

Dissonance & Abstraction @ the Movies

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through the lens of 60's/70's progressive jazz





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The musical prism through which we remember

Although the vast majority of listeners do not recognise music **literally** and are not able to **literally** identify the notes and chords, for many people it is the music they **remember** sometimes more than the film or TV show

Something people understand in a largely **emotional** way often eclipses more literal or visual memories - supposedly superior methods of understanding

Traditional memory v Emotional memory

You can prove this yourself by asking someone to name the **actors or characters** from a television show from twenty years ago. Many will not be able to. But if you play the **theme music**, many will recognise it and name the show. It is strange that something that communicates via the vagaries of **emotional memory** can sometimes be more effective than our actual visual memory of people, places, events, etc.

Eric Deggans discusses the 'death of the TV song' in the Chicago Tribune:

“I write today about the passing of something special, fading away so subtly many of us have failed to take proper notice. The death of the TV theme tune, from ‘Mission: Impossible’ (did a trilling string tremolo ever sound cooler?) to the theme from ‘Ironside’. “So, why do so few current TV shows have memorable themes? My hunch is that modern TV producers fear flip-happy viewers will take any excuse to surf away from a show and sample other channels. Eliminating the theme tune is just another way to deal with the multitude of channels and remote-control technology offered today's consumers, locking them into an unfolding show before they even realize it has begun.”

The 'death of the TV theme' Chicago Tribune 2nd Jan 2008

Chicago Tribune



Dirty jazz chords

‘Play School’

The humble ‘flat 10’

C7(b10) F13 C7(b10) F13

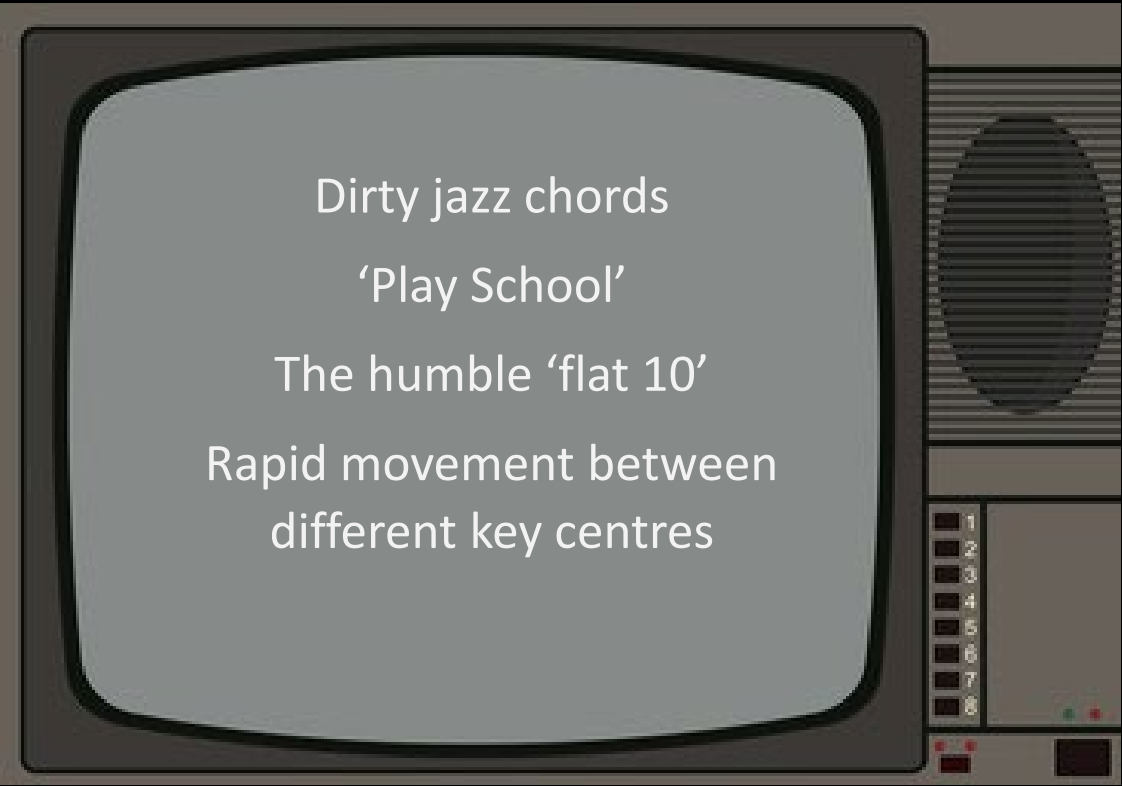
Variations

C⁷ F⁷ C⁷ F⁷

4/4

C⁷(b10/b13) F⁷ (6/9)

4/4



Dirty jazz chords
'Play School'
The humble 'flat 10'
Rapid movement between
different key centres



The Last Days Of
LEHMAN BROTHERS

MUSIC BY KEVIN SARGENT



KEVIN SARGENT

00.00.37

Piano /
Strings

B \flat 7(\flat 10)

C7(\flat 10)

B \flat 7(\flat 10)

Musical score for Piano/Strings, measures 4-6. The score is in 4/4 time. The treble staff has whole rests in measures 4, 5, and 6. The bass staff has whole rests in measures 4 and 5. In measure 6, the bass staff contains a triplet of eighth notes: B \flat 3, A \flat 2, and G \flat 2. Above the bass staff, there are two sets of notes: B \flat 4 and A \flat 4 in measure 4, and B \flat 4 and A \flat 4 in measure 5. In measure 6, there are two sets of notes: B \flat 4 and A \flat 4, and B \flat 4 and A \flat 4.

