

Creative Music Production
Professional Project

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The Lavender Trilogy:

Composing for Unfamiliar Instruments

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1. Introduction

The subject of the research is composing for unfamiliar instruments, contextualised in the genre of jazz. The aim of the project is to gain an insight into traditional forms of notation, research characteristics of the jazz genre, analyse the trombone, piano and flute, and compose for their individual strengths. This analysis includes their frequency range, note range, and also factoring in any potential human capabilities which may hinder, or accentuate, the compositional process. This is an ambitious, content heavy project primarily focused on composition.

The project begins as a heavily collaborative endeavour. Composing with the aid of musicians who understand their own instrument influenced the project, and subsequently affected the composition of the tracks they were not involved in, tracks two and three. Once the recording concluded, the project became a solitary body of work. Composing tracks two and three in a traditional setting allowed the music to be more ambitious, without the restrictions that having any one musician may, or may not, impose.

This project is a valuable insight into a more unconventional form of traditional music composition. The desire for the project was to provide an example of a body of work that is composed in collaboration with a musician in real time, and then using these findings to compose without the input of a musician. Track one, 'Lavender' displays the collaboration process which is less common for a traditional composer. 'Thistle' and 'Poppy Seed', tracks two and three, convey the findings taken from the participants in 'Lavender', informing them and applying them to notation.

2. Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review was to provide a solid foundation that the project can build from. Familiarising with standardised arrangement, notation and jazz compositional techniques allowed the execution of soundly supported compositional material. Having these articles and books to refer to supported the legitimacy of this research and further affirmed why this project was worthy of study.

Nestico, Sammy. *Composer and Arranger, The Complete Arranger*, Kenwood Music Co., Inc. 1993

This book, written by Grammy-nominated composer Sammy Nestico, is a complete and in depth guide on how to successfully arrange a body of music that either the individual or someone else has composed. The project in question can be influenced and supported by the relevant information on composing for a large group of instruments, covering an orchestra of instruments which is more than sufficient. The aim of this professional project is to compose and notate music that is accessible to the instrumentalist. The project will have a flautist, drummer, pianist, bassist, trombonist and vocalist. *The Complete Arranger* has chapters split into woodwind, brass, rhythm, percussion instruments and vocals, among others. This is a very accessible guide, containing elements of colloquial jargon from Nestico, as their aim is to inform and educate with a helpful guide, something they didn't find easy to find at the beginning of their career. The guide is based on the fundamentals of music theory and harmony, something in which the project will elaborate on. *The Complete Arranger* achieved the goal of being a practical approach to orchestration by providing notations in concert key. Nestico is aiming to teach the composer how to challenge their notation and arrangement and look at it objectively.

Nestico's goal is to identify potential problems that a composer may come across while arranging, and offers clear and insightful solutions. *The Complete Arranger* gives a comprehensible guideline for an arranger, who may not be comfortable or familiar with notating scores for different instruments.

This project will be rooted in richness of harmony and a warm blend of instruments that are commonly found in jazz music. This resource is relevant as it contains information on voicing. This topic is introduced with the most commonly used duet voicing. This is built in thirds, sixths and

tritones. This may be helpful when composing for the lead melody instruments in the project, the flute and voice, as they are most pleasing to the ear. Semi-open voicing was used particularly in the swing era. This applies to sax sections, which will translate nicely to the trombone in this project. Building on this, there is a section specifically for notating trombone, which applies directly to the project. *The Complete Arranger* contains classical and contemporary music vocabulary, which will be useful in translating meaning to the instrumentalist.

The research resource is successful in providing the reader with an extensive arrangement and harmony guide. The book is in depth, and is written in familiar and accessible language which the reader can understand with ease. Nestico provides a dictionary of commonly used music vocabulary, which an arranger can refer to. The book is divided into chapters with introductions, the description of a particular topic and an accompanying extract from a score where the reader can see the topic in context.

This book will provide valuable resource material throughout the duration of this project. During the composition process, correct and comprehensive notation will prove crucial in the performance of the recorded tracks. By referring to the voicing, trombone, woodwind and vocabulary sections, this should ensure that the score is at professional standard.

Brandt, Carl and Roemer, Clinton. *Standardised Chord Symbol Notation*, Roerick Music Co., 4046 Davana Rd., Sherman Oaks, California, 91423, 1976.

