

2018

Neoteric Drum Set Orchestration: An analysis of Nate Wood's drumming on the music of Tigran Hamasyan

Ryan George Daunt
Edith Cowan University

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Neoteric Drum Set Orchestration: An analysis of Nate Wood's drumming on the music of Tigran Hamasyan

This thesis is presented in partial fulfilment of the degree of
Bachelor of Music (Honours)

RYAN GEORGE DAUNT

Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts
Edith Cowan University
2018

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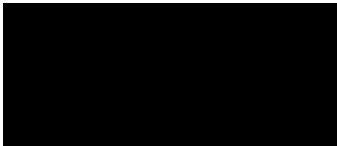
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Abstract

Nate Wood is a highly acclaimed multi-instrumentalist who pushes the boundaries of drumming in a contemporary jazz setting. Wood is well known for his playing with Tigran Hamasyan, Wayne Krantz Trio and Kneebody. This study focused on the orchestration approach of Wood within the context of Tigran Hamasyan's original compositions. Wood's drumming was analysed through transcription and interview to further gain insight into his drumming concepts.

These findings contribute to knowledge on contemporary jazz drumming and specifically Wood's playing, which has not been the topic of a research paper before. Analysis of Wood's drum parts and improvisation within drumming frameworks point to an extended role for drummers in a contemporary jazz setting. These findings will also be highly informative for my practice, the practice of others and for developing new approaches to drum set orchestration.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to my supervisor, Chris Tarr, for his support, time, and guidance.

Many thanks to my tutors for their excellent teaching, and also to my fellow postgraduate students for their ongoing encouragement and friendship.

Thanks to Nate Wood and Tigran Hamasyan for their fantastic musicianship and especially to Nate for his contribution to this project.

Contents

Declaration.....	i
Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Contents	iv
Index of Figures.....	v
Chapter one: Introduction	1
Rationale.....	1
Methodology.....	2
Chapter two: Nate Wood.....	3
Literature Review	3
Interviews	3
Theses	4
Podcasts	5
Chapter three: Analysis.....	7
Part One: Nate Wood’s Influences	7
Part Two: Tigran Hamasyan’s Music	14
Part Three: Analysis of Nate Wood’s Drumming.....	17
Part Four: Nate Wood – <i>Vardavar</i> – Tigran Hamasyan	45
Chapter four: Summary of findings.....	54
Chapter five: Conclusion.....	56
Bibliography	58
Appendix A - Musical Key	60
Appendix B - <i>The Court Jester</i> Nate Wood's Drum Part	63
Appendix C - Nate Wood Interview with Ryan Daunt.....	68

Index of Figures

Figure 1.1: Tony Williams accompanying on <i>Riot</i> – Miles Davis (0:43-0:47)	7
Figure 1.2: Re-written version of Tony Williams accompanying on <i>Riot</i> – Miles Davis (0:43-0:47)	8
Figure 1.3: Tony Williams ride cymbal pattern on <i>Riot</i> – Miles Davis (0:43-0:47)	8
Figure 1.4: Wood's part - <i>The Court Jester</i> – Tigran Hamasyan (2:33-2:37)	8
Figure 1.5: Keith Carlock's playing on <i>Harum-Scarum</i> – Wayne Krantz (1:06-1:10)	9
Figure 1.6: Nate Wood – <i>A Crane Came from Van</i> – Tigran Hamasyan (7:36)	9
Figure 1.7: Jack DeJohnette – <i>Pharaoh's Dance</i> – Miles Davis (3:53)	10
Figure 1.8: Nate Wood – <i>The Court Jester</i> – Tigran Hamasyan (4:35)	10
Figure 1.9: Deantoni Parks – <i>Fire Flower</i> – Asteroid Power Up! (1:02)	11
Figure 1.10: Nate Wood – <i>The Court Jester</i> – Tigran Hamasyan (1:29)	11
Figure 1.11: John 'Jabo' Starks – <i>Escape-ism</i> – James Brown (0:00)	11
Figure 2.1: Hamasyan's beat-boxing – <i>Rhythm – Lines of Oppression</i> (1:04-1:11)	16
Figure 3.1: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section one – Phrase one – Piano, Bass and Drums – (0:23-0:28)	17
Figure 3.2: <i>The Court Jester</i> - Section one - Phrase one (first time) - Wood's part – written in 3/4 time	18
Figure 3.3: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section one - Phrase one (first time repeated) - Wood's part (0:28-0:33)	18
Figure 3.4: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section one – Phrase two - Melody – Vocals – (0:33-0:39)	18
Figure 3.5: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section one - Phrase two - Summary of Wood's part – (0:33-0:39)	19
Figure 3.6: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section one – Phrase one (second time) - Summary of Wood's part – (0:39-0:44)	19
Figure 3.7: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section one – Phrase two (second time) - Tenor saxophone harmony (0:44-0:49)	19
Figure 3.8: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section one – Phrase two (second time) - Summary of Wood's part – (0:44-0:49)	20
Figure 3.9: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section one – Phrase one (third time) - Wood's part (0:49-0:55)	20
Figure 3.10: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section one – Phrase two (third time) Wood's part (0:55-1:00)	20
Figure 3.11: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Wood's development in Section one - Phrase two – first Time – (0:33-0:39)	21
Figure 3.12: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Wood's development in Section one - Phrase two – second Time – (0:44-0:49)	21
Figure 3.13: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Wood's development in Section one - Phrase two – third Time – (0:55-1:00)	21
Figure 3.14: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section one – Phrase two (final) - Wood's part (1:00-1:05)	21
Figure 3.15: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section two – Phrase one - Saxophone/Vocal melody (1:06-1:11)	22
Figure 3.16: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section two – Phrase one - Bass part (1:06-1:11)	22
Figure 3.17: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section two – Phrase one - Summary of Wood's part (1:06-1:11)	22
Figure 3.18: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section two – Phrase one (repeated) - Wood's part (1:11-1:16)	23
Figure 3.19: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section two – Phrase two - Vocal melody (1:16-1:21)	23
Figure 3.20: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section two – Phrase two - Bass part (1:16-1:21)	23
Figure 3.21: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section two – Phrase two (first time) - Wood's part (1:16-1:21)	24
Figure 3.22: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section two – Phrase three (first time) – Hamasyan's part (1:21-1:25)	25
Figure 3.23: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section two – Phrase three (first time) - Wood's part (1:21-1:25)	25
Figure 3.24: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section two – Phrase three (first time) - Wood's part (1:26-1:27)	25
Figure 3.25: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section two – Phrase two (second time) - Wood's part (1:27-1:32)	26
Figure 3.26: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section two – Phrase three (second time) - Wood's part (1:32-1:37)	26
Figure 3.27: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section two – Phrase two (third time) - Wood's part (1:37-1:42)	27
Figure 3.28: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section two – Phrase three (third time) - Wood's part (1:42-1:47)	27
Figure 3.29: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section two – Phrase three (third time) - Piano (bass clef)/bass part (1:42-1:47)	27
Figure 3.30: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section two – Phrase three (third time) - Saxophone/Piano line (1:42-1:47)	27
Figure 3.31: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section two – Phrase three (third time) - Wood's part (1:42-1:47)	28
Figure 3.32: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section three - Vocal part (1:47-1:58)	28
Figure 3.33: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section three - Wood's part (1:47-1:58)	29
Figure 3.34: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section three - Main groove	29
Figure 3.35: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section three examples - Dynamic crescendos (2:01)	29
Figure 3.36: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section three examples - 16 th note variations (2:06-2:07)	29
Figure 3.37: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section three examples - More 16 th note variations (2:11-2:12)	30
Figure 3.38: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section three examples – 1/4 note variations (2:14-2:15)	30
Figure 3.39: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section three examples - Dotted 1/4 note variations (2:15-2:16)	30
Figure 3.40: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section three examples - Rests (2:45-2:46)	30
Figure 3.41: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section three examples - 16 th notes triplets (2:47-2:48)	30
Figure 3.42: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section four - Phrase A – Piano part – (2:52)	31
Figure 3.43: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section four - Phrase A first, second and third time	31
Figure 3.44: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section four – Ending A – Piano part (3:00-3:03)	32

