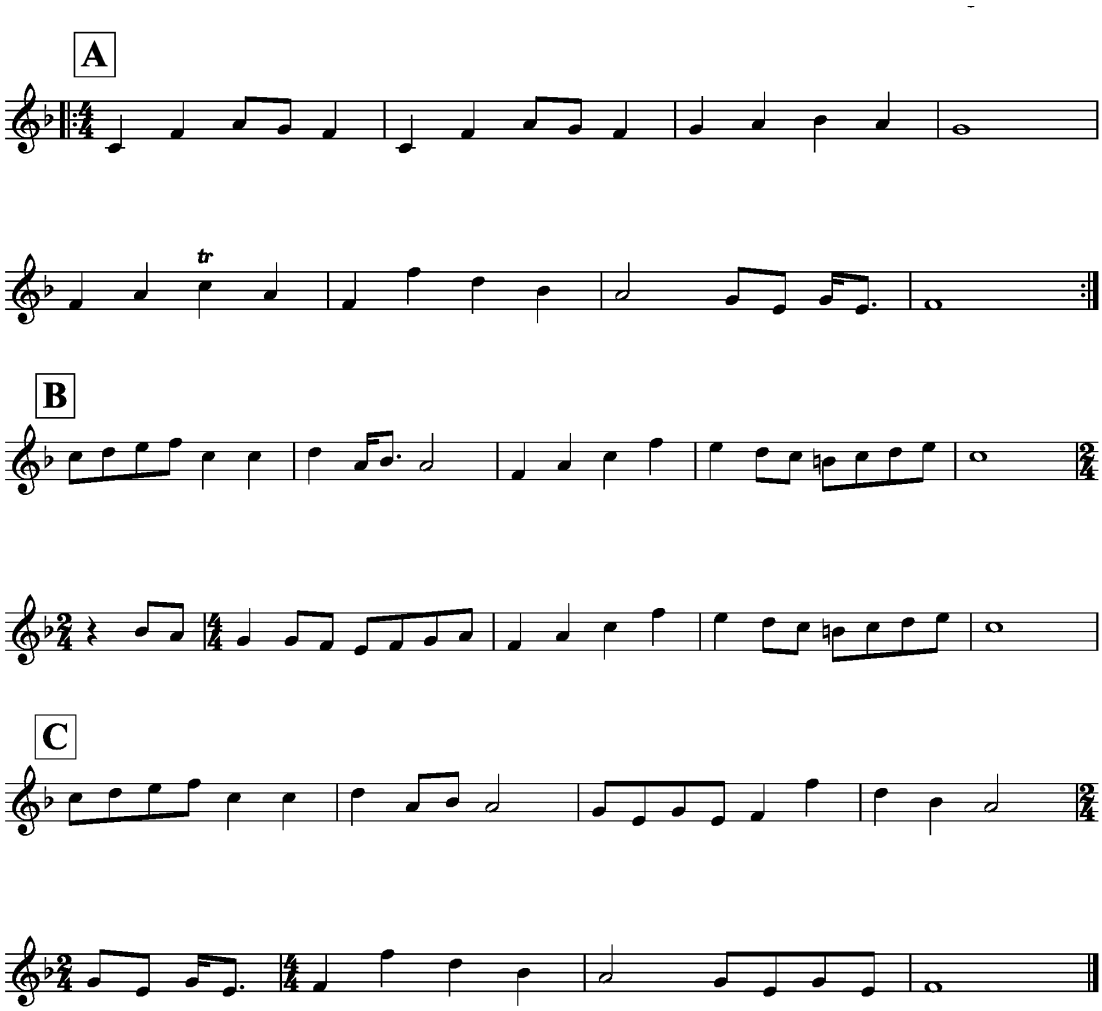
[70] Olav Sæta, 'Tune Genres and Designations' *Slåtter for the Normal Fiddle* 4 (1997), 10.
[71] Torkil Baden, 'Feil bruremarsj?' *NRK Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation*, 2001, http://www.nrk.no/musikk/1249495.html (accessed August 12 2010), translation mine.

out-of-print, however a more recent recording by the group issued in 2009, S*låttar Frå Lom*, also contains the piece.

Garbarek's performance itself seems to have revived a great deal of interest in this particular composition in the wake of the wedding of the crown prince with NRK additionally stating that they were aware of a number of local churches that were performing the piece the very next weekend after the royal wedding. As with most European folk music, the melodic content is significantly more diatonic than what one might expect to on an average free jazz recording of the time (see example 3).

Example 3 *Gamal bruremarsj fra Nord-Gudbrandsdalen* Melody[72]



Garbarek and Andersen share the melody with Andersen playing arco phrases that begin in the middle register of the bass and then shift to the upper register to play for a time in unison with the tenor saxophone before Garbarek himself breaks into extended interpretations of the theme in the saxophone's altissimo register. Garbarek's use of the altissimo here is audibly taking great influence from Albert Ayler's liberal use of the same.

Contrasting the two performances, that of the *Triptykon* group and Lom Spelemannslag, one can hear that Garbarek remains, rather interestingly, quite true to the original melody on his trio recording with Vesala and Andersen. I find

[72] Transcribed by D.Rorke from Jan Garbarek, Arild Andersen, Edward Vesala, *Triptykon.* 1972, ECM 1029. LP.

it significant here that Garbarek did not feel the need to reinvent the melodic material: what was important was the delivery of the melody, which when placed in the context of the trio playing freely, rubato and with only bare allusion to harmony, transforms this very simple diatonic folk melody into a strident vehicle for trio's improvisations. Vesala himself is also showing his dedication to the unifying force of the composition as a vehicle for group improvisation and even when he departs from outlining the melodic schema of the tune one can readily hear that he has it always in mind. No member of the trio actually journeys too far from the composition: this piece is a deconstruction and reconstruction of the original rather than a theme from which ensues improvisational abandonment.

This recording was, in its time, at the cutting edge of this eurological approach to improvisation, and still stands today as one of the most influential recordings for the next generation of Nordic improvisers. Among the many who have drawn from this recording is a man of distinct musical identity, guitarist Raoul Björkenheim.

> *Vesala samarbeidet jo med Jan Garbarek og Arild Andersen, og plata "Triptykon" var for meg en av de viktigeste platene som kom ut på den tiden. Den hadde en sterk skandinavisk identitet, uten å ha de derre malende fjordfargene. På den tiden spilte de jo mer Albert Ayler/sen John Coltrane-aktig musikk, noe som gjore et sterkt inntrykk på en ung musikerpire.*[73]

> Vesala collaborated with Jan Garbarek and Arild Andersen, and the album 'Triptykon' was for me one of the most important records that came out at the time. It had a strong Scandinavian identity, without having these *malende* fjord colours. At the time they played the more Albert Ayler / late John Coltrane-ish music, which left a great impression on a young aspiring musician.

[73] Raoul Björkenheim, 'Finnish Sisu' *Jazznytt* 1 (2011), 31, translation mine.

Notably, here Björkenheim states that *Triptykon* was significant for the fact that the trio were able to combine these influences without the 'malende' (graphic/picturesque) fjord-colours. Despite the fact that these 'fjord-colours', a synonymous term for oft cited 'Nordic sound', were really not the thrust of the aesthetic approach on *Triptykon,* those who function in the publicity and commercial promotion sector always seem to harken back to this rather exhausted analogy when writing about the music. That the *All Music Guide* describes this recording as 'images of keening water birds patrolling the sub-Arctic fjords'[74] should make the difficulties between appropriate representation and accurate interpretation of this music all too self evident. In his interview for jazz music journal *Jazznytt* Björkenheim is informing us that for him, as one of the next generation of creative musicians from Finland, this recording stands as significant in part for the fact that it did not fit into what would become the major overarching generalisation and commercial meme of Nordic improvised music.

The *Triptykon* recording was a significant marker for Vesala's career too, and after this point he ceased the majority of his commercial music activities in order to focus on these more artistically significant endeavours. Vesala describes this significant reorientation of his playing:

> I'd only been playing a few years when I became a 'top' musician, an all rounder, playing everything. It all stopped when I began to get other work especially after Garbarek stepped into the picture. I gave up being a normal professional musician, session work, playing Rock and different types of Jazz whenever a drummer—a beat basher—was needed. It was important to get to do exactly what I wanted, at last.[75]

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[74] Brian Olewnick, 'Triptykon' *All Music Guide* http://www.allmusic.com/album/triptykon-r139069/review (accessed 30 October 2010).
[75] Vesala, cited in *Edward Vesala - 12 sessiota Eetun kanssa (a documentary),* 1999, Noema Film/YLE TV 2 VHS Video, translation by Anni Kiviniemi.

True to this renewed focus, the Vesala discography after *Triptykon* is almost exclusively populated by recordings of improvised art music, with little to no concessions to commercialism.

This decision to focus on improvised art music, and to develop his own unique and specific vernacular, was one of two significant re-orientations in the career of Edward Vesala. In 1973, a little over two months after the recording of *Triptykon*, Vesala won second place in the Pori Jazz Festival Composition Contest, resulting in an LP Record featuring the four compositions by the finalists being released by EMI Finland. While this might not have constituted more than some helpful recognition for Vesala it did help to expose him as a composer. Vesala had studied composition at the Sibelius Academy and had already worked on a number of film and theatre projects. Over the next few years Vesala's compositions increasingly feature on the recordings in which he is involved. He penned the first track on the record *Hot Lotta,* a quartet featuring Peter Brötzmann, fellow Finn Juhani Aaltonen, Peter Kowald and Vesala for the Blue Master record label, and two of the tracks for the now incredibly rare *Ode To Marilyn*, an eccentric mix of voice, electronics, jazz instrumentalists and even the brief appearance of an organ as well as the Finnish zither: the kantele. However, the first recording to fully feature Vesala as the primary composer came with *Nan Madol,* his debut ECM release under his own name.

Nan Madol, named after the mysterious isle of Micronesia whose origins are surrounded in a mythology of magical occurrences,[76] featured an unusual mix of instrumentation and a number of unique musicians such as American Charlie Mariano who performed on the Indian nadaswaram[77] as well as alto saxophone. The Finnish woodwindist Sakari Kukko, who is rumoured to have turned down a full scholarship to Boston's Berklee School of Music (which at that time was widely acknowledged as the best place for the study of Jazz in the world) in order

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[76] David Hatcher Childress, *Ancient Micronesia & the Lost City of Nan Madol* (Illinois: Adventures Unlimited Press, 1998), 50.
[77] A double reed, conical bore wind instrument used extensively in South Indian Carnatic music.

to study Finnish folk music and focus on a more personal approach to improvisation,[78] performs on flute. *Nan Madol* also includes harpist Elisabeth Leistola and violinist Juhani Poutanen. The result is a recording of unusual confluence. The musicians' interest in various forms of folk music, not only from Finland but also from other cultures and traditions throughout the world, is in the foreground on this recording, yet this is far from what now might be described as a 'world music' recording. These sounds and musical expressions are used as a platform for provoking improvisations that operate in exotic territory yet still retain a particular identity. Saxophonists Juhani Aaltonen, Marinaro, Seppo Paakkunainen and Pentti Lahti along with trombonist Mircea Stan improvise often as a group, creating textures through which Aaltonen and Marinaro emerge as the two primary soloists.

The record itself paints a mysterious musical picture through its use of a variety of folk music instruments and non-Western aesthetics re-synthesized into a focused representation of musical identity. Significant to a specific narrative of the European frontiers, of which one may find no better contemporary example than the sui generis culture of Finland, the free improvisation elements on this recording invoke a specificity, and a distinct non-American identity within what is still a jazz orientated music, through the allusion to a feeling of ecstatic ritual.

Vesala's compositional expressions reached full bloom when he began collaboration with his wife Iro Haarla. Haarla had studied piano and composition at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki and after meeting Vesala in 1978 she effectively put her career as a concert pianist and composer on hold to perform in Vesala's group and help him create much of his music from that point on.[79] Haarla was 'the inner architect and orchestrator' of much of the music made under Vesala's leadership, and is sadly rather under acknowledged for her

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[78] Interview with Anni Kiviniemi, 15 November 2010.
[79] Iro Haarla, 'Background' *ECM Records* http://www.ecmrecords.com/Background/Background_1918.php (accessed 20 January 2010).

pivotal contributions to many of the later *Sound and Fury* recordings. Saxophonist Trygve Seim outlined the situation in a 2006 interview.

> When you listen to his records you hear a very sudden development in orchestration and instrumentation. That is very much because of his association with Iro, who is educated as a classical composer. When they married they started to write all the music together, but that's really the dark side of Edward. He didn't credit Iro for any of these collaborations, he took all the credit, and as a result there are two very bad consequences. First, when Iro records today she is accused of being a copy of Edward when in fact it was collaborative, and if you listen to his recordings you can hear, 'now he's married to Iro,' because the music changes significantly. The other thing is that, because he had children from a previous marriage, Iro doesn't receive any of the copyright/royalty money that is her due.[80]

The last three records ECM recorded releases of Vesala's *Sound and Fury* are the most easily obtainable examples of the collaboration of Vesala and Haarla, namely *Ode to the Death of Jazz, Invisible Storm* and *Nordic Gallery,* all of which are magnificent examples of stylistic confluence. There is the undeniable mark of Haarla, a composer and performer in the Western art music tradition, and most certainly the music does change significantly, yet it must be acknowledged too that Vesala was already writing fully realized confluent music before meeting Haarla, as can be heard on a number of recordings made for the Finnish label Love Records and Vesala's own Leo Records. In my interviews with Haarla she herself tended to frame the music as Edward's music: 'In my mind was Edward's music. What kind of feeling each tune needs, which usually was a melody or some phrases or idea'.[81]

A great example of Edward's confluent works before Haarla is the 1976 recording for Love Records *Rodina.* This record was not only an unprecedented musical statement for Vesala's ensembles, it also presented a unique

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[80] Trygve Seim cited in 'Trygve Seim: Vanguard Of A New Wave' by John Kelman *All About Jazz* http://www.allaboutjazz.com/php/article.php?id=16864#2 (accessed 15 March 2006).
[81] Interview with Iro Haarla, 20 January 2011.

philosophical position, one not only of confluence of music but also insinuations of confluence of culture. *Rodina,* meaning fatherland, is a Russian title, in many respects a rather unorthodox title for a music created in the nation of Finland, where still decades after the war there is still a notable dissonance between the two very differing cultural identities. From the notes accompanying Rodina:

> Musically it implies that this music has the whole world as its fatherland. This is music beyond categories: it is jazz; it is folk music; with its poems from the Turkish Nazim Hikmet, it is art music; with its choir and string ensemble it is contemporary music.[82]

The band itself features many of Vesala's regular collaborators, such as trumpeter Tomasz Stanko, and is a combination of Finnish, Polish and Romanian musicians with string section and choir. Like much of Vesala's output, this record is not so concerned with making works that operate within the established idea of 'Nordic Jazz,' so much as presenting compositions that reflect the complexities of the composer's various relationships to the world. Vesala's music does not intersect with a narrative of Finnish identity that sees itself it terms of cultural purity, instead the interpretive possibilities lean more toward a vision of Nordic identity that embraces multiplicities. With a migrational history unique to the Nordic countries in that it originates in the east rather than the south, this may still be interpreted as a uniquely Finnish expression of identity. However, Vesala can never be accused of indulging a sense of national romanticism: rather, he is fully embracing a global audienceship and making music of which inspiration must come from the totality of his experience in the world, not just Finland.

As a way to understanding the reflexivity of this music, Markku Salo suggests a small test for listeners of *Rodina*:

> Go to the biggest supermarket in your home town at rush hour. Choose the longest queue and put Vesala's *Satujen Satu* on your walkman. Look at the people around you. Do you see them

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[82] Markku Salo, *Edward Vesala: Rodina* (Finland: Love Records 189, 1977), 4.

> differently? Can you see them more clearly? Can you see them not as obstacles keeping you from getting out of the commercial world, but in a light which the visionary poet William Blake expressed so simply: 'everything that lives is holy. All this you can realise through this relational music that speaks through itself but not about itself.[83]

It is this aspect of Vesala's music that is so very engaging; his ability to embrace and use the music's Nordicness, Finnishness and 'Vesalaness', without it being, as some less successful Nordic jazz has been, only an investigation into the particularity of one's own cultural environment. Alternatively, Vesala's concern here is a deeply moving, unifying relationship with the totality of human art and human identity. His music may be interpreted as a particularly Finnish marker of identity surely, yet this is not an insulated narrative, rather, it is the expression of a unique identity within the context of an image of human interconnectedness.

The philosophical directions for this and the later records involving Haarla bear strongly the unmistakable mark of Vesala, yet in subsequent productions with Haarla the musical realisation was very often engineered by her professional and sublime compositional hand.

> He would play the parts on whatever instrument he had and made a tape recording. I would then transcribe the parts and talk to him about what instruments he wanted. Sometimes, I would edit them, because they were very long sometimes and I made them shorter, using the best parts. Then I would write the parts. We would always talk about what kind of feeling he wanted a composition to have, but very early I could tell what he wanted just from the parts he recorded. So, we would talk about what instrument would express it in different parts of the composition.[84]

This statement regarding the working processes of Vesala and Haarla, from a 2006 interview with Haarla herself, adds weight to Seim's assertion that Haarla

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[83] Ibid.
[84] Iro Haarla cited in Bill Shoemaker 'An Interview with Iro Haarla' *UMO Jazz Festival September 2nd, 2006 Helsinki, Finland* http://www.pointofdeparture.org/PoD8/PoD8Northbound2.html (accessed 5 January 2010).

is deserving of far greater recognition for her part in the creation of this music. It was this relationship that was the catalyst for what in many ways was the most full and fruitful realisation of Vesala's musical and philosophical vision of a fully confluent music. It is these records that are the dominant focus of this thesis for the fact that so many varied tributaries are so comprehensively re-synthesised into a single musical approach.

This ecstatic element of Vesala's music plays an important role in the realisation such confluent music, and perhaps could enlighten us regarding the apparent divide between what is widely perceived as eurological trends in improvised music and the contemporaneous neo-classicism movement in the United States. Keith Jarrett in an interview with Ted Rosenthal spoke candidly about the American relationship with ecstatic music:

> TR: What about an American who's sitting there and he hears D minor for 20 minutes, and he's looking at his watch. What would you tell (them)? Is there a certain emotional state to be in, or listen for other things than we may have been either trained for or subliminally (recognize)?
> KJ: No, because we don't have an ecstatic tradition.
> TR: What is an ecstatic tradition?
> KJ: It's a tradition where the state of ecstasy is the goal. We don't have that. We actually didn't want that, we were the Puritans. We didn't want the dark side, so we had to get rid of the other shit, so we ended up with the middle. I think only an American who wasn't so American would be able to know how to listen to that.[85]

Vesala's music is fully involved in the attainment of these ecstatic states while at the same time maintaining a very cerebral and complex intellectual landscape. This is likely a combination of musical influences from various traditions throughout the world, not only African music and free improvisation, but also the drummer's interest in certain Eastern philosophies that give rise to this ecstatic element. It is something that very noticeably sets the music apart from the

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[85] Keith Jarrett cited in Rosenthal, 'Keith Jarrett: The 'Insanity' of Doing More Than One (Musical) Thing', 35.

American Third Stream with which it has been compared. In the liner notes of *Rodina* Markku Salo notes not only Vesala's 'deep interest in the Eastern way of life and music (esp. Chinese and Tibetan)'[86] but also makes reference to the rather unique heritage of the Finnish people who are thought to have come to Europe originally from Asia via migration through what is now Russia: 'Vesala 'Easternizes' our Sibelianic tradition of composition. The result is not cheap fusion music, but a deep realisation of the Eastern roots of Finnish people'.[87] It is something that imbues this music with a certain sense of intimacy with its sometimes distant influences, while at the same time allowing an objective artistic position that the interpreter may well understand as both particular and, as will be explored more in chapters four and five, universal.

Vesala, Haarla, and their ensembles ask us to accept an impressive number of dualities in this art, while at the same time understanding it as a singular expressive act. For example, this music is jazz in many ways, not least of which in the way it interacts with other musical traditions, yet there are very rarely literal expressions of the jazz tradition to be heard. It is distinctly Nordic music, and distinctly Finnish at that, but at the same time this is global, human music that addresses a human cultural paradigm at the same time as it relates to particular social and artistic environment. Its particularity may be said to lie precisely in such a duality. It is ecstatic music but it is also cerebral, intellectual music. It is political music in many ways, yet it is also autotelic art music relating first and foremost unto its own structural logic. This is an achievement of multiplicity and confluence that warrants Vesala and Haarla a significant and unique place in the history of improvised music.

One might speculate whether there is a certain connection to an aspect of Finnish identity that places relatively little romanticism upon its own history. The history of the land is by no means forgotten, but the romanticism and ensuing attachment of Finnish people to sentimentality and romantic rhetoric is much

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[86] Markku Salo, *Edward Vesala: Rodina* (Finland: Love Records 189, 1977), 4.
[87] Ibid.

diminished in comparison with their Nordic neighbours.[88] I can think of no more apt expression of this than contemporary Finnish attitudes toward their architectural history, whereas in Norway, Denmark and Sweden great sums of money are spent preserving aging wooden houses, often ill fitting to contemporary life, whereas in Finland they are often removed and replaced by newer structures, with comparatively little attachment. It may be so that this yields a certain freedom, an emancipation from the weight of history that is so present in much of Europe, in much the same regard as was suggested by the Italian Futurists of the early twentieth century whose architectural manifesto proposed cities built of such temporary materials as cardboard and reconstructed by each ensuing generation.[89]

> From an architecture conceived in this way no formal or linear habit can grow, since the fundamental characteristics of Futurist architecture will be its impermanence and transience. Things will endure less than us. Every generation must build its own city. This constant renewal of the architectonic environment will contribute to the victory of Futurism which has already been affirmed by words-in-freedom, plastic dynamism, music without quadrature and the art of noises, and for which we fight without respite against traditionalist cowardice.[90]

These ideas represent an attempted emancipation from a history that has the potentiality to bind the artist, the community and the identity to boundaries of outdated and often intrinsically false imaginings of cultural particularity. Freedom from such a thing must surely, therefore, open the way to increased pluralities and confluences of cultural expression.

As will be investigated in greater detail in chapters four and five of this thesis, these conventions of social boundaries and cultural quadrature are an area that

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[88] Jaakko Ahokas, *A History of Finnish Literature*, (Indianapolis: Indiana University Publications, 1973), 186.
[89] Antonio Sant'Elia, cited in Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918*, (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 100.
[90] Ibid.

has occupied a number of twentieth-century thinkers. Philosopher Martin Heidegger posits that 'a boundary is not that at which something stops but, as the Greeks recognised, the boundary is that from which something begins its presencing'.[91] Similarly, Vesala's unique success at creating a 'relational music that speaks through itself but not about itself'[92] is in no small part that which made his *Sound and Fury* group so distinguishable from other contemporary ensembles.

One work, of particularly Finnish identity, that is not a form of absolute music, despite it being highly abstracted art, is Vesala'a 1984-85 record *Kullervo* released on his own Leo Records label. This is programme music; a section from the Finnish national epic the *Kalevala* set to Vesala's confluent ensemble writing. The musicians are mostly assembled from Vesala's regular stable of artists, notably Juhani Aaltonen, Raoul Björkenheim, Antti Hytti and Pepa Päivinen, with the addition of Ritva Ahonen delivering a recitation of the text. The instrumental arrangements are typical Vesala, with long dense woodwind harmonies underscoring the spoken text.

This recording is an unusually explicit depiction of indigenous folklore, and still somehow avoids the sense of romanticism and runaway patriotism that have plagued many such contemporary renderings of Nordic folklore within the jazz idiom. It is, of course, very difficult to evaluate an impression such as 'overtly romantic' objectively. What can be said, however, regarding Vesala's *Kullervo* is that by the mid 1980s the drummer/composer's musical vision was so bold and well manifested, and so well understood by those that shared his musical world, that there was little possibility for artistic compromise in the service of explicit narrative.

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[91] Martin Heidegger, 'Building Dwelling Thinking' *Basic Writings: from Being and Time (1927) to The Task of Thinking (1964),* (London: Routledge and Kegan, 1978), 319.
[92] Markku Salo, *Edward Vesala: Rodina* (Helsinki: Love Records 189, 1977), 5.

For those unfamiliar with Finnish folklore, the *Kalevala* is the most significant text in the Finnish cultural history, assembled in the first half of the nineteenth century by Elias Lönnrot, a doctor by trade, and essentially Finland's most influential folklorist.[93] He undertook a total of 11 journeys, beginning in 1828, in order to compile Finnish poetry and folk songs. It is interesting to note that, in reality, the *Kullervo* story seems to be predominantly the cataloguing work of one of Lönnrot's contemporaries, David Emmanuel Daniel Europaeus.[94]

The *Kalevala* contains much of the significant body of Finnish mythology, including creation myths. *Kullervo* itself is a tragic story of a young, abused man who is sold into slavery and eventually commits murder, then suicide. It has been a fertile tale for representation by artists and musicians alike, and Vesala's *Kullervo* is by no means the first musical incarnation of the story. The first musical rendering on record is credited to a descendent of German nobility, Johan Filip von Schantz (1835-65), who was a conductor and composer associated with the Swedish Theatre in Helsinki.[95] Of course, the most famous musical documentation of *Kullervo* was by the famous Finnish composer Jean Sibelius. Sibelius' *Kullervo* was eventually performed all over the world, recorded many times by various orchestras, and is still consistently performed to this day. That Vesala chose this particular story from the *Kalevala* is another, albeit somewhat superficial, suggestion of Sibelius' influence in his music.

Vesala's *Kullervo* is a clear example of a contemporary enactment of Finnish folklore. It makes no attempt to disguise itself otherwise, it is an idiosyncratic expression, but boldly and relateably Finnish. For all Vesala's musical plurality, his multiplicities of cultural expressions, here is a statement of definitive cultural identity and communal relatedness. What the Finnish jazz drummer Olavi Louhivuori, who now plays in the group led by Vesala's close musical confidant

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[93] Juha Pentikäinen, *Kalevala Mythology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 68.
[94] Lauri Honko, *Religion, Myth, And Folklore In The World's Epics: The Kalevala And Its Predecessors* (Berlin, New York: Mouton De Gruyter, 1990), 238.
[95] Denby Richards, *The Music of Finland*. (London: *Hugh Evelyn,* 1968), 3.

Tomasz Stanko, described to me during an interview as an indentifying image of Finnish identity, was that isolationist mentality of 'being alone in a winter cabin'.[96] This alone is such a strong narrative that it fundamentally influences Vesala's musical aesthetic, as it does quite many Finnish artists. Yet, beyond this is Vesala's enactment of specific folkloric material as a recognisable, and accessible unit of Finnish identity.

Bill Shoemaker, in his essay *Northbound*, describes Vesala's compositional approach as 'taking the Ellingtonian tact of writing to his players' strengths',[97] and this seems to be a dominant strategy of the Vesala/Haarla orchestrations. As much as this is a practical concern, in that it facilitates a more focused sounding ensemble where each musician is afforded the opportunity to express those aesthetic elements best suited to their style, so is it also part of the engine that drives a sense of cultural connectedness and meaning. This is to say that, by allowing the aesthetics of their players to permeate the compositional processes, Vesala and Haarla have allowed the composition to become more than simply an expression of the identity of the composers' themselves. The composers must, somewhat, become interpreters of these performers' own identities in order to create compositional passages applicable to such a relationship, and therefore, the composers become interpreters of a certain narrative quality of their fellow musicians' aesthetical representations. This cyclic relationship may well be understood as analogous to the relationship between the music and cultural identity narratives within which it will, inevitably, be interpreted upon performance. The Ellingtonian analogy for Vesala and Haarla's compositional approach also pertains particularly to *Kullervo* as there is a correlation between such a suite of connected, programmatic music and some of the Duke Ellington suites such as *The Afro-Eurasion Eclipse*, *Latin-American Suite* and *New Orleans Suite*, all of which were focussed works of cultural narrative. In this sense it seems that it could be logical to cite Ellington as one of the primary influences

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[96] Interview with Olavi Louhivuori, 20 January 2011.
[97] Bill Shoemaker, "Northbound" *Point of Departure,* http://www.pointofdeparture.org/PoD8/PoD8Northbound3.html (accessed 12 October, 2011).

upon Vesala's work. Certainly, Ellington provided an important precedent for the successful creation of an expression of jazz music that was at once highly individual and personalised, yet also intersected with a wider cultural sensibility.

Kullervo begins with a trumpet and saxophone playing against long arco tones from the bass. There is a certain sense of jazz music in this introduction. The winds are playing in time, although the time is barely stated by any other instrument and although it is in time, there is very rarely a pronounced display of rhythm or tempo. It is as though the time is to be as hidden as possible. The percussion is noticeably absent from this introduction. Before the first text is spoken the ensemble tacit. From here on the music becomes much more audibly programmatic. The first text is a reading of the entire first stanza of the first poem in the *Kalevala* to concern Kalervo, Kullervo's father. The translated text reads:

> A mother reared chicks
> a great crowd of swans;
> she set the chicks on the fence
> brought the swans to the river.
> An eagle came, snatched them up
> a hawk came and scattered them
> a winged bird strewed them:
> one it bore to Karelia
> one it took to Russian soil
> and the third it left at home.
> The one it took to Russia
> grew to be a trading man
> the one born to Karelia
> grew up to be Kalervo
> and the one it left at home
> sprang up to be Untamo
> who would blight his father's days
> who would break his mother's heart.[98]

At this point the instruments re-enter, this time providing an unnerving bed of rubato atonality, which seems referential to the Second Viennese School and

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[98] Elias Lönnrot, 'Number 31: 'Feud and Serfdom' *The Kalevala* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 432, translated by Keith Bosley.

twentieth-century classical music in general. The percussion is still absent at this point, which further obscures any sense that these are jazz musicians. Upon this bed of disquiet come two connected excerpts from the second stanza:

> Untamo let down his nets
> in Kalervo's fishing-ground;
> Kalervo looked to the nets
> gathered the fish in his bag.
>
> Untamo-land's fine ewe at
> Kalervo's oat-crop;
> Kalervo's fierce dog
> tore Untamo's ewe to bits.[99]

Before these excerpts are complete the musical accompaniment has begun to coalesce into a rhythmic entity. Time has returned, yet again without the drums for the third stanza:

> It was Untamo's fellows
> approaching for war
> and Untamo's fellows came
> the sword-belted men arrived
> and they felled Kalervo's crowd
> and the great kin they slaughtered
> burnt the house to ash
> razed it to the ground.[100]

Here the orchestration gradually becomes more pointillist, and presses into the foreground before the stanza continues:

> One Kalervo lass remained
> who had a heavy belly:
> Untamo's fellows
> took her home with them
> to clean a small room
> and to sweep the floor.[101]

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[99] Ibid., 432-433.
[100] Ibid., 433-434.
[101] Ibid., 434.

The composer has evolved to the music to an increasingly rhythmic environment. The musical passage that follows this third stanza eventually comes together in a short ostinato figure featuring the winds. The fourth and final section of this first poem is comprised of excerpts from the fourth and fifth stanzas, jumping ahead finally to the last stanza of 'Feud and Serfdom' before continuing.

A little time passed
and a small boy-child was born
to the unhappy mother.
What shall he be named?
Mother called him Kullervo
but Untamo Warrior.

'Would I were to get bigger
to grow stronger in body
I'd avenge my father's knocks
I'd pay back my mother's tears!'

Untamo happened to hear
and he put this into words:
'From this my kin's doom will come
from this Kalervo will grow!'

Then he sold Kalervo's son
traded him in Karelia
to Ilmarinen the smith
the skilled craftsman.[102]

Under this last excerpt of 'Feud and Serfdom' Vesala paints a tonal yet rubato atmosphere of piano, winds and, finally, drums. It may well be that the entry of the drums is a programmatic device intended to signify the birth of Kullervo. After a conservatively proportioned instrumental passage, in this same rubato atmosphere, the text continues into poem 32: *To Guard a Herd* without any sense of demarcation of the form. Vesala is obscuring the divisions of the form of the text in much the same way as often we hear him treat musical form.

[102] Ibid., 435-442.

Works such as *Kullervo* allow for a wider readership, and a deeper identification with the greater spectrum of the Finnish population. Despite the likelihood that Vesala's interest in the *Kalevala* was without motive ulterior to personal interest and musical vision, *Kullervo* must have facilitated Vesala's other music to more harmoniously enter the wider Finnish cultural psyche. While *Kullervo* on its own is by no means solely responsible for Vesala's imposing influence on contemporary Finnish music making, this work, along with his early recordings with rock groups such as Karelia that incorporated Finnish folklore references, certainly placed him in a powerful position within the cultural consciousness of the Finnish arts community. In essence, the 'text' created by Vesala's *Kullervo* was one of which an inclusive cut of the Finnish population could read, and must have comparatively related to a larger province of his indigenous community than did his more absolute works.

Lying somewhere on the spectrum of particularity in interpretable narrative, between *Kullervo* and *Rodina* is the Vesala piece *The Wedding of All Essential Parts* from the 1991 ECM record *Invisible Storm,* which presents a spacious spread of wind and string colours arranged with unusual, sometimes dissonant, voicings. There is a stark beauty here making correlations with the minimalism of much Nordic art a plausible congruency. There is also, however, so much more in existence in this work than merely a suggestion of 'Nordicness', the world is present in the subtleties of this piece. It is present in the nuances of orchestration that again evokes shades of the Second Viennese School, or the saxophone improvisation rich in vibrato whose expeditious effectuation and unusually epicurean tempo bring to mind the most subtle reminiscences of the early greats of the tenor saxophone; Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, and a World War II America, all in synchronicity with the instrumentalist's solemn Garbarek-influenced timbre. Significantly, nothing is overtly revealed here, we the listeners are not given to the notion of directly experiencing any of the myriad of pictorial insinuations that might be interpreted from these nuances, instead we stand outside of these images, slightly numb and slightly cold, in simple witnessing to a highly individual synopsis of universal experience.

The Wedding of All Essential Parts is a through-composed piece that features cello, bass, trumpet, flute, tenor saxophone, harp and drums. The piece begins with a series of long tones, often given staggered-entries, which provoke a sense of rising and falling like waves, a feeling that is strongly assisted by Vesala's own percussive-like drums. A very wide, string-like vibrato permeates the majority of the wind and string writing throughout the piece, and this, combined with the waves of percussion, provide a palpable sense of drama throughout the work. Interestingly, the voicings, phrasing, interval relationships, melodic ideas, harmonic relationships and indeed the whole arrangement of the winds and strings is constantly changing, yet the piece has a strong sense of internal integrity which may be attributed to the 'atmospheric' colour provoked by a general sense of minimalist densities and pulse in lieu of strict time.

The harp, played by Haarla, presents short, wide intervals against the ensemble passages, obscuring the fundamental harmonic colours and providing contrast against the long vibrato filled tones that at points feel as though, surprisingly, they are evolving into a type of abstracted romanticism: however, this never fully eventuates. A harp solo, occurring some length through the piece, accompanied only by drums, develops this conception without ever surrendering the sense of composition to any improvised exposition of instrumental technique.

Once the harp solo is complete, however, the mood shifts from an undercurrent of ambience to a more assertive sound. The winds and strings become noticeably more rhythmic, and the change is accompanied by press rolls, and increasing density, from the drums. This increased drama in the orchestration is an interlude to a rather sizable, through-composed single-line melodic section, rendered first by the tenor saxophone and then by the trumpet. By the time these melodies begin, however, the pulse, which until now had been more of a background colour, begins to assert itself strongly. There is a sense that the ensemble might well be building to a destination of strict tempo, but, tantalisingly, time never manifests itself. A short, breath-like pause resets the ensemble somewhat before the tenor saxophone solo, accompanied by harp and drums, which over a considerable period builds with a profound sense of

direction toward a final ensemble section that is the most full and consolidated ensemble writing of the piece. Again this final exposition presents entirely new material and entirely new ideas, relying on the manner of performance more so than the arrangement itself for continuity.

Like many of the sparse rubato works *Sound and Fury* have created, there is great emotion evoked, but this is not the emotion that any romanticist composer sought to attain: the emotional content here is deep and personal, obscure and unspeakable. It is a confluence of multiples whose trajectories find culmination in the postmodernity of the composers' own pluralities. There is brought to bear a singularity of objective experience. The specificity here is never a product of romantic instincts of bordered identity, and yet there is a certain sense of place, present it its Sibelius-like transcendence which, as Danish composer Per Nørgård once wrote in a letter to Sibelius himself, conveyed 'the elementary, innermost and quite timeless forces of existence,' which 'although constantly transformed in expression, character and material, still preserves its 'I'.'[103] In this work, as in others that are examined in this thesis, there is a confluence not only of traditions, but a confluence of perspective, a confluence of individual and group, something which although not specifically Nordic in origin, has formed a lineage of its own within Nordic art.[104]

Identity, of course, exists on a number of levels: personal identity, national identity, cultural identity and communal identity are all interrelated—yet often differing—positions that must be acknowledged in the consideration of this music. Certainly, these many positions contribute to the creation process, as concerns the aesthetics of this music, but perhaps even more influential is the way these notions contextualise the music as they interact in a performative space. Surely, these many facets of human identity exist in confluence in any single artwork. The history of Nordic jazz, congruently, is largely a history of

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[103] Per Nørgård, cited in John David White, and Jean Christensen, *New Music of the Nordic Countries*, 23.
[104] Michelle Facos, *Nationalism and the Nordic Imagination: Swedish Art of the 1890s* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 1998), 4.

traversing these two poles of maintaining such a sense of "I", or identity, as Nørgård describes, in the context of a constantly transforming expressive context, while at the other end incorporating and accounting for that which is productive yet new and possibly unfamiliar. The success of Nordic jazz music is not only a product of maintain an identity in the art form but also of negotiating where this identity may acquiesce to the influence of new forms. This is a process true to the heart and the root of the origins jazz music, this music of confluence, and the meeting of improvisation and advanced composition, has allowed these specific artists addressed here to develop a whole field of contemporary improvised music where any notion of genre or discipline is appropriately positioned as Heidegger's 'boundary from which it begins its presencing'.

CHAPTER 3

EXPRESSIONS OF PARTICULAR NARRATIVE AND THE SCHOLARSHIP OF FOLKLORE

This chapter intends to show relevance of narrative as a metaphor for the discussion of Nordic jazz music, and thus, how the scholarship of folkloristics can provide a context in which the social functioning of this art form can be framed, specifically in relation to the implication or insinuation of meaning related to culturally particular notions of identity. The Keith Jarrett piece *Questar* is discussed in detail in this chapter in order to demonstrate certain narratological aspects as connected to the musical aesthetics of this jazz music.

The domain of narrative has been selected in this thesis as the theoretical focus in the identification of meaning, primarily, for the fact that it is a framework where by an evolving province of significance can be understood amongst what are separate, and sometimes disparate, cultural 'acts'. This research is, however, not informed by narrative theory in a semiotic sense such as that put forward by Northrop Fry, whose famous work of essays *Anatomy of Criticism* divides narratives into four main themes, that of romance, tragedy, irony and comedy, dubbed *mythoi* by Fry.[105] While writers such as Eero Tarasti and Byron Almén have created convincing works of scholarship that give due credence to such an understanding within the field of music, these are not, however, the themes which concern this research or the understanding and utilisation of narrative in this thesis. Such usage of narrative requires an intersection with semiology, where in mutually understood signifiers exist between narrators and their audiences. This is of course applicable to music with any form of programmatic composition, yet the music discussed here, in general, is much closer to an absolute music than any program music. To use narration as a framework for discussing jazz music a certain, perhaps seemingly paradoxical, notion of

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[105] Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1957).

narration without signifiers allows for a perspective that does justice to the narrative power of the music without being lost in the potential mire of the semiological metaphor. In other words, it is not the objective of this research to search for mutually understood signifiers that exist in the foreground of this particular cultural act (although such signifiers as Fry's *mythoi* may well be present at certain times), but instead, for what are insinuations toward narratives and symbols of identity that already exist in the community's consciousness. Such insinuations exist in the minutia of design and within aesthetic over tones such as timbre, and importantly, they are not independent entities or markers capable of autonomous meaning. Rather, they are a relational aspect where by the music is designed in relation to other music that is understood to have distinct identity due to historical or social contexts.

As jazz musicians, more and more, find their livelihoods connected to universities and academic institutions, so, in turn, has there been a stark increase in research and publications regarding jazz music.[106] While there is certainly still much to be discussed, a significant proportion of this published research explores various alternate or extended metaphors regarding jazz, and improvised music in general. The discussion of jazz has found increasing intersection and confluence with other academic disciplines such as folklore, critical theory and even scientifically orientated mathematical approaches (for example; Allen Forte's work with set theory, which certain jazz musicians have considered in relation to improvisation).[107] Understandably, there is much research that embraces a semiotic analysis of jazz improvisation, such as in Ole Kühl's essay *A Semiotic Approach To Jazz Improvisation*.[108] However, in contrast to a semiotic understanding (which in order to create relevant, communicable

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[106] Ingrid Monson, 'Doubleness and Jazz Improvisation: Irony, Parody, and Ethnomusicology' *Critical Inquiry* 20/2 (Winter, 1994), 283-313. See also: Bill Dobbins, 'Jazz and Academia: Street Music in the Ivory Tower' *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* 96 (Spring, 1988), 30-41.
[107] Steve Larson, 'Schenkerian Analysis of Modern Jazz: Questions about Method' *Music Theory Spectrum* 20/2 (Autumn, 1998), 209-241.
[108] Ole Kühl, 'A Semiotic Approach To Jazz Improvisation' *The Journal of Music and Meaning* 4 (Winter 2007), 4.

signs must therefore find conscious connections between the minds of the performer and audience), the music addressed in this research is more akin to a psychological understanding of mythology than analytical analysis of literature. As Almén explains, 'Music, like mythology, is a temporal phenomenon, and both are amenable to narrative organisation'.[109] Like mythology, this music insinuates meaning, speaking in metaphors and inferences rather than specific 'stories'. In this way, the scholarship of folklore becomes a potential framework for the discussion of the cultural 'work' that this art may be seen to be doing. There is a distinct intersection between this understanding and the idea of music functioning as a narrative concerning change as well as identity. This idea of music as a metaphor for change will be discussed in greater length in chapters four and five.

It is important, firstly, to position Nordic jazz music in relation to a wider trend of regional specificity within Europe. The contemporary European jazz environment enjoys a diversity of regionally-specific stylistic commonalities among jazz improvisers that, in many ways, parallels the North American jazz environment in the first half of the twentieth century. In these formative years of the development of jazz music, each American city where communities of jazz musicians resided gradually developed identifiable improvisational mannerisms. These evolved as the members of these communities learnt from one another, exchanging ideas and adapting their aesthetics to operate most effectively in an art form where dialogue and group interaction are paramount. In the later part of the twentieth century this behaviour waned in the United States. This may have been due to the centralisation of the major innovators of the time, most of whom chose to base themselves in New York City, whose work understandably exerted a gravitational pull on emerging players. A significant number of emerging players simply moved to New York, the widely acknowledged hub of jazz music.

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[109] Byron Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2008), ix.

While this centralisation brought with it many benefits, namely access to the highest calibre of musicians, it also had a tendency to homogenise many of the stylistic mannerisms of the music. In essence, regional dialects gave way to a more universal approach to the music, based upon the aesthetics of a canon of significant innovators. Today, such adherence to this universal approach is a common criticism of many conservatories, the majority of which teach a common jazz syllabus, based almost exclusively on learning the music of the American masters in a quasi-semiotic fashion. The common university jazz syllabus certainly utilises 'the language of jazz' as a primary metaphor. Today, a majority of young aspiring jazz musicians have assimilated and absorbed the 'New York sound' before they have ever even visited the city.

In general terms Europe, although still financially supporting a steady stream of expatriate musicians bound for 'The Big Apple', has developed along significantly different lines. Currently, young musicians in Europe are not duty-bound to leave their home country on a permanent basis for any given Mecca of jazz music. In Europe itself, while several cities boast thriving communities of jazz musicians, no particular city stands as a rite of passage for young artists the way New York has, and indeed still does, for the practitioners of a specifically American vernacular.

There are, of course, a number of cultural and linguistic barriers for emigrant artists. Coming to a new country, learning a new and sometimes difficult language and attempting to integrate into the artistic community can be a daunting task. There is, however, a more significant reason that many European musicians do not expatriate in order to learn their art, and that is that they simply do not see the necessity, as Alexander Gelfand argues:

> There have long been idiosyncratic regional practitioners of European jazz. Spain's Tete Montoliu, England's Stan Tracey, and France's Martial Solal were among the first post-war European keyboard players to establish styles that, while indebted to American models, were not slavishly devoted to them. Since then, pianists like Enrico Pieranunzi in Italy and England's John Taylor have continued to carve

> out highly personal idioms. (The distinctiveness of European jazz has rarely been appreciated in America, in part because recordings by European musicians are often hard to find, and in part because the cost of flying in a band from France or Germany or Norway discourages American promoters from doing so. In addition, robust state funding for the arts means that Europeans themselves are often quite content to stay where they are. ''In Europe, when people are known in their country, they're perfectly happy,'' says the French pianist Jean-Michel Pilc.)[110]

The opportunity to study jazz music at a high level is now quite possible in much of Europe, and many countries, most notably the Nordic countries, will fund external touring and recording, This fosters world-class artistry that is informed about external innovations in the art, has practical experience in these environments, yet orientates its aesthetic outlook from a specific, regional position.

One result of this regional specificity is that not only does the location, and environment, become practical elements of the music's creation, but perhaps more significantly, the music comes to be seen as product of the environment and therefore meaningful to it. This exists primarily on the interpretive side of the musical experience and is most commonly framed in terms of some form of linguistic metaphor. Of all the linguistic metaphors that are used to describe various aspects of jazz music the one which most applicable to the identification of overarching strands of meaning is the metaphor of "storytelling", a term very closely associated with narrative. The pianist Tord Gustavsen describes this very common approach to discussing jazz music:

> I feel that there is a need for *alternative* metaphors; for new words and perspectives. Apart from informal terms like "groovy", "hot", "happening" and the like, the metaphors of *linguistics* are most widely used in our field when musicians or analysts try to move outside of main stream harmonic or motivic analysis. The favorite metaphor of many jazz musicians and critics alike is no doubt "storytelling". In

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[110] Alexander Gelfand, 'Scandinavian Invasion', 35.