Similarly to *The Complete Arranger*, *Standardised Chord Symbol Notation* will prove invaluable to the research involved in this project. Accomplishing this project involves composing clear and understandable sheet music and notation for a variation of instrumentalists. It is therefore essential that research is carried out to support the project with recognised and standardised notation. This resource is dedicated entirely to different chords, their names and how they are written, for stave and for symbols. The project will be composing for flute, which will draw on the staff notation element, and there is a possibility of guitar, which will call for symbol notation.

The purpose of this resource is to offer an understanding of the most widely accepted form of notation in sheet music. This is chord symbols, which should be as descriptive as possible with the least amount of clutter as possible, to ensure fluidity in the reading of the sheet music. The authors reference that in the age of pop-jazz-contemporary writing, there tends to be an over-embellishment of description for the instrumentalist, which is overwhelming and impractical. The aim of this book is to avoid such issues while still providing all the information necessary to the musician.

The authors emphasise that the understanding of harmonic fundamentals is vital in writing easily understandable chord symbols. Since this entire project is largely based on harmonic interchanging of the chosen instruments, this resource is relevant to the project. The authors suggest that using standardised rules of notation and language contribute to an overall better performance. With this in mind, this resource will be taken into consideration from the beginning of the composition process of this project.

The tone of this resource is slightly opinionated, and almost dismissive towards some forms of music notation or other approaches used in the general field of composition. The overall mood seems to be rather relaxed and almost like a 'how to' guide. However, this does not take away from the information provided in the resource. The colloquial delivery can be disregarded, as the actual musical content holds merit.

This will be a useful reference to have to hand, though it will not be the primary source of material that supports the research of this project. Certainly, there is a myriad of chords in major, minor, diminished, augmented and polytonal chords, some of which are unfamiliar which will be useful to the project. Due to this, it will be a source of reference material when composing chord progressions and the score.

Murphy, John P., *Jazz Improvisation: The Joy of Influence, The Black Perspective in Music*, Vol. 18, No. 1/2 (1990), pp. 7-19 (13 pages).

This paper is a revised version that was originally delivered in 1988 at the annual meeting for the Society of Ethnomusicology in Tempe, Arizona. It is a discussion about the origin of jazz improvisation, how inspiration is celebrated and not to be afraid of, and the relationship between performers and an audience when listening to jazz. The project requires some desired improvisation from the flautist and trombonist, so it will be valuable to be aware of the process of improvisation, and how these motives are presented.

The author is conveying to the reader that for decades, there have been talented jazz composers, and their works is continuing to be appreciated through interpretation. Musicians can show their appreciation for their predecessors while also impressing the audience with their own unique style. The author wants to show different examples of well known musicians whom are known for their unique interpolations of motives and riffs that are not reserved solely for the experienced jazz appreciator.

The author examines examples of improvisations from tenor saxophonist Joe Henderson, of which are based on original compositions by Charlie Parker, one of the great music innovators of the 20th century. He was an alto and tenor saxophonist. The paper discusses quotations played by Henderson on the tenor saxophone, written by Parker, which then evolve into a melody that is authentic to Henderson. Although this project will not involve saxophone, this inspiration approach to melody can be applied to the instruments present in the project. This is a convincing paper. There are descriptive examples of motives performed by Henderson. The paper includes supporting material of the original notated scores where the similar melodies can be compared.

The resource was interesting to study and additional useful reference listening material. It is not completely transferable to this project, however it will certainly provide inspiration in the area of jazz that the project is heading towards.

Madura, Patrice Dawn, *Relationships Among Vocal Jazz Improvisation Achievement, Jazz Theory Knowledge, Imitative Ability, Musical Experience, Creativity, and Gender*, *Journal of Research in Music Education*, Vol. 44, No. 3 (Autumn, 1996), pp. 252-267 (16 pages)

This paper covers a broad spectrum of the makings of jazz, and presented in a general summary. It is conveyed through a case study carried out with 101 participants, with the criteria being their involvement in collegiate vocal jazz ensemble, or solo jazz singing class, where jazz improvisation was taught.