Figure 3.45: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section four – Ending A – Wood’s part (3:00-3:03).....	32
Figure 3.46: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section four – Ending B – piano part (3:11-3:16).....	33
Figure 3.47: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section four – Ending B – Vocals part (3:11-3:16).....	33
Figure 3.48: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section four – Ending B –Wood’s part (3:11-3:16).....	33
Figure 3.49: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section five – Piano part (3:26-3:28)	34
Figure 3.50: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section five – Wood’s part (3:26-3:28).....	34
Figure 3.51: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section six – Part one - Piano part (3:28-3:39)	35
Figure 3.52: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section six – Part one – Summary of Wood’s part - (3:28-3:39).....	36
Figure 3.53: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section six – Part one (second time) - Wood’s part (3:39-3:50).....	36
Figure 3.54: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section six – Part two - Wood’s part (3:50-3:56)	37
Figure 3.55: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section six – Part two – Wood’s part (3:56-4:00).....	37
Figure 3.56: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section seven – Part one – Piano eight bar pattern (4:11-4:22)	38
Figure 3.57: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section seven – Part one – Wood’s part labeled (4:11-4:22)	38
Figure 3.58: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section seven – Part one – hi-hat/snare ostinato (4:11)	39
Figure 3.59: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section seven – Part one – Piano eight bar pattern (4:22-4:33)	39
Figure 3.60: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section seven – Part two - Diagram of layout.....	41
Figure 3.61: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section seven – Part two – First eight bars - Wood’s part (4:33-4:44).....	41
Figure 3.62: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section seven – Part two – Second eight bars - Wood’s part (4:45-4:56).....	42
Figure 3.63: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section seven – Part two – Third eight bars - Wood’s part (4:56-5:07)	43
Figure 3.64: <i>The Court Jester</i> – Section seven – Part two – Last eight bars - Wood’s part (5:07-5:19)	43
Figure 4.1: <i>Vardavar</i> – Section one - Piano part (0:00=1:52)	45
Figure 4.2: <i>Vardavar</i> – Section one – Wood’s part (0:00)	46
Figure 4.3: <i>Vardavar</i> – Section one – Wood’s part – Hi-hat ostinato	46
Figure 4.4: <i>Vardavar</i> – Section one – Wood’s part – Embellishment example one (0:06).....	46
Figure 4.5: <i>Vardavar</i> – Section one – Wood’s part – Embellishment example two (0:13)	47
Figure 4.6: <i>Vardavar</i> – Section one – Wood’s part – Embellishment example three (0:26)	47
Figure 4.7: <i>Vardavar</i> – Section one – Wood’s part – Stack cymbal (1:25)	47
Figure 4.8: <i>Vardavar</i> – Section one – Wood’s part – Original Groove (0:00).....	48
Figure 4.9: <i>Vardavar</i> – Section one – Wood’s part – Groove at 1:38	48
Figure 4.10: <i>Vardavar</i> – Section two – Wood’s part – Original Groove (1:52).....	48
Figure 4.11: <i>Vardavar</i> – Section two – Superimposition (1:59-2:12).....	48
Figure 4.12: <i>Vardavar</i> – Section two – Wood’s part (1:59).....	49
Figure 4.13: <i>Vardavar</i> – Section two – Wood’s part (2:12).....	49
Figure 4.14: <i>Vardavar</i> – Section two – Groove development (2:30)	49
Figure 4.15: <i>Vardavar</i> – Section three – Wood’s part - Rewritten in groupings (2:40).....	50
Figure 4.16: <i>Vardavar</i> – Section four – Piano part (3:15-3:21)	51
Figure 4.17: <i>Vardavar</i> – Section four – Wood’s part - Groupings (3:15).....	51
Figure 4.18: <i>Vardavar</i> – Section four – Wood’s part – Embellishment example one (3:20-3:21)	51
Figure 4.19: <i>Vardavar</i> – Section four – Wood’s part - Embellishment example two (3:27-3:28).....	52
Figure 4.20: <i>Vardavar</i> – Section four – Wood’s part - Embellishment example three (3:28-3:31).....	52
Figure 4.21: <i>Vardavar</i> – Section four – Original - Four bars of 4/4 time.	52
Figure 4.22: <i>Vardavar</i> – Section four – Superimposition – two bars of 5/4 time (In the time of four bars of 4/4 time)... ..	52
Figure 4.23: <i>Vardavar</i> – Section four – Superimposition diagram – 10 beats in the time of 16 beats (4:09).....	53

Chapter one: Introduction

Contemporary jazz has diversified as a style over the last century. “Contemporary mainstream jazz artists continue to push the music forward, ever increasing technical proficiency on their instruments, expanded musical harmonies, and deeper and varied emotions expressed.”¹ Multi-instrumentalist Nate Wood is one of a group of drummers who are pushing the boundaries of contemporary jazz drumming with their unique approach. This research investigated Wood’s recently developed hybrid, idiosyncratic approach, an approach here termed neoteric.

Rationale

Drummer Nate Wood is a prime example of individuality through musical expression in the contemporary jazz genre. His improvisations, composed drum parts and stylistically diverse knowledge create a fluid rhythmic and melodic framework in the music of Tigran Hamasyan. Wood describes his approach;

All the stuff I did was listening and playing along, all the drummers I like have a thread, who have an idea that goes for a certain amount of time, that’s melodic and sounds like a composition, my playing is not necessarily jazz, it’s modern, but I like the idea of it having the same thread that the jazz guys had, like Jack [DeJohnette] and Tony [Williams] had when they played jazz. I want to portray the same sense of melody and theme that those guys are [Jack DeJohnette and Tony Williams] in my own way.²

The findings of this paper exhibit a contemporary jazz drumming approach that not only informs myself, but also will help others seeking similar conceptual inspiration for drum parts in contemporary music.

¹ Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz, "Jazz in America," (Jazzinamerica.org2018).

² Nate Wood, interview by Ryan Daunt, 10 May, 2017, Edith Cowan University, Mount Lawley.

Methodology

In order to investigate Nate Wood's orchestrational approach to the music of Tigran Hamasyan, Wood's drumming parts and other key ensemble parts were transcribed, noted, and analysed to display his orchestration techniques and applications. This process is commonly used as a way of providing a visual representation of music, which "serves in supporting musical analysis."³ The particular notation used, abbreviations and other relevant musical keys form Appendix A. Rather than transcribing full songs, the study focused on key passages that highlight important concepts. The pieces for analysis were selected from Hamasyan's recent releases *Shadow Theater*⁴(2013) and *Ep No1*⁵(2011). *The Court Jester*⁶ and *Vardavar*⁷ were selected as the focus pieces as they are excellent examples of Wood's orchestration techniques. The author of this paper also conducted a personal face-to-face interview with Nate Wood on the 10th of May 2017 and this interview is frequently referred to in the paper.

The analysis is divided into three sections. The first examines Wood's background and influences. The second discusses Hamasyan's music and his unique compositional style, which involves the specific orchestration of drum set parts. Chapter three analyses Wood's orchestration techniques into sub-categories; accents, subdivisions, dynamics, orchestration and, compositional elements. In each example, these were analysed to gain more insight into Wood's drum set orchestration. Chapter four is an evaluation section, which summarizes the findings from chapter three.

³ Dave Goodman, "Tony Williams' Drumset Ideology to 1969: Synergistic Emergence from an Adaptive Modeling of Feel, Technique and Creativity as an Archetype for Cultivating Originality in Jazz Drumset Performance Studies" (University of Sydney, 2011).

⁴ Tigran Hamasyan, "Shadow Theater," (New York, NY: Sunnyside Communications, 2013).

⁵ Tigran Hamasyan, "Ep No1," (Paris, France: Universal Music France, Verve Records, 2011); *ibid.*

⁶ "The Court Jester," in *Shadow Theatre* (New York, NY: Verve Records, 2013).

⁷ "Vardavar," in *Ep No1* (Paris, France: Universal Music France, Verve Records, 2011).

Chapter two: Nate Wood

Literature Review

Literature on Nate Wood's drum set orchestration for the music of Tigran Hamasyan is quite limited due to the recent release of the records *Ep No1* (2011) and *Shadow Theater* (2013). There are, however, many reviews that relate to Wood's drumming style on the album *Shadow Theater*, which are referenced in this paper. Wood has been interviewed several times and in some of these interviews he discusses his influences and his approach when playing with Hamasyan. The sources of literature for this paper will be taken from recorded material, i.e. interviews, podcasts, theses and internet sources.

