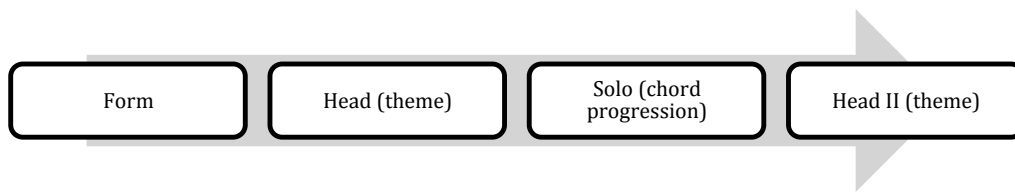


## CHAPTER 6 – A TRANSCRIPTION BECOMES A COMPOSITION

### Part 1: The Improvisational Framework | Composition

Through the study of speeches it is important to find new improvisational structures<sup>1</sup>. Ultimately, these compositions sourced from speech will be used to create structures that can be used in improvisations, a little bit like 'jazz standards'<sup>2</sup>. The composition should be a way of normalising the speech melody in similar fashion to Oliver Nelson's 'The Kennedy Dream'<sup>3</sup>.



**Figure 6-1** Typical jazz framework

In the composition process it is important to find a balance between freedom and control<sup>4</sup>.

#### i) *Donald Trump medley*



**Figure 6-2** Trump's first sentence composition mode begins on the last note of the transcribed speech, the B<sup>b</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'The idea behind writing these compositions was to challenge my ability to improvise through unfamiliar structural frameworks', Hannaford 2013

<sup>2</sup> American songbook The Great American Songbook, also known as "American Standards", is the canon of the most important and influential American popular songs and jazz standards from the early 20th century, taken from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great\\_American\\_Songbook](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_American_Songbook)

<sup>3</sup> 'The Kennedy Dream' is an album by American composer/arranger Oliver Nelson recorded in tribute to John F. Kennedy in 1967 for the Impulse! Label. It is an album that inspired me to compose music based on speeches and focus on the innate power that each historical speech holds.

<sup>4</sup> Carter 'hoping to give the impression of that combination of freedom and control that I greatly admire in many works of art', Bernard 1997

In his opening sentence, Trump sounds like he is alternating both the  $\sharp V$  ( $F^\sharp$ ) and the  $\flat V$  in  $B^\flat$  (E natural) and the  $V$  (F). This is an integral factor in composing the bass line for the improvisational framework (Figure 6-3).

16  $B\flat m(maj7\flat5)/G\flat$  mode

20

$fp$   $f$

$B^\flat$  C  $D^\flat$  E F A

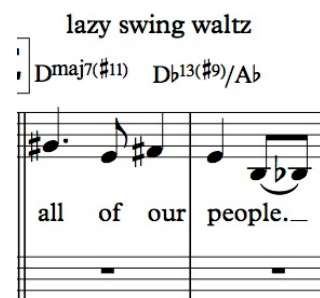
**Figure 6-3** Improvisational framework based on Trump's first sentence

In the bridge (B Section) the enharmonic equivalent  $G^\flat$  is used instead of  $F^\sharp$  because of the **A** theme home key ( $B^\flat$  minor). This  $G^\flat$  gives the piece an Ethiopian 'Mulatu Astatke' sound<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> 'Yekermo Sew' Mulatu Astatké – Éthiopiennes 4: Ethio Jazz & Musique Instrumentale 1969-1974 Full Album

The melody of this piece uses a combination of the composed mode and the spoken transcription of Trump. The pivotal notes (interchange) are F and G<sup>b</sup> (F<sup>#</sup>) just like the pivotal notes in the speech (Figure 6-3).

Using the figure from the second paragraph in bars 9-10 'All of our people' an improvisational framework with an AABA form was composed in 3/4 time (Figure 6-4).



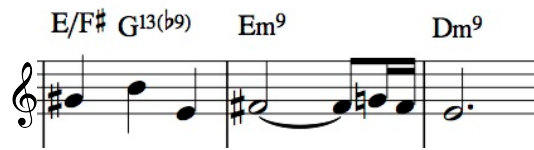
**Figure 6-4** Phrase 'All of our people' taken from second sentence in Trump's speech

The chords in the A section were based on the chords that were composed during the harmonisation of the transcribed speech (Figure 6-5).



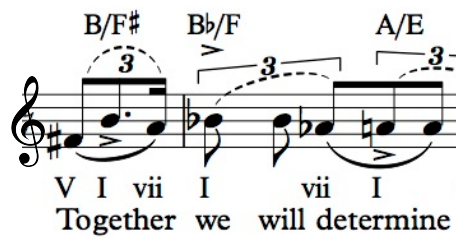
**Figure 6-5** Trump Form 'All of Our people' improvisation framework.

