Kenny Wheeler: Melody, harmony and structure: An analysis of the melodic, harmonic and structural techniques in the compositions of Kenny Wheeler, and the implementation of those techniques into the author's own creative process

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Kenny Wheeler: Melody, Harmony and Structure

An analysis of the melodic, harmonic and structural techniques in the compositions of Kenny Wheeler, and the implementation of those techniques into the authors own creative process.

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Abstract

Kenny Wheeler is a Canadian born trumpeter and composer who has gained the respect and admiration of musicians and critics alike for his distinct and beautiful compositions. Despite this acclaim, an extensive search of relevant literature has revealed very little academic study of his compositional technique. Through an analysis of the melodic, harmonic and structural techniques evident in selected compositions by Kenny Wheeler, this dissertation offers insight into what gives Wheeler's music its distinct sound. The influence of these techniques on the author's own creative work is discussed through an exegesis. The dissertation consists of three chapters. The first chapter briefly introduces Kenny Wheeler and discusses why he is an important figure in jazz and the contribution he has made to jazz composition. Chapter two analyses selected Kenny Wheeler compositions, focusing on the areas of melody, harmony and structure. This chapter also explains the methods used in analyzing the melodic, harmonic and structural techniques. The third chapter includes a comparative analysis of the compositional techniques of Kenny Wheeler and the author's own creative work.
Declaration

I certify that this dissertation does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

(i) incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution or higher education;

(ii) contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; or

(iii) contain any defamatory material

Alice Humphries

2009
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Kenny Wheeler first appeared onto the major jazz scene in 1975 with one of the most important debut albums in modern jazz, *Gnu High* (Wheeler, 1975) (Bambarger, B. 1997, p. 85). Since then he has enjoyed significant critical and peer acclaim for his compositions and trumpet playing. Despite this acclaim¹, very little research has been done on Wheeler’s compositions and the techniques employed in them. An examination of his compositions reveals that certain techniques and devices continually re-appear in the areas of melody, harmony and structure, offering insight into what it is that gives Wheeler’s music its distinct sound.

1.1 Who is Kenny Wheeler

Born in Canada, Kenny Wheeler built his musical career in London after a spur of the moment decision to move there in 1952 (Lees, 2000, pp. 21-22.). Before he left Canada, Wheeler took some private lessons in trumpet and harmony at the Toronto Conservatory where he studied texts by Paul Hindemith². When he first arrived in London, Wheeler worked in a post office until he started to get work with dance bands and big bands as a trumpeter. His most significant work in these early years was with John Dankworth, who he joined in 1959 and played with intermittently for six years. Wheeler wrote his first big band album for Dankworth’s band in 1968 called ‘Windmill Tilter’, (based on the story of Don Quixote) and during his time with the band he studied composition with Richard Rodney Bennett (1962–3) and Bill Russo (1963–4).

From the mid-1960s he toured and recorded as a sideman with many different artists³ including Ronnie Scott and Philly Joe Jones as well as doing studio work around London and can even be heard on the original recording of *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Lloyd Webber, 1970). Wheeler first led his own small groups and big bands in the mid-1970’s recording the big band album *Song for Someone* in 1973. However, it was the critically acclaimed *Gnu High*, which he recorded for the label ECM in 1975 with Keith Jarrett, Dave Holland and Jack DeJohnette, which “…marked his arrival as a major

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¹ This critical and peer acclaim is discussed in more detail later in the paper.

² The book referred to is probably *Elementary Training for Musicians* or *The Craft of Musical Composition*. Wheeler has never disclosed which books he studied, simply stating that he studied texts by Hindemith.

³ See Appendix A for discography
presence, particularly as a composer,” and is considered to be “one of the most striking debut albums in modern jazz.” (Bambarger, B. 1997, p. 85)

“Blessed by deep, lyrical compositions and searching, apposite improvisations, Kenny Wheeler’s debut ECM album, ‘Gnu High’ has come to be a touchstone in modern jazz—a testimony to the artistic efficacy of thoroughness in conception and spontaneity in execution.”

(Bambarger, B. 1997, p. 85)

In an interview in 1997 for Billboard, even the ever humble and self-effacing Kenny Wheeler was able to admit that; “The compositions may have made a statement that a lot of up-and-coming musicians at the time appreciated...The pieces might have helped point out avenues between the different European and American sensibilities in jazz. (Bambarger, B. 1997, p. 85)

After Gnu High Wheeler recorded a steady output of critically acclaimed albums for ECM including Deer Wan (1978), Around 6 (1980), Double, Double You (1984), Window in the Window (1990) and Angel Song (1997). His best known album for large ensemble came in 1990 when he recorded Music for Large and Small Ensembles; a two-disc album that included the ‘Sweet Time Suite’, an extended work for big band. In recent years Wheeler has recorded a brass ensemble album for ECM, Long Time Ago (1999) and a joint recording project with valve trombonist and composer Bob Brokmeyer called Island (2003). Wheeler also released a duet album Where do we go from here? (2004) (with pianist John Taylor), and a drummer-less chamber project; What Now? (2005) that he recorded with Chris Potter, Dave Holland and John Taylor. He also released the album Other People with the Hugo Wolf String Quartet and John Taylor in 2008.

1.2 Critical and Peer Acclaim

As a composer, Wheeler is both critically acclaimed and highly respected by his fellow musicians. Composer and bassist Dave Holland said “...Kenny’s work as a composer is as individual as that of Mingus or Ellington – a serious contribution to the written jazz literature. His music is something for musicians to study and for everyone to listen to and enjoy,” (Bambarger, B. 1997, p. 85). Fellow trumpeter Dave Douglas described Wheeler’s compositions as “…jazz standards; I learned them at music school. When you’re studying the music, Kenny Wheeler’s tunes are one giant area where you need to focus. They’re unique in jazz composing – the different types of chords, always really interesting phrase lengths; odd phrase lengths, but somehow with melodies that make them work.”
Eminent jazz composer and arranger (and recent collaborator on the 2003 album *Island*), Bob Brookmeyer, described Wheeler’s trumpet playing and compositions as “Outstanding” (Brookmeyer & Wheeler, 2003). Bassist Jeremy Allen, (who also played on *Island*), spoke of the influence Wheeler’s compositions have had on younger generations of jazz musicians;

“Kenny Wheeler represents... one of the big important steps in the lineage that goes all the way through jazz and he’s one of the most important post-Wayne Shorter voices as far as the influence on younger writers is concerned...A lot of musicians I run into listen to a lot of Kenny Wheeler tunes and when they’re starting out to write...you hear a lot of Kenny Wheeler in what they write because his vocabulary and his structure is something that is completely fresh and very interesting and it really appealed to people.”

(Brookmeyer & Wheeler, 2003)

Critics have described Wheeler as “One of the jazz world’s unsung heroes...” who has “cultivated a highly personal, poetic voice...simultaneously tapping and transcending tradition” (Bambarger, B. 1997, p. 85) “…If his work over the decades has left him with almost no public profile, he has an enviable reputation among musicians of all ages and backgrounds.” (Sinker, 1990, p. 45)
Chapter 2

Why have Wheeler’s compositions attracted such glowing admiration and respect? Examining his compositions reveals that certain techniques and devices continually re-appear in the areas of melody, harmony and structure. Wheeler’s beautiful and melancholy melodies, the specific harmonic techniques he employs as well as his non-traditional approach to structure, all contribute to giving his music its distinct, open, and austere sound.

