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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

Double Down ! : The Use Of Two Basses in the Jazz Avant-Garde of the 1960s

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Musical Arts

in

Contemporary Music Performance

by

Thomas Andrew Babin

Committee in Charge :

Professor Mark Dresser, Chair
Professor David Borgo
Professor Anthony Davis
Professor Victoria Petrovich
Professor Stephanie Richards

2021

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University of California, San Diego

2021

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VITA

1997 - Bachelor of Music, Jazz Performance, McGill University, Montreal

2015 - Master of Arts, Music, University of California San Diego

2021 - Doctor of Musical Arts, University of California San Diego

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Double Down ! : The Use Of Two Basses in the Jazz Avant-Garde of the 1960s

by

Thomas Andrew Babin

Doctor of Musical Arts in Contemporary Music Performance

University of California San Diego, 2021

Professor Mark Dresser, Chair

“So from my generation, we had the time bass players and we got the free time bass players. And when you put it all together you had the modern bass player.” – Alan Silva¹

¹ Alan Silva on the motivations of using 2 bassists from Parker (2011) p.407

The standard model since the advent of recorded jazz is for an ensemble to include a single bassist (or, in the earliest days, a tuba player). In the 1960s, however, all of the major figures that we associate with the jazz avant-garde included two bassists in their ensembles during pivotal points in their development.

As music of the period attracts more and more academic interest, it is important that this practice, largely overlooked in the literature, is included as part of the discourse.

This paper will provide an overview of the practice of using two simultaneous bassists during the 1960s by major figures including John Coltrane, Cecil Taylor, Ornette Coleman and Albert Ayler and discuss the motivations, outcomes, and eventual decline of the practice.

Introduction

The 1960s was a time of rapid change in the jazz world and throughout the decade bandleaders changed the instrumentation of their ensembles with relative frequency. For the most part, instrumentations remained relatively standard for the jazz idiom - horns, a pianist, a drummer¹ - but the one addition to the band that was not otherwise standard but that became common amongst the innovators of the period was an extra bass player. At one time or another, all of the most influential figures that are associated with the jazz avant-garde of the 1960s - musicians based in New York City whose music was variously termed “Free Jazz”, “The New Thing”, “Anti-Jazz” or “Fire Music” - used two bassists in their bands for significant periods during that decade. This group of musicians are ones that are still considered principal innovators of jazz of any stripe including John Coltrane, Ornette Coleman, Cecil Taylor, Albert Ayler, Bill Dixon, Archie Shepp, Pharoah Sanders² and many others.

This fact has been almost entirely sidelined in the discourse surrounding jazz of the 1960s. The foundational writings from the late 1960s or early 1970s on the avant-garde of the period such as the works of Amiri Baraka and Ekkehardt Jost understandably give the use of a second bass little attention given their herculean

¹ Coltrane used 2 drummers on “Meditations” and both harpsichord and bagpipes have appeared on Albert Ayler records.

² See Appendix for a list of albums from the 1960s with 2 basses.

efforts to establish any kind of serious discussion around the music .³ As a result in recent times, without any kind of pre-existing discourse, the significance of using two basses is often entirely overlooked leaving the impact of the use of two basses misunderstood.

This paper will serve as an overview of the use of two basses in the jazz avant-garde of the 1960s by the major musical figures of the period while offering some suggestions to explain the reasons why such a wide swath of musicians chose to include an instrumentation that both before 1961 and after 1970 is effectively missing from the jazz landscape except as a noteworthy novelty.

The focus through the paper is on the bandleaders rather than the bassists themselves for a number of reasons.

The first is the simple economic situation of not just the jazz of the period, but jazz of today - we for the most part only get to hear the music that attracts some measure of funding and the bandleader is the person who attracts that funding. Whether it be recording scale from the Musicians Union (or more likely in this case the Jazz Composer's Guild) or the take from the door of an afternoon cafe gig⁴.

Wherever the money comes from, it needs to be distributed amongst the musicians and simple math says that as the number of musicians in an ensemble grows, so does either money the funding body has to distribute, or the number of portions that money needs to be divided into . Adding musicians to a performing or recording ensemble costs more - although if we are frank, it was and is much more

³ And, of course, they are not bass players nor do they have a special interest in the contributions of the instrument

⁴ Which was often the only available performance venue

likely that the cost is the responsibility of the musicians themselves rather than the funding source - and therefore would at some level imply a musical necessity, at least if it is done with regularity. Of course, experimentation is intrinsic to the jazz of the 1960s but without a sense that the experiments are aiding the music, the continued presence of a musician that needs to be paid becomes less and less tenable. In the case of two basses, despite the fact that there was no obvious advantage to having a second bass player, the prominent (and poorly funded) musicians of the jazz avant-garde in the 1960s consistently devoted resources to the inclusion of a second bassist.

The second reason for the focus on the bandleader is that, for the most part, bassists did not (and today do not) show enthusiasm for performing in a jazz ensemble alongside another bassist.⁵ There were, and are, of course specialty bass ensembles that stretch back as far as Whitey and Red Mitchell's group of the late 1950s to Alan Silva's reported bass ensembles of the early 1960s through Barre Philips and Dave Holland's 1971 album "Music for Two Basses" to the present with ensembles like the Marks Brothers and William Parker's Bass Quartet, but the sonic and strategic dynamics of playing music within an ensemble, particularly one rooted in a history of performance strategies that are based on a single bassist, is a different situation altogether. To spend a musical lifetime developing ways of negotiating and understanding the subtleties of being heard clearly, supporting a soloist, interacting with a drummer, etc. only to have the road obscured by somebody else in the same lane was simply not attractive to most bass players. It was made even less attractive by the fact

⁵ Generally speaking, though, enthusiastic about it or not a gig is a gig.

that the experienced bassists who were part of the scene could, with relative ease, find other engagements that paid better and gave them more musical freedom.

The two-bass tandem, however did give some bassists who otherwise would never have had the opportunities to perform and record with musicians of renown if they had not been included as the second bassist alongside a more experienced one. In time, this introduced an important alternate perspective to the world of jazz as these bassists who had not developed their craft through the traditional means of study and apprenticeship but who nonetheless found themselves in positions of influence continued to perform as single bassists with these well known bandleaders as economic needs dictated⁶ and as the practice of using two basses fell out of favor.

The following is organized in four sections, grouped into roughly two-and-a-half year portions of the decade from 1960 to 1970, that trace the musical developments of the bandleaders associated with the period as they include two bassists in their bands.

The first covers the early developments of the instrumentation with Ornette Colemans' experimentation with two bassists in 1960, John Coltrane's inclusion of two bassists in his band through most of 1961, and Cecil Taylor's withering use of a single bassist that led to a lack of bass at all in his groups.

The second section discusses the period from 1963 to 1964 with Bill Dixon's early advocacy of using two basses within the ensemble as a counterbalancing measure and Albert Ayler's alternation between one and two bass players in his early career. The beginning of John Coltrane's second period of using two bassists in his band will be likewise addressed.

⁶ As economic prospects dwindled and more experienced musicians took better paying gigs, it was often the inexperienced ones who remained and who had developed a relationship with the bandleader's music.

The period from 1965 to 1967 will be discussed in the 3rd section with a focus on John Coltrane's second period using two basses, Cecil Taylor's use of two basses on his influential albums of 1966, as well as the continued use of the instrumentation by Albert Ayler and others.

The final portion of the paper will discuss the gradual decline of the practice, some possible long-term effects, and how by 1970 it had mostly disappeared from the jazz world.

The portions of the paper that cover the earliest part of the decade include transcriptions but as the decade progresses and the music becomes more and more dense and effectively untranscribable, the paper will rely on embedded audio files for demonstration purposes.

Background

Prior to the 1960s there were scattered cases of the use of two simultaneous bassists in jazz however it's difficult to ascertain exactly what influence, if any, these examples had upon the figures associated with the jazz avant-garde of the 1960s, although some motivations may have been similar.

At various periods throughout Duke Ellington's career he is known to have employed two bassists at once; however, with a few exceptions, the bassists did not play simultaneously. Recording sessions were poorly documented prior to the 1950s and available documentation generally lists the personnel on the payroll at the time and not necessarily the participants on any given recording. Tubaist/Bassist Billy Taylor and Tubaist/ Bassist Hayes Alvis were both members of Ellington's band from 1935 to 1938 and although it is true that Ellington wrote arrangements of material where the tuba would double the bass line, Taylor and Hayes did not play the bass together . As a further complication for our understanding of the bassists in Ellington's band , he was famous for his reluctance to fire anyone and would often keep musicians on the payroll for a period after a replacement was hired and both musicians would be listed in concert or recording documentation.

During Jimmy Blanton's brief but influential tenure with Ellington from 1938 to 1941 , his health failed and he did not have the energy to perform throughout an entire

concert so Junior Ranglin was added to the band as a relief for Blanton until the latter's death when Ranglin became full-time bassist.

Ellington did, however, write at least one piece, "Basso Profundo" and a large-scale suite, "The Liberian Suite" - both recorded in 1947 - that featured two bassists Oscar Pettiford and Ranglin playing simultaneously.

"Basso Profundo" was a showcase piece for the two bassists where the two played the melody together, at times harmonized, and traded solo sections without accompaniment. At no time do the bassists accompany each other nor do they together accompany any other band members. The piece, although an impressive display of technical prowess, is effectively a novelty song to showcase the group's bassists (primarily Oscar Pettiford) and not a functional integration of two bassists into the band.

Ellington's album-length work "Liberian Suite" features the same two bassists as above - at times playing orchestrated passages simultaneously where one plays bowed material and the other pizzicato and others where both use pizzicato articulation but with arranged registration -but mostly the bassists alternate back-and forth-during solos so that only one is playing at any given time.

An exception to the above occurs during the second movement, "Dance Number 1", where both bassists play slight variations of a simple ostinati and periodically play walking bass lines in rhythmic tandem. The effect is likely an attempt to suggest West African drum patterns in a similar way to John Coltrane a decade later however not only does the restrained nature of Ellington's notated material demonstrate a contrast to Coltrane's later search for fewer constraints, there is no indication from the literature that "The Liberian Suite" was on the radar of the jazz innovators of the early 1960s.

A second precursor is the music that was produced by Gunther Schuller and John Lewis, amongst others, during the brief “Third Stream” movement of the late 1950s and early 1960s. The movement was a well-intentioned and whole-hearted attempt to mix elements of American “jazz” music with European “classical music”. This mixing of the two potentially contradictory practices most often involved the use of large ensembles with an alternation between highly orchestrated composed sections and proscribed sections dedicated to improvised solos. The interest in having a kind of “orchestra” mixed with a small group (alongside the necessary funding sources for such projects) led to there being often two bassists – a “classical” one who played with a bow and performed as part of a kind of orchestral string ensemble with little or no improvisation, and a “jazz” one who accompanied the soloists and improvised.

Arguably the most influential, if not most famous, of the “Third Stream” events is the “Modern Jazz Concert”, organized at Brandeis University in 1957 by George Russell and Gunther Schuller, featuring compositions by Schuller, Russell and Charles Mingus. The ensemble included orchestral bassist and noted educator Fred Zimmerman playing alongside either Joe Benjamin or Charles Mingus⁷. In Mingus’ piece, “Revelations”, for example, the roles inhabited by Zimmerman and Mingus are entirely separate – Zimmerman playing the “orchestral” part that was restricted to notated material and the bow, and Mingus embodying the “jazz” role of improvisational accompaniment by playing time swing with the drummer and outlining the piece’s harmonic structure.

⁷ Mingus only played on his own piece, “Revelation”, as a guest – Joe Benjamin was the ensemble’s “jazz” bassist

John Lewis's "Jazz Abstractions", although more heavily influenced by contemporary jazz music than the above ⁸ and featuring a band that included such renowned jazz innovators as Ornette Coleman and Eric Dolphy, also featured two bassists. In this case either orchestral bassist/conductor Alvin Brehm or multifaceted bassist George Duvivier performed alongside innovator Scott LaFaro⁹. Although "Jazz Abstractions" is certainly more contemporary in terms of jazz influence than "Modern Jazz Concert", there is a division of responsibilities between the bassists that is similarly divided into "classical" and "jazz" parts without any pretense or suggestion of improvised interaction or a distributed role.

Interestingly, Eric Dolphy and Ron Carter both released their debut albums as leaders in 1961 featuring largely the same musicians ¹⁰- George Duvivier on bass, Dolphy on multiple reed instruments and Carter on 'cello. Dolphy's "Out There" and Carter's "Where" were both recorded before the release of Coltrane's "Africa" or Coleman's "Free Jazz" however Carter's treatment of the cello as a soloistic instrument does not allow for any sort of accompanying figures that may descend at least sonically into the bass range leaving the instrument more like a companion to Dolphy's bass clarinet than Duvivier's bass.

There is one song on "Where ?" that features both Duvivier and Carter on bass, however it is a bass showcase for Carter . There are no shared bass duties or joint

⁸ And recorded three years later, in 1960, allowing for inclusion of elements of the jazz avant-garde which was only then just emerging.

⁹ Apropos to the rest of this paper, Coleman, Dolphy and LaFaro recorded "Free Jazz: A Collective Improvisation" the day after they finished "Jazz Abstractions"

¹⁰ Likely the instrumentation was inspired by Chico Hamilton's use of a cellist in his band. Dolphy had worked with Hamilton extensively in Los Angeles immediately prior to moving to New York

accompaniment as Duvivier plays as he would under any soloist and Carter solely plays the part of the soloist¹¹.

Johnny Griffin's "Change of Pace", released in February 1961¹² featured the unusual instrumentation of Griffin on tenor saxophone, Julius Watkins on French horn, Ben Riley on Drums, and both Larry Gales and Bill Lee on bass. The album is more of an arranging showcase with odd instrumentation than an album with two bass players acting together as improvising accompanists. For the most part, Larry Gales functions as the "bass player" while Bill Lee primarily plays notated bowed material with moments as a low-pitched soloist.

There are a number of interesting notated tandem pizzicato sections over the course of the album, however the album can't be said to contain the same kind of two bass functionality that we see arising later on in 1961 and that is being discussed in this paper.

It should be noted at this point that Charles Mingus had experimented with two basses briefly in 1957 although no recordings were officially released . After the recording of "Revelations" at Brandeis University, Mingus briefly led a sextet with a second bassist. The bassist, Henry Grimes, had been a student of Fred Zimmerman's at Juillard and at the age of 22 was only beginning to become acknowledged in the jazz world. Mingus himself was an accomplished orchestral bassist and an album featuring the two bassists, nominally under the leadership of Shafi Hadi, was recorded for Debut records but never released.

¹¹ Which Carter still does to this day, often on a "piccolo" bass tuned an octave higher than normal

¹² Making it technically the first 2-bass record released in the 1960s

One musician who may very well have had an influence, if an esoteric one, on the idea of using two basses together, is Sun Ra. A highly idiosyncratic musician, composer, and bandleader, Sun Ra had been releasing albums on his own “El Saturn” record label since at least 1956, recording live using his own equipment, pressing his own records, and hand-drawing the album covers to be distributed at live concerts. Some recordings have completely disappeared and others have no longer have accurate lists of band members leaving little sense of what exactly he was doing at certain times of his career,¹³ or on the contemporary availability of his material. What is certain however, is that in the late 1950s he used two bassists in his band, Wilburn Green on bass guitar and Ronnie Boykins or Richard Evans on double bass, and given Sun Ra’s idiosyncratic arrangements it is likely that other arrangements of multiple bassists occurred during the period.

When John Coltrane was asked in 1966 about Sun Ra’s claim that not only Coltrane but all of the jazz innovators of the early 1960s period had “stolen their ideas from him”,¹⁴ Coltrane replied “ There may be something, there may be something to it. I’ve heard him and I know that he’s doing, he’s done, some things that I’ve wanted to do.”^{15 16}

¹³ Sun Ra released all of his early records on his own self-distributed “El Saturn” and he often would release material long after it was recorded.

¹⁴ Sun Ra was not shy about claiming that he was not getting properly recognized for his forward-thinking

¹⁵ Kofsky, 1988 p. 441

¹⁶ Coltrane was also known to have been influenced by John Gilmore, the saxophonist who prior to 1962 had almost exclusively performed with Sun Ra aside from a few record dates with Clifford Jordan. In the same interview as above, he states about Gilmore “ I listened to Gilmore quite closely before “Chasin’ the Trane (1961). Some of the things on there are a direct influence of listening to this cat.”

Part 1 - 1960-1962

“In jazz improvisation, the alteration of the role of the bass player has serious implications for every other instrument, as the normal roles adopted in the production of the music are disrupted by the innovations.” - Will Gibson ¹⁷



*Eric Dolphy, John Coltrane, Reggie Workman, Art Davis at the Village Gate, 1961-
photo by Herb Schnitzer*

¹⁷ Gibson (2002) p.178

Principal Timeline

1960 - Ornette Coleman records “Free Jazz : A Collective Improvisation” featuring both Charlie Haden and Scott LaFaro on bass. This project is effectively only for the recording studio ¹⁸ and Coleman performed with a single bassist - first LaFaro, then Jimmy Garrison, and finally David Izenzon - until 1962.

1961 - John Coltrane includes a 2nd bass player in his touring and recording band alongside regular bassist Reggie Workman from March 1961 to November 1961. This 2nd bassist was primarily either Art Davis or Jimmy Garrison but Paul Chambers and Donald Garrett also appeared. By the turn of the year, Coltrane’s group included Garrison as a single bassist.

1962 - Bill Dixon regularly includes two basses in his performing ensembles, including the one that he co-led with Archie Shepp. Amongst the rotating cast of bassists were David Izenzon, Henry Grimes and Gary Peacock.

1962 - Cecil Taylor stops performing regularly with a bass player. Already infrequent, most performances between 1961 and 1965 were as a bassless trio with Henry Grimes or Buell Neidlinger appearing occasionally.

1962 - Ornette Coleman stops performing for nearly 4 years.

¹⁸ There was an ill-fated effort to perform another double quartet concert with Jimmy Garrison and Art Davis in June 1961 but the concert was cancelled.

Ornette Coleman

“I never used the bass to back me up, I use it to open me up. I can get one movement from one [bass], and one resolution from the other, at the same time. It's amazing! You hear me doing it” ¹⁹- Ornette Coleman ²⁰

It is fitting that the album from which the jazz avant-garde of the 1960s took its most enduring, if not appropriate, name featured two simultaneous bass players. “Free Jazz: A Collective Improvisation” was recorded in December 1960 and included both Charlie Haden, a former member of Coleman’s band, and Scott LaFaro, the bassist since August, 1960 ²¹

Coleman had established himself as the direct forerunner of the jazz avant-garde of the 1960s with his initial version of “free” music in 1959 that seems tame by the standards of the early 1960s, once the avant-garde floodgates opened. Although he was both hailed as “ a man who symbolized a departure for new musical shores” ²² and as “a charlatan and a primitive”²³ most of the arguments between these two camps

¹⁹ Coleman (2005)

²⁰ We need to recognize that Coleman often used terms related to western harmony to jointly describe spiritual or esoteric elements of the music.

²¹ Although some sources, including those quoted in the Wikipedia entry on LaFaro claim that he joined Coleman’s band in 1961, he had been the regular bassist since mid-August, 1960 according to LaFaro-Fernandez (2009) and Litweiler (1992) as well as available publicity documents from the time.

²² Jost (1973), 44

²³ Ibid.

centred around either Colemans idiosyncratic saxophone technique or the fact that he and his band had not apprenticed with established musicians before gaining recognition.

The music itself was still very recognizably operating within what was understood as being “jazz” at the time - a rhythm section playing swing time (for the most part - Charlie Haden may depart from walking on “Lonely Woman” in favour of a drone-like pedal and a melody , for example, but Billy Higgins still plays a fast swing feel) with a soloist playing a melody and with some kind of implicit harmony in-between. The only real break with the defacto jazz customs of the time and Ornette’s music was that the formal elements of the music were not pre-determined. Instead of harmony recurring in a cyclical fashion, it existed as a linear set of relationships between the pitch content of the bass and the pitch content and melodic contour of the soloist. Since the soloist was “free” to play whatever he or she wanted, it was up to the bassist to ensure that a sense of moving harmony was maintained ²⁴ while grounding the music as “jazz” with a requisite strong swing feel and full, low-pitched sound.

Charlie Haden, the bassist with Coleman’s band in its most highly regarded initial iteration ²⁵ was given a measure of freedom, but it was a restricted one that carried a great deal of responsibility. He still had to fulfil the same role as any other bassist within a jazz idiom but also was tasked with determining the movement of audible harmony and making that harmony interesting to the listener and soloist alike.

²⁴ Coleman’s earliest concepts of “Harmolodics” centred around the notion that harmony is defined in the moment and is non recurring whether it be in terms of western musical harmony or a more esoteric kind.

²⁵ Haden replaced bassist Don Payne in 1958. When Payne was in the band, Ornette’s music was still shoehorned into cyclical forms with chord changes. It wasn’t until Haden joined after the recording of “Something Else” that the forms were abandoned.

Of course, Haden was a brilliant bassist and musician but it should be recognized that for all the discussion of “freedom” that surrounds Coleman’s music, the earliest iterations of his own playing - the thing that served as the organizing focus of the music - was still based on blues aesthetics and followed the recognizable melodic contours of the jazz music of his contemporaries.

Likewise Haden’s four-beat-to-the-bar walking bass lines follow the same favored contours that we find in most forms of jazz - using stepwise motion and resolving with leading tones while balancing the sonic space with clear and resonating articulation.

Below is a brief transcription of Haden’s bass line during the opening 16 bars of Coleman’s solo on “Blues Connotation” from his 1961 album “This Is Our Music”.



Figure 1.1 - Charlie Haden on "Blues Connotation"

We should take note of the characteristic combination of chromatic movement that serves as a kind of catch-all set of resolutions that serve to outline a shifting harmonic foundation regardless of pitch content that the soloist is exploring. Haden periodically breaks these implied half-step resolutions with very obvious V-I movements that, again, are not entirely dependent on making a direct connection with the soloist’s

melodic contours but serve to sound like an unpredictably evolving linear harmonic structure.

The goal of Haden in these early Coleman recordings is to give a sense of complex-yet functional tonal harmony without the structural constraints of one.