> seeing an improvisation as an unfolding of some kind of a narrative, it becomes natural to focus on the "words" and "sentences" of the music. It also becomes natural to focus on an artist's "vocabulary".[111]

It seems Gustavsen is calling for alternative metaphors in part due to the observation that the fundamental linguistic elements that communicate meaning directly and verifiably are very difficult if not impossible to demonstrate unequivocally within what is primarily understood as autotelic music. The idea therefore, if narrative can be used with relevance, is that jazz music is capable of creating specific and meaningful narratives in the abstract without sign, signifiers or other specifically semiological elements. It is therefore not a language, despite an enduring popularity for, and convenience of, that analogy. It is, however, an art capable of narration; of storytelling and dialectic, of the contrasting of multiple 'characters' and points of view, and of comprehendible cultural or political perspectives.

These narratives are not solely to be found in specific works, or in the oeuvre of individual artists, but also (and perhaps more profoundly), in the evolution and dissemination of jazz as a medium. In his introduction to his film and discussion project about the American cultural relationship to jazz Robert O'Meally states:

> The history of jazz is much more than the history of an extraordinary musical genre—it is also the story of central social, political and cultural issues of the 20th century that continue to play a part in our fledgling 21st. In reviewing the story of jazz, we are faced with an American narrative that is about our great promise as a nation and our successes and failures in fulfilling that promise.[112]

Therefore, it is the transference of this particular function to the social, political

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[111] Tord Gustavsen, 'The Dialectical Eroticism Of Improvisation' (Phil. Musicology, University Of Oslo, 1999), 12.
[112] Robert O'Meally, 'Looking At: Jazz, America's Art Form' *North Carolina Humanities Council* http://www.nchumanities.org/programs/ltai/looking-jazz-america%E2%80%99s-art-form (accessed 12 August 2010).

and cultural context of the Nordic countries of which this thesis is concerned, as much as the output of any singular artist. It is this function of the art of jazz music that transcends any notion of genre as a specific congregation of certain musical elements. And, it can be argued that it is this aspect, beyond any more specifically musical element, which connects various dissimilar branches of jazz that occur in a multitude of geographical locations with the cultural traditions and the philosophical heart of jazz from the United States.

The importation of jazz as a tool of socio-cultural narrative to the Nordic countries brought with it the most noble aspects of an American tradition of free speech and public critique of one's society. However, such politicisation is by no means a universal, or even a dominant, aspect of much of the ensuing Nordic jazz. Moreover this music has been concerned with identity, and one very discernable and relatable way that a percentage of jazz musicians have intersected with established narratives of national identity is to incorporate aspects of local folk music. There can be seen here a certain national romanticism such action. However, the romantic national ideal is not to be found merely in the use of traditional material, rather it is the treatment of the material, whether the essence of its appearance in an improvised context pays more attention to purity, or to contemporary reinterpretation or reconstruction. As regards Finnish experimental music inclusively, and concerning jazz specifically, Paul Austerlitz claims:

> Reinterpretation of local music through a jazz lens reflects an African-American musical dominance that parallels, in some ways, the German musical hegemony that reigned in Sibelius's day. Coming from the hegemonic U.S. but simultaneously epitomizing post-colonial self-determination, African-American style has become the lingua franca of world popular musics. Moreover, like the nineteenth-century composers and folk song arrangers, today's Finnish avant-garde experimentalists are unconcerned with stylistic fidelity to rural practice: romantics sought to uplift national culture by turning folk music into high art, while today's experimenters make old local styles

relevant by relating them to global currents. [113]

Therein resides strands of one significant dialectic operating within Nordic jazz music; the romantic contrasted against the contemporary; rural life contrasted against urbanisation; the isolated nation contrasted against the increasingly globalised world; the exclusive contrasted against the inclusive. It is this duality, and the coming together in confluence of these two poles within a unified aesthetic, with which this thesis is primarily occupied. John Gennari argues that it is the very reinterpretation or reconstruction through which jazz music generally has maintained its much cultural potency.

> Through its subversion of traditional cultural categories and its reshaping of aesthetic and social boundaries, jazz has helped define the cutting edge of twentieth-century Western culture.[114]

This is the music with which this thesis is most concerned; the music that constructs modern, relevant narratives about Nordic society, that recontextalises traditions and subverts mainstream (or dominant) conceptions about social identity.

Such narratological aspects as described above are unsurprisingly very difficult to pinpoint within an improvisation even if it is one based on reinterpretation or reconstruction of other music which itself relates to a recognisable and identifiable narrative culturally specific identity. The metaphor of storytelling in jazz improvisation relating to a linguistic structure of 'words' and 'sentences' relates inherently to an established schema of musical logic that is formed in most listeners (of a shared culture) at an early age. I am talking here about

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[113] Paul Austerlitz, 'Birch-Bark Horns and Jazz in the National Imagination: The Finnish Folk Music Vogue in Historical Perspective' *Ethnomusicology* 44/2 (Spring - Summer, 2000), 205.
[114] John Gennari, 'Jazz Criticism: Its Development and Ideologies' *Black American Literature Forum* 25/3 (Autumn, 1991), 450.

concepts such as antecedence and consequence in musical phrase construction, or harmonic cadence. It is something that most audience members will not consciously consider while listening to a concert or a recording, but the commonality of these musical understandings reveals a schema that, through shared culture, we have been indoctrinated into from our earliest exposure to nursery rhymes, as David Huron explains:

> Listeners also rely on generalized learning to suggest how the music might unfold. We already know that an isolated tone tends to be heard by listeners as the tonic. But do listeners suppose that it is the tonic of a major or minor key? Following exposure to an isolated two second tone, I have found that listeners are more than three times as likely to expect a tone whose pitch is a major third above. This implies that Western-encultured listeners have a tendency to start by assuming a major mode.[115]

Huron continues:

> Given the rapid speed of style recognition for music, it is possible that schema recognition in music follows the same principles that have been observed in language. Linguists were surprised to discover that words are often recognized before a speaker finishes uttering the word.[116]

With such an existant *a priori* framework in place as an inherent part of our culturally specific understanding of musical organisation it is perhaps not a huge leap to interpret meaning, of a shared and relatable kind, within the basic structure and development of musical phrasing of a given piece. It is, in essence, the manipulation of these subconscious expectations formed by audience members, based upon pre-existing schemas, that neo-linguistic analysis of jazz music explores. These principles underpin what is often taught today in our jazz education systems as the primary vehicle of analysis, and a fundamental tenet of

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[115] David Huron, *Sweet Anticipation: Music and the Psychology of Expectation* (Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology 2006), 207.
[116] Ibid., 208.

'good' solo construction.

> Improvisation in jazz can be seen much in the same way a storyteller is seen. While it is their job to communicate a message or feeling to the listener or reader, the storytelling does not take place alone—that is it does not end with something the storyteller has said. The interest comes not out of a one-way communication from orator to the crowd, but stems mainly from a conversation in which the crowd can also participate. I do not necessarily mean that the crowd will get up and tell part of the story; rather their reactions and questions to that message, for example, are critical components. In this thinking, it is a good idea to see this storytelling as a sharing process.
>
> The musician also takes on this role, giving to the audience what it is they are feeling or trying to say. A good story will reel the audience in, make them listen to the music, and react. An example of this reaction is the audience's expectations for the lines to follow. "Based on this line, the next one will include a faster run, a retreat to a more quiet dynamic, or even an explosive chord that ends the line." With this in mind, the musician is leading them on a journey in which they are interacting. The musician may want to reveal what the crowd is waiting for (like a happy ending), or switch gears and show them something different (like a plot twist).[117]

It is interesting to note the difference here between improvisational storytelling and compositional storytelling. I see this is closely akin to the difference between reading a diary, an analogy used by Robert Washut, as opposed to reading an autobiography.

> Only by harrowingly traversing that bridge between conscious and unconscious can the jazz artist succeed in revealing a new story with each telling. In the art of jazz, the truly improvised solo remains the ideal. It is a unique story, a kind of spontaneous interior monologue shared with the listener. It is effectually a work in progress, a single entry in an ongoing diary of discovery.[118]

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[117] Robert Washut cited in Mike Coster, 'How To Improve Your Jazz Improvisation. The Key: Tell A Story' http://www.allyourjazz.com/2008/08/the-key-to-jazz-improvisation-be-a-storyteller/ (accessed 3 March 2011).

[118] Ibid.

There is something profoundly different about improvisational storytelling in the group art of jazz, as any member of the band may be relating to, or preparing for, significantly different expectations and aesthetic consequences than what may actually transpire. Yet another dialectic is therefore rendered in the intersection between the storytelling of the composition and the story telling of the improvisations of any given jazz piece.

Therefore narrative within jazz is a metaphor with an established understanding. It is supported by a neo-linguistic understanding of the syntax of music that itself is metaphoric as it does not fulfil any of the requirements of a semiotic communication. These narratives in Nordic jazz music, therefore, become a series of insinuations and allusions that weave a narrative web wherein dialectics and negotiations between sometimes previously incompatible understandings of musical aesthetic tell a form of story, reinforced by a sense of syntax and linguistic relationship.

Some defining of the nature of identity is also in order at this point. We have described a narrative of identity that positions itself as relative to other perceived symbols of identity. These symbols, in narrative theory, provide shared meaning. They are complex negotiations of action and response that over time build to point of significance.

> Symbols provide a shared view of the world by providing names for a large number of objects and categories that are relevant to social interaction. Along with the names, symbols provide shared meanings (responses) for the objects and categories named. Because the meanings (responses) to the objects and categories are shared, they also form the basis of expectations for the behavior of others. The behaviors are also symbolic and convey meaning. Thus, as the behaviors initiated by the agent identities occur and proceed in interaction, there is a flow of symbols (action) and meanings (response). To the extent that these meanings are shared, such flow of

> symbols and meanings serves to validate and reinforce existing symbols and meanings.[119]

As pertains to the jazz music under examination here two processes are under way. Firstly, there is the relational processes of identity, whereby new works are created that are recognisably divergent to an established paradigm of action and response. Such a process is perceivable in the example from the Keith Jarrett Quartet that will be discussed later in this chapter. The aesthetics of these musicians might be understood by how they diverge from accepted symbols of identity that apply to an American tradition of jazz, for instance. This is one potential relational identity.

As this music, the artists and their works, push a new form of identity with in the realm of jazz music, and also move into a new socio-cultural realm of already established symbols of identity, so a negotiation is occurring.

> What is important in the interaction is not the behaviors themselves but the meanings of the behaviors, and it was this that Blumer pointed to when he coined the term *symbolic interaction*. The fact that these occur within the structures of society and are highly dependent upon those structures (often being defined by them) is what Stryker pointed to when he coined the term *structural symbolic interaction*. What we have, then, are agent identities that come in to being with the emergence of structure, that is, named patterns of behaviors and expectations. At the same time, these identities produce the patterns of behavior that are named and constitute the structures. The patterning of behaviors and expectations is really a patterning of symbols and meanings that produce and reproduce the structure of society in a tug-of-war between agents that seek to validate existing self-meanings and thereby (because of lack of perfect consensus) invalidate, to some extent, meanings being maintained by other agents.[120]

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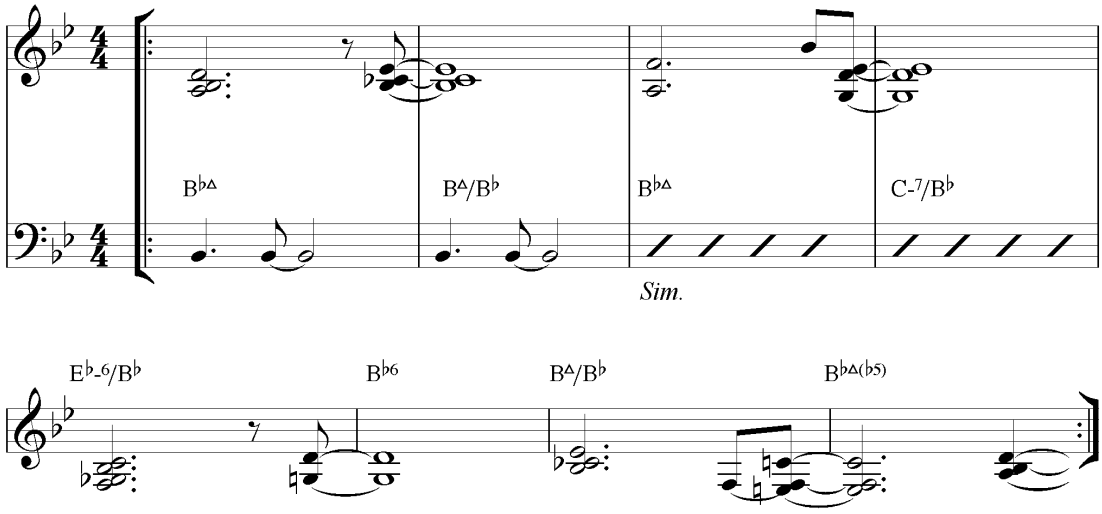
[119] Peter J. Burke and Jan E. Stets, *Identity Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 16.
[120] Ibid.

This understanding of symbols of identity is useful to this thesis in many ways. It provides a theoretical description of the way that this music stands to advocate various positions of identity. In addition it frames the objective of the forthcoming analysis, wherein aspects of the music that provide markers or symbols that either conform, don't conform or have a relative inference to other forms of music that have more established symbols of identity. These structural symbolic interactions, as defined by identity theory, provide an apt bypass to the difficult application of semiotics as they, by contrast, can be a product of repetitive interpretation rather than definitive signifier.

The piece *Questar,* from Keith Jarrett's album *My Song,* is the first composition on this second album by the pianist's European group. Even more so than the first record, *Belonging, My Song* has a lyrical quality, with works that lie somewhere between jazz compositions, pop songs and ballads that audibly delve into the *Geist* of European folk song. *Questar* is one of the more jazz-influenced pieces, featuring a strong rhythmic ostinato that keeps at least a few perceivable connections to the more stated rhythmic expositions connected to the American roots of jazz music (see example 4).

Example 4 *Questar* Bass and Piano Introduction[121]



Tension is added to the very simple bass figure by chords in the piano's right

[121] Transcribed by D.Rorke from Keith Jarrett, *My Song,* 1978. ECM 1115, LP.

hand, which creates tension and release through the fluctuation between diatonic and non-diatonic harmonic structures. In the first two bars a distinctive motif is produced as the harmony shifts from the B flat major tonic to an identically voiced B major chord, one semitone higher, which produces a dissonant flat nine interval over the constant B flat pedal. In the fifth bar another non-diatonic tone fulfils a similar but less obtuse function as the we hear F sharp, the third degree of the E flat minor 6 chord, introduced for the first time, the close and inverted voicings contrasting this new sound sharply against the more stable F natural, the fifth of the primary tonal centre, only a semitone below. In bars five to eight the tension and release pattern established in the first four bars (tonic chord to tension to release) is inverted.

Used to hearing harmonic form in duple systems of two, four or eight bar phrases the most commonly held expectation is likely some form of diatonic harmony, yet the E flat minor 6 contains significant non-diatonic tensions. Already, the story telling has begun. Jarrett has, albeit in an extremely subtle way, informed us firstly with the B major chord in bar two that the story we will hear will have tension, and given the highly dissonant flat nine interval, that this tension may be a significant departure from our diatonic comfort zone. Next, with this F sharp tone, the third of the Eb minor 6 in bar five, we are told that our expectations regarding when events occur may be manipulated and things will not always happen when we might expect them. Our excitement and anticipation for the coming story is peaked.

Despite this short reversal in the tension and release pattern of the harmonic rhythm, the introduction to this piece does conform eventually to a duplex system. We become aware of this form as the eighth and final bar of the introduction is heard. There the listener's schematic intuitions are also confirmed. In bars six and seven, we hear a repeat of the harmonic movement heard in bars one and two, followed by a tonic chord with a lowered fifth in the last bar of the introductory figure. This is the first time we hear the E natural, and there is something about the tension and release between the classic 'blue note' and its resolution to the F natural on beat four, that anticipates the first bar of

the melody. This structure communicates something comprehensible to the audience: it gives the informed listener a most simple, yet effective, reference toward the underlying (yet still rather obscured) jazz roots of this composition.

It is the simplicity of this introductory figure that allows the narrative significance of such small musical elements as a single non-diatonic chord tone, or small reversal in duplex symmetry to become apparent and perceivable. There is substantial inference and meaning contained in the nuance of this music, yet it is all somewhat objective as these are of course not signifiers in the semiotic sense. This is reader-, or, rather, listener-dependent communication. For instance, the simplicity of the bass ostinato—a single note repeated in half time with the clear and dependable syncopation of the beat three anticipated by a quaver—in fact can insinuate identity and meaning. It could be interpreted as insinuating the piece's jazz heritage, as this figure is probably the most manipulated rhythmic pattern in jazz bass ostinatos. So there is a relationship to jazz communicated even in these two notes, yet there is also much more. The fact that despite these jazz overtones this is not a swing feel—it is straight eighths—is immediately apparent in the placement of the second, syncopated B flat. The drummer, Jon Christensen, is also not playing anything like the predominantly African American innovators of modern jazz drumming. Those players who created much of the modern drum set technique, and with whom most listeners would be more well-acquainted, at least those listeners who may be considered an informed reader/listener of jazz music's musical texts. The placement is different, both in the bass and the drums, to what one may be used to as a jazz aficionado.

Timbre is one of the most distinct intersections with a narrative of identity. Something in the clarity of the various timbres of the cymbals and drums gives Christensen a distinct Nordic aesthetic. It is about stillness within the clarity, again, sparcity, within the overtones of each instrument. One might think of it as a bucolic sensibility, as opposed to the urban densities of music jazz. The unique timbre exists also in how the both the bass and the drums operate as a unit in the rhythm section. Both rich yet light, almost more opaque than is usually heard in

jazz ensembles, the tone of the bass and drums orientates us away from the established idioms of jazz music and into new territory, with new formations of rhythm, melody, phrasing and timbre that position the music in relation to the identities of a new community of players and their social context.

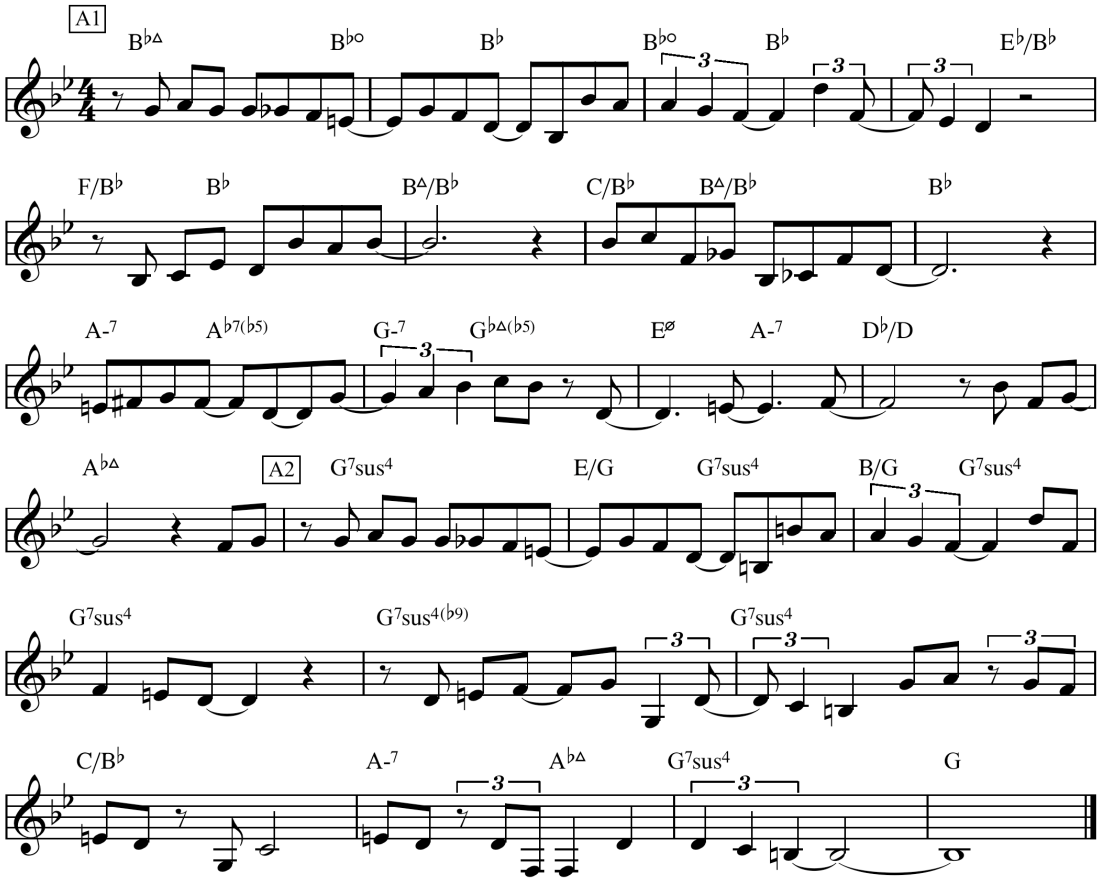
This is the minutia of course: if one stands back a little, a bigger picture might be perceived, one that is first about simplicity. Hypothetically, if another rhythm section were to play this piece, it is likely that elements such as the bass figure would be embellished, as a natural consequence of the improvisational condition of the music. However, Palle Danielson plays this with a distinctively Nordic starkness. Here we find the 'idea of North' as discussed in the previous chapter. The introduction to this musical saga has thus already established distinctive aesthetic parameters of simplicity, space, and the significance of small deviations. It has told us, already in the first eight bars, much about a European art aesthetic, and set these aesthetics to contrasting relationship to the American cultural implications inherent in performance of 'jazz' music.

The timbral conception, especially the combined timbral conception of the whole group, gives us a landscape; which is not to say that the music represents an exterior existent landscape, rather that it creates a musical landscape in which minor musical elements have a relationship to the musical whole. We have, therefore, a 'world' in which our 'story' can take place, with the melodies and solos acting like characters. Is this inferring too much from a simple eight bar rhythmic figure? Certainly little of this would have been a conscious process on the part of the performers. There is nothing absolute about this discussion, in fact the point is that meaning in the elements of this music is specifically relative to the conditions that the composition (and the group's individual sound) prescribes.

A cursory overview of the compositional structure is required before delving into the improvisational aspects of the piece. The composition is, after all, the framework on which the improviser develops his or her spontaneous creations in music such as this. The compositional body of *Questar* is through-composed

(one continuous body of composition where no section is repeated.), a compositional form that will be explored further in the next chapter. This is something that fundamentally draws more inspiration from Western art music traditions, than the American show-song forms that underpin a vast majority of jazz. *Questar's* structure is however divisible into two distinct sections, the first characterised by the B flat pedal and the second by the G pedal, as can be seen in the chord symbols in example 5.

Example 5 *Questar* Melody and Harmony[122]



The section, comprised of mostly descending chords, is a harmonic sequence bridging the two sections of the form, however it is clear from the melodic structure that this should be associated with the first section of the composition (marked as A1 in example 5 above) rather than the second (marked as A2). A2

[122] Transcribed by D. Rorke from Keith Jarrett, *My Song,* 1978. ECM 1115, LP.

begins clearly in the second bar of the fourth system of example 5 above. Here Jarrett manipulates our expectations further by repeating the first two and a half bars of the melody. Having altered slightly the melody by changing the B flat tones to B naturals, in order to conform to the new harmonic context, Jarrett presents almost the same melodic material, giving the listener a nearly sure footing, and reaffirming the particular phrase most reminiscent of folk song. Despite clearly delineating the form into a binary structure and providing an essence of 'song' among a somewhat oblique structure of uncommon bar numbers per section, this piece remains primarily, if not strictly, through-composed: the melody at A2 is not transposed to conform to the new harmonic structure, but instead altered, so we are never actually hearing the same material twice and each tone now has a new function in relation to the G pedal.

As mentioned earlier the melody of *Questar* is almost 'vocal' in its manner or, to be more specific, a great deal of this melody is closely akin to something that a vocalist might sing. This reveals a deep connection on the part of the musicians to a more melodic approach, and in this case perhaps a conscious decision by the composer to create more 'song-like' structures without relinquishing compositional sophistication. There is also a confluence of musical idea and cultural reference here in the usage of 'song-like' melodies in Nordic jazz music; it is a intersection between jazz music and vocal traditions of the Nordic countries, something that is a particularly strong and enduring cultural heritage. I asked Karl Seglem if there was something particularly potent about the musical culture that comes via the singers in Norway:

> The oral traditions is [sic] very well being taken care of here—and good singers develop old traditions further. Especially Berit Opheim, that I will say is one of the foremost singers in Norway at the moment. Because of her great musicality and her way of both improvis[ing] and present[ing] traditional material. This is very potent yes![123]

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[123] Karl Seglem, cited in Daniel Rorke, 'It's Ok to Listen to the Grey Voice' B.Mus (Hons.) Diss. Sydney Conservatorium, The Univ. of Sydney, (2006), 96.

While jazz music already contains a long and enduring relationship with the voice, with most great soloists of the idiom studying vocal articulation and phrasing, there is something distinctly different about the vocal traditions of the Nordic countries and the American song tradition of which most jazz involves itself. The show-song idiom is, in many ways, an example of compositional modernity which is rather alterior to folk music in the Nordic counties, outside of 'imported' church music and, more recently, the ubiquitous influence of American popular music on all aspects of music making.

Harmonic structures in the American song tradition are more often duple, with strong functional harmony and clear cadential structures leading the listener through the form of the song in a way that provokes interest, colours and perhaps even toys with the expectations that it provokes, but rarely disappoints with too much obliquity.[124] It is, in fact, more akin to poetry than the prose-like folk music of the Nordic countries. One need only examine music forms such as the Icelandic *Rímur*, the Sami *Joik*, Norwegian folk *Kvads* or *Stevs* (which were, incidentally, improvised) or the *Runonlaulanta* singing of Finland to hear vocal music, the structure of which is more akin to prose. In all these music forms one perceives a distinct lack of harmonic structure, certainly at least, there is often little in the way of specific chord progression, which appears to be related to the history of this music as a primarily vocal art with simple accompaniment, if any. More often, one encounters harmony in a polytonal sense, or in the context of an organum style fixed interval harmonisation as is common with Icelandic *Tvisongur* which is harmonized in perfect fifths and therefore operates in an alternate harmonic realm to that of contemporary polyphonic sensibilities. [125]

In contrast to the poetry of the modern American song these forms put

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[124] Allen Forte, *The American Popular Ballad of the Golden Era: 1924-1950* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995), 6-17.
[125] Joseph Jordana, *Who Asked the First Question: The Origins of Human Choral Singing, Intelligence, Language and Speech* (Georgia: Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, 2006) 126.

storytelling in the foreground, with the older forms such as the *Runonlaulanta* and the *Rímur* having evolved directly from storytelling traditions, such as skaldic poetry in the case of *Rímur*,[126] and continuing this function in a clear and communicable manner. In these structures the melodies are often through-composed, and expectations about symmetry in form is much lower in priority than the need to vocalise the story. This often leads to odd bar lengths and extended forms. The truth may well be that many of the expectational schemas that most modern Western people possess regarding structure and form were not to be found among the originators of these folk music styles, much as the same schemas are not to be found in many traditional cultures that have not been greatly exposed to Western popular music in recent times.[127]

When Jazz musicians in North America took the American popular song and made it a form on which to trellis complex modern improvisations, one result was a gradual complexification of the melodies which they applied to these harmonic structures. A great example is the saxophonist Charlie Parker, probably the single most important innovator in modern jazz music, many of his compositions based upon the recapitulation of harmonies from American show tunes contained exceedingly complex melodic structures, with a high degree of chromaticism and density. These melodies were busy creations that left much less space between melodic events than the songs on which they were based. American jazz musicians following Parker often developed this conception with compositions such as John Coltrane's *Giant Steps, 26-2* and *Countdown* taking the complexification of the American show tune to its furthest degree, both harmonically and melodically (certainly during Coltrane's improvisations if not always during the head melodies). This is a distinctly different approach to that which would be taken by Garbarek's generation of Nordic jazz musicians a decade of two later. These musicians invested themselves in the folk music of

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[126] Dr. Bjarki Sveinbjornson, 'Icelandic Folk Music Past and Present' *Margaret and Richard Beck Lectures,* University of Victoria (March 23, 2009) http://web.uvic.ca/~becktrus/assets/presentations/Bjarki-Folk-Music-web/bjarki-folk-music_01.php (accessed 5 April 2011).
[127] Tyler Cowen, *Creative Destruction: How Globalization is Changing the World's Cultures* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2002), 171.

Scandinavia and other lands, and their jazz is almost the antithesis to the American/Parker lineage.

The Garbarek generation, in congruence with much Nordic folk music (whether consciously or unconsciously), has tended to create compositions in which the melodic material is often somewhat sparse, and often distinctly more vocal in its approach. The harmonic structures are often more oblique, less symmetrical with more linear root movements than the more functional harmony derived from the American show tune. Brevity of melodic material has become a tradition among Nordic jazz musicians that continues to this day, and it is clearly a relationship to melody that embraces a greater sense of vocality. Another European jazz musician, Enrico Rava the trumpeter from Italy, describes a similar relationship, wherein the influence of singers can provoke brevity, this highlights the universalism of the relationship between vocality and brevity in improvisational practice.

> A big influence to me is a singer, who is Joao Gilberto… he influenced me in the way I play melodies, the way I make economy of notes. He kept telling me, 'Why do you play so many notes? Only the notes that need to be played.' I think that's the biggest music lesson I ever got.[128]

It is therefore no surprise that a vocalistic sensibility becomes an interpretable aspect of a Scandinavian saxophone player whose aesthetic is concerned with brevity. Scandinavia has, for many years, received a great deal of attention internationally for the unique talents of its vocalists. Singer Karin Krog was one of the most successful Norwegian jazz singers during the latter half of the twentieth century, and her groups featured many of the musicians who would later define an individual approach to jazz in Scandinavia. Today there are a quite number of successful singers such as Cecilie Norby, Silje Nergaard and

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[128] Enrico Rava cited in 'Consummate Fan, Consummate Artist' by R.J. DeLuke at http://www.allaboutjazz.com/php/musician.php?id=10568 (accessed 12 September 2006).

Sidsel Endresen, all of whom are making a significant contribution to the world of jazz, folk music and experimental music in the Nordic countries as well as abroad. From Iceland, Björk Guðmundsdóttir, commonly considered a pop singer but also a competent jazz vocalist, is perhaps the most influential singer of her generation in the entire spectrum of contemporary Western popular music.

Common perception is that the issue of melodic density is an influence of landscape as much as the culturisation of musical schemas. This is an idea that was voiced prominently at the very point of modernisation of the music, when New York became the destination for the majority of America's most significant artists. At this point in the music's history analogies between bebop and the hectic density of New York City became an all too easy way to discuss this new, and rather impenetrable, music. If Charlie Parker's music, or bebop in general, is in some way a reflection of New York City life then could Jan Garbarek be 'singing the song of the Nordic Fjords?'

> The development of European "national schools" of jazz, an outcome of African American penetration across the Atlantic, was as much an ideological marker as a musicological one. These schools based their distinctiveness on the assumption that sound and location is connected to identity. Manfred Eicher, owner of the afore mentioned German record label Editions of Contemporary Music (ECM) established in 1969, states that the music he records, his company's engineering and production values, and even its record covers, reflect a "new ecology of catching sound" and are evocative of northern European spaces—"of a certain quality of light and air in that region.[129]

Perhaps surprisingly, even Jarrett himself acknowledged a certain degree of environmental influence over the European musical approach.

> It's got to do with the landscape too. (If) it's grey and damp, you don't

[129] Christopher G. Bakriges, 'African American Avant-Garde to European Creative Improvisation,' in *Jazz Planet,* ed. E. Taylor Atkins (Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2003), 113.

> go out on a grey and damp day and go (imitates walking bass) 'dum dum dum dum dum.' This all interests me because I think if people thought further than their first impulse to come up with a conclusion about where something's from, there are always so many more elements. It's why Americans are American and Italians are Italian. The environment is a big thing. We're thinking always about the environment of what we see, but sonic environment is another thing. The type of materials that were used in the rooms that music was played in, in Europe, (are) usually stone, or marble. In jazz clubs (here) there is a dry sound. In that kind of sound, you wouldn't be able to do that thing you were talking about very well because (the sound) wouldn't hang. The (bass and) drums wouldn't have any resonance, and the cymbals would sound dry.[130]

While many a tourist would feel perfectly justified buying a copy of Garbarek's *I Took Up The Runes* or *Dís* as a memento of a summer spent hiking through the Norwegian wilderness, it is the conclusion of this research that these things significantly are a result of culturisation and musical tradition.

The Nordic lands are a comparatively unpopulated area that, as one travels North, open onto an incredible stark tundra, beautiful in its sparcity. It is not that these analogies hold no logic (and certainly if that is the meaning that the tourist derives from the music then that must be of no less value than that of a musicologist), it is merely a question of the reader of these musical texts and their *a priori* assumptions relating to them. In short, it must be acknowledged that interpretation and representation cannot be intrinsically separated.

> We cannot give voice, but we do hear voices that we record and interpret. Representational decisions cannot be avoided; they enter at numerous points in the research process.[131]

Here, Catherine Kohler Riessman is talking about interpretation of the telling of

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[130] Keith Jarrett cited in Ted Rosenthal, 'Keith Jarrett: The 'Insanity' of Doing More Than One (Musical) Thing', 35.
[131] Catherine Kohler Riessman, *Narrative Analysis* (California: Sage Publications 1993), 8.

personal experience through verbal language, but it is equally applicable to an abstracted narrative such as jazz music, both to the audience as interpreters, and certainly to the writings of musicology.

So, there are a number of different ways in which we can consider sparcity in Nordic jazz music. The 'Nordic sound' as a reaction to landscape could perhaps be one of them, yet there seems to be no strong evidence for an argument that this music represents landscape in any figurative way. There are, however, confluences between the elements under examination here, and the aesthetics of certain culturally specific conceptions, for example, the 'Idea of North' conception and the deconstructed simplicity of the above eight bars. Moving deeper into the explanation of this music one should keep the history of folk music in the Nordic countries close at hand, both indigenous and foreign, occidental and oriental, acquired both first hand and via modern media.

In *Questar*, one dialectic in play is that between the musicians who created the piece and already established aesthetics within jazz music. This would surely not have been lost on the artists themselves who, in the context of the jazz of the time, were certainly striving to try something new and create works of art driven by personal experience. This notion of individual expression is a central, and vitally important, tenet of jazz music.

> Jazz is, unlike many other musical traditions, both European and ethnic/non-Western, a music based on the free unfettered expression of the individual. This is perhaps the most radical and important aspect of jazz, and which differentiates it so dramatically from other forms of music making on the globe.[132]

Even the title of the album, *My Song,* speaks of a personal relationship to the music. There is a relationship, and a dialectic, here not just between the personas of the musicians themselves, but also within the music of the ensemble's leader.

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[132] Gunther Schuller, *Musings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 27.

Jarrett at this time had two working quartets, an American and a European, both consisting of the tenor saxophone, piano, bass and drums instrumentation so ubiquitous among jazz ensembles. These were both ensembles led by Jarrett, performing his compositions, yet creating vastly different music, as Rosenthal observes:

> Jarrett's compositions and the strong musical identities of the group members gave this group [the American Quartet] a very distinctive sound. The group's music was an interesting and exciting amalgam of free jazz, straight-ahead post-bop, gospel music, and exotic Middle-Eastern-sounding improvisations.

Rosenthal continues:

> In the mid and late 1970s Jarrett led a "European Quartet" concurrently with the above-discussed American Quartet, which was recorded by ECM. This combo consisted of saxophonist Jan Garbarek, bassist Palle Danielsson, and drummer Jon Christensen. This ensemble played music in a similar style to that of the American Quartet, but with many of the avant-garde and Americana elements replaced by the European folk influences that characterized ECM artists of the time.[133]

From this perspective identity becomes part of the 'prose' of the music, and occurs in many manifestations in relation to these works. One of the many dialectics that may be identified within surrounding ideologies and aesthetic of this music is that dialectic between the individual and the group. What we hear when we compare these two ensembles is two very different dialectic relationships between individual and group, and individual and community.

In jazz, a music where individual expression is so highly valued, this is often revealed in the way a player differentiates himself or herself from other artists.

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[133] Rosenthal, 'Keith Jarrett: The 'Insanity' of Doing More Than One (Musical) Thing', 10.

> If I thought to play like Coltrane would be my goal, then I'm wrong. If I thought to play like anybody was my goal, then it's wrong in jazz. Because the whole survival of jazz depends on there being people who aren't playing like anybody else. It would be like someone saying "This is my favorite poet, therefore, I would like to write their poetry".[134]

With this in mind the increased sparcity in Jarrett's European Quartet was an element that encompassed both the personal identities of the musicians and the a dialectic between the individual and jazz music as a musical community. In addition, this approach reveals an important aspect of Jarrett's personal philosophy regarding life and music.

> There is a fine line between using technique and making music. We must be open to the spaces (silence) in order to fill them just right. We must see the spaces, inhabit them, live them. Then the next note, the next move, becomes apparent because it is needed. Until it is apparent, nothing should be played. Until it is known, nothing should be anticipated. Until the whole appears, nothing should be criticized. Until you are participating in this, you cannot hear. Until you hear, you cannot play. Until you listen, you cannot make music. Music is a part of life. It is not a separate, controlled event where a musician presents something to a passive audience. It is in the blood. A musician should be able to reveal this. Music should not remind us of the control we seem to have over our lives. It should remind us of the necessity of surrender, the capacity in man for understanding the reason for this surrender, the conditions that are necessary for it, the Being necessary for it.[135]

So, for Jarrett (personally at least), bringing silences and space into his music was not only an element of his personal narrative, but also he clearly saw it as a powerful element of the socio-cultural implication of his music. Likewise I suggest, that for the Nordic musicians in his group, sparcity became perhaps the most important musical element in the definition of a non-American musical expression, and the ensuing interpretation by the related societal context.

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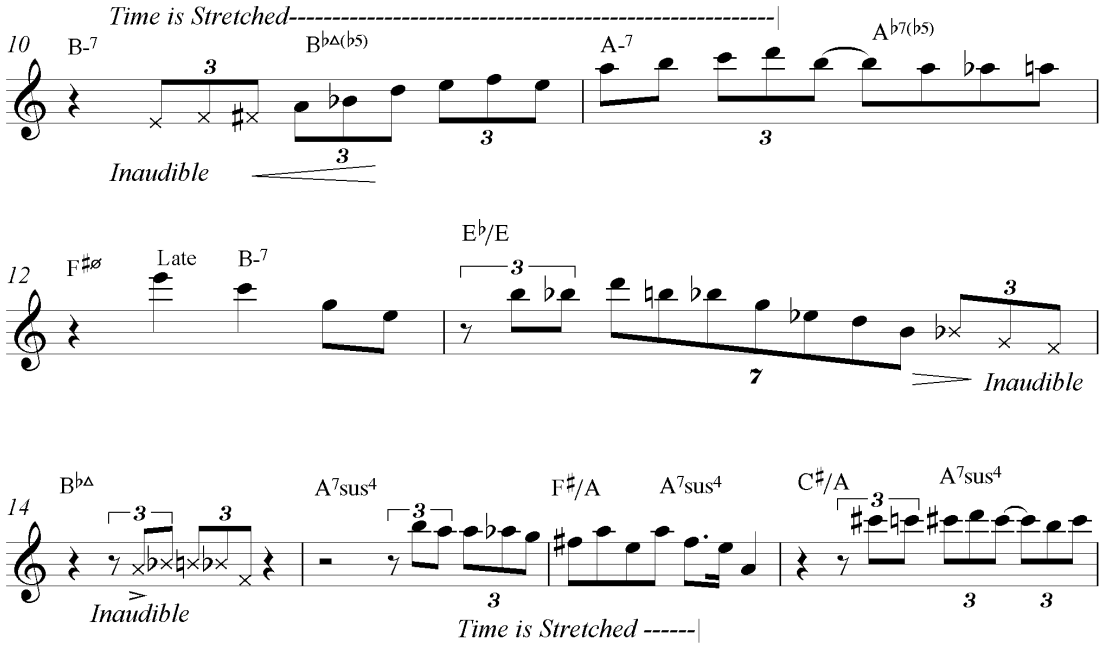
[134] Ibid.
[135] Carr, *Keith Jarrett: The Man and His Music,* 154.

Jan Garbarek's playing is by far one of the best examples of Jarrett's notion of 'being open to the spaces' in jazz music. His exceptional embrace of brevity allows for other musical elements to come into the foreground. For instance, Garbarek improvises within an exceptional dynamic range. He is likely one of the most dynamically manipulative saxophonists in jazz, and this is most certainly something that he has taken from Western art music, and something that adds even further to his confluent aesthetic. In *Questar* phrases such as the one below begin and end inaudibly, as the saxophonist plays with the least possible air pressure the instrument is barely speaking, giving the impression of someone talking under his/her breath (see example 6).

Example 6 Jan Garbarek from *Questar* Bars 10 - 17[136]



While Garbarek's solo on *Questar* presents a somewhat more dense an improvisation than is common for him, his masterful manipulation of this density is apparent. This is more intimately explored in terms of the saxophonist's rhythmic conception, which is discussed in detail below.

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[136] Transcribed and annotated by D. Rorke from Keith Jarrett, *My Song,* 1978. ECM 1115, LP.

Delving into Garbarek's improvisation on *Questar* it is his manipulation of rhythm that is perhaps the most immediately noticeable element. Of course, sparcity/brevity/omission/minimalism is in essence a rhythmic act. Almost nowhere in this improvisation does the saxophonist rely on sequences of eighth notes, something that is often the primary rhythmic unit of currency among more traditional Jazz improvisers. As the respected jazz saxophonist and intellectual Dave Liebman describes:

> Eighth notes are the main denomination of jazz time, much like the penny is to the American dollar. Although one may not play only eighth notes, they still serve as the underpinning of jazz time, similar to what the clave beat is in Afro Cuban music, meaning if not necessarily stated it is implied.[137]

This in itself is a distinctive break from the American Jazz tradition and is a significant way in which Garbarek differentiates himself. It is not that Garbarek is simply choosing another rhythmic metre as the backbone of his improvisation (as is often heard in jazz due to a fundamentally polymetric relationship to rhythm), more what we see here are multiple rhythmic devices contrasted within a single phrase. If we examine the first half (A1) of the first chorus of improvisation the variety of rhythmic multiplicities in play are immediately apparent (see example 7).

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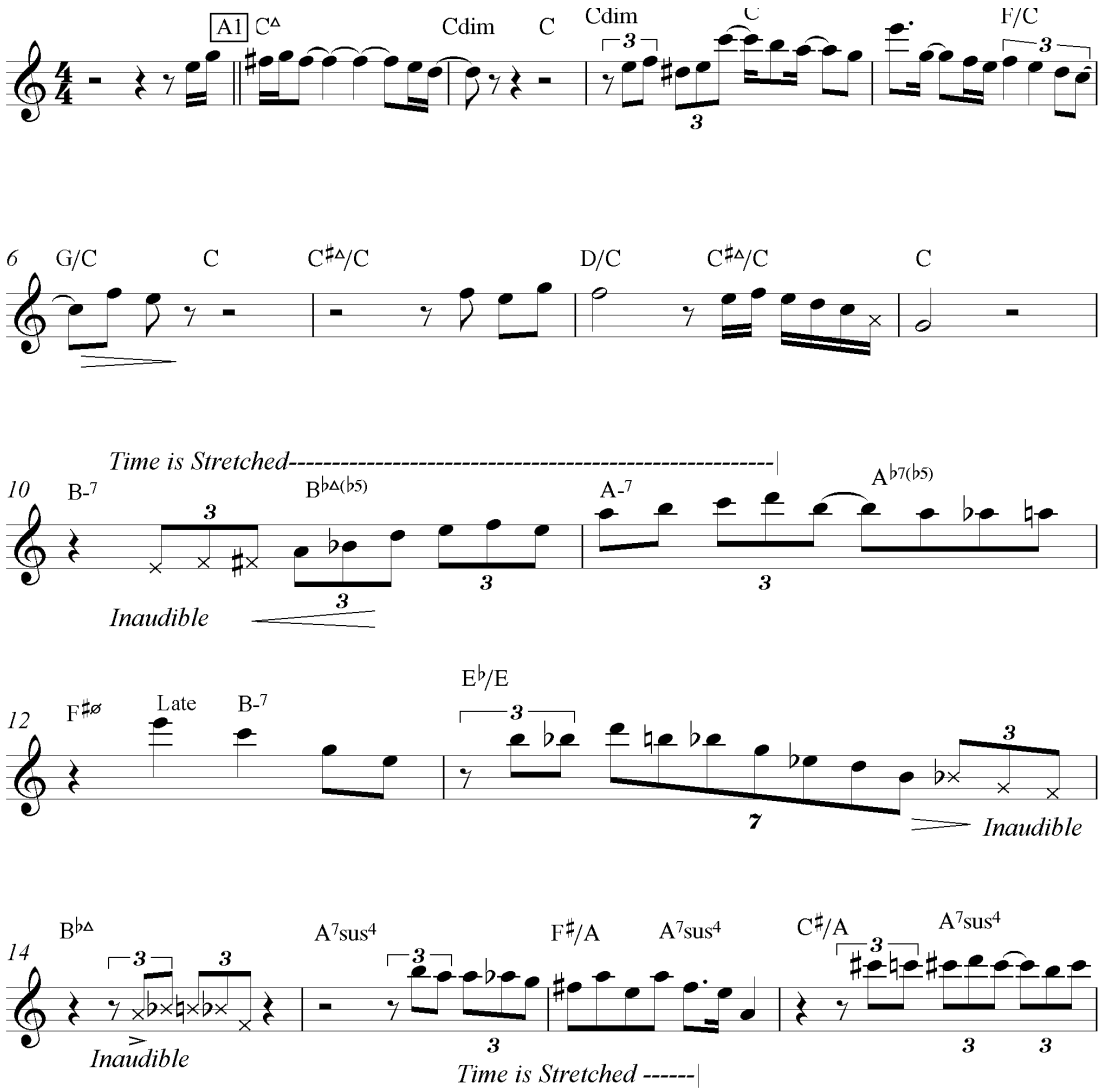
[137] David Liebman, 'Jazz Rhythm' http://www.daveliebman.com/earticles2.php?WEBYEP_DI=8 (accessed 19 July 2011).

Example 7 Jan Garbarek Solo from *Questar* Bars 1 - 14[138]



Interestingly, despite the obviously substantial amount of rhythmic information in this excerpt the primary impression one gets from this music is one of melodic sensibility.