Interviews

Nate Wood

(Modern Drummer, 2014)

This interview discusses Wood's biography and questions him about his playing with Kneebody, Wayne Krantz and Tigran Hamasyan. It also discusses gear setup, technique and his influences. Wood explains how his odd-time phrasing has vastly improved from playing with Hamasyan: "Tigran has taught me more about odd-time phrasing than anyone else."⁸ When asked about his linear playing, Wood replies with a detailed answer.

It comes from listening to Jack DeJohnette and Tony Williams. You could isolate those guys and they would be playing melodies the entire time. They're making their own piece of music that is concurrent with the music that's happening. More rock-based linear drummers are more like a drum machine programmed to random. I like that sound too. I've always worked on playing a phrase and making it melodic. My linear playing comes out of trying to do that.⁹

Wood also provides insight on where the core of his playing was formed.

I'm trying to think melodically and rhythmically and not use any reference points. That is really our goal in Kneebody, to not play from our comfort zones or repeat ourselves. I've listened to a ton of Wayne Krantz's music and Miles Davis with Tony Williams, and I love Jack DeJohnette and Paul Motian. And I've also really been into rock, drum 'n' bass, and hip-hop like A Tribe Called Quest and D'Angelo. It's like a blender.¹⁰

⁸ Ken Micallef, "Nate Wood," *Modern Drummer* 38, no. 3 (2014).

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Nate Wood Interview

(Steve Krugman, Hollywood drum, December 31 2009)

This short article published by Hollywood drum features Steve Krugman discussing Nate Wood's profile.

"How could this guy be killing so far below the radar?"¹¹ Krugman then talks about Tigran Hamasyan's music and mentions Wood's suitability.

Hamasyan's music is stunningly inventive, complex, and stylistically diverse. The Armenian pianist breeds elements of Persian music, classical, jazz, drum n bass, and metal to create a genetically-engineered, mutant sound that is bold and exciting and fresh. His choice of drummer could not have been better.¹²

Jazz pianist Tigran Hamasyan on his new album, Shadow Theater, and his Armenian influences

(Jon Solomon, Westword, October 29 2013)

A recent interview by Jon Solomon with pianist Tigran Hamasyan discusses the new release of his album Shadow Theater. When asked about the selection of his band, he states why he selected Wood as his drummer.

I needed a drummer that can play all these beats that I write. At the same time, I needed a really strong pop-rock drummer, and Nate has the most incredible sense of improvisation, and just makes everything feel so natural and fluid, so he was the perfect drummer.¹³

When asked about the odd time signatures on some of the compositions, Hamasyan also mentioned his practise time with Wood,

Yeah, we've been working with Nate a lot on that. We've been sort of working together for the last few years, since that Red Hail album I did.¹⁴

Theses

Melodic Drumming in Contemporary Popular Music: An Investigation into Melodic Drum-Kit Performance Practices and Repertoire

(Michael Jordan, RMIT University, February 2009)

This masters thesis investigates melodic drumming in popular and contemporary music. While the thesis provides information attained through practice-based research, music composition and transcription,

¹¹ Nate Wood, interview by Steve Krugman, December 31, 2009.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Tigran Hamasyan, interview by Jon Solomon, October 29, 2013.

¹⁴ Ibid.

interviews with musicians and elements of auto ethnography, the concepts discussed predominantly relate to improvised drum set solos as opposed to drum parts in an ensemble setting for original jazz music.

Defining the Role of Drumset Performance in Contemporary Music

(Benjamin N. Reimer, McGill University, December, 2013)

This doctoral thesis discusses the development of the role of the drummer through the twentieth century. Reimer argues that the drum set has evolved to a musical level where prescribed notation and works are composed for drum set. Although this thesis provides much detail of the development of the drum set in a classical setting, there is very little mention of drum set orchestration, or, specifically, drum set orchestration in a contemporary jazz setting.

Podcasts

Nate Wood Interview - The 80/20 Drummer Podcast

(Nathaniel Smith, November 17 2014)

In this podcast interview, Wood is asked about his influences, how he got into the drums and also demonstrates his playing in video format. Wood mentions he was attracted to the playing style of certain drummers. “But then I found my brain was attracted to people that told a narrative story, like Jack DeJohnette and Tony Williams.” He continues. “All I try to do is follow my own narrative, and not rely on things that I know are safe.”¹⁵

Nate Wood Interview I'd Hit That Podcast FULL

(I'd Hit That Podcast, June 21 2015)

In this podcast with Dave Varialle, Wood discusses his upbringing, influences and studio mastering. He states his main influences are Tony Williams, Deantoni Parks, Keith Carlock, Dan Weiss, Zach Danziger and says Paul Motian is also one of his biggest influences. “Paul Motian is one of my top five.”¹⁶

¹⁵ Nate Wood, interview by Nathaniel Smith, 2014.

¹⁶ Dave Varialle, 2015.

Nate Wood: The art of communicating musically

(Drummer's Resource, October 31 2016)

In this podcast, Nick Ruffini, the host of drummer's resource, interviews Wood about his upbringing, musical influences and practise methods.

I started off working on my double kick playing, and was into the band Death, then I moved to fusion, the Dave Weckl Band and Vinnie [Colaiuta], then I tried playing along to Miles Davis Four and More [Tony Williams] to try and get a grasp on what it was like to play in that band.¹⁷

In summary, these interviews provide insight into Wood's influences, approach and playing with Hamasyan, however, there is room for investigation into Wood's orchestration, drum part construction, and improvisation within drumming frameworks. The interview conducted by this author thus concentrated on specific questions in relation to these topics on *The Court Jester and Vardavar*.

¹⁷ Nick Ruffini, *Nate Wood: The Art of Communicating Musically*., podcast audio 2016.

Chapter three: Analysis

The analysis section is in four parts. Part one discusses Wood's bio and his influences, where some examples of his influences are present in the music of Tigran Hamasyan. Part two discusses Hamasyan's music and some compositional devices employed by Hamasyan including his orchestration concepts. Part three and four analyse Wood's drumming with Hamasyan, including transcriptions and analysis on the tunes *The Court Jester* (part three) and *Vardavar* (part four).

Part One: Nate Wood's Influences

This section features some of the influences Wood has mentioned in various interviews and podcasts and how they have influenced and shaped his neoteric style.

Influences

Tony Williams

In an interview with Ken Micallef, from *Modern Drummer* in 2014, Wood mentions that one of his favourite albums is *Nefertiti*.¹⁸ Also in an interview on the *I'd Hit That* podcast Wood states, "When I got into college I really got into jazz, guys like Tony Williams".¹⁹ Figure 1.1 is a transcription of four bars of accompanying by Williams on the tune *Riot*.²⁰

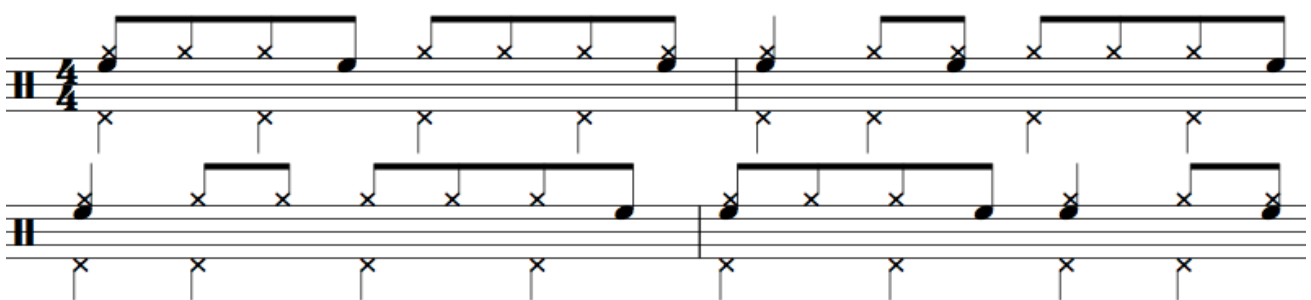


Figure 1.1: Tony Williams accompanying on *Riot* – Miles Davis (0:43-0:47)

The tempo for *Riot* is approximately 256 BPM. Figure 1.2 shows William's part written in half time at crotchet = 128.