The result is, of course, an exciting and unpredictable music but an artistic bottleneck is set up between the soloist and the bassist. In order for this version of “free” music to work, both the bassist and the soloist need to agree to remain within the bounds of most jazz conventions. If the soloist strays too far from the melodic or, more accurately, rhythmic content that connects with the shifting harmony coming from the bass, then the tether between the soloist and the requisite swing feel is severed. Likewise, if the bassist abandons the walking bass line then both the sense of shifting harmony underneath the soloist and the counterbalancing gravity of the instrument are lost and the music’s sense of time and swing are forfeited.

These potential problems were not an issue with Charlie Haden since, effectively, Coleman’s music functioned this way because of Haden’s instincts, but when Haden left Ornette’s group and new bassist Scott LaFaro joined in August, 1960, the nature of the role of the bass within Coleman’s group changed as “Haden had almost effortlessly matched his responsibilities as a harmonic signposter but LaFaro did not”²⁶

LaFaro first came to prominence with pianist Bill Evans who was in many ways a different kind of musician than Coleman, however in the period from 1959 to 1961 they were both dedicated to fostering a greater sense of freedom within jazz music - to

²⁶ McRae, (1988), 31. McRae seems to be of the opinion that LaFaro’s manner playing in Coleman’s group was a means of compensating for an inability to play like Haden, however it is clearly an extension of his playing with Bill Evans. One assumes that his presence with Coleman was exactly due to the difference between his playing and that of Haden.

pushing boundaries. While Coleman at first looked for that freedom by abandoning cyclical forms, Evans looked for it, beginning 1959, within those forms by exploring the subtleties of harmony and by, at least partially, abandoning the traditional fixed roles associated with the instruments of the piano trio.

Below, is a transcription of Scott LaFaro's bass line on the first chorus of the piano solo of "Witchcraft" from Bill Evans' album "Portrait in Jazz". Evans' relatively dense and restrictive chord scheme remains intact via LaFaro's elegant adherence to idiomatic chord-scale relationships despite his freedom with both rhythm and function.

The image shows a musical score for the bass line of "Witchcraft" by Scott LaFaro. The score is written in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat major). It consists of ten staves of music, each with a measure number (5, 9, 13, 17, 21, 25, 29) at the beginning. Above the notes, various chords are indicated, including FΔ, G-, C9 sus, FΔ, C-, F13, BbΔ, Bb-, Eb7, AbΔ, G7(b9), CΔ, C9 sus, B-7(b9), E7, A-, A-#5, A-6, D7, G-, G-Maj7, G-, and C13. The notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and slurs, indicating a complex and fluid rhythmic approach.

Figure 1.2 - Scott LaFaro on "Witchcraft"

Of course, LaFaro isn't entirely abandoning the idea of the walking bass line while playing with Evans, as we see from bar 26 onward, but he is certainly playing with far more rhythmic mobility than a soloist might have expected to hear behind him or her at the time, and he is playing within a different pitch range than was customary, extending up into thumb position with no notes appearing from the E string at all until the G on beat one of bar 29.

The contribution that the bass makes to the music is largely rhythmic and motivic in the above example since the harmonic content is suggested by the form and defined by Evans. The music, to sound complete and remain grounded as jazz, does not need to be supported by a hard-driving swing feel from the bass as a cultural tether nor does it need for the bass to play in step-wise motion to imply shifting harmonies. As a result, the bass can be more-or-less free from the constraints of the walking bass line within this context and LaFaro's instincts were uniquely suited both in terms of physical ability on his instrument and understanding of harmony just as Haden was uniquely suited within the context of Coleman's music.

When LaFaro joined Coleman's group, replacing Haden ²⁷ the entire sound of the group was necessarily affected, particularly when considering Will Gibson's above quotation, although the assertion by Litweiler that "(LaFaro's) lines appear merely ornamental while Haden's were integral." ²⁸ is difficult to square with the rest of Coleman's work in the 1960s since David Izenzon, the bassist in Coleman's groups for

²⁷ Haden had suggested LaFaro and they were close, personal friends.

²⁸ Litweiler (1992) p. 96

the bulk of the decade, sounds much more like LaFaro in terms of both instrumental timbre and playing style than Haden.

Below is a segment of LaFaro's playing on W.R.U. from Coleman's album "Ornette!".

The image displays a musical score for Scott LaFaro's bass line on the track "W.R.U." from Ornette Coleman's album "Ornette!". The score is written in bass clef and consists of eight staves of music. The first staff begins with a time signature of 4/4 and a tempo marking of 0:30. The piece features a complex, multi-measure structure with various time signatures including 4/4, 5/4, 3/4, and 2/4. The notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and accidentals (sharps and flats). The bass line is characterized by its rhythmic complexity and melodic movement, typical of LaFaro's style.

Figure 1.3 - Scott LaFaro on "W.R.U."

Take note that, although there is clearly more of an emphasis on the walking bass line than we saw in LaFaro's playing with Evans, there is also much more rhythmic mobility and complexity than we saw in Haden's playing with Coleman. The trade-off is that the music no longer benefits from the stabilizing gravity of the walking bass line or from the sense of a constantly shifting underlying harmony that Haden brought to the music.²⁹ The nature of the music does not change entirely, but the music has more of a modal character than the recordings with Haden and requires a higher level of rhythmic movement to prevent a sense of stasis.

In December 1960, Coleman brought an octet with both Charlie Haden and Scott LaFaro into the recording studio for an album on Atlantic Records that would be released as "Free Jazz : A Collective Improvisation" in September of the following year.³⁰

Conceptually, the album was not a "two-bass" album where two bassists were to work in tandem to fulfil a function within the ensemble. The album was intended as an experiment with two quartets complementing and opposing each other where, in terms of the rhythm section, "Charles Haden and Ed Blackwell are responsible for the fundamental rhythm which is constantly challenged and constantly "endangered" by Scott LaFaro and Billy Higgins" ³¹

²⁹ See Cecil Taylor's comments about LaFaro and Haden later in this writing

³⁰ Note that although the album was recorded before John Coltrane's "Africa/Brass", Coltrane's album was released first.

³¹ Jost (1973) p.59

Most of the album features a clear stratification of roles between the two bassists where they follow their own instincts with Haden walking in the lower register and LaFaro half-walking in the higher one in double-time which fails to add rhythmic complexity to the music and contributes to the “up-down hugga bugga shuffle rhythm”³² that Litweiler characterizes as the sound of the basses throughout. There are, however, moments when the two complement each other in a way that foreshadows some of the types of interaction that we see later in the decade.

Below is a transcription of one such segment from the beginning part of the album, before the sound mass of the music begins to obscure the basses..

The image shows a musical transcription of a segment from the album 'Free Jazz' by Scott LaFaro and Charlie Haden. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system is labeled '0:27' and shows Scott LaFaro on the top staff (treble clef) and Charlie Haden on the bottom staff (bass clef). The second system is labeled '2' and shows LaFaro on the top staff and Haden on the bottom staff. The third system is labeled '3' and shows LaFaro on the top staff and Haden on the bottom staff. The transcription uses various musical notations including notes, rests, and accidentals to represent the improvisation of the two bassists.

Figure 1.4 - Scott LaFaro and Charlie Haden on "Free Jazz"

³² Litweiler (1992) p.96

There is, of course, a huge wall of sound that develops but in this initial stage we see how LaFaro's bass lines dance around Haden's. The regularity and reliability of Haden's bass lines are both disrupted and complemented by LaFaro's gestures in the upper register so that the music is, at least briefly, both grounded and rhythmically complexified at the same time. If we trust that Coleman's words at the beginning of this chapter are referring to musical characteristics³³, from his perspective as the soloist, he can choose which of the two basses to interact with³⁴ and do so without having to change the fundamental nature of the music since there are two "natures" present - the harmonically grounded one of Haden and the rhythmically mobile one of LaFaro

The problematic issue that arises with "Free Jazz: A Collective Improvisation" is that the din caused by two drummers leaves little sonic space for LaFaro rendering him hamstrung by having to cut through the sonic mass and play much harder than is effective when trying to play with rhythmic subtlety. As a result, Litweiler's "hugga bugga" effect becomes unavoidable as LaFaro reverts to simpler, more regular gestures and a double-time walking feel.

Nonetheless, a stage is more-or-less set where, in principle, the best of both worlds of bass playing can be attained - one with both stability and rhythmic complexity. "Free Jazz: A Collective Improvisation" does not yet conform to Alan Silva's mixture of "free player" and "time player"³⁵ but it is a step towards it.

³³ Coleman often used musical terms to refer to either nonmusical or undefined things

³⁴ Bobby Bradford, who was the original trumpeter hired for the recording and used two basses in his own bands with John Carter during the late-1960s referred to this as "The Scramble"

³⁵ Parker (2011) p.407

Further, this mix of two “natures” is, at its root, dependent on the advantages of the bassists’ opposing natural tendencies rather than the suggestion of a bandleader to two bassists with the same complimentary natural tendencies. Although both bassists are undeniably great bassists, Haden’s musical history is rooted in playing country music and his instincts lead towards an exploration of a supporting bass role, and LaFaro who began as a saxophonist and took up the bass quite late would lean more towards a melodic one. This is not the “trained” and “untrained” dyad that we see towards the mid-1960s but it hints at the necessity of relying on a performer’s natural musical tendencies in order for the two basses to complement each other in an improvised setting. If both bassists had the tendency to do the same thing, then the two-bass idea would not work but produce a confusing mass that may constrain the freedom of the soloist rather than expand it.

Coleman never performed again with the double quartet, although there was an ill-fated attempt to do so with bassists Jimmy Garrison and Art Davis replacing Haden and LaFaro in July of 1961³⁶.

LaFaro continued with Coleman as the sole bassist until Spring 1961 when he returned to extensive touring with Bill Evans and shortly thereafter was killed in a car accident in July. After LaFaro’s death Jimmy Garrison joined Coleman’s group³⁷ until he left to join John Coltrane as first the second bassist next to Reggie Workman and then the full-time sole bassist³⁸.

³⁶ The financial arrangements changed at the last minute and the group refused to perform.

³⁷ Coincidentally, LaFaro had replaced Garrison in Evans’ trio

³⁸ See the next section

Coleman formed a new trio in the Fall of 1962 with bassist David Izenzon and drummer Charles Moffett before a performing hiatus from December 1962 until June 1965.

John Coltrane

*“I had a sound that I wanted to hear and that was about it.....One bass plays all the way through and the other plays rhythmic lines around it”*³⁹ - John Coltrane

John Coltrane is known to have experimented with two simultaneous bassists, George Tucker and Ahmed-Abdul Malik, during a weekend live date at Birdland in New York City in September 1959⁴⁰, but it wasn't until early 1961 that he began regularly using two bassists at once at live dates⁴¹ in New York City shortly after Reggie Workman replaced Steve Davis⁴² as bassist in his working band. Says Coltrane, “Once I was in town and I said to Art to come on down because I liked him so much and I

³⁹ Coltrane quoted in Devito, 2010, p.93

⁴⁰ It is worth noting the 1958 recording sessions that Coltrane did with tubaist Ray Draper and that were released in 1990 as the album “Like Sonny” (Roulette). The leader on the sessions, however, was Draper and Coltrane was hired as a sideman.

⁴¹ According to Fujioka, once in a pianoless quintet with Eric Dolphy at the Village Gate and once with Coltrane's quartet at the Half Note. The exact dates are unknown but both shows were prior to March, 1961. There also exists a recording of a live radio broadcast from a show in Chicago sometime between March 1-12th 1961 with both Workman and Donald Garrett on bass.

⁴² Davis joined Coltrane's band in 1960 and left in early 1961, appearing on “Coltrane Plays the Blues”, “Coltrane's Sound” and “My Favorite Things”

figured that he and Reggie (Workman) could exchange sets. But instead of that they started to play together and I got something from it”⁴³ ⁴⁴

During this period, Coltrane was continuing to indulge and explore his interest in South Asian music that had developed in the late 1950s and he had begun to consider ways of integrating the rhythmic elements of the music into his own.⁴⁵ With a renewed emphasis on the universality of modal improvisation after the harmonically dense material that he had explored on “Giant Steps” ⁴⁶ and a return to the Miles Davis Group in early 1961, Coltrane “ thought another bass would add that certain rhythmic sound. We were playing a lot of stuff with a sort of suspended rhythm, with one bass playing a series of notes around one point, and it seemed like another bass could fill in the spaces....” ⁴⁷

Coltrane entered the studio on May 23rd, 1961 with a large ensemble to record the album “Africa/Brass” for Impulse! With Paul Chambers performing alongside Reggie Workman for the song “Africa . Later in the month, on the 25th of May, Coltrane recorded a smaller ensemble in fulfillment of his contract with Atlantic records with Art Davis performing alongside Workman. According to Davis, “He wanted me to play in a sort of solo capacity, and that would drive him, and then another bassist would play the

⁴³ Coltrane in Devito, 2010, p.115

⁴⁴ There exists a radio recording from a few weeks before the Village Vanguard sets that Davis played with Workman in March 1961 where we hear Donald Garret sitting in as the second bassist with Workman

⁴⁵ In the late 1950s and early 1960s Coltrane did not consider himself “an astute observer of the music” but had a great appreciation for the music of Ravi Shankar.

⁴⁶ “There was a point when I was going through a “chord” phase, back when I recorded “Giant Steps”, now I’m in my modal phase. There’s a lot of modal music that is played every day throughout the world.....but take away their purely ethnic characteristics - that is to say, their folk aspects - and you’ll find yourself in the presence of the same pentatonic sound, of comparable modal structures. It’s that universal side of music that interests and draws me.” Coltrane quoted in Devito, 2010, p.181

⁴⁷ Coltrane in Devito, 2010, p.115

regular “bass parts”, having a drone sound just like Indian music.”⁴⁸ The music recorded during the above session became the album “Ole Coltrane” and Coltrane reconvened his large ensemble to re-record the music that was to be included on “Africa/Brass” with Art Davis as the 2nd bassist.

Coltrane’s performances in and around New York City during the summer and fall of 1961 featured both Workman and Davis⁴⁹, with Jimmy Garrison replacing Davis during a week-long residency at the Village Vanguard in November 1961.⁵⁰

When Coltrane embarked on a month-long European tour in mid-November, he brought along a quintet with Eric Dolphy, McCoy Tyner, Workman and Elvin Jones, although he remarked during an interview with the Times of London in November 1961 “I wish I could have brought Art over with me.”⁵¹

By early 1962 Dolphy had left Coltrane’s group to tour with Charles Mingus, leaving it as a quartet with new bassist Jimmy Garrison who had replaced Workman at the end of 1961 . It was this band that became Coltrane’s primary musical outlet for the next three years.⁵²

Speaking of his groups of 1961 during an interview conducted in early 1962, Coltrane explained that he had “sought more rhythmic variety behind me than usual,

⁴⁸ Coltrane in Kahn, 2002, p58

⁴⁹ Coltrane toured California during September 1961 with only Workman

⁵⁰ From which were recorded and released as Live at the Village Vanguard (1962) and half of “Impressions” (1963) on Impulse! Records

⁵¹ Coltrane in Devito, 2010,p.138. The implication is that he wanted both Workman and Davis and not Davis instead of Workman.

⁵² Eric Dolphy returned to the band for 2 shows in 1963 and the band performed for a week at the Half Note in New York in September 1964 but aside from those shows and the single recording sessions that produced “Coltrane and Duke” (Impulse! 1962) and “John Coltrane and Johnny Hartman” (Impulse! 1963), Coltrane exclusively performed and recorded with his own quartet with Tyner, Garrison, and Jones from March 1962 to December 1964.

and I think I achieved that with two basses....I'm certainly going to try to get a similar effect from a single bassist...I hope that he could play without any constraint, that's to say, to not stay locked into an unchangeable rhythmic line.”⁵³

Bassist Steve Davis joined Coltrane's quartet in early 1960 alongside pianist McCoy Tyner and drummer Pete LaRoca at a time when Coltrane was transitioning from the dense and complex harmonic material that was heard during the brief “Giant Steps” period of 1959 into the modal era that flowered through the early 1960s.

It was during this period that Coltrane's rhythmic interests began to drift away from the 4/4 walking bass line feel that had typified his earlier work and towards the ostinato-based music that was inspired by South Asian music.

In looking at Steve Davis' bass lines from two albums of the transitional period, we see that the composed material, the starting point of the song, is relatively simple and largely is built from static figures that contain little or no harmonic tension.

“Coltrane Plays the Blues” represents a true transitional song where a simplified blues form exists however the modal treatment of the chord changes combined with the ostinato eliminate the need for harmonic voice leading on the part of the bass.

Below is the opening introductory material of the song Mr. Day as played by Steve Davis.

⁵³ Coltrane in Devito, 2010, p. 178



Figure 1.5 - Steve Davis on "Mr. Day"

This bass line was composed by Coltrane and not Davis, and it is indicative of the open harmonic content that Coltrane was looking for as a vehicle for improvisation - mid-way between a blues and a modal form - but as one listens through to the last chorus of Coltrane’s solo, for instance, the fact that the bass line is still exactly the same as the beginning is striking– Davis simply repeated the bass line unaltered throughout.

On ‘My Favorite Things’, the recording sessions from which were taken the music that was approved by Coltrane for release between the Giant Steps era of dense harmony in 1959-60 and the modal era of 1961-1965 , we can hear exactly the same sense of stasis on the part of the bass line.

The rhythmically simple and harmonically open ostinato that we hear at the beginning of the song:



Figure 1.6 - Steve Davis on "My Favorite Things"

Is alternated with a second, similar bass line,



Figure 1.7 - Steve Davis on "My Favorite Things"

But there is no other sense of variation or transition between the two – Steve Davis plays one or the other and above all, there is no interactivity between the bass and the rest of the band.

The bass lines that Coltrane had composed became a static element of the music in contrast to its modal, open nature. The demands on the bass player within the type of dense harmonic structures that Coltrane had been exploring during 1959-1960⁵⁴ – ensuring that root movement was clear to the soloist - were suddenly very different than the demands of the open music that we now know that Coltrane was moving towards.

In retrospect, it would appear Coltrane was no longer interested in performing with a rhythm section who was tasked with “laying it down”⁵⁵ for the soloist and was looking for musicians who were actively interacting with the soloist and feeding him or

⁵⁴ Coltrane’s own band had been performing standards and pieces based off of his complex “Coltrane Matrix” chord system from 1959 up until the late 1960 recording sessions that are heard on both “My Favorite Things” and “Coltrane’ Sound”. During the same period, Coltrane had returned to Miles Davis’ group but, although “Kind of Blue” had recently been released, the group largely played standard repertoire.

⁵⁵ i.e. strictly outlining the chord changes and steady pulse

her material – distributing the conversational elements of improvising amongst band members. Steve Davis was clearly not participating on that level.

In defense of Davis, the great innovators on the bass from the 1950s from Oscar Pettiford to Charles Mingus operated within a swing-based walking structure. The kind of ostinato that Coltrane began to use was largely signifying latin influences on jazz where the expectation was the immobility of the ostinato due to the complexities of surrounding rhythm events. The prima facie expectation upon seeing a line like that would be, then, stasis regardless of surrounding rhythmic events and reserving any kind of interaction to walking bass lines.

In the most general of terms most non-walking bass lines from the era from Bebop to 1961 were either directly related to the integration of Afro-Caribbean elements into jazz, were melodic parts unto themselves, or were necessarily restricted accompaniment in a highly organized musical arrangement.

In the first case, the distribution of both time and harmonic expression among multiple voices - mainly percussion - necessitates that each ensemble member stick to his or her de facto part in order to maintain cohesion.

If we look at the early attempts to fold BeBop into Afro-Cuban music by Dizzy Gillespie, Chano Pozo and George Russell, we see the necessity of an unchanging bass line.

Gillespie's 1947 recording of "Manteca" demonstrates the relative need for an amount of restraint on the part of the bassist (Al McKibbon) in order to maintain the intricacy of the relationship between percussive elements of the music during the

“straight-eighth”⁵⁶ portions of the song. This intricacy is a necessary and idiomatic feature of clave-based music such as Afro-Cuban styles where rhythmic elements must interlock with the underlying rhythmic pattern as a fundamental practice, however the complicating element is the fact that “Manteca” is not Afro-Cuban music, nor is it BeBop but is a hybrid between the two. The negotiation between the two traditions had not yet been solidified .

Immediately apparent, however, is any soloistic improvisation and group interaction - that is to say, “blowing sections” - only occur during sections of swung time and walking bass lines.

Opportunity to “break up” the bass line was largely non-existent in these highly influential recordings since sections where (relative) improvisational freedom was desired did not feature a latin-style bass line and therefore there was no pressure from soloists for the development a practice of rhythmic or harmonic loosening of the ostinati.

As these latin and afro-cuban elements became more and more common in jazz moving into the 1950s, we hear the same kind of alternation where the bulk of improvisation occurs over swing-feel rather than latin-feel, and we similarly can take note that, despite the fact in smaller jazz ensembles that there is no longer need for the kind of restraint needed with multiple percussionists and a complex montuno, the bassist tended to primarily repeat a one-bar repeated bass line - the part that normally would fill in the spaces between the percussion and the piano -- until the time to walk and interact arrived.

⁵⁶ I.e. non-swing feel. At the time a “straight” feel was synonymous with a “latin” feel

Of course, there were other constraining factors on the bassists of the early 1950s, most notably a similar initial immobility on the parts of both the pianists and drummers of the period.

By the mid-1950s, however, pianists and drummers began to move away from consistent, repeated rhythmic patterns while the bassists tended not to. If we use Art Blakey's recording of Horace Silver's "Nica's Dream" (1956) as an example, we note that aside from the swing feel that appears during the bridge sections of the composition and some notated sections at the beginning and ending of the song⁵⁷, bassist Doug Watkins largely does not diverge from the rhythmic bass line pattern that he begins the song with:



Figure 1.8 - Doug Watkins on "Nica's Dream"

Silver's left-hand pattern and Blakey's drum pattern initially act in conjunction with the bass as an interlocking rhythmic distribution however both Silver and Blakey begin to diverge from these patterns shortly after the initial composed material while Watkins remains staid and unwavering throughout.

Most often, however, during the mid-late 1950s where the latin-feel and swing-feel co-existed within the same song,, the latin-feel bass line and accompanying drum pattern became more of a compositional feature than a functional part of improvisation. Like a shout chorus in a big band where relation to the principal compositional elements

⁵⁷ Particularly the worked-out rhythmic patterns at 5:16

of a piece are re-established during solo sections, the established pattern of latin-feel bass use became compositional - the bass line was used during the initial composed material and generally held over for a chorus as a kind of improvisatory send-off for the first soloist, and each subsequent soloist would play over the the latin-feel for the first chorus of his or her solo to reconnect with the initial thematic material which by the second solo had become musically distant.