7

A \flat 7

B \flat 7(\flat 10)

C7(\flat 10)

E \flat

F

C7(\flat 10)

E \flat

F

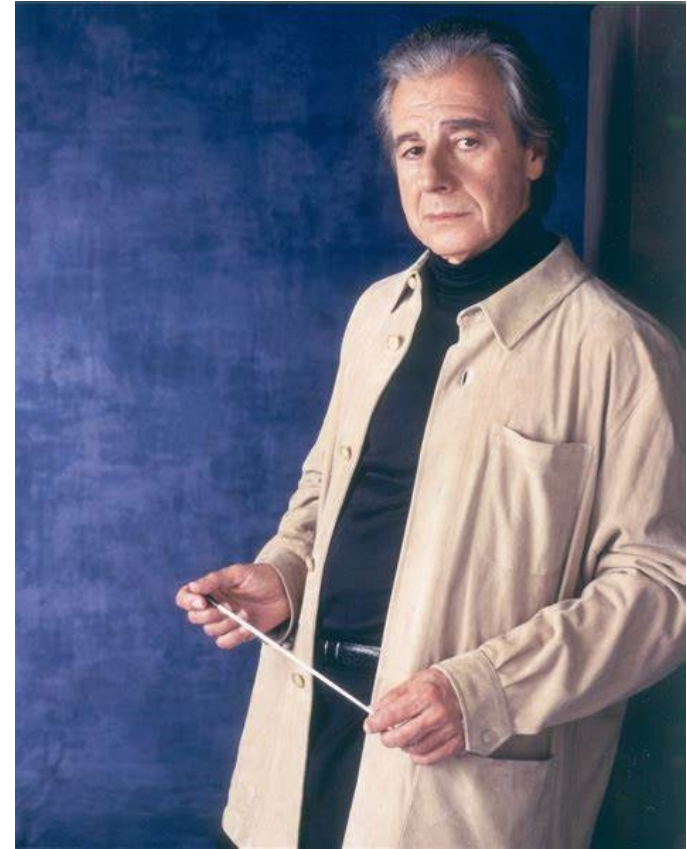
Musical score for Piano/Strings, measures 7-10. The score is in 4/4 time. The treble staff has whole rests in measures 7, 8, 9, and 10. The bass staff has a triplet of eighth notes: B \flat 3, A \flat 2, and G \flat 2 in measure 7. In measure 8, the bass staff contains a triplet of eighth notes: B \flat 3, A \flat 2, and G \flat 2. In measure 9, the bass staff contains a triplet of eighth notes: B \flat 3, A \flat 2, and G \flat 2. In measure 10, the bass staff contains a triplet of eighth notes: B \flat 3, A \flat 2, and G \flat 2. Above the bass staff, there are two sets of notes: B \flat 4 and A \flat 4 in measure 7, and B \flat 4 and A \flat 4 in measure 8. In measure 9, there are two sets of notes: B \flat 4 and A \flat 4, and B \flat 4 and A \flat 4. In measure 10, there are two sets of notes: B \flat 4 and A \flat 4, and B \flat 4 and A \flat 4.

“Music lives or dies by its arrangement.”

Lalo Schifrin, like most great composers, above all else, is a consummate arranger, who understands structure and placement like few others. Music is a living, evolving thing and every style normally has an atypical approach to arrangement, which acts kind of as the ‘**textural ‘clothes’**’ that the harmony wears.

“Don’t hide behind your music.”

Don’t be afraid to expose important bits of your music. Don’t be afraid to do minimal. Don’t be afraid of space. Don’t be afraid of silence. Don’t fill every available space.



Jazz harmonies and loose instrumentation is used to characterise the financial crisis of 2008

Lots of vertical space makes the notes that **are** there, resonate

KEVIN SARGENT

00.00.37

Piano /
Strings

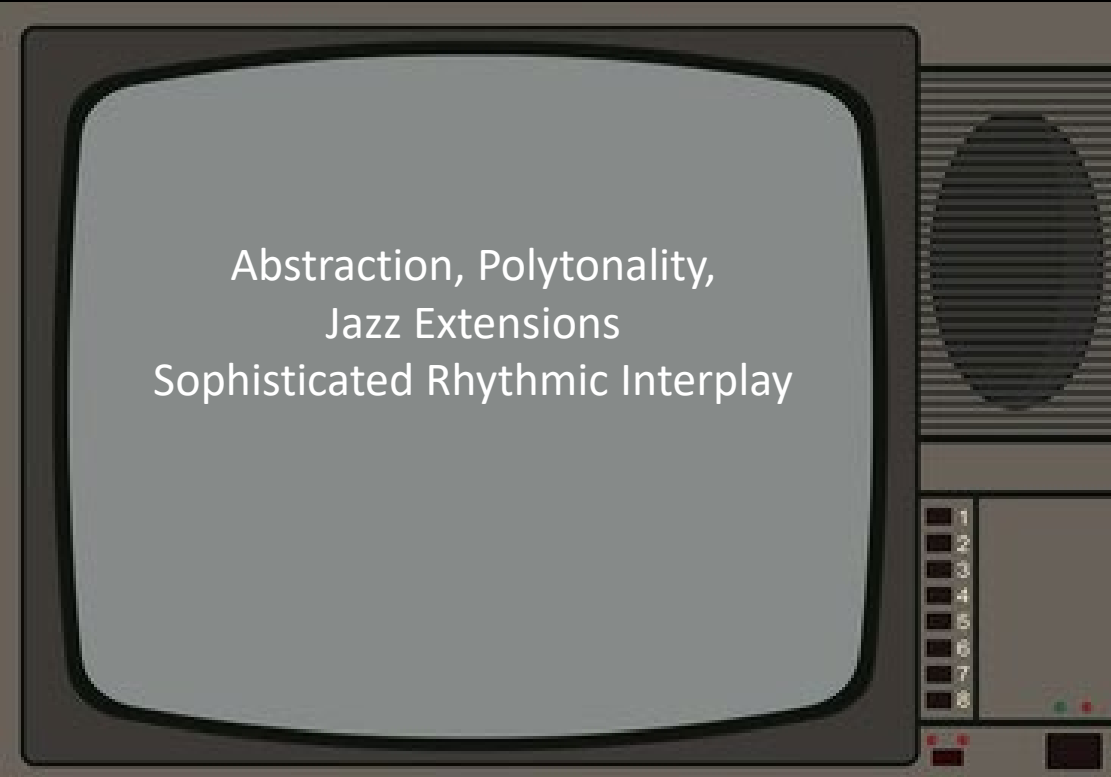
These voicings can be literally transported onto to brass