¹⁸ Micallef.

¹⁹ Varialle.

²⁰ Miles Davis, "Riot," in *Nefertiti*, Columbia jazz; Columbia jazz masterpieces. (New York, NY: Columbia/Legacy, 1998).



Figure 1.2: Re-written version of Tony Williams accompanying on *Riot* – Miles Davis (0:43-0:47)

Figure 1.3 isolates William’s ride cymbal pattern.

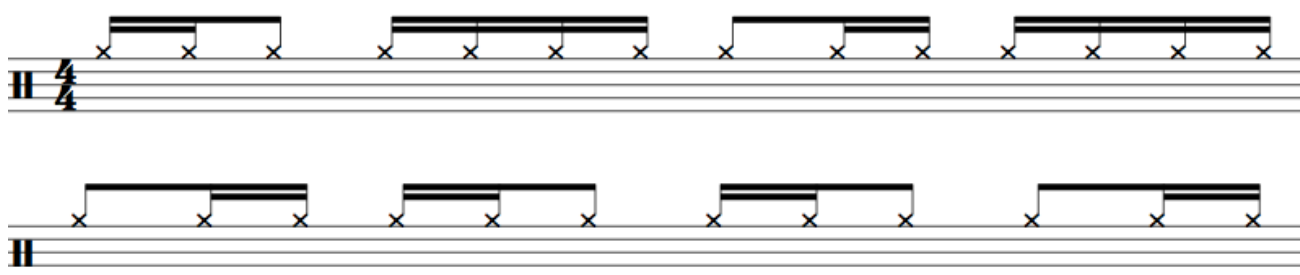


Figure 1.3: Tony Williams ride cymbal pattern on *Riot* – Miles Davis (0:43-0:47)

The rhythms are very similar to Wood’s part in section three of Hamasyan’s *The Court Jester*, shown in Figure 1.4.



Figure 1.4: Wood’s part - *The Court Jester* – Tigran Hamasyan (2:33-2:37)

Wood uses three, four and five notes groupings of 16th notes, which can be identified in the drumming of Tony Williams.

Keith Carlock

Keith Carlock is a Nashville based drummer who has played with Wayne Krantz, Steely Dan, James Taylor, Donald Fagen, Walter Becker, John Mayer, Sting, and Chris Botti. Wood says one of his influences is the

album *Greenwich Mean* by Wayne Krantz with drummer Keith Carlock.²¹ Also in an interview on the I'd Hit That podcast Wood states,

Keith is a big influence of mine...Keith opened up a whole avenue of dynamics for me. My sound is way better on the drums than it was 2 years ago, thanks to Keith and that conversation.²²

Figure 1.5 is an example of Keith's playing on *Harum-Scarum*²³ from the album *Greenwich Mean*.



Figure 1.5: Keith Carlock's playing on *Harum-Scarum* – Wayne Krantz (1:06-1:10)

In this instance Carlock is playing a busy 16th note groove. The groove has dynamic contrast with ghost notes²⁴ on the snare and ride cymbal as well as syncopated accents on the kick and snare. This groove is similar to Wood's part on the Tigran Hamasyan trio's live performance of *The Crane came from Van*,²⁵ shown in Figure 1.6.



Figure 1.6: Nate Wood – *A Crane Came from Van* – Tigran Hamasyan (7:36)

Jack DeJohnette

Wood mentions Jack DeJohnette as being one of his biggest influences in several interviews. Three such examples are interviews with Nathaniel Smith,²⁶ *Modern Drummer*²⁷ and Ryan Daunt.²⁸

²¹ Micallef.

²² Varialle.

²³ Wayne Krantz, "Harum-Scarum," in *Greenwich Mean* (New York, NY: Wayne Krantz Self Released - none, 1999).

²⁴ A ghost note is a note that is played at a very low volume. R. Miller, *The Drum Set Crash Course* (Alfred Publishing Company, Incorporated, 1996).

²⁵ Tigran Hamasyan, "Tigran Hamasyan Jazz Trio - a Crane Came from Van," in *Ep No 1* (Youtube2012).

²⁶ Wood, "Nate Wood Interview - the 80/20 Drummer Podcast."

²⁷ Micallef.

²⁸ Wood, "Nate Wood Interview with Ryan Daunt."

Figure 1.7 is a transcription of DeJohnette's playing on *Pharaoh's Dance*²⁹ from the album *Bitches Brew* by Miles Davis.



Figure 1.7: Jack DeJohnette – *Pharaoh's Dance* – Miles Davis (3:53)

The subdivisions are 16ths, in groupings of four. This groove is more ostinato based with some embellished improvisation from the kick drum. Figure 1.8 shows Wood using a similar concept on *The Court Jester* by Tigran Hamasyan.



Figure 1.8: Nate Wood – *The Court Jester* – Tigran Hamasyan (4:35)

The ride cymbal and hi-hat part are playing an ostinato (like DeJohnette on *Pharaoh's Dance*). The kick drum is playing syncopated rhythms, which align with the melody. The orchestration is the same here with snare and cymbals emphasizing the downbeat while the kick drum provides rhythmic interaction and accents.

Deantoni Parks

Wood discusses Parks' influence on him in an interview on the I'd Hit That podcast.

Deantoni Parks was a huge influence, he is unbelievable...He did this record in 2003 [*Asteroid Power Up - Google Plex*] with a friend of mine...It is the most incredible improvisations of that drum and bass language but it's Deantoni's own thing, his own language, so that record was really big for me.³⁰

Figure 1.9 is a transcription of Parks' playing on the track *Fire Flower* from the album *Google-Plex* by Asteroid Power Up!³¹

²⁹ Miles Davis, "Pharaoh's Dance," in *Bitches brew*, CBS jazz masterpieces; CBS jazz masterpieces. (New York, NY: Columbia, 1970).

³⁰ Varialle.

³¹ Asteroid Power Up!, "Google-Plex," in *GGPLX* (US: Earstroke Records, 2003). 34:00



Figure 1.9: Deantoni Parks – *Fire Flower* – Asteroid Power Up! (1:02)

The subdivision is 16th notes, grouped 4,4,4,3,3,3,3,4. The groove is orchestrated as follows; the hi-hat is playing a subdivisions role with syncopated rhythms and broken 16th notes. Kick and snare are playing accents, sometimes in unison and often syncopated, playing on the ‘e’ ‘+’ and ‘a’ of beats 1, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

This groove has similar concepts to the groove at (1:29) on *The Court Jester* by Tigran Hamasyan, shown in Figure 1.10.



Figure 1.10: Nate Wood – *The Court Jester* – Tigran Hamasyan (1:29)

The ride cymbal bell is playing a subdivision role. The kick drum and snare accents are playing syncopated rhythms on beats 2+ and 3a of the first bar and 1e, 2e and 3e of the second bar. The ride cymbal often aligns with the kick drum and the snare ghost notes also add texture and dynamic contrast.

John ‘Jabo’ Starks

In an interview on the I’d Hit That podcast, Wood mentions John ‘Jabo’ Starks’ influence on his playing.

“That guy [John ‘Jabo’ Starks] is just a miracle to me”.³² Figure 1.11 is an example of Starks’ drum groove on the James Brown song *Escape-ism*.



Figure 1.11: John ‘Jabo’ Starks – *Escape-ism* – James Brown (0:00)

³² Varialle.

Starks' hi-hat/bass/snare rhythms are 16th note based. The accents in the Starks transcription are on beats 2 and 4; this is likely because in the funk era the back beat was a common musical device. This groove is similar to Wood's playing on *Vardavar* by Hamasyan.

Extra Influences

Wood also mentions a number of other drummers who have influenced him.