The aim of the study seems to examine the vocalists' ability to imitate sound and their ability in jazz improvisation. Madura discovers that the more emphasis given to practicing blues and ii-V7-I chord progression tasks, the more successful the individuals are at improvisation.

Portions of this case study are relevant to the project at hand. The skills examined in the case study, rhythm, expression, intonation and tonality provoke areas of the vocal performance that such be paid attention to. Jazz theory knowledge and general creativity will contribute to the success of the project's recordings, and this case study gives a good example of what that may look like.

Using critical evaluation, this is an interesting study, however it will not largely impact the creative process of this project. It will be useful to bear the areas of examination in mind when performing and recording vocals.

This case study will be referenced at times almost as a checklist, to ensure that dynamics, tonality and intonation are being paid attention to at all times, but it will not bear much weight on the creation of this project.

Stewart, Alex, University of Vermont, *Contemporary New York City Big Bands: Composition, Arranging and Individuality in Orchestral Jazz, Ethnomusicology*, Vol. 48, No. 2 (Spring/Summer, 2004), pp. 169-202 (34 pages)

The existence of big bands has contributed to the versatility and evolution of jazz music. It is the epitome of class and enjoyment, as seen in film, television and advertisement. This journal article deals with the success and “death” of big band, and also composition and arrangement difficulties that can be faced.

The author is narrating the history of big band, in the format of a story, which is engaging to read. The journal article is filled with named composers and their orchestras.

The most relevant section of this article is the area of incorporating improvisation. The most difficult task for an arranger is “how to combine pre-composed material with improvisation”. There is a danger, in large orchestral groups such as big band, to leave out instrumentalists for an extended period of time in an effort to create a dialogue between the soloists and the percussion sections. An arranger must use sustained chords, interludes or riffs and be aware of the fluidity of a piece, in order to keep an audience engaged. Soloists play melodies based on blues or 32-bar song forms, much like Herbie Hancock did with Miles Davis. This is worth keeping in mind when composing for trombone and flute sections.

This is a thorough and effective resource of material. Although the big band concept doesn't directly apply to this project, its essence is the same as that of modern jazz, which this project will be potentially following. The techniques and areas of awareness remain the same.

Stewart's journal article is valuable reading, and gives an insight into the history of big bands in New York City and its relation to jazz. It will not be needed as a reference material, but it is useful in the area of interest and to be aware of the history of this genre.

Gowers, Patrick. *Modern Jazz*. *The Musical Times*, vol. 103, no. 1432, 1962, pp. 389–92.

It is important to be aware of that *Modern Jazz* by Patrick Gowers may not be as relevant today as it once was at the point of publishing, in 1962. However, it is still a valuable paper, as Herbie Hancock was composing in this decade and he is considered an innovator still to this day. Modern jazz began to become popular music, with its ability to evoke emotional intensity and style.

Gowers is aiming to dissect the components of modern jazz; that being harmony, tonality, rhythm and vocal melody. The author takes a basic approach, and describes the individual chords being “rudimentary and dull”, suggesting the only thing that makes it interesting is the improvisational element. The author seems to be advocating for modern jazz’s technical credibility, while also contradicting themselves by referencing its association with distasteful stereotypes, like drug addiction sleaziness and seduction. This is slightly conflicting.

Certainly, the discussion centred around modern jazz and how it progressed from being the less serious genre of music and evolving into popular music is relevant to this project in ways. It is true that rhythm and harmony are the backbone of this genre.

The author is not entirely persuasive in their seemingly positive opinion of jazz music. Their ingrained beliefs in stereotype have subconsciously hindered their ability to look at the evolution of jazz music objectively, for its technique and compositional style, and instead the paper seems to discredit the rising popularity of the music style at that time. Therefore, the author isn’t entirely convincing in their argument.

This paper was worth reading, but gives the impression as though it is more of an opinion piece. It will not contribute to the compositional process of this project.

Waters, Keith. "Modes, Scales, Functional Harmony, and Nonfunctional Harmony in the Compositions of Herbie Hancock." *Journal of Music Theory*, vol. 49, no. 2, 2005, pp. 333–57.