Classic b10 voicings.
Lots of space

7 Ab7 Bb7(b10) C7(b10) Eb F C7(b10) Eb F

space space space space space

A harmonic flavour becomes an indelible musical calling card for this film



Abstraction, Polytonality,
Jazz Extensions
Sophisticated Rhythmic Interplay

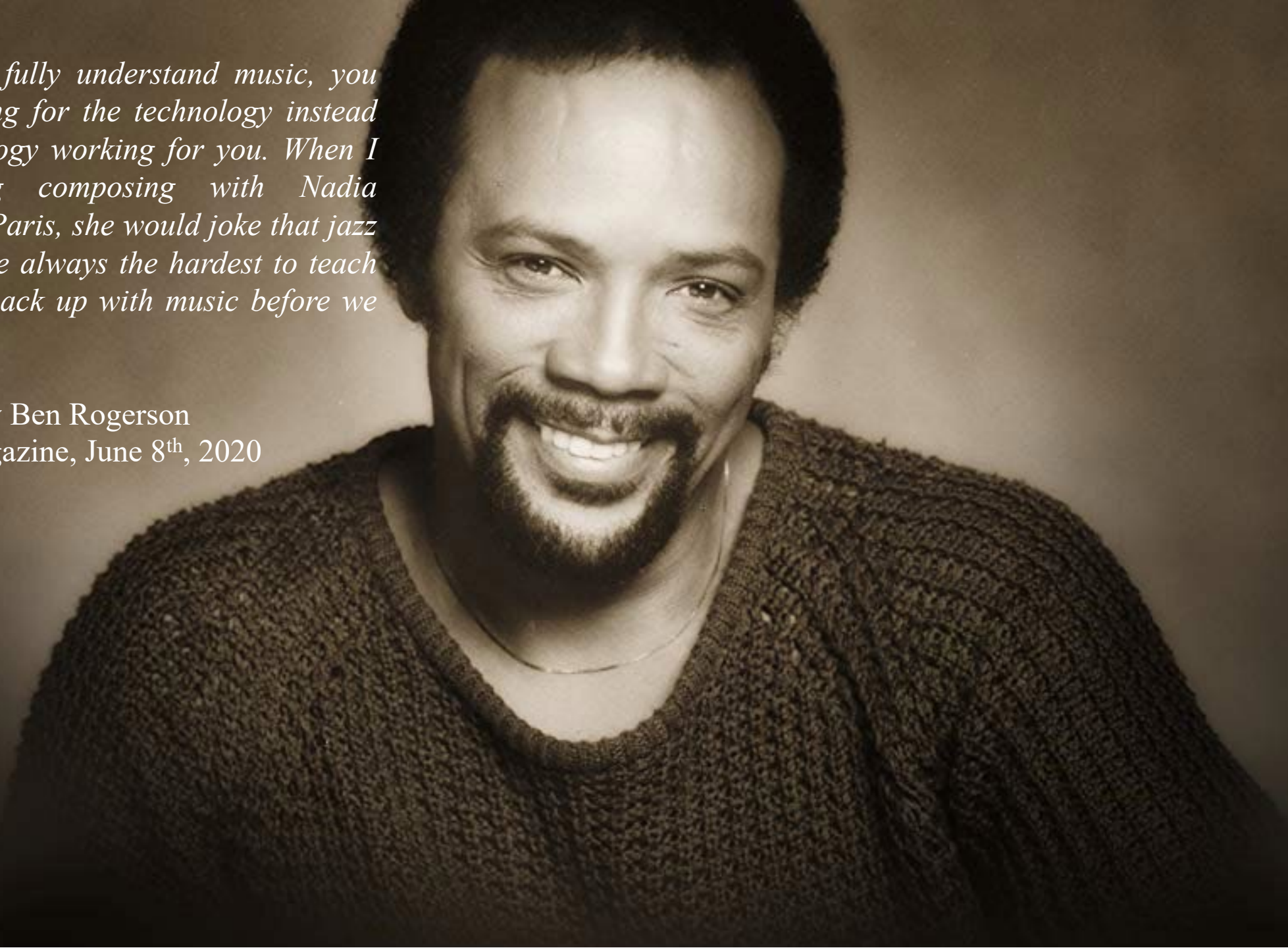


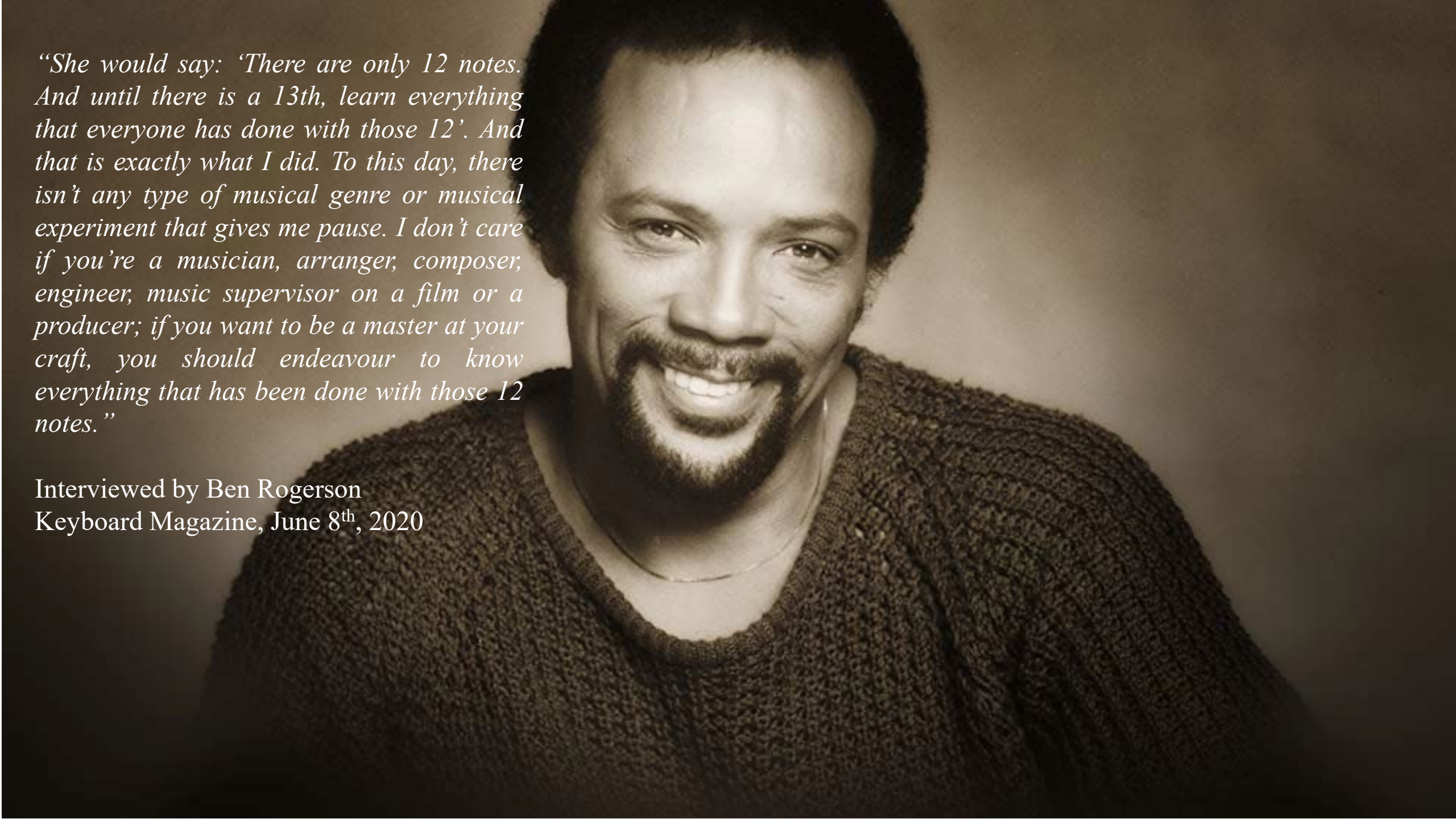
IRONSIDE