Explanation of the Analytical Techniques

This dissertation will utilize jazz analytical techniques outlined in Rayburn Wright’s Inside the Score (Wright, 1982), Ron Miller’s Modal Jazz Composition and Harmony (Miller, 1996) and aspects of the hybrid analytical technique employed by Michael Herbert in his Masters thesis; New Directions in Jazz Composition as evidenced in the work of three composers: Kenny Wheeler, Don Grolnick and Russell Ferrante (Herbert, 2000). The melodic analysis will consist of intervallic and structural analysis of the melody using score extracts. Harmonic analysis will utilize harmonic/chordal graphs to show chord construction and harmonic movement and will also examine voicings and chord types through score extracts. The analysis of structure will consist of structural diagrams to outline the overall form of selected compositions. All score extracts, tables and graphs are labeled as Figure 1 to 35 and are clearly explained as they occur in the dissertation.

2.1 Melody

Respected composer and valve trombonist Bob Brookmeyer stated that “Kenny writes beautiful songs tinged with kind of a melancholy sadness” (Brookmeyer & Wheeler, 2003) and Wheeler himself has repeatedly stated that he has “...always loved beautiful melodies. I must be a little twisted because beautiful sad melodies make me feel very happy – because they communicate to me.” (Sturm, 1997, p. 6) “...I’m still trying to find soppy romantic melodies mixed with a bit of chaos.” (Eyles, 2003) "I try to write my idea of a nice, slightly melancholic melody” (Hale, 1997, pp. 34-36). Considering these comments by Wheeler, it comes as no surprise, that one of the most striking observations about Wheeler’s music is the strength and beauty of his melodies. Through analysis of Wheeler’s melodic material, four techniques are consistently apparent:

• Melodic sequences and motific development;
• 7th intervals within the melodies (often created through octave displacement);
• Basing of the melody in the extensions of the harmony and;
• Additive melody.

These four techniques are important in contributing to the strength and individuality of Wheeler’s music.

Figure 1 demonstrates an example of melodic sequence in Wheeler’s compositions. The melody of ‘Foxy Trot’ consists of an 8 bar phrase that is repeated, and this phrase is made up of a two bar motif that is repeated 3 times, down a semitone each time, with a two bar tag on the end. Figure 2 shows another instance of melodic sequences in Wheeler’s compositions. The first motif shown in red as A is repeated down a 4th in A1. The motif B is then repeated up a 4th in B1. The motif at C is then repeated down a 4th in C1. Almost the entire melody of ‘Smatta’ is made up of motifs that are then repeated at a different pitch, creating a melodic sequence.

Figure 2. Wheeler’s use of melodic sequence: “Smatta” from the album Gnu High by Kenny Wheeler (concert pitch). (Sturm, 1997)
The use of this technique gives great unity and strength to the melody of 'Smatta', as each motif is somehow related to the motif that comes before or after it. Kenny Wheeler's use of melodic sequence is a significant aspect of his compositions and contributes to the strength and unity of his music.

The extensive use of 7th intervals within the melody and the use of octave displacement are other distinct characteristics of Wheeler's melodic material. 'Mai We Go Round' (Figure 3) contains ascending and descending major and minor 7th intervals. The fourth bar contains an ascending major 7th interval, and the fifth bar has a descending minor 7th from the G to an A. In the seventh bar a descending minor 7th interval occurs and in the ninth bar another descending minor 7th occurs.

Figure 3. Extensive use of 7th intervals within melodies: The melody of 'Mai We Go Round' as heard in the trumpet at 2.24min on the album Around 6 by Kenny Wheeler (concert pitch) (Wheeler, 1980).

Figure 4 shows another example of Wheeler's use of 7th intervals within the melodies of his compositions. The melody of 'Nicolette' contains several ascending and descending 7th intervals, and these intervals are created through octave displacement. The instances of octave displacement (circled in red) occur because if these circled notes were moved into the octave closer to the melody notes surrounding them, the melody would move in a more traditional fashion (without the distinctive jumps of a 7th interval). For example if the circled notes labeled 1, 2 and 3 were moved up the octave the first line of the melody would appear as shown in Figure 5, where the melody moves

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4 Octave displacement is where stepwise notes or notes within a small range in a melody are displaced by an octave.

5 Diminished octaves will also be referred to as 7th intervals.
in a more traditional progression of intervals. Wheeler's use of large intervallic jumps within his melodies is integral to the distinct sound of his compositions.

Figure 4. Octave Displacement: 'Nicolette' from the album *Angel Song*. Bar 1-29 of the melody, circled notes indicate instances of octave displacement (concert pitch). (Sturm, 1997)

Figure 5. Melody without octave displacement: The first line of the melody of 'Nicolette' altered to be without octave displacement (concert pitch).

Wheeler has stated that he is "always looking for a more austere, open sound..." (Sturm, 1997) in his music and this 'open' sound is apparent in Wheeler's melodic material often being based within the extensions of the harmony. Figure 6 shows where the melody of 'Smatta' is placed within the harmony. The boxes labeled 1-22 in Figure 6 show the instances of the melody note being an extension, or implied extension of the harmony. For example number 1 shows where the melody note, an A# (Bb), is the 11th degree of the chord, (an Ema711). Number 6 is an example of an implied extension; the melody note, an Eb, would be the 13th degree of the Gbma713 chord. By basing his melodic material in the extensions of the harmony, Wheeler creates a more 'open' sound by accentuating the extensions of the harmony, and having a large distance between the root of the chord, and the note of the melody.
Another melodic device found in the compositions of Kenny Wheeler is additive melody, where small fragments are repeated, each time adding a few more notes of the complete melody. An example of this is in ‘The Opening’ of *The Sweet Time Suite* (shown in Figure 7.) Melodic fragment A is expanded in A1, A2, A3 and A4, melodic fragment B is expanded in B1. The last half of B1 is marked C and is
then expanded in C1. The use of additive melody helps create tension by delaying resolution, making it an effective technique employed in Wheeler’s compositions.

![Figure 7. Additive Melody: 'The Opening' from The Sweet Time Suite (concert pitch)](image)

As has been shown in the above extracts, the use of the melodic techniques melodic sequence, octave displacement and use of 7th intervals, the placing of melodies within the extensions of the harmony and additive melody, are integral parts Wheeler’s compositional style and essential to the individual sound of his music.

### 2.2 Harmony

Pianist Frank Carlberg\(^6\) stated that Wheeler has “...his own harmonic language” (Brookmeyer & Wheeler, 2003). Wheeler’s compositions are easily recognizable because of the harmonic techniques he uses and five characteristics are consistently evident in Wheeler’s harmonic language:

- the use of certain specific chordal movements, and an avoidance of the harmonic progressions traditionally associated with jazz composition;
- quartal harmony;
- the writing of contrapuntal style countermelodies;
- the use of poly-chords and other specific chord structures and voicings;
- and the lack of a key signature.

---

\(^6\) Frank Carlberg worked with Kenny Wheeler on the 2003 album Island along with valve trombonist Bob Brookmeyer, drummer John Hollenbeck and bassist Jeremy Allen.
The movement from a Ma7(#11) chord down a semitone to a Mi11 chord is a common chord movement in Wheeler’s compositions. This is demonstrated in Figure 8 where in the second and third bar, and the sixth and seventh bar, the harmony moves from an Abma7(#11) down a semitone to a Gmi11.

This specific chordal movement also occurs in ‘Smatta’, (Figure 9), in movement from the Ema7(#11) to an Ebmi11 (in the second and third bar), and the movement from a Bma7(#11) to a Bbmi11 (in the sixth and seventh bar). There are many more incidences of this harmonic progression in Wheeler’s compositions. His consistent use of the chord progression Ma7(#11) down a semitone to a Mi11, is a distinguishing characteristic of his harmonic language and is significant in the creation of the distinct sound of his compositions.