This paper is theory heavy, while also presenting an analytical discussion. This, in some ways, is it more preferable to read than pages of sheet music, as Waters discusses the topic at hand in detail. The author, Keith Walters delves into the birth of modal jazz, or modal harmony. It can be said that Herbie Hancock pioneered this form of harmonic structure and progression. This study is relevant to this project, as Herbie Hancock's music is one of the main sound references for the project. The paper also contains Herbie Hancock's style of chordal organisation, something which is notably unique to him.

The author is examining many of Herbie Hancock's compositions that were recorded in the 1960s. The paper analyses Hancock's approach to composition and how it compares to standard harmony and modal harmony. The author presents the question of how did Hancock build on the modal ideas created by Miles Davis and others, and also asks how did Hancock integrate standard harmonic function with his style of modal harmony.

Miles Davis is one of the most prominent names in jazz. Hancock's involvement in the Miles Davis Quintet from 1963-1968 is an important element of Hancock's accolades, and what he has contributed to jazz music. The paper is discussing Hancock's compositional technique, and techniques that were developed in this time that are practiced today. These terms are provided informally. Ambiguous harmony and static harmony are discussed, which are interesting ideas that may be useful to look into further for this project. It is desired in this composition to look at voicing, and Waters addresses the use of extended pedal points composed by Herbie Hancock. This would be an interesting theme to incorporate into the composition for piano. A slow harmonic rhythm seems appropriate to, to fit the laid back mood of this project, which Walters also looks into. Hancock's interval cycles and voice leading extracts are included in this paper. This is incredibly relevant to the piano element of this project. Hancock's diatonic compositional style and ascending melodic minor scales inspired the research for this project.

The author successfully conveys Herbie Hancock's prominence and technical ability in this paper. He is a pioneer of the modal jazz scene, and his work, supported by his influence from Miles Davis, is worthy of study.

It is evidential that this paper is a concise, dependable resource to refer to when composing for the piano element of this project. The musicality of this project requires unusual triadic and harmonic style, which Herbie Hancock's discography provides.

Bruner, "Thundercat" Stephen Lee, *The Golden Age of the Apocalypse*, released under Brainfeeder, 29 Aug 2011.

Thundercat is a bassist, singer and songwriter. *The Golden Age of the Apocalypse* is their first studio album, produced by Thundercat and Flying Lotus. The main components of this album are synthesiser and drums. While these not being the focus of this project, the composition and arrangement of the tracks will largely influence the composition of this project. Thundercat's atonal vocal melodies and rapid rhythm pays homage to an older element of jazz fusion, while also making it entirely their own. Thundercat's lyricism and delivery is emotional and personal, something that is desired to be present in this project. The project will not use the instrumental format of this album, but it will draw inspiration from the vocal melodies.

Track one of the album, 'Daylight' uses a layered vocal hook throughout that is repeated. It is layered with complex harmonies. This will be used as a reference for the recorded track in the trilogy. Thundercat's baselines, particularly in 'How Sway' are known for their melodic complexity and movement between different modes. 'How Sway' will advise the research of potential bass plugins and software pedal boards.

Thundercat's form of jazz fusion is the desired outcome of 'The Lavender Trilogy'. With their involvement with Flying Lotus, their talent is deeply rooted in traditional jazz characteristics, which advise the entirety of this project. However, as Thundercat's career trajectory continued, the incorporation of non traditional funk and jazz fusion made its way into their music. This gives the project at hand the freedom to explore a wider scope of composition, broadening across different genres.

3. Methodology

The approach to the recording of 'Lavender' strayed from the original intention. With obstacles arising, this informed the rest of the project and provided valuable learning experience when moving onto the composition of tracks two and three, 'Thistle' and 'Poppy Seed'. Overall, a successful study of these unfamiliar instruments in the genre of jazz was completed.

This project consists of four main elements; composition, tracking, mixing and mastering. The nature of this project draws on every element that is studied in the course. Evidently from the literature review, correct compositional techniques, harmony and instrumental decisions are the driving force of the project. The nature of the project calls on comfortability in Sun Studio, displaying advanced composition techniques, skilful communication between the instrumentalists involved, a high level of professionalism and good mixing and mastering ability.

With the main focus of the project being composition, the pre-production stage of the piece was an important aspect of the project. 'The Lavender Trilogy' consists of one completed track; 'Lavender'. It is composed, recorded, mixed and mastered with the aid of the instrumentalists involved. The following two tracks were influenced by the learnings from the first track, and are notated in full. The tracks are named 'Thistle' and 'Poppy Seed'.