Paul Motian

In an interview on the I'd Hit That podcast Wood states "Paul Motian is top five for me, I love Paul, I got to see him a bunch before he died, he taught me a lot about life".³³

Zach Danziger

In an interview on the I'd Hit That podcast Wood states "He [Zach Danziger] is a big hero of mine"³⁴

When talking about the Wayne Krantz album *Two Drink Minimum*³⁵ Wood talks about Danziger's playing and influence on his own playing, "Zach [Danziger] was a huge hero for me at that time".³⁶

Dan Weiss

In an interview on the I'd Hit That podcast Wood states "Dan Weiss is one of my new favourite drummers, because there has never been a drummer like him".³⁷

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Wayne Krantz, "Two Drink Minimum," (55 Bar, New York, NY: Krantz, Wayne, 1995).

³⁶ Varialle.

³⁷ Ibid.

Nate Wood Biographical Information

Nate Wood, born October 3 1979 (age 38), is an American drummer/multi-instrumentalist, who has performed with Wayne Krantz, Kneebody, Tigran Hamasyan, The Calling, and Taylor Hawkins and the Coattail Riders. His parents are both professional musicians and performed together with Stekol³⁸. Wood attended the California Institute of the Arts for drums and guitar where he studied with Charlie Haden and Joe LaBarbera. He also attended Los Angeles College of Music where he studied with drummers Ralph Humphrey and Joe Porcaro. After graduating, Wood played with Kneebody on their first gigs (2001), and then toured with The Calling in support of their debut album (2001). He later recorded and played every instrument on his own debut album, and in addition to his work with Kneebody, toured and performed with artists such as George Harrison, Chaka Khan, Sting, Wayne Krantz, Donny McCaslin, Taylor Hawkins and the Coattail Riders and the Ed Fry Band. Steve Krugman from Hollywood drum states: “No doubt, Wood is a wildly endowed and original musician”.³⁹

³⁸ Wood, "Nate Wood Interview."

³⁹ Ibid.

Part Two: Tigran Hamasyan's Music

Tigran Hamasyan's original music draws from a wide range of musical styles. In an interview with John Lewis, Hamasyan states "I get into different types of music and really immerse myself in each one and then move on".⁴⁰ Hamasyan's music draws many influences predominantly from Armenian Folk Music, Jazz and Metal. John Fordham discusses Hamasyan's diverse style;

He's the hottest pianist in jazz and he likes to mix things up, whether it's bebop, thrash metal or dub-step. But his heart is in the folk music of his native land.⁴¹

These influences result in a mix of traditional drumming genres and form a new genre that requires the creation of new drum parts. Hamasyan's 'riff-based approach to jazz is unique'⁴², often has no improvised solo sections, as is the standard in the jazz genre. Hamasyan discusses his composition style and rhythmic devices on the track *The Grid*, from his recent release *Mockroot*⁴³;

It's through-composed, and has so many sections. It's based around a grid-like rhythmic pattern, which is two bars of 4/4 that is grouped in 5,5,7,5,5,5/16 notes.⁴⁴

The music by nature is very structured and would suggest that drum parts are composed to compliment this.

When asked if Hamasyan gave specific drum parts for his music, drummer Nate Wood replied,

Yeah kind of, he [Hamasyan] did, although as I said before sometimes he would be like "I'm hearing a back beat here" and then I [Wood] can do whatever else.⁴⁵

Wood also mentioned in an interview with Ryan Daunt that Hamasyan is specific about certain aspects of the drum parts, although is also open to input from Wood.

Tigran was very specific about what he wanted but then I think what he started to want, was what I started to do naturally, so it's like, when he would write stuff with me in mind or my bass drum sound or you know whatever... a lot of the stuff you hear on Shadow Theater is Tigran's idea with me embellishing.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ John Lewis, "Tigran Hamasyan, the Pianist Giving Jazz an Armenian Twist," (The Guardian: The Guardian, 2013 25 October).

⁴¹ John Fordham, "Review: Jazz: Armenian Folk and Banging Beats Get Jazz Festival Jumping: Tigran Hamasyan, London Jazz Festival 4/5," *Guardian, The* (2013).

⁴² Ben Norton, "Review: Tigran Hamasyan – Mockroot," *Can This Even Be Called Music* (2015).

⁴³ Tigran Hamasyan, "The Grid," in *Mockroot* (Paris, France: Nonesuch Records, 2015).

⁴⁴ Nonesuch, "Mockroot by Tigran Hamasyan," (nonesuch.com: nonesuch, 2015).

⁴⁵ Wood, "Nate Wood Interview with Ryan Daunt."

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Low High Orchestration

A compositional concept of Hamasyan's is hearing the drums as low and high pitches, e.g. Kick, low and the snare high. This relates to the way Wood orchestrates his drum parts, and influences how he approaches the drum orchestration in Hamasyan's compositions. Wood discusses low and high orchestration in an interview with Ryan Daunt.

Ryan Daunt: If you play a riff-based section and the melody goes low and high, do you orchestrate it that way?

Nate Wood: Yeah, a part of that is what he wants...one of the things that he doesn't like that I do a lot, is I like to hit the kick and the snare together, I like that weird sound of like low and high together, like a block of sound and he really hears it orchestrationally like low high, and he wants to hear a differentiation between the two, so he would tell me sometimes... you know the beat would be (sings a beat that has low and high sounds), that's Vardavar, so he [Hamasyan] is hearing (sings) "Low, High, Low, Low, High, Low, High" he is either writing the melody to the drum part in his head or vice versa, but yeah a lot of the orchestration is intentional its like low to high, and I think a lot of the improvisation I did around the beats that he had me play were based on his idea on orchestration and his music is so composed, that I try to orchestrate low to high in my orchestration as well.⁴⁷

Hamasyan's hearing of low and high in his conception of drum parts can be evidenced in Hamasyan's beatboxing,⁴⁸ Figure 2.1 is an example of Hamasyan improvising phrases and trading with Ari Hoenig on the tune *Rhythm* from the album *Lines of Oppression*⁴⁹.

Figure 2.1 shows musical notation for beatboxing. The first staff is marked with a tempo of 150 and a 4/4 time signature. It contains a series of rhythmic patterns with lyrics: "Dun ts goo sh ga da t ga du ga da goo sh ga da t ga du ga da goo sh ga dr ll da ga da ga". The second staff starts with "(Breath)" and continues with "da gu z e du gu ts gu da ga da gz ga du gu t gu t ga da ga da ga da ga tzu gu". The third staff is mostly empty with a final "tzun" at the bottom.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Beat-boxing is the musical expression of the body through the innovation of sounds and the crafting of music by only using the mouth, throat, and nose. Human Beat Box, "A Beginner's Guide to Beatboxing," (2017).

⁴⁹ Ari Hoenig, "Lines of Oppression," (France: Naïve, 2010).

Figure 2.1: Hamasyan's beat-boxing – *Rhythm – Lines of Oppression* (1:04-1:11)

His use of the syllables 'ga' and 'da' often for the snare drum, 'gu' 'dun' or 'du' for the kick drum are similar to the sounds of the kick and snare on a drum kit and this concept of vocalising drum sounds is similar to that used in Indian music.

Part Three: Analysis of Nate Wood's Drumming

Nate Wood - *The Court Jester* – Tigran Hamasyan

The Court Jester by Tigran Hamasyan features a vocal part, tenor saxophone, piano, bass and drum set. *The Court Jester* is categorised into seven main sections (excluding the introduction and ending as there are no drums in these sections), all of which are in 3/4 time and in G# minor. Wood's drumming is analysed in relation to these seven sections and discussed with reference to other parts of the music.

Intro (0:00-0:23)

The introduction features a harpsichord and vocals playing an opening rubato phrase to set up the tune. There are no drums in this section.

Section one (0:23-1:06)

Section one features two call and response phrases from the ensemble that repeat three times. Each phrase is four bars of 3/4 time. The first phrase is a pedal ostinato from the piano, bass and drums. The second phrase is a melody played by the vocals, piano and saxophone over the pedal. Section one follows; P1 (repeated), then P2, P1 repeated three times. Phrase one is notated in Figure 3.1 (P1).

The musical notation for Figure 3.1 shows three staves: Piano, Bass, and Drums. The Piano staff is in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The Bass staff is in bass clef with the same key signature. The Drums staff is in drum clef with a 3/4 time signature. The Piano part consists of a melody in the right hand and a rhythmic pattern in the left hand. The Bass part consists of a single note (G#) held for the duration of the phrase. The Drums part consists of a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.

