

The Role of the Bass in Pianoless Jazz Ensembles: 1952-2014

Volume One

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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June 2016

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ABSTRACT

The study examines chronologically the role of the bass in pianoless jazz ensembles, beginning with Gerry Mulligan's cool jazz ensembles, through to Sonny Rollins' pioneering trios and free jazz quartet. This leads to Ornette Coleman's ensembles and an exploration of the role of the bass in free jazz. Charles Mingus, Dave Holland and Jaco Pastorius are examined in the context of their roles as rhythm section instrumentalists and ensemble leaders, alongside drummers Paul Motian and Elvin Jones. The pianoless trios of saxophonists Joe Henderson, Branford Marsalis, Joe Lovano, Kenny Garrett and Joshua Redman are likewise explored, as are recent contributions by bassists Steve Swallow and John Patitucci, and the contemporary trio, Fly. In depth analysis of rhythmic, harmonic, stylistic and timbral devices, is underpinned by extensive transcriptions by the author and audio excerpts of original recordings. The study focuses exclusively on the techniques the bassists bring to bear as accompanists in the pianoless ensemble setting. It emerges that the function of the bass in pianoless ensembles has influenced the role of the bass player in jazz as a whole. No less significant is the finding that the bass in pianoless ensembles provides unique insights into the musical aesthetics and performance practices of the respective ensemble leaders.

DECLARATION

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I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisor Professor Mark Carroll for his invaluable advice and expertise throughout my candidature; it has been privilege learning from his academic experience. Mark has provided assistance not only with the final thesis, but also for my many presentations and milestones. His editorial assistance is gratefully acknowledged, as well as his advice on thesis content, structure and presentation. Many other professors and lecturers at the University of Adelaide have provided invaluable advice, and generously given their time and encouragement to support me in completing in my project; these include Associate Professor Kimi Coaldrake, Professor Charles Bodman Rae, Stephen Knopoff and my co-supervisor, Mr Bruce Hancock.

While this project is not performance-based, it is a product of my on-going passion as a performer and bassist, and also signifies the end of my journey as a student at the Elder Conservatorium of Music. My affinity for bass was began early on in my musical development and has continued to be cultivated by my bass teachers. Thank you to my first bass teacher and mentor, Ben Chambers, who generously invested countless hours to provide me with performance opportunities and life-long skills as a musician and bassist. It was through Ben's support and encouragement that I pursued music beyond high school and for this I will always be grateful. I would also like to thank my University bass teachers, Robyn Habel and Peter Dowdall, for extending and improving my playing beyond recognition. Peter also provided valuable assistance and advice in the early stages of my proposal and has always been generous with his knowledge and time. Other Adelaide bassists I would like to acknowledge include Lyndon Gray and David Phillips, for their generous advice and informative discussions about jazz and bass. Thank you for

sharing your wealth of knowledge with me in all aspects of music; it has been a privilege to learn from musicians of such a high calibre.

To each member of my family for their love, encouragement and support – my parents Diane and Nigel, who have provided unwavering support and belief in my ability to not only pursue this project, but music; my brother, Matthew, and his partner Danni, who have also been an important part of my journey through their emotional support; and my second family, Diana and Greg and the rest of the Bassanis for always being there for me. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the most important person in my life, Evan, for not only being my partner in love, life and music, but for his unwavering support and encouragement throughout this journey; I could not have completed this project without him. I would like to conclude my acknowledgements with a thank you to my friends and music colleagues I have had the privilege to perform and practise with. This project will always be considered a significant milestone in my life and is a culmination of everything I have learnt thus far as a student of music.

The Role of the Bass in Pianoless Jazz Ensembles: 1952-2014

Volume Two

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B.Mus. (Hons) 2010 (The University of Adelaide)

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
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Faculty of Arts
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June 2016

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DECLARATION

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