Even against the steady pulse of the rhythm section Garbarek is stretching the time, laying back and pushing into phrases in a manner that puts the vocal demands of the melody he is creating ahead of strict rhythmic unity with the rest of the group. What we hear is a melodic approach to the jazz solo that contains a high degree of influence from Western art music's approach to time. Robert

[138] Transcribed and annotated by D. Rorke from Keith Jarrett, *My Song*, 1978. ECM 1115, LP.

Kaye explains:

> Classical Music emphasizes clear beautiful melodic structure with clarity and expressive restraint. It uses multi thematic phrases, accents, harmonies, resolves, intimacy, delicacy, strings, bounce, divertimento, exposition, expression, recapitulation, clarity of line, proportion, pauses, moments of acceleration and slowing as themes are introduced transited juxtaposed and developed. Rhythmic flexibility imbues it with rhetorical sensibility akin to speaking or story telling.[139]

It is a type of phrase construction that allows the 'storyline' even more scope by incorporating very subtle *accelerandi* and *rallentandi,* that emphasise this rhetorical aspect. This in itself is a highly confluent approach to improvisation, and while critiques of rhythm and time have sometimes been levelled at musicians such as Garbarek critically by those that have ears for more traditional jazz 'groove' and 'swing' playing, it is clear that his approach is complex, meaningful and deeply thought out.

He is using expressions influenced by European classical music and vocalistic melodic sense to create a personal statement which, due to the unpredictability of rhythmic phrasing, creates an improvisation that is melodically accessible and relatable while still rhythmically incredibly exciting. This may well be considered an inevitable consequence of the steady evolution of jazz away from an early history of utility within dance halls in the United States. This correlated historically with the improvisers increasing desire for more freedom to express and increasingly intellectual side of the music, one that was integrating aspects from various musical traditions. This attitude is completely congruent with the ambitions of the musicians discussed here.

> In this ECM sound there is a certain disregard for dancability, yet at the same time tremendous freedom and much room for

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[139] Robert Kaye, *The Classical Method: Piano Classical Improvisation and Compositional Theory* (Bloomington: Authorhouse 2010), xxiii.

> improvisations and exploratory solos. This demands much musical background from the musician, including knowledge of art music.[140]

Relatedly, for a long period jazz music was deemed as inherently limited by many practitioners and composers of Western art music due to its reliance on a regular rhythmic pulse.

> Only big band complex swinging saxes, bop or even modern quintets or quartets of the past era have come close to classical music. But jazz ultimately gets limited because of the steady rhythm. As baroque can be. Not to mention the unnatural physical shape it demands. Where classical has the in-between breaks and relief that one can rest in at a moments decision. This is great for improvisations. And new in my book. For Jazz without the rhythmic pulse is abstract classical.[141]

The playing of Garbarek and his collaborators may well be described as a form of abstracted classical music, however it is by no means 'without pulse', rather, the metronomic regularity of the pulse has been loosened to account for a highly sophisticated sense of phrasing and melodic expression.

Garbarek is not the only member of the Keith Jarrett ensemble to engage with rhythm in a way that projects a strong sense of European, and specifically Nordic, particularity, and in turn engages with this narrative of artistic identity. In jazz music, the playing of the drummers epitomises the improvisational act, operating free from any strict observation of tonal organisation, the drummers and percussionists are the most prolific improvisers in the jazz ensemble. The specific nature of what a jazz drummer plays is most often left to the improvisational prowess of the player. This means that drummers are improvising almost all the time. To repeat Christensen from chapter two "It felt in a way natural then to meet up with Keith Jarrett, and his melodies and

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[140] Acácio Tadeu de Carmargo Piedade, 'Brazilian Jazz and the Friction of Musical Personalities', in *Jazz Planet,* ed. E. Taylor Atkins, 50.
[141] Kaye, *The Classical Method: Piano Classical Improvisation and Compositional Theory*, xxiii.

concept, for more interplay. I never saw a piece of written music, He only told me: 'Jon, play what you feel and hear!'"[142] So, therefore, Christensen was improvising for the entirety of his tenure with the Jarrett ensemble. Whether in the United States, India or Finland the drummers, through this closeness to improvisation, are often strongly linked to the individuality of a given ensemble's style or aesthetic, and therefore closely linked to any ensuing narrative one might care to illuminate. Any story regarding a distinctively Nordic style of Jazz must inevitable feature Jon Christensen as one of its primary protagonists. Christensen's playing is unique in jazz music and he simply does not operate in quite the same way as any of the greats of American jazz percussion. However, respect for him in Scandinavia, and abroad, has given birth do a whole new idiom within jazz drumming. Today his influence on many jazz drummers from Europe (and in fact globally) can be heard, the most significant example perhaps being the younger Norwegian percussionist Per Oddvar Johansen, whose playing provides a somewhat similar type of rhythmic platform for his collaborators as Christensen did for his contemporaries.

Accordionist Frode Haltli says of Johansen: 'I am very fond of the kind of rhythmic flexibility, which Per Oddvar Johansen is so great at. I am always trying to disturb the obvious time a little bit'.[143] Somewhere in this idea of wanting to 'disturb the obvious time' lies something unique in terms of jazz drumming. While the great American jazz drummers are, in many respects, the masters of division polyrhythm and the infamous placement of that second eighth note, these particular Norwegians play in a manner less concerned with stating the time so emphatically. Christensen himself characterised this open rhythmic conception in terms of his own personal philosophy in interview.

> You could go to a jazz club Tuesday at 8:00 and play just one tap on the cymbal, then come back to the club exactly one week later and play one more cymbal hit. People would think the two events have

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[142] Jon Christensen, cited in Lake and Griffiths, eds. *Horizons Touched: The Music of ECM*, 142.
[143] Frode Haltli cited in Rorke, 'It's Ok to Listen to the Grey Voice', 86.

> nothing in common. But that is a beat."… "If I'm playing with a band in 4/4 in a medium tempo, and I feel like loosening up a bit, I could go out of tempo or stop altogether, but I always know exactly where I am. I'm just not marking the 1 or setting up the bridge with a fill. I always try to avoid that. Instead, I try to play in waves.[144]

As a percussive approach, this manner of playing is more concerned with sustaining the group energy and creating texture than time-keeping in a strict sense. Berendt and Huesmann's seminal tome *The Jazz Book describes* Christensen:

> Norway's Jon Christensen is not so much a "straight-ahead" musician as a "painter" in percussion: a Nordic impressionist of rhythm whose unpredictable patterns can lead groups in entirely new directions. His sensitive, spacious playing has helped shape the music of Jan Garbarek, as well as Keith Jarrett's European Quartet.[145]

Berendt and Huesmann are correct when they point to Christensen as a force in the shaping of the other's music. It is something that is surely true of drummers in many significant jazz ensembles for the fact that the drummer's particular sense of pulse and placement so intrinsically influences the way the other musicians will relate to rhythm in their improvisations. Christensen certainly brought much in terms of rhythmic colour to the Jarrett ensemble and, as the primary rhythmic improviser in such a influential group, the drummer has in turn had great influence over the whole aesthetic of Nordic jazz music. His playing has generated a whole idiom of jazz percussion practised by ensuing generations.

This tradition of the drummers and other instrumentalists of the Nordic

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[144] Jon Christensen 'A Beat Is Not Always What You Think It Is' interviewed by T. Bruce Witte. http://www.moderndrummer.com/updatefull/200001174 (accessed 14 August 2006).
[145] Joachim-Ernst Berendt, Günther Huesmann, *The Jazz Book: From Ragtime to the 21st Century* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2009), 492.

countries is not really one of mere musical style, but also of significant social meaning. The music itself is highly informed by specific artistic tendencies such as brevity, texturalism and vocalism, which in turn allow the music to integrate with a greater cultural narrative of Nordic identity. If one accepts that these unique Nordic improvisational mannerisms have a congruency with aspects of Nordic cultural identity, beyond (and perhaps excluding) some ambiguous environmental influence, then it is logical to understand this music within the context of a lineage of Nordic art and philosophical thought.

3.1 Folkloristics

It is the central argument in this chapter that certain forms of improvised music may find congruity of function—and so of understanding—with the discipline of folklore/folkloristics and with the general more developed scholarship of folklife. Depending on one's definition of 'folklore', it may, in fact, be possible to understand these particular types of music as forms of evolving folklore in themselves. At first glance, it could easily seem that to examine a contemporary and forward-looking art form, such as improvised music—in terms of its positioning in the field of folklore—might be a rather strange and far fetched leap. However, there is to be found much commonality of societal function between this music and the current scholarly perceptions of the functions and purpose of folklore.

A primarily musically orientated perspective is best expressed when it is attempting to find a folkloric conception that may be manipulated to encompass this confluent jazz, rather than attempting to find patterns of folkloric motif embedded structurally within this structurally autotelic music. Most commonly, and simplistically, folklore is understood to be a form of culture that is concerned with a retrospective preservation of cultural identity through the media of story, of song and of dance; yet there are distinguished scholars within the field of folklore who now embrace a more encompassing definition. This is by no means a new or radical conception of folkloristics, a 1977 paper by folklorist Thomas Burns describes this as already familiar territory for the discipline:

> There has been an enormous expansion in the past fifteen years in the scope of theoretical viewpoints that have come to be regarded as legitimate perspectives in the American study of folklore. Besides the emergence of new interests within the foundation disciplines of anthropology and English literature, major perspectives of the disciplines of linguistics, sociology, psychology, history, and communications have been incorporated into the study of folklore.[146]

This increasingly accepted expansion of the field has also included an expansion in the discipline's temporal range. Today, folklorists are increasingly equipped with frameworks that are capable of considering much more immediate conditions. The path that folklore has trodden in order to arrive at a point comfortable with integrating contemporary thought and issues is largely one of re-definition.

> All definitional exercises are situated, even dictionary definitions, and they have economic, institutional, political, and legal consequences (see Shiach 1989, pp. 19-34 on the entry for 'popular' in the *Oxford English Dictionary*). As rhetorical statements, definitions make claims, command resources, and define their appropriate allocation. We have sustained ourselves as a discipline by consistently loosening the definition of folklore, while preventing new material from destabilizing the working assumptions of the discipline. We find folklore in the media and study the impact of the media on folklore. We fully attenuate our most fundamental categories—"The modern definition of folk as any group whatsoever that shares at least one common factor-language, occupation, religion, ethnicity—makes it possible to consider the folklore of various urban groups"—without shifting the disciplinary paradigm (Dundes and Pagter 1978[1975]: xv).[147]

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[146] Thomas A. Burns, 'Folkloristics: A Conception of Theory', *Western Folklore*, 36/2 (1977), 110.
[147] Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 'Folklore's Crisis', *The Journal of American Folklore*, 111/441 (1998), 307-308.

The process of creating a case for the positioning of contemporary jazz music—or indeed any autotelic form of the art—is, therefore, something of an exercise in negotiating multiple and sometimes conflicting current/traditional definitions.

Jazz is an expressive culture and contains within its 'texts' multiple visions of the world, sometimes several of these even occurring within a single work. In order to embark upon such an interpretation of jazz music, one must embrace and, indeed, revel in dichotomy, while searching simultaneously for appropriate congruities. The meaning present here is a interpretive meaning born of insinuation rather than signification. It is vitally important that the interpretive act be understood as part of the cultural practice itself, rather than as a search for universalisms. Yet, while this is important, it is 'definition' that allows us to construct new/developing interpretive systems. In the forward to Berger and Del Negro's *Identity and Everyday Life,* they state their position, which is relative to this:

> Though our ethnographic background makes us cautious about the universalizing tendency found in some forms of phenomenology, we rely heavily on that tradition to unearth patterns of organization in the interpretive processes by which expressive culture and other types of social conduct are made meaningful. Viewing interpretation as practice, we see a thread that connects all the elements of expressive culture-expressive culture is created in practices of production, received and made meaningful in interpreting practices, and tied to the rest of social life as one of the many domains of practice through which society is constituted.[148]

We are, then, as interpreters, part of the expressive culture. It is a dichotomy; we are part of the act, yet must attempt to consider it objectively. Creating a basis for the discussion of jazz music and folklore, one can then surely find value and interpretive utility in even the most definitive and compartmentalised of the established folklorific codas.

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[148] Harris M. Berger and Giovanna P. Del Negro. *Identity and Everyday Life: Essays in the Study of Folklore, Music, and Popular Culture* (United States: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), xi.

In defining folklore this research turns most strongly to the scholarship of Dan Ben-Amos, who has been responsible for the most nuanced and utilised definitions of the theoretical domain. Ben-Amos provides this research with a definition of folklore that is focussed upon the socio-cultural relationship of the act, rather than the nature of exposition.

> Folklore is very much an organic phenomenon in the sense that it is an integral part of culture. Any divorce of tales, songs, or sculptures from their indigenous locale, time, and society inevitably introduces qualitative changes into them. The social context, the cultural attitude, the rhetorical situation, and the individual aptitude are variables that produce distinct differences in the structure, text, and texture of the ultimate verbal, musical, or plastic product. The audience itself, be it children or adults, men or women, a stable society or an accidental grouping, affects the kind of folklore genre and the manner of presentation. Moreover, the categorization of prose narratives into different genres depends largely upon the cultural attitude toward the tales and the indigenous taxonomy of oral tradition. Thus, in the process of diffusion from one culture to another, tales may also cross narrative categories; and the same story may be myth for one group and *Miirchen* for another. In that case the question of the actual generic classification of the tale is irrelevant, since it does not depend on any autonomous intrinsic features but rather on the cultural attitude toward it.[149]

Significantly to this research, Ben-Amos sees one aspect of folklore as existing as a kind of art and acknowledges previous attempts at definition as being focussed upon the realisations as contextualised by various expressive genres, or materials as he puts it, of the folkloric artefact itself.

> Definitions of folklore have had to cope with this inherent duality of the subject and often did so by placing the materials of folklore in different, even conflicting perspectives. In spite of this diversification, it is possible to distinguish three basic conceptions of the subject

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[149] Dan Ben-Amos, 'Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context' *The Journal of American Folklore* 84/331 (1971), 4.

> underlying many definitions; accordingly, folklore is one of these three: a body of knowledge, a mode of thought, or a kind of art. These categories are not completely exclusive of each other. Very often the difference between them is a matter of emphasis rather than of essence; for example, the focus on knowledge and thought implies a stress on the contents of the materials and their perception, whereas the concentration on art puts the accent on the forms and the media of transmission. Nevertheless, each of these three foci involves a different range of hypotheses, relates to a distinct set of theories about folklore, and consequently leads toward divergent research directions.[150]

Ben-Amos's definition further makes way for the positioning of this research by his acknowledgment of possible contemporary acts of folklore that address a contemporary narrative, something that is an important point for understanding folkloristics as a tool in the discourse of jazz music. He quotes folklorist Benjamin Botkin to illustrate this all often-neglected element in the folkloric scope. 'Folklore may be "old wine in new bottles" and also "new wine in old bottles" but rarely has it been conceived of as new wine in new bottles'.[151] Logically, for folklore to be a continuing tradition it must, and surely will, find its way into both the contemporary subject and the contemporary medium, sometimes simultaneously.

This provides an apt example of the potential deviations that can occur between the realm of folklore as an expressive act and folklore as a discursive framework. It is important to state that these two things are not the same. In this thesis it is primarily the framework of folklore as a discourse that is put forward in relation to this music. However, there are, quite naturally, more domain shared than divided between the two endeavours of folklore the act and folkloristics the scholarship. Therefore, even though the focus here is upon the application of the scholarship, there should be kept an understanding of the reality of the folkloric act itself. Jazz music, as understood in this research, is certainly part of that act, yet it is the scholarship that can be made useful to us in the analysis.

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[150] Ibid., 5.
[151] Ibid.

What is significant to its contextualisation as folklore is, from the perspective of Ben-Amos and so of this research, the cultural attitude toward it. Finally, Ben-Amos provides a single sentence that positions artistic endeavour at the forefront of folkloric practice. 'In sum, folklore is artistic communication in small groups'.[152] That he finds room for the artistic expression of cultural narratives in his definition of the folklore as cultural practice, makes Ben-Amos's definition the most important understanding of folklore to inform the contextualisation of jazz music in this thesis and, in addition, has made him the most important scholar in the definition of the field itself. As Pulikonda Subbachary writes:

> After the definition of folklore by Amos no major definition has deviated from the basic concepts of folklore given by him. Amos has given more importance to the communicative process of various folklore genres... According to Amos a folk art form may be very popular at the regional, national or international level through electronic media. But an event which happens or is performed in a small group in a native context is only considered as folklore genre.[153]

Therefore, although much of the music addressed in this thesis is distributed internationally, the interpretation of these artists' work as a symbol of particular identity is something that is primarily the product of the 'native context' of the Nordic communities. It is the enactment of this art, and the ensuing interpretation that occurs inside the particular cultural group of the Nordic countries in relation to a particular narrative of Nordic identity, that allow congruencies to be established with various scholarly frames of folkloristics.

Embarking upon any investigation of the nature and scope of folklore, it is significant to note that, conceptually, the idea of folklore as a discipline is a rather recent invention. The term itself came into the English language

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[152] Ibid., 14.
[153] Pulikonda Subbachary, "Caste Myth: A Multi Voice Discourse" in Muthukumaraswamy, M.D. ed. *Folklore as Discourse* (Chennai: National Folklore Support Centre, 2006), 135.

approximately 100 years ago, from the German through William John Thoms, who originally defined it as 'the manners, customs, observances, superstitions, ballads, proverbs, &c., of the olden time'.[154] However, since its inception, there has been a strident and expansive evolution of this elusive term, with many of those who are involved with folkloristics applying the epithet to aspects of culture that, due to their remoteness to the original definitions of folklore, continue to provoke debate among scholars today. It seems that a tangible part of the problem of folkloristics' attempts to create a consensual, universal theory of folklore, lies with the congruencies between an anthropological definition of the term culture and the field of folkloristics' own early attempts at self-definition.[155] The equally emotive, and related term 'culture' came into existence around 150 years ago through the writings of anthropologist Edward Taylor,[156] and it served to further obscure an already tenebrous region of thought. As William Bascom explains:

> These similarities have in large part been the root of the argument about the scope of folklore, which still plagues us. Although historically the word folklore is nearly twenty years older in English than the word 'culture', culture has become accepted in the social sciences in the sense that the anthropologists use it, while the argument over 'folklore' continues, even among folklorists.[157]

It very important to this research to acknowledge folkloristics as potentially much wider a field than simply the historic examination of folkloric cultural practices such as myths, legends, ballad songs and similar survivals. Folklore remains a relevant aspect of living culture, which, despite changes in the

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[154] William R. Bascom, 'Folklore and Anthropology', *The Journal of American Folklore*, 285.
[155] Ibid., 285.
[156] Idem, 285.
[157] John Boyce, 'Terry Gunnell: Legends and Landscape', *Iceland Review* (Autumn 2009) http://www.icelandreview.com/icelandreview/search/news/Default.asp?ew_0_a_id=352646 (accessed 12 November 2012).

expressive realization of particular practice, will continue to fulfil the same or at least related functions, as did its historical incarnations. Terry Gunnell, senior lecturer in folkloristics at the University of Iceland, explains in a recent interview what he sees as the significance of his own scholarly position in relation to today's (Icelandic and general Nordic) society:

> When I came to work in this department one of my central ambitions was to try to demonstrate the importance of folklore study, to challenge the idea that folklore is little more than the superstitions, stories and songs of old Icelandic farmers. The reality is that folklore is constantly evolving and above all remains very relevant. In my time here so far, I hope I and my fellow teachers have at least helped to change perceptions of this whole subject area. Not least as to its role in helping to achieve an understanding of our past, and indeed our present, as modern society has its own form of folklore, stories, traditions and beliefs.[158]

Folkloric practice continues in contemporary society,[159] yet the forms through which it is realized will, rightly, be the subject of much future research and debate.

It is in regard to contemporary society's own folkloric forms enlightening us as to our condition in the present, that I put forward the study of contemporary improvised music as a form of folkloric narrative in the abstract. In today's society many of our cultural forms have evolved and metamorphosed to the point they are, at least superficially, scarcely recognizable when juxtaposed with traditional practices. The Hollywood plot to a 'blockbuster', for instance, is superficially a far cry from the campfire tales of our ancestors, and yet it is easily understandable as working similarly due to its function within the socio-cultural context.

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[158] Ibid., 24.
[159] See also, J. S. Ryan's recent essay, 'Traditions in Exile: Canada, Australia and their Own Countries' Folklore Disciplines', e-*Tradition Today,* 1 (2011), 35-48.

Jazz, and improvised music generally, have clearly struggled in their relationship to purely musicological research, due to the fact that via stylistic musical analysis, anthropological perspectives, semiology or other means, the bulk of the research on this subject has primarily occupied itself with providing definitions and analysis of the structural substance of this art. Despite this, most highly respected improvising musicians tend to see it as something much deeper than the constituent elements of the art object itself.[160] It seems that scholarship of folklore has, in many ways, been provoking similar polemical discussions. While there are those who seek a broader definitions, and increasing inclusivity for their folkloric endeavours, there are still many who argue against this inclusiveness. 'Folklore' is now, quite simply, a term loaded with abundant and divergent definitions.

> During the ninety years in which this word has been spreading over the world, it has extended its meaning until no man today can take all folklore for his province. It may be of interest to see how many things people mean when they say folklore. The folklorist has little hesitancy in meddling with the anthropologist's business, though, on another day, he may be dealing with problems so far in another direction that he must take out license as a practitioner of literary history.[161]

It is in congruity with a more lateral conceptualizing of folklore, that this thesis suggests the possibility of a harmonious positioning for improvised music within this discipline.

Going back to the defining theories of folkloristics, Bascom's contributions are significant to the discussion of 'folklore' as a process of culture rather than any categorical or prescribed aspect of culture. Bascom's work, while now more than fifty years old, was an important milestone in the attempt to define a more valid scope for the folklore field. He had then outlined four functions that help to categorize interactions between folkloric forms and their social environments.

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[160] Pat Metheny, 'Pat Metheny', *The Toronto Globe and Mail*, 4 October 1997.
[161] Stith Thompson, 'Folklore and Literature', *Publications of the Modern Language Association,* 55/3, (Sep., 1940), 869.

Firstly, Bascom points out that an undeniable aspect is that folklore entertains, and so it allows people to escape from certain limitations and repressions imposed upon them by dominant social forces. Secondly, folklore validates culture, justifying its rituals and institutions to those who perform and observe them. Thirdly, Bascom stated that folklore educates: 'it is a pedagogic device that instructs and reinforces morals and the norms of social conduct. Finally, folklore is 'a means of applying social pressure and exercising social control'.[162] Bascom specifically described this final function as a process of maintaining some 'conformity' amongst the community's members.

The question as to what community is actually in question here is inevitable, however, the answer is more complex than it may seem on the surface. We have already limited the scope to those acts that occur within the realm of Nordic society, and not the complete audience for this music therefore, yet, when discussing the social environment of the Nordic countries themselves there is many factors that limit our 'community' to a far greater degree. One, most surely, is the various nation states that exist within the Nordic lands, and the various subsets of these nations that share a common verbal language for the exchange of identity symbols. The reality is that a community of individuals sufficiently informed by symbols of identity so as to be capable of 'reading' the 'texts' of this music is always in flux, in total congruity with the evolving nature of the narratives that are being read. It is the points of intersection between symbols of identity, the cultural work that this art can perform in relation to them, and the narratives as interpreted by a given group regarding the relationship between successive symbolic acts that in turn define the constituency of the community. As will be discussed in chapters four and five, the act itself can potentially negotiate who composes a given community of such readers, those who in jazz-parlance might simple be referred to as 'the hip'.

While this thesis, in some ways, challenges certain of the preconditions of Bascom's functions, these four points provide a clear platform for the conceiving

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[162] William R. Bascom, 'Four Functions of Folklore', 346.

of 'folklore' as a social process; a plethora of forms that construct a narrative and a dialogue that interact with society in communal terms. However, Bascom has not exactly arrived at, or defined for us, the skeletal functions of folklore; instead, these are to be read more closely to what might be defined as 'activities' of folklore, as Elliott Oring, explains:

> Function is to be distinguished from activity, however. The activity of the stomach is to secrete gastric juices. The function of that activity is to change food so that it can be absorbed into the blood and distributed to the tissues. If the stomach ceases in this function, the life process will cease and the continuation of the structure as a living structure will come to an end. Function is thus the contribution which a partial activity makes to the total activity of which it is a part. The function of a particular social usage, therefore, is the contribution it makes to the continuity of the social structure, that is, the maintenance of the life process of the society.[163]

A certain deconstruction of these four functions is therefore required, in order to apply them appropriately to forms such as improvised music, or any form that operates primarily in an abstracted textual relationship to its reader- or audience-ship.

Bascom describes entertainment as a process of escaping from the limitations and repressions of society. Here already, even when dealing with entertainment, the explanation must turn quickly to the nature of our social organization. Might this imply that our need for entertainment is somewhat in itself a commentary on the state of our society; at least, in so far as there exists something from which we require escape? Bascom's intended point, surely, is about creating diversion away from these external pressures. Entertainment may be commenting upon our society, but it is doing so in a non-confrontational manner to divert the audience's awareness away from their own personal situation in that society,

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[163] Elliott Oring, 'The Three Functions of Folklore: Traditional Functionalism as Explanation in Folkloristics', *The Journal of American Folklore* 89/351 (1976), 68.

and therefore the responsibilities and biases that come by way of that position, be it high or low, powerful or powerless.

It is therefore legitimate to consider this not so much as diversion but as re-contextualization; that, by considering society while displaced from our position as participants in that social mechanism, folkloric forms find an unfettered bed for the validation, reinforcement and advocating of the subject matter which they are negotiating. Improvised music, apart from being entertaining by its pure, sensual nature, is most certainly fulfilling such goals. The abstract nature of the art allows for a high degree of displacement from the object that the art may be addressing, and the often-confluent nature of improvised music provides an apt base for abstracted, recontextualised debate and advocacy. The confluent jazz music addressed here might usefully be understood as a form considering cultural change, exploring purity versus plurality, and identity and the control of cultural narratives within a stratified social context, then expressed in a re-contextualised, abstracted form.

Bascom's second and third functions come closest to discovery of the most socially reforming functions of folklore. Bascom's second function is that of ensuring approval, and so continuity:

> A second function of folklore is that which it plays in validating culture, in justifying its rituals and institutions to those who perform and observe them. When dissatisfaction with or skepticism of an accepted pattern is expressed or doubts about it arise, whether it be sacred or secular, there is usually a myth or legend to validate it; or a so-called 'explanatory tale', a moral animal tale, or a proverb, [told] to fulfill the same function.[164]

To apply these academic schemas from folklore scholarship to this music without a relatively high degree of adaption will not make a framework that reflects the somewhat esoteric nature of the art with which we are concerning ourselves.

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[164] Bascom, 'Four Functions of Folklore', 344.

The application of the four functions could, therefore, be directed into the substrata of these discussions, and to a position that will inform a variety of perspectives, rather than merely dictate definitions.

Operating from this perspective, synonymous or otherwise related meaning can be investigated in order to incorporate Bascom, and the larger body of folkloric scholarship in general, into a discussion about contemporary, abstract music. It is therefore an appropriative position, in truth an attempt at co-option of this second function, when, rather than ensuring approval this thesis considers 'mediation' as the descriptor in this second class of activity. 'Mediation' implies multiplicitous understanding of cultures as fluid entities that influence and collide with other cultural bodies—holding within them various interlacing sub-branches, often in competition for increased 'real estate' on the map of communal identity.

It is this manner of cultural confluences that may be reflected congruently upon the improvised music under discussion. Not merely an approval is present, but rather a mediation between existing social bodies. By way of example, 'The Source of Christmas' (the concert series bringing together Norwegian musicians of a number of disciplines with Egyptian musicians and musicians of other Middle Eastern nations who now reside in Norway) providing perhaps the most blatant and easily visible example of an act of cultural mediation. This act is certainly one of approval, if not as imbedded in the music itself then as understood by various communities within the Norwegian society. But it is also more than approval, this music is a form of discussion with a view to resolution and unification. It is a coming together that is both negotiation, adjudication and, in addition, simple celebration.

The third function is the least problematic when applying to the subject matter of this thesis. To educate, or to serve as some form of pedagogic device is something that is very closely associated with the kinds of sociological narratives that are under examination in this research. If music is with meaning, and even if this meaning is only observable on the reader's side of the reader/text or

audience/musical work relationship, then certainly there exists a potential for a didactic component. The difficulty we have with considering this music through the framework of the third function is the problem of specific representations of such meaning. Much of this music is not representational by its structural nature, although it may work within a given socio-cultural context to provoke or insinuate a sense of meaning. It is a medium that communicates meaning certainly, but meaning communicated through figurative abstraction. Bascom's third definition is, at least by contrast, rather literal:

> The importance of the many forms of folklore as pedagogic devices has been documented in many parts of the world, although perhaps most comprehensively in Raum's study of education among the Chaga of East Africa. Here ogre tales, like our bogey-man stories, are used in the discipline of very young children, and lullabies are sung to put them in a good humor. Somewhat later, fables or folktales incorporating morals are introduced 'to inculcate general attitudes and principles such as diligence and filial piety, and to ridicule laziness, rebelliousness and snobbishness'. (Raum, 214). Riddles are used to express a threat which the speaker may not later wish to carry out, to direct another's action where a blunt command might offend, or to incite a person to action through irony.[165]

In the third function, rather than consider this aspect of folklore as a tool to teach a specific social lesson, as proposed by Bascom, let us, instead, deem the goal of this function to 'impart'. These definitions are of course very similar, but, it is more appropriate for this thesis to suggest the notion of 'imparting' as the frame for this function, for it is less construed with specific dictated instruction, and rather more with bringing a given object into public awareness.

In this way folklore, and so the improvised music we talk of here as an element of folklore, will bring new or more obscured aspects of culture to recognition within the community's collective identity. It will impart a clearer identity for given communities and also certain subdivisions of these communities who have specific shared ideologies, and to which the music is construed to relate. Nordic

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[165] Bascom, 'Four Functions of Folklore', 345.

jazz music has come to represent a recognisable aspect of the wider Nordic cultural identity. This is a consideration more strongly connected to Bascom's didactic conception of tolerance. Jazz music as a plural, dialectic music certainly teaches, in its own way, tolerance for difference generally, as well as tolerance for different thinking and different ideas more specifically. It is a multi-cultural music, with the ability to allow two voices of a highly contrasting, or even perhaps polemic nature within a single piece. In this way, while it continues this practice, it will always remain connected to the Creole origins of its history, and for this reason we should look upon rhetoric which ties the music to geography instead of shared ideal and shared identity with a great deal of suspicion. Furthermore, that this dialectic sense in jazz, and its associated ability to present two contradictory ideas viewed (or rather, heard) from a single perspective, is something that 'imparts' freedom of thought and acceptance of a multiplicity of viewpoints, therefore allowing the cultivation of non-conformist perspectives. It is an antidote to social conformity; an outlaw music designed to provoke subsequent outlawism in those who can read its texts, i.e. the 'hip' in the jazz designation. Here it must be acknowledged that this reconstruction is somewhat removed from Bascom's more conventional representations of folklore. Bascom, in his consideration of the instructive nature of certain folk tales, such as troll myths about rocky and dangerous places to be avoided, was again considering the activity of folklore in a given instance rather than identifying universal principles of communion existing between a society and its folklore.

In an article entitled 'Folklore's Crisis' written for *The Journal of American Folklore*, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett examined the fragmentation of the discipline in the mid to late twentieth century—a time when many influential scholars, whose work would otherwise be understood as 'folklore', chose to align themselves with other academic disciplines such as anthropology or literature. Among them a figure highly influential in folkloristics, Stith Thompson, had 'identified himself first and foremost as an 'English teacher', (i.e. teacher of mainstream literature and its place in its societies), commenting that folklore

was a 'side issue', an 'avocation'.[166] Kirshenblatt-Gimblett later points to Américo Paredes and Richard Bauman's work, entitled *Toward New Perspectives in Folklore,*[167] as a formative provocation to a new form of folkloristics, occurring at a time when folklorists such as Thompson were distancing themselves from the field.

> When *Toward New Perspectives in Folklore* appeared in 1972, it did not represent the engineered interdisciplinary of the interwar years, in which fields that had broken away from an omnibus discipline were encouraged to find new points of intersection. When disciplinary lines later crossed, they did not reconstitute the older arrangements. There is news at the nexus, which is a place of articulation not necessarily seen before. Less an exercise in disciplinary diplomacy than an attempt at theoretical synthesis, *New Perspectives in Folklore* was relatively unconcerned about provenance—about 'borrowing' ideas from, or being 'influenced' about loyalty to, folklore's disciplinary autonomy.[168]

While Kirshenblatt-Gimblett bemoaned the decline of establishment advocacy for the discipline—which went so far as to reach a point where Bauman and Paredes's new perspectives were necessary to reinvigorate the declining field of folkloristics. She also acknowledged the ensuing potential for the discipline, and new niches for folklorists.

> As disciplinary birds of (ritual) passage who have historically nested in anthropology and/or literature departments, we could well play a pivotal role in reorienting both national literature departments and area studies programs in a cultural direction, while making common cause with cultural studies.[169]

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[166] Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 'Folklore's Crisis', 293.
[167] Américo Paredes and Richard Bauman, '*Toward New Perspectives in Folklore', The Journal of American Folklore* 86/341 (Jul. - Sep., 1973), 312 - 313.
[168] Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 'Folklore's Crisis', 283.
[169] Ibid., 295.

The manipulation of folkloric conceptions such as Bascom's functions or the Stith Thompson index, for example, certainly can provide new structures for the discussion of confluent jazz music in the Nordic countries. At a stage when the foundational work of folkloristics has been established, and the field has been opened in such an expansive way, as described by Kirshenblatt-Gimblett above, there are ample pathways into the established scholarship of the dicipline (or diciplines) of folkloristics whereby discussion of the extra musical activities of this musical art is possible. There exist an abundance of intellectual resources at one's disposal with which it is possible to frame discourse and determine the intersection between Nordic jazz and the (past and present) 'folklife' of the Nordic people. The Stith Thompson/Antti Aarne Index is one such recourse that warrants further investigation for such a purpose.

Responding to the fragmentation of folklore, and the assimilation of much folkloric study into other related fields, such as anthropology, literature and ethnomusicology, folklorist Richard M. Dorson published his work, an edited collection, entitled *Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction.* Appearing in 1972, the same year that Bauman and Paredes published *Toward New Perspectives in Folklore*, both had sought to re-establish folklore's independence. At the same time, these works each acknowledged the necessity for a re-defining of the discipline. Dorson problematized the condition of folkloristics thus:

> What then are the skills, perspectives, and methods that set the folklorist apart from the anthropologist, the historian, the literary critic, the sociologist, the psychologist, and the political scientist?[170]

In beginning to address this question, Dorson himself outlined several methodological practices. Notable among them is the use of indices such as Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk Literature,* which has outlined thematic motifs of folklore in a compartmentalised numerical table. It is clear from Dorson's

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[170] Richard M. Dorson, *Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 6.

presentation of these skills and methods that he views the practice of folklore as a rigorous investigation, not only of the expressive idioms in a given culture, but also the mass of idiomatic, motific expressions embedded in the everyday life of communities. Herein we find the folk 'life', which differentiated this branch of scholarship from the larger body of folkloristics.

This approach to the examination of everyday life, as an expressive cultural medium, did in fact serve to encourage multiplicity in the field of folkloristics.

> Many folklife scholars were primarily students of material culture, and, expanding their theoretical vision, they urged folklorists to take a synthetic, cross generic approach and explore the interplay of 'everyday practices, artefacts, and expressions' in a given social world.[171]

Beyond the scope of a people's everyday practices, folklife scholarship can also make a significant contribution to the examination of cultural acts that reference or respond reflexively to the condition of everyday life. Of significant interest to the discourse regarding jazz as a diaspora music is the notion of the jazz festival, which can be regarded beneficially through the lens of folklife scholarship. It is worth reiterating at this point the significance of the jazz festival in Europe generally and particularly for the development of the art form in the Nordic countries. The scholarship of folklife gives unique insight into the reciprocal meaning that occurs between these sort of 'enactment' events such as festivals and the everyday cultural life to which they connect:

> Enactments and the typical situations of everyday life are premised upon similar structuring principles (social roles, norms of behaviour, and so forth). As a result, there is both a 'continuity and a dialectic

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[171] Berger and Del Negro, *Identity and Everyday Life: Essays in the Study of Folklore, Music and Popular Culture*, 5.

> between everyday activities and these heightened events' (Abrahams 1977, 200).[172]

It must be said that there has been no single cultural act that has driven the formation of a specifically Nordic vision of musical identity within jazz more than the lively and frequent string of summer jazz festivals in Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland. By presenting both local musicians and international artists the jazz festivals of the Nordic countries, particularly in their early development, provided exactly the kind of continuity simultaneously contrasted with an emerging dialectic. One may here substitute 'everyday activities' for expressive acts of cultural identity, generally understood by a given community.

When considering of folklore or folklife in a more appropriative manner to examine a contemporary subject such as jazz, it necessary to understand how the sub branch of folklife studies differs in approach from the established field of folkloristics, Burns describes the divergence:

> Generally the traditional arts folklorists define 'traditional' in terms of some process or basis of artistic expression (oral transmission, face-to-face communication) and not in terms of a particular culture level. Consequently, they are free to explore this art among all cultural levels and groups. The second group of folklorists (folklife scholars) delimits the domain of traditional ideas, behaviour, and/or consequences in terms of culture level and not in terms of whether these traditional ideas etc. are necessarily expressive in nature. Folklife scholars study traditional or folk culture where traditional tends to mean some combination of the following traits: rural, pre-industrial, non-mainstream, non-elite, preservationistic (past oriented, old time), regional or ethnic.[173]

It is possible that both procedures help for assessing the music with which this thesis is concerned. 'Folklore' fits this music rather well—in fact, precisely because of the nature of its transmission. Jazz is passed around between artists,

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[172] Ibid., 5.
[173] Thomas A. Burns, 'Folkloristics: A Conception of Theory', 109.

generations and locations in a manner very close to an oral tradition, albeit in the abstract. Although a great deal of the music is now learnt and taught through written notation, the history of the music is one of a dominantly oral (or, rather, aural) transmission, and much emphasis on the oral and aural engagement with the music will always endure.

Folklife, on the other hand, allows the exploration of how this music exists in relation to various cultural and sub-cultural groups. Addressing the music via the scholarship of 'folklife' provides a pathway into discussion of the sociological contexts of the art form. It may be that the most poignant analytical frameworks are a hybrid of multiple branches of academic scholarship. Jazz music is an art of multiplicities, and its texts are highly reader-dependant. For this reason it requires multiple frameworks, coinciding at the point of analysis.

In the previous chapters a number of interactions between Nordic jazz musicians and folk music were discussed, and how that folk music affected our particular subjects or specific works. Folk music is one element of the discipline of 'folklore studies, within which a notion of folk endures a picture of relics of a rural, perhaps pre-industrial and certainly a regionally specific, culture. Chapter seventeen of Dorson's collection, Folklore *and Folklife,* written by ethnomusicologist George List, considers folk music closely. List's work provides a lengthy treatise on the definitions of folk music, which is of particular interest to this thesis. He outlines his view that, despite the interchangeability in the French language of the terms *musique populaire* and *musique folklorique*, popular music and folk music are, in List's opinion, divergent:

> The term folk music is often loosely applied to cover all traditional or aurally transmitted music, . . . passed on by ear and performed by memory rather than by the written or printed musical score. In a specific sense, the term refers to aurally transmitted music found within a society that also has art or cultivated music that is transmitted through the musical score. It is thus differentiated from

> the music of nonliterate people where music writing is non existent.[174]

And List continues:

> Folk music and popular music are not synonymous terms although as forms they share common traits. Popular music may or may not be transmitted by the musical score. It is often varied in performance and at times improvisatory in nature. Popular music, however is generally an ephemeral commercial product intended for mass consumption rather than a tradition known and practised in a restricted area or by a subculture.[175]

List's provides us with useful set of defining principles, but these do not render a context in which jazz will naturally fit.

The American trumpeter Nicholas Payton recently stated that 'Jazz separated itself from American popular music'.[176] His observation is a statement of record, of historic significance to the art of jazz music and the cultural life in which it was imbedded. It was a conscious strategy of jazz artists to separate from popular music and create an African American high art music that, in turn, elevated the position of that community's artists and intellectuals. Jazz played but one part in the assertion of the right to authorship of identity by a community. What followed was some of the most motivated intellectual and creative activity of the twentieth century, and jazz music was certainly at the forefront of this wave in the United States. The art form was no longer popular music at this point, and by doing such cultural work it in many ways become closer to folk music and to a form of folklore, than to popular music. This, at least, holds true within the delimited schema that the dualism of popular and folk describes.

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[174] George List cited in Dorson, *Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction*, 363.
[175] Ibid., 364.
[176] Nicholas Payton, 'On Why Jazz Isn't Cool Anymore', http://nicholaspayton.wordpress.com/2011/11/27/on-why-jazz-isnt-cool-anymore/ (accessed 6 December 2011).

The difficulty in applying definitions such as List's categorisations to jazz lies both in the fundamental plurality of the music, and in its inherent diversity. What is lost if we categorise jazz as popular music is the essence of jazz music, not as a style or a genre but as a way of working with music in an ecstatic, plural and improvisatory manner. Jazz music, and even the Nordic confluent jazz that concerns this thesis, is not popular music, nor is it folk music. Moreover, due to this absence of stylistic standard, different branches of the music, and therefore the discourse surrounding the music, will fall on different sides of List's polemic appraisal of the popular and folk idioms.

> One criterion frequently applied is that the origin of the melody must be unknown to its performer. Music that originally appeared in published form can be considered folk music if it has been passed on by ear and memory until the performer is no longer aware of its origin. Such music is said to have entered the 'oral tradition'. [177]

> A second requirement applied is that the melody exists in variant forms. As it is transmitted from one individual to another and diffused from one locality to another, as performance succeeds performance, both unconscious and conscious modifications of the melody occur.[178]

This is a useful principle in itself, but, primarily, it serves to differentiate nonliterate traditional music from conceptual music. Such differentiation is difficult to apply outright to jazz music, with its fundamentally plural approach combining a highly literate intellectualisation with aural traditions. Both conditions are able to exist simultaneously in much of the music discussed here. Furthermore, it is frequently the case in today's globalised world that even the most isolated communities are connected via technology, and that very little purely oral music making still occurs in human society.

With the advent of the digital age the sort of conditions imposed by List are rendered fundamentally obsolete. With access to the Internet and digital media

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[177] George List cited in Dorson, *Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction,* 364.
[178] Ibid., 364.

becoming widespread even in developing nations, the discussion of folk music, and folklore in general, has had to enter the median zone between any possible polemic definitions of folk and popular, or equally oral and literate, as Philip Vilas Bohlman's *Study Of Folk Music In The Modern World* illuminates:

> It is virtually impossible in the twentieth century to discover folk music traditions that are purely oral or exclusively literate. And still another lesson has accompanied the twentieth century: the spread of various forms of literacy throughout the world has not been the death knell of folk music that some scholars have alleged. It becomes increasingly necessary, in fact, to expand our understanding of the range spanned by such concepts as orality and literacy, especially when electronic and other media of transmission exert a growing influence on folk music.[179]

Here, discourse that represents a categorical understanding of humanity and culture finds itself in conflict with an increasingly heterogeneous and often multiplicitous human condition. Juxtaposing of polemics, such as in List's scholarship, must in this age inevitably give way to a more creatively based interpretive practice. In the construction of a musicology for jazz, this definitional history has been problematic at best.

An emerging commonality between artists of differing musical traditions in the Nordic countries, increasingly blurring such definition as above, is the spread of the electronic arts in music making. The way electronic music has developed, in sub-cultural diasporic manner, without the necessity of conventional notational scoring, has led some to consider it as the folk music of the digital age.[180] A perhaps surprising confluence between electronic instrumentation and traditional music is occurring in many parts of the globe. House music or techno music is all you'll hear in a club in India. What's becoming international folk

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[179] Philip Vilas Bohlman, *The Study Of Folk Music In The Modern World.* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), 30.
[180] Qubais Reed Ghazala, 'The Folk Music of Chance Electronics: Circuit-Bending the Modern Coconut', *Leonardo Music Journal* 14 (2004), 104.

music is techno'.[181] Certainly, the accessibility of high quality digital music making tools, for little or no cost, has helped the proliferation of electronic music enormously. It is a development that, at the very least, stretches established definitions of musical idioms.

> The spread and development of electronic music has also encouraged musicians to create 'new folk music', which is a fascinating blend of folk music, electronic music and pop music.[182]

This is not merely an attempt to popularise folk music. It is, in essence, a way of maintaining particular cultural identity in the face of an ever homogenous, globalised cultural paradigm. It is about staking out authorship of identity narratives within the shrinking world provoked by digital media. Interestingly, this is something that has a relatively long and established history among folk musicians of the Nordic countries.

> Nordic folk music, interestingly enough, was often incorporated in electronic music outside of the romanticist environment—as early as 1960—in the tape part for Ingvar Lidholm's ballet rites. Also Swedish and Nordic non-peasant music, such as the music of the Sami people, has attracted attention. A particularly interesting example is Rolf Enström's (1951) electronic composition *Tjidtjag and Tjidtjaggaise* which uses authentic recordings of Sami Yoik.[183]

It is nothing new to note what a large percentage of the Nordic musical landscape is comprised of the prolific work of electronic musicians, operating in a variety of stylistic contexts.

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[181] Shrikanth Sriram cited in Michelle Goldberg, 'Electronic Music's New Globalism', *Metro Active Music*. http://www.metroactive.com/papers/sfmetro/05.24.99/electronic-9919.html (accessed 3 December 2011).
[182] Jin Jie, *Chinese Music*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 120.
[183] John David White and Jean Christensen, eds. *New Music of the Nordic Countries*, 503.

The Sami people, whose history has been largely one of cultural domination with an emphasis on assimilation into the Germanic cultural systems of the south, have been especially active in terms of electronics and technology in their music making. The singer Mari Boine is perhaps the most well known Sami musician of her generation, her music combines jazz, Rock and electronic music with traditional drumming and Yoik. In addition, there are a number of more obscure artists, notably Torgeir Vassvik whose 2006 album *Sáivu*, produced by jazz trumpeter Arve Henriksen, featured traditional instrumentation, Yoik and overtone singing with improvisation and electronics. There is a sense that these artists bring electronics, jazz and improvisation to a unified position within the lineage of their folk music, rather than merely applying a folk music expression, such as Yoik, upon an external form, Eyal Hareuveni's review of the record describes this:

> Vassvik and Henriksen manage to marry the past and the present on *Sáivu*. And though this release introduces a distant musical tradition, it represents this tradition in a contemporary manner that charges it with imaginative vitality.[184]

This marriage in Vassvik's music is not a 'fusion' in the jazz sense of the term, instead it is an example of Sami confluent improvised music including electronic instrumentation. It is contemporary improvised folk music expressing a culturally based view of multiplicity from a unified musical aesthetic point.