Figure 3.1: *The Court Jester* – Section one – Phrase one – Piano, Bass and Drums – (0:23-0:28)

Wood is playing a one bar 16th note pattern that repeats four times and is implying 6/8 time over the 3/4 time which creates rhythmic interest. Figure 3.2 shows his part written in 3/4.



Figure 3.2: *The Court Jester* - Section one - Phrase one (first time) - Wood's part – written in 3/4 time

Wood follows the pedal notion by orchestrating his pattern on the ride cymbal. The cymbal has a longer duration which matches the piano and bass durations. There are no accents here, (although the down beats of every bar are accented in the bass and piano part). The subdivision is 16th based, which follows Hamasyan's part. The dynamics are consistent (mezzo piano), to match the dynamic of the music. The four bar piano and bass phrases (Figure 3.1) are repeated and the top melody notes change in the piano treble clef part. Wood makes embellishments to his part (Figure 3.3).

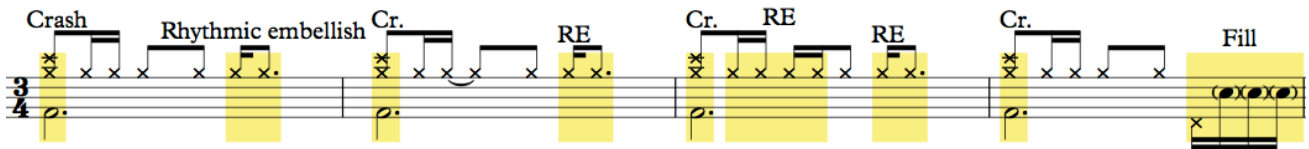


Figure 3.3: *The Court Jester* – Section one - Phrase one (first time repeated) - Wood's part (0:28-0:33)

In Figure 3.3 Wood adds a crash cymbal on the downbeats of every bar that effectively accents and strengthens the piano and bass parts. He then varies the rhythm of his ride cymbal but is still playing with an implied 6/8 feel. In the last bar Wood plays a fill, this acts as a transition leading in the melody.

In phrase two, the melody enters. The bass and piano (bass clef) are playing long notes (6 beats in duration) and piano bass clef part is filling in 16th notes around the melody, playing every opposite rhythm in 16ths that is not the melody. The melody is notated below in Figure 3.4.



Figure 3.4: *The Court Jester* – Section one – Phrase two - Melody – Vocals – (0:33-0:39)

Wood's accents on the second cymbal align with the rhythm of the melody of the saxophone, vocals and piano. This strengthens the melody and adds texture. The kick drum aligns with the lower register parts (bass and piano) to emphasize the long notes. Subdivisions are still 16ths and grouped as (2, 4, 3, 5, 5, 3, 2), which

follow the phrasing of the melody. The dynamics of Wood's part are graduated from piano to forte every two bars, following the contour of the ensemble. The orchestration here is as follows; kick drum with piano and bass to emphasize the parts and downbeats. The ride cymbal is outlining the subdivision and filling between the second cymbal, which is accentuating the melody. Wood outlines the subdivision, texturally embellishes, and emphasizes the melody. A fill is then played on the second 16th of beat 3, which acts as a transition back to phrase one. Wood's part is summarized below in Figure 3.5.

Figure 3.5: *The Court Jester* – Section one - Phrase two - Summary of Wood’s part – (0:33-:039)

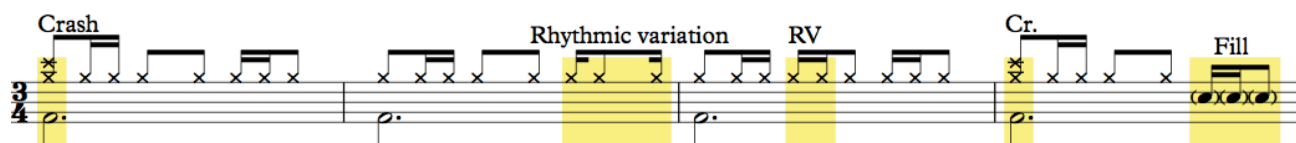


Figure 3.6: *The Court Jester* – Section one – Phrase one (second time) - Summary of Wood’s part – (0:39-0:44)

In phrase two, the melody returns and the saxophone plays a harmony part. This follows the same rhythm as the melody. The tenor saxophone part is notated in Figure 3.7.

Figure 3.7: *The Court Jester* – Section one – Phrase two (second time) - Tenor saxophone harmony (0:44-0:49)

Figure 3.8 shows Wood playing the melody whilst adding further rhythmic embellishment on the cymbals.

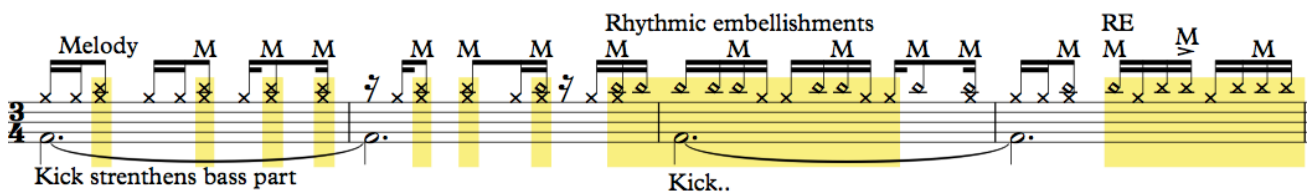


Figure 3.8: *The Court Jester* – Section one – Phrase two (second time) - Summary of Wood's part – (0:44-0:49)

Wood emphasizes the melody whilst also adding multiple 16th notes on the bell of cymbal two and the ride cymbal. Wood helps to compositionally develop this section since the piano, bass and, vocal parts remain the same, with only saxophone changing by adding in a harmony. The kick drum rhythm remains the same, strengthening the lower registered parts.

The rhythmic embellishments of the last two beats in bar four also act as a transition back to phrase one. Phrase one returns and the bass and piano parts remain the same. Wood adds rhythmic embellishment to the ride cymbal and plays a transitional fill in bar three to bring the melody back in for the final time (see Figure 3.9).



Figure 3.9: *The Court Jester* – Section one – Phrase one (third time) - Wood's part (0:49-:055)

The melody returns, this time ending the phrase on a G# minor triad. This resolves the section and sets up the pedal before section two. Wood rhythmically embellishes the cymbal part, further developing the final repetition of the melody (Figure 3.10).

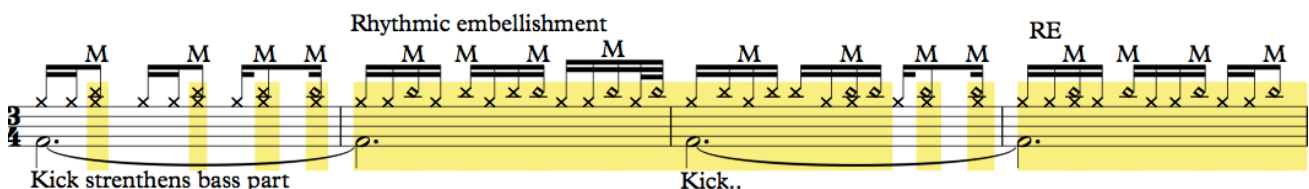


Figure 3.10: *The Court Jester* – Section one – Phrase two (third time) Wood's part (0:55-1:00)

With each melody repetition, Wood embellishes the cymbal texture further, whilst outlining the subdivisions, and developing his part compositionally with the melody. Figure 3.11- Figure 3.13 display an overview of Wood's compositional development in phrase one, section one.



Figure 3.11: *The Court Jester* – Wood's development in Section one - Phrase two – first Time – (0:33-:039)



Figure 3.12: *The Court Jester* – Wood's development in Section one - Phrase two – second Time – (0:44-0:49)

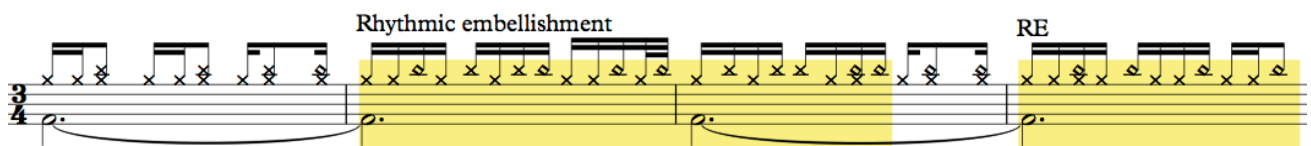


Figure 3.13: *The Court Jester* – Wood's development in Section one - Phrase two – third Time – (0:55-1:00)

Wood's improvised embellishment throughout this section is an example of his idiosyncratic drum orchestration.