Prior to commencing the project, personal reflection was required to decide which instruments would be suitable to compose for. The first step was to source instrumentalists that were available. With the focus of the project being the genre of jazz, live piano was at the core of the composition. The quartet was completed with a silver flute, trombone and full drum kit, all of which being instruments that have not been explored in previous personal research projects.

In preparation of the commencement of the project, research was undertaken by familiarising with Keith Walters' "Modes, Scales, Functional Harmony, and Nonfunctional Harmony in the Compositions of Herbie Hancock." With Herbie Hancock being an important contributor to the evolution of jazz music, and Hancock's involvement with the Miles Davis Quintet, this was a valuable resource in preparation for the composition of the piano parts. The piano was composed with Dave Brubeck's 'Take Five' and Miles Davis' 'So What' in mind. The piano in these tracks are syncopated with the drum kit, predominantly block chords with the left hand playing the root notes

and with the right hand leading. In the composition process, the piece was composed in open key, but with the consistent appearance of A flat, E flat and B flat, the key can be notated as E flat major. The breakdown section of the piano modulates to G major for a period of eight bars, and then returns to the key of E flat major. On completion of the piano, the sheet music was sent to the pianist providing four weeks of rehearsal time before the scheduled studio recording date, the 11th of January 2023.

Generally, drums are the first instruments to be tracked in the studio, so they can lead the feeling and drive of a piece. To maximise the time allocated in the studio to this project, a colleague offered their home studio and drum kit to track the drums prior to the first Sun Studio recording date. This allowed the time in Sun Studio to be used for instrumentalists that would be travelling from outside of Dublin, and also presenting these external instrumentalists with a level of professionalism that Sun Studio provides. Five days before the first Sun Studio session, a drum kit was set up in the home studio. The drum takes were recorded in Ableton, played to a click and an mp3 bounce of the piano midi taken from MuseScore. There was no formal notation of the drums. The session was a verbalised idea to the drummer, with some references to aid the understanding of the drummer. The microphone set up was one widely used in commercial studio recording, which was observed in the Studio module over the four years of study (fig.1). After taking comp notes, a track was settled upon. The session was prepared with bpm and markers in protocols, ready for the piano tracking day in Sun Studio.

The piano session began with setting up Sun Studio. Having recorded some piano throughout the year in Sun, it was straightforward for microphone choices and the positioning along the strings. The wooden panel was removed from the piano to expose the strings, to allow full potential of resonance. Two Coles 4038 studio microphones were placed approximately between the second and third octave and the fifth and sixth octave, as was the range of the piece. At the back of the piano, close to the floor, a TLM 103 was positioned. Two stereo 414 microphones were placed directly across the room from the piano, and a U87 was placed near the window of control room to capture reflections. The pianist recorded multiple takes. There was no notated section for a piano improvisation solo, however it was decided that this would prove interesting to the piece and add texture. Influence was drawn from Steely Dan 'Home at Last' and Janelle Monet's 'Dorothy Dandridge Eyes' for this improvisational piano line. The pianist took some time to look at the key and work on some ideas, and recorded an improvised piano melody that comes in in the outro of the

piece. The pianist took inspiration from the fourths riff on the electric guitar, which can be heard in the instrumental sections of 'Home at Last'.

Tracking the flute was next. The desired flute sound was something very natural and airy. The track was to have a 'human' feel to it, as if the instruments themselves hadn't been overdubbed and the musicians all played in the room together in unison. To achieve this, two Coles 4038 were placed in the two back corners of the Sun live room. A U87 was positioned once again at the glass of the control room to pick up reflections. An AKG C12 tube condenser was placed approximately two feet from the flautist, with the musician avoiding the microphone with their mouthpiece, as to minimise air being blown directly into the diaphragm. To find a suitable reference for the flute, Herbie Mann's recording of 'Comin' Home Baby' was analysed. The flute has a similar level of reverb, but the desire was for the flute to be slightly more legato. In the recording session, the instrumentalist had their input in the composition process. Direction was given for the composition; working along triadic chordal ideas and some accidental notes would give the desired jazz influence. The flautist then spent some time working out a melody, and added some ornamentation. Some time was spent on variations of the flute, and in post production a comp was chosen after combing through multiple takes with minute differences.