Bascom's work cannot easily be assimilated with the new ideas of folk culture, however his work is one of the formative foundations of the scholarship of folkloristic. If reinterpreted they such conventional definitions as Bascom's can stand to lend structure to a generality wherein all definitions become grossly encompassing. For instance, where Bascom saw a didactic narrative of conformity to established social precepts in his fourth function, this thesis

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[184] Eyal Hareuveni, 'Torgeir Vassvik: Saivu', *All About Jazz* http://www.allaboutjazz.com/php/article.php?id=24798 (accessed 11 November 2011).

proposes a didactic narrative of non-conformity that nevertheless imparts social consciousness in unison with the championing for the freedoms of the individual. It seems that many others have found a necessity for some unravelling of Bascom's definitions. Stanley Edgar Hyman, in his critical response to debate about Bascom's Hero, said:

> He (Bascom) must grant Harrison, Raglan, and others the right to attempt to create some sort of order out of his chaos by more scrupulous definition. In practice, Bascom's own definitions are rather conventional.[185]

Thus, the rewriting of Bascom's definitions has not been uncommon among folklorists, however, it is not commentary upon the writings of folklorists or anthropologists that this thesis seeks to achieve, but it is, rather, an attempt to build upon established understandings of the realm of folklore, in order to create a framework that may be applied to this new improvised music. It is not that it is necessary to advocate any specific understanding or positioning of improvised music within folklore, although such a stance may well possible and relevant, so much as to create from folklore a device for musicological assessment of the interaction between improvised music and the more customary context of societal narratives. In reconstructing the fourth function the idea of 'advocating', instead of Bascom's exercising of social pressure and control, considers folklore a medium through which various sub-groups of society participate in the re-authoring of communal identity. In such a terminology there is no understanding of folklore as (universally) a tool for dictating behaviour by the collective over the individual, as might be construed from the fourth function; that of certain activities of myth/legend directing individual behaviour within social etiquette and custom. Advocating as a folkloric activity in Nordic jazz music, it is perhaps best viewed as a narrative written by the outlaws themselves.

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[185] Stanley Edgar Hyman, 'Reply to Bascom', The *Journal of American Folklore*, 71/280 (1958), 152.

The outlaw as a folkloric motif is one further aspect of folkloric origin that may be brought to bear on the consideration of this Nordic jazz music. The 'outlaw' in European folklore makes no secret of his or her allegiances to a given community, or more importantly a community-based sense of identity, in the face of limiting social conditions. While many of our most well known folkloric outlaws are given to establishing greater economic equality for their communities by the unlawful acquisition of wealth, the greater message is one of transcendence of imposed limitation, as Ray Cashman explains:

> As a symbolic figure who appears in folklore and popular literature, the Irish outlaw—like Jesse James in America and Robin Hood in England—embodies 'a sense of justice based upon kinship and community rather than one based upon impersonal, bureaucratic procedures established by the state' (Kooistra [186] 1989, 11). The socio-political implications of his lawlessness identifies the outlaw among his admirers as a hero rather than as a mere criminal, a hero through whom to imagine their dignity in the midst of perceived political subjugation and social injustice. In outlaw lore we see the Irish representing themselves to themselves, reflecting on their greatest strengths and weaknesses, and commenting on their place in the world.[187]

In this respect there is an amount of congruity with the folkloric *monster*, a word related by common linguistic root (*monstrum*) to our English term *demonstrate*, whose cultural function it is to 'bring to light' that which is hidden by social norms. The outlaw's function is equally to illuminate, and so to actively represent communities, community freedoms, and the many significant communal issues that are in serious moral and cultural danger under dominating/limiting ideologies or social systems.

As discussed in the previous chapter of this thesis, jazz music in Europe has for a goodly length of time represented, for many European people, a freedom music.

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[186] Paul Kooistra, *Criminals As Heroes: Structure, Power and Identity* (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1989), 11.
[187] Ray Cashman, 'The Heroic Outlaw in Irish Folklore and Popular Literature', *Folklore* 111/2 (2000), 192.

In World War II, jazz in occupied Europe was an often-outlawed expression, representing as it did the assertion of individuality and an antithesis to the Nazi occupation. In many ways, while there were rebellious individuals in this movement, it was jazz itself that played a character. Jazz not only represented the idea of rebellion against the current paradigm it also, through its improvised, neo-democratic, and group-constructed nature, represented an alternate model for social organisation. It is interesting to note that in Europe jazz music is studied with great seriousness as an analogy for societal, and more recently corporate, organisation.

> Jazz bands consist of diverse specialists living in turbulent environments, interpreting vague cues, processing large chunks of information, formulating and implementing strategy simultaneously, extemporaneously inventing responses without well-thought-out plans and without a guarantee of outcomes, discovering the future that their action creates as it unfolds. Jazz bands, in short, embody many of the characteristics of post-industrial, post-bureaucratic organizing that complexity theorists extol. Jazz bands have a minimal hierarchy, decision-making is dispersed, they are designed to maximise flexibility, responsiveness, innovation and fast processing of information. It is a form of social organization that produces order with little or no blueprint organized from the bottom up.[188]

In Norway, many of the most respected lecturers in jazz improvisation are frequently engaged to describe the interactive principles of the music to business organisations and social studies students.

In Finland, an interesting historical situation occurred prior to, and then during, World War II, which had a formative effect on the highly insinuative, and sub-textual, music that was to come. Namely, this was racism and ridicule of those who sought to re-invigorate Finnish music through integration with a centrally African diaspora. Austerlitz describes how:

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[188] Frank J. Barrett, 'Cultivating an Aesthetic of Unfolding: Jazz Improvisation As A Self-Organizing System,' in *The Aesthetics Of Organization* ed Stephen Linstead and Heather Höpfl, (London: Sage Publications, 2000), 230.

> Looking to Afro-diasporic music, including jazz, Finnish musicians of the 1920s and 1930s innovated new performance styles on the accordion, drums, saxophone, fiddle, and bass, which helped not only to shape early forms of Finnish jazz music but also to invigorate rural or folk instrumental dance music (pelimanni). As jazz became a target of racist and nationalist rhetoric prior to World War II, local jazz musicians increasingly delved deeper into the subtle aesthetic qualities of jazz.[189]

Finland, being allied with Nazi Germany from 1941 to 1944, during what is known in Finland today as the Continuation War,[190] was by no means a receptive environment to artists who saw a confluent future for the nation's musical forms. However, this confluent experimentation never actually ceased, rather in became more nuanced and increasingly sub-textual, readable by the minority of 'hip' individuals mostly of the art community.

It was, therefore, an already confluent musical environment into which Finnish percussionist Edward Vesala emerged. These 'subtle aesthetic qualities of jazz' were already imbedded into the Finnish relationship to jazz music, even if those seminal artists had turned to these subtleties largely in order to protect the music under the watch of fascism. Confluent experimentation by Finnish folk musicians with jazz and African music had already existed for decades therefore, before the group Karelia, in which Vesala participated in his early career, gained a rather significant popularity in Finnish society. Karelia was a folk-rock group that used Finnish folk music as raw material.

> In 1970 we set up Karelia. Fairport Convention was very popular at that time. A friend of mine, Edward Vesala, and I decided to make

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[189] David F. García, 'Jazz Consciousness: Musky Race, and Humanity by Paul Austerlitz.' *Latin American Music Review / Revista de Música Latinoamericana* 27/1 (2006), 106.
[190] Philip Jowett and Raffaele Ruggeri, *Finland at War 1939-45* (Westminster: Osprey Publishing, 2006), 3.

> electric folk-rock music, and we made two LPs then. We broadened he idea. We imitated [Saami] joiku and used rare instruments like a suitcase. It wasn't just electric, rock-type music. We also listened to the old singers in the SKS [archive recordings] to find out more about the traditions. Our idea was to make old Finnish folk tunes fresh, more contemporary, to make contact with young people. The first Karelia LP also marked a folk instrument making renaissance. When Rauno Nieminen saw the record cover he thought I would be playing a birchbark flute. I was just using an ordinary flute. He decided that he would have to make a birchbark flute that would sound good.[191]

Vesala's own outlawism, however, began less as an attempt social engineering in relation to Finnish identity or musical history, and more to an attempt to retain a personal identity within jazz music in the late 1970s and through the 1980s under the presence of codifying forces within arts and educational organisations in Europe informed by a rising neo-classicism movement in jazz.

For example, Vesala himself is known in Finnish music circles for his opposition to the way the Sibelius Academy set about teaching the jazz art form. It was in the context of the most conservative and retrospective period of jazz music's history that the Sibelius Academy established its program, one that focussed heavily on a historical approach to the art with a definite leaning towards mastery of the Bebop language and swing feels. Vesala's own attitude, conversely, was one of fierce and dedicated individuality. For some of those musicians that performed in his band, he demanded that they choose between a conservatory education at the Sibelius Academy and the opportunity to play in his group, which by the 1980s was well established as one of the most creative improvisational ensembles in Europe.[192] Not surprisingly, the musicians of whom he demanded this chose Vesala over the Sibelius Academy. In this way, Vesala was in many respects an outlaw. He may not have robbed stagecoaches on his silvery horse, but he did steal back individuality, communal identity and the

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[191] Seppo Paakkunainen, cited in Tine K. Ramnarine*, Ilmatar's Inspirations: Nationalism, Globalization and the Changing Soundscapes in Finnish Folk Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 59-60.
[192] Interview with Antti Kujanpää, 12 January 2011.

right to authorship of identity narratives within the creative process of jazz and improvised music from conservatism, social conformity and globalism as arbitrated by social change dictated by trends in the American jazz environment.

Vesala did not completely sever the umbilical chord between Finnish jazz music and the American homeland of the art by his 'Ode to the Death of Jazz' or related expressions of his philosophy, nor did he likely seek to. Finland today, most certainly, still produces some of the most productive and talented musicians within the mainstream jazz vernacular. However, Vesala kept the confluent nature of Finnish music alive within the world of improvised music, at a point where it was the most compromised by ascendant philosophy since World War II. Vesala kept radicalism, multi-consciousness, inclusiveness, and individuality at the forefront of the Finnish jazz scene. In fact, his legacy continues to do so, giving improvising musicians in Finland a choice and an alternative to hegemony to this day. He is one of the most influential and important outlaws of European improvised music for achieving such an influence on the consciousness of a community. Therefore, it may be quite fitting to understand Vesala as an outlaw in the folkloric sense. He certainly has, to paraphrase Koonistra, provided a sense of justice and-musical-kinship in opposition to a type of bureaucratic incursion of external culture in the form of the codification of jazz aesthetics based upon the stylistic norms of the American tradition. Vesala, the outlaw, fought, through the nature of his art, to keep Finnish jazz in the hands of the contemporary artist despite the pressure of legitimacy as pertains to the music's historical baggage.

Improvised music, by its very nature, has a different temporal relationship to its cultural context than purely composed music or preservationistic folk music. Improvisation, true improvisation, exists in immediacy. ‘Immediacy’ is its most fundamental aspect, yet it is also able to reference the past and discuss potential futures. Surely, this puts it in a very powerful position in terms of cultural work. If we relinquish the necessity to define folk music as a purely retrospective act, and instead define it by the cultural work that it is doing, then jazz and improvised music are as much a part of folk music as any, perhaps more emphatic, expression. In addition, to rely on retrospectivity as an intrinsic

element of the practice of folklore divorces us from the contemporary subject and the opportunity to discuss the cultural life of today, and potentially tomorrow, in the context of the scholarly foundations of the folkloristic discipline.

Narrative in the context of Nordic jazz music, and therefore folkloristics as a scholarly basis for the discussion of these narratives, are used to highlight a meaningful condition occurring between the performed work and its audience. Such a condition, which is dependent upon the audience's interpertive processes, can be underscored by the work of Stanley Fish. Fish's significant contribution to this area posed the all-important question; 'is the reader or the text the source of meaning?'[193] In the introduction to a well-known collection of his essays on the subject, *Introduction, or How I Stopped Worrying and Learned to Love Interpretation*, Fish provides an explanation of the interpretive process that brings us somewhat full circle from the problems of interpretive practice highlighted by Berger and Del Negro earlier in this chapter.

> It is often assumed that literary theory presents a set of problems whose shape remains unchanging and in relation to which our critical procedures are found to be more or less adequate; that is, the field of enquiry stands always ready to be interrogated by questions it itself constrains. It seems to me, however, that the relationship is exactly the reverse: the field of inquiry is *constituted* by the questions we are able to ask because the entities that populate it come into being as the presuppositions—they are the discourse-specific entities—of those questions.[194]

Correspondingly, Fish's position concerning the creation of meaning and the relationship between reader and text is something that is a fundamental assumption for interpretive aspects this thesis. While a more even-handed position may well hold that meaning is a shared process between reader and

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[193] Stanley Eugene Fish, *Is There A Text In This Class?: The Authority Of Interpretive Communities* (Harvard: President and Fellow of Harvard College, 1980), 1.
[194] Ibid., 1.

text, audience and performer/work, Fish claimed that it was the reader themselves that was responsible for the creation of meaning.

> The reader's response is not *to* the meaning; it *is* the meaning, or at least the medium in which what I wanted to call the meaning comes into being, and therefore to ignore or discount it is to risk a great deal of what is going on.[195]

In relation to Nordic jazz music addressed here, meaning itself is naturally highly subjective. Even the musician, or composer's own attribution of meaning to a given work is highly interpretive, and may not be any more concerned with an objective meaning structured within the given work as any audience member's assignment of related meaning. Berger and Del Negro position the performer in a position not dissimilar to the audience themselves.

> Interpretive practices occur on the part of the performer as well. Observing his/her own actions, the performer may produce a number of reflective or imbedded identity interpretations and situate them variously in the foreground, the defining background, or the receding background of experience.[196]

Therefore, it can be concluded that an artist's own interpretation of the meaning of his or her work is not necessarily any more validating to the nature or even existence of meaning within a given work than that of an audience member. Following from this, not only is enquiry into musical meaning legitimate beyond the bounds established or acknowledged by the work's creator, but it is also surely necessary.

In conclusion, narrative, as a metaphor, illuminates continuity and the connectedness within the interpretations of these 'readers'. Additionally, by

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[195] Fish, *Is There A Text In This Class?,* 3.
[196] Berger and Del Negro, *Identity and Everyday Life: Essays in the Study of Folklore, Music and Popular Culture*, 148.

identifying meaning as significantly a creation of community interpretation, folkloristics subsequently becomes a relevant and applicable tool for the examination of the societal function of the art as a meaningful act. Folklore as an analytic utility for Nordic jazz music has the potential to provide tangibility and framework to such meaning. It should be apparent at this stage that not only has Nordic jazz music intersected with narrative of particular identity within various communities in the Nordic countries, but also that it has itself become a tangible aspect of the identity symbols that support such a narrative. What surfaces from such a line of inquiry is the manner in which Nordic art and music, such as that jazz music discussed here, can stand as a community's own remembrance/continuance of culturally based community identity, and a celebration of the living condition of such an identity. In addition, as will be discussed in the next two chapters, the simultaneous expression of such narratives of cultural continuity as well as jazz improvisation, as an inherently dialectic form of related narrative process, give these abstracted and insinuative gestures a subtle, yet poignant effect on the identifying consciousness of the Nordic community.

CHAPTER 4

NARRATIVES OF UNIVERSALISM: CONFLUENT MUSIC, COMPOSITION AND PEDAGOGY

This chapter aims to establish a background for narratives of plurality, universalism and multiplicity in Nordic jazz music, specifically that jazz music which sought openly to incorporate Western art music traditions as well as various other tributary influences. Of interest to this research is music that forms a precedent for the sense of confluence found in the work of the Nordic subjects addressed in the thesis, and here the Third Stream movement is of significance. In addition, this thesis frames a differentiated relationship to composition that has occurred among some artists in the Nordic countries and discusses ramifications for a continuing tradition through the attendance to certain pedagogical conditions. It will be shown how, through the raised importance of composition, this music aligns relatively to the art of certain American musicians, either by congruity or incongruity, creating narratives of wider inference that intersect with narratives of cultural universalism

A confluence, by literal definition, is the moment in the path of a river or waterway when one or more significant tributaries merge to form a single flow: this single flow then continues as along its allotted path. The term when applied analogously to music—and if it is to be of any use in the analysis and consideration of music—should be less an attempt at creating a new label for any genre of the art, and more a way of shedding light on the evolutions and metamorphoses of certain lineages and traditions, and the way in which some of those traditions are manipulated at this point of merging with other forms. From this understanding of the analogical aspect of the term, a newly formed waterway or reach of a river may, or may not, be subsequently given an independent title by those who use it; yet the confluence is itself another subject. It is not an epithet for the new system but, instead, descriptive of the moment of its inception. Although a noun, 'confluence' also illuminates the processes by

which we arrive at a new system, for it is an object of process itself, and this process must culminate in an emergence.

It is this process of emergence and rebirth which, when applied to music, sets the terminology somewhat apart from other genre-specific appellations such as 'Third Stream', or 'Fusion', or the other myriad of musical terms we have invented, most of which attempt, quite understandably, to give title and individuality to the new entity. Of course, among practitioners of improvised music these genre labels have traditionally meant very little. The creators of any form are quite naturally more concerned with the process of creation than the ordering of the results. Genre is for the benefit of the consumer, for he or she to differentiate between objects of art without the necessity for profound involvement. Genre terminologies, such as Third Stream (or even jazz), serve a purpose to be sure, but, for the most part, only on the interpretive side of the artist and audience relationship. To bring our audiences closer to these art works, a deepening of relationship between terminology and the artist's process must be required. It seems logical that the first step toward such a relationship is, at the very least, to acknowledge the existence of the creation process within terminology, rather than merely the quality of the resulting object.

The result of any musicological inquiry concerning that which lies on either side of the musical work; either within the creation process or the reception process, is to deepen humanity's relationship with these works of culture and to keep the creators of these works connected to their audiences and to a wider societal context. In the most recent decades jazz has often been seen to struggle with its relationship to its audiences. Jean-Louis Pautrot writes of the opinion of André Hodeir, one of the greatest scholars of jazz music, and his conception of the push and pull of ideas between artist and audience in contemporary jazz music.

> Hodeir explains, in his 1958 essay, how audiences, whose tastes are, to a large extent, shaped by fame, always tend to lag behind in discovering important new musicians. Elsewhere in *Toward Jazz*, he reminds us that such has been the case in European music since Beethoven, and also in other arts, and that the public was "out of

> phase with the changes required by the artist" ("Popularity of Recognition," 199). But he also makes clear, as in "A Formidable Wagner," That such a phenomenon does not excuse artists from pushing forwards" You mustn't be afraid to be right." (70) Hodeir is not a defeatist who things that all art is killed by money. This essay ends with an expression of hope, a plea for Milt Jackson, and a call for the reader to go and listen to current endeavours.[197]

By such reasoning, if such an ill considered and oft heard idiom such as 'jazz is dead' is in anyway plausible, it is not so much that jazz artists have failed to create works that are relevant to their audiences but that the society, and those who write or speak about this music, have failed to create the connections to concepts necessary to connect the creation processes of the art's creation to the public's processes of interpretation.

The very fact that the word 'jazz' is often the only descriptive the public has for a myriad of diverse, often plural, mostly absolute musical expressions is an appalling failure on the part of common language to create appropriate linguistic tools for our understanding of this music. Language as a schema for understanding is not a new idea among anthropologists: one often cited conception, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis,[198] is, in essence, the idea that language shapes culture.

> Recognisable versions of the idea go back at least as far as the eighteenth century, but the formation most familiar now grew out of Benjamin Lee Whorf's field work, influenced by Edward Sapir at the Yale University in the mid twentieth century, on concepts of time in Amerindian languages and cultures. Whorf noticed that his subjects' ideas of time and punctuality were very different from those of Anglo-Americans, and that the verb tense structures of their languages differed from that of English in ways that might explain the cultural differences. Perhaps, he suggested, Amerindians found it difficult to understand Anglo notions of time because their own languages did

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[197] Jean-Louis Pautrot, *The André Hodeir Jazz Reader* (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 2006)131-132.
[198] Benjamin Lee Whorf, *Language, Thought, and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf* (Boston: MIT Press, 1956), 159.

> not lend themselves to verbalising those notions. Another example is that Arctic cultures tend to have multiple words for "snow"- not synonyms, but words for different *kinds* of snow that might look like synonyms to people from lower latitudes simply because it has never occurred to them that there *are* different kinds of snow.[199]

It is conceivable, then, that there is a great responsibility for those who write about a music such as jazz and on the greater paradigm of improvised music—an art form that in 2012 is very noticeably still struggling with its relationship to its contemporary cultural context—to facilitate these connections between the creation processes and the music's reception processes through a deepening—and clarifying—application of language and the establishment of more enlightening linguistic tools. Thusly, confluence, which is not a new piece of terminology but is, however, a somewhat underused construct, is utilised in this thesis in relation to the Nordic jazz artists who comprise the subjects of this research.

Lurking on the outskirts for sometime, the term 'confluent music' has become increasingly prominent in the writing of some academics concerned with this pluralistic jazz music. One early significant work to make explicit use of the term was the dissertation of Clarence Joseph Stuessy Junior. Stuessy suggests that 'this flowing together of influences from pop[200] and classical be referred to as 'confluent music'' and notes that 'it may be suggested that Schuller's term 'Third Stream music' should suffice here. However, Schuller defines Third Stream music in a much more restrictive way than is often assumed'.[201] Stuessy proceeds to note that, at the time of writing, Schuller's conception excluded all disciplines of music with the exception of jazz and 'classical music'.[202]

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[199] Stanley Schmidt, 'Adjectives that Aren't' *Analog* (March 2011), 4.
[200] The definition of pop, i.e., popular music as used by Stuessy here encompasses American jazz music.
[201] Clarence Joseph Stuessy Jr., 'The Confluence of Jazz and Classical Music from 1950 to 1970', Ph.D Diss. (Eastman School of Music, The Univ. of Rochester, 1977), vii.
[202] Ibid., vii.

In another academic study instrumental in the fostering of 'confluent', Heather Koren Pinson gives us a definition of musical confluence that while concise, does even less to distance itself from the Third Stream paradigm.

> Confluent music combines in a single composition aspects of Western art music (henceforth called "classical music") with those of one or more types of popular music—whether folk, gospel, rhythm and blues, or jazz. The performing forces of confluent works may vary accordingly, ranging from the symphony orchestra to jazz combos and anything in between.[203]

Pinson's thesis does point out some significant confusions within Schuller's own Third Stream rhetoric, and in parts is as much an attempt to clarify Schuller's many and varied statements as it is to redefine this form of music and begin building from new and clearer foundations. However, Pinson's definition of confluent music differs significantly from Schuller's own use of the term. Fundamentally, Pinson sees confluent music as preserving the dualities of its tributaries within the final aesthetic whereas Schuller conceives of confluent music as synthesis of these influences into a unified statement. In a thesis written recently in Australia, Matthew John Styles points out a fundamental difference of understanding between the two influential figures.

> Whilst Pinson uses the term 'confluence' to describe the result of musical joinings, Schuller draws on the term 'confluence' to describe the process by which two or more elements are influenced by each other to form a wholly contained and separate genre (jazz).[204]

So confluence by Schuller's definition may well be understood as the processes

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[203] Heather Koren Pinson, 'Aspects Of Jazz and Classical Music In David N. Baker's *Ethnic Variations On A Theme Of Paganini',* M.Mus. Diss. (Louisiana State Univ., 2002), 2.

[204] Matthew John Styles, 'An Evaluation of the Concept of Third Stream Music and its Applicability to Selected Works by Gunther Schuller and Mark-Anthony Turnage', Doctorate of Musical Arts Diss. (University of Western Australia, School of Music, 2008), 106.

by which Third Stream operates. Third Stream might, therefore, amount merely to a genre appellation for a specific style of confluent music. In this work the definition falls somewhere in between these poles. This research is primarily concerned with the congruencies between the processes of Third Stream music. As will be show in the forthcoming paragraphs, Third Stream as a sub-genre of jazz music was met with a degree of scepticism in socio-cultural environment of American jazz music. This thesis frames the music of its subjects as part of the tradition of jazz music, however, a European 'diaspora' of jazz music that has, by the multiplicities of its influence, given rise to new expressive idioms. The methodologies of this music may well be seen as a potential extension of the Third Stream experiments, and moreover, are acts of the confluence process described by Schuller.

Due to the unity and relatedness of expressive syntax that these artists display, neither Schuller's definition nor Pinson's fits the purposes of this research perfectly. The latter may be understood as a hybrid form of confluence rather than the metamorphic form of confluence, which this research primarily seeks to address. Pinson, however, indispensably points out that Schuller's conceptions were often in flux and sometimes reorientating their central focus.

> Schuller's evolving definition creates great difficulty in determining the essential characteristics of Third Stream. He was especially unclear regarding the degree to which elements of jazz and classical music combine to form a new style.[205]

> Schuller seemed to shift its focus to phrasing, calling for a 'process of joining jazz inflections and phrasing to the more set phrases and techniques of nonjazz music.' He further complicated the meaning of Third Stream by seemingly contradictory statements regarding the relationship of jazz and classical components: on the one hand, he claimed that they should not merge at the cost of losing their respective identity; on the other hand, he made it clear that Third Stream music was not supposed to preserve the purity of each

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[205] Pinson, 'Aspects Of Jazz and Classical Music In David N. Baker's *Ethnic Variations On A Theme Of Paganini'*, 9.

contributing stream but to create a stylistic synthesis.[206]

Perhaps Pinson did not feel any great requirement to focus on delineating confluent music as an entity independent from Schuller's Third Stream, as confluent music had already found independent foundation in Stuessy's seminal work. Stuessy himself found Schuller's definitions of Third Stream too restrictive and noted the exclusion of fully composed confluent music by Schuller's definition, which demanded the inclusion of improvisation as an intrinsic characteristic.[207] Stuessy defines for us two separate avenues for the understanding of confluent music. The two separate forms of confluent music Stuessy proposed finds congruity in the examinations of change conceptions that will be further explored later in this thesis. Stuessy proposes firstly what he calls 'integrated' confluent music, which seeks to 'isolate and extract and extract specific elements of jazz and classical styles and then fuse these into a new style'.[208] This is in essence a neo-Hegelian dialectic synthesis, the creation of a new truth and new proposition from conflict of thesis and antithesis. It is also a corollary to the metamorphic change I will discuss further in chapter five.

Continuing, Stuessy points out that there are those that seek to place these tributaries in juxtaposition, without synthesis, what he calls 'adjacent' confluence wherein the 'contributory styles of jazz and classical music should be juxtaposed, with each style retaining its distinct identity'.[209] This is the hybridised form of change that we will, again, cover in further in chapter five, but for now it is important only to understand that both of these forms create differing contributions to an allegory of change that is, hence, presented in differing ways within the larger social and communal narrative.

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[206] Ibid., 9.
[207] Clarence Joseph Stuessy Jr., 'The Confluence of Jazz and Classical Music from 1950 to 1970', vii.
[208] Ibid., x.
[209] Ibid., x.

It is possible that this particular area of musical debate, as encumbered as it is with mishandled labelling and debates over definition, might be so concerned with terminology for a significant purpose. This quest for self-definition is in essence the other side of the quest for identity, and what has been discussed here is not just academic debate about terminology, but also the inception of self-awareness in a still-emerging art form, being interpreted within a given community. Sense of community can be understood as a form of imagination.[210] It is a group imagining that has reached a type of consensus among, not only the participants in that community, but very often certain onlookers and informed readers. Of course, any audience will have specific differentiated interpretive branches as well, there is no such thing as consensus among the readers, and this is another reason semiology in its traditional sense can become problematic for jazz, and art music in general.

In relation to Nordic jazz, too often one reads discourse that considers the music in terms of a singular expression of national identity. The whole notion of jazz as a diaspora music is, however, lost when nationalism or regional particularity are considered out of greater context. The communities considered in this thesis are, therefore, primarily communities of shared cultural identity, rather than nationhood. As Kirshenblatt-Gimblett describes:

> Cultural identities, as Hall defines them, are positionalities in retrospect (Hall 1997). Or, in Paul Gilroy's terms, "Diaspora's discomfort with carelessly over-integrated notions of culture, and its rather fissured sense of particularity, fits readily with the best moods of politicised postmodernism which share an interest in understanding the self as contingently and performatively produced.[211]

Absolutes are rarely if ever to be found in the musicological discussion of improvised music. The music is simply in too great a state of flux to be able to be

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[210] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.
[211] Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 'Folklore's Crisis.', 295.

examined in a conclusive and temporally infallible way. Perhaps it is simply too soon, and as observers we are too close, to categorically conclude too much. Yet we can 'dance about architecture' in our pursuit of greater understanding. This music is fundamentally a form of imagination, and so therefore can our musicological discussion of the music embrace similar, congruous imaginations. Benedict Andersen in his book *Imagined Communities* considers the community, cultural organisation and even nationhood as a form of imagination.

> It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. In fact, all communities larger than primordial villages of face to face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined.[212]

Therefore, a community connected by ideas is potentially a much more unified example of a communal structure than a nation or even a geographically constituted community. The shared style in which the community is imagined is surely much more consensual within the community of improvisers, jazz or otherwise, than within any more statutory declaration of community.

Could it be that under the condition of globalisation, heightened by communicative technology, that a community related by shared philosophical imaginings could become more significant to cultural acts, and thereby folkloristic scholarship, than communities united by more superficial imaginings such as geography or nationality? There exists the potential that this condition will increasingly divorce us from the practice of culture as a specific act, indigenous to certain locations, while bringing increasing access and legitimacy to the incorporation of diverse and even distant cultural practices. Simply, this may occur as a result of this distance between the contemporary community member and any regionally specific constitution of community. In the

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[212] Anderson, *Imagined Communities,* 6.

contemporary, postmodern condition of globalised society all expressions become relatively equidistant. Isozaki Arata describes an analogous process in architecture:

> The Katsura Palace, the Parthenon, the Capitoline piazza, and so on all live in a time and place equidistant from us. Anything occurring in the history of architecture-and even the history of the world-is open to quotation. But the important point to notice is that, once quoted, things lose their original meaning and generate new meanings.[213]

The metamorphosis to such post modernity is a process that is currently still manifesting in the Nordic countries, and confluent music represents but one reflective picture of this change. This is assuredly one narrative of cultural change that Nordic confluent jazz music imbeds within its 'text'. Such relationships, whether it be to cultural practice or cultural artefacts, are certainly informing any contemporary understandings of community identity.

Debate over Third Stream music might well, then, be viewed as a debate over identity, where the main confusion lies in precisely whose identity is being expressed by the art form. Proponents of jazz music as an analogy of specifically, and its seems solely, American identity seem to have found it difficult to understand and except this form as an expression of a different and separate community, and any independence that Third Stream artists longed for was generally argued for in vane.

The Third Stream movement arose in the United States in the 1950s onwards and was, at its inception, an attempt to create a musical form that was a synthesis of Western art music and jazz.[214] Third Stream, destined as it was to become a quite problematic piece of terminology, was first coined by composer

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[213] Isozaki Arata, 'Of City Nation and Style', in Masao Miyoshi and H. D. Harootunian eds*. Postmodernism and Japan* (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1989), 59.
[214] Gunther Schuller, 'Third Stream Flow' *Jazziz* 17/1 (2000), 70-72.

Gunther Schuller in 1957 during a lecture at Brandeis University. In his famous 1961 article, Schuller defines Third Stream as a genre 'halfway between jazz and classical music'[215] and as a style that 'attempts to fuse the improvisational spontaneity and rhythmic vitality of jazz with the compositional procedures and techniques acquired in Western music during the 700 years of musical development'.[216]

Since that time various attempts have been made to create a more satisfactory manifesto by these artists who were, in essence, endeavouring to cross what was as much a social divide as a musical one, between jazz and the traditions of Western art music, which were generally more widely acknowledged as the legitimate art form by certain institutions and historically powerful strata of society.[217]

In addition, this is also true of the jazz community itself, and its associated press, all of whom were suspicious of this 'intruder', one seen to threaten the purity of a music that many understood as constituting a symbol of identity for many Americans, even if essentially communities of lower social class. Yet this was a music that has even been conceived as a symbol of American individuality and freedom,[218] and an analogy for the ideals of American society itself. Importantly to this thesis, Third Stream challenged ideas of identity within jazz music, in essence asking if jazz was the domain of African-American identity or could be in more general terms an expression of American identity as a multicultural environment, and therefore encompass expressions of European-American identity.

The responses to Third Stream from music critics and newspaper journalists were merciless. So much rhetoric and opinion, often loaded with vested interest,

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[215] Gunther Schuller, *Musings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 114.
[216] Ibid., 115.
[217] Daniel Hardie, *Exploring Early Jazz* (Lincoln: Writers Club Press, 2002), 15.
[218] Lucas E. Morel, ed. *Ralph Ellison and the Raft of Hope: A Political Companion to Invisible Man* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2004), 60.

was expressed in the early stages of the exposure of the movement that any conceptions inextricability related to this terminology are well and truly relegated to the artefacts of history. Jean P. Leblanc in a 1962 issue of *Negro Digest* went so far as to proclaim that 'the posturings of the John Lewis-Gunther Schuller clique are pretentiously pathetic' and that the pianist John Lewis 'submerges his Modern Jazz Quartet in a farrago of pseudo-crypto-neo-quasi-classicalism'.[219] Later, in his biography of John Coltrane, Eric Nisenson would retrospectively conclude that, 'by emphasizing its European elements, jazz began to lose touch with its folk roots and alienate a good deal of its audience'.[220] It was, in many respects, this inability to attain independence from its jazz origins that plagued the Third Stream composers: all too often these artists found themselves in a position of being critiqued as a branch of jazz music instead of individual artists in their own right.

The unrelenting criticisms not only came by way of the critics, however. A number of prominent musicians also expressed negative feelings about the Third Stream concept: 'Although he rarely spoke out on such matters, (John) Coltrane made clear his dislike for the Third Stream. Miles Davis also disliked it, comparing Third Stream music to 'looking at a naked woman you don't like''.[221] Even musicians whose music was intimately involved in the kind of amalgamations Schuller was proposing resisted this disadvantageous sobriquet. A good example of this is Stan Kenton, whose work in the 1940s and 1950s with composers such as Bob Graettinger has yielded one of the most unified amalgamations of Western art music and jazz improvisation to date. Jack McKinney remembers that 'Kenton is quick to point out his lack of empathy for the vapid form which is Third Stream, and he refuses to consider any of his efforts as such'[222] and also interestingly claims that 'Kenton is not interested in

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[219] Jean P. Leblanc, 'Is Jazz Sick', *Negro Digest* (June 1962), 39.
[220] Eric Nisenson, *Ascension: John Coltrane and his Quest* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 110.
[221] Ibid., 110.
[222] Jack McKinney, 'The Kenton Story' http://www.jazzprofessional.com/interviews/kenton%20story.htm (accessed 1 October 2010).

this effort for he is positive that for jazz to survive it must maintain its own identity'.[223] Quite rightly, McKinney points out that Stan Kenton's group not only laid many of the foundations for Schuller's later developments, but that his experiments in this regard were also arguably more successful: 'Kenton presented more ambitious and better integrated works of classically–tinged but still vital jazz in his Progressive and Innovations orchestras in the later 1940s and early 1950s, and with the concert scores of the past three years'.[224] One might well speculate that Kenton's success in this regard is quite possibly facilitated by his being unencumbered with the rhetoric and criticism that later surrounded Schuller and his terminology. Equally, it may be speculated that many of the musicians who sought publicly to distance themselves from the concept were more concerned with distancing themselves from the controversy than from the musical direction itself. Notable in this regard is that Miles Davis, although critical of Schuller actually recorded with him; the conductor performing on French horn during Davis' classically influenced *Birth of the Cool* recording. Miles also went on to make *Sketches of Spain,* another historically influential recording combining improvisers and orchestral musicians.

Unfortunately, the commentary that brewed around Third Stream was exactly the type of controversy Schuller hoped to avoid by creating the term in the first place.

> I am fully aware that individually, jazz and classical music have long, separate traditions that many people want to keep separate and sacred. I also recognise the right of musicians in either field to focus their attention entirely on preserving the idiomatic purity of these traditions. It is precisely for these reasons I thought it best to separate from these two traditions the new genre.[225]

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[223] Ibid.
[224] Ibid.
[225] Schuller, *Musings*, 115.

It must be acknowledged that by this stage Third Stream, only a few years after the words had entered the popular media, had now become an almost unusable term due to this acquired baggage of connotation and controversy. Whether or not one views this term as particularly appropriate or useful, it is hard to deny that it was not really given due chance by critics, media and even many musicians, to establish itself as an independent entity in the United States. Even now, after this war of ideas is a relic of history, the idea endures that, instead of its own discrete form, Third Stream is jazz that doesn't swing, or the orchestra playing that more popular (less legitimate) jazzy music,[226] albeit as an undercurrent in these politically correct days when such passion-filled opinion pieces, as were published fifty years ago about the subject, would now be far less likely to see the light of day.

These ideas do, however, endure, and the inability of many critics to evaluate improvised music from outside a jazz tradition continues. Even Edward Vesala's ECM records masterpiece *Ode to the Death of Jazz* suffers at the hands of a reviewer from the *All Music Guide* who ironically compares him with Third Stream composers and then objects to his relinquishing of stylistic elements of the jazz tradition. 'There's a hint of George Russell in several of the pieces, but without that composer's sly humour and deep melodic sense. Instead, there's more of a 'Third Stream' sound, but one that has dispensed with a bit too much of the blues.'[227] Olewnick's glaring misconceptions such as his apparent confusion between Finnish and Argentinean tango aside, this reviewer is basically recapitulating the same kind of criticism that was brought to bear against the Third Stream composers decades previously. It is a position that is not uncommon in the critique of European improvised music by the American media,[228] yet potentially does more to reveal the fear of a community whose

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[226] Robert Palmer, 'Jazzmen At Odds With Stereotypical Swing' *New York Times*, February 7, 1982.
[227] Brian Olewnick, 'Ode to the Death of Jazz' *All Music Guide,* http://www.allmusic.com/cg/amg.dll?p=amg&sql=10:hxfwxq8gldae (accessed 29 September 2010).
[228] Mike Heffley, 'European Free Jazz: Whiteness As Friend, Or Same Old Foe?' *Almamusicology* 2006,

cultural artefact is now perhaps more potent beyond its homeland. Whatever one's position about the success of this record, it is interesting that association with the term Third Stream still carries the same connotations of 'restrained' 'academic' jazz.[229] This kind of criticism assessed Third Stream music solely in relation to a specific jazz canon, and specifically traditions of American jazz, rather understanding it as a artistic statement in its own right, to be then assessed on its own merits and objectives, with due understanding of the art work's relevant sociological context. Why, for instance, would one consider blues to be a compulsory element in the expressions of a Finnish drummer? Instead of seeing Vesala's music for what it was, this review takes the far too common position of assessing the music in terms of what it wasn't, i.e., jazz of a purely American vernacular.

There is, ineradicably, something about the term, and the notion of Third Stream that provokes reaction, especially among those who see jazz as an analogy for specifically American identity. Speaking from an artistic standpoint, Schuller himself expressed little attachment to the term. 'Ultimately, I don't care whether the term 'Third Stream' survives. In the interim it is no more than a handy descriptive term. It should be obvious that a piece of Third Stream music is first of all *music*, and its quality can not be determined solely by categorization'.[230] While for some reason, perhaps the lack of common adoption of an alternative, the term has endured, at least in relation to the music of Schuller and his contemporaries with whom it first became associated. However, in the intervening decades much has been done to widen and refine its definitions.

In 1967 Schuller became president of the New England Conservatory in Boston, Massachusetts, where by the 1970s he had founded the only department of Third

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http://mheffley.web.wesleyan.edu/almatexts/almamusicology/Whiteness%20as%20Friend%20or%20Foe.pdf (accessed 3 October 2010).

[229] Olewnick, 'Ode to the Death of Jazz' *All Music Guide* (accessed 29 September 2010).

[230] Schuller, *Musings*, 115.

Stream music in the United States.[231] He hired a number of prominent composers of Third Stream music, such as Ran Blake and George Russell, to join him there. Somewhat in refuge from the cacophony of critical opinion regarding the movement, at New England Conservatory these composers could work in peace, fostering younger musicians with similar goals and refining their own conceptions.

By the early 1980s these same individuals were advocating a far more expansive manifesto for the department. Ran Blake in his paper entitled 'Third Stream and the Importance of the Ear' stated:

> I went a step further towards a clearer definition by describing Third Stream music as a label for an anti-label music. At the time this seemed the most relaxed and least doctrinaire meaning. But this still defines a finished product, an entity. During the last few months I have begun to use the term Third Stream as a verb. Now I am convinced that it is a process, an action, and if the final product must be labelled, a new term such as 'salsa' will be coined, or it will carry the name of the author, e.g., Mingus.[232]

A related, and increasingly all-inclusive definition was supported by Schuller himself that same year, in the contents of a 1981 recruitment booklet for new students at the New England Conservatory. This presented a broader perspective on the nature of Third Stream from Schuller, one more in keeping with the ideas of Blake.

> From its original idea to fuse classical and jazz concepts and techniques, it has broadened out—in ways that are an apt corollary to our expanded knowledge of non-Western cultures and the rapid shrinking of our globe—to embrace, at least potentially, all the world's ethnic vernacular and folk music. It is a non-traditional music which exemplifies cultural pluralism and personal freedom. It is for those who have something to say creatively/musically but who do no

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[231] Michael Sletcher, ed. *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of American Regional Cultures: New England* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004), 338.
[232] Blake, 'Third Stream and the Importance of the Ear', 1.

> necessarily fit the predetermined moulds into which our culture always wishes to press us. Third Stream, more than any other concept of music, allows those individuals who, by accident of birth or station, reflect a diversified cultural background, to express themselves in uniquely personal ways.[233]

While this seems like a timely mandate for a internationally accessible, postmodern art music, it had, at least to the overtly commercial realm of the American music producer and consumer, arrived after the battle for public legitimacy had been fought and lost and, coming from its refuge within the halls of academia, has gone on generally overlooked by improvised music's 'public' in the United States. While these audiences were, in the proceeding years of the 1980s, being fed the neo-classicist rhetoric of outspoken artists like Wynton Marsalis who, loaded with critic Stanley Crouch's second hand philosophy, became an almost omnipresent figure in the jazz media, classical music audiences remained typically ambivalent.[234] As a result, a declining number of ears were open to any confluence of jazz and Western art music in the United States. This was, of course, exactly the same ideology that Vesala's *Sound and Fury* was positioning itself apart from as it filtered across the Atlantic.

Irrespective of these resistances many highly respected composers historically have, as a subject of common knowledge, drawn upon jazz to inform their works. George Gershwin, Igor Stravinsky, Darius Milhaud and Maurice Ravel were but a number of these who looked to jazz in a search for source material and inspiration. All these composers, whose perspectives in relation to the jazz of that time might well be considered almost neo-orientalist, coming as they did from their positions as practitioners of Western art music, sought to reflect the colours of the folk music and dance rhythms of this, then still quite new, American jazz music. However, the intentions of these composers were never one of significant commitment to synthesis. While much of the music of Ravel,

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[233] Schuller, *Musings*, 120.
[234] David Joyner, 'Analysing Third Stream' *Contemporary Music Review,* 19/1 (2000), 85.

Stravinsky and other early twentieth-century composers was then new music, it was firmly new Western art music and not concerned with any extension or recontextualising of the jazz traditions from which it drew inspiration.

> Even before Gunther Schuller coined the phrase ''Third Stream'' in the late 1950s, a number of composers had been experimenting with the confluence of jazz and classical music. However, very few of these mixtures were created by composers who had a true grasp of both the classical and jazz languages.[235]

It was in this regard, perhaps more than any other, that Schuller is an important figure; it is his enduring commitment to draw upon jazz and the classical art music tradition on an impartial basis. It is perhaps these early gestures towards postmodernism and the breaking down of distinctions between high and low art that, as much as any other aspect, subconsciously angered many onlookers when Schuller's Third Stream became politicized through articles in the *New York Times* in 1960.[236] All of this has contributed to a great deal of political baggage being connected with the term Third Stream, which may well be in many respects a quite ill-conceived piece of, perhaps even overly provocative, terminology.

Third Stream did, however, set an important precedent for the kinds of musical pluralities that the subjects of this thesis innovated in the new cultural context of the various Nordic countries. If we examine an example of the writing of trombonist Bob Brookmeyer, who was an important member of the Third Stream movement and who went on, like Schuller and George Russell, to teach at the New England Conservatory of Music, we see certain commonalities with this Nordic confluent music. Brookmeyer's *American Tragedy* is a piece of uncommon pacing, it is a piece where we hear the orchestration 'breathe' as events are played out with a conscientious sense of timing and development. There is a

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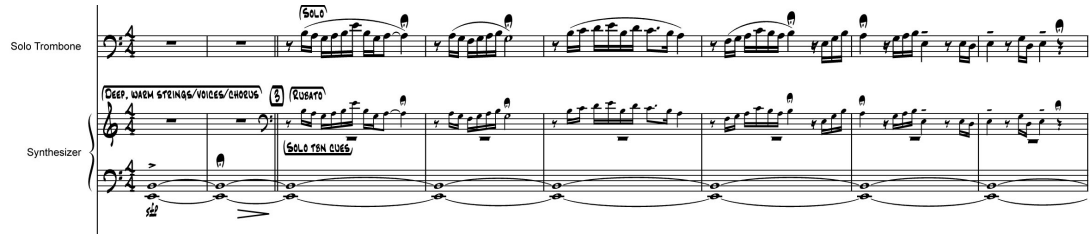
[235] Garth Alper, 'Making Sense Out of Postmodern Music?' *Popular Music and Society* 24/4 (Winter 2000), 5.
[236] Schuller, *Musings*, 114.

strong parallel between this sense and the example of Trygve Seim's music, which will be examined later in this chapter. American Tragedy was recorded on a relatively recent album, *Waltzing for Zoe*, in 2001. By this time Brookmeyer was a fully formed composer, with experience writing music for a plathora of varying contexts including jazz big band, symphony orchestra and chamber ensemble. The piece begins with a pedal in the low brass, over which a trombone solo occurs. In the following example from Brookmeyer's score we see the pedal in the synthesizer stave, however, this part was given to the low brass in the recording (see example 8). In this ensemble, essentially a standard big band, the third trombone is a bass trombone while the fourth trombone doubles on tuba.