Section one ends with phrase one being repeated once more. Wood adds kick drum to the down beats of each bar, strengthening the bass parts further and slightly varying the ride cymbal. There is a slight decrescendo in bar four and He plays a fill on beat 3 to transition to the next section. Wood's part is shown in Figure 3.14.

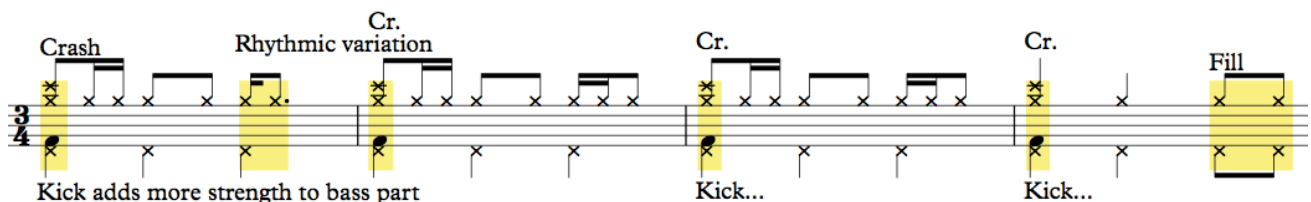


Figure 3.14: *The Court Jester* – Section one – Phrase two (final) - Wood's part (1:00-1:05)

Section two (1:06-1:47)

Section two features three phrases, played by all of the instruments. Phrase one is played twice followed by phrase two and phrase three which are then repeated three times, phrase three is played with an alternate ending on the third time with ensemble hits to transition into section three.

Phrase one – (1:06-1:11)

In phrase one the vocals and saxophone are playing the melody. Piano treble clef is playing a busy 16th note line and the piano bass clef and bass are playing hits, which accentuate and set up the melody. The melody is notated in Figure 3.15.



Figure 3.15: *The Court Jester* – Section two – Phrase one - Saxophone/Vocal melody (1:06-1:11)

This melody is syncopated with no notes being played on the downbeats of any bar. The bass part is doubled with the piano (see Figure 3.16).



Figure 3.16: *The Court Jester* – Section two – Phrase one - Bass part (1:06-1:11)

Wood's part is thoroughly constructed, aligning with fragments of the melody, emphasizing the bass parts with the kick drum and outlining the subdivision. His part is notated in Figure 3.17.

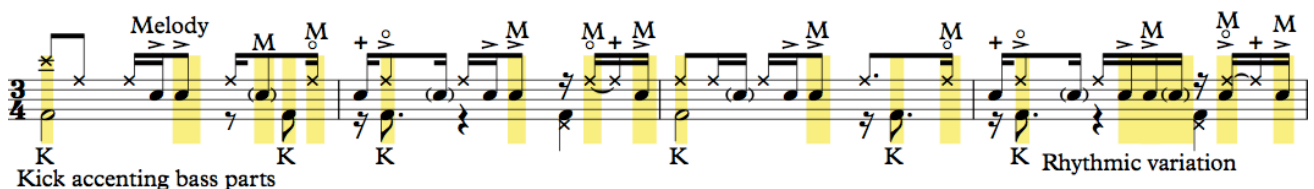


Figure 3.17: *The Court Jester* – Section two – Phrase one - Summary of Wood’s part (1:06-1:11)

Wood's part is 16th note based and the accents align with both the melody and bass parts. Wood's part is orchestrated as follows; hi-hat and snare drum align mostly with the melody (vocal/sax) and the kick drum aligns with the bass parts (piano and bass). Wood is always accentuating the last notes of each melodic phrase, which gives the phrases rhythmic momentum. He emphasizes these on either the snare drum or with open hi-hats to match the duration of the melody. The first two bars are similar to the second two bars as he repeats his part with slight variation only, possibly because the melody repeats.

The band then repeats this phrase. Wood repeats his part with two small variations. He plays a crash on beat 1 of the first bar which signposts that phrase one is repeating and adds a snare accent on beat 3 of bar two. This adds a slight variation to accent the melody. There are no other variations in his part. Wood's part is notated in Figure 3.18.

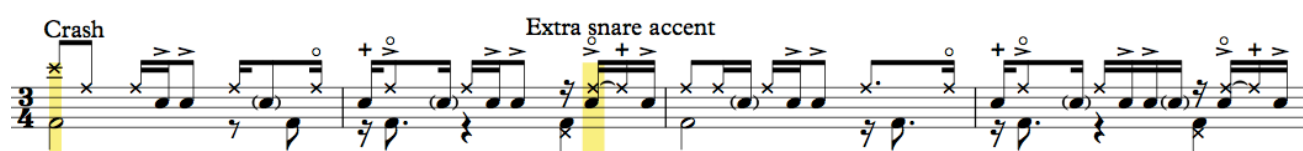


Figure 3.18: *The Court Jester* – Section two – Phrase one (repeated) - Wood's part (1:11-1:16)

Phrase two (1:16-1:21)

In phrase two the rhythm of the melody remains the same but the pitch changes and the saxophone is playing a harmony. The bass rhythm is varied and so is Wood's part. The vocal melody is notated in Figure 3.19.



Figure 3.19: *The Court Jester* – Section two – Phrase two - Vocal melody (1:16-1:21)

Figure 3.20 shows the bass part.



Figure 3.20: *The Court Jester* – Section two – Phrase two - Bass part (1:16-1:21)

Wood aligns the kick with the bass part. Wood plays the ride cymbal, hi-hats (with his left foot) and the snare drum to outline the subdivisions, as opposed to playing with the melody. Most of the ride cymbal aligns with

the melody however Wood is not accenting the melody as prominently as before. His part is notated in Figure 3.21.

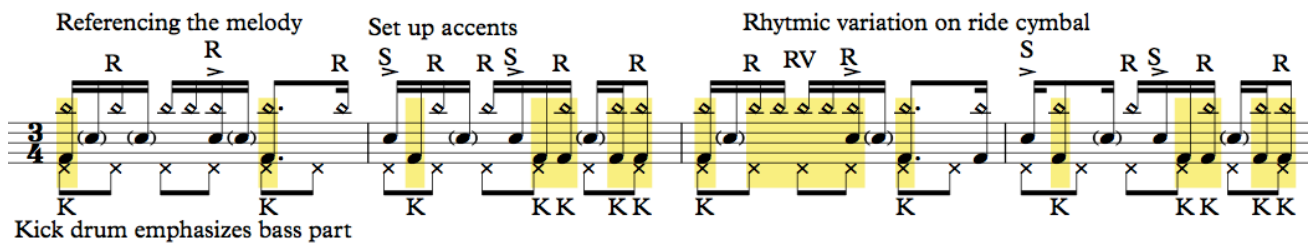


Figure 3.21: *The Court Jester* – Section two – Phrase two (first time) - Wood's part (1:16-1:21)

Wood's part is orchestrated as follows; the ride cymbal is referencing the melody, the hi-hat (left foot) is playing 8th notes, the kick drum is aligning with the bass part and plays a rhythmic variation on the 3e of the third bar. The snare drum is either accenting the melody, using accent to set up the bass part or playing ghost notes for dynamic contrast. His part is very similar from the first two bars to the second two. There are some slight variations in the ride cymbal and kick drum but mostly it is the same as the melody repeats.

Phrase three (1:21-1:25)

Phrase three features a superimposition of four beats in the time of three beats in Wood's part. The pulse stays the same but it suggests the tempo has changed. Hamasyan is known for his ability to superimpose meters over each other. "Superimposed rhythms are defined as placing a new rate of notes over the original without changing the pulse."⁵⁰ Wood discusses Hamasyan's superimposition in a recent interview with Ryan Daunt.