According to Fred Sturm Wheeler’s chord progressions “...stray far beyond the stereotypical ii-V7 structures and root movement of 4ths and 5ths that characterize traditional jazz standards.” (Sturm, 1997) This is apparent in his rare use of dominant chords in their pure form, and infrequent use of the ii-V7-I or even a V7-I chord movement. When Wheeler does use a V-I root movement it is not often at the end of a piece or phrase and also the chord type is rarely dominant. For example in Figure 10 in the twelfth to thirteenth bar of ‘Riverrun’, the root movement is Ama9 to Dmi9(#20). The V chord in this V-I root movement would traditionally be an A dominant 7th chord, however Wheeler has used an A major 7th chord with the major 9th.
A second consistent feature of Wheeler’s harmonic language is his use of quartal harmony\(^7\) and the voicing of melodies and backings in 4ths. Wheeler has stated that he “...was very much affected by Paul Hindemith’s “Mathis der Maler. I especially like the quartal harmonies...” (Sturm, 1997) The use of quartal harmony is particularly evident in Wheeler’s writing for large ensemble. Figure 11 shows an extract from Part II of the ‘Sweet Time Suite’ from the album *Music for Large and Small Ensembles* (1990). The extract shows the trumpet and trombone sections playing a rhythmic backing motif with the rhythm section. The trumpets are voiced in 4ths with the 1st and 2nd trumpet playing the top voice, and the 3rd and 4th trumpet playing a 4th below. The piano voicing in Figure 11 is an example of quartal harmony, with the piano voicing’s being based on 4th intervals. In the first two bars the right hand plays a 4 note chord built of 2 sets of 4ths, an F# to B, and then a C# to an F# above that. In the second two bars of Figure 11 the right hand plays a 3 note chord built of 4ths, an F# to a B, then an E.

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\(^7\) Quartal Harmony is a chordal system based on the interval of a perfect 4th.
Figure 11. Quartal Harmony in 'Part II: Kind Folk' from the *Sweet Time Suite* by Kenny Wheeler, bar 9-12, trumpets, trombones and rhythm section (concert pitch). (Sturm, 1997) (Wheeler, 1990a)
Wheeler has cited the influence of some renaissance composers on his compositions;

"I love contrapuntal music, and I was listening to a lot of Byrd, Tallis, Gesualdo when I was composing the pieces on 'Angel Song,' I've been trying to capture the spirit of that era while still keeping it jazz."

(Bambarger, B. 1997, p. 85)

The influence of these composers manifests itself in Wheeler's consistent use of counterpoint in his compositions. 'Three for D'reen' (Figure 12) for example shows the melody in the trumpet with a contrapuntal counter-melody in the tenor saxophone.

Figure 12. 'Three for D'reen' from the album Double, Double You by Kenny Wheeler, bar 1-14 (concert pitch). (Sturm, 1997) (Wheeler, 1984)

A second example of the Wheeler's use of counterpoint is shown in Figure 13 in the piece 'Nicolette' which is an example of imitative polyphony. 'Nicolette' consists of two melodic lines that are based on the same melodic material that interact rhythmically and contribute to the outlining of the harmony.
Figure 13. 'Nicolette' from Angel Song bar 1-29 of the melody and countermelody (concert pitch). (Sturm, 1997)
(Wheeler, 1997)

Another example of Wheeler's use of the contrapuntal style is evident in his writing of chorales with contrapuntal lines in his large ensemble works. 'Sophie' (shown in Figure 14) from the album Music for Large and Small Ensembles is a primary example of this. The chorale in Figure 14 is continued in a similar fashion in the saxophone section after this excerpt.
As demonstrated in the above analyses and excerpts, Wheeler’s consistent use of counterpoint is an important aspect of his harmonic language, and an essential component of his compositional voice.

Another key aspect of Wheeler’s harmonic language is his consistent use of particular chord types. These chord types include poly-chords (the imposing of triads over different bass notes) as well as other specific chord structures and voicings such as altered major chords, extended minor chords and suspended dominant chords.

“[Kenny Wheeler’s] harmonic language has been distinguished by synthetic harmonies (triads over foreign bass notes for example), altered major type chords (particularly major 7th with an augmented 5th), extended minor chords (that frequently omit the 7th and sometimes lower the 6th degree), and dominant structures with suspended 4ths.”

(Sturm, 1997)
Wheeler’s use of poly-chords is an important characteristic of his harmonic language. The bass note is often either a note foreign to the top chord, or a degree of the top chord that is not the tonic. For example in Figure 15 the first chord is an Cma7(#5)/G. The bass note G, is the ma7th degree of the top chord, Cma7(#5). The interval between the bass note (G) and the root of the top chord (Ab) is either a min9th or a semi-tone, either of these intervals creates dissonance in the harmony.

Figure 15. Poly-Chords: The chord chart of 'May Ride' from the album Around 6 bar 9-20. (Sturm, 1997) (Wheeler, 1980)

The third chord in Figure 15 is an E/F chord. This specifies that an E major triad be played over an F root note. The F is a foreign bass note as it is not part of the top chord, an E major triad. Figure 16 shows the chord changes for ‘Ma Belle Helene’ and is another example of Wheeler’s extensive use of poly-chords, particularly the placing of triads over foreign bass notes.

Figure 16. Poly Chords: The chord chart of ‘Ma Belle Helene’ from the album Window in the Window by Kenny Wheeler, bar 5-28. (Sturm, 1997) (Wheeler, 1990b)
Another characteristic of Kenny Wheeler’s harmonic language is the extensive use of certain chord types, specifically, major chords with an augmented 5th, major chords with a #11th, extended minor chords (e.g. Mi13) and suspended chords. Figure 17 shows the chord changes to ‘Blue for Lou’ from the album Double, Double You in which there are only two chords in the entire chord chart that are not either an extended minor chord or a Maj7(#11) chord; in the eighth bar, there is a D13(#11b9), and in the sixteenth bar there is an Eb13(#11b9) chord. Figure 16 shows an example of Wheeler’s use of suspended chords with the last 4 bars of the form being an Absus4 chord. Figure 15 is an example of Wheeler’s use of augmented major chords, with the first two bars being an Abma7(#5)/G and the seventh bar being a Gma7(#5). Wheeler’s consistent use of particular chord types such as poly-chords, Ma7(#11), Ma7(#5), extended minor chords and suspended chords is a key feature of his harmonic language, and an important factor in achieving the individual sound of his music.

Figure 17. The chord and rhythm chart of ‘Blue for Lou’ from the album Double, Double You by Kenny Wheeler. (Sturm, 1997) (Wheeler, 1984)

Another important aspect of Wheeler’s harmonic technique is the lack of a key-signature in his compositions;

“I never think about key signatures. I never put a key signature on any of my pieces, sometimes I try to figure out what key they’re in at the actual moment....maybe there’s a key signature (that) goes through the whole thing. I don’t know.”

(Brookmeyer & Wheeler, 2003)
By not using a key signature, Wheeler is free of the restrictions of key centers, and this perhaps contributes to the constantly changing key centers and often unusual harmonic progressions in his compositions.

As shown in the above analyses, the harmonic techniques employed by Wheeler in his compositions; quartal harmony, the use of specific chord types, counterpoint, the consistent use of particular chordal movements and the lack of a key signature, are important aspects of his harmonic language, and contribute to the distinct sound of Wheeler’s music.

2.3 Structure

Wheeler’s approach to form and structure in his compositions is a further important aspect of his compositional technique. The structural techniques evident in his compositions include;

- extended free improvisation sections or interludes within structured formats such as big band;
- writing of extended and multi themed works;
- blurring of bar lines through frequently changing time signatures;
- repeating melodies at different pitches;
- a non-traditional approach to form within his compositions.