Example 8 Bars 1- 8 *American Tragedy*[237]

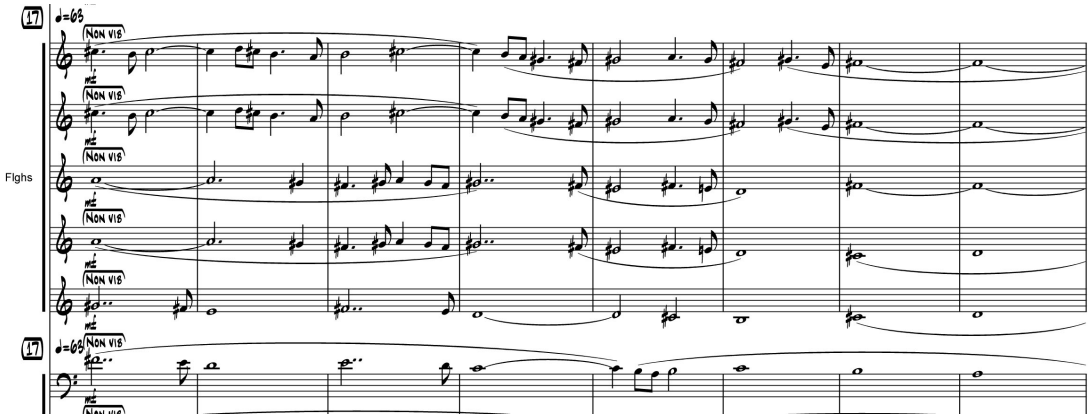


In this introduction the trombone presents an almost cantorial recitation of a solo that, contrasting the score to the recording, is somewhere between improvised and composed. This whole introductory elaboration on a pedal point might be thought of as very European in its phrasing and sentiment. There is much space and brevity in the musical material being delivered by Brookmeyer in a very vocal, yet also very stoic, manner. However, important is the way that it is conceptualised rhythmically. It is almost rubato, and yet it really never gives the time away completely: instead, there is pulse instead of strict time, which gives way to repeated fermata points at the end of the phrases (see example 8 above). It is a vocal, almost choral sense of time in relation to phrasing. There is an emphasis on subtone here, and each successive tone is chosen with a sense of deliberateness and conscious intellect in place of abandonment to subconscious improvisational reaction.

[237] From the original score, attained from Bob Brookmeyer.

In *American Tragedy*, when the introduction is over, time resumes. Here Brookmeyer gives is a distinct exposition of counterpoint featuring three prominent interacting melodies (see example 9 and see the extract from the score in the appendices for the full ensemble orchestration).

Example 9 Bars 17-24 *American Tragedy* (Trumpets and 1st Trombone)[238]



There is much difference in the treatment of harmony and voicing, yet there is a certain commonality between this and the Christian Wallumrød compositions discussed later in this chapter, if only for the occupation with the sixteenth-century art of counterpoint. Brookmeyer's music is incredibly modern, and incorporates the hippest of jazz dissonances in his voicings, making this sound like anything other than sixteenth century music, however, some of the same intellectual methodologies are certainly present. I am sure, in addition, that Brookmeyer, being a scholarly composer of works for orchestra and chamber ensemble in addition to big band, has spent time studying counterpoint as pertains the Fux/Palestrina tradition, as he has taught the subject to other musicians.[239]

Brookmeyer's *American Tragedy*, while it shares many of the influence of our Nordic subjects, markedly different. For instance, Brookmeyer's piece features

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[238] Ibid.
[239] Hans Koller, *Birmingham Conservatoire,* http://www.conservatoire.bcu.ac.uk/profiles/hans-koller (accessed 10 October, 2011).

long improvised passages, where the composition functions as a vehicle for extended improvisations. As will be seen when we contrast this against Seim's work, this brings to light a very different aesthetic. The relationship between improviser and composition, perhaps more than any other element serves to show that the Nordic confluent music addressed here is not merely Nordic Third Stream. There are vastly different priorities in the two aesthetics, different working methodologies and different socio-cultural relationships to the various influences (in this case Western art music) purely as a product on location.

Interestingly, Brookmeyer maintains a very multinational ensemble featuring players from Europe, Australia, the Americas and also the Nordic countries. Therefore, perhaps, Third Stream may encompass much more of an identity than just the expression of a solely American identity. However the controversy it generated most certainly was American, and similar musical developments in other parts of the world, while potentially informed by the Third Stream composers and related artists, were in a unique position to develop confluences in relative peace, perhaps even gaining support and recognition through the widened audience appeal that such works precipitated. However it must also be acknowledged that, at least in retrospect, the writings of critics are of significance for the fact that they informed the audiences and therefore influenced the interpretation of the music within its social environment. It is for this reason that a number of critics' opinions have been discussed here.

In the Nordic countries, a very different paradigm existed than the one encountered by the Third Stream composers, one where the various institutions were far less entrenched and a great many improvising musicians had in fact learnt much of the traditions of Western art music and folk music as part of their musical development.[240] As stated by accordionist Frode Haltli, himself a practitioner of both Western art music and improvisational music, it is not an uncommon occurrence to see jazz musicians, classically trained instrumentalists and even folk musicians or rock musicians performing together on the same

[240] Frode Haltli cited in Rorke, 'It's Ok to Listen to the Grey Voice', 86.

stage in Scandinavia. It is perhaps a product of smaller communities, where there may be a limited number of performers, that any given individual during his/her career is afforded a wider stylistic spectrum of performance opportunity. Scandinavia might not have the heights of achievement that a performance in Carnegie Hall, the Blue Note or the Sydney Opera House might symbolise, but what it lacks in height in makes up for in breadth.

Along with this, there also exists a certain lack of fear, as all influences potentially stand more or less equidistant, and therefore the perspectives of the individual performers are less informed by any single discipline to the exclusion of any other. Jan Garbarek has stated that 'there is no pure musical mind anymore that has known one source and stayed with that'.[241] To a modern Scandinavian, even the indigenous folk music will mostly seem distant, foreign as it is by time and period if not by place. This objectiveness seems to be a widely acknowledged platform for artistic endeavour in the Nordic countries. By way of these tendencies, improvised music in the Nordic countries has moved closer to a postmodern position where plurality over purity has become the normal state of affairs. Congruencies exist within the contemporary Nordic social environment too, which in the twentieth century, with the immigration of people from a wide variety of places, was increasingly becoming a culturally diverse blend of culture and perspective.[242] It fact one only needs to look at the colourful array of languages in Scandinavia (Norway itself having three distinct vernaculars, Bokmål, Nynorsk and Sami and a large number of dialects within these) to realise that the Nordic lands have long been a place of cultural plurality, even if all too rarely acknowledged as such.

The significant thing about confluent music in the Nordic countries is not, fundamentally, that it merely exists, as most certainly confluence as the critique of purity and a counterweight to potential stagnation of cultural practice and

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[241] Jan Garbarek, cited in Michael Tucker, *Jan Garbarek: Deep Song* (Hull: The University of Hull Press, 1998), 74.
[242] Harald Runblom, 'Swedish Multiculturalism in a Comparative European Perspective' *Sociological Forum* 9/4 (1994), 631.

identity exists in almost all cultures, especially those engaging in cultural discourse with other groups. Instead, the interesting thing about Nordic confluent music is that among certain artists there has arisen a new and unified expression that is focused by an understanding of the particular within its narratives in the Nordic social environment. To use one of the most uncomfortable, yet most common of analogies regarding music, that of language, a new dialect is being created. Of course, many of the musicians discussed in this thesis exhibit a primarily personal voice, which is very much in keeping with the true traditions of jazz music. Duke Ellington for instance, was famous for declaring that he did not play jazz, he played Duke Ellington music. While these artists all have unique personal interpretations of the phrasing, density, rhythmic and harmonic aspects of the music, a small shared working environment has led to a great deal of cross-fertilisation of influence. There is, most certainly, a perceivable, unified expressional commonality that can be observed among many of these players, and this has led to what is arguably one of the world's most successful departures from the American jazz tradition. For this reason the confluent music of the Nordic countries stands as a unique case in the history of the world's improvised music.

As stated in the introduction to this work, there are two distinct narratives that this thesis is examining; particularity and universalism. This thesis does not hold the aesthetic tendencies that may be perceived in Nordic art and music as analogous with only a notion of cultural particularity. This attempts, as far as possible, to avoid that most fervent of European pastimes, nationalism. This is one of the motivations for utilising subjects from various nations within the Nordic lands. Of course, art practices can and do sometimes singularly represent national identity, but this is not the art that concerns this thesis. One might conclude that particular art and music might well be an expression of a rejection of confluence, however, this research will show that this is not necessarily the case. It is also worth observing that the Nordic jazz and improvised music that has had the most impact and the most cultural resonance, both domestically and abroad, is that which is most starkly, and openly plural. I suggest that this tendency toward plurality is, in the twentieth century, far more representative of

the cultural condition of the Nordic countries than national romanticism. The Nordic society is, if any such generalisation may be deemed appropriate, a community for whom progress is as important as tradition. The increasing diversity in Nordic culture, of which immigration of differing peoples with new traditions was merely one factor, by the mid- to late-twentieth century led to a fully realised modernism and philosophy of progressive thinking in art aesthetics, which is now as easily identifiable in the improvised music as it is in the visual art or design.

> In the post-war years Scandinavian art became more diverse as each country responded to modernity in different ways. All the countries shared a socially democratic recognition of social equality, industrialisation and urbanisation as factors of modern life.[243]

Despite this modernism, urbanisation and the immigration of new people much of the Nordic lands remains sparsely populated rural areas with small regional centres dotted among its landscape. In Norway only around five percent of the land is even cultivated farmland, while the capital, Oslo, must be described as a small city. This has given rise to a unique plurality between a viewpoint of globalised modernity and a sense of isolation and locality.

4.1 Composition in the Foreground

I have frequently used the term 'absolute music' in my writings as the antithesis to programme music. This is, of course, a common conception, and indeed a useful one. Yet there must exist an underlying conflict between the search for meaning the notion of 'absolute music'. The question is: how absolute is absolute music? Possibly, the answer is that it is not as absolute as we are often given to assuming. I have tried however, to differentiate 'absolute music' as music that

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[243] Rosie Mitchell, 'Art of Scandinavia: Design in the 20th century', *Faculty of Arts, University of Cumbria, United Kingdom* http://michelangelo.pixel-online.org/files/Manual_of_fine_arts/New%20Manual%2013%20scandinavia.pdf (accessed 24th January, 2011).

may provoke meaning, but does not inherently contain representations of meaning. Still, it is worth considering the notion that absolute music is not, as a condition, absolutely real.

Among the most infamous for her questioning of absolute music is musicologist Susan McClary. Her work has been outspoken and highly influential, particularly in the realm of considering music from a feminist perspective. For McClary, art music has a clear social significance.

> Rather than protecting music as a sublimely meaningless activity that has managed to escape social signification, I insist on treating it as a medium that participates in social formation by influencing the ways we perceive our feelings, our bodies, our desires, our very subjectivities—even if it does so surreptitiously, without most of us knowing how. It is too important a cultural force to be shrouded by mystified notions of Romantic transcendence.[244]

It is difficult not to be somewhat intrigued at, if not enamoured by McClary's strident style. Her understanding of musical meaning is one that avoids overly flamboyant association with theoretical elements of musical analyses; instead it is that her notion of meaning positions music among the social discourses, in effect raising its status in terms of cultural significance.

> To remain with 'purely musical' accounts even of 'absolute' music minimises our appreciation of why and how these pieces have exerted so much influence, how they negotiated the tensions of their times, why they still matter. And it continues to overlook the ways those underlying structures we often receive as bedrock do cultural

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[244] Susan McClary, 'Constructions of Subjectivity in Schubert's Music', in *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology*, ed Philip Brett, Elizabeth Wood and Gary Thomas (New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 205-235. And see also her *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991. 2nd ed. 2007).

> work, even when they purport to speak to us from the refuge of counter convention.[245]

Without doubt her words apply to the subjects of my research. Perhaps there is no autotelic music form that lays more claim to this refuge of 'counter convention' than jazz can. Nordic jazz in itself is often interpreted as a counter convention in relation to, not only the often-expounded stylistic elements of jazz music (to which the art form in general mostly refuses to consistently adhere), but also to the narratives of 'traditional' and 'American' jazz music.

In fact, this research aligns itself more with McClary's perspective than it disagrees with it. Like McClary's own analyses, the perspective of this research is that it is specifically the cultural achievement of Nordic confluent music that has allowed it to exert such influence. Beyond the ingenious and original constructions of sound, this 'cultural work' is why this music matters. However, there is no necessity to dispense with the widely understood metaphor of absolute music. Very likely, for many of the musicians discussed in this thesis[246] this sort of cultural work is beyond their necessary sphere of consideration. Their operational perspective of the art may well be absolute. This is why I suggest that the music 'provokes meaning' rather than represents it. Simply, within the structures designed for this research, the music ceases to be 'absolute' when there is conscious acknowledgement of meaning on both the disseminative and assimilative sides of the relationship. Thus, this research is also grounded on the idea that meaning as interpreted solely on the assimilative side of this transmission is both valid and identifiable.

As described in previous chapters, some meaning is relational in that a change to patterns understood in another context can give significance in the new context. This is one of the central ways that Nordic jazz artists have differentiated

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[245] Susan McClary, *Conventional Wisdom: The Content Of Musical Form.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 138.
[246] For example; Edward Vesala, Iro Haarla, Jan Garbarek, Trygve Seim or Christian Wallumrød, to name just those most frequently discussed.

themselves and constructed a sense of significance for their art within Nordic society. It is precisely rendered meaningful by what they don't do. By changing aspects of the established jazz methodology these artists diverge from the interpreted identities with which that methodology is associated. One of the most significant ways that Nordic jazz music has differentiated itself is by raising the importance of compositional elements within the music. This is a departure from the absolute that can potentially provoke a new sense of identity.

As a generalisation, placing the composition at such a level of importance and using the improvisations in support of the musical narrative of the piece, (as opposed to using a given composition to serve the soloistic proclivity of the instrumentalists) is a distinct divergence between European and American jazz. Of course there is dialogue and interaction between composition and improvisation in all jazz forms, essentially a dialectic between the two processes exist, and the differentiation between how Trygve Seim writes and the way a bebop player interacts with a standard tune may be argued to be, in essence, a matter of proportions. However, it is within these proportions and their manner of presentation that interpretation frequently operates. A story of the importance of Western art music on these artists (and their cultural environments) is woven between these assemblages of value systems and their relative proportions. Such proportional value systems (such as this system of proportional improvisational and composition importance) frames aesthetic representations such as abstraction, or minimalism (as well as dialectics between structure and freedom with ensuing societal connotations) that eventually lead to the creation of personal and group narratives.

If an artist of the depth and calibre of Edward Vesala were found as an isolated phenomenon that would surely be of interest, but perhaps it would never have achieved the synergy that his music has with a wider Finnish cultural imagining. Vesala has become a role model for the next generation of Nordic composers, in Finland he is an iconic figure,[247] certainly among jazz musicians yet also equally

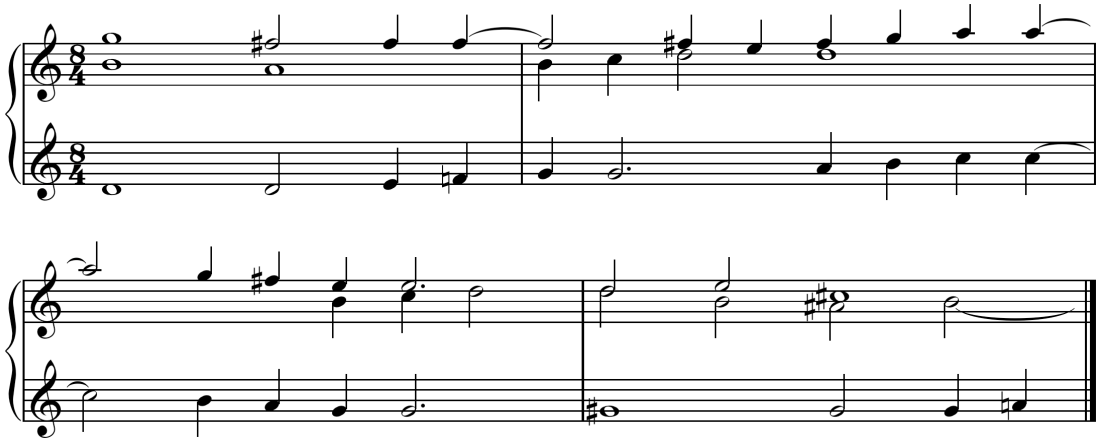
[247] Interview with Mikko Iivanainen (10 January 2011).

among the arts community in general. Even among the general population there is quite widespread knowledge of his work, which it must be said is quite an achievement for a mostly self-taught free-jazz-orientated drummer, whose work might be described as somewhat challenging. But beyond his impact on Finnish culture, which will be discussed in the next chapter, is his impact on the compositional approach of a new generation of musicians. Norwegian saxophonist Trygve Seim for one, could be critiqued as substantially developing Vesala's music within his own compositional aesthetic. But beyond the immediacy of style there is the influence that Vesala has had over the way musicians in Europe value the compositional process itself. Vesala opened doors. He might be thought of whimsically as the Leifur Ericsson of Nordic jazz composition, and the mere fact that he created such works has allowed other musicians to traverse related waters, even if this journey leads them to different places entirely.

Christian Wallumrød is one musician currently active in Scandinavia who is not only continuing a tradition of confluence, but also expands upon established conceptions. Wallumrød was schooled primarily in jazz improvisation at the NTNU conservatory in Trondheim, yet there is little to no bebop to be heard in his playing. More likely one could point to Bach or Chopin as more identifiable influences on the surface aesthetic of his playing. His music is profoundly and almost exaggeratedly confluent, still Wallumrød's music does not sound anything like Vesala's. Where Vesala's art draws upon modernism, with shades of atonality and the Second Viennese School, Sibelius and modernity, Wallumrød has placed more emphasis on the baroque and mediaeval. Certainly it must be interjected here Wallumrød's music is not without modernism, his works equally contains popular music, free jazz and even overtones of electro-acoustic improvisation, albeit in a mostly acoustic context. However, although Wallumrød's connection with Western art music is in a very different relation than Vesala's, in many respects his art represents an extension of the same ideals existent in Vesala's music.

Wallumrød's composition *Backwards Henry,* recorded on the 2007 album *The Zoo is Far,* is a suitable example of another alternate, yet related, take on confluence. Without being informed about the ensemble, a casual listener could be forgiven for thinking this piece the work of an unusual early music ensemble. Perhaps only the unique timbre of Arve Henriksen's trumpet, in an even more subdued aspect than usual for him, would give away the confluence of this work on casual listening. Written in 8/8, a very uncommon time signature for contemporary improvised music, the notation itself looks more like an exercise in baroque counterpoint than a composition intended for improvisers (see example 10).

Example 10 *Backwards Henry* First 4 Bars[248]



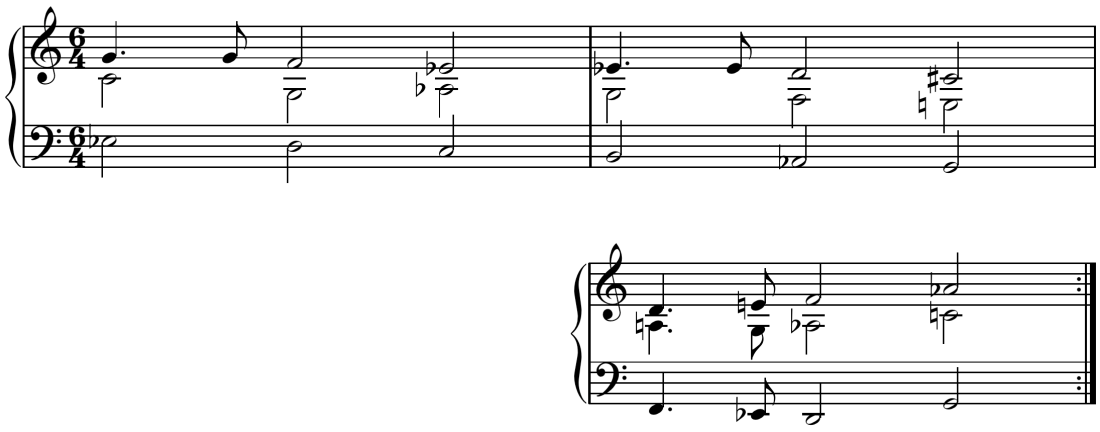
In fact, there is very little improvisation in Wallumrød's ensemble, at least in terms of solos. Again, as in Vesala's *Third Moon*, there is improvisation by the percussionist, Per Oddvar Johansen, and on some of Wallumrød's compositions interpretive practices within the harp and piano that comprise a reasonable degree of improvisational activity. Yet, in most concerts I have witnessed by the ensemble there is perhaps only one improvised drum passage that could be called a solo, perhaps one from the piano and rarely some small improvised passages from the trumpet. Even to call these improvised passages solos

[248] Transcribed by D. Rorke, with consideration of the original score, from Christian Wallumrød, *The Zoo is Far.* 2007, ECM 1717820, Compact Disc.

stretches the point, as all the players in the group utilise their improvisations in the service of the composition. Moreover these are often improvised expositions of the compositional themes, and are never standout solos intended to highlight the expertise of a single player.

Notably, within the large collection of Wallumrød's scores that I have transcribed and/or seen, none of the compositions for his ensemble contains any chord changes or related jazz-like harmonic information. The improviser is, therefore required to improvise based on the often-contrapuntal harmonic considerations of the composition, rather than a jazz-like chord progression invoking chord scale relationships. The result is short passages of improvisation that give a sense of conscientious, intelligent note choice, instead of a visceral stream of sub-conscious improvisational reaction. Despite this, the presentation of the notated score is quite like a jazz 'lead sheet'. Dispensing with much of the solo improvisations that would be integral to jazz in a traditional sense, Wallumrød's works tend toward short expositions or sketches. The composition *Sarabande Nouvelle*, recorded on the 2003 album entitled *Sofienberg Variations,* is one such example of his compositional/notational style (see example 11).

Example 11 *Sarabande Nouvelle* Lead Sheet, First Three Bars[249]



Despite being performed by highly competent improvisers Trygve Seim and Arve Henriksen, the performance contains almost no level of improvisatory practice beyond interpretation, with the exception of that of Johansen on the drum set. It is easy to relate this sort of playing to experimentations in jazz music such as Miles Davis' *Nefertiti,* which also contains no formalised solo sections, but this is likely an interpretation that says more about the jazz orientated consciousness of the interpreter than the influences or intentions of the composer.

> Wallumrød expressed his ambivalent feelings toward jazz proper, particularly its head-solo-head orthodoxy. Tellingly, though, he admitted loving Miles Davis' *Nefertiti*, the title track of which has no "solo," as such, apart from the free-range, discursive rumble of Tony Williams' drums. A similar effect, within strict melodic guidelines, governs Wallumrød's music: He might give improvisatory license to trumpeter Eivind Lønning (in a chair previously held by Arve Henriksen and Mathias Eick) or his longtime, coloration-sensitive drummer Per Oddvar Johansen, but ensemble consciousness is always paramount.[250]

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[249] Transcribed by D. Rorke, with consideration of the original score, from Christian Wallumrød, *Sofienberg Variations.* 2001 ECM 1809, Compact Disc.
[250] Josef Woodard, 'Christian Wallumrod Ensemble: Fabula Suite Lugano.'*Jazz Times* 10 (2010). http://jazztimes.com/articles/25827-fabula-suite-lugano-christian-wallumrod-ensemble (accessed 19 December 2010).

What becomes particularly clear is that Wallumrød barely creates his music in relation to the jazz idiom at all, and it is the interpretive practices inherent in the way his music is reviewed and promoted that lead to comparisons relating his works to that of a figure like Miles Davis.

Even the title of the work tells us that this is new impressionistic music, as much as it is understandable as any singularly definable genre or style. Certainly, the manner by which the wind players articulate these lines puts this music well beyond the bound of interpretive practice as would be executed by classically trained wind players. However, in addition, it is probably safe to claim that this is no longer jazz, and Wallumrød himself claimed as much during a 2009 master class at NTNU conservatory in Trondheim, Norway. Alternatively, this is highly confluent music, performed by a combination of classically trained performers and improvising musicians. An alternate picture of confluence than that given to us by Vesala, for while Vesala raised the composition to a position in his art that equalled improvisation, Wallumrød has gone one step further and placed improvisation in an often supporting, sometimes even background, position.

Tenor and soprano saxophonist Trygve Seim's improvisational approach is deeply rooted in the saxophone style of Garbarek. He is one of the foremost practitioners of a distinctly Eurological jazz aesthetic in the Nordic countries and his group *The Source,* who hold an annual Christmas extravaganza featuring an constantly alternating stream of Norwegian and international guests, has become somewhat of a cultural institution in Norway. Beyond the fact that Seim is a consummately exciting and creative artist, a significant element of his success in Norway and the Nordic countries in general is bound to this aesthetic influence that comes, at least partially, through the music of Garbarek, Vesala and the other creative Nordic musicians of the previous generation. It is not only that Seim is a great player, it is also that the way he plays, and the aesthetics he presents in his music, is seen to exist within a larger Norwegian societal context. Michael Tucker is clear in his positioning of Garbarek as a central figure in the Norwegian musical psyche.

> Just as Edvard Munch is the artist most likely to spring to mind when non-Norwegians are asked to name an important Norwegian painter, so have two distant but related figures come to dominate popular European awareness of on Norwegian music form the past century or so: the classical composer Edvard Grieg (1843-1907) and the jazz inflected improviser Jan Garbarek (born 1947). [251]

This is not at all an attempt to temper Seim's claim on individuality; he is merely expanding upon a musical tradition by allowing previous innovators to influence his art, something that is completely congruent with the traditional operations of jazz music, and something that helps the music he makes be better understood by a pre-existing audience. The saxophonist himself freely explains the manner in which Garbarek's playing came to fundamental influenced his musicality.

> I heard Jan Garbarek's *Eventyr*, and that kind of made my decision to play saxophone. It was just a coincidence really, that my stepfather played me *Eventyr*; we were on a trip in the mountains when I first heard it. It was not so much an intellectual thing; the melodies on the album just touched my heart directly. Anyway, my father had a saxophone that he wasn't using, so he said I could have it and that was the beginning.[252]

It was likely, however, that it was less the trip to the mountains specifically, than the fact that Seim grew up in a cultural environment where one's father might play Garbarek's *Eventyr* during a long road trip; in other words, an environment where Garbarek's music was imbedded into a greater sense of communal identity.

Seim has also been highly influenced by Edward Vesala's *Sound and Fury*

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[251] Michael Tucker, 'The Snowball Effect - Part 1' Music Information Centre Norway (2002), http://www.listento.no/mic.nsf/doc/art200210101209091806271 4 (accessed 15 August 2011).
[252] Trygve Seim cited in 'Trygve Seim: Vanguard Of A New Wave' by John Kelman *All About Jazz* http://www.allaboutjazz.com/php/article.php?id=16864#2 (accessed 30 January 2012).

recordings, and is currently a member of Iro Haarla's quintet. John Kelman positions Seim's compositional persona as an extension of certain elements of Vesala's work. He claims that 'Seim's two records can, in fact, be described as the gentler side of Vesala taken to the next level'.[253] It is a connotation which during the course of a recent interview Seim himself seemed willing to allow, going on to describe how taken he was with Vesala's ensemble as a younger musician.

> He played with his group Sound and Fury, and I didn't know anything about him but went to this concert and didn't understand a thing about what they were doing! It was kind of frightening to see them live; I remember Jon Balke, also a very meaningful person to me, saying it was so fantastic. And so, because I didn't understand a thing, I had to go and buy a record of his. So I bought *Invisible Storm* and I listened to it over and over again and it just became more and more fantastic. I have all his ECM records as well as some others, but *Invisible Storm* is, I think, the pearl, an absolutely incredible record.[254]

Trygve Seim's playing is discussed here substantially due to fact that Garbarek, as well as Vesala's *Sound and Fury* constitute such a significant influence on Seim, and that Seim himself is now a significant part of the continuing tradition forming from the Garbarek/Vesala generation's unique take on jazz music.

The two compositions contrasted here, *Mmball* written by drummer Per Oddvar Johansen and *Breathe* by Seim, both are compositions of graceful, meditative simplicity, and provide perfect vehicles for the type of minimal, melodic improvisation that Seim's group applies. This particular transcription of *Mmball* is taken from the 2005 album entitled simply *The Source*, but in fact Seim has recorded the composition three times for the ECM label. This album is the second recording of the composition, done at the behest of producer Manfred Eicher. The piece is also featured on a more recent duets album between Seim and accordionist Frode Haltli. It has even made an appearance at the annual Christmas concert, *The Source of Christmas.* If one feels a certain influence from

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[253] Ibid.
[254] Ibid.

Brian Eno's *Music For Airports* in this composition, it is no coincidence. In a quote from trombonist Øyvind Brække used in full in the next section of this discussion he described aspects of this record as 'breathing, minimal, yet warm' an aesthetic that is closely aligned with Eno's experiments into minimalist electronic music. Seim himself acknowledged an influence from Eno:

> I remember, before I wrote "Breathe," that I was listening to Eno's *Music for Airports* almost every day, and "Breathe" clearly comes from a similar space.[255]

Per Oddvar's *Mmball* is of a more concise expression than *Music for Airports* and has a form that is almost reminiscent of a verse-chorus song structure, underpinning a distinct melodic statement, both elements serving to make it much more accessible as a vehicle for jazz improvisation.

In the quote above Seim is referring to his composition *Breathe* from the 1998-99 recording *Different Rivers* featuring a larger ensemble led by the saxophonist himself and released under his name. This element of breath is something that is deeply imbedded in Seim's approach to both improvisation and composition and likewise can be heard in the playing of Garbarek and some of the more down-tempo composition of Vesala. The idea of breath as a central unifying aesthetic in the music is something that is deeply connected to the influence of folk music, especially non-Western folk music. It is an approach to composition that is especially applicable to the ensemble of mostly wind instruments that Seim leads.

The composition *Breathe* features a narration that reads almost like a guided meditation of sorts. There is certainly more than a small nod here to Eastern spirituality. Seim's group was described by reviewer John Litweiler as 'a sort of

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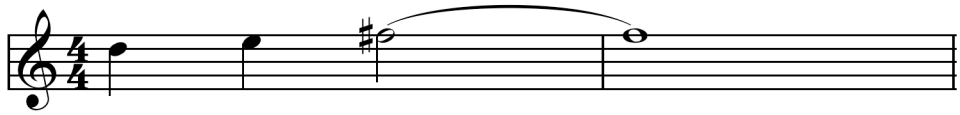
[255] Seim cited in 'Trygve Seim: Vanguard Of A New Wave' by John Kelman *All About Jazz* http://www.allaboutjazz.com/php/article.php?id=16864#2 (accessed 30 January 2012).

new-age jazz, mostly composed, with ultraslow tempos and almost immobile lines. That is, Seim's octet plays a phrase, and repeats the phrase, and repeats the phrase, and repeats the phrase, and so on; some pieces also have contrapuntal lines with minute developments, with tiny developments, with small developments, and so on'.[256]

This is something that is heard often as a reaction by American audiences and critics to a Eurological jazz approach that presents less density of musical information in the music than what American audiences are mostly used to. However, Litweiler did correctly remark upon the 'heavy overtones of breath in the mouthpieces and horns',[257] which is to identify a certain subtone emphasis in the writing for the winds, that is an element of prime importance to the music. Here, with *Mmball*, there is a similar aesthetic at play, albeit one that is less provocative in its deconstruction of musical architectures, retaining a certain melodic singing quality, which assists the listener's interpretation.

Seim's solo is indelibly intertwined with the composition itself. Something that is more than a small nod to the Vesala group whose music presents a similarly entwined relationship between improvisation and composition. The primary theme of the saxophonist's improvisation is so closely derived from the composition that from an analytic point of view it may be difficult to differentiate the improvised passage as a 'solo' in the traditional sense. (see example 12)

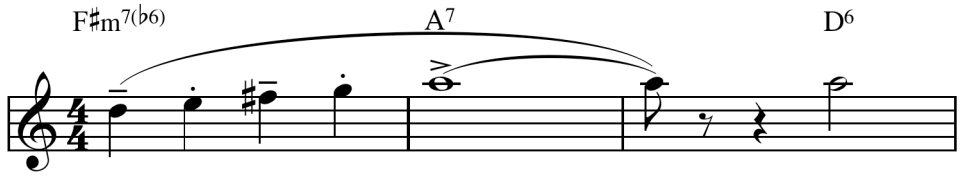
Example 12 Trygve Seim from *Mmball* Bars 4-5[258]



[256] John Litweiler, 'Trygve Seim: Different Rivers' www.jazztimes.com http://jazztimes.com/articles/12633-different-rivers-trygve-seim (accessed 27 November 2010).
[257] Ibid.
[258] Transcribed by D. Rorke from The Source, *The Source,* 2001. ECM 1809, Compact Disc.

It is in a certain reality an extrapolation; an extemporaneously performed extension upon the composition. The sequence of notes above is in fact repeated explicitly in various configurations, and with subtle rhythmic alteration a total of five times during the somewhat short improvisation. If we remove the passing note in this phrase, E, and look at the progression from the initial tone D to the target note of F sharp then this particular interval can be seen to be underpinning a majority of the solo (see full transcription in appendices). At several points throughout the improvisation this phrase extends to include the note A above the F sharp, sometimes with passing notes in between (see example 13).

Example 13 Trygve Seim from *Mmball* Bars 28-30[259]



Although this phrase is presented in a linear fashion progressing from D to A in stepwise motion up the diatonic scale, it in fact completes the outline of a D major triad over the B minor tonic, having established the D and F sharp so definitively as strong tones the A becomes the culmination of this antecedence.

The phrase above, in many ways, could not be a more clear and melodic musical structure on which to base an improvisation; the D major being the relative major of the piece's tonal centre B minor, completes the B minor seventh, and throughout the solo there is in fact no non-diatonic tones. Even the ninth, C sharp, occurs rarely and when it does there is an F sharp in the bass making the C sharp the fifth of that harmonic moment. The solo is so diatonic, and in many ways so open and free from convolution that many would not recognise it as jazz music when examining it purely from the transcribed page. However, inherent in this improvised passage is something very distinct about the way these Nordic

[259] Ibid.

improvisers operate, it is this proclivity to understate that distinguishes it from much of the jazz music found elsewhere.

Seim in this improvisation has nothing to prove: he is not imbuing the piece with sophisticated harmonic superimposition, or using the piece as a frame within which to hang a mark of his own technical virtuosity. Instead he is attempting to serve the composition, itself an exercise in clearly voiced harmony and melodic brevity. While a listener more familiar with the virtuosity and complexities of much contemporary jazz music might well feel that there is little occurring, here there is much spoken regarding Seim's attitude to music and where he places his sense of self. Surely, there is much here that points to Seim's consciousness as a composer, and his improvisations essentially serving as an extension of that musical perspective, yet equally there is a sheer humility to this music. This is not music that seeks to impress, but instead to leave one affected. In this way it is music that includes the listener in its processes. This music in not oblique and obscure it is direct and intelligible. These are conscious directions on the part of the saxophonist and something he has spoken about with earnest.

> When I went through that period I mentioned where I wanted to quit playing, one of the things that really made me doubt playing was this solo thing so prevalent in jazz music. When you go to a festival, it almost feels like you are going to a shopping centre where people are marketing their wares, standing there and playing solos because they want to impress the other musicians on stage, the audience (especially if there's musicians in the audience) and promoters so they'll be able to get better work. To me that is not at all what music is about. For a long period I was anti-solo, I didn't want to play any solos, although these days I do every now and then. But I don't find soloing in the traditional manner particularly interesting; so often it's more about showing off, and there are so many jazz musicians who are more like salesmen.[260]

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[260] Seim cited in 'Trygve Seim: Vanguard Of A New Wave' by John Kelman *All About Jazz* http://www.allaboutjazz.com/php/article.php?id=16864#2 (accessed 30 January 2012).

In this same interview, Seim questions the obvious connotation regarding humility such as that made above.

> While one might consider my avoidance of overt soloing to reflect a certain lack of ego, in the end it may be just the opposite because I rebel against the traditional form of jazz playing[261]

It is the conclusion of this thesis that this rebellious attitude toward the status-quo of soloistic jazz performance is not, in fact, a by-product of inverted egocentricity, as Seim may be alluding to here, but a socio-cultural metaphor with an emerging tradition. Here also we see a similar attitude to that of Seim's predecessor, Vesala, that finds congruity with folkloric notions of the outlaw, and is another example of how this might come into play in the perception of jazz music.

4.2 Pedagogy

On a pedagogical note, when considering the art of confluent music, with composition elevated to a more foreground position in the art, the study and practice of composition becomes an important device in development and learning of fluency within this mode of music making. As an educator, one of the difficulties with furthering this art of confluent playing and composing that I have personally observed, especially among younger musicians trained in jazz conservatories, is a certain problem with finding a appropriate conception in terms of repertoire. This seems especially pronounced among those who have been schooled in the educational institutions of jazz whose perspective is based on the jazz standard repertoire and mastery of 'the bebop language'. I have come across a number of musicians, from Nordic and Non-Nordic countries, who attempt to transplant this standard repertoire approach and apply it to the personalised, confluent work of musicians such as the ones discussed in this

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[261] Ibid.

thesis. I believe there are concrete reasons why this approach does not translate well.

The standard repertoire of jazz not only includes much of the body of work found in the American show song, it also includes a number of compositions written by the performers of jazz themselves. Certain differences between the compositional process of canonical jazz artists and the subjects of this thesis have already been discussed in this chapter, namely the placement of various complexities within differing elements of musical structure. However, the motivations of the composers of jazz standard repertoire and our subjects are also generally divergent. Let us take Joe Henderson as an example. The compositions of this American iconoclastic saxophonist feature in prominence in every 'Fake Book'[262] with good cause; his music is written as a provocation to certain types of improvisation and as a melodic, rhythmic and harmonic premise on which to structure these improvisations. What one will observe if one looks over the recorded output of Henderson is that he often performs these compositions with groups consisting of differing musicians. These compositions, designed as 'vehicles' for improvisation, are transferable. There is a great element of Henderson's personal vision in these works, however, Henderson is a canonical innovator in the American jazz lineage, and as such his aesthetic has come to constitute part of the improvisational memes of jazz music. These memes, passed between jazz musicians, are simply short phrasal elements that mostly originate with the music's pioneers.

> Swing, imagination, courage, and innovation. These words bring to mind something different and special. That someone in this case is tenor saxophonist Joe Henderson, who is, in my opinion, one of the pioneers of jazz.[263]

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[262] A collection of notarized jazz standards, intended for 'faking' the performance of certain pieces. i.e., performing pieces one does not know by memory alone using notation.
[263] Carl Allen, Liner Notes for 'Thank You Joe,' *Arkadia Jazz All-Stars,* Arkadia Records (1998) 70004.

Likewise, Henderson's personal improvisational aesthetic has been born directly out of the aesthetics of other innovators, such as Sonny Rollins. In turn Henderson's own vision has now come to comprise a significant element in this, now communally shared, jazz tongue.

If we take Vesala's compositions, for the purpose of a contrasting example, and examine them from this with this perspective we see a different operation in place. Vesala's pieces are quite complex, often resistant to memorisation and highly orchestrated. These works were never intended to be 'blowing tunes' or 'vehicles' to be performed at informal gigs or jam sessions, they are instead highly stylised works designed for a very specific group of individuals. In some instances improvisation itself assumes a subservient position to the composed material, rendering any function in this regard inapplicable. Vesala's music is so personal that even the ensemble for which it was written, *Sound and Fury*, had problems performing his work convincingly after his death.

> For a start I have to tell you, that I don't work anymore with Sound & Fury. After Edward's death we had a memorial concert at Pori Jazz Festival in 2000. Unfortunately I recognized that the most important thing had disappeared; the musical spirit of *Sound and Fury*. Edward was most of all a strong leader and without him the band doesn't sound anymore. So, I decided to concentrate on continuing to compose my own music with other, different musicians.[264]

From my personal experiences I have heard a number of musicians attempt Vesala's pieces, and only one group I have heard seemed to be able to apply these works to a new ensemble context with conviction. This was the Finnish trio dubbed *Nordic Trinity*, led by guitarist Mikko Iivanainen and drummer Klaus Suonsaari.

I am certain that it is no coincidence that Vesala's music worked well for this trio and that the third member of the group is Juhani Altonen, the saxophonist and

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[264] Interview with Iro Haarla (6 March 2011).

flautist who was an integral part of Vesala's music for much of his life. Substantially the success of this trio is intertwined with the fact that they, in no way, tried to replicate this music. Instead they presented a reworking of the composer's material.

> Juhani [Altonen], he wanted to have it different. There is no point in doing something like Vesala's records. We have three people, they have ten people in the band. Totally different players, totally different sounds. Just do your own versions, the more different the more better: this was the idea. We respect, a lot, this music.[265]

Individuality in itself is both the aesthetic position and the performative and/or compositional methodology required for musicians to engage with the confluent materials pioneered by these Nordic jazz artists. Iivanainen replied in the simple affirmative when I asked him if it was partially because he respected the music that his group must play it very differently. Congruently speaking, to develop music based on the aesthetic principles of Nordic confluent music requires a similar adherence to perhaps the most important fundamental precept of the music; that of creating an individual voice, and an individual vision.

If we, as a new generation of musicians and interpreters of musical forms, are enamoured with Vesala's music we surely must live by his example and continually create anew. What we see in an emerging tradition of confluent music in the Nordic countries is a pedagogical environment, whether existing inside or outside of institutions, that takes this sort of compositional considerations into a learning context and fosters both improvisation and composition as two sides of the same coin. Future creators of this art must become composers as well as improvisers to continue to realise this music. It is unrealistic to expect to transfer the processes of standard jazz playing to this new musical, and often new cultural, context. By the very universalism of this music, one must look to a wide spectrum of musical forms, without convolution

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[265] Interview with Mikko Iivanainen (10 January 2011).

or particularity, in order that true plurality be preserved and that confluent jazz music continues its traditions of reinvention and, indeed, metamorphoses.

This research finds great potency in the compositional process within improvised music. Composition, like no other musical act of which I am aware, is a powerful and direct way to realise a personal vision of the music. Vesala's music was most certainly that; a defined presentation of multiplicity and confluence that relied on the compositional process heavily, and therefore he on the compositional skill and sheer talent of his wife Haarla, in order to realise the full potential of his conception. We must compose this confluent music. At least at this point in the evolution of improvised music, there is no universal jazz canon other than the canon of the twentieth century American jazz innovators. Of course, the Nordic countries, Europe and the world as a whole had and still has an abundance of incredible innovative musicians whom may in the future comprise such a canon. But somehow I doubt that the canonisation of great European jazz composers will lead to the establishment of repertoire. Simply, the aims of composers such as Vesala, Seim or Wallumrød are personal aims. They are writing intricate and nuanced music designed specifically for a certain group of performers.

This is a very different process to that of the jazz composers one studies in a jazz conservatory or finds in a Fake Book. As a generalisation, most of the compositions based on the American show song tradition are written as a vehicle for improvisation, and by their very nature and true to their conceptual aims, these pieces are transferable among differing musicians, all of who will place personal emphasis on the music after the composition has been created. This is not to say that the 'vehicle' approach to composition is enacted without personality; rather that in this style the composer has designed a multipurpose vehicle.

In the confluent music that I have discussed in this chapter, personal and directed compositional processes are an integral element, simply more necessary to the fundamental realisation of the musical vision than in the realm

of 'straight-ahead' jazz. Rudy Garred's perspective of jazz sums up the priorities of an improvisationally dominated art:

> With the so-called New Musicology, it has become increasingly common to include genres other than Western classical music in the field of study. What then becomes apparent is the different status of the *work* that may be found in various genres, different *ontologies* of music (Bohlman, 1999), which is about different modes of being, the different ways of music being realized. A contrast to the case of Western classical music is jazz. Here the performance itself tends to acquire a first rank position in relation to the composition. The composition may be a so-called standard tune, which is a popular song used as a basis for improvisation, and it is the improvisation on this tune that primarily constitutes the *work* in this instance. The tune is just a frame, a form to improvise upon.[266]

Garred might well have considered Nordic confluent jazz music such as Vesala and Haarla's works for *Sound and Fury*, if he had wished to de-polarise this synopsis.

The conclusion of my research is that a composer like Vesala can be thought to have initiated a whole new 'mode of being' in the lineage and diaspora of jazz, and this is shown clearly in the music of Wallumrød and Seim. Vesala's and Haarla's mode of being is one that places composition and improvisation on equal footing, interacting between the two in a dialectical sense. In my observations this is quite unique in jazz music. It is something that the Third Stream composers surely sought, but did not always realise, perhaps due to not having a dedicated stable of musicians who could work pretty much sole on a new musical vision. At least not so dedicated to this singular work as were the *Sound and Fury* players as described by Haarla.

> The most difficult thing was just the improvisation and solos on the *Sound and Fury* recording sessions. Edward was very demanding. He

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[266] Rudy Garred, *Music As Therapy: A Dialogical Perspective* (Gilsum: Barcelona Publishers, 2006), no page numbers.

> tried to teach them, rehearsing with them a lot: Every day 6-8 hours during weeks or months. Edward emphazised different moods/emotions, energy and importance of strong feelings. He didn't ever allow them to play "normal" jazz phrases. As a "master drummer", he taught mostly rhythmical things (rubato, rhythmical changes, physical strength.) He did not say anything about harmony, that was my job. If they had some question concerning the composing/arrangements, they turned to me.
>
> In my mind it was Edward's music. What kind of feeling each tune needs, which usually was a melody or some phrases or idea. How to keep this original atmosphere? What is the leading motive? Of course I had to keep in mind the skills and capability or failings of the musicians. I had to find the way to make this difficult music as intelligible as possible without breaking the original mood of the tune, however without compromise. It was easier for me to understand Edward's purposes, because I knew him so well as a person.[267]

Truly this must be rare gift for any jazz composer, and likely a pivotal element in the realisation of such a confluence of compositional and improvisational aesthetics. Vesala was surely fortunate man to have an arranger the calibre of Haarla and a group of such sophistication as *Sound and Fury* readily willing to set aside the substantial time and energy required to realise his musical vision in such an uncompromising way.