The B section melody was written in response to the A section melody but instead of playing G<sup>#</sup>, E, F<sup>#</sup>, E, B, A<sup>#</sup> the melody goes, E, G<sup>#</sup>, B, E, F<sup>#</sup>, which is a different ordering of the same notes (*sans* A<sup>#</sup>). The chords were used to provide a fluctuating accompaniment to a repeated melody, especially in contrast to the various melodies found in the transcribed speech (Figure 6-6).



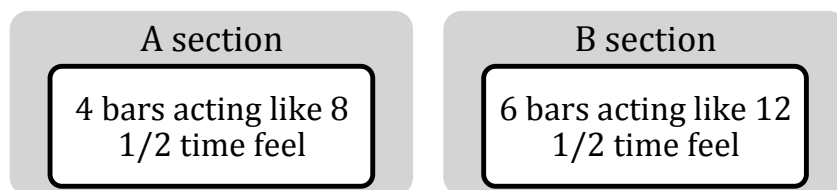
**Figure 6-6** Trump's second sentence B-section melody

In the original melody of Trump's 3<sup>rd</sup> sentence, he starts by accenting the top descending moving chromatic notes. These 'slash chords' used in the harmonisation (B/F#, B<sup>b</sup>/F, A/E) form the basis for the harmonic devices used in the improvisational framework (Figure 6-7)



**Figure 6-7** Slash chords

The solo form is in 7/4 time and is



**Figure 6-8** Trump's 3rd composition improvisation framework

The parallel minor 7<sup>th</sup> chords used in the solo section offer an ominous, underground, perspective (Figure 6-7).

ii) *Martin Luther King Jr, 'I have a dream'*

This is a simple sounding composition. The melody moves in thirds and the bass line moves upward in step, giving the illusion of a sunrise. The chord progression is following the D major scale with exceptions in bar 8-9 using G<sup>#</sup> and A<sup>#</sup> accidentals (E7/B, then F<sup>#7</sup>) before moving into a B minor chord over a D bass (Figure 6-9)



Figure 6-9 Martin Luther King Jr composition

The B section references the gospel chord progression used in Eulogy (see iii). A D<sup>6</sup> chord moving to an F<sup>#7</sup>/A<sup>#</sup> then B-7/D moving to an E7/G<sup>#</sup> with added notes 9, <sup>b</sup>9 13, <sup>#</sup>11 trill, then in B26 to the gospel progression I/V, I7/V, IV, <sup>#</sup>iv dim, and finally to a powerful I/V chord. This stoic chord progression and melody is used to demonstrate the gravity of the content and historical context of the speech<sup>1</sup>.

iii) *Eulogy*



Figure 6-10 Eulogy composition

<sup>1</sup> Martin Luther King Jr sounds like he sings when he talks. He holds the pitch longer than most other speakers. He descends only at the very end of paragraphs.

The piece starts with a male tenor line played by the left hand in bars 1-4 (Figure 6-10). Bars 9-16 form the last 8 bars of a New Orleans rag progression<sup>1,2</sup>.

The piece moves through several key centres other than the home key of C major. Via D minor in Bar 30 the harmony moves to B<sup>b</sup> Major in bar 32 before B<sup>b</sup> minor in bar 40. From here we get through to the relative major of D<sup>b</sup> and then at Bar 48, C<sup>#</sup> minor. The progression gets back to the dominant of C (G7) supported also by the secondary dominant (D7) Bars 53-56.

Between bars 57-62 there are extensive modulations (6 in total)<sup>3</sup> before the piece moves into a ii7- V7- I progression back to the home key of C until the end of the piece. (Figure 6-11)

The musical score for Figure 6-11 consists of two systems of music. The first system begins at bar 56 and ends at bar 58. It features a treble staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a bass staff with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The music includes various musical notations such as treble and bass staves, key signatures, and dynamic markings like 'mp' and 'mf'. The second system begins at bar 59 and ends at bar 62. It continues the complex harmonic changes, including modulations to B-flat major, B-flat minor, D-flat major, and C-sharp minor. The score includes various musical notations such as treble and bass staves, key signatures, and dynamic markings like 'mf'.

**Figure 6-11** Eulogy's extensive modulations before the tonic

<sup>1</sup> The Chord progression <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sAnU4DsoRI4>- Typical New Orleans Rag  
Marvelous- Walter Hawkins <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZYIRp7XD1o>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ajHottEhREs>- Eulogy Hue Blanes

<sup>3</sup> Modulations: E<sup>b</sup> major, G minor, A<sup>b</sup> major

### **Part 3: Summary**

The morphing between the monophonic, homogenous, nature of a raw speech into a fully worked piece/composition (Harmony, Form, Structure, Emotion) can be a painless and organic process when it is envisioned from the transcribing stages.

If the final result of the composition is not as planned one should look at **all** the stages of the previous chapters to find where the process could have deviated.