Composing for the trombone introduced challenges. To prepare the session, it was necessary to familiarise with the bass clef. Although it is a non-transposing instrument, previous experience has been in the area of the treble clef, so this presented a new area; composing for a lead instrument in the bass clef. A classically trained approach was taken to the composition of the trombone. The instrumentalist was classically trained, and performed in orchestras. To perform to the best of their ability, they needed notated sheet music in order to play. Having completed the flute recording the previous week, this was no issue as a trombone accompaniment had been composed in anticipation of this. To establish a suitable microphone choice, the frequency range of the trombone was analysed. The instrument sits in the mid-range area for brass instruments, so initially, the Neumann TLM 103 was chosen. This microphone boosts the mid range and lowers the frequencies in the low end and high end. After consulting with a colleague, two alternative mics were chosen, due to their allowance of more higher frequencies, while also being used commonly to record brass, and particularly trombone, in professional settings. A booth was set up to remove room sound, with awareness of the extension of the instrument. A singular Coles 4038 microphone was positioned at the bell of the trombone. An AKG C414 was placed over the shoulder of the musician, to capture

the sound that the musician is hearing in real time. The intention with this was to continue the 'human' and live-tracking feeling of the track.

The final recording session was spent working on a vocal idea. Initially, the desire was for this track to imitate a pop tune; with a structure of 'ABA*B'. Once the flute and trombone was tracked, however, it was apparent that it would be difficult to fuse a pop vocal melody line with the jazz instrumental. It was not possible to create a counter vocal melody without taking away from the instrumental. In response to this, with the input of a colleague, a hook was composed and recorded.

Turning now to post- production, normal mixing procedures were followed. Each track was EQd, and the necessary effects were added. With the track feeling slightly sparse in sections, the vocal hook was duplicated and introduced into an earlier section of the piece, with the trombone line dropping out to create space. Despite this addition, there was potential to develop the piece further. An attempt at creating a synthesised bass was made, using software instruments and a pedalboard in logic pro. The aim was to replicate the sound of Thundercat's bass in 'Is it Love?' , the fourth track from the 2011 album 'The Golden Age of the Apocalypse'. This was accomplished with the aid of a YouTube tutorial, using the Logic Pro software pedals (fig.2). Difficulties arose, however, after composing a small section to the completed track. Although successful in imitating the Thundercat reference, it did not fit with the track. The digital sound of bass stood out from the rest of the piece. The decision was made to remove it from the final track.

Finally, by selecting a section of the main recorded vocals, the section was reversed and plugins were added to create a phasing vocal stutter. This was carried out to implement other techniques studied throughout the course. By crossfading correctly, EQing and editing, an unusual texturised sound was created to add depth to the track. Automated panning was carried out in the piano improvisation and the flute, to follow the movement of the instruments, in an almost literal manner. (See fig.3 and fig.4) The track was completed and made ready for distribution following mastering.

The project was a well informed, theoretical and practical approach to composing for a jazz arrangement. The structure of the project allows for further research in this area and provides a well informed basis for the continuation of such research.

4. Analysis

The results of the recording of 'Lavender', track one of the trilogy, influenced the composing of tracks two and three. Much of the time leading up to recording in Sun Studio was spent composing piano. With it being the basis of the jazz structure, having a solid foundation of jazz theory in the piano took priority. The recording session went very smoothly, equally due to the talent of the musician and the preparation put into the music notation and the recording decisions made prior to the studio date.

However, an issue emerged when it came to the date booked for the flautist. Time was incorrectly accounted for, with the turnaround from the piano session to the flute session being one week. It became apparent in prioritising the piano, not enough time was allocated to the composition of the flute. In the early stages of the project, the plan was to have the flute and trombone as lead instruments, with interspersing countermelodies throughout the piece, which is the direction tracks two and three took. More composition preparation before this session would have been valuable. Despite this, the musician adapted to this and was open to a more free flowing, improvised idea for the session.