Such a unified, and balanced relationship between composition and improvisation surely cannot help but amplify meaning in the art works, meaning either devised or interpretive. Through composition the aesthetics of the music can be advanced in ways that would either be impossible through an improvisatory approach alone, or at the very least would take much longer to evolve. These possibilities include the many musical expressions that we have discussed in this chapter, and the future certainly holds unseen developments in the same spirit. At the same time, the value of premeditation on musical structures, and the possibilities of these structures to assume meaning after the fact, should not be underestimated.

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[267] Interview with Iro Haarla (6 March 2011).

It is not the composer's work to inscribe this within the music, and many composers would not heed any call to acknowledge extra-musical narrative. On the contrary it is our responsibility as audience members to interpret, to empathise and to be active participants in extra-musical narratives. Laura C. Jarmon's work on narrative describes just such a responsibility:

> Narrators, officiants, musicians, dancers and any other sort of participant somehow obliged to an audience are all performers, yet so are audiences performers in their own right. From the perspective of reception theory, it is the audience's responsibility for realizing a text, and to do so, audiences depend upon conventions, a critical one of which is genre.[268]

It is then perhaps so, that it was in part the uniquely confluent cultural paradigm of Finland that allowed Vesala create such maverick art. Precedents such as the Finnish Tango movement surely must have helped cultivate an audienceship that could be at least be mildly more receptive to these works, and possibly even more conditioned to interpret meaning with less importance placed on genre as described by Jarmon. However, changing the music by raising the status of composition relative to improvisation has provoked an interpretation of European identity based upon the understanding of certain compositional techniques from Western art music, and these will be discussed in more detail in chapter five.

To apply the notion of confluence to such an act, in fact, inscribes multiple levels of meaning and insinuation, not only musical meaning but also interpretations of socio-cultural relativity. While in the wake of debate Third Stream remains useful perhaps only as a way of describing those composers who themselves instigated the term, and a small period in the evolving history of improvised music, confluence, alternatively, provides a framework for analysis. Intrinsically it does not suggest any specific content, as did the term Third Stream, neo-

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[268] Laura C. Jarmon, *Wishbone: Reference And Interpretation In Black Folk Narrative* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2003), 309.

classicism or any of the other idioms that have be used to coin composers with associated inclinations for plurality. It is not in essence a generic label so much as it is a process and also, as will be explored in chapter five, a framework for considering moments of change, and encompasses within it the scope for multiple classes and expressions of this change. Confluence simultaneously allows for the attending to of both the individual and the group, it presents the particular and the universal in dialogue and has the potential to elucidate the imaginations of 'self' and 'selves' within a specific context and also beyond particular contextualisation. Thereby, as will be explored in detail in the next chapter, the confluences between jazz and Western art music inform narratives of identity that go beyond the boundaries of particularity and describe conditions of multiplicity and universalism.

CHAPTER 5

EXPRESSIONS OF UNIVERSAL NARRATIVE, COMPOSITIONAL TECHNIQUES, CHANGE AND GLOBALISATION

The last chapter of this thesis introduced the idea of confluence, and this chapter begins by exploring some of the expressive realisations of confluence in the musical compositions of Edward Vesala and Iro Haarla. The aim is to show the confluences between jazz and Western art music that exist structurally in Vesala's music, and that are presented in this chapter as a precursor to a theoretical discussion of change and globalisation. This chapter will show how Vesala's music, and other examples discussed in the context of globalisation, exist as metaphors for social change. In addition, various conceptual categories of these narratives of universalism are explored in relation to confluence. These theoretical frames such as 'fusion' and metamorphic change are discussed to consider the relations between certain works of improvised music and depictions of change of both artistic and cultural nature.

It is the suggestion of this thesis that some of the works of improvised music addressed here are modern narratives of universalism, and metamorphosis of social identities, discussed via the crafted manipulations of abstract forms. This is, in essence, the logical extension of the consideration of Nordic jazz music through the lens of folklore scholarship. As will be discussed, metamorphosis is a reoccurring theme in folkloric storytelling. The usefulness of this understanding, when juxtaposed with improvised music, becomes apparent when it is employed to illuminate the social functioning of improvised music as a form of storytelling about change in our societies. This perspective proposes that, through abstraction, improvised music can negotiate the intrinsic and the metamorphic aspects of social identity, and the intersection of the particular and the universal. Furthermore that this process can influence and advocate change within society via these abstracted forms.

Within the art of composing for jazz improvisers, there has been a continuing tradition of embracing multiplicities. In the Creole melting pot of the Southern United States, during the establishment of what we now call jazz music, many artists were experimenting with the utilization of diverse materials such as African American work songs, French folk music and classical repertoire as a framework on which to develop new improvisatory approaches to music making. Jazz musicians often refer to using a composition as a 'vehicle' for improvisation, and what is commonly described as the standard repertoire of jazz primarily functions as such a vehicle. Improvisations derived from the show song compositions are based on the cyclic rendering of the chord progressions associated with the chorus of these songs, usually with total expurgation of the verse structures. The melody, while still retaining some importance, is freely subjected to a high degree of interpretation, and is typically presented at the beginning and end of the improvisational body of the performance.

In Europe, as a generalisation, a closer relationship between jazz improvisers and the canonical composers of Western art music exists, in a large degree due to the unbroken lineage of innovation within European composition, going back many centuries. Among the musicians born amidst such an enduring and fortified history, it is common to find Western art music as a formative didactic element, even among those who aspire to a variety of musical disciplines. The classical music tradition is simply imbedded in European culture in a way that is fundamental and uncontrived. Jazz saxophonist Dave Liebman describes this viewpoint:

> Almost everywhere you go in Europe there is something really old staring you in the face, especially compared to the World Trade Center or Sears Tower. In my opinion, it is all of the above and more that causes Europe to be such a fertile land for jazz. There is definitely a long musical tradition which besides having provided for the church liturgy has elevated music making to a high art. On the technical side, jazz harmony derives lock, stock and barrel from the European classical aesthetic with much having been written tracing the

> common lineage from Bach to Schoenberg. Because of this long tradition, music is considered a necessity in Europe.[269]

Liebman's perspective is of interest here, not only because he is one of the greatest living improvisers in American jazz music, but also because his career has taken him to Europe on a frequent basis. Over the last few decades he has increasingly developed performative musical relationships with musicians from a number of differing European countries and cultural backgrounds. His essay on the European jazz diaspora presents a pragmatic appraisal of the changes in the music as jazz evolves in a non-American cultural context. Notably, he points to both the formative environment for young musicians in Europe, which is inherently connected to the indigenous European tradition of art music, and interestingly a differing sense of proximity to Eastern music than what is to be observed in the United States.

> Each country has its own slant on the development of jazz with a distinct way of doing things. Given the rich classical tradition that these musicians were born to and in many cases trained in, you can imagine the interesting and diverse fusions of influences that have taken place there. The Afro-American roots of jazz which we take for granted in the U.S. didn't really exist in Europe. But what they do possess besides the classics is proximity to many types of world music coming through colonization and subsequent immigration from Asia, the Middle East and Africa.[270]

Certainly though, it must be noted that the history of the Nordic countries participated only secondarily in terms of colonisation, particularly in the East, at least in comparison to the major European empires of antiquity. Beyond the Scandinavian land mass itself, colonised from the disenfranchised Sami people, Britain and the west coast of America, historical colonization by Nordic people

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[269] David Liebman, 'Europe - Its Role In Jazz.' http://www.daveliebman.com/Feature_Articles/europe.htm (accessed 12 July 12 2011).
[270] Ibid.

has been somewhat incidental. Certainly in terms of the interaction with Eastern nations the Scandinavian viewpoint has been one of externality.

One manifestation of a particularly European compositional tradition, to be observed flowing into compositional practice among jazz improvisers, is in the way form has been manipulated. The central subject of this thesis, Edward Vesala, has engineered a very personal approach to form in his compositions. His works, often structured in an extended or through-composed manner, are heavily indebted to a European tradition of composition and innovation in Western art music but, equally, are concerned with structures specifically indigenous to Finland. An example of this is the Finnish Tango form, which I will explore later in this chapter. As I have pointed out throughout this thesis, Vesala, like many of his Nordic contemporaries, is not by any means bound to any pure indigenous aesthetic sense in his manipulations. His utilisation of cultural artefacts, such as Kalevala references, are done with great intellect and empathy, yet are never so particular as to deny a world full of musicality. Vesala brings us closer to what is foreign as much as he brings us closer to the beauties of Finnish culture. He blurs the boundaries between these two ideas in fact, in a way that produces some of the most postmodern compositions in jazz music.

A perfect example of one of Vesala's and Haarla's through-composed pieces is the work entitled *Third Moon* from the 1987 album *Lumi,* released on ECM Records. *Third Moon* features a sextet of wind players; woodwind players Pentti Lahti, Jorma Tapio, Tapani Rinne and Kari Heinilä create a section comprising of flutes, clarinets and saxophones with brass players Tom Bildo on trombone and Esko Heikkinen on trumpet. Of course, Vesala and Haarla also perform on the composition, with Haarla playing harp throughout. Interestingly, while the piece features no improvisation whatsoever from the six wind players, Vesala's and Haarla's own parts are not present on the original score in any form (see example 14).[271]

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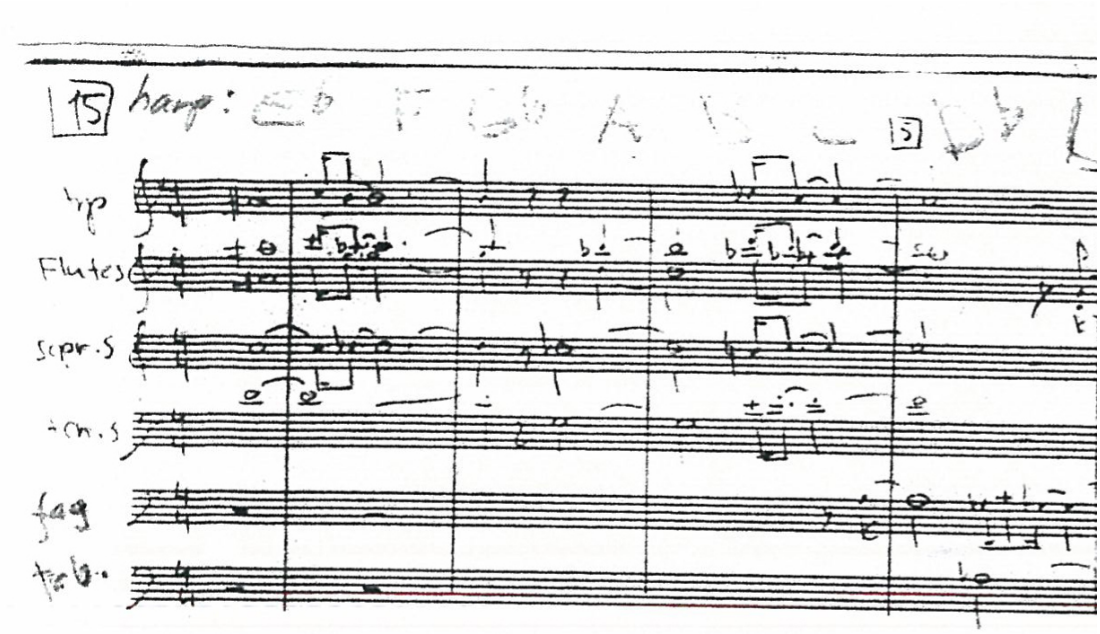
[271] The reader may note that are limited examples of the scores from these pieces. As noted in the introduction to this thesis, this is at the request of Haarla

Example 14 *Third Moon* Score Layout[272]



There are, however, some pencilled-in chords, obviously written in after the main score was composed, on which Haarla bases her harp part. The through-composed piece places all the winds in a relatively equal foreground position, each voice having differing yet interrelated parts that allow the various timbral colours to surface momentarily before submerging back into the combined texture of the ensemble.

The form of *Third Moon* is not one that builds toward structural points or takes us on a journey through thematic developments. There is no significant foreground melodic material, and the listener will certainly not leave this composition singing the theme. Instead, this is a textural exploration featuring close intervals in the voicings among the winds that undulate along a mostly static aesthetic plane. There is also no real sense of single melodic line phrasing in the work: the various instruments' entries are as often as not staggered,

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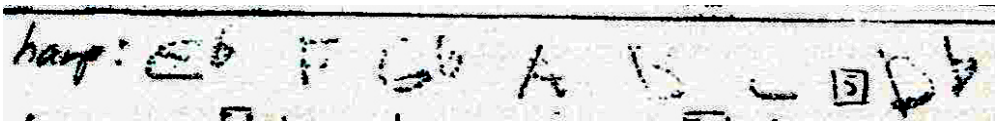
herself who must contend with a problem involving a lack of rights over the music from the Sound and Fury ensemble. For this reason no score excerpts are included in the appendices.

[272] From the original score. This excerpt comprises less than 10% of the total score.

leading in and out of points of rhythmic convergence. While bar-length crescendi and decrescendi accentuate this undulation along the static aesthetic plane, as does the rhythmically staggering entries leading to convergences and then back to staggering also, there are in fact only silences in the winds in just two places. These silences could in many ways be thought of as demarcations of form. The first rest in the winds occurs for only one beat: beat three, in bar twenty. The second rest is to be found approximately the same distance from the first as the first was from the beginning of the work, occurring again for one beat only, this time beat four in bar forty four. While it is tempting to understand these demarcations as a signification between A and B sections, only the heavily disguised harmonic basis could warrant such an analysis. The harmonic underpinning, as pencilled in above the score, is comprised of the following chord sequence (see example 15).

Example 15 *Third Moon* Chord Sequence for Harp[273]

Harp: Eb | F | Gb | A | B | C | Db



As can be observed in this example, the first three chords (Eb, F and Gb) have an identical set of relationships as the fourth, fifth and sixth (A, B and C). The two sections, proposed as A and B above, are not related by any melodic structures, and the most satisfying conclusion is that this is truly a through-composed work despite the harmonic sequence.

It is fascinating how, while there is no repetition or recapitulation in the first forty-four bars, there is also no tangible development. The only obvious development is in the last three bars of the piece; bars forty seven to forty nine, where in a final, coda-like structure, the winds converge rhythmically for the first

[273] From the original score. This excerpt comprises less than 10% of the total score.

sustained time during the composition, rendering a final statement that is more harmonic than melodic. The through-composed nature of the piece imbues the work with a certain sense of anticipation, as the listener's expectations of traditional form structures are denied and the aesthetic tension is sustained.

> In all through-composed pieces with extended forms, the most important thing is to keep the tension. Even if there is many different parts, I had to form an integrated whole (Contrasting variation and unity). At first, I had to find the place of the climax of the piece, after that try to build very carefully the suspense of a final scene.
> In very long pieces, it needs also differences of tension; for example by using strong dynamic variation, or changes of the instrumentation in different parts. The problem was, that there was many ways of doing it, but same time keep in mind the wholeness and the original spirit of the composition. I always tried to keep the atmosphere unchanged.[274]

Although the piece changes constantly, the mood, or atmosphere, could be considered static. The work is, in a sense, more of a creation of placement, positioning and an investigation of such, than an exploratory work in the superficial sense of the term. Despite a continuum of change in the voicings, instrumental combinations and rhythmic figuring, *Third Moon* is an investigative perspective of a singular position rather than developmental or recontextual explorations that are certainly more common in the field of jazz composition.

Perhaps the most singularly startling element of Vesala's work is the way in which he is able to blur the seams between his compositions and the improvisational aesthetic of his band mates. It certainly must help to facilitate this that Vesala has cultivated long and enduring relationships with the musicians with whom he worked. Even after repeated listening to certain compositions on the *Sound and Fury* recordings I am sometimes uncertain whether particular parts are composed or improvised. This is in stark contrast to much of the relationship between composition and improvisation in jazz music

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[274] Interview with Iro Haarla (6 March 2011).

generally, where often one hears potential relation to the composition sacrificed to improvisational spectacle. Here we might perhaps see a certain disconnected side to the conception of the jazz composition as a 'vehicle' for improvisation. In is possible this metaphor does little justice to the composition, relegating it as it does to an object of secondary importance. For Vesala and Haarla it seems that the composition was far more than simply a utilitarian vehicle for getting to the desired improvisational territory. On the contrary, as described in chapter four, the value of composition is raised to equal that of the improvisations, at least in certain significant works. The result is another level of confluence; the confluence of premeditation and spontaneity, a unified dialectical presentation of the positions of both composer and performer.

Third Moon provides an interesting example of a uniquely unified coalescence of composition and improvisation. As noted above, there exists no conceptualised part for either the drums or the harp in the score to this piece, apart from a simple chord progression. Both Vesala and Haarla improvise all the way through the work. However, one can observe that at no point are the improvised performances assuming the foreground. In fact, the harp lies at approximately the same level of prominence as the six winds, with the drums positioned in a slightly more background role, colouring timbrally with mostly cymbal sounds. It is relevant that this piece should dispense with the traditional soloist and accompaniment condition, historically the most prevalent arrangement in jazz music. There really is no one instrumentalist that fronts the ensemble in this work, instead the combined performances of all eight musicians create a single, integrated expression. While the harp and the drums do create interest alternate to that of the winds, they do not stand apart from the wind section. In essence, the improvised parts and the composed parts of the ensemble seem to exist in a type of unified expression, where one relies upon the other to create the totality of the musical image.

The various subjects of this thesis have all, as a generalisation, manipulated their approach to instrumentation in a way that provokes a more confluent aesthetic within their various works. Often, what is to be observed in the arrangements of

artists such as Vesala, Seim, the Norwegian pianist and composer Jon Balke or related confluent improvisers are compositions for moderately-sized ensembles that create an impression more related to the instrumental colour manipulations of a chamber ensemble than to those aesthetics that might come by way of the history of large ensemble jazz, or the Big Band lineage. Certainly, a work such as *Third Moon,* discussed above, is highly indebted to modern chamber music in terms of its orchestrational aesthetic. *Third Moon* might well be interpreted as referencing significant composers of modern chamber music the like of Arnold Schoenberg, Alban Berg and even Oliver Messiaen, certainly in terms of ensemble constitution and compositional usage of instrumental colours, if not only in terms of tonal organisation. Haarla, who was schooled in Western art music at the Sibelius Academy, has clearly brought her knowledge and experience of the orchestration of such composers to bear on the compositions of Vesala. When we listen to *Sound and Fury* what we hear in essence is Haarla's orchestration of Vesala's sketches.

> Edward composed by playing some instrument, singing, or even by whistling the tunes into a cassette recorder. When we started to work a new tune, we listened it together over and over again, and he described his feelings quite long time, then I proposed the instrumentation which I prefer. If he accepted my proposition, I started to make transcription and chose the best parts of material. (Very often the original material was more than we needed).
> He didn't give me any theoretical advices. I had freedom to work how I saw it the best. He trusted on my capability to arrange his tunes. Perhaps we had quite much same kind of outlook, view...?
> Anyway, I think it was essential part to our success, that we spend so much time together by talking about the music. We lived in the same musical word, and we both loved this work.[275]

Therefore it seems logical, that when considering the instrument arrangements of Vesala's music, full credit should be given to Haarla. It is her vision and usage of the instrumentation on these recordings, and her sense of timbral organisation that is so consequential to the aesthetics of the music. She may have

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[275] Interview with Iro Haarla (6 March 2011).

been working with Vesala's lines, or musical ideas in one form or another, but in the totality of the final artwork it is very much both Vesala's and Haarla's art that the listener is immersed.

On a perhaps more superficial level is the choice of instrumentation itself. While there have always exists practitioners of non-traditional instruments in jazz, for the most part the music has conformed to certain predisposed tendencies. Many of these tendencies have arisen out of the simple practicalities of availability, both of the instruments themselves in post-war America and the availability of proficient performers of these instruments. The trumpet, saxophone, piano, bass and drums combination is perhaps the most ubiquitous in jazz, yet also the way the Big Bands combine woodwind and brass instruments in sections of regularly conforming numbers is another tradition. In Europe a slightly different condition prevailed for similar reasons; simply, there existed many proficient exponents of instruments such as violin, accordion, harp and other instruments more commonly associated with European classical music, or the folk music of the Nordic countries. Inevitably, many of these performers themselves became interested in jazz music with the burgeoning scene that was developing on the continent that promised a renaissance of improvisation in European art music. Therefore, we find instrumentalists, like Jean Luc Ponty for example, drawing on a tradition of high level string performance in France, adding significantly to the development of a jazz based improvisational approach for violin. In the Nordic countries, we see a number of improvising accordionists such as Frode Haltli, who performs with Trygve Seim's somewhat Vesala influenced ensemble, or Veli Kujala, who improvises with an aesthetic that comes much more from contemporary Western art music than jazz, on a specially build quarter-tone accordion. Haarla's inclusion of the harp in the Sound and Fury ensemble also led to a similarly related sense of a dominantly chamber music influenced aesthetic.

It is a little know fact that Edward Vesala wrote a series of etudes that incorporate many advanced techniques, microtonality included. Vesala's interest in microtonality may have been provoked by his experiences of Asian music as much as Nordic folk music, which before the influence of Western culture rarely

conformed to a tempered system. However, beyond the surface level identifications of musical influences, of which there are certainly many divergent tributaries, these etudes are clearly a product of Vesala's dedication to the notion of self-development and searching. His is a music that has always been attempting to push the boundaries of musical and cultural conception.

Until I had spent time among Finnish jazz musicians I had never heard of these etudes, despite being well acquainted with the entirely of Vesala's output. They are perhaps one of Finland's best-kept musical secrets. Iro Haarla spoke to me about how these etudes came about and the motivations behind them.

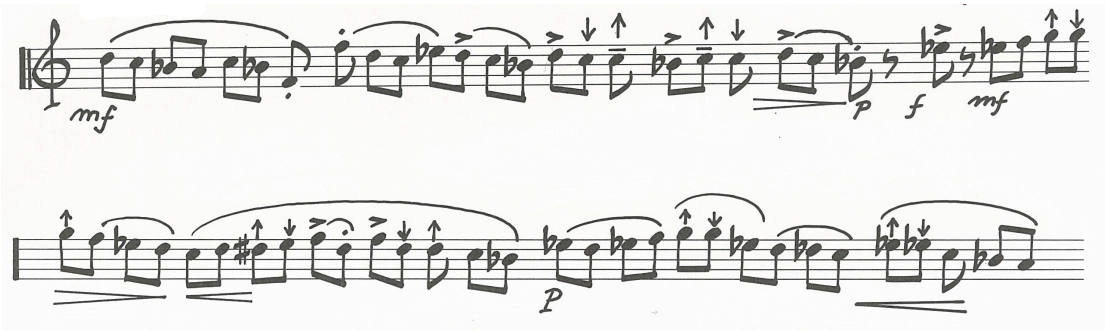
> The Eytudes are "composed" like this way: Edward had a very small Casio-keyboard, like a toy for children—with it he played only one key a while, which caused many fast single notes at random—then he changed the key, etc. He recorded it to a cassette-recorder and I made a transcription and wrote all material to the paper. I know, that these Etydes are extremely difficult. I got the impression, that this was the exact purpose; To work by supreme efforts and struggle with almost impossible things, through this you can find something new from yourself as a musician, or as an instrumentalist. This is a kind of psychology. Quartertones have been experimented also in his work *Taksenta*, it is a solo work for a tuba.[276]

It is clear then, from Haarla's account, that Vesala considered microtonality a system by which he could explore the furthest horizons of his own musical intellect. The Etudes not only include microtonal elements such as quartertones, but also intervallic structures based on compound intervals (see examples 16 and 17).

[276] Interview with Iro Haarla (6 March 2011).

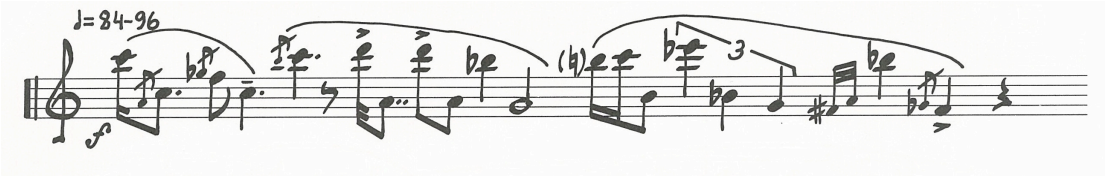
Example 16 Eytude Number 3: Excerpt Demonstrating Quarter Tones

Edward Vesala[277] (Published without time signature or bar lines)



Example 17 Eytude Number 1: Excerpt Demonstrating Compound Intervals

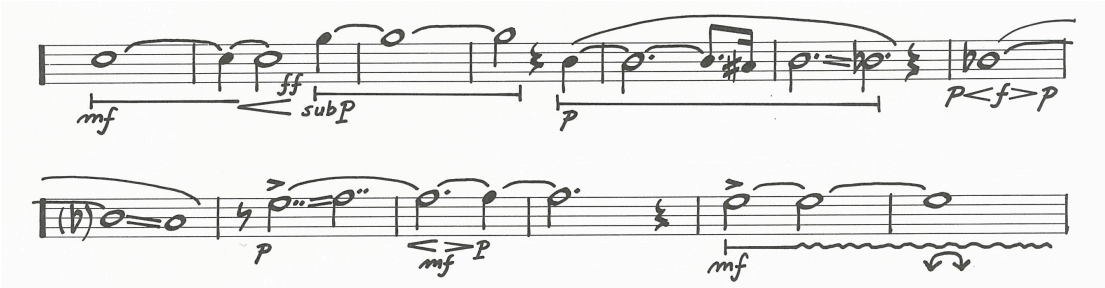
Edward Vesala[278] (Published without time signature or bar lines)



There are also extended passages at challenging dynamic levels and, true to Vesala's experience as a master percussionist many passages containing odd rhythmic divisions.

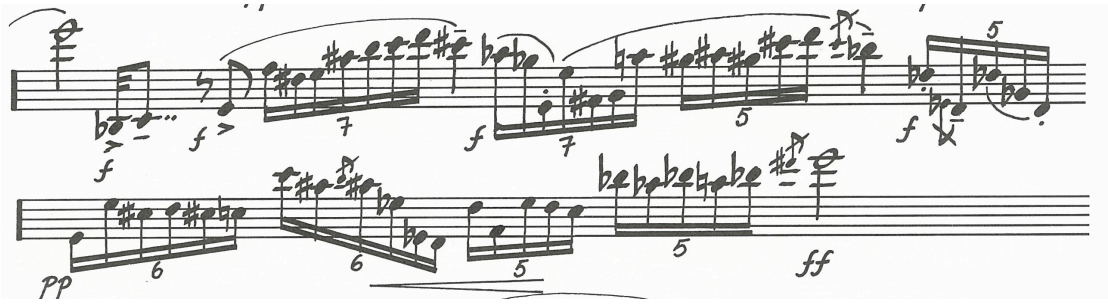
Example 18 Eytude Number 7: Excerpt Demonstrating Dynamic Modulations

Edward Vesala[279] (Treble clef, 4/4 time)



[277] Edward Vesala, *Eytudes* (Uusikartano: Fenix, Date not given), No page numbers.
[278] Ibid.
[279] Ibid.

Example 19 Eytude Number 4: Excerpt Demonstrating Polyrhythms Edward Vesala[280] (Treble clef, published without time signature or bar lines)



These etudes are a special window into his musical mind, and one that allows us behind the scenes, and into his practice room, in a way that his recorded legacy cannot.

Finnish saxophonist Pepa Paivanen, who recorded extensively with Vesala, is another instrumentalist with a distinctively confluent conception. Notably, one is often able to hear the influence of Garbarek, especially in Paivanen's tenor playing. However, Paivanen's playing is also highly individual and it is clearly evident that the saxophonist is comfortable in a wide variety of musical contexts, something that should come as little surprise given the highly confluent nature of the groups in which he played, the *Sound and Fury* ensemble led by Vesala being one.

Ready Way to Go is a composition by Vesala recorded by Haarla and Paivanen in a duo setting after the drummer's death. Paivanen's playing on this piece is of significance to this study as its positioning is one that encompasses a multiplicity of jazz aesthetics. Paivanen is well versed in the Garbarek-influenced Nordic tenor sound, and his timbre, dynamic range and wide vibrato all speak of this influence, but at the same time his saxophone phrasing and articulations are obviously strongly grounded in the history of jazz music more generally, and this

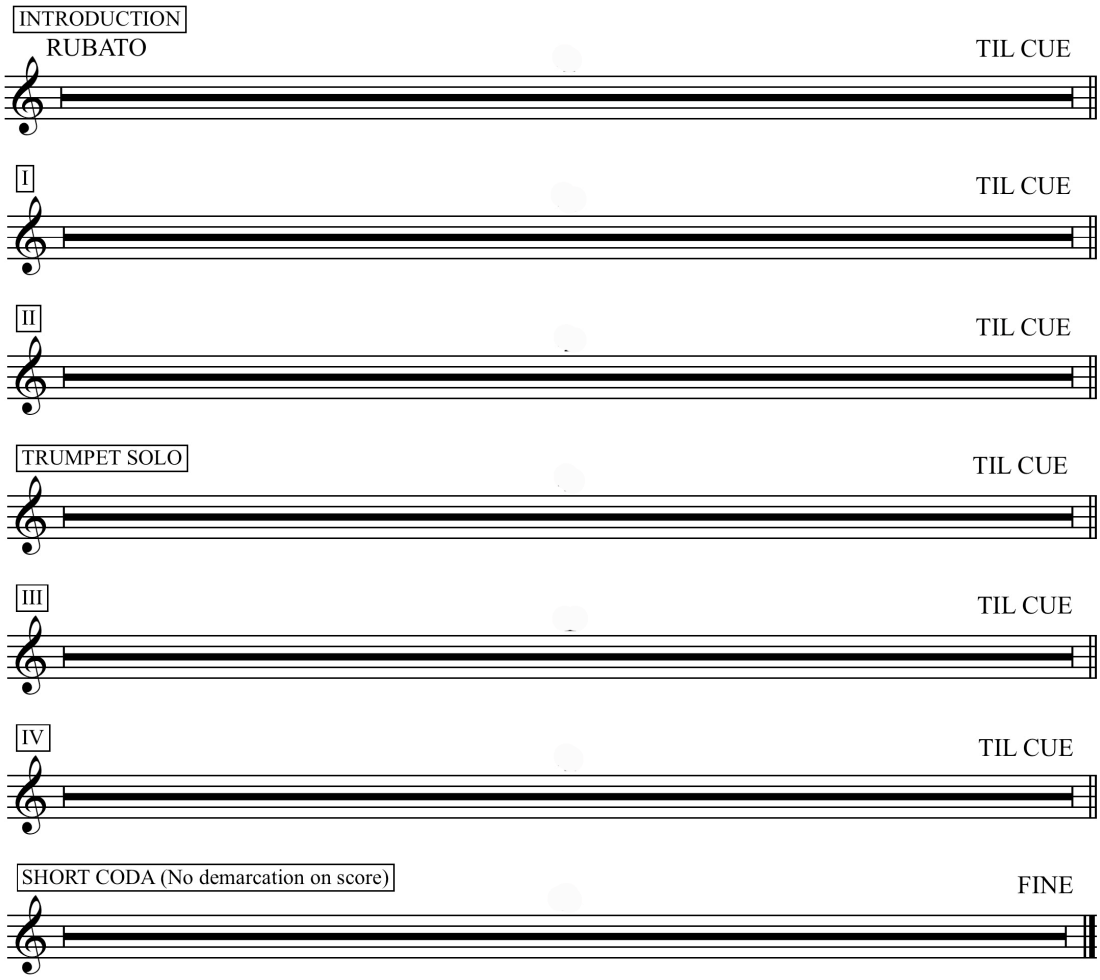
[280] Ibid.

phrasing is particularly prevalent during his baritone playing on the recording in question. A highly skilled and flexible musician, Paivanen is by no means a stereotype of the Nordic Sound. On *Ready Way To Go* we hear him first on baritone saxophone, then on tenor, and finally on soprano. In his phrasing of Vesala's melodies, and in his baritone improvisation, there can be noted a subtle recontextualisation of traditional jazz phraseology and articulation, yet the melodic material itself speaks of another musical world. There is a dialectic at work here; the compositional material and the performative approach take subtly contrasting positions, which become consolidated into a singular unified whole during the piece's realisation. This dialectical aspect of the performance drives what is a palpable sense of excitement. It is a joyful performance, which presents not merely a rendition of a work that *Sound and Fury* unfortunately never recorded while Vesala was alive, but also a posthumous musical conversation between Paivanen, Haarla and the late Vesala's compositional self.

Haarla's piano is quite astounding on *Ready Way to Go.* Until she sent me the scores (which were, incidentally, notated for trumpet, alto saxophone doubling on bass clarinet, tenor saxophone, soprano saxophone doubling on tenor saxophone and bass clarinet, and bass) I had believed Haarla's piano part during the melody to be completely improvised. Such was the general flow, sense of space and timing and overall feeling of her performance. I am given to wondering if it is in part due to her proximity to Vesala, and her obviously deep understanding of the drummer's melodic conception that her interpretation of the score feels so natural. Of course, in addition to this facet, she would have spent a great deal of time with *Ready Way to Go* as she arranged it for the *Sound and Fury* Ensemble. In this, the only recorded version of the work, released on the album of duets between Paivanen and Haarla entitled *Yarra Yarra,* Haarla combines all the varying instrumental lines into a single piano reduction.

In rearranging the piece for a duet setting, Haarla has notably deviated from the form of the original version as notated for *Sound and Fury*. The original score is designed as shown in example 20.

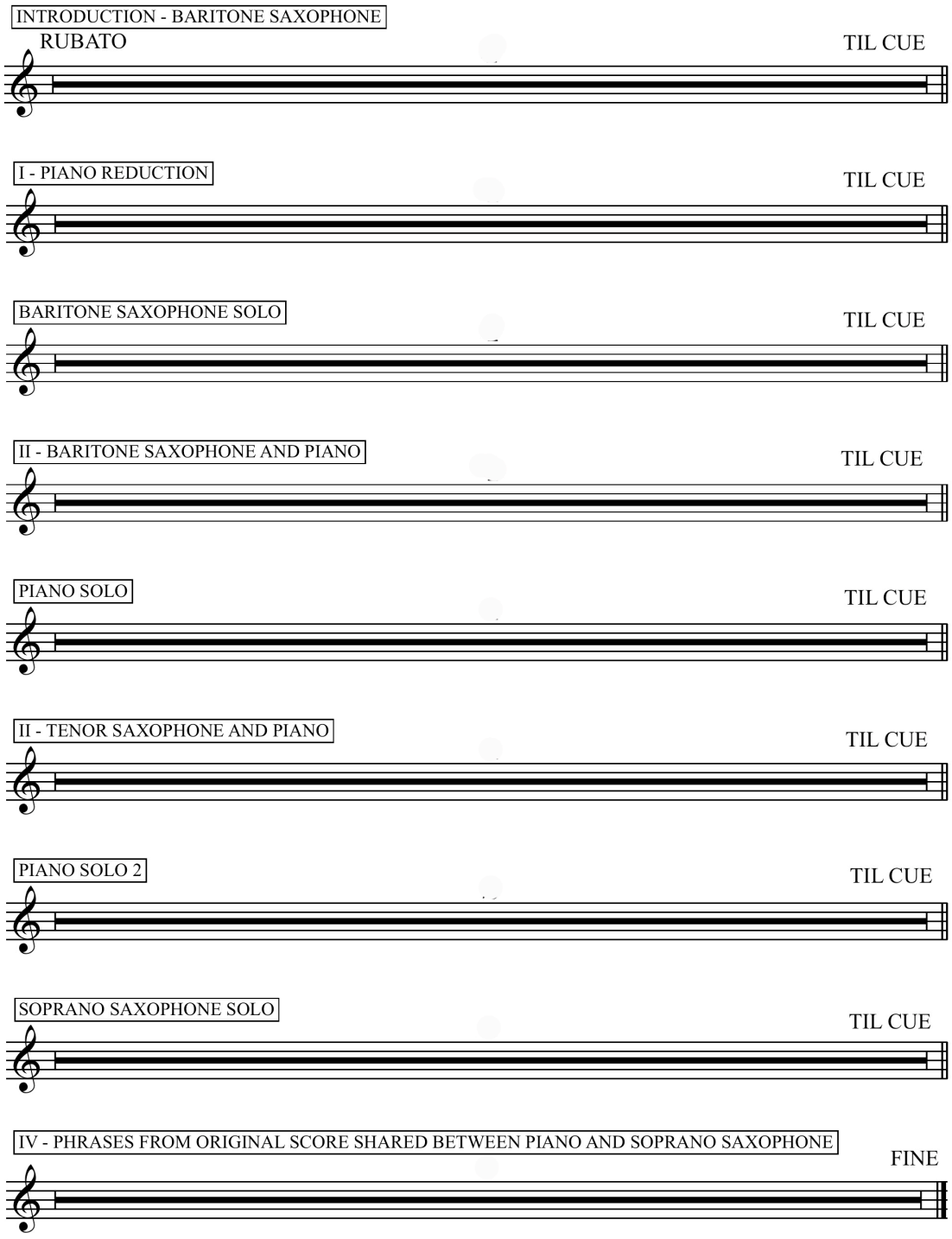
Example 20 Form of *Ready Way to Go*[281]



On Yarra Yarra however, the solos occur intermittently between sections, further obscuring the boundary between composition and improvisation (see example 21).

[281] Derived from the original score.

Example 21 Form of *Ready Way to Go,* from *Yarra Yarra*[282]



This deconstruction of the original form has allowed Haarla and Paivanen to preserve the through-composed nature of the piece and yet make room for four

[282] Transcribed by D. Rorke from Iro Haarla and Pepa Päivinen, *Yarra Yarra*. 2000, November Music NVR 2017-2. Compact Disc.

sections of improvised material. Instead of merely extending the one section originally allocated for a possible trumpet solo, the arrangement on *Yarra Yarra* expands upon the sense of journey and progression that is evident when reading through the original score. As with many of the improvisations we hear in Vesala and Haarla's works, the improvisations here strongly exist to serve the compositional material. In answer to my questions about the compositional process Haarla talked, somewhat generally, about her approach to working with Vesala's material.

> Very often the structure was constituted of several different parts of different compositions. The big part of my work was to choice the best parts of the enormous large-scale material and put them together in that way, that it would describe Edward's idea as good as possible. The style of improvisation was strictly determined by the mood of each part of the piece.[283]

There is a sense that the improvised sections on *Ready Way to Go* are as unwritten segues between each scored part, with devices such as periods of silence before sections almost a necessary marker for differentiating the form.

The blurring of improvisation and composition is further assisted by the way Haarla and Paivanen treat the source material. The composition itself is entirely rubato, notated without any bar lines. However, there does exist specific rhythmic notations that, if performed with the larger *Sound and Fury* group, would have had to be observed with a reasonable degree of integrity in order for all the five notated parts to be realised as intended in relation to each other. Of course, in a duo setting Haarla and Paivanen do not have such concerns and are therefore free to take certain liberties with the melodic material. A great deal of rhythmic interpretation is prevalent, yet this is also somewhat an element that comes naturally within this medium tempo, rubato territory. There are some sections of the original score, such as the first seven beats of section II, that are simply omitted from the duo performance, probably by design. Furthermore,

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[283] Interview with Iro Haarla (6 March 2011).

throughout the composed passages there are a number of notes, generally of secondary significance to the structure of the melodic material, that are omitted from both the saxophone and the piano performance. This is most likely a spontaneous occurrence, and that these smaller omissions are more a product of a high degree of interpretation on the part of Paivanen and Haarla, than any preconceived rearrangement.

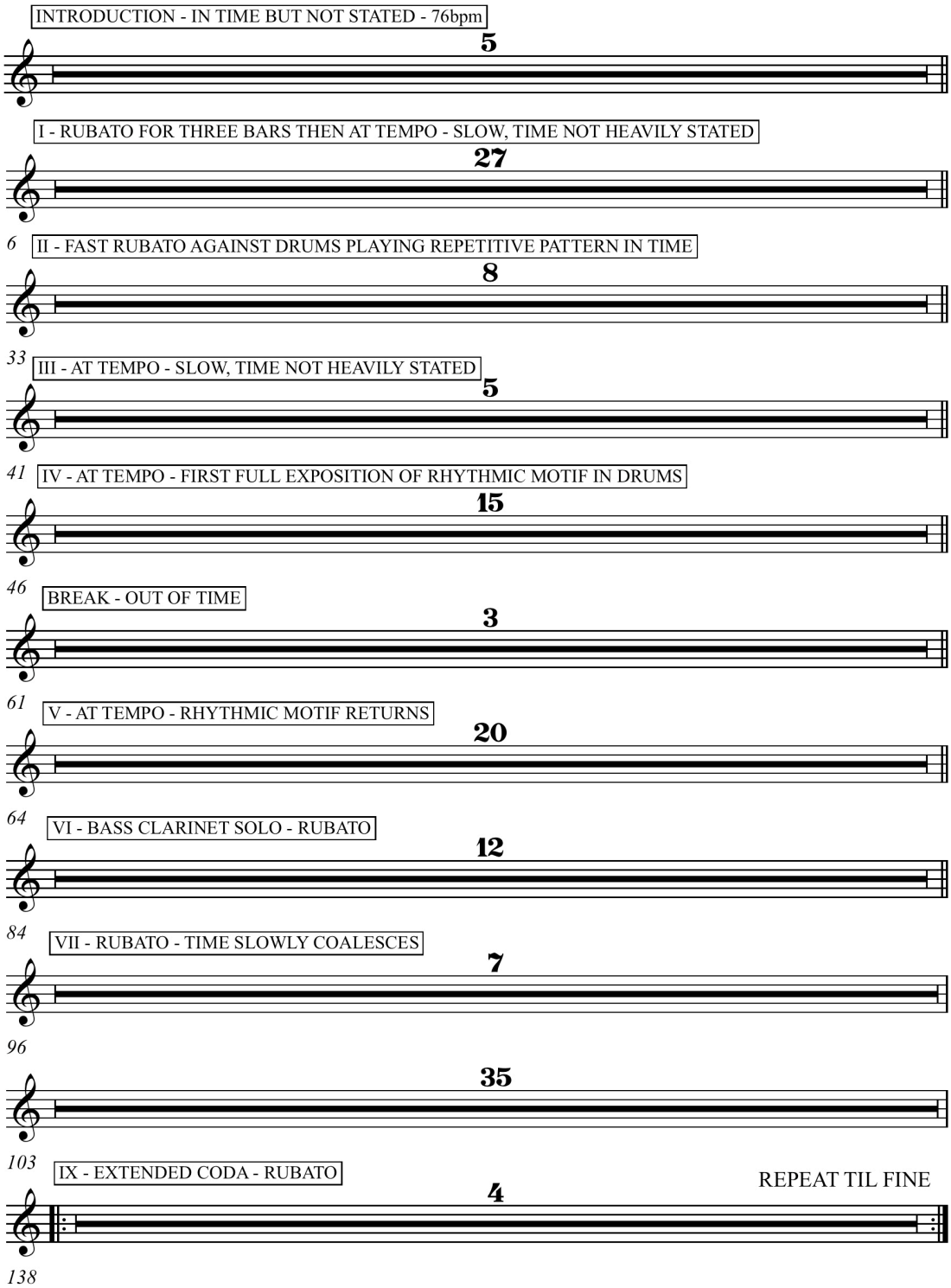
This high degree of interpretation is perhaps the singular element most responsible for creating such a unification of the aesthetics of the composition and the performer's improvisations. Again, as in *Third Moon*, the composition and improvisation are integrated entities, presenting a singular musical aesthetic throughout. *Ready Way to Go* is a wonderful example of the raised significance of composition in Haarla's and Vesala's work. Rather than the composition existing to frame the improvisations, such as in 'lead sheet' based jazz compositions, and thereby in essence occupying a less salient position in the aesthetic of the work, Haarla's and Vesala's music unifies composition and improvisation to a degree that is very rarely witnessed in jazz music. Their confluence, however, is not one of hybrid or fusion, it is a single aesthetic position that has metamorphosized out of a spectrum multiplicities; this dialectic between the composition and the improvisations being merely one aspect to arise from the music's diverse provenances. Confluence provides a much more applicable descriptive for this music, one where various tributary influences, along with fundamental musical methodologies of improvisation and composition, are united into a unified expression. Confluence allows for such unification, whereas conceptions such as fusion see these dualities as juxtaposed.

Streaming Below the Time, featured on Vesala's 1993-94 recording *Sound and Fury: Nordic Gallery,* and for all intents and purposes appears much more like a composition for chamber ensemble than something intended for jazz musicians. Once again we hear Haarla's accomplished arranging work, making full use of the timbral colours at her disposal, especially within the woodwinds who provide a full spectrum of instrumental possibilities, with the musicians doubling as they

do on flutes, alto flutes, clarinets, alto clarinets and bass clarinets in addition to the saxophones.

The manner in which time is utilised is particularly masterful in this work, and the given title may allude to this element being of central significance. *Streaming Below the Time* presents a continuum of alternating relationships to time, with various sections of the through-composed piece obscuring time, relinquishing time in a rubato fashion or stating the time directly. In addition, there are also a number of differing relationships to tempo within the work. In the example below we can observe the form as it concerns time (see example 22).

Example 22 *Streaming Below the Time* Time-Based Form Analysis[284]



What is particularly interesting in the treatment of time in this piece is not in fact

[284] Transcribed by D. Rorke from Edward Vesala, *Sound And Fury: Nordic Gallery.* 1993-1994. ECM 1541. Compact Disc.

the mere quality of moving in and out of passages of varying rubato. Rather, it is the manner in which the different treatments of time interact with each other.

Vesala's groups disguise the demarcations between these sections of varying rhythmic conception in a particularly abstruse way. This is especially true of the first six sections as differentiated in example 22. The introduction, for instance, is so understated in terms of time that the listener might well take it as being purely rubato. The intermittent three-bar rubato break between bars 6 and 9 further obscures our sense of sureness in this regard. When time does return after this break it is again very understated and hard to differentiate from those rubato sections that frame it.

There are a sections during which either dissolution or coalescence of the time occur, and this further obscures any strict point of demarcation between rubato sections and those with stated time. The first extended realisation of such a process is in section II where the drums play a rhythmic pattern, anticipating that which is to come in bar 46. Although the drums are stating time, the pattern is less formalised than that which it anticipates and less strict in relation to the pulse. What we hear in this section is the coalescence of the 'beat'—which will not be fully manifested until bar 46.

The antithesis of this process is to be heard at the end of section X, and this time the change comes from above, originating in the winds before gravitating to the rhythm section. In the last four odd bars of this section the winds begin drifting away from a strict adherence to the time, the effect of which is like being pulled from orbit by another gravitational body. It is the winds that establish the form of this new rhythmic condition, and after a short period of wonderful tension between the new, rubato rhythmic conception increasingly outlined by the winds, and the continuance of the ostinatio in the drums, the rhythm section eventually acquiesces.

