

Truth Seeker
Jazz Suite for Big Band

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Abstract

This analysis and discussion of *Truth Seeker Jazz Suite* should aid the listener in understanding its intent and construction. *Truth Seeker Jazz Suite* could be considered simply as a musical war protest that transmits a social message. But more than that, it is quasi-autobiographical as well. Similar in the way that Hector Berlioz depicted his love and sadness for not having (early on) been able to win the affections of Irish actress Harriet Smithson in his *Symphony Fantastique*, *Truth Seeker* will musically depict my own quest to filter through the mass of information that we consume in hopes of discovering truth and meaning in times of continued war and violence. It is my hope that listeners would allow the work's programmatic elements to help them realize their own personal endeavors toward deeper truth and understanding of our world.

This piece is written for large jazz ensemble including 2 alto saxophones, 2 tenor saxophones, baritone saxophone, 4 trumpets doubling on flugelhorn, 3 tenor trombones, bass trombone, guitar, piano, bass, and drums. This instrumentation places this work in the larger lineage of Duke Ellington, Benny Moten, Count Basie, and Thad Jones, reflecting the quintessential American sound. Since the loose program of this piece reflects my American experience of becoming more socially aware, the modern big band offers the most flexibility in expressing different Afro-centric, blues, and rock grooves that will be required to tell this American tale.

As I was born in 1968, the sound and notion of the modern concept album, comprised of interrelated tracks, captured my ear. John Coltrane's suite for jazz quartet, *A Love Supreme*, and many of his albums have a continuity in programming where songs, grooves, and tempos balance each other perfectly to create a journey for the listener. In addition to jazz influences, rock icons

like Jimi Hendrix and the Beatles have also left an indelible mark on modern music. While my main influence is jazz music of the 1940s onward, rock music through hip hop has filtered into my ear and settled into my own sub-consciousness. I feel that in the effort to write modern music, it is natural to work within contemporary musical esthetics and attempt to push their boundaries. This piece does not focus on recreating the great swing music of the past jazz masters but instead builds on those traditions and is a culmination of my influences.

This three-movement modern jazz suite depicts my musical reactions to why governments resort to violence, which I vehemently oppose. The musical depictions of my discoveries will reflect the gamut of emotions including: confusion, anger, pride, strength, weakness, beauty, agony, etc. While other jazz musicians have written more overt protest pieces than this, this suite attempts to communicate a serious social message through abstract music. There is no formal program and there are no words aside from the titles. However, I would be honored if my work would be considered in that lineage of any artist of similar pursuits. Sonny Rollins' *Freedom Suite*, and Charles Mingus' *New Tijuana Moods*, *Remember Rockefeller at Attica*, and *Fables of Faubus* were all inspirations for this piece. In addition, music from the vast jazz canon helped me to believe that instrumental music has the power to convey real meaning. As Rollins and Mingus railed against the offensive civil rights issues of their day, I too am deeply concerned with political issues of violence and inequality and I strive to spark an increased social awareness in others through my music.

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Worth acknowledging as well are my main musical influences including: Clifford Brown, Kenny Dorham, Freddie Hubbard, Woody Shaw, Larry Young, John Coltrane, Booker Little, Miles Davis, Bob Brookmeyer, Quincy Jones, Frank Sinatra, Nelson Riddle, Jimi Hendrix, Antonio Carlos Jobim, Igor Stravinsky, Aaron Copland, Leonard Bernstein, Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel, etc. I thank them and many others for their constant musical inspiration.

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Chapter 1:

1st Movement: “Weapons of Maniacal Deception”

Programmatic Aspects

Movement 1 depicts how a person feels when they begin to question what they’ve learned in life regarding geopolitical society. The name was inspired by the infamous Colin Powell speech to the United Nations that explained how Saddam Hussein possessed powerful weapons of mass destruction.¹ That misinformation was used to justify sending troops to Iraq where thousands of United States troops remain to this day.

After the slow and unstable introduction concludes, the bass begins a lively Afro-beat ostinato that builds the foundation for explosively charged syncopations with the full band meant to jar the listener awake from the hypnotic and dreamlike introduction. The listener is now in the war zone. This movement occasionally contrasts heroic and triumphant sounds with dark and chromatic harmony meant to convey the madness of war and misinformation.