Using the findings from the flute session, and the trombonist being heavily reliant on sheet music, it was important that sheet music was prepared for the musician on the day. On sending the piece to the instrumentalist, a minor issue arose. Due to dental work years previous affecting their embouchure¹, some adjustments to the piece were needed. Notes from C3 and above could not be reached by the instrumentalist. This was somewhat limiting to the piece, but on reflection it was an interesting and valuable obstacle to overcome as a composer. Keeping this in mind, tracks two and three were composed in a similar fashion, as though this particular trombonist were to perform them.

¹ The shape and positioning of a player's mouth on the mouthpiece while playing.

Track two, 'Thistle' began as a very bass-focused piece, aiming to incorporate the Neo-funk and jazz fusion from Thundercat. In hindsight, the piece was overcompensating for the air of simplicity in 'Lavender'. In doing so, however, the rhythmic complexity in the piece contradicted the general rule of thumb in counterpoint. Following feedback from mentorship, the piece was adjusted and some rhythmic hooks were expanded. The piano and flute were then able to explore between different modes, and a more complimentary harmony was introduced.

Track three, 'Poppy Seed' was composed simultaneously, to avoid deadline issues. Using the feedback received from tracks one and two, the composition process for 'Poppy Seed' went smoothly. It is apparent in the reading of the score and listening to the piece, all of the jazz study gathered during this project has been incorporated, potentially the most successfully, of the three tracks. It follows a clear chord progression of ii-V most commonly found in traditional jazz music, has a syncopated piano ostinato which provides a structure for the bass to follow with root notes. This created a space for dialogue between the trombone and the flute, taking turns at different points to be the lead instrument of the piece.

5. Discussion

Executing this project allowed for many avenues of participation to be discovered. The project required a composer, producer and engineer at different stages. Involving three outside instrumentalists required group direction, a high level of communication and a personable disposition. With the pianist and the trombonist having never recorded in a professional setting prior to this, providing an air of professionalism, and equally comfort, was a new area of learning.

The project design was successful in achieving the research statement, 'An Exploration of Composing for Unfamiliar Instruments'. Through article research, and subsequently working with each musician, an understanding of the trombone, piano and flute was observed.

Having accomplished a flute recording that was satisfactory for 'Lavender', the flautist provided some valuable advice for future projects. When a composition includes other lead instruments, in this case vocals, having lyrics and a melody composed and prepared prior to the recording process will allow a more successful composition to be created. Had the vocals been recorded prior to the flute session, the flute could have counteracted with the vocal melody and created some counter melodies. Learning from this, 'Thistle' and 'Poppy Seed' achieved what was desired compositionally from 'Lavender'.

6. Conclusion

The recording of 'Lavender' was a valuable opportunity to work in a professional studio as the director of a project. Composing for talented instrumentalists with little to no risk involved, with money and studio time, allowed the freedom to create in a pressure-free environment. Having 'Lavender' as the first track completed in the trilogy, 'Thistle' and 'Poppy Seed' were more elaborate and a successful contribution to the fully recorded piece. Had the musicians involved in 'Lavender' not advised and offered their time, the final two tracks would certainly be different. A further stage of development of the project could be in the inclusion of a live bass guitar in 'Lavender'. With this addition, there is potential for a rewrite in the flute, so the bass and flute may compliment one another. Recording 'Thistle' and 'Poppy Seed' with the aim of releasing 'The Lavender Trilogy' will be a goal for the future.

Having more time would allow further exploration into Thundercat's bass guitar discography, which would then be observed and put into practice in an original form. Further research is needed of mixing and mastering techniques, particularly for jazz ensembles. More time for pre production and rehearsals could lead to potentially live tracking 'Thistle' and 'Poppy Seed', rather than overdubbing. The overdubbing worked successfully, however the feeling and authenticity of a group playing together would have further added to the jazz context.