A distinguishing characteristic of Wheeler’s music is the use of free ‘interludes’ within his compositions. Wheeler’s involvement in the free jazz movement in London and Europe during the late 60’s influenced his approach to how he structures his large and small group compositions. In his 1973 big band album Song for Someone Wheeler combines elements of free improvisation into a big band format, with the track ‘The Good Doctor’ beginning with over two minutes of free improvisation from saxophone, guitar and piano, utilizing contemporary classical and free jazz improvisation techniques. Wheeler said of his use of free improvisation:

“When I first decided to start a big band in England around 1968, I wanted to ask all my favorite players to join it, whether they were bebop players, Dixieland players, free players or studio players, and I decided to try to write for these players. I also wanted to get the music to the stage where we could do a whole continuous set with no interruption, so I decided to

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8 ‘Non-traditional’ meaning different to the AABA song form, or head, solo, head format traditionally associated with jazz composition and performance.
have free interludes between pieces. For me, this worked very well...I always try to have areas in my big band music especially for free improvisation. Sometimes this gives the music a kind of schizophrenic feel to it, but I have always liked this.”

(Sturm, 1997)

This mix of free improvisation and structured composition is also apparent on Wheeler’s acclaimed album for big band, *Music for Large and Small Ensembles* (1990). Between the 6th and 7th movements of his extended piece ‘Sweet Time Suite’ there is a two and a half minute free interlude, first by trombone, piano and guitar then taken over by the drum kit (these sections are not notated on the scores but exist in the only recording of the work). The use of free interludes within structured compositions gives Wheelers music a spontaneity and uniqueness that holds the listener’s interest through unexpected twist and turns.

The writing of extended works and multi-themed compositions is an essential component of Wheeler’s structural technique. His debut album for ECM *Gnu High* included the composition ‘Gnu Suite’, and also the multi-themed ‘Heyoke’ and his composition for big band ‘The Sweet Time Suite’ is an extended work in seven movements taking up a whole disc on the two disc *Music for Large and Small Ensembles* (1990). Wheeler’s extended and multi-themed works often move though several different tempos and have multiple melodic themes. In “Heyoke” there are three different melodic themes. The overall form structure of the piece is shown in Figure 18. ‘Heyoke’ moves through three different tempos including sections that have no tempo or are rubato. The piece also has two open or free solos, one from the piano (shown in Figure 18 at F) and the other from the drums (shown in Figure 18 at L). The use of changing and rubato tempos and open/free solos is an important part of Wheeler’s structural technique and contributes to the spontaneity of his music.

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9 The three melodic themes can be found notated in Appendix B.
### Form of ‘Heyoke’ from the album *Gnu High* by Kenny Wheeler.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Theme 1 played by trumpet, backed by piano, bass and drums. Theme 1 is a 36 bar form consisting of a 16 bar melody repeated, and a 4 bar tag.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Trumpet solo over the form and harmony of Theme 1, repeated 3 times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Piano solo over the form and harmony of Theme 1, repeated 4 times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Bass solo over the form and harmony of Theme 1, repeated twice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Theme 1 repeated, first 16 bars played by piano backed by bass and drums, second 16 bars played by trumpet backed by piano, bass and drums. The 4 bar tag is then repeated four times and fades out into a piano cadenza.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Extended solo improvised piano cadenza.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Theme 2 played by solo piano. (Out of tempo).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Theme 2 is repeated with trumpet playing the melody backed by piano, bass and drums. (Out of tempo).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Trumpet solo over the form of theme 2 repeated twice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Piano solo over the form of theme 2 repeated twice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>Theme 2 repeated with trumpet playing melody backed by piano, bass and drums.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Drum solo. No tempo or harmony, free/open.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Theme 3 is played by piano bass drums and trumpet.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 18. Extended and multi themed works: Form diagram of ‘Heyoke’ from the album *Gnu High* by Kenny Wheeler. (Wheeler, 1975)

Wheeler has many time signature changes in his compositions. The time signatures change to suit the natural flow of the melodic line. Jazz writer and educator Fred Sturm said in an interview with Wheeler in 1997:

> “Frequent meter changes don’t burden your [Kenny Wheeler] lines or phrase constructions, and the resulting combination of elements tends to organically ‘blur’ the bar lines.”

(Sturm, 1997)

The frequently changing time signatures give the affect of blurring the bar lines for example ‘Blue for Lou’ *(Figure 19)* from the album *Double Double You* has two phrases of 25 beats in length with those 25 beats grouped into bars of 4, 2, 4, 2, 4, 2, 3, 4. The harmonic rhythm is shown in the piano and
bass parts and the melody in the trumpet and counter melody in the tenor saxophone flow seamlessly over the top.

Figure 19. Frequent time signature changes in 'Blue for Lou' from the album *Double, Double You* by Kenny Wheeler, bar 1-16 (concert pitch).

The repeating of melodies at different pitches is a key feature of Wheeler's compositional structure. His repeating of melodies at different pitches could be considered a 'key change' however Wheeler never uses key signatures and refers to this technique as repeating melodies at a different pitch. Wheeler spoke about his realization that he uses this technique in an interview on the DVD attached to the album *Island* that he recorded with Bob Brookmeyer in 2003;

"Like most of my pieces, the second half is in a different pitch to the first half. I didn't really realize I was doing that for a lot of years until maybe 10 years ago I thought 'Oh that's what I do.' And I was unhappy to know that because I don't like to know what I do, I like to think it's instinctive. I know I have a system but I don't really want to know what the system is."

(Brookmeyer & Wheeler, 2003)
Wheeler’s melodies don’t usually have a specific key center and they often resolve in a way that the melody is repeated at a different pitch. This is achieved through the end of the melody resolving in a different key center to the beginning of the melody. Examples of melodies being repeated at different pitches include; ‘3/4 in the Afternoon’ from the album Deer Wan (1977), and ‘May Ride’ from the album Around 6 (1980). ‘Blue for Lou’ (Figure 19) from the album Double Double You (1983), is another example of Wheeler repeating melodies at different pitches. At A in Figure 19 the trumpet melody starts on an E natural, and then at B the melody starts on an F natural. The harmony of the melody at A resolves to repeat the melody up a semitone at B. There is no specific point where there is a key change, the harmony of the melody simply resolves so that B is up a semitone from A.

Wheeler’s non-traditional approach to form is a significant aspect of his structural technique. His compositions often have several different sections with changing tempos, changing time signatures and new melodic material. The composition ‘Riverrun’ (shown in Figure 20) from the album Around 6 (1980) is an example of Wheeler’s non-traditional approach to form. The melody of ‘Riverrun’ moves through four different tempos;
- starting rubato or out of tempo at A,
- moving to a fast swing at B,
- back to rubato halfway through B
- two bars of fast 6/8,
- back to the fast swing feel.