Analysis

Movement 1 begins with a rubato introduction consisting of unsettled harmonic chromatic harmony over a pedal point, with echoes of a foreign land coming from the sparse guitar solo with effects in the background, all awash in cymbal waves.

¹ David Zarefsky, "Making the Case for War: Colin Powell at the United Nations." *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 10, no. 2 (2007): 275-302.

Notice in the piano reduction below of bars 1-8 (Example 1-1) that the texture is created by moving parallel harmonic structures over sustained open fifths F and C. Harmony shifting over pedal point is a unifying compositional device throughout *Truth Seeker Jazz Suite*.

Example 1-1: “Weapons of Maniacal Deception,” bars 1-8.

There is call and response between the lower voices in open fifths over an F pedal and the upper four-part writing which is drawn from the upper four voices of the classic “So What” minor 5-note voicing played by Bill Evans on Miles Davis’ seminal modal jazz record, *Kind of Blue*.² Example 1-2 shows a written example of Bill Evans’ original “So What” voicing.

Example 1-2: Bill Evans’ 5-note “So What” voicing.

²Miles Davis, *Kind of Blue*. Columbia Records: LP CS 8163, 1959.

At bar 8, an Afro-beat bass ostinato in F minor sets the brisk pace for the rest of the movement at 220 BPM. Over this bass figure, the horns are set in open and closed quartal harmony with a melody drawn directly from the blues scale. The parallel structure helps to control the level of dissonance depending on the melody note and is reflective of bars 1-8 as seen in this piano reduction of bars 16-23 in Example 1-3.

The image shows a piano reduction of bars 16-23. The left hand (bass) plays a steady, rhythmic ostinato pattern in F minor. The right hand (treble) plays a melody consisting of chords and single notes, primarily using a blues scale. The notation includes a 'PND' (Piano) marking at the beginning.

Example 1-3: “Weapons of Maniacal Deception,” bars 16-23.

The main theme comes in at bar 36 in the brass. Melodically, it is constructed mostly of three notes in the top voice, descending from the minor third to the tonic, 3 – 2 – 1, in F minor. The simplicity of this melody allows for an active bass ostinato line and an even more active countermelody in the saxophones and solo trumpet. Notice the descending triadic harmony in the brass over an Fmin ostinato: Fmin - E/F - E \flat /F - D \flat /F that creates a grim sound of impending doom.

The image shows a musical score for bars 36-39. The top staff (treble clef) shows a descending triadic harmony in the brass, with chords labeled Fmin, E, Eb, Eb, and Db. The bottom staff (bass clef) shows an active bass ostinato line. The bars are numbered 36, 37, 38, and 39 at the bottom.

Example 1-4: “Weapons of Maniacal Deception,” bars 36-39.

At bar 36, I create a repeating 32-bar AABA American song form. The B section gives respite to the doom and gloom of the A sections and departs from the Fmin texture with two sets of parallel chords: the triumphant Dsus and Esus, and concludes with the more guttural Cmin and Dmin chords. The melody is passed off to the saxophones and the trumpets answer with rifle-fire like rhythms as can be seen in this piano reduction.

Musical score for piano reduction, bars 52-59. The score shows two staves: treble and bass. Chords are labeled above the staff: D7sus, E7sus, Cmin, and Dmin. Bar numbers 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, and 59 are indicated below the staff.

Example 1-5: “Weapons of Maniacal Deception,” bars 52-59.

For the beginning of the last A section, the dissonance increases, the melody transforms slightly from a three-note to a four-note melody to allow for chord extensions, and the harmonic tension builds toward the resolution back to Fmin (Example 1-6.) The simple minor melody counter balances complex harmony with suspensions. This all creates a yearning quality and a sense of desperation.

Musical score for piano reduction, bars 60-63. The score shows two staves: treble and bass. Chords are labeled above the staff: Fmin, E(11), Eb7sus4, Eb, Eb(11), and Eb. Bar numbers 60, 61, 62, and 63 are indicated below the staff.

Example 1-6: “Weapons of Maniacal Deception,” bars 60-63.