“If you don’t fully understand music, you end up working for the technology instead of the technology working for you. When I was studying composing with Nadia Boulanger in Paris, she would joke that jazz musicians were always the hardest to teach because we shack up with music before we marry it....

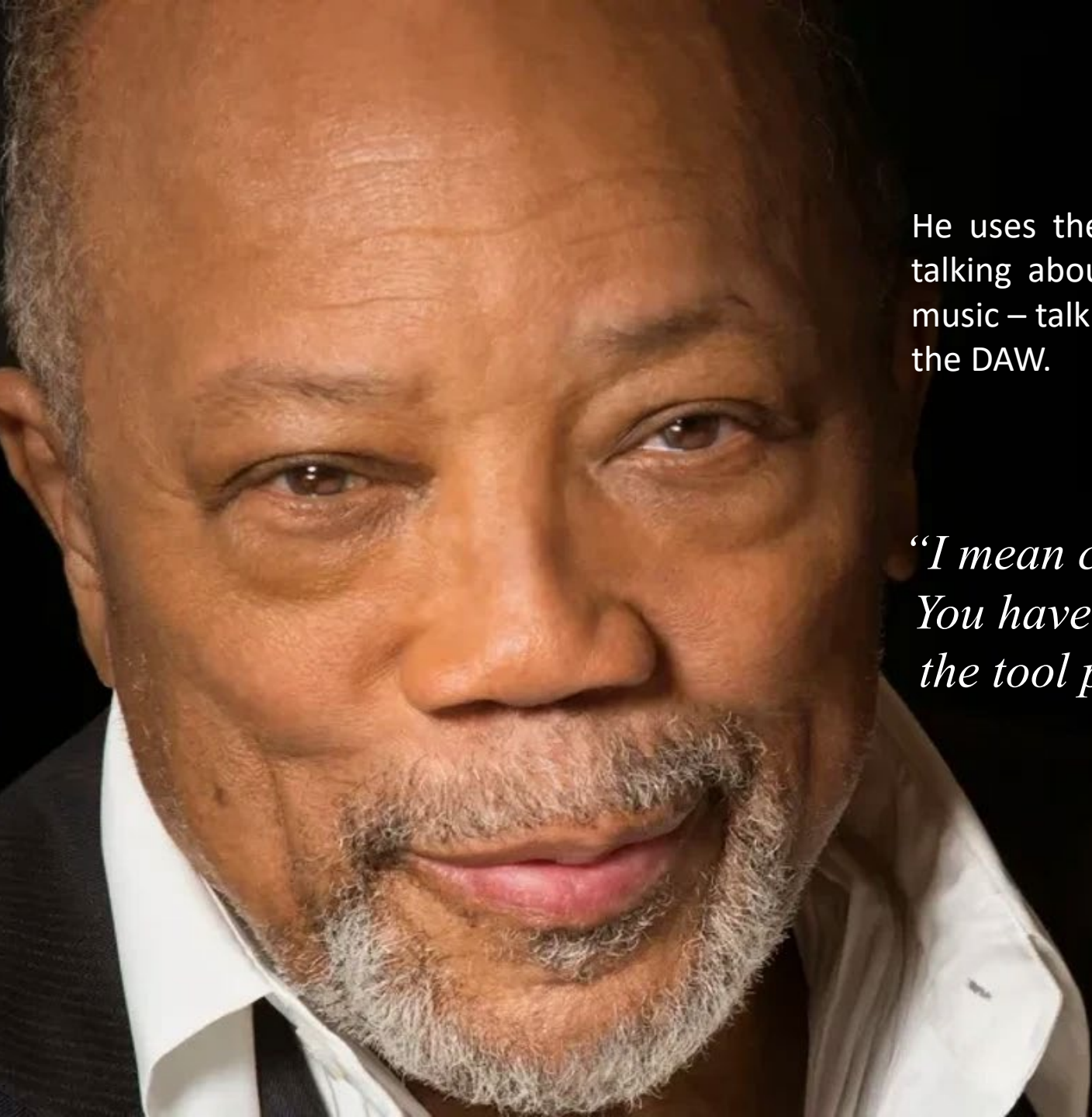
Interviewed by Ben Rogerson
Keyboard Magazine, June 8th, 2020