An interesting example can be heard in Miles Davis' 1958 recording of "On Green Dolphin Street". Alongside the rhythmic element of the repeated bass line during the first 8-bar sections of the melodic form and solo form, bassist Paul Chambers fixes on a pedal point while pianist Bill Evans plays the song's standard chord changes.⁵⁸ The interesting effect not only foreshadows the modal harmonic elements of Coltrane's approaching work but it also brings a sense of pushing-and-pulling against a static bass line into the harmonic realm rather than just a rhythmic one.

Below is Chambers' bass line from the first chorus of the melody:

The image shows a musical score for Paul Chambers' bass line on "On Green Dolphin Street". It is written in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of four lines of music, each with chord changes indicated above the staff. The first line (measures 1-4) has chords EbMaj, b, GbMaj, and b. The second line (measures 5-8) has chords FMaj, b, EMaj, and b. The third line (measures 9-12) has chords F-7, Bb7, EbMaj, Bb-7, and Eb7. The fourth line (measures 13-16) has chords Ab-7, b, Db7, GbMaj, F-7, and Bb7. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' in a box under the first measure of the fourth line.

Figure 1.9 - Paul Chambers on "On Green Dolphin Street"

⁵⁸ Bill Evans' 1959 recording of the same song, also with Chambers, uses the same pedal point but with a different rhythmic pattern.

The striking difference in both interactivity and functionality between the 8-bar ostinato section and 8-bar swing section is apparent even in this early stage of the song and highlighted by Chambers' walking in 2 rather than in 4, giving him more space between articulated beats for rhythmic freedom. Note the resolute Eb pedal during the 1st 8 bars, even in the face of the contrasting E major chord, and contrast with the way that Chambers both outlines the chord structure in the 2nd 8 while seemingly dancing around it rhythmically.

If we skip ahead to Coltrane's solo at 3:13, we see the same steadfastness during the first 8 bar sections of the form and, although now walking in 4 so less rhythmically interactive, rich harmonic-melodic bass movement. We see below that even at a later stage of Coltrane's solo, at 4:27, where, as is customary, the solo has progressed in complexity and general interactivity on the part of the rhythm section has been heightened, the strict bass pattern is maintained.

The image displays a musical score for Paul Chambers' bass line on "On Green Dolphin Street". It consists of five staves of music in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The first two staves (measures 1-8) show a walking bass line with a steady eighth-note pattern. The first staff has a constant Eb pedal point. Above the notes, chords EbMaj and GbMaj are indicated. The second staff continues this pattern with chords FMaj, EMaj, and EbMaj. The third staff (measures 9-12) shows a more complex rhythmic pattern with chords F-, F-/Eb, D-b5, G7, C-, C-/Bb, A-b5, and D7. The fourth staff (measures 13-16) continues with chords G-, C7, F-, Bb7, G-, C7, and F-, Bb7. The fifth staff (measures 17-20) shows chords G-, C7, F-, Bb7, and EbMaj, ending with a double bar line.

Figure 1.10 - Paul Chambers on "On Green Dolphin Street"

Although by the late 1950s, Yusef Lateef had introduced both modal harmonies and non-western aesthetics into his jazz recordings, they remained largely separate from the more traditional jazz elements. On Lateef's recordings prior to 1959, in fact, the two did not (at least overtly) coexist within the same song. Bassist Ernie Farrow⁵⁹ played walking swing bass lines during songs that were very much in the favored "post-bop" style of Lateef's contemporaries, and did not play bass at all but rebab on the songs that featured non-western elements and instrumentation.⁶⁰

It is not until 1959 and the album "Cry-Tender" that Lateef's group begins to mix these two elements together in the same song but, like the material examined above, an immobile ostinato is used in the composed sections where an Eastern-influenced aesthetic is expressed while the band moves into a swung quarter-note feel for improvised sections.

Below is a transcription of Farrow's bass line from the beginning of the song Dololous from Lateef's "Cry-Tender" album.

⁵⁹ Although it has no bearing on this writing, it is of interest to note that Farrow was Alice Coltrane's brother

⁶⁰ Similarly, Ahmed-Abdul Malik's albums featured himself playing oud on songs that exhibited strong African influences but playing bass on jazz songs with swing time, mostly standards.

G-

5

9

13

17

21

Figure 1.11 - Ernie Farrow on "Dololous"

It is interesting to note that the entire song is modal, unlike the previous example of Green Dolphin Street where an 8-bar (implied) modal section is alternated with a section with a harmonic structure. The first 12 bars of the above transcription occur under the melody, and the next under Yusef Lateef's flute solo however there is no structural differences between the two sections other than the fact that one contains improvisation and the other does not. The default then, in terms of how the bassist is expected to improvise appears to be a walking bassline, regardless of whether or not the harmonic content necessitates it. The previous examples where formal construction

based on an alternation between static harmonic elements and tonal harmony may necessitate a breaking of an ostinato to accommodate root movement, but in the case of “Dololous”, no such alteration exists. Whether musical tradition, habit of the bassist, or preference of the soloist, the ostinato remains strict when present but improvisation and interaction occurs when the bassist walks, even when there are no underlying differences between sections.

The second case, where the bass line functions as a kind of melodic component, follows a similar kind of inflexibility but the bass lines themselves tend to be much more complex than those found in the latin-influenced music above, although it should be noted that Gil Evans’ influential modal music was heavily influenced by Spanish composers of guitar music which in turn heavily influenced Miles Davis, and Coltrane himself referred often to the “spanish” sound of his work of the early 1960s.

The trumpet solo section found in Gil Evans arrangement of Joaquin Rodrigo’s “Concierto de Aranjuez (Adagio)” is an example of a complex bass line within a modal, single-chord, solo structure. The bass line, below as played by Paul Chambers, serves a structural and melodic element in a solo section where no connective signposts exist - a sense of form and stability are maintained by repetition and familiarity with the bass line.

Harmonic stability is also reinforced via the repetition of not only the strong chord tones, as one would in latin music, but by inclusion of the entire pitch collection that is associated with the underlying modal harmony of the piece, as we see below in the descending triplet scale pattern of the composed bass line.



Figure 1.12 - Paul Chambers on "Concierto de Aranjuez (Adagio)"

A similar example of a bass-line melodic component can be heard in Miles Davis' 1959 recording of "So What" where the initial, composed, portion of the piece uses the bass line as a defacto melody that states and strongly establishes the harmony and related pitch collection of the piece, in this case D dorian / Eb dorian.



Figure 1.13 - Paul Chambers on "So What"

Like the recording of Green Dolphin street, however, any and all improvisation occurs over a walking bass line.

An interesting comparison is made between the relative freedom of the walking bass line in modal areas and the pitch content of the composed portion of the piece.

Paul Chambers no longer strictly adheres to the stated pitch collection once he begins to walk. We see that even within the first four bars of walking, the defining color tones of the D dorian mode are obscured by the color tones of other minor modes. The modal pitch collection that is strongly established at the beginning includes major 6th and minor 7th scale degrees, but Chambers includes both minor 6th and major 7th scale degrees - for example the C sharp in bar 3 of the solo and the Bb in bar 4 - throughout his walking bass line. Although it is most likely that these pitches are included for the sake of contour, which we can see elegantly in the transcription, the final result is a subtle yet definite opening of harmony to include tones outside the established pitch collection. As a result, after a strongly stated harmonic framework is established, that framework is loosened during the solo sections however the melodic and rhythmic elements of the opening composed bass line of the song are completely forsaken in favor of walking. The relationship between the improvised portion of the recording and the thematic material is made only via harmony as the D minor sound is not abandoned in order to maintain some continuity⁶¹ but the rhythmic and melodic elements of the bass line are completely left by the wayside.

A closer sound to the one that we hear later in Coltrane's work can be heard in Sun Ra's 1960 recording, "Tiny Pyramids" which was composed by bassist Ronnie Boykins⁶² and the notated material that the band used is little more than a lead sheet

⁶¹ Although there were notions of improvising "free" harmony at the time of the recording due to both Ornette Coleman's contemporary work and the earlier work of Lennie Tristano, Davis was heavily influenced by the relatively strict improvisational theories of George Russell at the time and would not play "free" until the mid-1960s

⁶² Coltrane was known to have been interested in Sun Ra's music at least as early as 1960 and likewise had acknowledged the influence of John Gilmore's work with Sun Ra on his 1961 live recordings. When asked in 1966 about Sun Ra's claim that Coltrane had stolen his ideas, Coltrane replied " There may be something, there may be something to it. I've heard him and I know that he's doing, he's done, some things that I've wanted to do." (Kofsky, 1988, p.441)

with no notated bass lines. Although Boykins, like the other bass players discussed thus far does not deviate from a static bass line once established (even if it were improvised) like the example of “My Favorite Things”, there is more than one bass line that is used over the same harmony - in the case of “Tiny Pyramids”, a static F minor.⁶³

Below is reproduced the sequence of repeated bass lines, each of which lasts for around 4 bars each.

The figure displays eight numbered musical staves, each representing a different bass line pattern. The staves are arranged in a grid-like fashion:

- Staff 1:** Starts with a repeat sign, followed by a sequence of notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4.
- Staff 2:** A sequence of notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4.
- Staff 3:** A sequence of notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4.
- Staff 4:** A sequence of notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4.
- Staff 5:** A sequence of notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4.
- Staff 6:** A sequence of notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4.
- Staff 7:** A sequence of notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4.
- Staff 8:** A sequence of notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4.

Figure 1.14 - Ronnie Boykins on "Tiny Pyramids"

⁶³ Note in the appended complete transcription that at 3 points of the song, bars 9-10, 16-17, 30-31, Boykins outlines an Ab-G root movement, but remains static at other times where that same movement would be implied formally such as bars 61-62 and at times during the piano solo

The difference, however between the Coltrane and the Sun Ra recordings, done at approximately the same time, is that instead of the two alternating bass lines on “My Favorite Things”, “Tiny Pyramids” features bass lines performed sequentially without effective alteration but more importantly, the recapitulation of the initial melodic material features a different bass line than the beginning giving a sense of progression and movement in the bass.

Overall, on “Tiny Pyramids” it appears that the bass line is improvised, given the periodic moments of indecision that occur before the various bass lines stabilize. The cumulative effect of this improvised sequence of bass lines is that the sense of movement is entirely rhythmic. In contrast to “So What” where the rhythmic elements of the initial thematic materials are set aside in favor of relative harmonic freedom and movement - contoured walking lines and pitch choices that, in principle, are reactive to the soloist - Boykins’ bass lines of “Tiny Pyramids” effectively only use two pitches - I and V in F minor - but contain constantly shifting rhythmic figures. While these figures appear in intact 4 or 5 bar sections and are not as free or reactive rhythmically as we see later on in the hands of Jimmy Garrison, they are certainly more varied than the repetitive rhythmic patterns that we have seen up until this point and might reasonably be interpreted as a bridge between the rhythmic stasis of the ostinato bass line in the 1950s and the freedom heard in the mid-1960s.

It is during early 1961 that Coltrane begins attempts to unrestrain the bass by having it use “more rhythmic variety”⁶⁴ replacing Steve Davis with Reggie Workman and experimenting with the addition of adding the second bassist, Art Davis.

Coltrane’s first attempt to record two basses simultaneously was at the May 1961 recording session for the material that was to intended to become the “Africa/Brass”⁶⁵ album.

Reggie Workman and Paul Chambers played a relatively complex two-part bass line composed by Coltrane that included a lower drone voice and in a higher register a more rhythmic one.



Figure 1.15 - Paul Chambers and Reggie Workman on "Africa"

Which alternated with:

⁶⁴ See above

⁶⁵ Coincidentally, saxophonist Pat Patrick is heard on both Sun Ra’s “Tiny Pyramids” and “Africa/Brass”



Figure 1.16 - Paul Chambers and Reggie Workman on "Africa"

The bass lines as we hear them at the beginning of the song is certainly more complex than the bass line of “My Favorite Things”, for example, and contain more opportunity for the kind of rhythmic and harmonic “feeding” that Coltrane was looking for. The two bassists, however, like Steve Davis beforehand, remained immobile in their parts and the intertwining bass line remains static and does not veer from the notated parts throughout the piece. An audible but likely unanticipated problem arose in this first Africa session with the matter of the two basses needing to coordinate their time feels, and being unable or unwilling to do so. The take was unreleased and the material was re-recorded two weeks later with Workman again and Art Davis replacing Chamber

Using the same two variants of the bass line, Davis had already opened up the upper line at the beginning of Coltrane’s solo at 2:13 and here we hear something that appears to correspond more closely to Coltrane’s description of what he had been looking for with the use of two basses.

The image shows a musical score for two bassists, Art Davis (labeled 'PC') and Reggie Workman (labeled 'RW'), on the track 'Africa'. The score is divided into two systems. The first system starts at measure 60, with a time signature of 2:13. The second system starts at measure 64. In both systems, the 'RW' part (bottom staff) plays a steady, rhythmic bass line, while the 'PC' part (top staff) plays a more complex, melodic line with many beamed notes and rests. The notation is in bass clef.

Figure 1.17 - Art Davis and Reggie Workman on "Africa"

The initial bass ostinato remains the same but using the accompaniment of Coltrane’s solo as an example, we can note a progressive and interactive complexification of the effective bass line as Workman adheres closely to his notated material. The net effect of this splitting of the “bass line” is that there is a simultaneous sense of rhythmic stability and rhythmic freedom where the lower line states a basic ostinato while the upper one adds complexity and interactivity with the soloist.

Similarly on “Ole” from “Ole Coltrane”, recorded the next day, we see a static Workman and a mobile Davis right from the very beginning of the song after the introduction of the piano.

0:17

Art Davis

Reggie Workman

Davis

Workman

Davis

Workman

Davis

Workman

Davis

Workman

Davis

Workman

Figure 1.18 - Art Davis and Reggie Workman on "Ole Coltrane"

After a summer and fall of extensive playing with two basses – Workman and either Art Davis or Jimmy Garrison, Coltrane left for a tour of Europe with Jimmy Garrison permanently replacing Workman. Although Coltrane’s wish to have brought Davis along as well is noted above, he also stated “I’m certainly going to try to get a similar effect from a single bassist...I hope that he could play without any constraint, that’s to say, to not stay locked into an unchangeable rhythmic line.”⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Coltrane quoted in DeVito, 2010, 178

Coltrane's group toured and performed extensively from 1962 to 1964 as a quartet with Jimmy Garrison on bass. The group's first studio album, "Coltrane", recorded in June, 1962, begins with the song "Out of This World" which is built from a modal ostinato that is not dissimilar to the call-and-response ones that we saw the previous year on recordings that featured two bassists.



Figure 1.19 - Jimmy Garrison on "Out of This World"

Garrison begins with the simple, recognizable bass line but soon he begins to diverge from it rhythmically until a short time later, at 3:10 where Coltrane's saxophone solo begins in earnest, he has diverged rhythmically from the upper octave of the line, but remains recognizably close to the bottom one.



Figure 1.20 - Jimmy Garrison on "Out of This World"

Although the bulk of the rhythmic content in the upper octave is largely non-repetitive, Garrison always plays an Eb in the lower octave on beat one of every 1st and 3rd bar of a 4-bar phrase and beats 2+ (mostly Bb) and 3 (mostly F) of every second bar.

The upper octave is much less predictable and although Garrison is staying around a small Eb minor pentatonic pitch collection (with no 3rd scale degree) he is using the “voice” of the upper octave as both a means of complexifying the overall bass

line and giving Coltrane the kind of rhythmic variance that he was specifically looking for in 1961 with two basses.

Cecil Taylor

*“(Cecil Taylor) wants to free himself from the conventional tonal structures set down by the bass....., but at the same time, as long as the bass and drums participate in the accented conventional manner, the improviser will constantly feel the gravitational pull of both their tonal and rhythmic weight.....I called this situation a dilemma and I really do not mean to criticize Cecil for failing to solve it.” – Gunther Schuller*⁶⁷

The four-beat-to-the bar walking bass line is an intrinsic part of jazz of the 1950s, so much so that it is difficult to imagine the music of the period without it. In fact, the earliest iterations of what we now label “Free Jazz” in the musics of Lennie Tristano and Ornette Coleman revolved around harmonic freedoms that were counterbalanced by a bass line that was necessarily grounded in “swing” tradition.⁶⁸

Despite modern claims to the contrary which are rooted in derisive historical comments⁶⁹Cecil Taylor firmly placed himself within the jazz tradition and there is no

⁶⁷ Schuller (1956)

⁶⁸ In modern times we think of “swing” as a way of feeling time, but during the 1950s it was a specific way of playing time, particularly where the bass player walked on all 4 beats.

⁶⁹ See, for instance Alex Ross’ obituary of Taylor in The New Yorker where he echos comments from the 1950s when an imagined connection with Eurological musics was used to denigrate Taylor’s stylistic innovations

clear reason for the modern listener to do otherwise. According to research by Allan Chase ⁷⁰ Taylor studied “Pop Arranging” at the New England Conservatory⁷¹ and only took piano lessons for two of his years there. Certainly Taylor’s experience with a such a Eurological institution would foment some strong opinions within him ⁷² but there is no evidence that Taylor had any unique connection to the contemporary music of the time - certainly no more than Bill Evans or Miles Davis who both studied European music seriously and who have never been accused of watering down their connection with jazz as they innovated.

By Taylor’s own admission his foundational piano playing is based on a combination of the influence of Lennie Tristano and Dave Brubeck, saying “ (Tristano’s) ideas interested me because he was able to construct a solo on the piano and I guess that has a lot to do with why I dug Brubeck too. Brubeck was the other half of Tristano. Tristano had the line thing and Brubeck had the harmonic density that I was looking for.”⁷³

Taylor was certainly influenced to a limited extent by composers such as Stravinsky and Messiaen ⁷⁴ who “apparently had more direct appeal to Taylor than the twelve-tone techniques of the Viennese School” ⁷⁵ but no more so than others of the

⁷⁰ See Allan-Chase.com

⁷¹ During the late-1940s into the 1950s the school was not prepared to offer jazz-based courses but allowed it to be lumped in with commercial arranging.

⁷² See the liner notes for Unit Structures or his interviews in “Les Grande Repetitions”

⁷³ Spellman, 1967, page 62

⁷⁴ Notably composers from an earlier era than Taylor is often linked to

⁷⁵ Jost, 1973, page 66

era⁷⁶ and certainly no more than Tristano or Brubeck themselves who were interested in “the integration of European avantgarde (sic) musical ideas into a jazz context.”⁷⁷

Recall too, that Taylor’s development as a musician was concurrent with the development of ideas on indeterminacy in music associated with Earle Brown and John Cage and there is absolutely no evidence that the seeds of Taylor’s eventual animosity towards the associated ideas, particularly pianist David Tudor, were sown until the 1960s after which both the New York School of composers and Taylor himself had achieved notoriety.

The “avantgarde (sic)” ideas that Jost refers to above, then are not all that “avant-garde” but the “jazz context” in Tristano’s, Brubeck’s and Taylor’s case, at least from 1956 to 1961, was one that was fundamentally based on the quarter note swing walking bass line.⁷⁸

Gunther Schuller’s dilemma described at the beginning of this section is not one based simply on aesthetics but on fundamental conceptions of what jazz music was and how it was played. The walking bass line did not just serve to outline a beat but it defined shifting harmonies, determined the way that a soloist felt time, and maybe most importantly, served as an anchor to the history of jazz at a time when other instruments were being freed from convention.

It is with some irony that the freedom for the bass player to leave behind the obligation to refer to “swing” tradition did not arise from the avant-garde where

⁷⁶ See Paul Desmond’s “Sacre Blues” with a melody based on Stravinsky’s “Sacre Du Printemps (The Rite of Spring)”

⁷⁷ Jost, 1973, page 66

⁷⁸ For essentially the same reasons as Ornette Coleman, although Brubeck’s dense harmonies required much more simplicity in the accompanying bass lines than Tristano’s

musicians were removing formal constraints, but from the piano trio where standard jazz repertoire prevailed.⁷⁹

In the late 1950s and into 1961 Taylor is very much still thinking in terms of idiomatic roles - of how the bass contributes to the overall sound of the music within a jazz context. While other musicians like Bill Evans audibly formed a contrapuntal relationship between the piano and bass that moved beyond the idea of role playing of the jazz rhythm section while maintaining a connection to tradition with elements of order like song form and tonal harmony, Taylor audibly, right from his earliest recordings, was moving beyond those elements of order and anchoring his work to tradition by maintaining those roles⁸⁰.

Bellow is a brief segment of both Taylor's piano and Buell Neidlinger's bass from Taylor's 1st album , Jazz Advance, beginning at 3:57.

The image displays a musical score for two instruments: Cecil Taylor (Piano) and Buell Neidlinger (Bass). The score is written in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one flat (B-flat major or F minor). The top system shows the piano part with a treble clef and the bass part with a bass clef. The piano part includes a melodic line with some chromaticism and rests, while the bass part provides a steady, rhythmic accompaniment. The bottom system shows the piano part with a treble clef and the bass part with a bass clef. The piano part includes a melodic line with some chromaticism and rests, while the bass part provides a steady, rhythmic accompaniment. The score is labeled with 'F7' and 'C7' chords. The score is labeled with '5' and '3' indicating measure numbers.

Figure 1.21 - Cecil Taylor and Buell Neidlinger on "Bemsha Swing"

⁷⁹ See Scott LaFaro above and later in this paper, Gary Peacock.

⁸⁰ Note that Taylor did not start to perform solo in earnest until the early 1970s and its not until 1988 when he began to play duos with drummers alongside solo and Unit performances

Neidlinger is functioning as any competent bassist would in 1956 - outlining the chords, using chromatic passing tones, using stepwise walking patterns - but Taylor is already at this early stage interacting with the bass and the rest of the band in a highly idiosyncratic way.

Importantly, though, he is, in fact, interacting with the bass - note for example that the off-beats of the first two bars line up with the walking bass line - rather than floating above it or completely ignoring it, as he is often accused of doing.

Taylor's 1959 album, "Looking Ahead" similarly, contains the same kind of dialogue between the bass and piano - one where the relationship is inscrutable but where the walking bass line appears important as a means of contextualizing and locating Taylor's playing in the same way that the walking bass contextualized Dave Brubeck's.