Wheelers frequent use of tempo changes contributes to the spontaneity of his music. The melodic material of ‘Riverrun’ has a 16 bar melody at A followed by a completely new 19 bar melodic idea based on 4ths at B. Halfway through B where the melody moves back into rubato, a second 4th based melody is introduced which moves into the two 6/8 bars and then into fast swing followed by solos. The form of ‘Riverrun’ could be described as;

**A - B - C - Solos over A - Melody A repeated**

When the form shown above is considered with the frequent tempo changes employed in ‘Riverrun’, the structure is quite different to the form often heard in more traditional jazz composition such as song form (AABA).
Figure 20. Non-traditional approach to form: Score of “Riverrun” from the album Around 6 by Kenny Wheeler (concert pitch). (Sturm, 1997) (Wheeler, 1980)
As discussed above, the incorporation of extended free sections or interludes into his compositions, writing of extended and multi themed works, blurring of bar lines through frequently changing time signatures, repeating melodies at different pitches and a non-traditional approach to form within his compositions, are all important aspects of Kenny Wheeler’s structural technique. The use of these structural techniques within his compositions contributes to the individual sound of Wheeler’s music.
Chapter 3

What follows is a discussion of my creative work, a 5 part suite called *A Suite State of Repair*, and the integration of aspects of Kenny Wheeler’s compositional technique into my creative process. The exegesis is structured as follows;

- A brief outline of the context of the work;
- A discussion of the overall structure and how it relates to my research on Kenny Wheeler;
- A discussion of each of the five parts of *A Suite State of Repair* in terms of the creative process, compositional techniques used, and how the creative process and compositional techniques relate to my research on Kenny Wheeler.

I regularly refer to the score of *A Suite State of Repair* which can be found at Appendix C (Page 56) and refer to specific bar numbers, all of which are clearly marked on the score. This chapter should be read in conjunction with the recording of *A Suite State of Repair* attached as Appendix D.

3.1 Context

*A Suite State of Repair* was written in the context of my research on the melodic, harmonic and structural techniques employed in the compositions of Kenny Wheeler and the integration of these techniques into my creative process. The piece explores the concept of breaking something apart and putting it back together again through music. This idea of the breaking and mending came from Wheeler’s structural technique of using free interludes within his large and small group compositions. I felt this concept allowed me to explore the structural technique of using free interludes in a coherent way in one large extended work for jazz ensemble. Each of the five parts of *A Suite State of Repair* explore the use of one or more of Wheeler’s melodic, harmonic and structural techniques.

*A Suite State of Repair* was written for a mixture of jazz orchestra and small jazz ensemble. The first two parts, ‘The Beginning’ and ‘The Breaking’ are written for a chamber jazz ensemble\(^{10}\) and the last two parts, ‘The Mending’ and ‘The Ending’ are written for jazz orchestra\(^{11}\). ‘The Broken’ (Part III) is

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\(^{10}\) ‘The Beginning’ (Part I) is scored for two flugelhorns, alto, tenor and baritone saxophone, trombone and piano, guitar, bass drums. ‘The Breaking’ (Part II) is scored for the same instruments plus flute, clarinet and a second trombone.

\(^{11}\) Jazz orchestra consisted off: 3 flutes, 1 clarinet, 5 saxophones, 3 trombones, 2 bass trombones, 5 trumpets, piano, guitar, bass and drums.
the free interlude that involves a small jazz group of piano, bass, drums, trumpet and tenor saxophone. My reasoning behind having a smaller group for the first two parts was to be able to explore a more contrapuntal style of writing and also due to restricted rehearsal time with the jazz orchestra. 'The Broken' was played by a small group of selected musicians who have the experience and capabilities to perform free improvisation.

3.2 Structure

The structure of A Suite State of Repair centers on the concept of 'breaking' and 'mending'. The work is a suite in five parts: 'The Beginning' (Part I), 'The Breaking' (Part II), 'Broken' (Part III), 'The Mending' (Part IV) and 'The Ending' (Part V). An overview of the overall structure of the suite is shown in Figure 21. I decided to write one extended work in the form of a suite as a way of exploring the structural techniques discussed in Chapter 2.3. A Suite State of Repair contains several tempo changes, rubato sections and improvised cadenzas (shown in Figure 21), and these structural techniques will be discussed with reference to each of the movements of A Suite State of Repair.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Bar No.</th>
<th>Tempo</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Instrumentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>=120</td>
<td></td>
<td>'The Beginning' (Part I)</td>
<td>Alto, tenor and baritone saxophone, 2 Flugelhorn, trombone, piano, guitar, bass and drums.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>=130</td>
<td></td>
<td>A, A, B, 4 bar tag, A, B.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Flugelhorn solo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>138</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pause</td>
<td>Flugelhorn Cadenza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>141</td>
<td>=200</td>
<td></td>
<td>New</td>
<td>Piano melody: ABAB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>149</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>bass feel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>207</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Repeats last 4 bars of B at different times in</td>
<td>Flute, clarinet, alto, tenor and baritone saxophone, 2 Flugelhorn, trombone, piano, guitar, bass and drums.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>245</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rubato</td>
<td>'The Breaking' (Part II) Solo Flugelhorn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>255</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rubato</td>
<td>Piano tag with drum colors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>260</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rubato</td>
<td>Tenor saxophone melody A as a counter melody and trombone plays a second countermelody</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>270</td>
<td>=90</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tenor plays A, trumpet plays A as a counter melody</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>287</td>
<td>=90</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bass guitar play melody A and clarinet and piano play a new counter melody</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>298</td>
<td>=90</td>
<td></td>
<td>Time signature changes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>343</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pause</td>
<td>Short piano cadenza</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>344</td>
<td>=90</td>
<td></td>
<td>Variation of melody A and A as a countermelody over new piano/bass motif</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>365</td>
<td>=90</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tenor saxophone solo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400</td>
<td>No Tempo</td>
<td></td>
<td>'The Broken' (Part III)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>401</td>
<td>=180</td>
<td></td>
<td>Free interlude, with form/intensity graph as score (No bar numbers)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>409</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Melody A introduced</td>
<td>Jazz orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>420</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Melody A with counter-melody A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>432</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Melody A with counter-melody A and counter-melody B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>441</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Melody A with counter-melody C and counter-melody B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>449</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Melody B with backing figures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>476</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tenor sax solo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>541</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Melody A with answering countermelodies/variations on melody A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>576</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Melody B with counter melodies and backing figures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>594</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Extended Pause</td>
<td>Solo Piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>595</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Extended improvised piano cadenza</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>622</td>
<td>=70</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ensemble repeats melodic theme for 'The Ending'</td>
<td>Jazz Orchestra</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 21. Form/Structure table of A Suite State of Repair.
3.3 ‘The Beginning’ (Part I) from *A Suite State of Repair*

‘The Beginning’ (Part I) was written for small jazz ensemble and features the flugelhorn in a solo and cadenza. The movement explores Wheeler’s techniques of melodic sequence, 7th intervals within melodies, counterpoint, the use of poly-chords, changing tempos and the repeating of melodies at different pitches.

My compositional process in relation to the melody for all five parts of *A Suite State of Repair* was focused on creating strong, memorable and emotionally evocative melodies. Wheeler spoke of his love of beautiful melodies in an interview with Fred Sturm in 1997 and his music reflects this. The melodic material for ‘The Beginning’ was developed from a section of a pitch-module that was one of many pages I wrote during the development stage of the piece. This pitch-module technique is one of Bob Brookmeyer’s compositional tools (Francis, 2004). The pitch module I used as the basis for the melodic material in ‘The Beginning’ is shown in Figure 22 with the section I used indicated in the red box. I used the pitch module system to try to write something new that I hadn’t perhaps heard or written before. The process involved my sitting down and writing out pages of 12 tone rows away from the piano and not trying to write melodies in particular, just trying to explore different intervals. Another advantage of the pitch-module process was that it took my melodies out of being trapped in one key center or scale/mode, which was a problem I had encountered in the past.