“She would say: ‘There are only 12 notes. And until there is a 13th, learn everything that everyone has done with those 12’. And that is exactly what I did. To this day, there isn’t any type of musical genre or musical experiment that gives me pause. I don’t care if you’re a musician, arranger, composer, engineer, music supervisor on a film or a producer; if you want to be a master at your craft, you should endeavour to know everything that has been done with those 12 notes.”

Interviewed by Ben Rogerson
Keyboard Magazine, June 8th, 2020

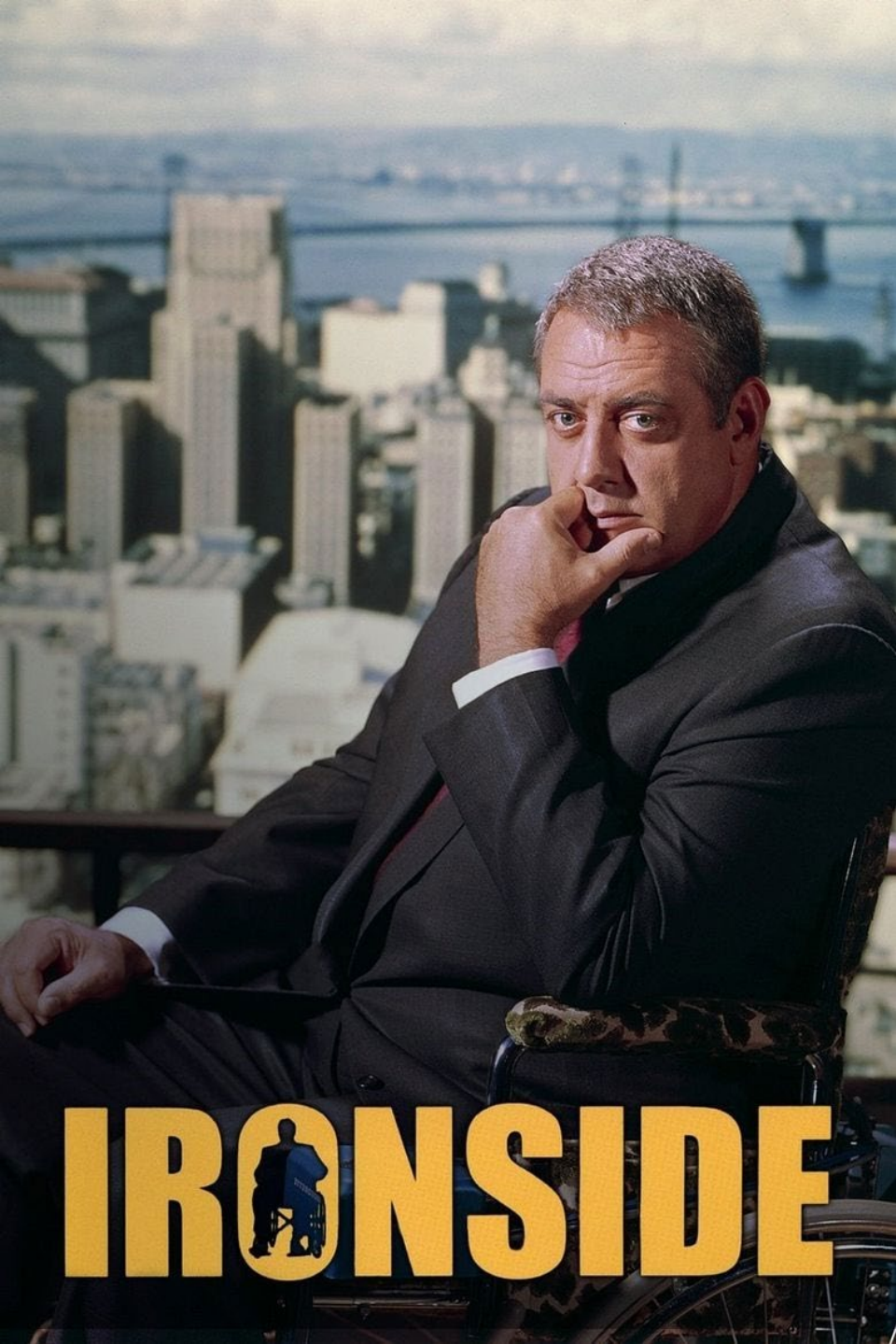


He uses the same argument in the same interview when he is talking about the overreliance on technology in the creation of music – talking about the ‘cut and paste’ mentality of composing in the DAW.