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WEAPONS OF MANIACAL DECEPTION

The musical score for "Weapons of Maniacal Deception" (bars 115-120) is a complex orchestral and chamber work. It features the following parts and instruments:

- Woodwinds:** A. Sax. 1 & 2, T. Sax. 1 & 2, B. Sax., B♭ Trp. 1-4, and Tbn. 1-4.
- Strings:** Gtr., Pno., A.B., and D.S. (Double Bass).

The score is written in 4/4 time and includes various musical notations such as dynamics (e.g., *f*, *mf*), articulation (accents, slurs), and performance instructions (e.g., *divin*, *min*). The bottom of the page shows bar numbers 115 through 120, with a red line indicating the start of the double bass part.

Example 1-8: "Weapons of Maniacal Deception," bars 115-20.

This interlude culminates in an expansion of that pattern to include fourth intervals in parallel harmony in bars 121-22 (Example 1-9.) The voicing at bars 121-22 is simply a diminished triad with a major seventh. Example 1-9 also shows how Bar 124 is a send-off for the second soloist that quotes the main theme from John Coltrane's *A Love Supreme* in A \flat (A \flat - C \flat - A \flat - D \flat .)³



Example 1-9: “Weapons of Maniacal Deception,” bars 121-24.

There is a climactic shout chorus section of “Weapons of Maniacal Deception” between bars 161-76 where tension maximizes by use of a shifting pedal point. In most of the piece, the top harmony planes over a constant ostinato bass pedal effect on F. In this section however, remote pedal points shift every two bars to create an unstable foundation for the brass writing that centers around the original chords of the 32-bar song over. This destabilizes the tonality to a high degree but it adds the right amount of new harmony because the F tonality had been so pervasive. This generated tension releases at bar 177 as the song returns to the triumphant B section in its original major key.

³ John Coltrane, *Love Supreme*. Impulse Records: IMP 77, 1965.

The movement ends much as it began (after the introduction) in a cyclic form. The ending features 16 bars of group improvisation over the opening bass line that lets the band cross the line from controlled dissonance to chaos for a moment before the reprised ending comes to its final resolution in F minor. As the musical dust of Movement 1 settles, the listener experiences a violent sentiment.

Chapter 2:

2nd Movement: “Ask Yourself”

Programmatic Aspects

The first theme of Movement 2 returns to another dream-like texture where two notes are sustained over shifting chords with soloist interjections. Movement 2 includes three separate themes. The affect is an introspective mood but with a slight air of danger. In this musical climate, the listeners are beckoned to reflect and “ask themselves” about the folly of war in Movement 1 much like when I came to conclusions about the faulty intelligence that triggered the Iraq War and what motivations drove that destructive force. A sense of woe and helplessness in this state of misinformation sounds in the music through the ambiguities inherent in mixed major and minor harmonies. This resolves back to a decidedly peaceful second theme in a major key as the listener comes to a vision for peace. This tranquil segment transitions through new harmony back to a mixture of major and minor tonalities in a bittersweet third theme that depicts the payback which now must be endured for the crushing damage inflicted during war.

Analysis

The introduction of “Ask Yourself” combines static long tones in the horns, a slow ragtime ostinato in piano and guitar, changing harmony with a heartbeat bass, and bolero rhythm in the drums. The changing bass tones supply the interest and redefine the harmony each bar. The harmonic motion is a variation of the descending chromatic melodic scale sequence motif from “Weapons of Maniacal Deception” (Example 1-7) built of minor thirds and half steps, E ♭ - E, C# - D, B - C, etc. This melodic motif transforms into harmonic motion and unifies the movements as seen in Example 2-1.

The image shows a musical score for five bars of music. The top staff is for the piano, marked 'PIANO' in blue. It features a 4/4 time signature and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The piano part consists of a descending chromatic scale sequence in the bass clef: E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3. Above the piano staff, five chords are indicated: EbMi, ED(#11), C#Mi, DD(#11), and Bmi. The bottom staff is for the acoustic bass, marked 'ACOUSTIC BASS' in purple. It features a 4/4 time signature and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The bass part consists of a descending chromatic scale sequence in the bass clef: E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3. The piano part is marked with a green 'p' and the acoustic bass part is marked with a green 'p'.

