

Job #



STEPHEN ANDERSON is both a composer and a pianist. As a composer, his works have been performed by a variety of ensembles and artists: The West Point Military Academy Band, The North Carolina Jazz Repertory Orchestra, Lynn Seaton and the Dallas Chamber Orchestra, the Crested Butte Chamber Orchestra, the One O' Clock Lab Band, Two O'clock Lab band, North Carolina Central University Percussion Ensemble, UNC Charlotte Percussion Ensemble, UNC-CH Wind Ensemble, Christopher Deane, Brian Bowman, Jason Ham, and a film score broadcast nationally on PBS.

As a pianist, Anderson has performed and recorded with the Lynn Seaton Trio and appears on two recordings with the trio for Nagel Heyer Records, *Puttin' On the Ritz* (2005) and *Ballads 2006* (compilation CD). Anderson played and recorded with the North Texas One O'clock Lab Band (*Lab* 2001) and Two O'clock Lab Band (*Translucent Two*). He has been active as a clinician and performing artist nationally and internationally in recent years and was the winner of the Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival piano competition (1997), has received awards from UNT and BYU in composition, an Honorable Mention from the International Society of Basses (in composition 2002), and grants from the Barlow Foundation and the UNC Research Council for his artistic work. Anderson's compositions are published by UNC (Northern Colorado) Jazz Press and Cimmarron Music Press.

Anderson earned a DMA (2005), and a MM (2000) in composition at the University of North Texas, and a BMus degree in composition at Brigham Young University (1997). He served as Assistant Professor of Jazz Piano at Western Illinois University (2003-2005) and is currently Assistant Professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in Jazz Studies and Composition.



1. Mobiles [11:43]
2. T'so Political [6:23]
3. Antithesis [10:14]
4. Moments of the Sublime [6:38]
5. 'em and 'ems [6:43]
6. For Sentimental Reasons [8:47]
7. Understated [7:10]
8. Forget Not [7:03]

Stephen Anderson – piano
 Jeff Eckels – bass / Joel Fountain – drums

(all compositions composed by Stephen Anderson except for track 6, "For Sentimental Reasons" by Watson/Best—arranged by Anderson)



STEINWAY & SONS



Forget Not

Stephen Anderson Trio



FORGET NOT – NOTES

The history books document the formation of early jazz as an amalgamation of musical attributes from a variety of cultures; i.e., African rhythms, Western harmony, and classical forms etc. That is kind of how I feel about my music—that it blends what I've learned from my heroes in the tradition; Art Tatum, Bud Powell, Oscar Peterson, Bill Evans, McCoy Tyner, Bobby Timmons, Keith Jarrett and so forth, together with techniques that I've learned from years of studying classical composition. On the one hand, I find that more and more I'm returning to the blues scale (a truly wonderful sound), yet intermingling the blues with more modern sonorities and atonal harmony. In this light, the words of Béla Bartók really resonate with me. Speaking of his harmonic aesthetic, he wrote, "it...seems to me that a carefully considered...use of chords of the older tonal type within atonal music is not stylistically incongruous." "These chords—which have long become banal on account of their use and misuse—maintain in their new circumstances a fresh and quite powerful effect, which arises from their capacity to provide contrast" (Béla Bartók, "The Problem with the New Music," 1920). Bartók favored mixing old school harmony with modern harmonies in order to expand and maximize his harmonic palette—I feel the same way.

Above all, despite the references to classical composers and techniques in these notes, for me the key of the music still lies where it rightfully belongs, in the groove! These are some of the thoughts about some of the compositions on the album.

MOBILES

The title, *Mobiles*, is indicative of the piece's use of mobile form. The form was popular in the 1960s and was used by Earl Brown in *Available Forms II* and by Stockhausen in *Klavierstücke XI*, as well as a number of other works. Each of the stated pieces is designed so that the players are able to make choices during the course of the performance that affect the ordering of events, and therefore, the interest in the form is that the music will be performed differently each time. The improvisatory nature of jazz has continually maintained this "always performed differently" factor as one of the hallmarks of the music, yet the cyclical nature of jazz forms can cause there to be a great deal of repetition when many choruses are taken. My interest in mobile form in *Mobiles* is to provide different paths which may be taken during the solo sections to limit the degree of repetition of chords each chorus. The larger form is a 24-bar blues in C major. During the solo section, the bass player is provided with five different endings that may be selected randomly, and the chords in each ending are modified using "change bass" technique. I usually play rootless voicings at the end of each form to stay out of the bassist's way.

One might argue that this sort of altering of the chord progression already occurs instinctively in rhythm sections, and that is certainly true. But the design of the chord paths ironically allows for a greater degree of composer control, while at the same time inviting the performers to participate in the design of the piece in real time. The changes from the solo section's five different endings resurface at the end of the chart and provide the backgrounds for the drum solo as a vamp. The drummer determines when the tune will end.