“I mean come on, man. The technology is a tool. You have to know what you’re building to utilise the tool properly.”

Quincy Jones

Interviewed by Ben Rogerson
Keyboard Magazine, June 8th, 2020



In a BBC article called “12 musicians you didn’t know had written famous TV themes’ Jeremy Allen says:

“The funky, borderline psychedelic theme from the very unpsychedelic TV series Ironside, about a wheelchair-using detective played by Raymond Burr, was written and performed by Quincy Jones. The irrepressible American soul and jazz legend’s achievements include being the producer and co-writer of the best-selling album of all time – Michael Jackson’s Thriller. The Ironside theme appeared on the 1971 album Smackwater Jack and parts of it have been sampled over a hundred times by artists including Drake and Dr Dre.”

Jeremy Allen August 23rd 2018

As Jeremy Allen says, the piece does have a psychedelic tinge to it, which is probably down to the ‘police siren’ synth sound, the Fender Rhodes sound and the heavy and occasionally dissonant use of brass.

These are also amongst the characteristics that make it ideal for a dramatic cop show. At the time this kind of textural approach gave the piece a contemporary and almost experimental feel.

(#4)
G(add2)

Trumpets

Horns

Trombones

Dissonant brass

Police Siren sound

glissando

glissando

glissando

glissando

Rhythmic interplay

Two distinct and different rhythmic patterns occupying the same space

Rhythmic interplay 00.19

Am (omit3) (omit3) Am Am Am (omit3) Am (add9) Am Am (omit3) (omit3) Am (omit3) Am (add4)

13

Trumpets

Horns

Trombones

Keyboards

Guitar

Bass

Drums

The musical score is written for a 7-piece band. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The tempo is 13. The score is divided into four measures. The first measure contains a triplet of eighth notes in the Horns and Trombones, and a triplet of eighth notes in the Bass. The second measure contains a triplet of eighth notes in the Horns and Trombones, and a triplet of eighth notes in the Bass. The third measure contains a triplet of eighth notes in the Horns and Trombones, and a triplet of eighth notes in the Bass. The fourth measure contains a triplet of eighth notes in the Horns and Trombones, and a triplet of eighth notes in the Bass. The score includes various musical notations such as chords, triplets, and rhythmic patterns.

The final two bars have an almost legendary status amongst Jazz musicians and arrangers. In this example (bars 21-22) we find the trumpet playing chords of **Ab, D, Db, Ab, Cb, Db**, but on listening to it we can tell something is 'off', i.e. something has been deliberately skewed. As in other examples we've looked at, this is not chaos. It is not random dissonance. There is a plan.



If we look at the trombones, we will see the top two notes (Eb and C) conform to the trumpet chords

Ab D Db Ab Cb Db

The musical score consists of three staves in 4/4 time. The top staff is in treble clef, the middle in bass clef, and the bottom in bass clef. The top staff contains chords: Ab (Eb, C), D (F#, G#), Db (Cb, Bb), Ab (Eb, C), Cb (Bb, A), and Db (Cb, Bb). The middle staff contains whole rests. The bottom staff contains chords: Ab (Eb, C), D (F#, G#), Db (Cb, Bb), Ab (Eb, C), Cb (Bb, A), and Db (Cb, Bb). A red line connects the Eb and C notes in the top staff to the Eb and C notes in the bottom staff.

If we look at the trombones, we will see the top two notes (**E \flat and C**) conform to the **trumpet chords**, but the bottom two notes (**A and E**) are a semitone up from what *would* have been there if the chord was an A \flat ; **the trombones are playing as if the chord is an A**. The bottom two trombones maintain this going through all six chords of the final two bars.

The image displays a musical score for two staves in 4/4 time. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. Above the staves, the following chords are indicated: A \flat , D, D \flat , A \flat , C \flat , and D \flat . The top staff contains chords for the first four measures, with rests in the fifth and sixth measures. The bottom staff contains chords for all six measures. A red line connects the top two notes of the A \flat chord in the first measure of the top staff to the top two notes of the first measure of the bottom staff. A blue line connects the bottom two notes of the A \flat chord in the first measure of the top staff to the bottom two notes of the first measure of the bottom staff. The bottom staff shows a consistent pattern of chords and rests across the six measures.

Basically, the **bottom two trombones** are playing from a chord that is a semitone higher than the **top two notes of the trombones and all the trumpets**

If we look at the trombones, we will see the top two notes (**E \flat and C**) conform to the **trumpet chords**, but the bottom two notes (**A and E**) are a semitone up from what *would* have been there if the chord was an A \flat ; **the trombones are playing as if the chord is an A**. The bottom two trombones maintain this going through all six chords of the final two bars.

The image displays a musical score for two staves in 4/4 time. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The score is divided into two systems, each containing four measures. Above the top staff, the chords are labeled: A \flat , D, D \flat , A \flat , C \flat , and D \flat . Below the bottom staff, the chords are labeled: A \flat , D, A \flat , C \flat , and D \flat . The bottom staff features a blue line connecting the notes A and E in the first measure, and a red line connecting the notes E \flat and C in the second measure. The bottom staff also includes the following annotations: A(omit3), E \flat (omit3), D(omit3), A(omit3), C(omit3), and D(omit3).