In addition to these two extended transitional sections there can be heard a number of points where one or more of the musicians may anticipate the

forthcoming rhythmic conception. This can occur by an act as simple as a single note placed slightly out of, or against, the existing time relationship, or a note placed with audible relation to the time feel which is forthcoming in the piece. Many of these instances are easier to perceive upon multiple listenings, when one possesses knowledge of what is to come.

Perhaps the most profoundly unique and original rhythmic aspect of this work is to be observed in the way the *Sound and Fury* group are able to sustain a dual conception of time throughout certain sections. The transitional section discussed above is surely one example of such a duality, yet there is one way in which this duality is even more subtly expressed. To problematise this, it could be worth asking the following question as one listens to a piece the like of *Streaming Below the Time*: how do ten musicians perform scored passages with intricate and varying rhythmic values through rubato passages and maintain tight rhythmic unisons? It is a question that leads to one of the most profound aspects of the *Sound and Fury* group. Iro Haarla stated that the group would rehearse all day, every day, sometimes for months leading up to a recording session.[285] As anyone who has performed improvised music with the same group of people for such a period can testify, an almost telepathic relationship develops, where each musician is so well acquainted with the subtle performative mannerisms of the other that they can anticipate the way in which the music will likely develop. This can certainly occur on such a microcosmic level as rhythmic placement.

What we hear in *Sound and Fury*, however, is both this relationship, and something unique as a by-product of this relationship. There exists in a number of these pieces a kind of dual relationship to time, where despite the rubato nature of a passage, certain instrumentalists will maintain a relative relationship to an imagined pulse. This can be heard in the majority of the rubato sections in *Streaming Below the Time*. This secondary time conception is not often completely strict; instead each tone exists in a relative relationship to the tones

[285] Interview with Iro Haarla (6 March 2011).

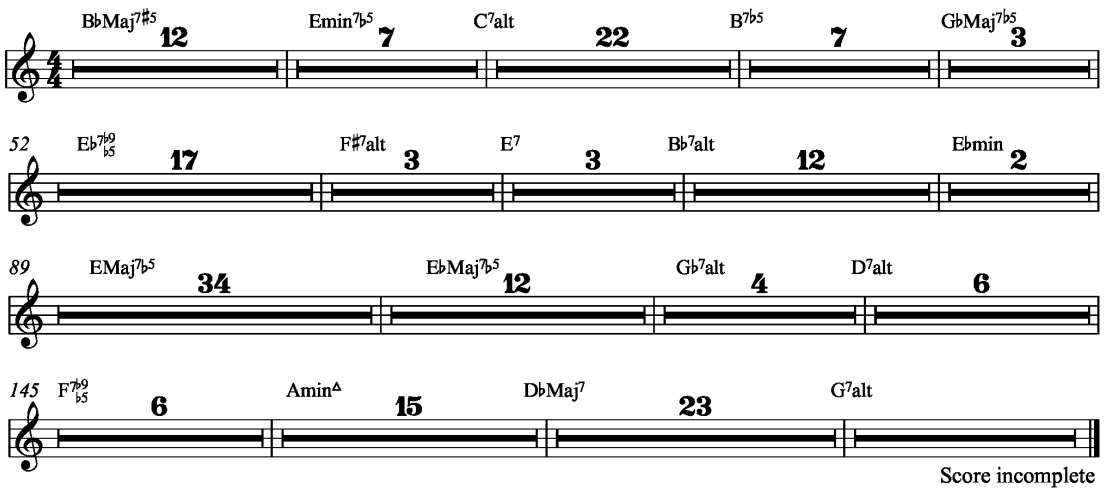
around it, and to an intermittent pulse that serves to accent certain strong rhythmic points in a given passage. The effect of such performance is that the lines treated in such a way may have a rhythmic conception that is relative to the performance of the passage itself, while other musicians who are not assigned such a part will be more freely interpreting the rubato mandate of the section. While there are usually points of convergence in such a performance, most often on the strong 'pulse' beats, this disjunction creates a wonderful sense of tension, while also allowing for an accurate and unified delivery of the scored theme. It is just another expression of the marriage of dualities that permeates this music. It is also a significant symbolic art that portrays duality as an artistic aesthetic throughout the work.

On the Shady Side of Forty, also to be found on the 1993-94 recording *Sound and Fury: Nordic Gallery,* is also of interest from the perspective of rhythmic conception. The recording itself is incredible diverse, with varying rhythmic feels and aesthetic conceptions from marches to Tango, to free jazz, to neo-chamber music, to the quasi-primitivistic feel of pieces such as *Fulflandia*, which invokes images of ecstatic pagan ritual. However, one might well be surprised to hear a swing feel in 3/4, especially given Vesala's apparently antagonistic attitude to the formalities of the, by then well constructed, jazz 'tradition'. Of course, this is Vesala's 3/4 swing feel, which could never be mistaken for anyone else's, and the piece is blatantly not jazz of the traditional vernacular. The drummer's feel is no anachronism, although it is a 3/4 swing played with brushes on the snare drum, his divisions of the beat are unusually wide and almost jerky, at moments almost to a degree of pointillism. This is no traditional jazz waltz. The winds, correspondingly, portray the lines with a sense of eighth note placement that could almost be interpreted as ironic. There is a humorous sense in Vesala's deconstruction of this feel, and as the quite free baritone saxophone solo begins, after the first scored passage, we start to hear the ensemble drift further and further from referencing anything akin to formality, and go deeper into abstraction.

For this thesis, *On the Shady Side of Forty* is of particular interest aesthetically as we hear Vesala's free jazz history very audibly brought to bear. Furthermore, in the context of the *Nordic Gallery* recording, we hear this aspect of his musical personality contrasted along side the more chamber-music-like confluences of Haarla's arranging. This is an adjacent duality, more akin to a notion of 'fusion' than the confluence more commonly presented by this ensemble. During *On the Shady Side of Forty,* the sublime orchestrations of a piece like *Third Moon* or *Streaming Below the Time* are relinquished to make way for a certain visceral energy. These visceral pieces, often to be heard with a strong underpinning of a driving, energetic feel from the rhythm section, present the extroverted side of *Sound and Fury*, while the more chamber music influenced pieces comprise a softer, more introverted sense. This is a group of stark dualities, even in terms of the contrast between individual works. This is further accentuated by the nature of the harmonic colours that Vesala and Haarla have used, *On the Shady Side of Forty* comprising of mostly major and dominant sonorities, while the more introverted works tend, naturally, toward minor harmonies.

On the Shady Side of Forty, as with many of the *Sound and Fury* compositions, presents the exposition of multiple measures of a single harmonic structure, instead of song form-like chordal progressions. The harmonic form of the piece is shown in example 23.

Example 23 *On the Shady Side of Forty* Harmony[286]



As is obvious from this example, there is no repetition or symmetrical relationships between these periods of harmony, instead they extend so far as the melodic material dictates. Likely, these melodies were the initial inventions, after which the associated harmonic conditions evolved and consolidated during the arrangement process. A number of these harmonic periods extend over and through significant demarcations of the form as notated on the score. This is yet another way that this music obscures the transitions between different sections and maintains a sense of continual progression. Of course, with any through-composed piece there is a constant realisation of new material, and a harmonic progression such as the one above further adds to this sense. Not only is no harmonic information repeated in this composition, but also even the durations of each harmonic period are continually altered. The impression this leaves in the mind of the listener is one of constant forward momentum, provoked by the sheer unpredictability of the harmonic condition.

In fact, even the harmonic changes are themselves obscured by a certain harmonic neutrality within the voicings. No enemy of dissonance, Haarla's voicings often contain many colour tones or chordal extensions with an emphasis placed on the textural possibilities of the various instrumentations,

[286] Derived from the original score.

rather than the functional expression of the harmonic basis from which they are derived. Close voices, often a tone apart, clusters and poly-harmonic structures further obscure any sense of harmonic exposition that might endure.

It is the boldness, and forthright adherence to such an uncompromising personal vision of their music, that has left such an enduring mark on the Nordic musical condition, rendering practices such as these as conceivable possibilities in the minds of the future musicians. Haarla and Vesala, by fashioning such works, create a precedent of the ulterior and a path to selfhood that is more accessible for their *sui generis* treatment of these musical structures. By pressing confluences into the fabric of music imbued with identities, both personal and communal, a reflective interpretation of selfhood and community as existent as a singular whole composed of multiplicities becomes possible.

5.1 Metamorphoses and Change

Jazz and improvised music have had a long and intertwined relationship to the idea of change. Whether change has found expression in the 'new thing', whatever that might be at a given period of the music's history, or in the evolution of the jazz form as it transforms into global diasporas of improvised music, change seems to be an aesthetic underlying a great deal of action within this art form. 'Playing the changes', which refers to an ability to improvise on the often-modulating harmonic progressions that underpin a good percentage of jazz music, has always been the hallmark of professional competency for the jazz musician. Yet, these 'changes' may well run a good deal deeper than any lead sheet can elucidate.

Australian trumpeter Philip Slater once described, at an improvisation class at The Sydney Conservatorium of Music, how expertise in improvisation is not necessarily purely the province of how well one can play in a certain passage or context, but how well one can play the transitions between these passages:

'Mastery is in the transitions'.[287] The position of this thesis is that this idea may allude to an even deeper relationship between improvised music and change, an examination of which may reveal a reflexivity between the art of improvisers and changes in the cultural, sub-cultural, social or political environments to which the artists associate.

Correspondingly, jazz has often been found explicitly commenting on the dark corners of political thought, even its early days. Billie Holliday's heart wrenching *Strange Fruit*, or John Coltrane's *Alabama* were provocative instigations of change in America's racial politics.[288] In Western Europe, and also Russia and the Eastern block countries, jazz became an analogy for individuality, personal freedom and a rejection of totalitarianism, a function it has fulfilled in America from its beginnings.[289] Robert O'Meally, in his most poignant work entitled *The Jazz Cadence of American Culture,* describes the American synergy between jazz and civil liberties.

> The whole idea of standing up for your rights as individuals against the government, which is the essence of the Bill of Rights, the First Amendment, the Fourth Amendment, especially the Fourth Amendment, which has almost disappeared now—the people who insist on doing that require a certain amount of guts, and that's what a jazzman has. In that respect, freedom of expression—that defines jazz. But that also defines the First Amendment, and also, the Fourth Amendment. So civil liberties and jazz, to me, are synonymous. And that became clear to me almost from the very beginning.
> I think jazz is very powerful, but it's not going to stop this mess we're in in Afghanistan, one of the biggest mistakes we've made. Jazz will reach individuals. Jazz is going to reach all kinds of people, and make an impact because of the feeling of freedom and individual liberty that they get from the music. It's there already, but it's nurtured by the music. Whether that's going to shape any policy, I have no idea. But at

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[287] Conversation with Phil Slater at The Sydney Conservatorium of Music (10 September 2005).
[288] Craig Hansen Werner, *A Change is Gonna Come: Music, Race and the Soul of America* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 130.
[289] Robert G. O'Meally, *The Jazz Cadence of American Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 422.

> least it will make those people feel, and it will show them what they're here for.[290]

Even since the 1980s the neo-classicism movement of jazz, despite its retrospective stance and almost summary rejection of qualitative change within the art form, has provided its audience with an understanding of change by engaging in imaginative performance often with contemporised results due to a plethora of variations in nuance and technique that, by general assessment, can only be attributed to the intervening passing of time. Simply, due to the improvised nature of jazz, time and social context changes the music even when the most proficient musicians aspire to preservation. If jazz, and by extension improvised music, is 'about' anything, it must certainly be about the nature of change; change that is to be found both in the artistic practices of the music itself and also in the art's reflection of the social contexts in which it exists.

Change, of course, is an issue of relative complexity, and in this thesis I wish to discuss two dominant expressions of change to be found in art and narrative; the metamorphic and the hybrid, and their congruencies with improvised music. There is possibly no better investigation into the nature of these two forms of change than that undertaken within the realm of folkloric story telling. For instance, the half-man-half-animal mythologies of creatures such as the centaur, minotaur or mermaid narrate a very different form of change to that of the therianthropic imagery of a werewolf or the Mesoamerican *Nagual* or Louhi's transformation into a bird in the Finnish *Kalevala*. The former is a description of hybridic change while the latter is a depiction of metamorphic change, both fulfilling differing societal functioning. As Caroline Walker Bynum put so clearly:

> Hybrid and metamorphosis are fundamentally different images and occur in different cultural contexts. They express different rhetorical

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[290] Nat Hentoff cited in Aidan Levy, 'A Steady Voice on Jazz and Politics, Still Going Strong' *New York Times*, http://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/06/17/a-steady-voice-on-jazz-and-politics-still-going-strong/ (accessed 30 November 2010).

> strategies and different ontological visions; as the literary critics say, they do different "cultural work". The hybrid expresses a world of natures, essences or substances (often diverse or contradictory to each other), encountered through paradox; it resists change. Metamorphosis expresses a liable world of flux and transformation, encountered through story.[291]

Author Kabir Sehgal claims that 'Music is audible and aural literature',[292] and with such ideals in mind applying the above models to music should not seem overly inappropriate.

In fact there is an exceedingly similar paradigm at work in the world of improvised music. By way of example 'jazz fusion', be it jazz-rock fusion—for which the term is most commonly employed—or the 'fusion' of jazz with any other tradition, expresses a distinctly hybridised take on change. In fusion music a double being exists, but, by maintaining this duality, the music resists any change to the pre-existing forms. What one takes from this hybrid music is the notion that the tributary traditions are affirmed, their nature, their essence is immutable. Metamorphic improvised music is much more elusive in many ways, it is concerned with process rather than substance. Metamorphic music cannot be defined easily, or satisfactorily by what constitutes it, but, instead, by how it behaves. There is a parallel to those who see the jazz canon defined by its innovators here. As pianist Kenny Werner said, 'the tradition is innovation'.[293] This position holds that jazz music's essence is not to be found within its substance, but in its process.

As a narrative form, metamorphosis has a central preoccupation with process. With metamorphosis, transition is the focal point. It is the central method by which these narratives investigate the nature of identity, the question being the

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[291] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Metamorphosis and Identity*, 29.
[292] Kabir Sehgal, *Jazzocracy: Jazz, Democracy, and the Creation of a New American Mythology* (Chicago: Better World, 2008), 224.
[293] Kenny Werner, *Effortless Mastery: Liberating The Master Musician Within* (New Albany: Jamey Aebersold, 1996), 8.

fundamental purpose of both hybridic and metamorphic change narratives. Important in this breakdown is the contrasts between these two significantly different forms of change. This is key, due to relationships between change and the concept of confluence, and enlightens one reason why confluence is in essence a vastly different concept to Third Stream or any idea of Fusion music. As in the narratives from the folklore of an earlier age, differing representations of change have been underwritten by exceptionally different conceptions of the nature of society and existence.

> Hybrid and metamorphoses revel or violate categories in different ways. Hybrid reveals a world of difference, a world that is and is multiple; metamorphosis reveals a world of stories, of things under way. Metamorphosis breaks down categories by breaching them; hybrid forces contradictory or incompatible categories to coexist and serve as commentary on each other.[294]

By substituting 'fusion' and 'confluent' for 'hybrid' and metamorphosis respectively in the above quote, we have a quite satisfactory statement serving to differentiate the aesthetic of fusion from confluent music, and thereby highlighting the necessity for the application of confluence as a principle in this research. However, in artworks as multifaceted and reader dependent as those created within the various realms of improvised music, and especially that which is a product of the culturally complex environment of Europe, one might perceive both forms of metamorphic and hybrid change relationships. This is certainly true of many of the artists examined here, Edward Vesala's music being a good example. The Finnish drummer's groups often played with various expressions of change in contrast and communion. Yet, it is the metamorphic aspects that set the music of Vesala, and the other subjects of this thesis, apart as a unique and significant point in the evolution of global diasporas of jazz music, and it was the process of resynthesising a new, singular, voice from various tributary influences that gave this music its unique and recognisable character, while allowing it to

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[294] Walker Bynum, *Metamorphosis and Identity*, 31.

simultaneously intersect with narratives of cultural particularity and universalism.

In a folkloric sense, these narratives regarding metamorphosis and change are a way for communities to construct narratives about the identity and evolution of their societies. As in folklore, so does contemporary improvised music, fulfil many of these same functions, albeit in an abstract fashion. Because of the way improvised music operates outside of the world of literal language, it is free from the social ramifications and dangers that a direct political discussion might involve, in much the same way that fables and storytelling displaces the actually subject matter by placing it in the realm of fantasy.

Metamorphosis asks the question of what is that is intrinsic in our identities, and our humanity. The question is: what aspects survive these changes, or indeed are rendered obsolete by them? By narrative change, and succession, metamorphosis is, in a way, intrinsically a narrative form. This stands in contrast to the hybrid, which, by portraying two aspects of static identity in adjacent relation, is more akin to a pictorial representation of dualities. Metamorphosis is at once an investigation into the identity of the subject and the devices of change itself. Walker Bynum explains metamorphosis as such an investigation into intrinsic identity:

> The way in which medieval romances and marvel collections use the theme [metamorphosis] insists on exactly what the theme seems to deny: the embodied nature of self. Thus it appears that the exploration of body-hopping and metamorphosis found in marvel collections and miracle stories, in theological discussion and commentary by grammarians, reflects less a desire to shed body than an effort to understand how it perdures, less an escape to alterity than a search for the rules that govern change.[295]

[295] Ibid., 109.

Likewise, if we look at improvised music through the lens of metamorphosis we find that music which conforms most appropriately to the concept behaves in much the same manner in relation to identity.

One of the central subjects of this thesis, Edward Vesala, is an apt example of a congruent process in Nordic jazz music. His music has often seemed to deny or reject what might, in this context, be referred to as the 'body' of jazz tradition; the model of jazz as a differentiated entity with a defining substance. This is an image most blatantly rendered with his *Ode to the Death of Jazz,* a record with a message that appears to reject the jazz tradition as a defining force, at least in relation to the music he presents in this edition. However, in the context of metamorphic narratives, it becomes apparent this is in many ways a quite superficial reading. *Ode to the Death of Jazz* when positioned in this context is not merely denying the jazz tradition, the jazz identity, the jazz 'self'. It does not seem to state that jazz has in totality expired, arguably there is much jazz to be found on this record. Alternatively, in complete congruency with metamorphosis narratives, Vesala has created a work that investigates the perdurence of the jazz tradition within the music as much as it investigates its evanescence. Although the results of his investigations clearly embrace the evolutions of the music and its rejections are most clearly levelled toward that of the codification of the art and the inevitable stasis that would ensue. Indeed, to a certain degree this has occurred as a result of retrospectivity and overt preoccupation with canonisation of past masters, particularly in the United States. Vesala's record is a picture of change within the art of jazz and improvised music itself, not an escape to alterity but a musical search for the rules that govern change. Death is of course well acknowledged for its role as the great transformer in folklore and mythology, particularly Eastern philosophy and pagan religions. It is likely that such notions were not lost on Vesala, an artist whose investigations had led him to become deeply invested in folk art and the folklife of not only the Finnish cultural realm, but simultaneously that of many of the world's traditions. Vesala's 1989 ECM release might just as well have been known as 'Ode to the Metamorphosis of Jazz', but unfortunately this alternate appellation lacks the impact conveyed in the original title.

Like the folkloric narratives with which I am drawing parallel, Vesala's music is addressing more than merely the evolution of jazz and improvisation. There are vast relationships, analogies and inferences that can be found between this music and its societal context. By creating a metamorphic art, Vesala is commenting upon the nature of reality and the way in which we imagine our reality as a society. For change to be observed, commented upon or narrated, there must first be a subject or entity that will undergo this transformation. For this subject or entity to exist requires categorisation, that most insidious and problematic of human abilities.

One of the most poignant ways in which art remains relevant is to establish dialectics with all forms of categorisation, these categorisations most often to take the form of what is most commonly referred to as genre in the musical arts.

> An attractive aspect of this understanding of the concept [of genre] has been its capacity to accommodate the mixing or blending of genres, a device that might well confuse the classifier, but which greatly strengthens the communicative and programmatic potential of genre. Since genres possess certain recognizable identifying traits (genre markers), they can be counterpointed within an artwork to generate a 'play' of meanings, which may, in some later style systems, extend into irony or parody, or even point beyond the work into the sphere of referential meaning.[296]

Challenging these genre categorisations is something of a fundamental characteristic of art that is progressive. If one's art is deeply involved in addressing the types of change narratives we are discussing here, it stands as logical that different relationships to the nature of change itself reveal differing influences on the nature of categorisation. Let us reflect once more upon Walker Bynum's differentiation between hybrid and metamorphosis:

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[296] Samson, J. (2001) 'Genre' in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* 2nd Edition, ed. S. Sadie, also 'Genre' in *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy http://www.grovemusic.com (accessed 1 February 2012).

> Hybrid and metamorphosis reveal or violate categories in different ways. Hybrid reveals a world of difference, a world that *is* and is multiple; metamorphosis reveals a world of stories, of things underway. Metamorphosis breaks down categories by breaching them; hybrid forces contradictory or incompatible categories to coexist and serve as commentary on the other.[297]

It stands to reason then that metamorphic music is in many ways quite radical. By violating category its maker is in essence creating an image of a reality that is in flux. This is an art that is destabilising any formal comprehension of what *is.*

While an art as fundamentally abstracted as music might well be seen to be commenting upon fully all or nothing of what *is,* so is it specifically predisposed toward certain areas of influence. Music is most often understood as a cultural, therefore by extension a social, narrative for no other reason than it is consumed in our society as a cultural commodity and our audiences are educated and conditioned to understand it as such. A member of a jazz audience, for example, is not dominantly motivated by a desire to hear a reflexive interpretation of sociological commentary manifesting in sound, but most regularly the individual is motivated to participate in a cultural ritual centring on the music as a medium for cultural expression. Therefore, like the mythologies of folklore, jazz music becomes meaningful commentary masked as entertainment or community participation in cultural expression.

In addition to, and in support of, these two expressions of change, hybrid and metamorphosis, there is the substantial and fertile area of dialectics. There are two ways in which dialectic processes might be applicable to the improvised music discussed in this thesis. Firstly, there is to be observed a rendering of the thesis-antithesis-synthesis model. In analysis this is a useful metaphor for describing the polemics that exist in jazz music. Derek Gatherer's very interesting essay *The Evolution of Music: A Comparison of Darwinian and*

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[297] Walker Bynum, *Metamorphosis and Identity*, 31.

Dialectical Methods describes this process in relation to African-American music:

> Dialectics posits a system by which any idea constitutes a "thesis" which inevitably must have its contradiction or "antithesis." The opposition of these entities leads to "synthesis" in which their differences become a source of something qualitatively new. This synthesis is then considered as the new thesis and the process repeats itself. Suggestively for dialecticians, much of the history of African-American music has been characterized by often vehemently opposed schools, elements of which are then often found combined in a succeeding movement which is different to both its parental styles.[298]

This basic rendering assists discussion of musical traditions that interact in a dialectical fashion with other traditions, resulting in new independent synthesised forms, and also in the way certain dialectics may play out within the sociological subtext of the music. In this way, dialectics can be seen as the engine of change narratives, with metamorphic confluent music and adjacent fusions existing at different point in the dialectic process.

In the second instance we have the ways in which dialectics have been used to describe the psychological actions of improvisers during the moment of creation. This was brought forward by Norwegian jazz pianist Tord Gustavsen in his excellent thesis, *The Dialectical Eroticism of Improvisation.* Gustavsen's work illuminates the way in which the mind of the improviser negotiates musical systems by positioning them in dialectical relationships.

> Its main focus is the need for dialectal movements in the self's facing and acting on its surroundings. This is specified in the need for successful negotiating of dilemmas like moment vs. duration,

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[298] Derek Gatherer, 'The Evolution of Music: A Comparison of Darwinian and Dialectical Methods', *Journal of Social and Evolutionary Systems* 20/1 (1997), 75.

> difference vs. sameness, gratification vs. frustration, stability vs. stimulation and closeness vs. distance.[299]

It is difficult for one to speculate whether these internal dialectics may or may not exist in specific congruence with dialectics that may be perceived within the actualisation of the music. It is, however, of great significance that certain processes of synthesis might exist within the internal psychological level of the musician during performance, while similar patterns of interaction can be understood in the external aesthetics of the music. This is, then, reflexively extended to one further layer of inference, that of the sociological interpretations of these aesthetics. Completing this circle, I see it as highly likely that these sociological interpretations influence the psychological tendencies of the artist who becomes aware of these perceptions, creating a sort of feedback loop of dialectic process that is to be observed imbedded in all levels of the musical and cultural process.

While confluence might be said to exist at the synthesising point of the dialectical process, so dialectics can be understood as the inner mechanics of confluence without contradiction. Dialectics provide a way of discussing the minor interactions of elements that, if synthesis is subsequently achieved, can give rise to the artwork's metamorphic aesthetic. It is at this point, when synthesis is occurs, that new artistic voices arise. This, of course, occurs all the time in jazz music, and it is this highly personal 'successful negotiation of dilemmas' that is the mechanics of individuality in musical improvisations. With the added complexity of the music's social and artistic/cultural environments, dialectics provides a theoretical understanding of the mechanics of the singular, unified expression derived from multiplicities of tributary influence.

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[299] Tord Gustavsen, 'The Dialectical Eroticism Of Improvisation', 4.

5.2 Globalisation and Universalism

The appropriation of extra-traditional material, by jazz musicians, is something that is more than a century old within the Jazz tradition. Composer and pianist Duke Ellington includes among his most famous works *The Far East Suite*, and the highly influential saxophonist John Coltrane not only wrote pieces such as *India,* with a distinct influence of Eastern traditional music, but also allowed this music to influence his improvisational palate. In keeping with, and extending upon, the inherently confluent nature of jazz, Coltrane was one of the first and most significant improvisers in modern jazz consciously to incorporate stylistic elements from Eastern music into his improvisational schema in such a profound way that it fundamentally altered what was already a fully developed musical aesthetic.

> Coltrane, with his strong influences from African-American oral culture, Africa, Asia and the Islamic world, was certainly one of the most influential precursors of contemporary genre transcendence and multicultural reference discourses in experimental music.[300]

Garbarek is highly influenced by Coltrane. For any saxophonist, and especially a tenor saxophonist, living in the era after Coltrane it is almost impossible not to be influenced by his work. Such is the enduring legacy of the man that he has in many respects fundamentally influenced the way the saxophone is played, both physically and in regard to the conception of how the instrument sounds timbrally. John Coltrane was a searcher, both spiritually and academically, and a tireless worker upon his art. As a product of the influence he exerted upon jazz music, this 'searching' left an indelible mark upon the working methods of future generations of jazz musicians.

When Garbarek began searching for material outside the jazz tradition, first in

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[300] Fischlin andHeble, *The Other Side of Nowhere: Jazz, Improvisation, and Communities in Dialogue*, 168.

Norwegian folk music and later among many other traditions of both Eastern and Western music, it may well be viewed as a methodology completely congruent with this post-Coltrane jazz environment. Garbarek describes his process:

> I went down to the folk music collection in Chateau Neuf and asked if I could listen to their recordings: what I was really after were cattle calls and short, improvised verses. It wasn't difficult to find plenty of good material, but I had to feel that I could play it. For, really, I haven't got any special grounding in folk music; I play the old melodies in a quite untypical way. The purists may have their doubts but it was absolutely necessary for me to play the music my way. I will say, there is something special to them—they are not so Europeanised as Danish material, for example. There's a strong Balkan flavour, lots of scales with minor thirds; you find similarities to the Greek modes, particularly the Lydian. The funny thing was that when I did look through some sketches of the old cattle calls, I found that what I had been moving towards playing anyway—something direct, very 'loud' in a way, but with a floating, far-off feeling as well as a sense of closeness—was also in those old pieces.[301]

This was a highly important moment in the history of jazz music in the Nordic countries, because from this point on Garbarek's improvisational style was to alter significantly. His playing became sparser, perhaps most importantly, less obviously influenced by great American innovators such as Coltrane and Albert Ayler. In the Nordic lands Garbarek was one of the first, and certainly one of the most influential, musicians to begin searching for a musical aesthetic that was not directly a reference to American jazz players. What Garbarek did with jazz has certainly exerted a profound force upon Nordic musicians that continues to this day, but also it has set a precedent that has inspired many non-American players around the globe to seek ways of playing beyond the traditional jazz vernacular. Often, this search has led to the co-opting of tradition music forms and indeed elements from a veritable plethora of other styles, such a methodology being in keeping with the confluent basis of jazz music.

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[301] Jan Garbarek cited in *Jan Garbarek: Deep Song* by Michael Tucker, 141.

On *The Source and Different Cikadas* and on Trygve Seim's albums *Different Rivers* and *Sangam* the saxophonist and trombonist Øyvind Brække gave clear evidence of their growing interest in 'eastern' sonorities and sounds inspired by the bansuri flute, the shakuhachi and the duduk, and what Brække has described as 'the search for a breathing, minimal, yet warm and spontaneous kind of music'.[302] Like his predecessor Garbarek, Seim is also strongly influenced by Eastern music forms generally, incorporating something of the music of Asia and the Middle East discernibly into his overall aesthetic. Frode Haltli told me that 'someone once called the Trygve Seim Ensemble the Oslo Shakuhachi ensemble, something that is quite funny and shows that influences have also come from Asia'.[303] This 'universalisation' of different musical forms is a strong undercurrent in the conception of many of the improvisers I am discussing in this thesis. There is a sense that, in the context of improvisation and jazz, all music forms may be legitimately and successfully integrated.

In line with an increasingly interconnected world, a great deal of the music that is examined in this thesis, and in a wider context a significant percentage of the confluent music in Europe, shows derivation not just from Western art music and American jazz primarily but also from various folk music indigenous to what can broadly be referred to as 'the East'. Jazz music has of course always drawn from much more than merely its Western influences. It is important that this thesis unpacks these concepts of 'East' and 'West', 'Oriental' and 'Occidental'. These are conceptualisations of the social geography of human society largely dependent upon location, place and cultural relativity. In the context of Orientalism as a field of scholarship, one of the most influential figures in the contemporary understanding of the discipline is that of Edward Said, whose work, simple entitled Orientalism, has become one of the most influential discourses to present a contemporised problematisation of the frameworks of 'Oriental' and 'Occidental'. In his response to criticism and commentary of his

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[302] ECM Records. 'The Source: Background' http://www.ecmrecords.com/Background/ECM/1900/background_1966.php (accessed 30 June 2010).
[303] Haltli cited in Rorke, 'It's Ok to Listen to the Grey Voice', 86.

work Said published an article in *Cultural Critique* that was prefaced by a framing of Orientalism that is of particular significance to this research.

> As a department of thought and expertise, Orientalism of course refers to several overlapping domains: firstly, the changing historical and cultural relationship between Europe and Asia, a relationship with a 4000 year old history; secondly, the scientific discipline in the West according to which beginning in the early 19th century one specialised in the study of various Oriental cultures and traditions; and, thirdly, the ideological suppositions, images, and fantasies about a currently important and politically urgent region of the world called the Orient. The relatively common denominator between these three aspects of Orientalism is the line separating Occident from Orient, and this, I have argued, is less a fact of nature than it is a fact of human production, which I have called imaginative geography. This is, however, neither to say that the division between Orient and Occident is un-changing nor is it to say that it is simply fictional. It is to say-emphatically-that as with all aspects of what Vico calls the world of nations, the Orient and Occident are facts produced by human beings, and as such must be studied as integral components of the social, and not divine or natural, world.[304]

Following, in the context of the language of this thesis, this understanding of Orientalism as a fact of human production, as imaginative geography, can be understood as analogous to the idea of the adjacent aesthetic, often know in jazz music as fusion. Adopting the idea of Orientalism, and placing it in the context of the idea of confluent music, the subject of this thesis can be seen not to be, mostly, producing works of Orientalism, instead this art is, moreover, an attempt to break down divisions of Orient and Occident, and intersect with a narrative of universalism. Orientalism, therefore, as pertains to this music, is a procedure of adjacent fusionism, while the opposite procedure of universalism is a procedure of confluence that occupy similar positions in the interpretive manifestations surrounding the art, albeit with a near opposite conception. The works analysed below do not show evidence of Orientalism, and specific elements of Oriental design can not be derived from these transcriptions, alternatively, they present a

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[304] Edward W. Said, 'Orientalism Reconsidered' *Cultural Critique*, 1 (Autumn, 1985), 90.

synthesised music that has amalgamated Oriental and Occidental influence in a confluent singular unified aesthetic.

Despite the fact that the threads of relation between Eastern and Western music are woven indelibly into the fabric and history of jazz and associated improvised music, there exists within the music jazz, as a whole, a multitude of differing approaches to the manner of interaction between the two poles. The terms Eastern and Western, Orient and Occident, do correspond to two important notions in art, that of the 'self' and 'other'. In the intersection, and provocation, of a narrative of universalism, the subjects of this thesis provide a picture that breaks down, and blurs these two divisions.

Jazz from its beginnings drew in a confluent manner from African and European traditions, and many of the music's most important innovators, such as Duke Ellington and John Coltrane, sought explicitly to address non-Western aesthetics at some point during their careers. Ellington's *Far East Suite* or Coltrane's *India* for instance make for apt, if somewhat obvious, examples. In the improvised music of the Nordic countries, particularly the music that may be labelled confluent, there is an established pattern of musicians addressing certain non-Western aesthetics simultaneously Western traditions. It is something that Third Stream idealists like Ran Blake would surely see as entirely congruent with their more expansive definitions of the movement.

Some notable examples of Nordic improvisers involving themselves explicitly with Eastern folk music include Jan Garbarek's more hybridic collaborations with musicians such as oudist Anouar Brahem on the ECM issue *Madar* and percussionist and tabla player Trilok Gurtu on his recording *Living Magic* in 1990 for the CMP label. These recordings represent a very 'jazz-fusion' orientated process where the differing musical traditions are exist together without fundamental integration of stylistic elements. Although small concessions are often made by the musicians in terms of rhythmic placement or temperament in order to facilitate coherent music there is rarely a great deal of cross-fertilisation between the two musical languages. Notably it is also most commonly the

Eastern participants that must reframe aspects such as rhythmic complexity or adopt Western temperament in these recordings. In the examples above for instance, saxophonist Jan Garbarek is most dominantly playing in his own vernacular. These records worked because of the understanding of Western music possessed by both Brahem and Gurtu who have each built successful careers through their ability to function in both environments.

A rarer find is the Western musician who seeks to imbed a plurality of musical schema deeply within his or her own improvisational structuring. In recent years two younger Norwegians have stood out in this regard: the saxophonist Trygve Seim and trumpeter Arve Henriksen. While neither of these musicians regularly performs Eastern music, each has invested a great deal of time and energy studying different traditions in order to inform his own improvisational aesthetics. Both Seim and Henriksen have spent time with the music of the Japanese shakuhachi, something that can most explicitly be heard on Henriksen's *Sakuteki* for the Runegrammofon label, but their searching leads all over. Henriksen told me he has been involving himself with the music of the Armenian duduk,[305] while Seim has been performing for many years with musicians from Egypt and the Middle East, a number of whom he came into contact with when they immigrated to Norway and took up residence near his home in Oslo.[306] In this regard Seim's music reflects his societal environment and its increasingly multicultural climate. Seim's approach varies significantly from Henriksen's in that Seim is more often to be found performing Eastern music with his Egyptian friends: in contrast, Henriksen seems more concerned with taking from these non-Western traditions to inform his own approach in contemporary contexts. In the same conversation that we discussed the duduk, Henriksen told me that he does not necessarily 'study' the music of the shakuhachi in a formal manner but instead spends a great deal of time 'with' (i.e., listening, playing and cognitively

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[305] Personal conversation with Arve Henriksen, *Dokkhuset* (Trondheim, Norway, October 2008).
[306] Trygve Seim cited in 'Trygve Seim: Vanguard Of A New Wave' by John Kelman *All About Jazz* http://www.allaboutjazz.com/php/article.php?id=16864#2 (accessed 15 March 2011).

involving oneself with) the music in order that it more deeply permeates his fundamental improvisational language.[307] This is an insight that is important to this thesis, it serves to underwrite the way in which Henriksen is more concerned with the universal, confluent integrations of Eastern and Western influences into a singular synthesised aesthetic, than maintaining dualistic independent branches of inquiry. In short, this study is the study of music as a universal totality, rather than an investigation via the imagined geographies that give birth to various traditions.

Any searching outward is in essence also a search inward as the increased contact and understanding of foreign cultural practices help inform the individual about one's own native culture. It has been shown that the conceptions that other groups have about one's own culture is potentially as influential as one's own experiences.

> Ethnic boundaries are drawn not just by the community around itself, for, as Fredrik Barth has shown in his work on ethnicity in the United States, a group is defined by others as much as it defines itself. Groups, then, exist not in isolation but in a negotiation with others.[308]

This goes a long way to explaining the fact that the Nordic jazz musicians who have had the most influence and impact on what is often called 'The Nordic Sound' have in often been substantially occupied with ethnic music forms from beyond Europe. Here we observe the intersection of the two narratives that concern this thesis, the particular and the universal. In this instance, the universalism inherent in intersecting with ethnic music informs the particular narrative about intrinsic identity through an art medium in metamorphosis. Luckily for Nordic society as a whole, a searching global perspective and Nordic particularity need not be mutually exclusive in the hands of intelligent and free thinking artists such as Garbarek, Vesala, Henriksen or Seim.

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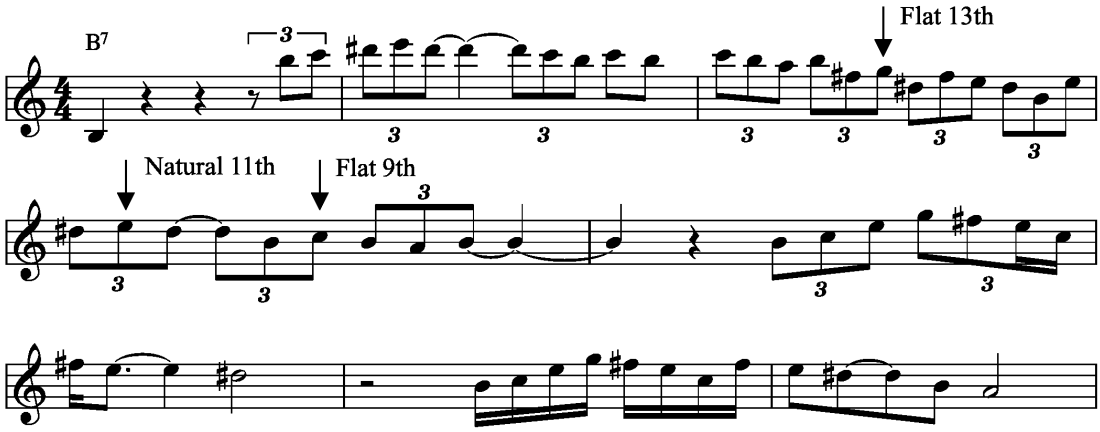
[307] Arve Henriksen, personal communication, 17 January 2007.
[308] Gregory Jusdanis, 'Beyond National Culture?' *Boundary* 2, 22/1 (Spring, 1995), 36.

'Long As You Know You're Living Yours from the first recording of Jarrett's European quartet, the album entitled *Belonging,* begins with a 4/4 funk beat over which sounds a vocalistic saxophone melody that, while a wonderful composition, does not particularly present much outside the expectations of many a 1970s jazz-rock endeavour. However, the composition is in some ways a ruse, and expectation is usurped immediately once the saxophone improvisation begins. Garbarek's oriental influences are audible in what is a solo passage of surprising departure from the mode of the rest of the piece, the harmony even modulating to concert B from the initial tonic of G.

The solo provokes connotations of the impassioned vocality of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan performing *Qawwali*, or perhaps the phrasing of the Hindustani bansuri, yet there is little one can find with which to link specifically to this music. There is not any specifically Eastern music incorporated in the improvisation, instead the improvisation gives the impression of these forms—a picture of musical alterity. While the group changes modes, drummer Jon Christensen keeps to the 4/4 funk ostinato, further exaggerating the sense of plurality and the feeling of otherness connected to Garbarek's improvisation. Were Christensen also to have changed mode with the rest of the group at this point, not only would the context of the improvised body of the piece been a huge departure from the framework of the composition, but also this 'orientalist' sense would potentially have been diminished, as the ensemble as a would become more of a fully realised exploration of alterity; having relinquished much of the lens of Western music invoked by the composition and, by extension, the percussion ostinato that continues during the saxophone improvisation. Therefore, what we see in this piece is an ensemble engaging in both adjacent and integrated modes of dualism. The saxophone solo, when considered unto itself is an integrated synthesis of various tributaries, and yet this contrasts with the rhythm section, and particularly the drums, that are still firmly in the realm of occidental music.

The solo is exclusively derived from the concert pitch E harmonic minor scale placed over the B7 chord, producing tones familiar to Eastern music such as the flattened 9th and flattened 13th alongside a natural 11th (see example 24).[309]

Example 24 Jan Garbarek From *'Long As You Know You're Living Yours* Bars 91-118[310]



These tensions are, in addition, manipulated in a manner of tension and release wherein extended hearings of tension tones tend to resolve to the chord tone a semitone below. Even though this is a musical principle that is almost universal to human music, such extended tensions resolving in such a manner is an expression that is heard frequently in Eastern music. This can be observed in the phrase occupying bars 94 to 99, where the tension C resolves to the tonic B, and again in the next phrase occupying bars 99 to 103 where the natural 11th (E) resolves in to D sharp, immediately preceding another C to B resolution in bar 102.

The most significant reference to non-Western music, however, is to be found in the developmental arc of the solo. This improvisation is unmistakably cast in the mould of the ecstatic traditions that Jarrett has discussed, with Garbarek steadily

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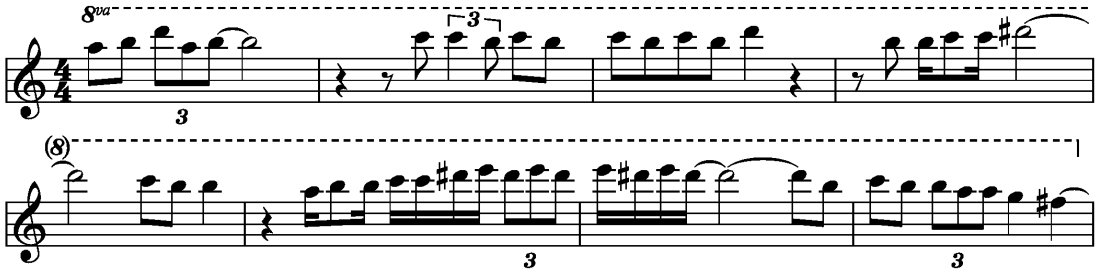
[309] Transcribed By D. Rorke from Keith Jarrett, *Belonging.* 1974, ECM 1050, Compact Disc.
[310] Ibid.

climbing through the saxophone's register to an impassioned extended altissimo passage (see example 25).

Example 25 Jan Garbarek From *'Long As You Know You're Living Yours* Bars 128- 135[311]



One might well associate this crying altissimo tenor saxophone as strongly with Islamic mystical chanting, as with the jazz influences the saxophonist acknowledges, such as Albert Ayler and John Coltrane. This sort of gradual pitch increase is a technique used in Syrian Dhikr, but also other forms of ecstatic music.

> From an aesthetic standpoint, this transcendence comes about from the perception of temporal transformations in the course of dhikr, specifically from the combined effects of melodic modulation and rhythmic acceleration. These two musical processes contribute to this sense of spiritual transformation by altering the participants' perception and experience of temporality. The gradual increase in the pitch and tempo of chanting, and thereby of the accompanying bodily movements, contributes to the experience or expectation of states of heightened emotional energy.[312]

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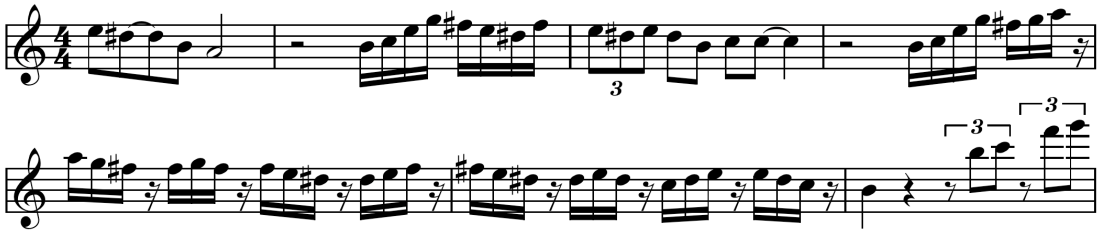
311 Ibid.

312 Jonathan H. Shannon, 'The Aesthetics of Spiritual Practice and the Creation of Moral and Musical Subjectivities in Aleppo, Syria' *Ethnology*, 43/4 (Autumn, 2004), 388.

In all likelihood, it is as much that these influential saxophonists were themselves involved in a process of assimilating Eastern ecstatic music, as Garbarek was drawing upon their anterior works.

Again, in this improvisation, Garbarek is creating a schema of rhythmic phrasing that need not rely on the fundamental eighth note unit to sustain rhythmic coherence. This is a significant departure from the composition itself, which is based almost exclusively on a series of syncopated eighth note phrases. While, again, there is no particular rhythmic unit that supports all phrases in the solo, the eighth note triplet is prevalent, and there is much that can be observed in terms of groupings of three (see example 26).

Example 26 Jan Garbarek From *'Long As You Know You're Living Yours* Bars 118- 124[313]



In the example above the saxophonist improvises sixteenth notes in groups of three from bar 121 through to bar 123. The stepwise structure and innate symmetry of the phrase creates an impression of ambiguously 'Eastern' flavour, somewhat akin to the short phrases of Arabic *maqam* improvisation. Bruno Nettl describes these short phrases as one of one important building blocks of *maqam*.

> In the Arabic taqsim, as in some other styles, various levels of building blocks can be observed. We have, first of all, the tones of the *maqam*, from which the performer draws more or less at will, in any order as long as the melodic movement is largely scalar. At a higher level there

[313] Ibid.

> are motifs of three to five tones that are associated with each *maqam*; these evidently must appear at least occasionally.[314]

What we hear in terms of musical function is the saxophonist in this instance imposing limitations both rhythmically and tonally, which brings clarity and a sense of simplicity to structures with much underlying complexity.

> As in all Garbarek pieces, he reaches toward areas that are mystic in their subjective allure, working within a self-limited harmonic and rhythmic palate to create an evocative tranquillity rich in impressionistic detail.[315]

The notion that this improvisation occurs within a self-limited palate also accounts for the fact that much of the improvisation is based upon a single harmonic minor scale. It would be rare to find another saxophonist of Garbarek's generation in the jazz idiom that would be likely to construct a whole solo on only eight tones in such a musical context.