T'SO POLITICAL

T'so Political was composed, from conception to completed score in four days, roughly three weeks before the recording. The piece is constructed on the principal of isorhythm, similar to the technique used in the 14th- and 15th-century motets, as in works by Philippe De Vitry or Machaut. There are two independent lines, each consisting of its own isorhythm. Like the isorhythmic motets, each line has a "color" and a "talea." The color is the cycle of pitches and the talea is the cycle of rhythms. The right hand color (or pitch content) is generated from pitches found in the Eb minor pentatonic scale, and the rhythmic pattern repeats (not cycles) every 12 bars as if it were a 12-bar blues. The left hand has a similar pitch series, being based on the Eb blues scale, with an added chromatic ascent after reaching the 5th. The color cycles every six bars, while the talea cycles every four bars.

The two isorhythmic lines reflect the title of the piece, as political parties, each with their respective agendas that never fully come to terms (or agreement) with the ideals of the other party. The irony is that their respective colors have so much in common (nearly the same scale with a few added notes in the lower voice). The first time the pitches would naturally elide at the "tonic" (Eb; after three repetitions of the right hand melody or 36 bars), the left hand sounds an "A" in the bass register, and together, the hands form an AMaj#11, thus forming a tri-tone between the outer-most notes of the chord. Discord resurfaces at the conclusion of the drum solo (which is performed over the left hand's isorhythm), at the moment where the two lines would again elide (after 36 bars), the lower line maintains its position on the D, while the right hand performs an Eb. Each voice is played fortissimo in octaves.

The political struggle theme is further depicted during the solo section, which is a modified minor blues. At the conclusion of the form, a series of ascending power chords are played over the ascending chromatic bass line derived from the left hand's isorhythm and depicts the rising power struggle between parties.

'EM AND 'EMS

'em and 'ems is a basic 32-bar Tin-Pan-Alley type tune possessing a high degree of melodic color, due to the many extensions and alterations found in the melody. The key to this tune, however, is the trajectory; a gradual upward slope of intensity to the end. This trajectory is established through two metric modulations that increase the tempo from 126 bpm at the beginning to 380 bpm at the end.

The piece is dedicated to Elliot Carter, Lynn Seaton, and Carolina grammar. Carter for the metric modulations, Seaton for the Lynn Seaton-esk treatment of a tune, and Carolina grammar for the interesting colloquial native speech we've enjoyed since recently moving to North Carolina.

FORGET NOT

Unlike *T'so Political*, *Forget Not* was composed over the course of several months. The groove is straight-eighth and is set in a 7-4 meter. The title is drawn out of Deuteronomy Chapter 8 and reflects my interest in and

passion for religious history; especially Old Testament history. The setting of the chapter is taken from the time when the Israelites were preparing to enter the Land of Canaan (their "promised land"). The text explains why the Israelites suffered so many afflictions in the wilderness encourages them to not forget these difficult times once that had entered into "goodly houses" and easier times.

- Stephen R. Anderson

ABOUT THE MUSICIANS...

I feel very fortunate to have recorded with Jeff and Joel. Having worked with players from all over the world, these are two of my favorite musicians. Joel is really funny and keeps us all laughing. — A devout vegetarian, great cook, a wonderful composer/drummer who really understands harmony. His time is impeccable. Legend has it that he swallowed a metronome when he was little. I kind of believe that is true. Jeff is an incredibly nice guy, an exemplar of musical professionalism, and a truly great bass player. Within the trio setting he is always doing stuff; playing counter melodies and supportive lines that always seem to somehow mesh beautifully with the groove.

We met at the University of North Texas and gigged in Dallas for years. Each performed with the I O'clock Lab Band. Jeff performed on NPR's "What Do You Know" show for several years in Madison, Wisconsin. Joel toured with Maynard Ferguson (2002-2003).

THANKS...

Many thanks to my wife, Dori Anderson, for her years of patience with my musical habit; our crazy kids; Madison, McCoy, and Tatum; mom and dad, Reg and Arlene Anderson — mom for forcing us to play piano when we were kids (she was the neighborhood piano teacher), dad for always being there and for his love of music; brother Mike, my first inspiration as a composer; brother-in-law, John Donner, for loaning me a tape of the 1979 Paris Concert of the Bill Evans trio when I was a kid (I think I returned the tape about 12 years later); and supportive siblings Cheryl Anderson, Pam Donner, and John Anderson.

Also thanks to Erik and Marc Herbst at Panhandle House Studios in Denton, Texas, to Steven Bromberg for his photography (front cover), to Lynn Seaton for his years of mentoring as I played in his trio, and to composition teachers Joseph Klein and Cindy McTee.

Stephen R. Anderson