![Figure 22. 12 tone row from which the melody of 'The Beginning' was created. Red box indicates the section of the tone row used to create the melodic material of 'The Beginning'.](image)

In creating the melody for ‘The Beginning’, I took the section of the pitch-module indicated in the red box (Figure 22), and repeated it down a 5th, creating a melodic sequence. Figure 23 shows the melody of ‘The Beginning’ and contains several examples of melodic sequence;

- Phrase A is sequenced in Phrase A1
- Phrase B is sequenced in Phrase B1 and then again in Phrase B2
- Phrase C is sequenced in Phrase C1
- Phrase D is sequenced in Phrase D1 and D2

---

12 Bob Brookmeyer’s pitch module system is based on the serial music 12 tone system, but has more freedom and is more a system for generating new material than a strict compositional ideal/process.
The melody of 'The Beginning' also contains frequent major and minor 7th intervals, shown in Figure 23 indicated by red boxes.

![Figure 23. Melody from 'The Beginning'. Incidence of major and minor 7th intervals shown in red boxes, melodic sequence phrases indicated by black brackets.](image)

The harmonic language used in 'The Beginning' is heavily influenced by my research into Wheeler's harmonic techniques. I focused on incorporating poly-chords and other specific chord structures such as Ma7(11), extended minor and suspended chords, which are integral to Wheeler's harmonic language. There are several examples of this in Figure 24 which shows bar 46 - 61 of the chord progression of 'The Beginning'. The first eight bars of the extract (bar 46-53) is two bars of Bbmaj7(#11), followed by two bars of B7(b9) and then two bars of Ebmaj7(#11) followed by two bars of E7(b9sus4). The second eight bars of the extract (bars 54 - 61) contain an example of an extended minor chord, Am11, and also several examples of poly-chords. In bar 55 the chord is Cmaj7/Ab which is an example of a poly-chord with a root note that is not part of the top chord, i.e. Ab is not part of a Cmaj triad.

![Figure 24. Chord chart to bars 46-61 of 'The Beginning'.](image)

The use of counterpoint is also evident in 'The Beginning'. I focused on writing counterpoint by not using any rhythm section or chordal instruments in the first section. Through not being able to rely on the support of bass lines or piano/guitar chords to outline the harmony, I was forced to write...
single line contrapuntal counter melodies to outline the harmony. This is shown in bars 1 to 41 of the score in Appendix C (pg 56 to 58).

In 'The Beginning' I also tried to explore the idea of moving through different key centers without any obvious key changes and not allowing the melody to be trapped in one key center. I did this by not using a key signature and through this, felt completely freed of the need to think about key centers in my compositions. I applied the concept of not using key signatures to all of A Suite State of Repair except 'The Ending' where it made sense to use a key signature as the harmony stayed within particular key centers for longer periods of time.

Wheeler's structural technique of repeating melodies at different pitches is also incorporated in 'The Beginning'. Bar's 17-41 (pg 57-58 in Appendix C) states the melody starting on a concert E flat, and then the melody is repeated in bars 46 -70 (pg 58-80) starting on a concert E natural. 'The Beginning' moves through three different tempos and also has a trumpet cadenza. The use of different tempos shows the integration of techniques examined in my research on Kenny Wheeler into my creative process.

3.4 'The Breaking' (Part II) from A Suite State of Repair

'The Breaking' (Part II) is composed for small jazz ensemble and incorporates additive melody, counterpoint, quartal harmony and the blurring of bar lines through frequently changing time signatures. My approach to writing the melody for 'The Breaking' was to create a particularly melancholy, heart-wrenching sound, and also to include the technique of additive melody. Through experimentation at the piano, I found that having a minor chord with a b13th (creating a minor 9th interval with the 5th degree of the chord) created the sound I was looking for. This led me to the first melodic fragment of 'The Beginning', which is a movement from the b13th to the 5th of an Ami\(^9(b13)\) chord (Shown in Figure 25).

Figure 25. Melodic fragment of 'The Breaking' from A Suite State of Repair.
I then gradually expanded this fragment to create the full melody. This is shown in Figure 26 where A1 is an expansion of A, A2 an expansion of A1, A3 is an expansion of A2 etc. The use of additive melody contributed to the tension and melancholy of the 'The Breaking'.

Counterpoint and quartal harmony were two of Wheeler's harmonic techniques that I integrated into 'The Breaking' and this is shown in Figure 27. The melody in the guitar (and doubled down the octave in the bass) is accompanied by an answering contrapuntal counter-melody in the piano right hand which is doubled in the clarinet part. When the two melodies join together briefly in bars 290 to 291, and from bars 295 to 297, they are voiced a perfect 4th apart, giving an example of quartal harmony.

Figure 26. Additive melody in 'The Breaking' from A Suite State of Repair.

Figure 27. Counterpoint and quartal harmony in 'The Breaking' from A Suite State of Repair (concert pitch).

13 Guitar and Double Bass both sound an octave lower than written.
The blurring of bar lines through frequently changing time signatures is an aspect of Kenny Wheeler’s compositional technique that I used in ‘The Breaking’. An example of this is shown in Figure 28 where I molded the time signatures to fit the melody rather than trying to fit the melody into a time signature. Frequently changing time signatures give the effect of ‘blurring’ of bar lines by not allowing in constant pulse grouping for the listener to latch onto. For instance, if a piece is in 4/4 eventually the listener will be able to pick up on and latch onto that pulse grouping of 4 beats in a bar. Figure 28 also presents another example of counterpoint, with the tenor saxophone playing the melody and the trumpet playing a counter-melody, and also the piano and bass providing contrapuntal interaction with the melody and countermelody.

Figure 28. Time signature changes and counterpoint in ‘The Breaking’ bars 352 – 364 (concert pitch).
'The Breaking' and 'Broken' (Part III) are blurred together by the tenor saxophone improvisation. I did this to give the effect of the piece gradually breaking apart through having one aspect of 'The Breaking' continue through the start of 'Broken'.

3.5 ‘Broken’ (Part III) from A Suite State of Repair

I explored the concept of breaking and mending through the use of a ‘free interlude’ which is ‘Broken’ (Part III). As the composer I faced an obstacle in this section in that while Wheeler is able to exert a certain degree of control over his free interludes by participating in them as an improviser, I was not able to interact as an improviser in this movement. I compromised by writing an ‘intensity and structural chart’ (see Appendix C pg 79-80) of the free interlude whereby I could exert some control over the outcome of the section, while still keeping it essentially ‘free’.

In the intensity and structural chart I was able to indicate where I wanted the performers to enter and exit the improvisation, and also and what intensity level I wanted them to play at. I did this by using crescendo and decrescendo lines to indicate whether they (the improviser) should be increasing (crescendo line) or decreasing (decrescendo line) the intensity of their playing. By intensity I mean not only dynamic level, but also level of dissonance, quality of tone and frequency of notes. I feel that the chart was effective in controlling the form of the piece but the performance on the night was not a complete success. This will be discussed further in my research outcomes.

3.6 ‘The Mending’ (Part IV) from A Suite State of Repair

‘The Mending’ was written for jazz orchestra and features the tenor saxophone as a soloist. The movement contains several examples of the integration of Kenny Wheeler’s melodic, harmonic and structural techniques into my own creative process. The movement is meant to be the mending not only in the sense that it comes out of the free section and back into written music, but that it moves gradually from sad, angst through to a happy, tonal and joyful ending that leads into 'The Ending'.