(#4)
G(add2)

(omit3)
C/G

C/E

Bm7

C

Trumpets

Horns

Trombones

Police Siren sound

glissando

glissando

glissando

glissando

glissando

glissando

glissando

glissando

Keyboards

Guitar

Bass

Drums

(omit3)
A(omit3)
B

8

Trumpets

Horns

Trombones

Keyboards

Guitar

Bass

Drums

Cowbell

This musical score is for a 7-piece band, including Trumpets, Horns, Trombones, Keyboards, Guitar, Bass, and Drums. The score is divided into two main sections, A and B, with a measure number 8 at the beginning of section A. Section A is in 2/4 time, and section B is in 4/4 time. The Trumpets part features a melodic line with a key signature change to one sharp (F#) in section B. The Horns part has a sustained note in section B. The Trombones part provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines. The Keyboards part has a sustained chord in section B. The Guitar and Bass parts provide a steady rhythm. The Drums part includes a Cowbell, which plays a consistent pattern throughout the piece.

Am⁷*(omit3)*

E

(omit3)
(b9)

E(#5)

(omit3)

E7(#9)

(omit3)

E

(omit3)
(b9)

E(#5)

(omit3)

E7(#9)

Ab/A

D/Eb

Db/D

Ab/A

Cb/C

Db/D

Trumpets

18

Horns

Trombones

Keyboards

Guitar

Bass

Drums

Musical score for a jazz ensemble, measures 18-22. The score is written for Trumpets, Horns, Trombones, Keyboards, Guitar, Bass, and Drums. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The time signature is 4/4. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, accidentals, and dynamic markings. The Trumpets part features a melodic line with a slur over measures 19-20. The Horns part has a triplet of eighth notes in measure 18. The Trombones part has a melodic line with a slur over measures 19-20. The Keyboards part has a melodic line with a slur over measures 19-20. The Guitar and Bass parts have a melodic line with a slur over measures 19-20. The Drums part has a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in measures 18-20.

Quincy Jones is a consummate musician, composer and arranger, and he is a great ambassador for the idea of **learning to read music** – something that statistically, in Britain, a majority of players **do not do**. There are over 40,000 musicians in the UK and **less than 5% read**.

- It has never been easier to learn how to read music.
- Previously attached to availability, opportunity, privilege.
 - Now anyone can learn it.
- There are under 3,000 film composers in the UK – 95% of them read.

The argument for reading as a film score composer isn't that all composers consult notation when they conceptualise music - although many do - it is that **reading and hearing music** enables you to properly understand how music works and is constructed. To be able to see what you have created is to know it and understand it.





Dissonance

Blues



CAPE FEAR

BERNARD HERRMANN

00.00 original / 00.2.40

Remake 00.00.24 vid/2.40 audio



Blues

The image shows a musical score for the song "The Rose Tree". The score is written for a single melodic line on a treble clef staff. The melody consists of a sequence of eighth and quarter notes, with a final measure containing a whole rest. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 4/4.

5

The musical score for 'The Rose Tree' is presented in three systems. The first system begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is written in the treble staff, and the accompaniment is in the bass staff. The second system continues the melody and accompaniment. The third system concludes the piece with a final chord in the treble staff and a final note in the bass staff.

A musical score snippet in 4/4 time. The right hand (treble clef) contains a melody of quarter notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5, C6. The left hand (bass clef) contains whole rests for all four measures.

Which bit is the melody?

A musical score snippet in 4/4 time, starting at measure 5. The right hand (treble clef) contains a melody of quarter notes: C#4, D#4, E4, F#4, G#4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F#5, G#5, A5, B5, C6. The left hand (bass clef) contains chords of quarter notes: C#4, D#4, E4, F#4, G#4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F#5, G#5, A5, B5, C6. The left hand is playing a harmonic accompaniment.

The search for meaning in music

Herrmann: “Melody is not a place or time or instrument or stave – ultimately it is a **function. Melody can be everywhere.**”

We are programmed to go searching for the ‘melody’ just as we are programmed to search for the foreground and background in a picture

Unaccompanied melody – significance ?