The difference between this improvisation and more overt alterity in Nordic improvisation (such as that of Arve Henriksen from his shakuhachi inspired recording *Sakuteki*) is one of proportion. Essentially, many of the same procedures have been applied by the two soloists. Neither Garbarek nor Henriksen is claiming title as practitioners of Eastern music forms, more precicely both have involved themselves intuitively with the expressive nature of certain non-Western forms. Garbarek's solo is, however, more given to an adjacent picture of duality due to the compositional context. Henriksen, on the other hand, may seem, in some respects, to present a more unified reflection of the various music forms he is drawing from, and possibly that is in large part due

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[314] Bruno Nettl, 'Thoughts on Improvisation: A Comparative Approach' *The Musical Quarterly*, 60/1 (Jan., 1974), 18.
[315] Max Harrison, Charles Fox, Eric Thacker, Stuart Nicholson, *The Essential Jazz Records: Modernism to Postmodernism* (London: Mansell Publishing 2000), 785-786.

to the highly abstract nature of the musical context in which Henriksen is frequently improvising. Such abstracting places all material outside any contextualisation based on genre. The rhythm section's groove and the pop song vocalism of the melody in Jarrett's *'Long As You Know You're Living Yours* is so strongly derived from traditions of Western musical thought that this sense of orientalism is provoked when we position Garbarek's phrases in this context, even if Garbarek's saxophone playing is an integrated synthesis of influences. Henriksen, however, provides little in the way of reference to any tradition; his is a fierce sense of abstraction, that the listener has no particular 'home' from which to position any idea of 'other'.

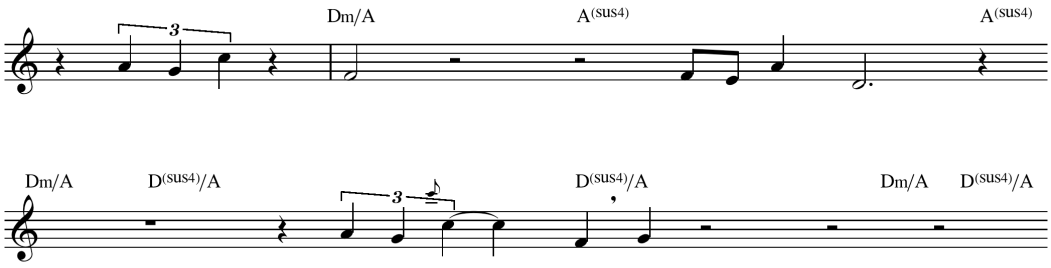
Among those Nordic jazz musicians who draw from non-western material, trumpeter Henriksen must stand as one of the most interesting and versatile. On his recording *Sakuteki,* on the *Runegrammofon* label, he presents an improvisational conception that has drawn heavily on the music of the Japanese shakuhachi. Henriksen's trumpet sound is small, soft, but immensely rich. He is a quiet player and plays in a style that has evolved from the introverted sparsity of Miles Davis' sound conception. Within Henriksen's approach one can also hear much influence from the English trumpeter Jon Hassell, who, like Henriksen, worked with a mixture of jazz, electronic music and inspiration from non-Western musical traditions.

Henriksen's trumpet makes much of the lower end of the dynamic spectrum. In much of his recorded work we hear the improviser make good use of closely positioned microphone techniques, these allowing him to play at a volume level where much of the brazen edge of the trumpet is subdued. The effect is so that we hear more of a throat sound, and this allows for nuanced manipulation of the articulations and micro-dynamics that imbue his improvisational approach with such vocality. This is, however, a very different vocality to what one might hear in the playing of Garbarek. Henriksen's manner is much more introverted. It is the vocalisation of an intimate conversation rather than the more soloistic oration of Garbarek. Congruently, Henriksen's music is most often manifestly more focussed on an ensemble voice rather than the traditional

soloist/accompaniment presentation style that is most common to much jazz music, and to which Jarrett's ensemble with Garbarek is still connected. For an example of such group-based improvisation one can turn to the group *Supersilent* of which Henriksen is a member, as well as much of the music the trumpeter has recorded under his own name.

Leaf and Rock, like much of Henriksen's work, presents improvisers working alongside electronically altered sounds. In this duet, producer Helge Sten plays electric guitar, heavily soaked in delay and other timbral effects. The piece itself is through-composed, in that there is no reoccurring theme generating any compositional recapitulation. It is most likely that the whole trumpet part is in fact improvised. There is, however, the one introductory phrase that could well have been composed, likely as a 'sketch' (an incomplete composition or musical theme used as the basis for liberal improvisation without a strict framework). Here we see the smallest amount of repetition, the A-G-C-F sequence of the first phrase is repeated in the third phrase in the second system (See example 27).

Example 27 Arve Henriksen from *Leaf and Rock* Possible Theme[316]



Henriksen's rhythmic placement is often significantly behind any calculation of measured time. When his phrasing across and against the time is combined with the delayed guitar of Sten the effect is so that it would be impossible, and inappropriate, to notate with bar lines. The primary rhythmic conception within this work is one of strict time existing subserviently to intermittent pulse. This is assuredly one of the central musical devices of the piece, creating an ambience

316 Transcribed by D. Rorke from Arve Henriksen, *Strjon.* 2007, Rune Grammofon RCD2061, Compact Disc.

where time feels suspended. It would be easy to create superficial analogies to the Nordic winter here, the piece itself is at rest, and Henriksen develops his trumpet phrasing only along this restful plane.

As with the music of Seim, discussed in chapter 4, there is a sense of stasis. The trumpeter allows the improvisation to 'be' without need to build, or observe any of the curves of solo development that are common-place among jazz improvisers. This sense of stasis is, however, congruent with certain styles of Japanese shakuhachi music. Speaking of the *Kinko honkyoku*, a collection of related pieces for the shakuhachi, Eliott Weisgarber claims that 'a sense of timelessness pervades much of the *Kinko honkyoku*. Strong beats alternating with weak are absent, and indeed there are moments when there is a feeling that all motion has been arrested'.[317] This is not to say that Henriksen is at any time mimicking the shakuhachi directly. The point here is, precisely that he is not enacting mimicry, but instead has synthesised certain elements from the shakuhachi with other influences, from Nordic folk music to jazz, to name just two, into a unified confluent whole.

The guitar, meanwhile, repeats only a select handful of chords with small variations in placement and organisation (see full transcription in appendices). There is no guitar solo as such and in fact there is such subtle movement in this piece that, instead of a composition featuring elements that interact that portray a 'journey' through musical landscapes, *Leaf and Rock* reads more as a collection of snapshots. Henriksen explained the process that created this piece:

> Most of the music comes from my own "library" of sounds and music created during my days at Stryn. At the age of 16 I started to make sketches and recorded lots of cassettes with electronic improvised sequences, and throughout the years loads of cassettes, dat tapes, minidiscs have been added to the pile of homemade studio sketches. My idea has been to look into those sounds and material to search for a history, moods and perhaps to understand a little bit more and

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[317] Eliott Weisgarber, 'The Honkyoku of the Kinko-Ryū: Some Principles of Its Organization' *Ethnomusicology*, 12/3 (Sep., 1968), 319.

> maybe discover some reasons for why I play like I do. Ambitious, yes, but for me personally very challenging and important.[318]

As an examination of his own personal musical history Henriksen has succeeded in uncovering something very unique that, while informed by major innovators in jazz such as Miles Davis, is also very specific in its sparcity, rhythmic ambiguity, timbral conception and compositional contextualisation.

That Henriksen's record *Strjon* is connected to a personal sense of place is something the trumpeter placed at in the foreground of his discussions about this music.

> My new record is called "Strjon", the mediaeval name of my home village Stryn. Strjon means streaming river/waters referring to the Stryn river. The village is situated on the west-coast of Norway, in the very end of the fiord Nordfjord. When I go there to visit my family I still get astonished by the fantastic nature. In one way almost frightened by the glaciers hanging down from high abrupt mountains where avalanches are crashing down during the winter season, but also calm and relaxed by its beauty and majestic tranquillity this scenery represents. I grew up there and was constantly bombarded by this smashing nature for almost 20 years.[319]

But there is much more to this recording than just inspiration from nature. While I do not deem it my place to rewrite Henriksen's treatise on his own music, it does seem legitimate to suggest that representation of the Norwegian wilderness is but one reading of the music on *Strjon*. Another, potentially more fertile field of exploration is to view the possible 'representations' of nature on this recording as a cultural tool by which the artists align their music to a sense of Nordic identity, and a thereby become associated with identity narratives already pre-existing in Norwegian audiences.

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[318] Arve Henriksen, 'Strjon' http://www.arvehenriksen.no/discography/strjon.htm (accessed 20 August 2011).
[319] Ibid.

This sense of identity may be most superficially contextualised by shared geography and shared place, but is in fact concerned more with cultural narratives than pictorial representations of landscapes. As Bruce Janz describes:

> Place is sometimes understood as reinforcing personal and cultural identity in the face of dissipating versions of modernism or postmodernism.[320] Place is imagined by some to re-integrate the self, resist the anomic effects of modernization, provide continuity and meaning in an increasingly fragmented and meaningless time, and link the cultural self back to a sure foundation.[321]

It is the position of this thesis, that is the effects of modernisation, globalisation and discrepancies between postmodernist conceptualisation and the cultural functionality of artistic practice that provokes the use of place as a narrative of cultural continuity. Simply put, place is a thread that these cultural narratives utilise in order to establish significance and independent meaning. In the case of improvised music, given the foreign genesis of jazz, when initially dispersed to the Nordic countries place became a trellis on which the music was able to grow in new ways. The idea that 'we do it differently here' has been allowed to bloom to fruition, creating new working methods, and culturally important narratives about identity. It is the 'here' in 'we do it differently here' that has allowed overt emphasis on place to endure, when 'we do it differently' may well become more than sufficient for both the musical processes and the identity creating narratives. The idea of communities of shared ideas (and shared imaginations) being as relevant as communities of a shared place is something that will be discussed further in chapter five. Looking back on Henriksen's *Leaf and Rock* through this frame we see that the myriad of influences, from classical music to the shakuhachi to electronica and jazz can exist in confluence with a palpable sense of integrity in the trumpeter's music, such a sense of multiplicity must

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[320] Bruce Janz, 'The Terror of the Place: Anxieties of Place and the Cultural Narrative of Terrorism', *Ethics, Place and Environment* 11/2 (2008), 191.
[321] Ibid., 192.

surely vastly transcend and narrative of place or geography. However, the dualism of the universal narratives connected to the confluences of Henriksen's playing, when juxtaposed with the particular narratives that are realised through a sense of place, render this art poignantly meaningful in a contemporary, globalised society. As with mythological folklore this art asks a Nordic audience to consider artworks that, to paraphrase Walker-Bynum, reflect less a desire to shed the 'body' of a Nordic identity, than an effort to understand how it perdures, less an escape to alterity than a search for the rules that govern change.

Edward Vesala has also frequently intersected with oriental music, and this can be most blatantly observed on his 1974 solo percussion recording *I'm Here*.[322] However, one interesting influence on Vesala's music is the Finnish Tango form that is itself a kind of musical confluence that intersects with narratives of universalism and identity. The Finnish Tango is a form of music that, perhaps more so than any other artistic endeavour of the Finnish nation, epitomises confluence both communal and intellectual, and the flexibility of the Finnish sense of identity. The Tango is an Argentinean music and dance form that has been adopted with enthusiasm and verve by the people of this small Nordic nation. It would not have reached Finland until the first few decades of the twentieth century, a period when Tango itself was gaining much popularity in England and Europe more generally.[323] By the time it had reached Finland, the Tango had already undergone a certain metamorphosis in the hands of Europeans.

> The fashionable new dance was introduced to the Finns in 1913, at a demonstration by a Danish couple at the Börs Hotel in Helsinki. Most of the tangos performed in Finland in the 1920s and 1930s were of foreign origin. In addition to tangos from Argentina the repertoires of the Finnish dance bands featured numbers borrowed in particular from Germany. These were already far removed from the original Argentinean dance. Instead of abounding in rhythmic agility and

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[322] Edward Vesala , *I'm Here,* 1974, Blue Master SPEL 311 (LP).
[323] Pekka Gronow, 'The Tango And The Finnish Soul', http://web.archive.org/web/20071202111115/http://virtual.finland.fi/netcomm/news/showarticle.asp?intNWSAID=26965 (accessed 17 April 2011).

> variety, the tango now had an even, heavier tread almost akin to that of a march. This thudding march rhythm was to remain as one of the dominant stylistic traits of the Finnish tango.[324]

The further metamorphosis of the Tango, into a form of specifically Finnish music, was fully realised with the music of Toivo Kärki, who recorded a number of Tango pieces of historical significance.

Many of the elements that characterise a specifically Finnish take on the Tango can be first observed in the music of Kärki. These popular compositions were composed by his own hand during the period after Finland broke ties with Germany during the Second World War. This break from Nazi Germany, and its associated repression of many non-Germanic music forms, was perhaps responsible in part for inspiring the adoption of the Tango in Finland. Nevertheless, this was a cultural revolution built by average citizens, and therefore political interpretations would have been far from the minds of those that pioneered the music.

> By the end of the 1940s, virtually every other popular hit was a tango, and by the turn of the decade it was fast gaining ground in the country, too, as the craze for summer dance pavilions gained momentum. Never before or since have these dance pavilions and halls been so numerous as in the 1950s. Every village sports club or society had a place of its own, and people flocked to hear the latest tango and pop stars.[325]

It was not, therefore, merely the appeal of the music, or even of cultural interest in Argentinean or non-Finnish music that fuelled the popularity of Tango so much as the opportunity to dance and celebrate in a social context, which is in essence an enactment of ritual in a folkloric sense.

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[324] Jutta Jaakkola 'The Finnish Tango. Its History And Characteristics', http://web.archive.org/web/20080527143743/http://virtual.finland.fi/netcomm/news/showarticle.asp?intNWSAID=26960 (accessed 23 April 2011).
[325] Ibid.

The Finnish Tango is unique in that it is often to be heard in a minor key, and also can contain points of musical confluence with other aspects of Finnish Folk Music. The tempi are mostly slower than those of its Argentinean counterpart and performed with a greater 'behind the beat' rhythmical feel, resulting in a lazy impression of almost dragging music.[326] Significantly, Kärki's compositions were mildly influenced by his interest in jazz, and this has left the Finnish Tango with a propensity for greater harmonic sophistication. Although the majority of the Finnish Tango compositions in the popular vernacular are still quite straightforward harmonic structures, these harmonic colourisations are to be observed in the occasional addition of a colour tone to simple triadic chord structures.

Despite all of the elements listed above, the most important identity markers in the Finnish Tango are the narratives to be found in the lyrical content of the songs. Often these are themes derived directly from Finnish folklore and poetry such as the epic Kalevala.

> It is the lyrics which are the key to the continuing success of the genre. In her forthcoming book *Tango Nostalgia: The Language of Love and Longing* (Helsinki University Press 1996), Dr. Pirjo Kukkonen suggests that tango lyrics reflect "the personality, mentality and identity of the Finnish people in the same way as folk poetry does". The central themes of Finnish tango lyrics are love, sorrow, nature and the countryside. Many tangos express a longing for the old homestead, or a distant land of happiness. The changing seasons of Finnish nature are frequently used metaphors: the spring breaks the hold of the winter, and flowers appear, creating new expectations. Autumn rains and dark evenings are symbols of crushed hopes.[327]

It is no doubt due to the now well-established tradition of incorporating such folkloric themes that the Tango has endured, and indeed thrived, as a popular

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[326] Ibid.
[327] Pekka Gronow, 'The Tango And The Finnish Soul' (accessed 17 April 2011).

form in the nation's musical psyche. Paul Austerlitz describes how the Tango became a symbol of Finnish identity:

> The tango figured prominently in the dance band repertory, although it did not dominate in the early years. In the 1960s, however, older-generation rural and working Finns, who disliked the encroaching popularity of rock and roll among urban bourgeois youth, adopted the tango in a search for Finnish authenticity. As Gronow writes, many agrarian and working class Finns were "now looking for a music which would sound truly Finnish, and somewhat paradoxically, ... adopted the tango. Either you supported the Beatles or the tango. At the height of the Beatles' popularity, the only domestic records that made the top three on the record charts were tangos" The tango still dominates the Finnish dance band repertory. At a dance during my 1988 field trip, I asked my partner "What type of music are we dancing to?" Her answer: "Don't you know? This is the national dance of Finland, the tango!"[328]

Today the Tango Festival in Seinäjoki is a national spectacle, attracting an increasingly huge number of attendees and broadcast to the whole community via substantial television and media coverage.

It is perhaps, then, not overly surprising that a number of significant Finnish jazz musicians have chosen to intersect with this, now Finnish, tradition. Vesala himself is known to have composed a series of pieces based on the Finnish Tango form, and although many of these works have not been recorded, they were allegedly performed posthumously with an ensemble that featured Haarla and Veli Kujala on accordion, along with an ensemble of other Finnish jazz musicians.[329] One piece of Vesala's that is most certainly a Finnish Tango, and in a minor key, yet rather more abstract in presentation than anything by Kärki or the other notable founders of the form, is the work *Bluego*.

Bluego is heard on the *Sound and Fury* recording *Nordic Gallery,* and this

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[328] Austerlitz, Birch-Bark Horns and Jazz in the National Imagination: The Finnish Folk Music Vogue in Historical Perspective, 193.
[329] Interview with Veli Kujala (12 January 2011).

particular piece features Petri Ikkelã prominently on the accordion. The work is one of the most arresting on what is one of Vesala's most musically successful recordings. The band is captured in exceptionally form, with Vesala's challenging writing realised with extreme precision and palpable grace. This record is also extremely varied in terms of choice of compositions presented, even by Vesala's eclectic standards. *Nordic Gallery* presents the full spread of the diverse spectrum of colours that comprise Vesala's broad musical palette. Yet beyond colour there is an understandable and communicable cultural significance to pieces like *Bluego*. By intersecting with a musical form that is so involved with the nation's folklore, as is the Finnish Tango, Vesala is able to retain within his composition a certain positioning in terms of identity narratives that remains, even when the lyrical content of popular tangos are not utilised. In this case when the vocal and lyrical element of the Tango form is omitted in the instrumental context of Vesala's group, and replaced with saxophones, clarinets, trumpets and the other instrumental tools of the *Sound and Fury* improvisers Vesala is able to synchronise his music with both narratives of particularity and narratives of universalism.

Any specifically Nordic approach to jazz music, viewed in terms of cultural and sociological narrative, is, fundamentally, a group creation that relies on a shared experience and interrelated expressions. It is not something that could ever have been engendered by a single artist working alone. In this context various individuals have the opportunity to express simultaneously, and sometimes in congruity, their own personal musical thoughts and perspectives while sharing in the creation of a cultural narrative that intertwines group cultural identity and aesthetics of artistic practice. In the work of the subjects of this thesis, a unique approach to the performance of jazz music can be heard, not only in the musical elements themselves, but also in the sociological narratives that the music creates. It is the dialectic relationship of elements in the musical structure that give rise to these narratives, and reciprocally it is the narratives which give independence and particular meaning to the musical structures. This was certainly true even when jazz improvisation first established itself in the United States, and it is likewise true as jazz establishes new narratives in new lands,

among new groups of people. From this perspective, individuals such as Garbarek, Vesala and others, in many ways, become characters in a larger story of group identity.

Unlike narratives that are the product of language-based cultural forms, the abstraction of improvised music makes specific meaning difficult to evaluate. This should not, however, render the task impossible or of no significance. That sociological meaning exists tangibly beyond (if not inherently within) the musical structures of this art, should now be evident. Furthermore, it should be apparent that improvised music in the Nordic countries is a confluent act involving many cultural tributaries. This multiplicity allows for not only musical confluences, but also for confluences of various group identities, as well as group and individual identities. These confluences of various expressions of group identity bring into question that which is intrinsic in the cultural identities of the artwork's context. It examines, in the consideration of forms of change, what about particular identity is, in fact, particular and what is universal.

When we examine the migration of jazz from America to Europe, it is clear that it underwent a metamorphosis in terms of cultural meaning. Certainly, Europeans who began performing jazz music were quick to transform this art into a medium for a specifically indigenous cultural meaning, significantly many American and African American musicians were aware of this shift and even championed it. This is especially true of the forward looking musicians of the 'New Thing' free improvisation movement, many of whom spent a good deal of time in Europe.

> A music that was once the sole domain of America was quickly transformed into having two alternate meanings in Europe. One was Sunny Murray´s declaration of "*un hommage au son universel de l´homme noir*" (homage to the universal black man) in liner notes he wrote for his first album produced for the BYG-Actuel label in France

> in 1966. The other was what Eric Dolphy, while residing in Europe in 1964, called "Human Jazz... the other name for the New Thing".[330]

In many ways the music of Vesala, Garbarek, Christensen and the other artists discussed here could be viewed as a sort of tonal free jazz, the 'Nordic Sound' equally willing to reengineer the traditions of jazz in search of cultural meaning. I believe this is an accurate assessment when we consider the histories of those formative musicians of Garbarek's and Vesala's generation, almost all of who spent formative periods involved with free improvisation in some respect. That the metamorphosis of meaning in the Nordic diasporas of jazz has led to jazz becoming part of the communal sense of Nordic identity among a significant proportion of the Nordic populace is testament to the fertility of jazz music and the sociological power of art-music to influence, and be influenced by, narratives of cultural identity. Through the provocation of narratives of universalism these artists have created works that can very appropriately be understood as the realisation of Eric Dolphy's 'Human Jazz'.

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[330] Christopher G. Bakriges, 'African American Avant-Garde to European Creative Improvisation,' in *Jazz Planet,* ed. E. Taylor Atkins, 103.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Presented here in this final chapter are those ideas that are most important to consolidating the various threads of argument considered in the body of this work. There exists, however, much room for further research regarding this topic, especially that that goes beyond the specific Nordic jazz musicians addressed in this thesis. As jazz continually metamorphoses more doors open, and more options become available, presenting more possibilities to employ new frameworks in the consideration of this music. Intentionally, I have attempted in this thesis to open doors for future enquiries, in particular in terms of plurality and confluence. The potential scope of this music is far beyond the bounds of a single work like this, and one objective of this research is to establish a framework for future academic work. When it comes to discussing jazz—and improvised music in general—writers will always be behind the times. We should aspire to the most contemporary and nuanced understanding of this music, but with the realisation that the art of jazz is always in flux, forever transforming. However, despite the implication and impetus for further investigation, a number of conclusions have been reached.

I have argued that jazz music in the Nordic countries is an art form that operates within narratives that exist well beyond the confines of jazz music understood as a purely American musical or socio-cultural phenomenon. While some commentators wish to account for jazz music as a purely absolute, non-representational expression. It is the overarching conclusion of this research, however, that this is very rarely the case; and that jazz music in the Nordic countries, although very rarely directly representational, is capable of meaning via the provocation of interpretations and culturally relative positioning. As E. Taylor Atkins put so succinctly in the introduction to his related collection of essays entitled *Jazz Planet:*

> This supposed aesthetic detachment from base politics has too often obscured the relationship between jazz's ubiquity, colonialism, nationalist politics, and American military, economic and cultural hegemony.
>
> We must also recognise the ways in which various nations' jazz cultures deployed the music to assert a defiant transnational imaginary that refused to coincide to (white) American dominance.
>
> Our understanding of jazz, both as a socio-cultural force and as a musical idiom, is significantly impaired by construing it as a narrowly *national* art, expressive of uniquely American experiences and characteristics, and splendidly autonomous from considerations of global politics, cultural power, and national identity. Collectively these essays [published in *Jazz Planet*] demonstrate the rewards of expanding the geo-cultural setting of the jazz historical narrative, which can fundamentally reshape our notions of what jazz music is, who creates it, and what it means.[331]

In this respect the research presented in this thesis should be positioned as one work in a greater pursuit to expand upon these geo-cultural settings of jazz music in the scholarly consideration of the meaning this art. This is something that is clearly an increasingly prevalent position, and of mounting importance, in the musicological investigation of the global spread of jazz improvisation. Therefore, this thesis concludes that it is not only plausible to consider the existence and nature of meaning created by jazz music discretely in the Nordic countries, but also that such an investigation potentially holds implications for the global spread of jazz music more broadly.

Despite this potential for Nordic jazz to inhabit a consciousness of 'defiant transnational imaginary', a sensibility closely congruent with folkloric outlaw mythology, this music retains important ties to events in the American history of jazz. Among the most important, and relatable, of these relationships are those commonalities with the Third Stream movement. Jazz music has proved itself as an art that continually defies genre and style, something that is especially clear in the music of the subjects of this thesis, and following it must be logical that

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[331] E. Taylor Atkins, *Jazz Planet*, xix-xx.

musicology will require multiple, and perhaps sometimes contradictory, frameworks with which to discuss the development of the music.

> Jazz for me has always been an art form and, like any art form, capable of a thousand interpretations and subtleties and joys, capable of every expression.[332]

One need only look at early writings and reviews regarding artists such as Charlie Parker, John Coltrane or Ornette Coleman to realise that as soon as musicology overly defines the music, or indeed the frameworks for discussing the music, artists will, intentionally or not, violate these attempts at categorisation. Perhaps this is simply one way the outlaw spirit, which through a folkloric lens seems so entwined with the cultural significance of jazz music, manifests itself. This metamorphic quality of the music is one significant reason why it is important to connect this Nordic confluent jazz music to its American roots and discuss the analogous Third Stream movement. Musicians such as Jan Garbarek, whose early musical experiences were importantly influenced by pianist George Russell, might well be considered as continuing a Nordic branch of Third Stream. Of course, the associated meanings, and narratives that surrounded Third Stream have changed considerably in this new cultural environment. However, there exists so much similarity in the pluralistic treatment of source material, and also in precisely the type of material being interacted with, that much of the conceptions of Third Stream music such as that proposed by Ran Blake may be of utility in the consideration of Nordic jazz music. In turn, it may well be that investigation into Nordic jazz, and the globalisation of jazz music generally, will be significant to a contemporary understanding of Third Stream music, or any confluent music arising from American jazz. It seems logical that similar processes of investigation, as used in

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[332] Gunther Schuller, cited in Styles, 'An Evaluation of the Concept of Third Stream Music and its Applicability to Selected Works by Gunther Schuller and Mark-Anthony Turnage', 106.

this research, to identify and examine narratives regarding identity could be adapted to consider Third Stream music.

This thesis concludes that the music examined as part of this research interacts with two distinct narratives, both of which that concerns the cultural identity of the Nordic communities. The first of these narratives concern the cultural particularity of communal identities, and as jazz implicates itself as an expression of such identity so does it place itself in an influential position to participate in the authoring of such identity. The second distinct narrative with which this music intersects is that of universalism. This is a story connected to the contemporary state of these communities, which are currently in significant flux due to globalisation, the interaction and evolution of modern societies. Being that jazz is an imported medium in the Nordic lands, it is capable, as an object unto itself, of representing such modernity and globalisation. However, as it has ingratiated itself with particular narratives of identity, it is in a uniquely powerful position to influence the understanding of these processes. It is such an influence that the confluence between these two narrative threads is able to exert. By bringing aspects of, or allusions to, foreign cultural forms to bear upon forms that have an established particularity, this art is able to pose questions regarding what is intrinsic and what is mutable in the identities of the community. It this way, this music has the capacity to both preserve, even reinforce, and yet also usurp culturally specific ideas of selfhood.

What this research shows is that, rather than creating a dualism between self and other, this confluent jazz music is a confluence not just of musical forms but also of the two narratives discussed above. It can be said that these two narratives, of particularity and universalism, rather than creating a polemic, exist in a unified singular narrative of contemporary identity, and as a reflection of the contemporary socio-political condition of the cultural context that the art inhabits. This confluence is a direct ramification of the musical confluences existent in this art; an interpretive, reflexive, manifestation of meaning. It should now be apparent that the term confluence inscribes multiple levels of meaning. While, in the wake of debate, Third Stream remains useful perhaps only as a way

of describing those composers who themselves instigated the term, a small period in the evolving history of improvised music, confluence alternately provides a framework for analysis. Intrinsically it does not suggest any specific content, as did the term Third Stream, neo-classical or any of the other idioms that have be used to coin composers with associated inclinations for plurality. It is not in essence a generic label so much as it is a framework for considering moments of change, and encompasses within it the scope for multiple classes and expressions of this change; specifically, the metamorphic and hybridised forms that are addressed this thesis, or in other terms the integrated and adjacent. Both of these forms of confluence are to be observed in the music of the subjects of this thesis, whose art provides a unique window into the nature of change, identity and community. These confluent works are, therefore, confluences of both musical tributaries and streams of meaning.

Confluence simultaneously allows for the attending to of both the individual and the group, it presents the particular and the universal in dialogue and has the potential to elucidate the imaginations of 'self' and 'selves' within a specific context and also beyond particular contextualisation. The possibilities for the application of this framework in musicology are, especially in relation to improvised music, far reaching and quite under realised, well exceeding the confines of any single study. Uniquely, the frame of confluence allows the researcher a vision of the actions and processes involved in the meeting of improvisation and composition.

This thesis has put forward the idea of discussing Nordic confluent jazz music through the framework of folkloristics. It is certainly not revolutionary to identify a connection between musicians like Garbarek, for instance, whose music is heavily influenced by folk music, and therefore folkloristics becomes an easily applicable framework. However, there exists relatively little research that both attempts to preserve the potency of this connection and simultaneously accept the inherent problems with applying this framework to the multiplicities of jazz of the 'Nordic sound'. Folklore is a useful tool for understanding the way the music influences its societal context, but it is the perspective of this thesis

that within such abstract music this type of meaning is generally to be found in the narratives that the music provokes, not objectively in the music itself. While this thesis has identified musical elements that interact with the interpretive processes of community understanding and enactment, these are not aspects that are generally represented directly by the musical structures themselves. Rather these structures provoke meaning by relative positioning to other art that has pre-established understanding in the community's schema of identities. In this respect the music addressed here is significant for the fact that it is neither representational, nor is it truly absolute.

This understanding reveals the potential of jazz music to advocate and resist new elements of identity, which may come either from external or ascendant influences. By not directly representing meaning this art substantially bypasses externally imposed censoring of these identity conceptions imposed by a mainstreaming of social commentary. In this respect we come again to the folkloric outlaw mythologies that existed to establish 'a sense of justice based upon kinship and community rather than one based upon impersonal, bureaucratic procedures established by the state'.[333] With regard to this Nordic jazz, what constitutes 'the state' may very well be the governance of the nation state, other limiting factors in the production of this art, but also this music stands to resist the dangers of uniformity that come by way of globalisation, homogeny of cultural forms and, thereby, cultural identity. There is still much that can be done in terms of researching this art form through the lens of folkloristics. The realm of folkloristics has already covered the ground necessary for the consideration of a contemporary subject such as jazz music. While this is still a far cry from well-trodden ground, the skeletal discourse required to embark upon an act such as the consideration of contemporary improvised music has already been established. In considering improvised music the general terminology may, and perhaps should, be manipulated to better represent a primarily musical perspective, but none the less the tools of folkloric scholarship are applicable to our subject. If we are considering the narratological

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[333] Paul Kooistra, *Criminals As Heroes: Structure, Power and Identity*, 11.

consequences of this music then folklore can become a highly applicable, and indeed highly useful, tool for the consideration of jazz and contemporary art music in general.

These theoretical frames such as narrative, folkloristics and dialectics have been employed to consider the relations between certain works of improvised music and depictions of change both in artistic and cultural nature. This thesis identifies a concurrence between ways of understanding change inherent in folkloric cultural practice, and that found in the work of the artists discussed in this thesis. It is possible that some of the works of improvised music addressed here are advocates of modern narratives of change, discussed via the crafted manipulations of abstract forms; further, that these narratives assume a similar functionality in contemporary society, as do many historical and continuing folkloric narrative forms. This is not to state that this music is necessarily itself a form of folklore, or should be incorporated into the academic disciple that is folkloristics, as that is something that is best a debate for those who practise the scholarship of folkloristic research; rather it is the findings of this research that analogous relationships can be perceived between audience and narrator/performer. The usefulness of this understanding of improvised music becomes apparent when it is employed to illuminate the social functioning of improvised music as a form of storytelling about change in our societies. This perspective proposes that, through abstraction, improvised music can negotiate the intrinsic and the metamorphic aspects of social identity, and further, that this process can influence and advocate change within society via these abstracted forms.

It is within such an understanding of musical confluence that this research frames the subjects of this thesis. Vesala, one of the central subjects here, is perhaps the most successful example of an improviser whose art epitomises confluence. His art is fiercely and outspokenly plural, and by its very nature definitively rejects any adherence to genre-specific understandings of music. Vesala and Haarla's *Sound and Fury* builds upon multiple lineages of thought and practice yet conforms to none.

The 1989 album *Ode to the Death of Jazz* is one of the recordings that is of significance to this aspect of research. According to Paul Austerlitz the title of this recording is 'referring to jazz neo-classicists' recreation of earlier styles',[334] the most famous neo-classicist of whom is the outspoken American trumpeter Wynton Marsalis. Vesala comments: 'this empty echoing of old styles... I think it is tragic. If that's what the jazz tradition has become then I don't see my band as part of it any longer'.[335] This recording is a statement of socio-cultural activism as much as musical innovation, a rare combination in a jazz recording from the 1980s; that is, if we wish to refer to this music as jazz. If this music is jazz then it is not so by any amalgamation of stylistic elements that those who, at that time of the prominence of jazz neo-classicists, sought to define the music by such would impose. Perhaps, alternatively, it is jazz music by virtue of its confluences.

Some of the most intricate and beautiful arrangements of strings and woodwinds (such as flute and bass clarinet) to be found on any Vesala recording (these most certainly arranged by Haarla), fully establish the *Sound and Fury* ensemble's deep relationship with Western art music with the pieces *Time to Think* and *Watching for the Signal*. Others show a certain Afrocentricity, namely *Winds of the Sahara* with its strong poly-rhythmic underpinnings that, while quite evidently referring to African musical influences, create a rhythmic dimension that is unmistakably Vesala's. Perhaps most impressive is *Sylvan Swizzle,* which is remarkable for the way it moves in and out of these influences without ever really departing from any of them, it is an incredibly successful realisation of unified synthesis of multiple musical tributaries. There is also a large amount of free jazz and improvisation to be heard in this record, the way in which these ecstatic traditions of African music and free jazz seem to interact so naturally with the very orchestrated and often through-composed sections of this record is something that stands as a major fulfilment of the musical vision of Haarla and Vesala.

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[334] Austerlitz, *Jazz Consciousness: Music, Race and Humanity,* 147.
[335] Steve Lake, *Edward Vesala: Ode to the Death of Jazz,* ECM Records 1413, LP 843 196-1, 1989.

If there is one defining aspect of this music it is its complete resistance to partitioning of any kind. In this way this recording is a statement of resistance against the neo-classicist rhetoric that was, at that time, beginning to influence the Finnish jazz environment. This 'outlaw' artwork of Vesala's is as much an act of maintaining authorship of identity as maintaining musical independence.

In chapter 4 of this thesis I quoted Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's description of a related aspect of this resistance to partitioning within the nature of diaspora.

> Cultural identities, as Hall defines them, are positionalities in retrospect (Hall 1997). Or, in Paul Gilroy's terms, "Diaspora's discomfort with carelessly over-integrated notions of culture, and its rather fissured sense of particularity, fits readily with the best moods of politicised postmodernism which share an interest in understanding the self as contingently and performatively produced."[336]

It is a certain discomfort with the 'carelessly over-integrated notions of culture' in relation to artists like Garbarek or Vesala that motivates much of this research. My experience, when looking for the identity-creating cultural mechanisms behind this music, was that I was forced to dig through much that was essentially a development and complexification of mostly nationalistic partitioning, something that seems to plague the discussion of jazz music universally, and profoundly so amongst the discourse of music critics. Critics are, of course, very important to this research because they mediate interpretation of the music for a wide portion of the community of jazz audiences.

Many understandings of 'the Nordic Sound' have tended to associate the aesthetics of Nordic jazz musicians to landscape and place in an overt way, invoking associations such as Brian Olewnick's description of *Triptykon,* discussed in chapter 2, which compares the music to 'images of keening water

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[336] Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 'Folklore's Crisis', 295.

birds patrolling the sub-Arctic fjords',[337] or the description of Garbarek in *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Jazz* that lists him as 'one of contemporary jazz's most important tenorists with a stark, plaintive sound atmospheric of his native fjords'.[338] Much of this form of nationalistic specificity reads more like a tourist brochure than an examination of a postmodern contemporary art form such as jazz. It is a pictorial, romantic interpretation, and one that provides no understanding of this music as a culturally meaningful entity.

This thesis has shown the potency of multiplicities as provoked by the confluences of just one branch of an expanding globalised diaspora of jazz music. These overly-integrated descriptions of Nordic jazz, tied to nationalism, act more to inhibit the potential of these artists to make artworks of social significance than to bring audiences closer to the music through pictorial associations. It seems that these overtly nordophilic narratives exist for primarily commercial purposes. For the purposes of scholarship these narratives, having now served that commercial purpose all too well, should now be deconstructed and hopefully reconstructed from a more heterogeneous understanding.

The images invoked by labels such as 'fjord jazz' are something that ECM records most definitely perceived as sufficiently, and universally comprehended so as to become a marketing strategy for this music internationally. As the story told by these artists unfolds, and becomes transparent in the historical conditions of the past decades, the interpretations can (and perhaps should) become increasingly multiplicitous and nuanced. In the context of solo improvisations, so often a product of a subconscious flow of connected ideas rather than contrived design, this should be the case, and especially when further compounded by the confluent, plural nature of this particular form of music. Representation of landscape, or association of geographic above conceptual connections between

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[337] Brian Olewnick, 'Triptykon' *All Music Guide* http://www.allmusic.com/album/triptykon-r139069/review (accessed 30 October 2010).
[338] Brian Case and Stan Britt, *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Jazz* (Edinburgh: Harmony Publishing, 1988), 76.

artists do little to enhance the understanding of multiplicities of this music. If this art became as deeply significant on an intellectual level as it is already is on a cultural level interpreters via the written word must exploit every possible approach to the discussion of meaning, significance, operation and design, opening analyses up to a more creatively-based metaphors.

It seems logical that there could be room for evaluation of this narrative of through the lens of Marxism and likely the work of Theodor Adorno. I am sure one could find much to justify Adorno's appraisal of the 'culture industry' in an evaluation of even the visual presentation of ECM records. Adorno describes a shift in function of cultural entities that become part of the 'culture industry':

> Culture, in the true sense, did not simply accommodate itself to human beings; but it always raised a protest against the petrified relations under which they lived, thereby honouring them. In so far as culture becomes wholly assimilated to and integrated in those petrified relations, human beings are once more debased. Cultural entities typical of the culture industry are no longer also commodities, they are commodities through and through.[339]

Adorno describes culture as raising 'a protest against the petrified relations' under which a community of humans may find themselves living. In an analogous sense, the music examined in this thesis advocates a metamorphic understanding of community identity. Once more there is great parallel between this cultural work and the folkloric outlaw, who seeks to retain authorship of communal identity in the face of ascendant or invasive influence.

This music walks a narrow path between such outlawism and Adorno's culture industry, as the mechanisms of production and marketing not only direct the reception of the music within the community's understanding, but also quite often influence the content of the music. ECM records, the primary producer and manufacturer of the recordings of these artists, is an independent record

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[339] Theodor Adorno, *The Culture Industry* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 100.

company, in fact, the largest independent jazz record company in the world. The cover art, packaging, promotion and even the music are filtered though the aesthetics of the record label. Many record collectors will buy an ECM record purely because it is on that label, without prior knowledge of the artists who created the music, identifying more with the production aesthetics than the art works themselves. This is, of course, a great career prospect for lesser-known musicians. However, there are surely risks to the quality of reception of the art works clothed in such an aesthetically determined cloth. Adorno describes the processes of the culture industry as distinct from the processes of works of art:

> The concept of technique in the culture industry is only in name identical with technique in works of art. In the latter, technique is concerned with the internal organization of the object itself, with its inner logic. In contrast, the technique of the culture industry is, from the beginning, one of distribution and mechanical reproduction, and therefore always remains external to its object. The culture industry finds ideological support precisely in so far as it carefully shields itself from the full potential of the techniques contained in its products. It lives parasitically from the extra-artistic technique of the material production of goods, without regard for the obligation to the internal artistic whole implied by its functionality (*Sachlichkeit*), but also without concern for the laws of form demanded by aesthetic autonomy. The result for the physiognomy of the culture industry is essentially a mixture of streamlining, photographic hardness and precision on the one hand, and individualistic residues, sentimentality and an already rationally disposed and adapted romanticism on the other.[340]

Adorno is not brought into the contextualisation of the arguments of this thesis in order to downplay the important role of producer Manfred Eicher in the development of this music, but rather, to identify him as specifically that: a producer. As a producer, the influence on this art, and therefore the relations that surround it, come with the inevitable problems of imposing Adorno's 'streamlining', or alternatively filtering and, more specifically, a 'romanticism' provoking overly-integrated notions of Nordic identity.

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[340] Ibid., 101.

Garbarek himself identified the magnification of certain qualities as a result of the influence and vision of ECM records and Manfred Eicher.

> I think like with all arts it comes down to the individual, and then schools are being made, but you might say this whole idea of a European approach came about through choices made by Manfred Eicher. I don't think we were talking about a European approach before ECM, there is a something he hears, something he wants to mirror from musicians. He can hear certain qualities in musicians and invites them to develop one aspect at least of their performance, something resonates in him, and with some musicians it could be a rather limited part of what they have to offer while in other cases it could be most of what they have to offer which resonates with him. But really the choices he makes with musicians, with material, with aesthetics that I think brought this idea about in the first place, this aesthetic in jazz, it has to do with ECM in a way.[341]

It is clear that Garbarek sees Eicher's contribution as pivotal in the development of a European jazz aesthetic. However, this quote also describes a quality of 'streamlining' and filtering in the production of works of 'the Nordic sound' occurring on the ECM label. It is an approach to the production of this music that magnifies certain aspects of the music, at the peril of accommodating a nordophilic, sometimes nationalistic, romantic approach to the marketing and consumption of the art form. The result of such association is a large percentage of international audiences that understands the music only through the mediation of critics and postcard-like marketing imagery, and domestically in the Nordic countries a reinforcement that most fervent, and potentially destructive, of European pastimes, nationalism.

It is the objective of this research that these overly-integrated understandings of the intersection of identities and Nordic confluent jazz, much of it contrived by superimposed nationalism and marketing strategies whose narratives provoke

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[341] Jan Garbarek, cited in Stuart Nicholson 'In Conversation with Jan Garbarek' http://www.jazz.com/features-and-interviews/2010/1/18/in-conversation-with-jan-garbarek (accessed 5 August 2011).

fetishism and hence consumption of this art as 'product', have been challenged by the direction of the arguments presented here. This is not to suggest that this art should be entirely divorced from landscape or even nationhood. Instead these ideas should merely be positioned appropriately and in appropriate proportion to the other meanings provoked by this art. In many respects the approach of this thesis is to take an overly integrated, and rather particular, notion of cultural identity, as it exists in relation to Nordic confluent jazz music, and deconstruct it.

The conclusion of this research, in light of the data examined, is that the prominence of place in Nordic jazz is not the result of cultural isolation and separate cultural traditions, but part of the current cultural processes and flows of modernism, postmodernism and globalisation. Simply, this music is less 'singing the songs of the Nordic fjords' than interacting with a web of globalised inter-relationships and positioning them within a culturally relative narrative of identity.

The most distinct conclusion of this research is the manner in which Nordic jazz artists, such as those that are the subjects of this thesis, create works of art that operate in relation to narratives of identity that are much wider and more nuanced than that with which they are often associated. This music should be acknowledged as being a significant event in the history of a global spread of jazz music for the fact that is able to engage simultaneously with the two narratives of local and global meaning and negotiate points of intersection and commonality between disparate socio-cultural expressions. This work suggests that jazz can operate as an agent for the continuing universalisation of intrinsic archetypes of identity and self-definition within the cultural consciousness of a contemporary society/community such as that which exists in the Nordic countries. It is the confluences of these narratives that give the universalisms in this music power to influence pre-existing narratives of community identity, through intersection with ideas of particular identity, and in turn it is the universal narratives that contemporize the particular notions of identity and potentially create a picture of identity as metamorphose and fluid. Such cultural

work has the potential to safeguard intrinsic aspects of identity while challenge that which is redundant or inessential.

In this thesis I have suggested that the cultural work surrounding the confluences of these two narratives has led directly to its significance within Nordic society. These narratives remain relevant to the community's sense of identity for they continue to metamorphose, as varying tributary influences are synthesised, congruently with changes in the societies of which it is a meaningful symbol. This relevance, this sense of jazz music as a participant in the evolution of identity in the Nordic countries, has led to new generations emerging within what is now a burgeoning tradition of musical aesthetics. This thesis suggests, in light of the data examined, that this is dominantly a product of how this music is able to sustain these two narratives of particular and universal identity, and how these narratives are able to be realised both as distinct expressions and as part of a singular, unified narrative of contemporary Nordic identity. To highlight a congruency with folkloric functioning, maverick mythologist Joseph Campbell explained:

> The universally distinguishable characteristic of mythological thought and communication is an implicit connotation through all its metaphorical imagery of a sense of identity of some kind, transcendent of appearances, which unites behind the scenes the opposed actors on the would stage.[342]

As in Campbell's mythological thought so in Nordic jazz music: this unification, when observable, is the ultimate and most consequential realisation of the effect of this art on these narratives of identity.

The improvisations and compositions addressed in this thesis are truly living representations of the contemporary folklife of the Nordic lands. They do more to keep culture and identity alive, healthy and relevant in this age than any work

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[342] Joseph Campbell, *The Inner Reaches of Outer Space* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1986), 110.

of national romanticism can, and at the same time actively integrate with many other cultural traditions that stand to combine fruitfully with Nordic and European traditions in a contemporary, multiplicitous cultural environment. The music examined in this thesis is an inclusive expression of contemporary culture, the positivism, and energizing nature of which has the potential to make a poignant statement in contemporary society; standing, as it does, in stark contrast to ideas of cultural purity, most frequently engaged in order to support internal political agendas. By contrast, Nordic art and music, such as that jazz music discussed here, can stand as a community's own remembrance of past cultural conditions and a celebration, revivification and living continuance of such identity in a contemporary cultural environment.