Example 2-1: “Ask Yourself,” bars 1-5.

Theme one begins at bar 17 and presents a tug of war between parallel and functional harmony. The first phrase opens over the parallel harmony and ends major but concludes in a minor key at bar 23 after some functional harmony at bar 21. The emergence of functional harmony is worth mentioning as there was no overt ii V7 I harmony in Movement 1. The short melodic statements followed by long held notes ask musical questions answered by the following phrases. Example 2-2 is a piano reduction of bars 20-25. There is considerable use of chromatic chord movement, chord substitution, and chord extensions as melody notes to create a modern song-like style.

The image shows a piano reduction of five bars of music. The score is written on a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. Chords are indicated above the staff, and bar numbers 20 through 25 are written below the staff. The chords are: A7, Ab13, Gmi, Eb, EbΔ, A7(b9), Dmi(Δ7), C#7(#11), Csus, Bb. The melody consists of short phrases followed by long held notes.

Example 2-2: “Ask Yourself,” bars 20-25.

The parallel structures do make a comeback at bar 28 seen in Example 2-3. Transposed chords from the introduction sound in diminution as an answer to the first part of the theme at bar 17. As the section oscillates between functional and non-functional harmony, the chord voicings likewise switch between tertian and quartal constructions. Melodically, notice the ascending major B \flat pentatonic scale question (bars 29-30) answered by the descending B \flat minor pentatonic response (bars 31-32), which provides a hint of blues feeling.

The musical score for Example 2-3, bars 28-32, is presented in a two-staff format. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb). The time signature is 4/4. The score includes the following chords written above the staff: E ALT, A mi, Bb D, G mi, Ab D, F mi, Gb D, Eb mi, and E D. The bass line in the bottom staff shows a descending Bb minor pentatonic scale in bars 31-32.

Example 2-3: “Ask Yourself,” bars 28-32.

Bar 33 begins a section of *Sturm und Drang* in theme one as it increases tension through pedal point, harmonic ostinato, jabbing rhythms, and a thorny countermelody. Note the use of the D natural passing tones over E Major 7 (#11) to add melodic bite to the line, a musical device evident in the music of Larry Young and Woody Shaw. Here in Example 2-4 is some melodic writing and the first few bars of Larry Young's *Obsequious* as performed by Woody Shaw; notice the major and minor thirds.⁴



Example 2-4: Opening bars of Larry Young's *Obsequious*.

The countermelody in bars 33-36 (Example 2-5) is constructed largely out of the E b minor pentatonic scale. This use of minor pentatonic melodies built on the major seventh of a major tonality invokes a blues sound while exploiting use of the upper extensions: major 7, major 9, #11, and 13. This technique sounds extensively in the writing of Wayne Shorter.

Example 2-5: "Ask Yourself," bars 33-36.

⁴ Woody Shaw, *Cassandranite*. Mosaic Records: MD7-255, 1965.

Two voicings of interest are the two altered dominant voicings: F7 (#9) at bar 41 and the G-altered at bar 44 (Example 2-6.) Both chords contain the full complement of dominant alterations including $b9$, $\#9$, $b5$, and $\#5$. However, the F7 is voiced closely at the top with the $\#9$ and $b9$ and root sounding simultaneously to accentuate the climax of the phrase with a more strident sound. The G7 voicing is more robust and consonant, and was derived from jazz pianist and author Mark Levine. He calls it his “Everything Voicing” that he uses when the melody is the root of an altered dominant chord.⁵ These relatively quick modulations involving complex altered dominant chords build tension that resolves at bar 45.

Example 2-6: “Ask Yourself,” bars 40-44.

The stormy minor keys of theme one as well as those of Movement 1 resolve finally to an oasis of C major tonality at bar 45. This section of Movement 2 is the most optimistic and romantic of the entire suite. After an eight-bar introduction in the key of C major, theme two enters at bar 53. Here, a melody of irregular phrase length sounds, built from a five-bar, a four-bar, and an eight-bar phrase. The juxtaposition of functional harmony with parallel harmonic structures continues here. However, the tension and release is on a smaller scale and is more conventional and song-like in manner and does not approach the level of dissonance found in

⁵ Mark Levine, *How to Voice Standards at the Piano: The Menu*. Petaluma, CA: Sher Music Co, 2014, p. 3.