Cecil Taylor - Luyah ! The Glorious Step - see file babin_luyah.mp3

Like Brubeck, Taylor's dense playing does not by itself fully sound like "jazz" and the irregular rhythmic content gives little sense of a strong rooting in time, but with the walking bass line present in both pianists' cases serves as a kind of stylistic anchor.

Gunther Schuller's question of the utility of the bass could be answered by countering that the "weight" of the bass is not necessarily "tonal" or "rhythmic" but something whose "gravity" is more important to jazz music than a connection with structural elements. With the understanding that Cecil Taylor viewed his music as a clear part of the tradition of jazz in which the idea of the "swing" that comes from the

bass in intrinsic, the dilemma lies in coming up with ways to distill the most fundamental elements of the bass - the “presence”⁸¹ that the bass contributes - while eliminating the formal constraints that Taylor was looking to move beyond.

The recording “Pots” by Taylor’s 1961 group features Taylor, Lyons, Shepp and Sunny Murray and although it only features one bassist shares curiously it shares some overall similarities, at least as far as time concept is concerned, with Coleman’s “Free Jazz” that had been released a month before the recording session.⁸²

Both Grimes and Murray are playing a kind of traditional time – or playing “in time” - although each of them is functioning independently of one another, at differing tempi.

Murray seems completely detached from the rest of the band⁸³ but Grimes, playing a walking bass line follows Taylor’s shifting implied tempo. Amiri Baraka points out that “Grimes holds the group together, and collects Cecil's diverse rhythmic pronouncements perfectly”⁸⁴ and he is not just speaking figuratively. Grimes is using the walking bass line as a kind of glue similarly to Neidlinger but shifting tempo with Taylor. As a result, the bass is not functioning as a kind of home base or reference but still sounds and feels like a walking bass line as it is guided by Taylor and works independently from the drums.

⁸¹ See Taylor’s upcoming quote about LaFaro and Haden

⁸² Since the band of “Free Jazz” never performed live it would have been impossible for Taylor to have seen the group live but it’s likely that at least some of the group wmembers would have hear the album prior to the recoding session.

⁸³ Murray was working on a physics-based concept where musical time was a function of the physical properties of the complex relationships between the sound waves of the drums, In principle, what we are hearing is a derivative of that time and inter-ensemble connections are made in a way that is audible to Murray but nobody else.

⁸⁴ Baraka (1962) p. 106

Cecil Taylor -Pots - see file babin_pots.mp3

The reality of Taylor's situation during the early 1960s right up until the mid-1970s was a unique one that came with prosaic concerns - his uncompromising nature brought a great deal of attention and acclaim, but it also meant there was very little money to be made by playing Taylor's music. The demands of his music which was not only very complex by 1962 but also was transmitted by ear rather than on score was not amenable to short-term musical commitments but there was no financial incentives to make long term ones, particularly by a bass player like Henry Grimes who was not at a loss for work in multiple jazz scenes. The lack of bass player in much of his work in the 1960s appears to have less to do with avoiding the role of the bass player, and more to do with an inability to find someone who could fulfil that role while committing to the associated musical and financial demands. The notion at the time was that Taylor was leaving tradition behind and that reinforced the idea that his perspective was coming more from a Eurological perspective than a historically Afrological one. The real reason seems much less romantic - when reasonably paying performances were few and far between and there was no musical advantage coming from the inclusion of a bass player in the band, it was better to split the pay 3 ways rather than 4.

Taylor's recording after "Into The Hot", "Nefertiti, The Beautiful One Has Come", features only the bassless trio of Taylor, Lyons and Cyrille alongside guest Albert Ayler on tenor saxophone. The liner notes of the original 1976 American release of the album (it was partially released as "Live at Cafe Montmartre" in Denmark in 1963) features an interview with Taylor where he criticizes bassist Scott LaFaro for an inability to be heard

in a live setting and emphasises his need for the bass to either be “present” or not there at all ⁸⁵ while he praises Charlie Haden for being “present”. Interestingly, during the interview Taylor was referring to LaFaro’s playing with Bill Evans which was very mobile and rarely rested for long in a quarter-note walking pattern while Haden’s playing at the time was very much rooted in walking. One would guess that Taylor is speaking both literally and figuratively about “presence” - not just about artistic engagement but about being audible in an acoustic setting.

The decision to perform as a bassless trio on the album, recorded live at Cafe Montmartre in Copenhagen during Taylor’s first European tour in November 1962, was effectively made by Grimes⁸⁶ but Taylor made no attempt to replace him and chose to primarily continue without a bass player not only for the near-term of the tour ⁸⁷, but upon their return, for a months - long Monday night residency through Winter and Spring 1963 at the Take Three Coffee House in New York City.

After Spring of 1963 Taylor did not perform with any regularity (and did not record at all between 1962 and 1966), with or without a bass player, until 1965 when the advocacy of Bill Dixon’s Jazz Composer’s Guild and the public support of John Coltrane provided opportunities for bringing the music of the jazz avant-garde out of the fringes of New York’s nightlife into concert halls and major jazz festivals.

⁸⁵ Taylor quoted by Hentoff (1976)

⁸⁶ He missed the flight to Europe.

⁸⁷ There exists a recording made at Stockholm’s Golden Circle with bassist Kurt Lindstrom who is largely inaudible and was only present for two nights of the week-long engagement. He was likely hired by the club to fill out the advertised quartet and not by Taylor.

Part 2 - 1963-1964

"I had been attracted to the musical idea of two bass players for many years." –

Bill Dixon ⁸⁸



*Henry Grimes, Jimmy Lyons, Lewis Worrell and Albert Ayler, mid-1960s -
photo by Raymond Ross*

⁸⁸ Dixon in Young (1998)

Principal Timeline

1964 - Albert Ayler records his first album with his own group, including both Earle Henderson and Henry Grimes. Shortly after, he meets Gary Peacock with whom he forms a trio that performs extensively.

1964 - Bill Dixon, who had been experimenting in unrecorded contexts with two basses since the late 1950s forms the Jazz Composers Guild brings together a wide range of figures involved with the jazz avant-garde. His portion of the album “ The Archie Shepp Quintet / Bill Dixon Septet” includes both Hal Dodson and David Izenzon.

1964- John Coltrane records “A Love Supreme”

Albert Ayler

“The point of having two basses is that thereby you can go in two different harmonic directions, which are, however, integrally connected so that you remain in organic unity.”

⁸⁹- Albert Ayler ⁹⁰

Cleveland native Albert Ayler first gained some notoriety after joining Cecil Taylor’s bassless trio briefly during the group’s European tour of 1962, appearing on recordings that are included in the boxed-set versions of the “Live at The Cafe Montmartre” materials. He was offered a what was to be his first recording session ⁹¹ in Denmark for his debut album with Taylor, Lyons, and Murray serving as sidemen however by the date of the recording the trio had already left the country. Not wanting to cancel the recording, Ayler hired a group of local musicians that included a 16 year-old Neils Henning Orsted-Pederson as bassist. Without preparation or a clear idea of Ayler’s musical concept, the group resorted to playing jazz standards - an environment that Ayler may have been comfortable with,⁹² but not one where he conformed to

⁸⁹ Ayler in the liner notes for the original release of “Live in Greenwich Village”

⁹⁰ Although we are taking “harmonic” as relating directly to musical harmony and physical vibration, Ayler, like Ornette Coleman, often used musical terms to describe esoteric concepts like spiritual “vibration”.

⁹¹ His earliest available recording, “Something Different” was a set of standards record live for private use - it was only released much later (without Ayler’s blessing) once Ayler had developed some acclaim

⁹² Ayler was not hesitant to jump on stage with his horn and begin playing standards with people, often clearing the stage when doing so. Bernard Stollman, who formed the highly revered ESP Records in 1964 in order to release Ayler’s music recounts that the first time he heard Ayler was as an uninvited guest with pianist Elmo Hope who promptly left the stage.

contemporary norms. The result is a strikingly idiosyncratic interpretation of common jazz repertoire from Ayler, but one where despite “the fact that the entire group had some strong empathy for Ayler”⁹³ the rest of the band remained stylistically within the mainstream of jazz at the time (despite Pedersen’s remarkable musicality and sensitivity, even at that young age).

Ayler returned to the US in Spring 1963 and was invited to join Cecil Taylor’s group during his Take Three Cafe residency. Although this afforded Ayler an opportunity to perform with like-minded musicians including not only the members of Taylor’s group but John Coltrane and Eric Dolphy, there was little or no money involved and Ayler was forced to return to his hometown of Cleveland.

In Cleveland, Ayler formed a band with saxophonist Charles Tyler and without being able to find a bass player who was both willing and able to play Ayler’s music, Ayler convinced pianist Earle Henderson to take up the bass and taught him how to play according to Ayler’s own vision of how the bass should function in his music - a vision doubtlessly affected by his time spent with Taylor.⁹⁴

Henderson, although he presumably had a requisite understanding of harmony and other musical concepts due to his (unreported) experience as a pianist, did not have the time to develop many of the skills that were associated with competent jazz bass playing at the time. Then, just as today, there was a tacit conception that being able to play competently in straight-ahead settings was a prerequisite for moving towards “free-jazz”. As such, “playing free” could be justified as a choice rather than a

⁹³ Baraka (1969), p.172

⁹⁴ A few years later, Ayler taught his brother, Donald, to play trumpet in order to continue ideas that he had explored with Don Cherry.

lack of ability on the instrument. In the case of a pianist such as Cecil Taylor, for instance, there was a relatively clear set of influences and a demonstrable physical prowess on his instrument coupled with a confidence that painted him as idiosyncratic rather than unable. According to Jost, even the “young guard of free jazz - Archie Shepp, John Tchicai, Marion Brown and others - was primarily concerned with finding its own identity in the terms of the standards established by the founding fathers.”⁹⁵

Ayler made no obvious attempts to connect with jazz history and his “renunciation of the conventions of jazz”⁹⁶ included the assumption that the bass was no longer expected to continue as a stylistic signifier or shibboleth to other musicians - a role that was inextricable from the swing feel and walking bass line that defined jazz even amongst the most idiosyncratic of the jazz avant-garde musicians up until 1964 .

In inviting Henderson to join his group Ayler created an opportunity to experiment with avoiding references to walking bass lines while maintaining a sense of the supporting role of the bass within the nominal jazz ensemble. Without the instinct to not just walk, but to walk as if one is supporting shifting and complex tonal harmony, ideally the bassist would invent a new approach to playing Ayler’s music without the tether to the past conventions that by 1964, had even been more-or-less broken in the drums by innovators like Sunny Murray, Andrew Cyrille and Milford Graves.

It is here that we see an important point that comes up in the two-bass tandems that we see arising in the middle part of the 1960s.

In the earlier part of the decade the success of two bassists playing together was more or less linked to not only an ability to be musical, but a high level of ability on the

⁹⁵ Jost (1973) p. 124

⁹⁶ *ibid.*

instrument as well as a deep connection to the established standards that Jost mentions above. If we use Coltrane as the example, Art Davis, Jimmy Garrison, and Reggie Workman were all highly accomplished musicians within a “jazz” setting as it was understood at the time - they could all play over chord changes, could “swing” appropriately, could play their instruments on a demonstrably high level. This attachment was part of the problem - Coltrane was looking for more mobility and rhythmic freedom coming from the bass player than was understood as appropriate and needed to experiment with two basses as an interim step to break free from tradition.

With Henderson we see our first inclusion of the “free” players⁹⁷ that Alan Silva talks about in his quote at the beginning of this paper and as we look ahead to the two-bass pairings of the coming years, a significant pattern emerges where the tandem consists of a bassist rooted in the tradition and one who is not, or Silva’s “free” bassist and “time” bassist.

Of course it’s possible that non-musical reasons contribute to the coming dynamic. Despite the stature that some musicians of the jazz avant-garde now hold, work was sporadic and poorly paying but a competent bassist could always find work whether it be in more “traditional” jazz settings or in a wedding band so although it was difficult to maintain any kind of consistent ensemble, it was even harder to keep a bass player. Ayler’s financial prospects were unusually grim and his choice of accompanying musicians was not always based on ability but availability. The augmentation of a touring bassist with a more experienced bassist for the sake of recording - rare

⁹⁷ We’re not sure how willingly a “free” player Henderson was

occasions where the musicians were paid any significant amount⁹⁸ - may have produced distinct aesthetic results, but also may not have been entirely motivated by the music.

Ayler, Tyler, and Henderson moved to New York in late 1963 and the opportunity arose for Ayler to record in 1964 for Debut records on the condition that he hire Sunny Murray and Henry Grimes as the rhythm section. Ayler brought Henderson and fellow Cleveland native Norman Howard and although Grimes and Henderson alternated through most of the session, they played together on the title song “Witches and Devils”. This marks the very first time that Ayler played with two bassists, and the overall sound of the song is very different than the others.

On “Witches and Spirits” we hear Henry Grimes playing something very much like we heard on “Pots” two years before although in a sparser iteration. He is breaking up the overall sense of a consistent time feel and locked-in gravity by interjecting segments of walking time that are not obviously related to one another but whose tempo is presumably determined by an audible hint on the part of a bandmate. When playing with Taylor, these hints that Grimes latches on to are obvious given the maximalist nature of Taylor’s piano playing, but given the much more abstract nature of both the music as a whole and Sunny Murray’s playing on this song the time suggestions are not obvious.

These oscillating segments of walking bass are interrupted and confronted by Henderson’s bowed bass playing. Henderson, a bassist without the same advantages provided by of formal training as Grimes remains largely in the low register of the

⁹⁸ At least, in principle. Established record labels like Impulse! and Blue Note certainly paid properly and on time but smaller labels like ESP were known to be unreliable in terms of artist compensation.

instrument, is largely out-of-tune, and does not appear to be concerned with leaving sonic space to Grimes so a kind of barrier arises that seems to interrupt the tendencies of both Grimes and Murray, who likewise seems to be having his musical flow interrupted.

Earle Henderson and Henry Grimes on "Witches and Devils" -
see file babin_witches_and_devils.mp3

That flow is more obvious on "Spirits" from the same album which features the single bass of Grimes with Murray. Murray's not-entirely-consistent fast ride cymbal pattern pervades the song and without the same kind of rhythmic cues available from the rest of the band that Grimes had with Cecil Taylor, he is left to either act in conjunction with or opposition to that ride cymbal - at times playing a walking bass line as fast as possible while not exactly lining up tempo-wise with Murray and by playing open string pedal points.

Henry Grimes on Spirits - see file babin_spirits.mp3

"Holy, Holy" which includes just Earle Henderson does not have a particularly distinctive character apart from the songs with only Grimes, however the sense of movement and propulsion that we would expect from a bassist that is accustomed to playing swing time is not present. Grimes is playing an abstracted and distilled version

of the walking bass line - moments of expressed swing time marked with even quarter notes and pitch content based on step-wise motion. Henderson, on the other hand never settles into any sort of tempo, shifting or otherwise, and consistently repeats pitches ⁹⁹, often with accelerating or decelerating gestures, which bears no resemblance or connection to the walking bass line, abstracted or otherwise.

Earle Henderson on Holy Holy - see file babin_holy.mp3

Being an inexperienced bassist, it's very likely that Henderson's playing was not only informed by conceptual ideas around the breaking of norms, but by an inability to conform to them.

Nonetheless, though, the fact that those norms are being broken are perhaps more important than the lack of elegance in doing so and it is entirely possible that this recording is the first of the period with a bassist who truly operates outside the realm of traditional jazz bass playing.

Shortly after recording "Witches and Devils" in Winter 1964, Ayler met Gary Peacock and formed a working group with him and Sunny Murray, later including Don Cherry.

Peacock, like LaFaro, was a self-trained, late-blooming bassist who had been working with Bill Evans in late 1963 in exactly the same kind of semi-contrapuntal role

⁹⁹ Charlie Haden often repeated pitches but he did so as a harmonic device to emphasise resting and resolution points.

as LaFaro¹⁰⁰ but said that when he heard Ayler he felt that his music was “so genuine and so natural and so authentic that it was unavoidable”¹⁰¹

After a two-month period as a member of Miles Davis’ group in Spring 1964, Peacock devoted himself to Ayler’s music and the trio of Ayler, Peacock and Murray recorded the seminal jazz avant-garde album “Spiritual Unity” in July 1964.

Below is a transcription of the first 16 bars of Peacock’s bass line behind Bill Evan’s solo on We’ll Meet Again from the album Trio ‘64.

The image shows a musical score for a bass line in 3/4 time, starting in the key of B-flat major. The score is divided into four systems of four bars each. Chord symbols are placed above the notes. Bar numbers 5, 9, and 13 are indicated at the start of their respective systems. Trills and triplets are marked with '3' and a bracket.

System 1 (Bars 1-4):
 Bar 1: FMaj7
 Bar 2: D7
 Bar 3: B♭Maj7
 Bar 4: Am7

System 2 (Bars 5-8):
 Bar 5: Gm7
 Bar 6: B♭m7
 Bar 7: Am7
 Bar 8: Gm7 C7

System 3 (Bars 9-12):
 Bar 9: Am7
 Bar 10: A♭o
 Bar 11: Gm7
 Bar 12: C7

System 4 (Bars 13-16):
 Bar 13: E♭7
 Bar 14: D7
 Bar 15: Gm7
 Bar 16: C7

Figure 2.1 - Gary Peacock on "We'll Meet Again"

¹⁰⁰ He had developed his bass playing with Paul Bley’s trio and with Paul Motian was asked to replace Chuck Israels in Evans’ trio on Motian’s advice.

¹⁰¹ Schwartz (2008), Chapter 3

Note that, like LaFaro, Peacock is both outlining the harmonic movement of the chords and adding rhythmic complexity to the bass lines while spanning, in relative terms, both the upper and lower parts of the instruments. Unlike LaFaro, however, we see gestural elements in Peacock's playing like the glissandi in bars 3, 13, and 14 that not only are not typical of the regular jazz bass aesthetics of the time, but that would be lost in a more dense-sounding ensemble.

Compare the above to the below transcription of Ayler (top line) and Peacock (bottom line) on "Ghosts (1st Variation)" by Robert Sabin¹⁰²

1:35 *in tempo*

♩ = 184

1:37 *swing 160s*

♩ = 222

1:39 *faster*

tuplet tempo (♩ = 206) - previous (♩ = 222) x 9/10

9-10

1:41 *in tempo?*

♩ = 128

♩ = 176

Figure 2.2 - Gary Peacock and Albert Ayler on "Ghosts (1st Variation) , transcribed by Robert Sabin

¹⁰² Sabin (2015) p 544

In both examples of Peacock's playing we see an alternation between obvious bass-role type functionality in the lower part of the instrument and flourishes in the upper part of the instrument. The comfortable range of the instrument and how we might define the "upper part" is noticeable slightly different between the two songs - note that with Ayler Peacock tends to play higher up the fingerboard - higher pitches - than with Evans and the reason for this is quite simple -- the concerns of tuning are different with Ayler than Evans. Evans, of course is a pianist, and his subtle voicings require strong intonation in order to be effective while Ayler, whose intonation was not entirely predictable, included gestural musical events as musical content. Peacock could then feel free to play gesturally in the upper reaches of the instrument without concerns about intonation.

The transcription with Evans is certainly in time and harmonic but nonetheless there is a sense of gestural playing in bars 3, 13 and 1 where we see both upward movement followed by downward glissandi and note that that B natural in bar 3 is very likely an intonation issue more than a harmonic choice. Nonetheless, the segment is marked by an undulating motion of alternating playing low and marking time and reaching higher up the bass' fingerboard for melodic or rhythmic interjections.

The transcription with Ayler shows this same kind of overall movement but over a longer period. More importantly, though, are the segments at 1:39 and 1:41 where Peacock is not playing time in the sense of marking it - establishing an agreed-upon tempo so that everyone can use it as a reference - but he is playing something like time - segments where he is approximating the walking bass line without explicitly playing one.

On the earlier Ayler recording we have Grimes on one hand making an effort to abstract walking by shifting the underlying sense of tempo and Henderson on the other had playing gesturally, but on the newer one with Peacock where he “hints at chains of impulses”¹⁰³ we have a combination of the two where a sense of propulsion is achieved but is consistently destabilized by leaps to the upper parts of the bass. As a result, a kind of dialogue arises within the bass line itself that is perfectly audible - there are no moments when bass players are muddying each others’ sonic space - and that still gives a sense of multiple harmonic directions.

Peacock’s approach gives a sense of propulsion and both rhythmic and harmonic complexity but due to his highly elevated level of physical ability on the instrument - his “trademark virtuosity”¹⁰⁴ - the ability to play in that manner was a rare one. Although that rarity was disappearing in the straight-ahead jazz world as bassists adapted to the expectations of Bill Evans and Paul Bley’s piano trio concepts, , in the less lucrative¹⁰⁵ avant-garde that ability was uncommon.¹⁰⁶

Peacock toured with Ayler in Europe through Fall 1964 in a quartet which included Murray and Don Cherry, leaving the group after the end of the tour to be replaced by Lewis Worrell who “as nearly any bassist would, suffers by comparison with

¹⁰³ Jost (1973) p.128

¹⁰⁴ Sabin (2014) p. 49

¹⁰⁵ One does not like to think of the music of the period in these terms, but the adage “a good bass player will always find work” is true.

¹⁰⁶ It is of note that a young Eddie Gomez played in a number of “free” groups in the mid-1960s including ones led by Giuseppe Logan and Milford Graves before joining Bill Evan’s trio.

Gary Peacock”¹⁰⁷ and whose “dense, foggy rumbling”¹⁰⁸ was more akin to the meanderings of Earle Henderson.

Lewis Worrell on Bells, 1965 - see file babin_bells_.mp3

Note in the above segment that Worrell is mostly either sliding around the instrument with no sense of pitch centre while allowing the open strings to ring, or he is repeating single pitches while accelerating and decelerating - all characteristics of Henderson’s playing on “Witches and Devils” and effectively the opposite of the focused and mobile playing of Peacock.

Interestingly, a Downbeat Magazine “Blindfold Test” with saxophonist Booker Ervin featured a segment of “Bells” and Ervin commented “I’ve heard Albert Ayler play, and I’ve heard one record I really liked by him (Spiritual Unity)....But this record I didn’t particularly like because the music gave me no feeling of direction or anything...The bass player, he just sounded like he was running his fingers across the keys.”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Schwartz (2008), Chapter 3

¹⁰⁸ *ibid*

¹⁰⁹ Ervin quoted in Schwartz (1992)

Bill Dixon

“I wanted another bass player in there. with the three-horn front line, it was too much for one bass player and a drummer. The two bassists gave a real balance.” - Bill Dixon¹¹⁰.