13

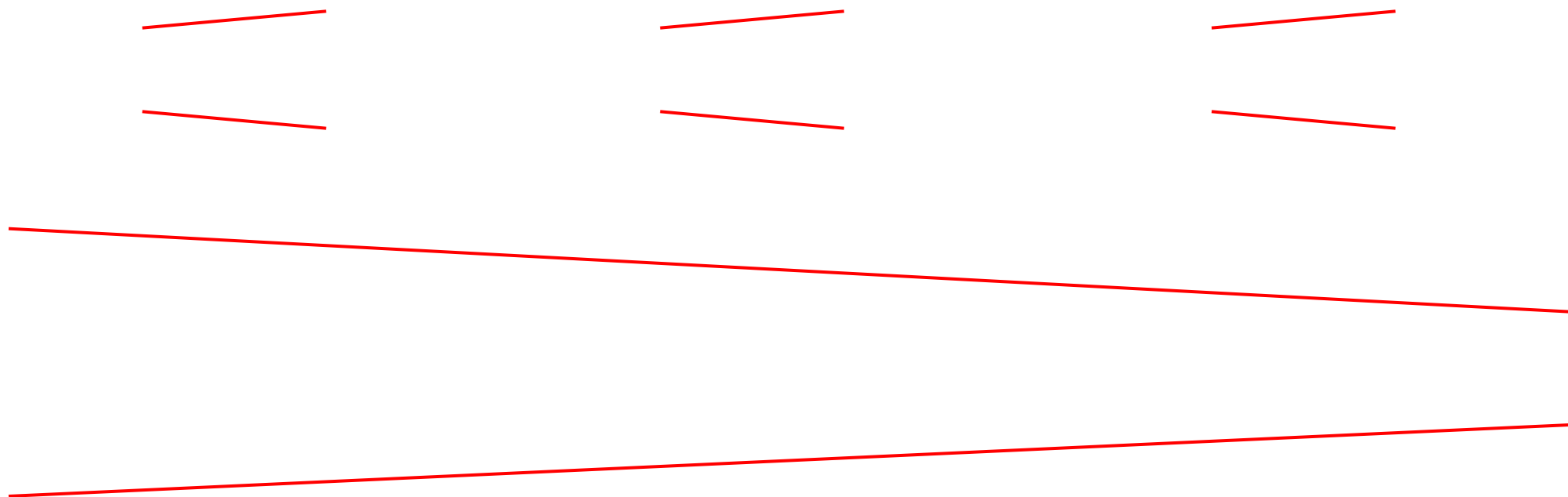
Horns

Strings

n.c. E *E(b5) implied* *C/E implied* *Em implied* *n.c.* E *E(b5) implied* 3

The image shows a musical score for two instruments: Horns and Strings. The Horns part begins at measure 13 with a melody of eighth notes. The notes are E4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3, F#3, E3, and D3. Above the staff, the following chords are indicated: *n.c.* E, *E(b5) implied*, *C/E implied*, *Em implied*, *n.c.* E, and *E(b5) implied*. The Strings part consists of two staves (treble and bass) with rests in all measures shown.

Contrary motion running at different speeds / rates



Contrary motion running at different speeds / rates

16

Horns

Strings

E(#4) Em F⁹(#11) (omit3/5) D/F# (omit5) D#(add4)/F# Dm/F# F(#5)/G (omit5) A^b A^b7(#5) A^bmaj7 (omit3/5/7) A(add9)

The image displays a musical score for Horns and Strings, illustrating contrary motion at different speeds. The Horns part, in treble clef, features a sequence of chords: E(#4), Em, F⁹(#11) (omit3/5), D/F# (omit5), D#(add4)/F# Dm/F#, F(#5)/G (omit5), A^b, A^b7(#5), A^bmaj7, and A(add9) (omit3/5/7). Red lines above and below the staff indicate the rate of change for these chords. The Strings part, in grand staff (treble and bass clefs), shows a continuous red line representing a slow, steady descent in the treble and ascent in the bass, creating a wide interval. The overall effect is a contrast between the rapid harmonic changes in the Horns and the slow, linear movement in the Strings.

It's never total dissonance – why ?

16

Horns

Em

(omit3/5) F⁹(#11)

(omit5) D/F#

D#(add4)/F#

Dm/F#

F(#5)/G

(omit5) A^b

A^b7(#5)

A^bmaj7

(omit3/5/7) A(add9)

Strings

4

19

Horns

n.c. B^b

(omit5) C/B^b

B^bm

(omit3/5) B⁹(#11)

(omit5) A^b/C

A^b(#5)/C

A^bm/C

D^b9(#5)

E

B^b

B^b(b5)

E

B^b

B^b(b5)

Strings

Harmonic colour changes **each beat**,
creating a restless feel

The image displays a musical score for two staves: Horns (top) and Strings (bottom). The Horns staff is in treble clef, and the Strings staff is in bass clef. The score begins at measure 16. Above the Horns staff, a series of chords are listed, each corresponding to a beat. Colored arrows point from these chord names to the notes in the Horns staff. The chords are: E(#4) (red arrow), Em (blue arrow), (omit3/5) F9(#11) (green arrow), (omit5) D/F# (purple arrow), D#(add4)/F# (brown arrow), Dm/F# (yellow arrow), F(#5)/G (red arrow), (omit5) Ab (green arrow), Ab7(#5) (blue arrow), Abmaj7 (blue arrow), and A(add9) (red arrow). The Horns staff shows notes for beats 2 through 11, with rests for beats 1, 4, 7, and 10. The Strings staff shows notes for beats 2 through 11, with rests for beats 1, 4, 7, and 10. The notes in the Strings staff are mostly half notes, while the notes in the Horns staff are mostly quarter notes.

16

Horns

Strings

E(#4) Em (omit3/5) F9(#11) (omit5) D/F# D#(add4)/F# Dm/F# F(#5)/G (omit5) Ab Ab7(#5) Abmaj7 A(add9)

Harmonic colour changes **each beat**,
creating a restless feel

4

Horns

19

Strings

n.c.
B \flat

(omit5)
C/B \flat

B \flat m

(omit3/5)
B 9 (\sharp 11)

(omit5)
A \flat /C

A \flat (\sharp 5)/C

A \flat m/C

D \flat 9 (\sharp 5)

E

B \flat

B \flat (\flat 5)

E

B \flat

B \flat (\flat 5)

The musical score consists of two staves: Horns (treble clef) and Strings (grand staff). The Horns staff has a measure rest at the beginning, followed by a series of chords. The Strings staff provides a harmonic accompaniment. Colored arrows point from the text above to specific notes in the Horns staff: a green arrow from 'n.c.' to the B \flat note, a blue arrow from 'B \flat m' to the B \flat note, an orange arrow from '(omit3/5) B 9 (\sharp 11)' to the B \sharp note, and a purple arrow from '(omit5) A \flat /C' to the A \flat note. The sequence of chords in the Horns staff is: B \flat , C/B \flat , B \flat m, B 9 (\sharp 11), A \flat /C, A \flat (\sharp 5)/C, A \flat m/C, D \flat 9 (\sharp 5), E, B \flat , B \flat (\flat 5), E, B \flat , and B \flat (\flat 5).

Bernard Herrmann's big ideas

- Conceptualisation
- Questions the traditions of the day
- The triumph of harmony over melody

Bernard Herrmann's granular context

Which bit is the melody?

Unaccompanied melody – horizontal harmony

Not total dissonance – dissonance needs to rub off consonance

Melody is a function, not a specific instrument or section or a 'place'

Harmonic colour changes almost by the beat

“I don’t need people to walk down the street humming the theme from ‘Psycho’. I don’t expect them to remember it musically. I just want them to remember that it terrified them.”