“Weapons of Maniacal Deception.” The formal sounding processional bolero rhythm of theme one has transitioned to a light-rock rhythm in theme two, almost like a slow dance. The overall feeling is meant to be uplifting and soothing. The 17-bar harmonic form introduced at bar 53 becomes the basis of an improvisation at bar 74.

At bar 95, the piece begins a transition from themes two to three. This occurs by combining the last descending motif of both themes two and three. This new melodic fragment is developed in a short fugue over new harmony along with a unison countermelody in the trombones. This bit of counterpoint and transition at bar 95 acts as a peaceful climax in a major key to the preceding material. This prepares the exact closing motif of the third theme at bar 102-05 (Example 2-7) which contrasts with more brooding harmonic material including shifting triads over a pedal point that help unify movement 2 with Movements 1 and 3.

The image shows a musical score for five bars, numbered 101 to 105. The score is written for piano, with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature has one sharp (F#). The time signature is not explicitly shown but appears to be 4/4. The music is characterized by complex, shifting triads in the left hand and a more melodic line in the right hand. Chord labels are placed above the staff: 'ESUS' above bars 102, 104, and 105; 'G/E' above bar 103; and 'F/E' above bar 103. The bass line is marked with 'v' (vibrato) under many of the chords. The overall texture is dense and brooding.

Example 2-7: “Ask Yourself,” bars 102-05.

Theme three of Movement 2 begins at bar 106. Its anthem-like melody begins haltingly with the melody interacting with two bugle-like responses built on the interval of the fifth from the rhythm section before continuing all together. The F# Ma7 (#11) chord at bar 112 breaks up the repetitive nature of the parallel chord structure with harmonic surprise (Example 2-8.) Here, the strength and simplicity of the melody allows for more interest to be generated in the harmony, which is a combination of spread and tight quartal and tertian constructions.

Example 2-8: “Ask Yourself,” bars 112-15.

The harmony drives the music at bars 116-22 as the melody simplifies to a repeated E-D-E mantra. The harmony is functional, but complex with chromatic and parallel characteristics. The combination of rich harmony and simple melody increase drama and tension as can be seen in Example 2-9.

Example 2-9: “Ask Yourself,” bars 115-19.

This section builds up to a climax in bar 122 where the winds are voiced in an interesting manner with the roots doubled higher than usual next to the major sevenths. This adds the right amount of dissonance to mundane major seventh chords.

Bars 127-50 are a solo section based on harmony from throughout the movement over an ostinato rhythm, the latter with the bass line forming a variation of Herbie Hancock's *Maiden Voyage*.⁶ Example 2-10 is a written example of the first two bars of *Maiden Voyage*.



Example 2-10: Opening bars of Herbie Hancock's *Maiden Voyage*.

At bar 135 the guitar part resumes the hemiola ragtime ostinato from the introduction to help segue back to a full reprise of the introduction at bar 151. This outro leads back into a variation of theme three at bar 160 which begins over open fifths in the low instruments reminiscent of the introduction to Movement 1. Through re-orchestration, the addition of some counterpoint at bars 172-174, and a prolongation of the final phrase, Movement 2 concludes on an unresolved E suspended chord.

⁶ Herbie Hancock, *Maiden Voyage*. Blue Note Records: BST 84195, 1965.

The ambiguity of suspended chords adds to the suspense of theme three. The unresolved ending creates an unanswered question that helps invite a response that is Movement 3. Should the answer be major or minor? The answer is dire as Movement 3 begins assuredly in E minor.

Chapter 3:

3rd Movement: *Truth Seeker*

Programmatic Aspects

Movement 3 begins with harmonic echoes of Movement 1 but with a more optimistic spirit. This optimism is conveyed through a powerful theme equal to the destructive forces encountered in Movement 1 but with more reassurance. After the opening theme, there is a breakdown that clears the air and the listener is left feeling concerned as the texture switches to a brass chorale in tight harmony underpinned by an ostinato figure that is like a clarion bell of cognition. This meditative moment creates a self-reflective, poignant feeling that can be likened to the self-awareness one gains as they discover how they fit into the world at large. The piece builds in strength and enthusiasm, and reveals a bright dance tune that evokes a party-like atmosphere created when all the “truth seekers” are working together for a righteous purpose. It transitions back to the minor opening theme in variation as the truth seekers assimilate back into civilization where they persevere to combat the misinformation and violence that still exists.