Bill Dixon’s group that he co-led with Archie Shepp had two bassists – Jimmy Corbett and either Henry Grimes or Buell Neidlinger¹¹¹ - as early as 1959. Later (unrecorded) versions of the group alternated between one and two bass players and a 1962 version of the group with a single bassist (Don Moore and one track with Reggie Workman) was recorded for Savoy records.¹¹² The 1963 version of the group added John Tchicai and returned to a largely two bass format, mainly combinations of John Stevenson Jr., Gary Peacock, and Don Moore.

According to Dixon, “I wanted another bass player in there. I honestly can’t tell you why I wanted to see two. It may have been that the bassists we used all became free at the same time – who were you going to choose ? I don’t think it was purely for

¹¹⁰ Dixon took a long hiatus from performing after recording his 2nd album, “Intents and Purposes” with Jimmy Garrison and Reggie Workman, but upon his return to performing in the early 1980s he would continue to use 2 basses.

¹¹¹ Neidlinger was a member of Cecil Taylor’s group at the time, Shepp was to join it in 1960, and Henry Grimes in 1961.

¹¹² Shepp’s first recording as a leader and Dixon’s first time on record.

artistic reasons. But with the three-horn front line, it was too much for one bass player and a drummer. The two bassists gave a real balance.”¹¹³

In the Spring of 1963, Dixon developed embouchure problems and stepped away from the group, leaving it under the leadership of Shepp. The group renamed itself the New York Contemporary Five, consisting of Shepp, Tchicai, Don Cherry (trumpet), Don Moore (bass) and J.C. Moses (drums).

Dixon and Shepp had already signed a 2 record contract with Savoy but bad blood between them led to make the record with 2 groups – the New York Contemporary Five on side one, and Dixon’s new group with two bassists - Hal Dodson and David Izenzon - on side two.

This album, the aptly titled “Bill Dixon 7-tette/Archie Shepp and the New York Contemporary 5” is Dixon’s earliest recording with two bassists and the single extended piece “Winter Song” is an almost entirely through-composed piece. Interestingly, the piece is stylistically more similar to recordings by Chico Hamilton or Johnny Griffin than to what his contemporaries in the avant-garde were doing¹¹⁴. For the most part David Izenzon is playing fully notated ensemble parts and Hal Dodson is playing walking bass lines and despite Dixon’s proseletyzing about using two bassists, their utility is difficult to see on this record. The multi-horn front line is dense but relatively restrained throughout and without any kind of extended improvisations where intensity and volume grow and may require some kind of counterbalancing, it is difficult to hear what kind of balance

¹¹³ Dixon took a long hiatus from performing after recording his 2nd album, “Intents and Purposes” with Jimmy Garrison and Reggie Workman, but upon his return to performing in the early 1980s would continue to use 2 basses.

¹¹⁴ Shepp’s side is very much in the “free jazz”.

was needed or why there is even two basses on this album other than to fulfil a melodic role like that of the cello on Eric Dolphy's "Out There", for instance.

Bill Dixon Septet - Winter Song - David Izenzon, Hal Dodson - bass

see file babin_winter_song.mp3

There is a strong likelihood that Dixon's "Winter Song" is as much reaction to the music that he had anticipated Shepp playing on his half of the record - largely improvised and "free"¹¹⁵ - as an overall artistic statement. Dixon's importance, then, to the notion of using two basses during the 1960s is not so much related to his artistic output ¹¹⁶ but for his influence due to his ideas, both those related to his opinions about music and his advocacy for using two basses at once.

Dixon's real influence on the use of two basses during the 1960s comes from his status as a kind of "free jazz" promoter and philosopher rather than as a bandleader. His displeasure with his trumpet sound on his March 1964 recording led him to again back away from performing to work further on his embouchure during which time he worked as a transcriber for Savoy records as he promoted and booked a weekly performance series at the Cellar Cafe in Greenwich Village which led directly to the formation of The Jazz Composer's Guild and the October Revolution in Jazz festival in October 1964.

¹¹⁵ Although by modern standards, not really that "free"

¹¹⁶ Although he released the same number of studio albums during the 1960s as Cecil Taylor did.

It is via his influence as defacto leader of the Guild and booker for the October Revolution and subsequent events that Dixon was able to suggest to Cecil Taylor that adding a second bass to his band may be fruitful in aiding the advancement of his music. ¹¹⁷

John Coltrane

In Jimmy Garrison's work on "A Love Supreme" we see what is likely the full realization of Coltrane's vision that inspired the use of two bassists as a means to move beyond the static sound of one bass during the Steve Davis era. ¹¹⁸

After Rubato Intro,
Bass Begins Ostinato
at 0:33

4x

Coltrane Enters (1:04)

5

9

13

17

The image shows five staves of musical notation in bass clef, 4/4 time. The first staff is an ostinato pattern: a half note B-flat, a quarter note G, a quarter note F, a quarter rest, a quarter note E, a quarter note D, a quarter note C, and a quarter note B-flat. This pattern is repeated four times. The second staff begins with a measure number '5' and shows a more complex melodic line. The third staff begins with a measure number '9'. The fourth staff begins with a measure number '13'. The fifth staff begins with a measure number '17' and continues the melodic line.

Figure 2.3 - Jimmy Garrison on "Acknowledgement"

¹¹⁷ This is not only confirmed by Dixon's words reproduced in the next chapter, but in this author's conversations with both Eddie Gale and Alan Silva.

¹¹⁸ Or, if we listen to Jimmy Garrison before he began to perform with Coltrane. On Ted Curson's "Plenty of Horn" (1961) and Curtis Fuller's "Images" (1960), bass ostinati are performed by Garrison without variation.

Note that after the establishment of the bass ostinato beginning at 0:33, Garrison immediately moves away from it upon Coltrane's entry at 1:04.

While on "Out of This World" Garrison held on to fundamental elements of the "lower" part of the bass line - the part of the bass line that would have approximated the part of the bassist who established and maintained the ostinato in the lower range of the instrument in Coltrane's two-bass format - here Garrison quickly abandons the bass line. Rather than filling rhythmically elastic improvisation between more-or-less consistent and stable fundamental patterns, Garrison engages immediately on what Ekkehardt Jost refers to as "Chain-Motivic Development"¹¹⁹. Since the "A Love Supreme" bass pattern, repeated at various times in both the saxophone and as a chant, is so strong as an idea and as an *idée fixe*, there is no need for Garrison to return to it as a constant home base for the sake of formal rhythmic continuity. Instead, he builds his bass line in a linear fashion, interacting with Coltrane and building off of the music that immediately precedes while still maintaining a relatively small pitch collection while hearkening to the quote shown above, "I hope that he could play without any constraint, that's to say, to not stay locked into an unchangeable rhythmic line."¹²⁰

The day after the quartet recording of "A Love Supreme" on December 9, 1964. Coltrane recorded an alternate version of the album with Archie Shepp on 2nd tenor saxophone and Art Davis on bass.

Below is a brief transcription of a portion of the first take of the 2 bass version (Jimmy Garrison and Art Davis) of "Acknowledgement" and we can note how the addition of a second bass can, without proper considerations, make the music more restrictive rather than more free. In this case, the necessity of the two bass experiments of 1961 had disappeared since Garrison had assimilated the feeling of two basses by first emulating the sound of two basses and then becoming free in time and harmony as a result.

¹¹⁹ Jost (1973) p. 50

¹²⁰ See above

During the opening period of the 2 bass version, Art Davis plays in rhythmic unison with Jimmy Garrison adding double-stops that serve to thicken the composed bass line that is fundamental to both versions :



Figure 2.4 - Art Davis and Jimmy Garrison on "Acknowledgement (alt. take)"

In contrast to the one-bass version, the two-bass one features both bassists unmoving from the introductory bass line upon Coltrane's entry giving it a plodding, repetitive feeling to the piece that is not present in the version that was released. .

To further constrain the bass line, Archie Shepp begins doubling it in rhythmic unison, weighing it down even further and reducing the complexity and opportunities for interaction.

Garrison and Davis repeat the doubled line until 2:04 at which point Garrison begins to free up the time in a similar fashion to the above quartet version where he is the only bassist, although a sense of confusion rather than complexity persists until around 2:45 by which time Davis has stopped playing.

Acknowledgement alternate take - see file babin_love_alt.mp3

Firstly, the effect of the solo immovability of the basically unison bass line during much of the sextet version of "Acknowledgement" contrasts with the mobility of Garrison's playing behind in the quartet version and that mobility and the sense of freedom that is associated with it only

appears in the sextet version only after Davis stops playing (mostly). The two bass cadenza that finishes the piece likewise goes nowhere as Davis struggles in the upper end of the instrument and Garrison dispassionately plays the bass line until Davis drops out and Garrison can bring the song to a close.¹²¹

It seems most likely, however, that this seeming failure was the product of haste rather than an incompatibility or conceptual fault. Other John Coltrane albums with Garrison and Davis (or Reggie Workman and Davis, Garrison and Donald Garrett, or Garrison and Workman) had been planned to contain a bass line to be distributed between the two voices, which clearly was not done for this particular session.

Ultimately, though, it was not the resulting restrictiveness of the two-bass version of "Acknowledgement" that led it to the one-bass version being favored for release, it was the chant which was present on the one-bass version and not the two-bass one. Said Coltrane, "I had one part that I was singing on.....well, not singing, chanting - and another part that Archie and the other bass were on.....I felt that I wanted use the part that had the singing on, see. So that's the one that we did use."¹²²

For the most part, the 1962-1964 period saw few cases, at least in an innovative sense, of the use of two basses in the jazz avant-garde.

The problem that arose in Coltrane's music involving bass mobility in his modal songs was solved at first by using two basses, and then by the innovations of Jimmy Garrison which were soon demanded by other bandleaders and adopted by other bass players. A number of albums from the period that contain two basses are followers of Coltrane who are emulating the same two bass process either as a way of freeing up

¹²¹ Coltrane does not chant during this second take - although much of what we hear on the album are overdubs, at the root is his spontaneous chanting, the original of which is heard immediately before the forefronted overdubs are heard.

¹²² Devito (2010) p. 249

their own music in the absence of a bassist who played with the same kind of freedom as Garrison or as a way to signify on Coltrane's work.

Prince Lasha's 1962 album "The Cry" has both Gary Peacock¹²³ and Mark Proctor the songs that are either modal and ostinato-based where roles are defined and maintained as on "Africa" or "India" or slower-tempo swing songs where both bassists walk quarter notes at the same time in different ranges the same kind of double-stop movement that is heard at 19:00 on "Free Jazz". The higher tempo songs on the album have only one bass- Gary Peacock - who is walking and outlining chord structures.

Likewise, Eric Dolphy's 1963 album "Iron Man" includes the song "Burning Spear" with both Richard Davis and Eddie Khan on bass and the song follows a walking version of the Ole Coltrane model - Davis playing as he would whether or not there was a 2nd bassist, and Khan staying in the upper register and playing rhythmic patterns as a kind of pitched percussion.

The problem that was outlined by Gunther Shuller still remained, though - that the pitched walking bass line by its very nature imposed both a regular time feel and implied tonal harmony.

A solution was presented in the playing of Gary Peacock but his musicality and ability on his instrument was of a kind that was rare amongst bassists of any stripe, and even more so those with an interest in the avant-garde and the conviction in it to refuse engagements that paid properly¹²⁴.

¹²³ Notably playing much less freely than he would in late 1963 and 1964. This album was recorded in Los Angeles before Peacock had moved to New York and while he was still playing Shorty Rogers and his Giants.

¹²⁴ Note that bassist Eddie Gomez - a great technician and long-time accompanist of Bill Evans - played some of his earliest jazz gigs prior to meeting Evans as part of the October Revolution in Jazz with Giuseppe Logan and as a member of the New York Art Quartet with Roswell Rudd and John Tchicai.

Even when a bassist with the facilities of a Gary Peacock or a Scott LaFaro are interested in participating, there remains the problem of Cecil Taylor's "presence" of the bass. The physical demands of making oneself heard while remaining mobile in a trio with a relatively quiet drummer are entirely different from the ones where there are more and louder instruments. One could argue against Bill Dixon's opinion that a 2nd bass is needed to counterbalance three horns, especially when considering unamplified big band bassists or innovators like Charles Mingus and Paul Chambers, but Dixon is not referring to the needs of the 1950s. He is referring to the avant-garde where it was becoming obvious that the sacrifice of mobility for the sake of audibility was no longer acceptable, there needed to be both, and as the music got louder, the most expedient solution was to just include two bassists. The cumulative effect of the bassists would not emulate a bass section of an orchestra where they all play the same thing for the sake of volume, but one where each bassist devotes energy to both audibility and mobility and the sacrifice of some of that mobility in each voice is compensated by the other.

The creation of the Jazz Composer's Guild in 1964 was an advance for the music as a whole that showed there was a "predominately young public that was just as fed up with the ossified musical norms and with the commercial hustle of the Jazz clubs, too."

¹²⁵ These young, mostly college-age men and women were not just interested in listening to the music they were interested in hearing musicians talk about it as well. The Guild presented public discussions about music alongside concerts, which in turn drew the attention of colleges and other sources of funding that could move the beyond the confines of the jazz club. Given that the addition of the second bass was basically

¹²⁵ Jost (1973) p. 85

an additional expense, the Guild was able to point musicians in directions that could provide funding for things that the jazz club owner might be unwilling to pay for.

It is also via the Guild and its October Revolution in Jazz¹²⁶ festival that we might again entertain the influence of Sun Ra on the notion of using two basses. Sun Ra's Arkestra was based in New York during the 1960s and by 1964 he had demanded that his entire band all prepare themselves to be "doubblers" - multi-instrumentalists. The live recording, "Sun Ra with Black Harold" was made during the December version of the October Revolution at Judson Hall in New York and although Alan Silva is the only credited bassist (and cellist with his doubling instrument), a second bass is audible (although poorly recorded). Research by Ben Young¹²⁷ indicates that Ronnie Boykins was that second bass player. Despite the unreliable and unpredictable documentation and availability of his work, the influence of Sun Ra again should not be underestimated even if it is of an esoteric nature.

Taylor was a common and active participant in the panel discussions sponsored by the Jazz Composers Guild as were Dixon, Ayler, Archie Shepp, Pharoah Sanders and Alan Silva - all of whom had a major influence on both the coming period in the jazz avant-garde and and, in the cases of Ayler, Shepp and Sanders, equally major influence on the musician that by 1965 was regarded as the established leader of "The New Thing", John Coltrane

¹²⁶ Ayler, Peacock, Murray and Don Cherry were touring in Europe through the entire Fall of 1964 so none of them was able to participate in the events.

¹²⁷ Young (1998) p. 335

Part 3 - 1965 - 1967

*“Because I want more of the sense of the expansion of time. I want the time to be more plastic.”*¹²⁸ - John Coltrane explaining why he was using two basses during the Fall of 1965



Sonny Johnson, Jimmy Garrison, Pharoah Sanders, Rashied Ali, John Coltrane, Omar Ali, Algie Dewitt, 1966- photo by Frank Kofsky

¹²⁸ Coltrane in the liner notes of the original release of Om.

Principal Timeline

1965 - After recording “A Love Supreme”, John Coltrane adds Art Davis as second bassist with Jimmy Garrison for the recording sessions in the Winter and Spring, and adds Donald Garrett as a touring 2nd bassist from September 1965 until February 1966, recording “Kulu Se Mama”, “Om”, “Selflessness” and “Live in Seattle”¹²⁹

1965 - Gary Peacock retires from performing and although Ayler includes a single bassist for most regular performances, recordings and major performances in the coming years feature two bassists.¹³⁰

1965 - Ornette Coleman returns to performing with a trio that includes David Izenzon.

1966 - Cecil Taylor records two albums for Blue Note Records - his first recordings since 1961 - that include both Henry Grimes and Alan Silva on Bass. A European tour that was to include both bassists followed in late 1966 /early 1967 but Grimes cancelled at the last minute.

1966- Bill Dixon records his only full album of the 1960s, “Intents and Purposes”, which includes a two-bass ensemble with Reggie Workman and Jimmy Garrison. He performs only rarely for the next decade with no recordings and no bass player until the mid-1970s.

1966 -Coltrane’s health impacts his scheduling reliability and regularly canceled performances lead to a varying ad hoc group of musicians, at times with no bassist, for most performances after the Japanese tour of summer 1966. His last known performances with 2 basses were in December 1966.

1967 - Ornette Coleman augments his trio with Charlie Haden to include 2 basses. The group tours until mid-1968.

1967 - John Coltrane dies in July.

¹²⁹ These albums were all released on CD by Impulse in 1990 collected as “The Major Works of John Coltrane”

¹³⁰ Although only Silva is heard on “Love Cry”, he indicated in conversation that he arrived at the studio with the expectation that Bill Folwell would be present too.

John Coltrane

Ekkehart Jost defines three periods of John Coltrane's work as a bandleader.¹³¹ The first is a period of "experimentation with vertical, harmonic development" from the late 1950s into the 1960s that began with *Blue Train* (1958) and flowered through *Giant Steps* (1960) with Coltrane's explorations of the dense harmony of the so-called "Coltrane Changes".

A second period of "modal linearity" saw its infancy on *My Favorite Things* (1961), developed through *Africa / Brass* (1961) and *Live! at the Village Vanguard* (1962), reaching its apex with *A Love Supreme* (1965). As noted above, this "modal" period began with experimentations with two basses that led to Jimmy Garrison's characteristic mobility while playing modal ostinati.

The third and final period, the "sound exploration" period, can be heard in early stages on Coltrane's recordings from the first part of 1965 developing until *Ascension*, recorded in June 1965, and continuing until his final recordings in March 1967¹³². Like the and this new period too begins with extended experimentation in using two basses.

After the abandoned attempt to introduce two basses during the recording sessions for "A Love Supreme" in December, 1964¹³³, Coltrane gathered Jimmy Garrison and Art Taylor together in the studio for a session in February, 1965 that would

¹³¹ Jost, pp 17-34

¹³² That were releases on Impulse! In Sept. 1967 as part of the album "Expression". Although Coltrane

¹³³ See Part I

be partially included on the album “John Coltrane Plays”¹³⁴, released in August of the same year.

In contrast to the two-bass concept that Coltrane had worked with during the 1961-62 period ¹³⁵, this new one did not rely on rhythmic intricacies that connected the two basses together, but the opposite. This very different concept that we first encounter in “Nature Boy” (notwithstanding the unused “Love Supreme” takes) does not rely on interdependence to achieve a final result, but rather independence. The bassists are not sticking to roles that require a measure of restraint in order to work - separate simple lines that are slightly altered or one bassist who remains static while another is more active - but both appear to be fully interacting with Coltrane without considering what the other is doing. Despite the initial orchestration of having Garrison play with his fingers and Davis play with a bow, both bassists are functionally doing the same thing - improvising with Coltrane - and in doing so are creating a dense, if indistinct, sonic bed.

When we compare the kind of interlocking two-bass figures that characterized the first period of Coltrane’s use of two basses to what is happening here with “Nature Boy”, it seems clear that both the intention and the result of the instrumentation is radically different.

The recordings which feature either Art Davis and Reggie Workman or Workman and Jimmy Garrison from 1961 focus on a liberation of rhythmic content with each bassist playing relatively simple and repeated patterns with the end goal of a cumulative and complex pattern that does not repeat with the consistency that either of the two

¹³⁴ The entire session is available as a bonus on the Impulse! CD reissue

¹³⁵ as described in Part 1, the earlier concept was one of interlocking rhythmic patterns with pitch content that was closely aligned with the underlying modal harmony.

parts does. The end desired result is not a densification of texture but a liberation of rhythmic elements which was developed by Garrison into an effect achievable by a single bassist.

The difference between this early concept and the new one that we hear on “Nature Boy” is immediately audible.

Neither Jimmy Garrison nor Art Davis appears to be restrained by either the harmonic or rhythmic content of the thematic material of Nature Boy (we should point out that the standard chord changes for the song are abandoned in favor of a modal pedal point), nor do they appear to be restrained by a desire to complement the other’s use of space. In fact, one might wonder if there is any regard on the part of the bassists at all towards each other at all. Both bassists do make periodic references to the key centre and to the time feel as expressed by Tyner and Jones, if at times obliquely, but these references mostly become obscured by the actions of the other bassist. It would seem that this may be the very point - that the goal is to disrupt formal references to harmony, rhythmic patterns and chord cycles.

One might make a comparison to the game of shuffle chess where chess pieces are randomly placed on the board before the game begins, ensuring that although the players still adhere to the customs of action - how pieces interact with one another and move - they must also improvise in a way that they likely would not were they able to rely on gameplay traditions and patterns.

The song Chim Chim Cheree off of “The John Coltrane Quartet Plays” gives an interesting point of comparison to “Nature Boy”. If we ignore the bassist(s) in either version, the musical language that is being used is the same highly evolved one that

the group had developed during the preceding four years. That language involves freely playing over a modal pedal point without losing a sense of harmonic grounding or time feel, and yet “Nature Boy” sounds noticeably chaotic in comparison to “Chim Chim Cheree”. Aside from the fact that Coltrane is playing soprano saxophone on “Chim Chim Cheree”¹³⁶ (and a $\frac{3}{4}$ time feel) the primary performative difference between the two songs is the fact that “Nature Boy” has two bassists and “ChimChim Cheree” has only one.

Below is a transcription of Art Davis and Jimmy Garrison playing on “Nature Boy” beginning at 3:00 on the album, and the start of the audio excerpt embedded below

3:00
Art Davis (arco)
Jimmy Garrison (pizz)

5
Indistinct Pitch

9
Indistinct Pitch

Figure 3.1 - Art Davis and Jimmy Garrison on "Nature Boy"

¹³⁶ Like he had on My Favorite Things. The similarity in the two songs and the instrumentation may not be a coincidence given what we now know to be the direction in which Coltrane wanted to take his music and pressures from the record company to generate income.

Take note of the seeming lack of cohesion between the two bassists. Not only does there appear to be no sense of rhythmic connectivity between the two, but there is also a lack of a harmonic one as well. The song itself is not without a key - it is in E minor - and this is not only obvious in the initial melody of the song, a jazz standard, but reinforced by Tyner's modal pedal point throughout. In the above segment of the recording we can see that in the initial moments of the transcription Garrison is, in fact, outlining the same E minor pitch collection that Tyner is using and that, under more familiar circumstances to listeners, would be considered idiomatic. The pitch content of the first four bars of Garrison's playing primarily consists of the root and the fifth of the E- minor tonality with fourteen of the nineteen plucked notes being either an E (root) or a B (5th).