The melodic and harmonic material for ‘The Mending’ grew from one seed, a Maj\(^{7(#11)}\) chord. The opening is a pedal on Bb but when the melody is introduced by the tenor saxophone, it is based on the E Lydian scale meaning the harmony created is a poly-chord, an Ema\(^{7(#11)}\) chord over a Bb pedal (Ema\(^{7(#11)/Bb}\), the Bb being the #11\(^{th}\) degree of the chord. The use of the Bb pedal also created dissonance and tension through creating a minor 9\(^{th}\) interval with the melody when the melody lands on a B natural in bar 422.
In ‘The Mending’, I based the melody in the extensions of the harmony (Figure 29) through the focus note of the melodic phrase being based in the extensions. The instances of the melody notes being based in the extensions are indicated by the red boxes labeled 1 to 4. In the red box labeled 1, the melody holds an Ab, which is the #11th degree of the chord Dma7(#11). In box number 2, the melody lands on the b7th degree of the Dbmin11 chord. In box number three the melody lands on the #11th degree of the Gbmaj7(#11) chord and in the fourth box the melody lands on the 9th degree of the Fm11 chord.

Figure 29. Melody based in the extensions, specific chord movements, melodic sequence and 7th intervals in ‘The Mending’ from A Suite State of Repair (Bar 449 -456).

Figure 29 also demonstrates my exploration of a specific harmonic movement that I found in many of Wheeler’s compositions, the movement from a Maj7(#11) chord down a semitone to a Mi11 chord. In bars 449 to 452 of the extract in Figure 29 the harmony moves from a Dma7(#11) down a semitone to a Dbmin11, and in bars 453 to 356, the harmony moves from a Gbmaj7(#11) chord down a semitone to an Fm11 chord.

Figure 29 also presents an example of melodic sequence, with the phrase from bar 449 to 452 (marked Phrase A), being sequenced in the following four bars (bar 453 to 456 marked Phrase A1). There are also instances of the use of 7th intervals in the melody in Figure 29, indicated by red circles in bar 451 and bar 455. When writing this section, I did not consciously aim to include all of these techniques in the one 8 bar section, but in my post analysis of the work, I discovered that this section contained all these techniques. This suggests the study of Kenny Wheeler’s music has greatly influenced my creative process. I think this is a positive outcome as I feel the study of the techniques has greatly increased the melodic and harmonic strength and coherence in my compositions.
The form of 'The Mending starts with the introduction of the melody, which is repeated with different counter-melodies. The use of contrapuntal counter-melodies comes from the influence of Wheeler's compositions on my creative process. Figure 30 shows the counter-melodies that occur from bar 419 to 448. Bar 420 shows the first counter-melody and a second counter-melody is introduced at bar 432 with the first countermelody being repeated and developed. Bar 441 sees the repetition of the countermelody introduced at 432, and the introduction of third counter-melody. The three different countermelodies heard with the initial melody (in the top line of Figure 30) are an example of the use of counterpoint in my composition, which is the result of studying the music of Kenny Wheeler.
Figure 30. Counterpoint in 'The Mending' from *A Suite State of Repair* (concert pitch).

*Figure 31* also shows an example of counterpoint in ‘The Mending’ but with the counter-melodies being an example of imitative polyphony. The top line states the original melody (though now in a different key center to the beginning of the piece) and the second and third lines show two different counter-melodies, both of which are based on the same material as the original melody, but interact rhythmically and harmonically.
In my voicings for the large ensemble in 'The Mending', I focused on using quartal harmony. Figure 32 shows an example of this in the trumpet voicing. Each of the voicings shown in Figure 32 is based on the interval of a perfect 4th, for example the first chord (the upbeat to bar 524) has a perfect 4th interval between the 1st and 2nd trumpet and the 3rd and 4th trumpet with the 5th trumpet doubling the 1st and 2nd trumpet down the octave. On beats 4-and and 5 in bar 524, there is a perfect 4th interval between the 1st and 2nd trumpet, the 2nd and 3rd trumpet and the 4th and 5th trumpet.

The use of quartal harmony in my voicings for large ensemble resulted from my study of Wheeler's large ensemble works such as 'The Sweet Time Suite'. Wheeler's voicings for trumpets in particular were often in 4ths and this creates a more open sound by having 4ths (an open sounding interval) at
the top of the voicings. As shown through the above analyses, I successfully incorporated aspects of Kenny Wheeler’s compositional technique into my creative process for ‘The Mending’.

3.7 ‘The Ending’ (Part V) from A Suite State Repair

‘The Ending’ starts with an improvised piano cadenza that is meant to be an improvised ‘recapitulation’. The pianist was given a melody and chord chart for the main theme of each of the sections I, II and IV (III being a free section) and then plays the written theme for V after the extended improvisation. I think the use of an improvised piano cadenza in ‘The Ending’ was an effective tool in tying the whole suite together, whilst also utilizing the spontaneity and energy of improvisation. After the piano cadenza and melody statement, the full band then plays a chorale of the theme of ‘The Ending’ and this tonal, and joyful ending is the completion of the ‘putting back together’.

‘The Ending’ contains examples of melodic sequence and 7th intervals in the melody both of which are shown in Figure 33 which presents the first part of the melody of ‘The Ending’. Phrase A is sequenced down a semi-tone in phrase A1 and the circled intervals indicate incidences of the use of 7th intervals in the melody.

![Figure 33. Melodic sequence in the melody of 'The Ending' from Suite State of Repair in Five Parts.](image)

The chord types used in ‘The Ending’ almost all utilize the upper extensions of the harmony with many instances of Maj7(11), Min11, Min9, and also add9 chords shown in Figure 34. I feel that the frequent use of extended chords gives depth and color to my harmonic language.
The second half of ‘The Ending’ is written in the style of a chorale and uses contrapuntal techniques to outline the harmony. Figure 35 shows the start of the chorale with the 2nd trumpet playing the melody accompanied by the trombones with rhythm section, then the remaining trumpets, woodwinds and saxophones are gradually added. The trombone’s voices have some contrapuntal movement at the start and then in bar 626 the trumpets enter with a contrapuntal counter-melody line. In Bar 631 the woodwinds enter with a contrapuntal counter melody followed by the saxophones in bar 632. The instruments all come together in block voicing style in bar 634 and continue in this way until the end of the piece. Figure 35 also presents an example of changing time signatures to suit the melody in ‘The Ending’, with bar 631 being a 5/4 bar (changed from 4/4) in order to allow the melody and countermelodies to flow naturally. In my creative process for ‘The Ending’ I successfully incorporated aspects of Wheeler's compositional technique, and this is shown through the above analyses and excerpts.
(Figure continued over page)
Figure 35. Counterpoint and changing time signatures in 'The Ending' (bar 622 - 634) (transposed score).
Research Outcomes

In this research project I set out to give a brief biography of Kenny Wheeler, analyse his melodic, harmonic and structural techniques, and then integrate these techniques into my creative process. The integration of the techniques of melodic sequence, additive melody and the use of 7\textsuperscript{th} intervals took my composition in a new direction that wouldn’t have occurred had I not consciously applied these techniques. Basing my melodies in the extensions of the harmony helped create the open sound that so appealed to me in Wheeler's music. While not a technique employed by Kenny Wheeler, I feel the use of the Bob Brookmeyer's pitch-module process also had a positive effect in taking my melodies in new directions.

I set out to expand my harmonic language, and move away from being trapped in particular key centers. The integration of aspects of Wheeler’s harmonic technique helped me achieve this. I feel that specifically focusing on using poly-chords, Ma\textsuperscript{7(VI)}, extended minor, suspended chords and quartal harmony has made my harmonic language more complex and introduced more interesting harmonic colors into my music. The use of counterpoint to create harmony has really helped move my music away from a vertical, chordal approach, to a horizontal, melodic approach. Also, by not using a key signature, I felt freed of the need to even think about key centers and as a result, the chordal movements in A Suite State of Repair were very much removed from the traditional ii-V-I chord movement associated with jazz composition.