Analysis

Like Movement 2, “Ask Yourself,” Movement 3, “Truth Seeker” is composed of multiple themes with transitions. “Truth Seeker” returns to a faster rhythm of 210 BPM, close to the 220 BPM in the bulk of Movement 1, and begins with eight bars of swinging drum solo introduction. The brass enters at bar 9 with three-note, quartal constructions descending chromatically every four beats over an E pedal point and bass ostinato with saxophone countermelody, much like the descending tertian figure over a pedal in Movement 1, which helps unify the suite. This

introduction creates a frenetic yet bluesy depiction of impending doom similar but with a bit more optimism than in Movement 1, “Weapons of Maniacal Deception.”

At bar 25, (Example 3.0) theme one begins over a traditional 32-bar AABC form. The saxophone melody has internal dissonances with the quartal-harmony brass figure which creates an unstable sound. These could be considered harmonic mistakes in most theory classes, but the strength and direction of the melody along with the parallel structure of the harmony help to allow these harmonic incongruencies. This also exploits one of the most interesting properties of bluesy melodies, that the notes are not always fully justified by the harmony. Notice beats three and the “and of four” in bar 29 where the melody intentionally clashes with the harmony. This friction gives the melody a volatile and edgy sound. It builds tension that releases in the more stable harmony of the B section at bar 41 where there are there are no harmonic clashes.

The image shows a musical score for five bars (25-29). The top staff is for saxophone, and the bottom two staves are for piano. The piano accompaniment consists of a quartal harmony in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The saxophone melody is characterized by internal dissonances and a volatile, edgy sound, particularly in bar 29 where it intentionally clashes with the harmony.

Example 3.0: “Truth Seeker,” bars 25-29.

The B section melody at bar 41 outlines Esus but is supported with more interesting non-functional harmony that channels through the following progression: Dsus, Bsus, C Ma7, A b mi7, F Ma7. In the C section of the form at bar 49, the main theme shifts from saxes to brass with saxophones and solo trumpet providing a complex countermelody. The final C section at

bar 49 returns to a pedal point on the subdominant, A. It builds tension and cadences back to Emi in a bluesy yet modern plagal cadence: C/A, B/A, C/A, B/A, A7(♭9, ♭5), Emi. The melody climaxes here and accentuates the flatted fifth of the key at bar 55. The break on the A7(♭9, ♭5) chord allows the final melody notes B♭, D, E to shout out of the texture before the delayed resolving Emi chord sounds.

The energy and volume are quickly cleared out in the Afro-centric call-and-response passage at bar 57. Rhythmically, the unison line in the rhythm instruments prefaces the new bass groove of theme two and the horns answer in triple meter to anticipate the future bridge of theme two as well. Harmonically, the answer phrases in the winds include shifting triadic harmony over an E pedal, which gives a more consonant sound than the opening quartal constructions. The answer phrase gradually increases in length to maintain interest and development. Bars 65-70 offer the full completed statement (Example 3-1.)

The musical score for Example 3-1, "Truth Seeker," bars 65-70, is presented in a grand staff format. The right hand (treble clef) and left hand (bass clef) are shown. The score begins with a whole rest in the right hand and a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the left hand. The right hand then plays a series of chords and single notes, including a triad in bar 67. The key signature changes from one sharp (F#) to two sharps (F#, C#) and then to one flat (Bb). The bars are numbered 65 through 70 at the bottom.

Example 3-1: "Truth Seeker," bars 65-70.

At bar 72 (Example 3-2) the band expands on the idea in tutti. The upper voices are triads ascending in a C diminished scale. The unison bass voices descend in contrary motion in what begins as a descending E diminished scale that ends chromatically.

Example 3-2: “Truth Seeker,” bars 72-78.