Davis too is playing within the E minor tonality during the first two bars of the above transcription, if largely avoiding the E and B pitches that Garrison is favoring, however by bar 3 of the above we see the introduction of the C pitch - not strictly "wrong" but a coloring tone (flat 6) that risks clashing with Garrison's pitch content - and in bar 4 we see both an Eb and a Db. Davis repeats an altered version of the same figure in bar 5, ending on a strongly resounding Eb and thereafter for the next 5 bars there is no obvious harmonic relationship between either the two bassists, or either of the bassists and the E minor tonality that Tyner is clearly still emphasising.

At the end of bar six Garrison begins playing chromatically rather than harmonically, first descending from an E and then moving up and down between an Eb and an F while Davis tremolos pitches that slide between each other with varying velocities.

Compared to the strict harmonic adherence of the earlier period of two basses in Coltrane's music, the relationship between the bassists and between either or both of them and Tyner seems at least nontonal if not entirely chaotic.

Notwithstanding the complications related to pitch, Garrison's rhythmic ideas appear halting and at times jarring - more like interventions than considered evolutions. Given the densifying of the sonic space with addition of Davis we might guess that Garrison was no longer able to work through his ideas like he had been - taking an idea and developing it over 20 or 30 seconds of real time was impossible given that he was no longer in full control of the audible "bass" part of the band . That is not to say, however, that there is no interaction between the two bass players. Garrison's reactions to Davis - finding spaces to play in and vice versa - is remarkably quick. Even when looking at the contours of the notated portion, we see how Garrison tends to fill in rhythmic spaces left by Davis, particularly at times where Davis is performing a tremolo, although to the eye that can also be deceiving because the tremolo texture is by its nature a dense one. Garrison, then, in having this extra consideration for sound-space cannot develop his material in the same way, and Davis himself is playing much more densely than on the 1961 recordings.

By 1965, there was no reason to add a second bass player to loosen the bass function - Garrison had already developed a multi-layered way of performing with Coltrane where rhythmic and harmonic tensions and releases, "ins" and "outs", were dynamic and interactive.

The addition of Davis, who already had been playing a coloring rather than fundamental role in the 1961 recordings, seems to in effect remove the impact of

Garrison's freedom and restrain his thematic and rhythmic elasticity so that the entire bass palette becomes dense - between the two voices the movements of tension, release and development become lost so that one has a sense of unreleased tension and stasis.

Coltrane chose the material that was to be released on "The John Coltrane Quartet Plays", leaving out alternate takes as well as other compositions from both the February and May 1965 recording sessions, so clearly he had a reason to include "Nature Boy" on the album. He was known to be highly discretionary if inscrutable when in determining recordings to be released and there was more than enough material recorded in May 1965 to make an entire album, as well as at least two other complete pieces from February 1965. Producer Bob Thiele was known to have easily indulged Coltrane's wishes and a large body of recorded works was consistently being collected, if not kept and /or released. According to Thiele, "I think my contribution with Trane was to let him record whenever he wanted to -even when the corporate power structure was opposed to it. I believe his contract called for two albums a year to be recorded and released. Well, hell, we recorded six albums a year. And I was always brought on the carpet because they couldn't understand why I was spending the money to record Coltrane, since we couldn't possibly put out all the records we were making ..."¹³⁷

Although we cannot discount the suggestion that there may have been reasons other than the bass players that Nature Boy was included on "The John Coltrane Quartet Plays"¹³⁸, we should also recognize that there was an abundance of material to

¹³⁷ Thiele, 1995, quoted in Wild, 1995

¹³⁸ On the boxed set "Heavyweight Champ" there are multiple takes of Coltrane stopping the band after his solo on Giant Steps when dissatisfied. It is entirely possible that his concern was with his own playing, although we could argue that his playing is inextricably from his band's playing.

be released and that despite pressures from the “corporate power structure” of Impulse! Records, Thiele acted as a buffer to ensure that Coltrane had final word on what was released and what was not.

A well known anecdote is the one where after the printing of Ascension had already begun and a batch of albums had shipped, Coltrane decided that he preferred a separate take and Thiele pushed the company to literally stop the presses, and replace the rest of the run with the alternate version of the album.¹³⁹

In early June, 1965, Coltrane approached Jimmy Garrison with the idea of forming a large ensemble of “fifteen or twenty cats” where everyone played “free”¹⁴⁰.

With little preplanning, Coltrane convened a large group of musicians – the quartet plus Art Davis, trumpeters Freddie Hubbard, Dewey Johnson, and saxophonists Archie Shepp, Marion Brown, John Tchicai and Pharoah Sanders – at the end of June to record two 40 minute-long takes of his extended piece, “Ascension”¹⁴¹

John Coltrane - Ascension (Part 1, Edition 1) - see file babin_ascension.mp3

At the moments of Ascension where Garrison is acting as sole bassist - the bulk of the record - we hear Garrison using his now-established elastic rhythmic and

¹³⁹ And thus the difference between Ascension “Edition 1” and “Edition 2” - both in exactly the same record jacket but with “Edition 2” inscribed directly on the vinyl of the replacement printing.

¹⁴⁰ Simpkins (1975) p.188

¹⁴¹ At the time, there was no pretense of forming a new “band” and the additional musicians understood that there was no plan to reproduce the work live. In a private conversation with trumpeter Eddie Gale, he said that he had been contacted by Coltrane to participate in the session but declined due to other work possibilities

harmonic language to communicate with his bandmates however as soon as Davis joins him, the nature of the bass function changes. Like we saw above on Nature Boy, a sense of disjunction and a move away from a discernible evolution of the bass line arises in favour of a thick and abstract density despite the fact that, like Nature Boy, there is a clear harmonic basis that, according to Archie Shepp, “was keyed, especially in McCoy’s playing, to a minor blues.”¹⁴²

Instead of a sense that a linearly evolving and stable foundation is being stretched and manipulated on Nature Boy and on the two bass portions of Ascension the foundation becomes formless and indistinct with no discernible sense of linear or repetitive grounding in either harmony or rhythm. Using a visual analogy, instead of an elastic band repeatedly being stretched and manipulated to be released to return to its basic form like when Garrison is playing alone, once Davis (or Donald Garrett) is added the “bass section” becomes a lump of plasticine, formless with no rebounding motion to ground itself to form but easily manipulated.

The last performances of the John Coltrane Quartet were during a week-long engagement in Indianapolis at the beginning of September, 1965 ¹⁴³, after the recording sessions on September 2nd that were later released as “First Meditations”. For Coltrane’s next week-long engagement, beginning September 19th in San Francisco, he invited saxophonist Pharoah Sanders and bassist Donald Garrett to join the group alongside the regular quartet members.

¹⁴² Simpkins (1975) p.189

¹⁴³ There is some dispute about whether or not it was, in fact, a “classic” quartet show since according to Lewis Porter there exists a concert report in the Village Voice of a show including Elvin Jones at the same time.

Immediately after the end of this San Francisco engagement, the sextet travelled to Seattle for a week-long engagement during which time the albums “Live In Seattle” and “Om” were recorded.

The “Live In Seattle” material, recorded on September 30, 1965 during band’s week-long residency at the Penthouse Club in Seattle, is of particular interest since the material on the album is a mix of the long-form and unstructured material that came to characterize Coltrane’s late work and the material that the quartet had been performing during its almost 4-year existence. As a result, we are able to directly compare the manner that Jimmy Garrison plays on quartet material with the cumulative effect of both Garrison and Donald Garrett on that same material.

“Out of This World” is one of the songs that appears on both “Live in Seattle” and in Coltrane’s earlier work and we can hearken back to the earlier part of this paper where we saw how Garrison had synthesized the character of the two bass recordings of 1961 to bring a new kind of freedom to the bass line and to Coltrane’s music.

The fundamental structural elements of the “Live In Seattle” version of “Out of This World” are very similar to the ones from the album “Coltrane” that is discussed above but there is an immediate audible difference between the two recordings occurs right at the introduction of the song when the bass ostinato begins alongside the piano and drums. McCoy Tyner is very clearly playing in a key (of Eb) but Donald Garrett, however, is playing open strings creating an obvious harmonic tension that undermines the stability of the modal tonality.

Garrison himself appears to be caught between a rock and a hard place initially, playing the characteristically strummed rhythmic pattern first closer to an E minor tonality before descending to harmonize with Tyner's Eb while Garret still plays an E.

Out Of This World (Oct 1965 version) - Jimmy Garrison, Donald Garrett - bass
- see file babin_out.mp3

The overall effect of the inclusion of Garrett is, like the one from Nature Boy, one of disruption. Coltrane's quote about the expansion of time does not seem to fully apply here, especially since Tyner and Jones, like on Nature Boy and Ascension, seem to be playing in the same way that they had before Garrett joined the group.

With a few exceptions including the album "*Meditations*", recorded in October 1965, this sextet format with two tenor saxophones, two basses, piano and drums, became Coltrane's core ensemble, often augmented during touring with the inclusion of local musicians, and the group recorded the albums "Live In Seattle", "Selflessness", "Kulu Se Mama" and "Om" between September 1965 and November 1965.

Elvin Jones moved in-and-out of the group from the recording of *Meditations* in November, 1965 until finally quitting permanently mid-gig in February 1966¹⁴⁴, and McCoy Tyner had been replaced by the newly-married Alice Coltrane so by Coltrane's West Coast tour of February 1966, the regular band included Coltrane, Sanders, Garrison, Garrett, Alice Coltrane, and Rashied Ali but no recordings exist of this band.

¹⁴⁴ Jones famously left a gig in San Francisco and flew directly to Germany to begin a tour with Duke Ellington

With small children and the beginnings of Coltrane's health problems, John and Alice Coltrane spent a period of reduced activity remaining in and around New York¹⁴⁵, with most out-of town performances cancelled.¹⁴⁶

The group recorded as a quintet with only Garrison on bass in both April and May 1966 but none of the material was ever released ¹⁴⁷ and due to contractual obligations, Impulse! recorded and released "Live at The Village Vanguard Again!" in May – an album where Garrison can barely be heard over the wash of saxophones and drums aside from a stunning bass solo in the middle of the session.¹⁴⁸

After more cancelled concerts, the quintet - John Coltrane, Alice Coltrane, Sanders, Garrison and Rashid Ali embarked on an extended tour of Japan during the summer, stopping for a two-week quintet engagement in San Francisco before returning to New York at the end of August, 1966.

By Fall, Coltrane's health was failing and he had effectively become inactive, cancelling a major European tour¹⁴⁹ which left Garrison and Ali no choice but to commit to other bandleaders. The few performances that are documented were largely performed by ad hoc groups although bassists Sonny Johnson and Sirone, and drummers Omar and Muhammed Ali (Rashied's brothers) were known to have

¹⁴⁵ The rest of the band returned to New York as well except for Garrett, who remained in Los Angeles - unlike the rest of the band, he was not a New York resident and with most upcoming shows cancelled he took work on the West Coast. Garrett's absence did not go unnoticed - a review by J.B Figi of a concert performed on a stop in Chicago while returning to New York, available at jazzinchicago.org, said "**...Garrison's long bass solos remain interludes, adjuncts unaccepted by the bulk of the music...Maybe a second bassist,say Donald Garrett, would have added that much more (order).**"

¹⁴⁶ Including significant ones - week-long engagements in Philadelphia, Austin and Montreal.

¹⁴⁷ According to archivist Yasuhiro Fujioka both sessions at Van Gelder Studios are now lost.

¹⁴⁸ This would seem to conform to Figi's description and complaint above about the show in Chicago.

¹⁴⁹ Where he was replaced by Albert Ayler

performed with Coltrane in the period. As few-and-far-between as they were, the known concerts from Fall 1966 seem to have primarily favored large ensembles, often including members of the audience.¹⁵⁰ The only available recording from the entire period from July 12, 1966 (*Coltrane in Japan*) to Feb 15 1967 (*Expression / Stellar Regions*) is a poorly recorded single-microphone amateur bootleg that was released in 2014 as “The Offering: Live at Temple University”¹⁵¹, which, although the liner notes credit Sonny Johnson and Rashied Ali and the concert programme listed the “classic” quartet, likely contains no bassist ¹⁵² and Muhammad Ali (Rashied’s other brother) on drums ¹⁵³ alongside a number of audience members who were invited on stage to perform when it was discovered that they had brought their instruments to the concert.

Coltrane’s last performance of 1966, followed by only three known live performances¹⁵⁴, was in New York with a group that included both Sonny Johnson and Jimmy Garrison on December 26th, 1966. Although there are claims that this concert was recorded, neither the multiple editors and authors of *The John Coltrane Reference* nor author Frank Kofsky ¹⁵⁵ have been successful in finding one, and it is likely that if there ever was one, it no longer exists.

¹⁵⁰ The Baltimore concert that was recorded and released as *The Offering: Live at Temple University* in 2014 featured two saxophone players who arrived with the intention of only using their horns as props to trick security into giving them access to the backstage area of the concert hall to meet Coltrane.

¹⁵¹ The liner notes by Ashley Kahn won the Grammy Award that year for “Best Liner Notes”

¹⁵² The ad hoc nature of the few Fall 1966 performances led to other concerts where it is confirmed that no bassist was present.

¹⁵³ There is no audible bass whatsoever on the recording, and Rashied Ali, in a 2003 interview with Yasuhiro Fujioka, claimed that he was at another gig that night but had sent his brother as a sub.

¹⁵⁴ All other concerts were cancelled.

¹⁵⁵ Kofsky was present at the concert and took a number of photographs

By 1967 Coltrane's health had deteriorated drastically and he and Alice had another child in March, making it effectively impossible to tour ¹⁵⁶, although he was able to record in February and March at Van Gelder Studios with Alice, Garrison, and Rashied Ali – recordings from which the albums *Expression* (1967), *Interstellar Space* (1974) and *Stellar Regions* (1995) were taken.

Coltrane's last concert in New York¹⁵⁷, on April 23rd, 1967 was recorded and released as *The Olatunji Concert* (2001) and although only Garrison is credited (and is very close to the recording microphone resulting in a presence on the recording that was likely quite different than the concert), Lewis Porter suggests that there was a second, poorly recorded bassist present. ¹⁵⁸

John Coltrane died on July 17, 1967.

¹⁵⁶ He performed one show with Thelonious Monk in Detroit, and although his "Quartet" was on the bill, it was Monk's rhythm section with John and Alice Coltrane.

¹⁵⁷ Formerly considered his last concert on Earth until saxophonist Ellery Eskelin's research confirmed that a concert in Baltimore previously believed to have been cancelled was, in fact, not.

¹⁵⁸ At times it does sound like two basses, one barely audible, but in the general chaos of the overdriven recording and Garrison's close proximity to the microphone it's possible that we are hearing uncredited, tuned African drums.

Albert Ayler



Albert Ayler, Donald Ayler, Sunny Murray, Charles Tyler, Henry Grimes, Gary Peacock recording “Spirits Rejoice”, September 1965 - photo by Guy Kopelowicz

In September 1965, ESP Records rented Judson Hall in New York City to record a mobile studio album¹⁵⁹ and although Lewis Worrell had become Ayler’s regular bassist, he hired Peacock, who had lost interest in performing and was about to move to Japan to retire from music altogether, and Grimes to play for the recording.

The photograph above was taken at the Judson Hall recording session and it shows that the two bassists are recorded with their own microphones relatively close to the instruments, while the rest of the band is recorded with overhead microphones on

¹⁵⁹ That is, there was no audience

the opposite side of the stage. The resulting record, “Spirits Rejoice”, lets us hear the basses surprisingly well (Peacock’s bass sound is more focused than Grimes’ and as a result Peacock is more audible) as the rest of the band sounds distant in the cavernous hall, although the nature of the density of the music leaves it effectively untranscribable.

This untranscribable nature does not render the basses indistinct - while at times Grimes acts as a melodic instrument, playing composed materials with the bow during the thematic materials at the beginnings and endings of pieces, for the most part the two bassists create an unrelenting swirling mass that is not amorphous but that still maintains propulsive energy throughout. One can pick out each bass player and they are effectively both playing as their instincts dictate - Peacock moving between the low and high ends of the bass, Grimes tending to move between shifting walking-type bass lines - with no pretense of order. The net result, however is that a kind of propulsion arises from the basses, the kind that Jost refers to as having a “subjective” time feel rather than an “objective” one¹⁶⁰ where neither bassist can define moments of time or swing via “chain impulses” anymore but where the listener, whether it be a member of the band or an audience member, will interpret time according to perceived “impulse density”¹⁶¹.

Albert Ayler - Prophet - Gary Peacock, Henry Grimes - bass

- see file babin_prophet.mp3

¹⁶⁰ Jost (1973) p.72

¹⁶¹ Jost (1973) p.73

The net effect is not similar to what is heard on “Free Jazz” where there are multiple “tracks” of bass playing where musicians within the ensemble can pick and choose which to play with, but where the “bass” is an aggregate of both. While Coleman indicates that when he is playing with two bassists he combines separate ideas from each in order to “open up” with improvisation, the rhythmic density of the combination of Peacock and Grimes would render such distinctions effectively impossible. While, as an exercise, we can listen intently to “Spirits Rejoice” and distinguish to a reasonable extent the character of each of the bassists, we are engaging in the same kind of recording-as-presence trap that is described by Taylor in that our recognition of the instruments is reliant on being recorded. From the perspective of the musicians in the room, no such distinction would be made since, firstly, the balance of volume of the instruments in the room was by no means what we hear on the album where the louder instruments appear to be quieter than the basses - the quietest instruments in the room. And secondly, the musicians and audience (and bassists themselves) did not benefit from the same stereo panning that we are now accustomed to hearing in music from the period that has been remixed to stereo, such as this recording.

Sunny Murray was able to secure funding for his own album as a leader in the Fall of 1965 and the band was effectively Ayler’s band but with Peacock now having left the music industry altogether, the two-bass tandem became Grimes and Worrell.

The album is poorly recorded and the basses are less distinguishable than on “Spirits Rejoice” but they are distinguishable enough to recognize that Peacock is not present and without his mobility in the upper range of the instrument or his clear tone on the bass, the mass of the bass players seem to lack any kind of propulsion.

Sunny Murray - Sonny's Time Now - Henry Grimes, Lewis Worrell - bass

- see file babin_sonny_time

The fact that the character of the bass and therefore the music is so different between “Sonny’s Time Now” and “Spirits Rejoice” does strongly suggest that despite the relative inaudibility of each individual bassist, the whole of the two of them playing together is still dependent on the interaction of rather than negation of individual voices.

Worrell, who we have already heard sliding and repeating notes in a way that does not add excitement to the music, has the same effect while Grimes is playing alongside. The two basses may sound like a single mass with notions of idiomatic harmony and rhythm gone out the window, but there is still enough subtlety in this way of using two basses that it is not just a binary practice where you either have two basses and create a swirling gravitational mass below a soloist or not.

A period of inactivity followed as the rest of Ayler’s band except for his brother Donald took other work but John Coltrane’s withdrawal from a European tour in the Fall of 1966 sponsored by the Newport Jazz festival left a spot for a group that would represent the “New Thing” and Ayler was approached to put together a replacement band. With his previous bandmates already engaged and with the festival unwilling to buy a plane ticket for a 2nd bassist, Ayler brought along only inexperienced bassist Bill Fowler who agreed to remain in Europe with Ayler after the festival concerts were finished in the hopes of finding some more work. That work never appeared but Coltrane had lobbied Impulse! Records to record Ayler and although they were unwilling

to pay for a recording session in a studio, the label's producers agreed to record a live concert. Ayler brought his band back to New York and added Henry Grimes on bass alongside Folwell to record the first of the two concerts from which the album "Live in Greenwich Village" were taken ¹⁶² and Silva along with Folwell for the second.

"Change Has Come " - Alan Silva , Bill Folwell - bass

- see file babin_change.mp3

"Truth Is Marching In" - Henry Grimes , Bill Folwell - bass

- see file babin_truth.mp3

Folwell had been primarily playing with a bow during the 1966 European tour ¹⁶³ and the additions of Silva and Grimes does not seem to alter his way of playing ¹⁶⁴ at all. Despite, the fact that the rest of band is exactly the same for the two recordings - Ayler's "working"¹⁶⁵ band of Ayler, Folwell, Donald Ayler on trumpet, Michael Sampson on violin, Joel Freidman on cello and Beaver Harris on drums - the music sounds very different.

¹⁶² This was Grimes' last recording before his disappearance

¹⁶³ The cover of Hat Hut's release of the collection of the tour's live recordings even shows Folwell playing with a bow

¹⁶⁴ A consistent complaint about Folwell and later regular bassist Steve Tintweiss was that it did not appear that they were at all listening to what was going on around them.

¹⁶⁵ In parenthesis because there was still very little work.

Grimes, who recorded his part of the record in December 1966 ¹⁶⁶ during the period where he was supposed to have been on tour with Taylor in Europe provides a relatively safe backdrop for the goings-on remaining in the low part of the instrument with irregular walking - like gestures and very little (admittedly one-way) interaction with Folwell.

Silva, who recorded his portion of the record in February 1967 after returning from the European tour with Taylor where he found himself the sole bass player, is moving rapidly around the instrument, exploring different sounds and rather than providing a solid walking- like foundation for the quite chaotic music, Silva is constantly interjecting with at times jarring accents that on one hand are not as dense as the ones that Jost might say are required for any kind of consistent impulse chain, but ones that at the same time give a sense of some kind of musical time. Although Folwell seems as oblivious with Silva as he was with Grimes, Silva's enthusiasm is audible as he nonetheless dances around with the other bassist.

Silva is noticeably a different bass player here than he had been even on "Conquistador!" - after an extended period of having to pick up the slack in the Cecil Taylor Unit for Grimes' absence, Silva has returned to New York a much stronger bass player and his confident enthusiasm translates into its own kind of musical quality that acts as a foundational element without relying on the walking bass line.

Both Grimes and Silva serve to add some coherence to the music, but Silva's playing after he had developed techniques for playing both roles of the bass in the Cecil Taylor Unit provides a much different character to the music than Grimes. Grimes is

¹⁶⁶ This was Grimes' last recording before his nearly 40-year disappearance

largely playing the role of the bass player much as he had done on other recordings of the period but Silva is playing all over the bass, exploring both register and timbre.