7. Bibliography

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8. Appendix

Fig.1

6/1/25 Chloë Fitzgerald Lavender Drum Rec Session

Inputs

Kik In	- AKG D112	Dynamic	# 3
Kik Out	- Cabinet Sub kik	+48v	octo # 5
Snr Top	- SM7b	Dynamic	ISA → EQP → 4
Snr Bottom	- SM57	Dynamic	# 5
Tom Hi	- e604	Dynamic	# 6
Tom Lo	- MD421	Dynamic	# 7
OH H	- NT5	+48v	octo # 6
OH R	- NT5	+48v	octo # 7
OH Mono	- RB500	Ribbon	# 8
Ambience	- NT1A	+48v	octo # 8
Knee	- SM58 clone	Dynamic	octo 3

T	Drum Comp						Notes
	9-16	17-24	25-32	33-40	41-48	49-64	
1	#						
2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Fill in Good
5	✓						
6	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	FM
7	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
8						✓	
9			✓	✓			
10			✓	✓			
11			✓	✓			

Fig.2

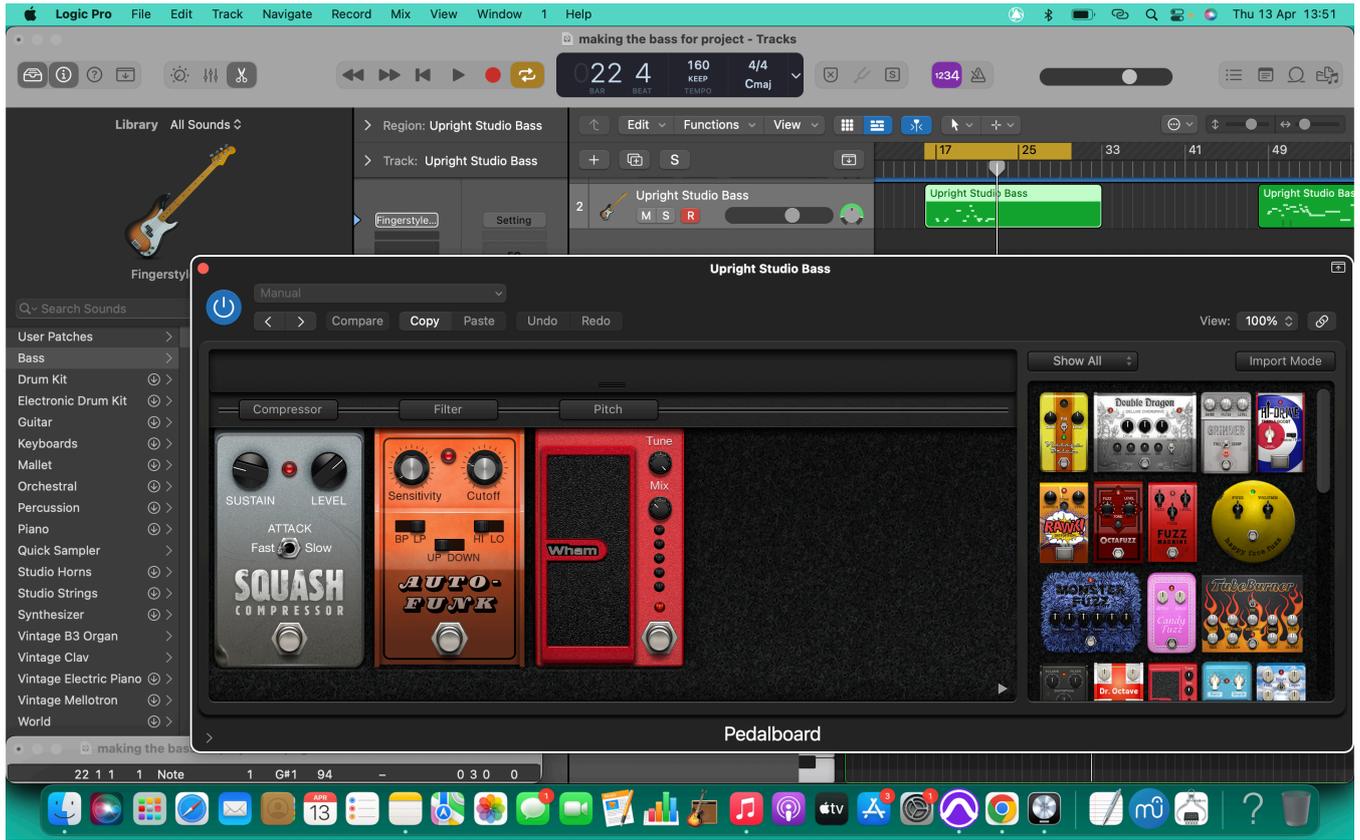


Fig.3



Fig.4