The resulting slash chords create an intriguing mini-climax again held together by its mostly parallel structures. The B/G chord acts as an altered V chord substitute going back to “i” in Emi at bar 84.

I was kidded by a colleague that the bass line that enters at bar 84 sounds like the bass line from the 1980s rock band Guns N’ Roses’ *Welcome to the Jungle*, a band and tune that I had previously ignored.⁷ After comparing the two, they are similar but the bass line in *Truth Seeker* ascends rather than descends; however, the overall effect and construction are quite similar and the rock influence is undeniable.

Theme two enters at bar 92 over mostly E7(#9) harmony. It is built on a modern short 40-bar ABC form of 20 bars of 4/4, twelve bars of 3/4, eight bars of 4/4. In addition to the chromatic melody that emphasizes notes outside of E7, slash chord harmonies B ♭ /E and A ♭ /E interweave

⁷ Guns N’ Roses, Axl Rose, Slash (Musician), Duff McKagan, Steven Adler, Chris Weber, and West Arkeen, *Appetite for Destruction*. Geffen Records: 24148, 1987.

with the E7 at bar 95 to help distinguish this from an average rock song. The 3/4 B section at bar 112 is constructed of two 6-bar sets of diatonic chords a minor third apart in D minor and F minor. After these two sounds, solos take place on the A and B sections of the song. The background of the first solo at bar 140 creates a “three over four” poly-meter that shifts between parallel structures E7 (#9, #5) and D7 (#9, #5) and anticipates the second solo in triple meter.

Theme three sounds in D minor and arrives via an altered A7 chord at bar 164 that pivots between IV7 in E minor and V7 in D minor. Theme three is a tightly-voiced brass chorale in D minor harmony over a melodic ostinato in the piano and guitar built on the notes A, G, A, D. The open fifth and ambiguity of tonality in the ostinato allows for a variance in chords placed against it, which are mainly diatonic chords of D minor but also include some E ♭ major at bars 174-174 and E minor at bar 176 (Example 3-3.) Rhythmically, the drums are limited to a steady eighth note accompaniment on the high hat which adds further lightness to the texture. Here is a piano reduction of the first few bars of theme three.

The image shows a piano reduction of the first few bars of 'Theme Three' from 'Truth Seeker'. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of two staves: a treble staff with chords and a bass staff with a melodic ostinato. The bars are numbered 170 through 176. The chords are labeled as Dm11, Eb7, and Em11. The bass line consists of eighth notes: A, G, A, D, A, G, A, D, A, G, A, D, A, G, A, D, A, G, A, D.

Example 3-3: “Truth Seeker,” bars 72-78.

These chord constructions all contain several diatonic intervals in the lower part of the chord and more space in the top of the voicing. This section was inspired by a YouTube

instructional piano video created by Kevin Conley.⁸ I analyzed and readapted his concept for chord voicing that he calls “Dirty Chords” to serve as a contrasting section in this suite.

Bars 201-16 serve as an introduction to theme four and sounds in stop time to quickly change the texture for contrast, inspired by John Coltrane’s *Syeeda’s Song Flute*.⁹ Theme four enters at bar 217 presented by a unison grouping of tenors, trombone, and guitar to keep it low and guttural. The melody is a funky blues pentatonic line in D minor. The harmony is a complex embellishment of a very simple “i IV7” rhythm-and-blues song type. As the melody would sound rather common over a simple Dmin G7 chord progression, the use of chromatic passing chords and chord substitution modernizes it at bars 217-32 to become: Dmin7 - A ♭ 13 - G13 - E ♭ min7 - Dmin7 - F#13 - G13 - D ♭ min7 - Dmin7 - A ♭ 13 - G13 - F#min7 - Fmi7 - B ♭ 13 - Dmi7 - G13. The supporting harmony complicates the thickening texture with ascending and descending chromatic guide tone lines.

After a 16-bar repeat, theme four develops over new harmony at bar 247.

The image displays a musical score for six bars, numbered 246 to 251. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. Handwritten chord voicings are placed above the treble staff: Dmi7 (bar 246), C#mi7 (bar 247), Cmi7 (bar 248), B7(#9) (bar 249), and B7(#9) (bar 250). The melody in the treble staff consists of eighth and quarter notes, while the bass line features a chromatic guide tone line with dotted and eighth notes.