After the recording with both Silva and Folwell in February 1967, Ayler continued to perform (sporadically) with his “working” band, including his only American jazz festival appearance - the 1967 Newport Jazz Festival - and at Coltrane’s funeral after Coltrane himself had requested Ayler to play there ¹⁶⁷

The release of “Live In Greenwich Village” was well-enough received and with some new exposure from the Newport appearance, Impulse! agreed to fund a new studio album. The album, “Love Cry” includes new drummer Milford Graves and only Silva appears as bassist on it, although according to Silva, Folwell was supposed to be on it too.¹⁶⁸

Impulse! Records had hoped that they could commercialize Ayler and encouraged him to remove both his brother, who by all accounts was descending into alcoholism and mental illness and was likely about to be fired anyway, and Graves, who had gotten politically militant, from the band. Whether or not it was at the behest of the record label, Ayler’s newfound desire to spread his spiritual message to a wider audience, or a desire to earn a reasonable living, Ayler began to move his music into an entirely different direction as 1968 approached - a rock band where he not only played saxophone, but sang songs with a spiritual message.

¹⁶⁷ On his deathbed, Coltrane said that he wanted Ornette Coleman and Ayler to perform at his funeral.

¹⁶⁸ In a personal conversation, Silva indicated that he was unsure why Folwell wasn’t at the studio but was surprised by his absence. Folwell was still the regular bass player and had appeared at the Newport Festival

Cecil Taylor

With concert appearances and pay scales rising beginning in 1965 thanks to Bill Dixon's advocacy, Taylor began to re-integrate the bass back into his band with regularity with either Henry Grimes and Buell Neidlinger appearing and he is known to have been performing the songs that were to appear on *Unit Structures* as early as August 1965 during a brief tour that included an appearance at the Newport Jazz Festival.

Taylor's period of relative inactivity in terms of performances was countered by a period of intense practicing and rehearsing so that by 1965, his organizational concepts were becoming more and more honed and as a result his aesthetic demands were becoming more and more precise. It is during this period that we see the development of the "musical quality of energy"¹⁶⁹ that Jost refers to and after the period of using no bassist whatsoever, which he characterizes as "no surprise"¹⁷⁰ since at times the density of the piano and drums make "the inclusion of a bassist in the group superfluous" the beginning of a musical development where the bass was responsible for the "creation of a solid and at the same time, driving rhythmic basis"¹⁷¹ without reliance on the walking bass line.

A counter-argument could be made, however, that the periods of no bassist in the Cecil Taylor Unit - on-and-off from 1962 to 1966, and no bassist at all from 1968 - 1973

¹⁶⁹ Jost (1988)

¹⁷⁰ *ibid*

¹⁷¹ *ibid*

and 1974-1978 - stems not from the fact that the bass is rendered “superfluous” in the group but that without the “presence” that is characterized by Taylor, a bassist would contribute nothing to the music.

Jost’s characterization of the history of bassists who performed with Taylor ¹⁷² however is incorrect. While recognizing that Jost is effectively ignoring the non-”free jazz” period of the 1950s he broadly associates the sound of Taylor’s work from the 1960s, with Alan Silva, the 1970s with Sirone, and the 1980s (and onwards) with William Parker.

If we concede that Taylor’s pre-Unit group with Buell Neidlinger represents an earlier era of his work ¹⁷³, Henry Grimes as a single bassist appears only on one half of “Into The Hot” as well as at least 2 available bootlegs while Alan Silva appears as single bassist only on bootlegs from The Unit’s 1967 tour ¹⁷⁴. The crowning recordings of The Cecil Taylor Unit’s early existence and the ones that still loom large over the groups’ entire output ¹⁷⁵, “Unit Structures” and “Conquistador!”, feature both Grimes and Silva so in essence the “bass player” that should be associated with the 1960s is both Grimes AND Silva collected in tandem.

Building from Jost’s understanding that that the most valued quality in a bassist in the Cecil Taylor Unit stems from an ability to maintain “energy” over the course of a

¹⁷² Although “Instant Composing as Body Language” was written in 1988 - 30 years before Taylor’s death - William Parker, the “latest” of his bassists remained the “latest” of his bassists.

¹⁷³ And if we are talking about the 1960s, it really does - the three albums from 1961 with Neidlinger and Charles all stem from the same January session and none of them were released before 1977.

¹⁷⁴ Which we will discuss was supposed to include 2 bassists

¹⁷⁵ Articles and analyses of Taylor’s work still focus on Unit Structures despite the fact that his career and artistic evolution stretched for another half-century.

performance while counterbalancing the density of Taylor's piano playing, the use of two basses in the mid-1960s may be understood as an initial attempt to develop that kind of gravity.

Although it's not clear exactly when, some time in 1964-1965 Bill Dixon became aware of a dissatisfaction on Taylor's part with the way that the bass was functioning in his group. Bearing in mind that Dixon's own opinion was that the use of two basses in his own group added "gravity" to counterbalance the densities of soloists and drums, he offered the solution of adding a second bassist to Taylor's band which by 1965 was known as "The Cecil Taylor Unit". Said Dixon, " I used to talk with Cecil and say "You could really use another bass in the Unit. What about Alan ? Besides, he'd make a good foil for Henry." ¹⁷⁶ ¹⁷⁷

In late 1965 Silva began to rehearse frequently with Taylor to learn his music - music that the rest of the band had learned aurally and had been playing for several years - but he did not appear in live concerts with him. Of course, there were very few concerts but during the previous summer of 1965 Taylor appeared at a number of jazz festivals with a quintet that included Henry Grimes on bass and they performed the material that would later appear on Unit Structures. These performances and a growing interest from Blue Note Records to record the avant-garde and reclaim some part of the jazz market that was cornered by Impulse! Records led to a recording contract that would not only allow Taylor's group to record with legendary engineer Rudy Van Gelder but provide funding to hire eight musicians to do so.

¹⁷⁶ Young, 1998, page 98

¹⁷⁷ In conversation with this author both Alan Silva and Eddie Gale confirmed that the idea of adding a second bass to the group was Dixon's

In May 1966, Taylor recorded “Unit Structures” with an ensemble that included both Henry Grimes and Alan Silva on bass.

Below is a portion of “Unit Structures” And note the avoidance of the migration towards the keys of the open string of the bass - the characteristic sound of the bass player giving his or her hand a break by inserting an open string.

This is due to the fact that Silva retuned his bass differently for the recording session. Although Blue Note gave a contract to Taylor, it was by no means the kind of open-ended one that Coltrane had for Impluse! Records. Taylor was given two three-hour recording sessions with Rudy Van Gelder to record two albums - one for each album. Gelder as an engineer was known for his precise ears for tuning and Silva became concerned that were he to play certain pitches out of tune, Van Gelder would interrupt a take and the three-hour session would dwindle rapidly. This became a worry in particular because Silva had some notated pitches to play higher up on the fingerboard so he decided to retune his bass so that those pitches could be reached as harmonics and would therefore be in tune.

The Cecil Taylor Unit - Steps - Alan Silva, Henry Grimes - bass

-see file babin_steps.mp3

According to Silva ¹⁷⁸ Taylor gave him no instruction on what he was expected to do alongside Grimes and although Val Wilmer characterizes his use of the bow on Unit Structures as an attempt to find a way to work within the ensemble, Silva plays almost

¹⁷⁸ In personal conversation

exclusively with a bow on his previous recording¹⁷⁹ so clearly his concept of bass playing relied less on the idea of the pizzicato walking bass line than others of his generation. Silva does not rely entirely on the bow, however, and over the course of the summer of 1966 the Cecil Taylor Unit had a period of activity unrivalled since the European tour of 1962 with Silva as a regular member alongside Grimes. In doing so, the bassists developed a clearer concept of how to play together..

The Cecil Taylor Unit recorded its second album of 1966 for Blue Note Records - "Conquistador!" - at the beginning of October with Taylor, Alan Silva, Henry Grimes, Andrew Cyrille, Jimmy Lyons and Bill Dixon.

The Cecil Taylor Unit - Conquistador! - Alan Silva, Henry Grimes - bass

- see file babin_steps.mp3

Here we hear an entirely new level of density in the accompaniment of Taylor's piano playing. Where Grimes as the only bass player would play something that sounded like a disjointed walking bass line that either followed or contrasted Taylor's implied tempos, here we have an enormous, swirling mass where Jost's idea of the impulse chain obviously applies. Both bassists are energetically playing without concern for space, both presumably listening to Taylor, and as the density unpredictably ebbs and flows, cumulative accents arise that give the music a sense of propulsion.

¹⁷⁹ Silva can only be heard on one reasonably available recording made prior to Unit Structures - Sun Ra with Black Harold on which he plays almost exclusively with a bow alongside Ronnie Boykins

Like on “Unit Structures”, Silva retuned his bass and without as many common open strings¹⁸⁰ the migration to certain keys does not happen. This all leaves the two basses as a kind of single mass that does not function as Coleman describes, for example, where there is always more than one choice for pulling material for interaction¹⁸¹

A week after the recording of Conquistador, The Cecil Taylor Unit - Taylor, Lyons, Dixon, Grimes, Silva and Cyrille were to begin a European - Taylor’s first since 1961 - and both Bill Dixon and Grimes cancelled at the last minute leaving Silva as the only bassist for the first time.

After the tour, Taylor’s performance schedule once again became sporadic and unreliable. After the Unit’s periodic concerts in 1967 and 1968 as a quartet with Taylor, Lyons, Silva and Cyrille, the group became a bassless one ¹⁸² once again until 1973.

Bill Dixon

Bill Dixon’s primary performing activities from 1964 onward had been as a dance accompanist and after producers from the RCA Victor record company had seen a performance with dancer Judith Dunn, he was offered studio time to record a quartet album for the label.

¹⁸⁰ He didn’t retune every string

¹⁸¹ In a personal conversation, Andrew Cyrille indicated that, although he did not remember specifically, he would have been listening to the bassists cumulatively rather than separately.

¹⁸² Either a trio of Taylor, Lyons and Cyrille or a quartet with the addition of saxophonist Sam Rivers.

As if taking a cue from Coltrane habit the previous year of arriving at quartet concerts with a much larger group, Dixon took the contract and showed up on the day of the recording session in October 1966¹⁸³ with a tentette that included both Reggie Johnson and Jimmy Garrison on bass.

The music that was recorded, however, was primarily through-composed and bore little resemblance to the music of his contemporaries. Dixon's use of the basses is very similar to the way that he used them in *Winter Song* with defined roles and direction from the composer himself with very few time-based passages where both bassists are improvising.

The album, "Intents and Purposes" was heavily edited and recorded in sections with the understanding that the music was to be associated with Dixon's work in the dance world as well as an extended chamber piece, but there is an interesting duet between Johnson and Garrison at 3:00 on the song "Metamorphosis 1962-1966" where Garrison uses his characteristic flamenco-style strumming. Garrison was in New York due to the cancellation of most of Coltrane's work in the Fall of 1966 and the duet strongly suggests his work the previous Fall in Coltrane's band with Donald Garrett.

Bill Dixon - Metamorphosis (1962-1966) - Reggie Workman, Jimmy Garrison - bass - see file `babin_metamorphosis.mp3`

Dixon's disillusion with the music business sped up a gradual retreat from regular performing and he took an academic position at Bennington College in Vermont in 1968,

¹⁸³ Just 4 days after recording "Conquistador!" with Cecil Taylor

after which he performed exclusively with the school's students in Vermont. He did not release another album until 1980.

Ornette Coleman

Unlike Taylor whose removal from the jazz scene was only partial, Coleman's was total. He had not performed in public a single time between 1962 and 1965 but he attended Dixon's "October Revolution in Jazz Festival" and despite his refusal to perform, was encouraged enough by what seemed like a new sense of community that he accepted an invitation for a 3-week long engagement at the Village Vanguard¹⁸⁴ with David Izenzon and Charles Moffett in June of 1965 which was followed by an extensive European tour.¹⁸⁵

The same motivations behind Blue Note's invitation for Cecil Taylor to record for the label led it to offer Coleman a contract as well which led to the two "At The Golden Circle" albums, but left performance prospects, at least in America, unfulfilling. Coleman spent another fallow period through most of 1966 until, much to the chagrin of the record executives no doubt, Coleman gifted a recording session to his 10 year old son Denardo - a completely untrained drummer - with the intention to release the album on Blue Note Records.. Izenzon was not interested in playing with Denardo but Charlie

¹⁸⁴ Although according to MacRae, Coleman felt that this was a type of selling out but he needed the gig to fund his trip to Europe

¹⁸⁵ His feeling of encouragement did not last long and he refused to perform live in the US again until 1967.

Haden, in New York with no cabaret card ¹⁸⁶ and no work prospects but newly drug-free agreed to play with the boy and the album “The Empty Foxhole” was recorded in September 1966. A difficult-at-times record to listen to, there are some moments of real beauty which are made coherent by Haden’s insistent time-keeping.

Ornette Coleman Trio - The Empty Foxhole - Charlie Haden - bass

- see file babin_empty_foxhole.mp3

Coleman’s trio with Izenzon had been moving away from the swing-based music that is heard on “At The Golden Circle” and he encouraged the bassist to play more with a bow and to move away from time keeping in early 1967 when the trio returned to performing with some regularity. At the same time, Coleman and Charles Moffett began alternating between instruments much more frequently than they had been - Coleman playing more violin and trumpet than saxophone, and Moffett focusing on the vibraphone and trumpet rather than drums.

In March 1967, Haden joined Coleman’s trio for a concert at the Village Theatre in New York City and then again at the end of July at John Coltrane’s funeral.

Immediately after the funeral and with New York’s cabaret card law about to be repealed, Haden joined Coleman, Izenzon ¹⁸⁷ and Moffett for a 6-week engagement at the Village Vanguard. There are no recordings available from the engagement but after a few nights of apparently very little saxophone or drums while Haden maintained a

¹⁸⁶ At the time the cabaret card was effectively a license to perform music in New York, and musicians needed one to perform at the major jazz venues. It could be permanently revoked for drug offenses.

¹⁸⁷ Izenzon was not pleased

swing feel much like he had done on “The Empty Foxhole”, drummer and former rhythm section partner of Haden’s in Coleman’s band of 1959/1960 Ed Blackwell walked on stage and began setting up his drums. According to Moffett “I took that as, well, I’ve really got some more freedom now, so we still have a drummer when I move off on vibes and trumpet.”¹⁸⁸

Within a week, Moffett was fired and Coleman’s group became a two-bass one with Izenzon and Haden with Blackwell on drums, and the group toured extensively through Europe from late 1967 until March 1968.

Although the group recorded no studio albums, there were two live albums recorded ¹⁸⁹ and an appearance on John Lennon and Yoko Ono’s first “Plastic Ono Band” album.

Below is a recording of “Forgotten Children” from “The Unprecedented Music of Ornette Coleman ” with the quartet of Coleman, Haden, Izenzon, and Blackwell

Ornette Coleman Quartet - Forgotten Children - David Izenzon, Charlie Haden
-bass - see file babin_forgotten-children.mp3

After an introduction with Coleman on trumpet and Izenzon playing a bowed solo in the upper range of the instrument and with an overall atmosphere that is reminiscent of Albert Ayler’s music, Haden and Blackwell begin to move in and out of a similarly strong swing feel to the one that they used on 1960’s “This Is Our Music.” As Izenzon’s

¹⁸⁸ Quoted in Litweiler (1992) p.125

¹⁸⁹ Like many European recordings at the time, the albums were released in the US under multiple names with incorrect dates, but are available as “Live in Milano” and “The Unprecedented Music of Ornette Coleman” - both recorded in Italy

solo ends and he continues to play texturally throughout, one is reminded of Coleman's quote at the beginning of this paper where he exclaims that the listener can hear him feeding off of one bass player or the other. Coleman's playing is inscrutable enough that it is difficult to tell who exactly he is playing with, but there are moments throughout (at the 6:00 mark, for instance) where the fact that Haden is paired with Blackwell appears to draw Coleman more towards the kind of playing that he did in 1960, despite the fact that he is playing trumpet instead of saxophone.

Upon returning to New York after the tour, Coleman formed a new, hard-swinging, group in April 1968 with saxophonist Dewey Redman. At first the group included Jimmy Garrison and Elvin Jones, yielding the Blue Note albums "New York Is Now" and "Love Call" and then with Haden and Blackwell¹⁹⁰. The quartet was Coleman's primary working band through the end of the 1960s into the 1970s.

¹⁹⁰ Strictly speaking, the next drummer after Jones was a 12-year old Denardo who was again gifted an album, this time with Redman as well as Haden and this time on Impulse! Records.

Part 4 - 1968-1970



Charlie Haden, Ornette Coleman, Ed Blackwell, David Izenzon and Yoko Ono, February 1968

Principal Timeline

1968 - Bill Dixon leaves New York for Vermont where he has accepted an academic position. For the next decade he only performs with his students and releases no more recordings until 1980.

1968 - Cecil Taylor stops playing with a bassist altogether and accepts an academic position in Ohio where he moves along with Jimmy Lyons and Andrew Cyrille. Taylor will not perform with a bassist again until 1973 ¹⁹¹

1968 - Albert Ayler abruptly changes musical direction and begins to release what are basically rock records where he sings as well as plays saxophone. After two such records which brought universal accusations of “selling out”, Ayler dies under mysterious circumstances in 1970.

1968 - Ornette Coleman removes David Izenzon from his band at the end of the 1967/68 European tour leaving Charlie Haden and Ed Blackwell (alongside Dewey Redman) as his working ensemble - a throwback to their work together in 1960. He continues working with this group until the mid-1970s

¹⁹¹ And then again until 1978

Albert Ayler

With the death of John Coltrane the jazz avant-garde lost not only its greatest public advocate, but the only musician associated with the movement that was capable of selling any reasonable quantity of albums to the general public. The fact that the initial British Invasion with its teenage pop sensibilities had given way to the psychedelica and hard funk that might be more attractive to college-age youths did not help. The young fan base who had been attracted by Bill Dixon's October Revolution only four years before were being drawn away from Free Jazz towards popular musics that now had their own avant-garde and experimental elements wrapped in a more familiar package. The fortunes of the jazz avant-garde seemed to change overnight and the interest that the major jazz labels in "free jazz" waned considerably.

Both Impulse! Records and Blue Note Records, who had seemed gung-ho about supporting the jazz avant-garde only a year before, began to be more interested in the possibility of using the avant-garde as an entree into the psychedelic scene and Albert Ayler was uniquely positioned to take advantage this with his spiritual, hippie-like imagery and outsider status.

Ayler recorded his album "New Grass" in September 1968 - a conventional-yet-bizarre rock/R&B record - with Bill Folwell on electric bass¹⁹² alongside a group of studio musicians¹⁹³ including James Brown and Gene Ammons drummer Bernard Purdie - and aside from the introductory speech and the fact that there is a version of his song

¹⁹² He was primarily an electric bassist despite playing double bass with Ayler

¹⁹³ Most of the album was overdubs and many musicians did not even meet Ayler - he recorded the basic tracks with Folwell and Purdie and then went home.

“Ghosts” that is included, there is absolutely no hint of Ayler’s earlier work aside from his saxophone tone which when recontextualized sounds more like that of a Texas Tenor than a free jazz iconoclast. Despite the relative success of the album in terms of record sales, Ayler was not equipped for or interested in reproducing the music on the album in any sort of live environment and it did not lead to more work.

Performance opportunities for Ayler became even more rare and his mental health declined rapidly in 1969.

Impulse! was still willing to fund another record, however, and Ayler recorded his last album, “Music is the Healing Force of the Universe” in August 1969 with two bassists - Folwell and Stafford James.

Below is the song “Island Harvest” which includes both Folwell and James on bass.

Albert Ayler - “Island Harvest” - Bill Folwell, Stafford James - bass

- see file babin_island_harvest.mp3

It is difficult to hear what the advantage of having two basses on this album are. Although there are some interesting textures created on the above song, the fact that the calypso feel naturally pulls both bassists towards playing similar things - roots and fifths - seems to negate the power and gravity that was intrinsic to Ayler’s earlier two-bass records.

The net effect of the two basses across the whole album is to create a less exciting version of Ayler’s earlier work . Stafford James is by no means an incompetent

bassist but with Folwell's seeming lack of interaction the enthusiasm brought by Alan Silva is missing from the recording. The vocals and drums (and blues guitar) serve to draw focus away from the abstractions of the two bassists so that they become an atmospheric element rather than one that is an essential part of the music, and are relegated to the background.

Impulse! Records cancelled Ayler's recording contract after "Music is the Healing Force of the Universe" and unable to find any work at all in the US, he and vocalist Mary Parks toured in France briefly in 1970 as Ayler's bizarre behavior worsened prior to his death in November 1970.

Pharoah Sanders

Pharoah Sanders fared better under Impulse! Records than Ayler did and continued the tangent of "spiritual" jazz that he had been following as a member of John Coltrane's band from Sept 1965 until the saxophonist's death, continuing with the practice of using two bass players.

Below is a song from his 1969 album "Karma" - his first since the death of Coltrane.

Pharoah Sanders - "Creator Has a Master Plan" - Reggie Workman, Richard Davis - bass - see file babin_creator.mp3

The references to “A Love Supreme” are obvious with the basses functioning much like they did in Coltrane’s groups of 1961, which of course included Workman.

Sanders has split the difference between the spiritual ecstasy of Coltrane’s last period, with the control of the late modal period of 1964. The interaction of the basses is not based on the patterns of interruption and disruption that seemed to be at the core of the relationship between Jimmy Garrison and Donald Garrett but are more like an updated, freer version of the relationship between Garrison and Workman.

Saunders continued to include two basses in his bands up until 1973 when his contract with Impulse! Records ended.

Eddie Gale

Trumpeter Eddie Gale, who appeared on Cecil Taylor’s Unit Structures, released two albums on Blue Note in 1968 and 1969 that both contained two bass players.¹⁹⁴ The albums “Ghetto Music” and “Black Rhythm Happening” were part of Blue Note’s attempt, like Impulse! Records’, to shift away from the esoteric musics of the jazz avant-garde towards popular music with enough outsider elements to appeal to both free jazz fans and those interested in the psychedelic and political content of the popular music of the time.

Below is a portion of Gale’s album “Ghetto Music”

¹⁹⁴ In a personal conversation, Gale said that the reason that he used two bassists in both these albums and the Michael Cuscuna-produced remake of “Ghetto Music” 40 years later was that he simply liked the way it sounded.