Structurally, I feel that A Suite State of Repair was a successful exploration of the concept of ‘breaking something apart and putting it back together.’ Writing a suite allowed me to do this. The use of open solos, improvised cadenzas and free improvisation gave my composition more structural interest and also pushed me to write in new ways to move in and out of those sections. However, the outcome of the performance of 'Broken' was not a complete success as I felt that certain sections of the ‘chart’ were going on too long, but I was unable to make eye contact with the musician involved to indicate I wanted it to move along quicker. However, had I been playing in the free interlude, (as Kenny Wheeler plays in his) I would have been able to have a much greater influence on the outcome. Also the performance did not follow exactly the structural/intensity chart that I had written. The bass ostinato that was meant to blur into 'The Mending' did not start until after the pianist and trumpet player had finished, so there was a moment of silence that was unintended. Once again had I been playing in the free interlude, I would have been able to have more control on the outcome. I still feel the overall concept of having a free interlude within the piece was a
successful one, but perhaps would've been more effective had I been able to exert more control over
the performance.

I feel that by allowing the melody to control the time signature, rather than the time signature
control the melody created sections of frequently changing time signatures gave my melodic
phrasing a more natural flow.

In A Suite State of Repair, I successfully incorporated aspects of Kenny Wheeler's compositional
technique into my creative process to create an extended work that explores the concept of breaking
something apart, and putting it back together. The integration of Wheeler's melodic, harmonic and
structural techniques into A Suite State of Repair helped to expand my melodic and harmonic
strength and coherence and structural complexity. In the future I hope to combine what I have learnt
from Wheeler's compositions with many different influences to create my own unique musical voice.
Reference List


Herbert, M. (2000). *New Directions in Jazz Composition as evidenced in the works of three composers: Kenny Wheeler, Don Grolnick, and Russell Ferrante,* Duquesne University.


Bibliography

Books


Journal Articles


**Recordings and Video**


**Theses**


**Websites**


Appendix A

Kenny Wheeler Selected Discography

As a leader:

Windmill Tilter (1968)
Song for Someone (1973)
Gnu High (1975)
Kenny Wheeler Quintet (1976)
Deer Wan (1978)
Around 6 (1980)
Double, Double You (1984)
Flutter by, Butterfly (1987)
Music for Large & Small Ensembles (1990)
The Widow in the Window (1990)
Kayak (1992)
Angel Song (1997)
Long Time Ago (1999)
Dream Sequence (2003)
Where do we go from here? (with John Taylor) (2004)

It Takes Two (2006)
Other People (2008)

As sideman:

Ronnie Scott & The Band – Live at Ronnie Scott’s (1968)
Karyöbin (1968) with the Spontaneous Music Ensemble
The Baptised Traveller (1969) with Tony Oxley
Live in Berlin (1981) with the United Jazz and Rock Ensemble
Jumpin’ In (1983), Seeds of Time (1984), The Razor’s Edge (1987) with the Dave Holland Quintet
Art and Aviation (1992) with Jane Ira Bloom
The Nearness (1995) with Jane Ira Bloom
Appendix B

Melodic Themes from "Heyoke" by Kenny Wheeler

Theme #1 from "Heyoke"

Theme #2 from "Heyoke"

Theme 1 from 'Heyoke' from the album Gnu High by Kenny Wheeler. (Wheeler, 1975)

Theme 2 from 'Heyoke' from the album Gnu High by Kenny Wheeler. (Wheeler, 1975)
Theme #3 from "Heyoke"

Theme #3 from “Heyoke” from the album Gnu High by Kenny Wheeler. (Wheeler, 1975)
Appendix C The Score of A Suite State of Repair
Very light airy... konitz-ish

Alto Sax.

Tenor 1

Bari.

Flgl. 1

Flgl. 2

Tbn. 1

Gtr.

Pno.

Bs.

Dr.

Alto Sax.

Tenor 1

Bari.

Flgl. 1

Flgl. 2

Tbn. 1

Gtr.

Pno.

Bs.

Dr.

Alt. Sax.

Tenor 1

Bari.

Flgl. 1

Flgl. 2

Tbn. 1

Gtr.

Pno.

Bs.

Dr.

very light airy... konitz-ish
Bb Pedal with passing notes from Bb Aeolian scale

Simile ad lib

Bb (SUS4)

m<#9)

Bb (SUS4)

m<#9)

Cam trumpet solo

Comp trumpet solo

Come down for start of trumpet solo

Come down for start of trumpet solo
Alto Sax

Gradually build through solo.

Tenor 1

Gradually build through solo.

Bari

(Band Backings enter)
Straight ballad broken feel, hint at the time but don't fall into a constant groove.
74

298 299 300 301 302 303 304 305 306 307 308 309 310

Fl.
Cl.
Alto 1
Tenor 1
Bass.
Tpt. 1
Tpt. 2
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Ccr.
Pno.
Bn.
Dr.

Loose straight 2nd brushes, support piano solo, gradually increase intensity

Support ad lib., support piano solo
simile ad lib

Band enters
mallets, cymbals, etc., gradually increase intensity
gradually move away from written idea, support tenor solo

Lots of interaction with tenor, never really fall into solid groove, mallets cymbals etc.
Sheets of sound keep it going through Part III
But not too hard, very breathy.
Bars or not an indication of time, but an indication of section.
Crescendo and Decrescendo markings are an indication of decreasing and increasing intensity in the improvisation.

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Tenor Enters

Open Repeat, Start of Part IV will be cued

(Bass will start Bb pedal at some point)

As trumpet and piano come down start ostinato for start of Part IV

Come down to nothing allow trumpet amid piano to finish
Ride symbal feel (Ad Lib)
Mainly cymbals to start, but gradually build (Ad Lib kick, snare etc.)
Just chord's, sparse, don't crowd the melody.
Start freeing up bass line, more passing notes etc.
Play something along these lines but you can mix it up a bit.
Fill between melody cues
Fl. 1
Fl. 2
Fl. 3
Cl.
Sop. Sax.
Alto 2
Tenor 1
Tenor 2
Bari.
Tpt. 1
Tpt. 2
Tpt. 3
Tpt. 4
Tpt. 5
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Tbn. 3
B. Tbn. 1
B. Tbn. 2
Otr.

Pno.

Bs.

Dr.

Fill till tenor solo starts

Gradually bring down for start of tenor solo

free up and bring down intensity for start of tenor solo

Gradually bring down for start of tenor solo
Fl. 1
Fl. 2
Fl. 3
Cl.
Sop. Sax.
Alto 2
Tenor 1
Tenor 2.
Bari
Tpt. 1
Tpt. 2
Tpt. 3
Tpt. 4
Tpt. 5
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Tbn. 3
B. Tbn.1
B. Tbn.2
Gtr.
Pno.
Bs.
Dr.

Fmaj7(B)
Fmaj7(B)
E>ma7(#111(A
E>ma7(#111(A
E>ma7(#111(A

Sparse chordal comping (eg Bill Frisell)

(Play 3rd and 4th time only)

Comp Tenor solo (with gtr as well 3rd and 4th time)
Fill over chord to finish solo...
Very Gradually Crescendo and building intensity
lots of fills
(Conducted in 4)
The Ending

Part V

Piano extended cadenza

595 Piano solo melody 595

596

Flute 1

Flute 2

Flute 3

Clarinet in B

Soprano Saxophone

Alto 2

Tenor 1

Tenor 2

Bari. Sax.

Trumpet 1

Trumpet 2

Trumpet 3

Trumpet 4

Trumpet 5

Trombone 1

Trombone 2

Trombone 3

Bass Trombone 1

Bass Trombone 2

Guitar

Extended improvised cadenza recapitulation

use melodic material from the first 4 movements.

Piano

Drums

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