Example 3-4: “Truth Seeker,” bars 246-51.

⁸ Conley, Kevin. *Dirty Chords*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FdlyUU5M2dI>, accessed January 5, 2019.

⁹ John Coltrane, *Giant Steps*. Atlantic Records: SD 1311, 1960.

At bar 251, development of theme four continues to exploit the Dmin sound but now over B7(#9) harmony, which adds further complexity to the blues sound. The trumpets, bones, and then saxes trade short soli sections over a James Brown-inspired funk groove. At bar 267, the melodic flavor of the D changes again as it becomes the 9th in C minor.

A conclusive short theme five occurs at bar 269. Here the tempo slows quickly to a moderate hip hop groove and the mood changes; the melody fully transforms into a two-bar chromatic bluesy mantra-like hook with staggered entrances placed over a non-functional repeating harmony: B7(#9) - Gmi9 - Emi9 - Cmi9. The intent was to create an urban, dreamlike effect along with a shock back into reality, and a new tempo.

This short progression repeats three times and concludes in a truncated parallel harmony variation at bar 283 (Example 3-5) that coincides with a functional harmonic cadence back to E minor via an altered ii V7 I.

Example 3-5: “Truth Seeker,” bars 282-86.

The tempo returns to the original faster tempo at bar 287 and marks the reprise of introductory material in truncation and slight variation. A new harmony accompanies theme one at bars 295-314. Whereas theme one had been originally in E minor over an E pedal at bar 25, the reprise at bar 295 begins over the subdominant A and deceptively cadences abruptly at bar 298 on B \flat Maj7(#11). The harmony continues to ascend at bars 301-304 through B, C, C#, D, and A, that further contrasts with the original descending chromatic quartal structures. Here at the climax of the suite, the quartal harmony ascends in chromatic and then pentatonic motion at bar 307 creating more consonant sounding major keys. The uplifting tonality at bars 307 drives upward toward its brief modulation to C major at bar 311. This creates a feeling of triumphal resolution in what had been previously been one of the darkest parts of the song. The sparse incomplete chords F(add 2)/A and G(add 2)/B at bars 309-10 (Example 3-6) add poignance to the progression, that along with the mostly pentatonic melody, is reminiscent of American folk music.

The musical score for Example 3-6, "Truth Seeker," bars 307-14, is presented in a two-staff format. The top staff is the melody line in treble clef, and the bottom staff is the piano accompaniment in bass clef. The time signature is 7/8. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The chords are: Dsus (bar 307), Fsus (bar 308), Fadd2/A (bar 309), Gadd2/B (bar 310), C13 (bar 311), Eb6/9 (bar 312), Bb7(#11) (bar 313), and Dsus (bar 314). The melody line features a mix of eighth and quarter notes, with some rests. The piano accompaniment consists of sparse, incomplete chords, primarily triads and dyads, with some octaves.

Example 3-6: "Truth Seeker," bars 307-14.

The rest of the *Truth Seeker* is a reprise of what had come in earlier B and C sections with minor variations in the saxophone countermelody and orchestration. In the last bar of the piece, the countermelody of the saxophones is a variation of the opening introduction melody of Movement 1, “Weapons of Maniacal Deception,” and helps to unify the suite from start to finish.

Conclusion

Truth Seeker Jazz Suite attempts to depict distinct stages in the mind of a war protester through each of its three movements. Movement 1, “Weapons of Maniacal Deception,” represents the anger I felt when I understood the United States of America was misled into the Iraq War under false pretenses. Movement 2, “Ask Yourself,” is a reflective movement that sees a mission for peace, but ends bitter sweet as the inevitable blowback from war creates challenges that are difficult to overcome. Movement 3, “Truth Seeker,” strives to fight the war of misinformation and unify people toward a more humanitarian goal. With an aggressively optimistic feeling toward reconstruction and positive vision, “Truthseeker” represents past (and future) battles that were worth the fight. It is my hope that *Truth Seeker Jazz Suite* inspires people to seek the truth, fight against greed, and create a better world for all of humanity.

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Appendix

Three Scores