Eddie Gale - The Coming of Gwilu - James Reid, Judah Samuel - bass

-see file babin_gwilu.mp3

The full album is a mixed bag of folk-type songs where both bassists play in unison, free jazz blowing sessions where a mass of sound is created, and songs where the bassists more-or-less mirror both 1961 Coltrane and Pharoah Sanders' meditative spiritual ostinati.

Gale left New York in 1970 and effectively retired from regular performing.¹⁹⁵

Outside of New York

The jazz avant-garde, like the rest of jazz, had been firmly focused in New York but by the late 1960s, independent and communitarian organizations had developed without the top-down funding from the jazz establishment that had supported the New York scene. These groups and the associated musicians were poised to emerge from the New York's shadow and included ones in Los Angeles, Chicago, and broadly, in Europe.

Trumpeter Bobby Bradford, who was a close friend of Ornette Coleman's and who had been hired to play on "Free Jazz" but could not make the session due to a scheduling conflict, had moved to Los Angeles and in 1967 started a group with reed player John Carter that included two bassists. Bradford referred to the sound produced

¹⁹⁵ Although he did rejoin Sun Ra's Arkestra for a brief period a decade later.

by the bassists as “The Scramble”¹⁹⁶ and he described his attraction to it in very much the same way Coleman did. The idea was that two bass players would always provide for two different choices of harmony that could be played over and that the soloist could freely move between the two.

Below is a song from the 1970 album ‘Self-Determination Music’ by John Carter and Bobby Bradford with both Tom Williamson and Henry Franklin on bass.

John Carter / Bobby Bradford - The Sunday Afternoon Blues Society - Tom Williamson, Henry Franklin - bass - see file babin_sunday.mp3

Both bassists are playing densely, but not so densely that they are indistinguishable and neither of them are playing in such a way to be disruptive towards the sense of tonality or rhythm. The idea is obviously not to create the kind of swirling mass that we heard with Ayler but to create two parallel tracks of bass similarly to what was heard on Free Jazz.

Carter and Bradford continued to use two basses in their groups on-and-off through the 1970s and into the 1980s.

Pianist Horace Tapscott formed the Union of God's Musicians and Artists Ascension in Los Angeles in 1963 and his first album, “The Giant Is Awakened”, recorded in 1969, includes two bassists - David Bryant and Walter Savage Jr..

¹⁹⁶ In personal conversation with the author

Horace Tapscott - The Giant Has Awakened - David Bryant and
Walter Savage Jr, - bass - see file babin_giant_awakened

Tapscott's above integration of the bassists is in itself unique in terms of what was heard throughout the 1960s. One bassist plays with a bow throughout and the other pizzicato ¹⁹⁷ but they play the idiosyncratic martial bass line in unison for the composed portions of the piece and at the beginning of solos but then diverge into walking bass with bowed atmospheric material.

It seems that the use of the two bassists in this case is more of an arranging strategy and not one related to improvisation and although it was some time until Tapscott would record again, he always recorded with a single bassist thereafter. ¹⁹⁸

The Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians looms large over the idea of experimentalism in jazz but there are very few examples of the use of two basses by musicians associated with the Chicago organization during the 1960s or up to the present ¹⁹⁹. The ideas of the AACM were largely independent of the dominant ones that were coming out of New York and the first generation of musicians associated with the organization did not begin to release albums until 1966 without the widespread attention that was afforded to the New York musicians.

Pianist Muhal Richard Abrams' first album in 1967 features two bassists - Charles Clarke and Leonard Jones.

¹⁹⁷ The bassists are not familiar ones so it is difficult to tell which of two is arco and which is pizzicato

¹⁹⁸ Tapscott played solo frequently

¹⁹⁹ Although Roscoe Mitchell's 1992 album "This Dance is for Steve McCall" features both William Parker and Jaribu Shahid on bass.

The album, “Levels and Degrees of Light” is a mix of heavily composed materials and “free jazz” and the use of the two bassists is more similar to the use on Bill Dixon’s “Intents and Purposes” than other music of the period.

Muhal Richard Abrams - Levels and Degrees of Light - Charles Clarke,
Leonard Jones - bass - see file babin_levels_degrees.mp3

The bassists are orchestrated throughout and although there are some moments of density within these orchestrations, for the most part the bassists are sparsely used. The one true “free jazz” song on the album, has only one bassist .

Kalaparusha Maurice McIntyre’s 1969 album “Humility in the Light of the Creator” features both Malachi Favors and M’Chaka Uba on bass.

Kalapursha Maurice McIntyre - Humility in the Light of the Creator - Malachi Favors, M’Chaka Uba - bass - see file babin_humility

The album draws obvious comparisons to Pharoah Sanders’ albums of the period ²⁰⁰ and there is a bass feature in the middle of the album where both bassists create a swirling, dense texture over an open-G string drone that turns into an accompaniment for a tenor saxophone solo by McIntyre. The bassists, like Workman and Davis on Sanders’ Karma sound like an updated version of the Workman/Garrison pairing from Coltrane’s “Live at the Village Vanguard” and the inclusion of the basses in

²⁰⁰ Even the title does

this case are more of an homage to the period than an attempt on the part of McIntyre to solve a problem.

Overall, though, there does not seem to have been a need in the world of the AACM to use two basses both because the associated music developed on a different track than the music from New York and because the bass players associated with the scene, particularly Malachi Favors and Fred Hopkins, were already playing with a requisite density and complexity by 1970.

In Europe, a Free Jazz revolution had begun shortly after the one in America, primarily centred in Western Germany, Amsterdam and London.



Buschi Neibergall, Sven-Åke Johansson, and Peter Kowald, late 1960s

Some of the earliest recordings of European Free Music contain two bassists - those by the Globe Unity Orchestra, Peter Brotzmann, and the Spontaneous Music

Ensemble - and although the spirit of the music is very much similar to the spirit of the American jazz avant-garde, the focus, at least in these early days, is on collectivity and not necessarily expressing a musical lineage or focusing on the idea of the soloist and accompanist

Below is Peter Brotzmann's "Machine Gun" which includes both Peter Kowald and Buschi Neibergall on bass.

Peter Brotzmann - Machine Gun - Peter Kowald, Buschi Neibergall - bass

- see file babin_machine_gun.mp3

The music is unrelenting and dense and sounds like a harsher version of Ayler's music with more musicians. The presence of two bassists however has less to do with the specifics of the music itself and more to do with the notion of collectivity. If there was little funding for free jazz in America, there was none whatsoever for it in Europe in the late 1960s²⁰¹, particularly a Europe that was gripped by multiple paranoias involving the economy and nuclear war. The outsider status of the musicians meant that resources needed to be pooled and that often meant including as many people as were interested, or even mixing two groups together like had been done to create the Globe Unity Orchestra.

Once the trend of these larger groups subsided in Europe and it became more viable for smaller groups to be recorded, the trend of two bassists disappeared.

²⁰¹ At least for European musicians. American ones fared better.

By 1970, the regular practice of using two bassists had all but disappeared. Coltrane and Ayler were dead and both Taylor and Dixon had dropped off the scene as the centre of the avant-garde expanded from New York to include Chicago and Europe.

Ornette Coleman, although he would return to multiple basses almost 20 years later in his electric band and then later in a series of quartets and quintets, returned to playing the more swing-and-harmony based version of “free jazz” that he had pioneered in 1959/60.

Some musicians like Pharoah Sanders and Bobby Bradford continued with two bassists into the early 1970s, but for the most part, the idea of using two basses became a way of paying homage to the music of the mid-1960s rather than as an authentic artistic practice.

Conclusions

The foundational musicians of the jazz avant-garde were a diverse group of musicians with different, often oppositional, ideas about how music should work.

The one thing that they all had in common, though, was that they wanted to move away from the orthodoxy of jazz and create their own, very personal, versions of the music.

A major part of jazz orthodoxy was the use of the bass - the use of the consistent walking bass line as a foundation for soloing - and despite a diversity of ideas, all of the major figures of the movement arrived at the conclusion that trying to use two bassists in the band might be a way to solve the problem of how to use the double bass in their music.

Like the musics themselves, the outcomes were different for each musician but for the most part, we have some idea of what these musicians were trying to do and via the existing body of recorded material, some idea of whether or not the experimentations with two bassists achieved their goals..

The most obvious success is that of John Coltrane in 1961. He was exploring the use of bass ostinati in modal music as a basis of improvisation that would not resort to a walking bass nor would remain entirely static. This interest was coupled with his interest in non-western musics and he imagined a bass sound that, as he said, "One bass plays all the way through and the other plays rhythmic lines around it" ²⁰²

²⁰² Coltrane quoted in Devito, 2010, p.93

He achieved the idea by using two bassists - one who played the ostinato on the bottom and one who played rhythmically around it, breaking up the monotony of the line. Unable to tour with two bassists, Coltrane expressed interest in having a single bassist emulate that feeling and by 1962, Jimmy Garrison was able to do so.

This seems like an elegant closure to Coltrane's early experimentation and one that has affected the way bassists approach modal music today. Certainly not everyone values the kind of mobility that resulted from Garrison emulating the sound of the two basses.

On Elvin Jones' 1994 album "A Tribute to John Coltrane", bassist Reginal Veal plays like Garrison did - moving between both the ostinato and rhythmic embellishments - as pianist Marcus Roberts solos but the moment that Wynton Marsalis begins to solo, he strictly plays the ostinato with no improvisation whatsoever.

The results of the second period of Coltrane's use of the bass seem less clear. Of course, Coltrane's flagging health and eventual death cut short much of what we understand about what he was trying to do but his statements about the way that he had hoped to emphasise the "plasticity" of time by using two bassists are difficult to confirm with the recorded record. Not only does the addition of a second bass seem more like a disruption of Garrison's already highly developed bass concept than a way of loosening it, it sounds like these disruptions are primarily harmonic or melodic without a clear effect on the overall sense of time. The fact that much of the time the basses are inaudible does little to help trying to understand Coltrane's ideas. During recordings from the last portion of Coltrane's life, one cannot hear the bass player (either Sonny Johnson or Garrison) well enough to determine whether or not this second period of two

basses had any effect at all (or in the case of “The Offering”, whether or not there is even a bass player).

In Ornette Coleman’s case, it seems clear what he was looking for when using two basses - the choice of alternating between two different ways of playing. Although Bobby Bradford characterizes his own choices as being harmonic, given that by 1967 Coleman was spending as much time playing violin and trumpet as he was saxophone harmony may not have been his priority. Coleman’s playing of the violin and trumpet are not melodic or harmonic in the traditional sense. Although we get a strong sense of key center and pitch-based melodies from his saxophone playing, we do not get those senses from violin or trumpet so the complex harmonies that are created by the interaction of Haden’s bass line with Coleman during the 1959-1960 period do not seem to count in 1967.

One would guess that the value in “Free Jazz” for Coleman would be that the contrasting ways that Haden and Scott LaFaro play time and harmony give him some relatively subtle choices on where he might want to take his improvisation. Although Coleman’s trio with David Izenzon and Charles Moffet began with a strong swing feel - as we hear on the Golden Circle recordings - the group had become less so until 1967 when Moffet was playing more trumpet and vibraphone than drums and Izenzon was primarily playing with a bow. The addition of Charlie Haden meant that there was a strong return to a sense of swing time in the band and that there were effectively still two bass tracks to choose from but instead of a subtle choice, it was a broad one between time and shifting harmony and textural playing.

The fact that the albums that Coleman recorded after breaking up quartet in 1968 - "New York is Now" and "Love Call" are very time-based - seems to indicate that a choice was made but that the two bass period of 1967-68 represents a period of indecision until a clear choice was made.

Albert Ayler's motivations are entirely mysterious but although his comments on using two basses in his music seem to lean towards a similar opinion to Coleman's, the music itself does not. The basses in Ayler's music generally are difficult to hear distinctly and, although Gary Peacock's virtuosity affected the expectations that we may have in terms of mobility in all forms of jazz, attempts to reproduce his kind of multi-level playing in groups larger than a trio, with bassists who may not have the same kind of facility as Peacock, seem to have fallen short. This is not a failure, however in terms of the broader effect on the music. The fact that most of the two-bass tandems of Ayler's bands consisted of a touring bassist - usually one who did not have the experience to have other, better playing engagements - and an established one ²⁰³ who would be forced to pick and choose work - did reduce some of the elegance of what we hear in the basses. This reduction however, served as the introduction of alternative voices into jazz music and into jazz bass playing. If both bassists, like for instance Peacock and Henry Grimes, are using jazz language as their common one then, notwithstanding creativity, there are a set of fundamental musical behaviors that go along with it. If one of the bassists however does not speak that language, it necessarily changes the way that the music is played.

²⁰³ Alan Silva may have been an outsider when he began playing with Cecil Taylor, but the fact that he was in Taylor's band brought along with it recognition

We know that the music of Albert Ayler has influenced a great many musicians, and at this point, over 50 years removed from Ayler's death, the only way to access that music is via recordings with bass players whose unique voices on the instrument - non-traditional, naive, or outright simplistic as they may be - would not be heard otherwise. Those voices in turn become an influence via Ayler's music.

Cecil Taylor's case is not a subtle one given his lack of romanticism towards the idea of the bass in The Cecil Taylor Unit - if the bass is not doing what he wants, he just gets rid of it.

We know that there was an audible disconnection arising from the beginning of Taylor's recording career between the strict nature of both the walking bass line and the swing drum pattern but by 1962 the disconnection came to a head as Sunny Murray had abandoned the swing drum pattern leaving only the bass player - either Buell Neidlinger or Henry Grimes - still operating in a relatively traditional way.

We also know that Taylor preferred Charlie Haden's playing over Scott LaFaro's due to Haden's "presence". Although the conversation itself was about Bill Evans, the only way to really contextualize those two bassists together was via Ornette Coleman so the comparison is not about walking bass or playing changes, it's about whether or not the bass player is able to fill up the sonic space - one that was becoming more and more cluttered by Taylor's left hand as time went on. In essence, the bass player needed to compete with his left hand and at first the regularity of the walking bass did so - even if it was in fits and starts - but by the early 1960s, it didn't so the bass was left out.

The answer seemed to be, according to Bill Dixon, adding a second bass that would create a counterbalance to Taylor's left hand but also be able to provide the same kind of propulsion as the walking bass line had done in less dense, more regular music.

The two basses seem to have succeeded on the recordings of 1966 but the realities of the marketplace left Taylor with one bassist again during 1967. That bassist, Silva, a bassist who was not coming out of the swing tradition and who was both open minded and enthusiastic, was able for a period to adapt and in doing so developed his own highly personal way of playing the bass, but by 1968 Taylor returned to playing without a bass. A need was established in Taylor's music that would only be fulfilled if certain conditions of density and "presence" were met and although Sirone briefly met those conditions in 1973, most of the rest of the 1970s was spent without a bass in the Cecil Taylor Unit. It's not until William Parker joined the Unit in 1980 that Taylor had a regular bassist again and Parker's ability to maintain not just energy, but, propulsion and interaction not only counterbalanced Taylor's left hand, but became an enormous influence on the way that modern jazz bass is played.

Often we see statements in the literature about how the introduction of Murray and Grimes into Taylor's band freed both Taylor and the idea of the rhythm section from stylistic constraints, but that is not entirely true. It was the introduction of both Grimes and Silva into The Cecil Taylor Unit that completely freed the rhythm section and set the stage for Taylor's continued development.

The relative ubiquity of the practice as it was in the 1960s receded rapidly until it became uncommon in following decades but not because it was not useful - the

marketplace changed, interest amongst musicians (at least in New York City) dwindled, major figures died.

Its effects lasted however because not only did the bassists present learn how to mitigate the sonic expectations of the sound of two bassists while using one bassist, also did the subsequent generations who learned from the recordings discussed here.

Jimmy Garrison emulated the sound of two basses in John Coltrane's group and in doing so created a way of playing his music that influences musicians to this day. Likewise, Alan Silva was required to develop his own way of navigating the demands of Cecil Taylor's music after being obliged to compensate for Grimes' absence, and in doing so developed a unique voice on the instrument that still resonates with those interested in this music.

Once jazz entered the 1970s, bassists like Sirone and William Parker were able to reproduce the sound densities of the two bassists on Cecil Taylor's and Albert Ayler's recordings to lay some of the foundational materials for modern free jazz bass playing.

We, as people who find this music meaningful, can only connect these giants of the music via the recordings that are available to us and many of the recordings have two basses on them. As musicians learn to play the music, they are not doing so with two basses in the band, but are doing so with one who will have no choice but to try to figure out how to do it by him or herself. This lag both explains the disappearance of the practice and the legacy of it - the needs of the music are absorbed by the listener and, where the listener has an interest in playing that music, are emulated.

Ultimately, though, as music from the period continues to find people interested in hearing it, the sound of the two basses should be recognized as a fundamental part

of the musical language used at pivotal points in the the careers of musicians like John Coltrane, Ornette Coleman, Cecil Taylor and Albert Ayler and it should be included in the discourse around the jazz avant-garde.

Appendix 1 - Recordings

Below is an overview of recordings that were released in the 1960s that feature two basses. This is not intended to be a complete or exhaustive list, but is a survey of readily available recordings.

Muhai Richard Abrams *Levels and Degrees of Light* - Charles Clarke/Lester Lashley, Delmark Records, 1967

Albert Ayler - *Spirits* – Henry Grimes, Earl Henderson - bass, Debut Records, 1964

Albert Ayler - *Spirits Rejoice* – Henry Grimes ,Gary Peacock - bass, ESP Disk, 1965

Albert Ayler - *In Greenwich Village*– Henry Grimes, Bill Folwell / Alan Silva, Bill Folwell - bass, Impulse! Records, 1966

Albert Ayler - *Music is the Healing Force of the Universe* – Stafford James ,Bill Folwell - bass, Impulse! Records, 1969

Don Cherry - *Symphony for Improvisors* - Henry Grimes, J-F Jenny Clarke - bass, Blue Note Records, 1966

Ornette Coleman - *Free Jazz : A Collective Improvisation* —Scott LaFaro ,Charlie Haden - bass, Atlantic Records, 1960

Ornette Coleman - *Live in Milano* - Charlie Haden, David Izenzon - bass, Jazz Up Records, 1968

Ornette Coleman - *The Unprecedented Music of Ornette Coleman* -Charlie Haden, David Izenzon - bass, Lotus Records (Italy), 1968

John Coltrane - *Ole Coltrane* – Reggie Workman, Art Davis - bass, Atlantic Records, 1961

John Coltrane - *Africa/Brass* –Reggie Workman, Art Davis - bass (alternate takes Workman, Paul Chambers), Impulse! Records, 1961

John Coltrane - *Live at the Village Vanguard* – Reggie Workman, Jimmy Garrison -bass, Impulse! Records, 1961

John Coltrane - *Impressions* – Reggie Workman,Jimmy Garrison -bass , Impulse! Records, 1963

John Coltrane - *The John Coltrane Quartet Plays* – Art Davis, Jimmy Garrison -bass, Impulse! Records, 1965

John Coltrane - *Ascension* – Art Davis , Jimmy Garrison - bass, Impulse! Records, 1965

John Coltrane - *Kulu Se Mama* – Donald Garrett, Jimmy Garrison -bass , Impulse! Records, 1966

John Coltrane - *Om* – Donald Garrett, Jimmy Garrison - bass ,Impulse! Records, 1967

Bill Dixon - *Archie Shepp Quintet/Bill Dixon Septet* –David Izenzon, Hal Dodson -bass, Savoy Records, 1962

Bill Dixon - *Intents and Purposes* - Jimmy Garrison, Reggie Johnson - bass, RCA/Victor, 1966

Eric Dolphy - *Iron Man* - Eddie Kahn, Richard Davis - bass, Douglas International Records, 1963

Eddie Gale - *Ghetto Music* - Tokio Reid, Judah Samuel - bass, Blue Note Records, 1968

Eddie Gale - *Black Rhythm Happening* - Henry Pearson, Judah Samuel - bass, Blue Note Records, 1969

Robin Kenyatta - *Until* - Lewis Worrell, Walter Booker -bass, Vortex Records, 1967

Prince Lasha - *The Cry* – Gary Peacock, Mark Proctor - bass, Contemporary Records, 1962

Prince Lasha - *It is Revealed* – Bill Wood, Orville Harrison - bass, Zounds, 1963

Prince Lasha - *Insight* – Rick Laird, Jeff Clyne / Dave Willis, Bruce Cale - bass, CBS Records, 1966

Michael Mantler - *Communication* - Kent Carter, Steve Swallow -bass, Fontana Records, 1965

Kalapursha Maurice McIntyre - *Humility in the Light of the Creator* - Malachi Favors, M'Chaka Uba - bass, Delmark Records, 1969

Sunny Murray - *Sonny's Time Now* - Lewis Worrell, Henry Grimes - bass, Jihad Productions, 1966

Sunny Murray - *The Lie* - Lewis Worrell, Henry Grimes - bass, Jihad Productions, 1966

Roswell Rudd - *Everywhere* - Charlie Haden, Lewis Worrell - bass, Impulse! Records, 1966

Pharoah Sanders - *My Gifts* – Sirone ,Cecil McBee - bass, Strata-East Records, 1967

Pharoah Sanders - *Karma* – Reggie Workman, Richard Davis / Reggie Workman, Ron Carter - bass, Impulse! Records, 1968

Pharoah Sanders- *Jewels of Thought* – Richard Davis,Cecil McBee -bass, Impulse! Records, 1968

Archie Shepp - *Live in San Francisco* – Donald Garrett ,Lewis Worrell -bass, Impulse! Records, 1966

Archie Shepp - *Three for a Quarter, One for a Dime* – Donald Garrett, Lewis Worrell-bass, Impulse! Records, 1966

Archie Shepp - *Yasmina, a Black Woman* – Malachi Favors,Earl Freeman - bass, BYG Actuel, 1969

Cecil Taylor - *Unit Structures* – Henry Grimes, Alan Silva - bass, Blue Note Records, 1966

Cecil Taylor - *Conquistador!* –Henry Grimes, Alan Silva - bass, Blue Note Records, 1966

Charles Tyler - *Eastern Man Unknown* - Brent Mckesson, Kent Brinkley -bass , ESP Disk, 1967

Marzette Watts - *Backdrop for Urban Revolution* - Juney Booth, Henry Grimes - bass, ESP Disk, 1967

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