So we would be on a gig playing that tune Shogar Jon, (demonstrates), and then Tigran would just play a phrase in five, over six, and I was like oh I'm gonna play five now, that's really easy, he's so good at it that in the middle of all this chaos going on his computing power is so high that he would be like five, and I would be like oh this is so easy. (Demonstrates). So that's going from five to six but the length stays the same. Superimposing one over the other, and he would do that anywhere, he could do four-five-six-seven-eight-nine he hears it all in the same time, he could just drop in and out of them, and so it wasn't so much us working on them together.⁵¹

In phase three, Wood is playing four dotted 8th notes which splits a bar of 3/4 into four notes of equal length. He then plays kick on the first dotted 8th and snare on the third dotted 8th note, which results in an implied back beat. The vocals are singing a G# on the 1+ of each bar and the piano is playing a line which suggest triplets due to the superimposition. Hamasyan's part is notated in Figure 3.22.

⁵⁰ Jerad Lippi, "Time Travels Modern Rhythm Section Techniques as Employed by Ari Hoenig" (SUNY Purchase College, 2008).

⁵¹ Wood, "Nate Wood Interview with Ryan Daunt."



Figure 3.22: *The Court Jester* – Section two – Phrase three (first time) – Hamasyan’s part (1:21-1:25)

Wood’s part is notated in Figure 3.23.



Figure 3.23: *The Court Jester* – Section two – Phrase three (first time) - Wood’s part (1:21-1:25)

Wood’s part is orchestrated as follows; the hi-hat is open and playing dotted 8th notes to outline the subdivision, the kick and crash are on beat 1 and the snare (accented) on beat 3. The dynamic is forte and the back-beat creates a convincing groove for the superimposition. He repeats this pattern for three bars, then plays a transitional fill to set up phrase two and the 3/4 metre. Wood’s fourth bar notated in Figure 3.24.

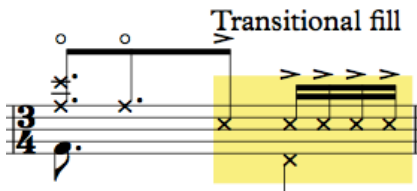


Figure 3.24: *The Court Jester* – Section two – Phrase three (first time) - Wood’s part (1:26-1:27)

Wood plays a stick shot on beat 2+ and then four stick shots on all four 16ths of beat 3 to set up phrase two for the second time.

Phrase two (second time) 1:27-1:32

Phrase two returns and Wood’s part is very similar to the first time, with some slight embellishments. His part is notated in Figure 3.25.

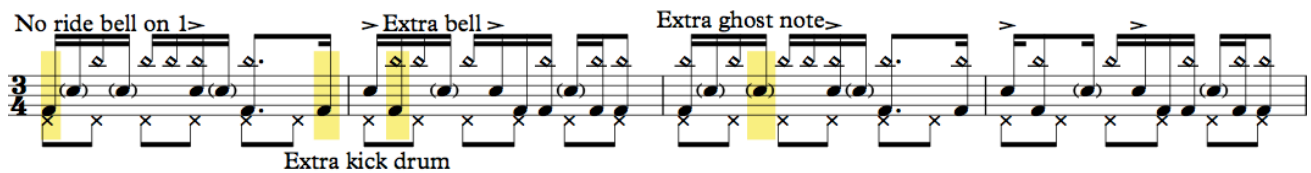


Figure 3.25: *The Court Jester* – Section two – Phrase two (second time) - Wood's part (1:27-1:32)

Wood's part changes slightly but the essence remains the same. The orchestration is as follow; the kick drum is still aligning with the bass part, the hi-hat is outlining the subdivision, snare accents are setting up the bass parts and snare ghost notes are adding dynamic contrast. These embellishments develop his part by adding rhythmic interest while still maintaining the original part. He does not play a bell on beat 1, it is likely this is because of the prior fill playing until the last 16th of the bar as it is difficult to get from the stick shot position to play the bell of ride within one 16th note.

Phrase three (second time) 1:32-1:37

Phrase three is played for a second time. This time the bass changes down to an F#. Everything else remains the same. Wood's part is the same as phrase three (first time), this time with a slightly different transitional fill in the fourth bar. This adds rhythmic interest. Wood's part is notated in Figure 3.26.

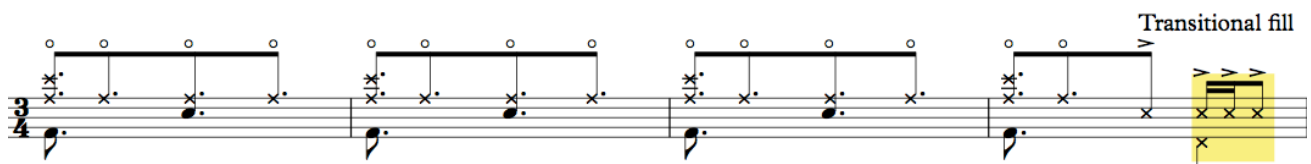


Figure 3.26: *The Court Jester* – Section two – Phrase three (second time) - Wood's part (1:32-1:37)

The subdivision is still dotted eighth notes. The orchestration remains back beat based and the dynamics are still forte.

Phrase two (third time) 1:37-1:42

Phrase two happens for a third and final time. Wood adds rhythmic variation by adding ghost notes, extra ride bell notes and a kick drum note. The variations are highlighted in Figure 3.27.

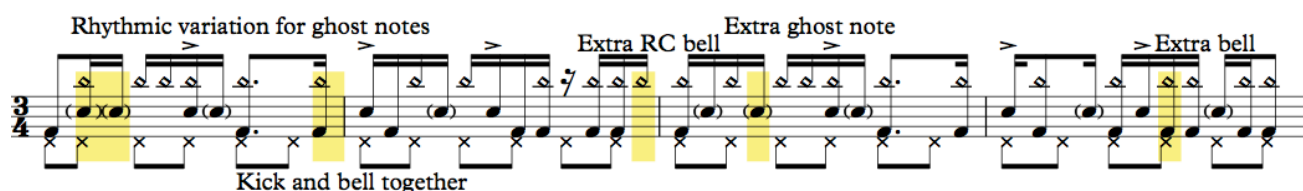


Figure 3.27: *The Court Jester* – Section two – Phrase two (third time) - Wood's part (1:37-1:42)

Phrase three (third time) 1:42-1:47

Phrase three happens for a third time. Wood plays the same part as the first and second time (Figure 3.28).



Figure 3.28: *The Court Jester* – Section two – Phrase three (third time) - Wood's part (1:42-1:47)

The next two bars, the piano (bass clef) and bass play hits while the saxophone and piano (treble clef) play a melody. Figure 3.29 shows the piano (bass clef) and bass parts for the last two bars of phrase three (third time).



Figure 3.29: *The Court Jester* – Section two – Phrase three (third time) - Piano (bass clef)/bass part (1:42-1:47)

Figure 3.30 is the saxophone/piano line for the last two bars of phrase three (third time).



Figure 3.30: *The Court Jester* – Section two – Phrase three (third time) - Saxophone/Piano line (1:42-1:47)

The dynamic is forte to match the rest of the ensemble. Wood's part is orchestrated; the kick aligns with the bass/piano part, the hi-hat aligns with part of the bass and part of the melody and also outlines the subdivision, the snare accents in the first bar align with one of the bass/piano hits on 2+ and in the second bar set up the first bass accent and catch the last note of the melody. He closes the hi-hat on the last 16th of bar two and plays a snare accent that results in a short sharp accent with the last 16th of the melody, which ends in a tight hit from the ensemble. Figure 3.31 is a good example of Wood's neoteric orchestration on the drum set to compliment the music of Hamasyan. This is the end of section two.

Section three features vocals and drums, with three small piano entries to add colour. In this section the vocals are overdubbed three times to create a moving harmonised vocal part. Wood is tapping on the floor. Wood says in an interview with Ryan Daunt “That’s me playing on the floor, he [Hamasyan] heard me practicing on the floor and was like ‘I’m gonna use that’.”⁵² The first eight bars of the vocal part is notated in Figure 3.32.



⁵² Ibid.

The subdivision is all 8th notes. This is the subdivision Wood bases his part around (see Figure 3.33).

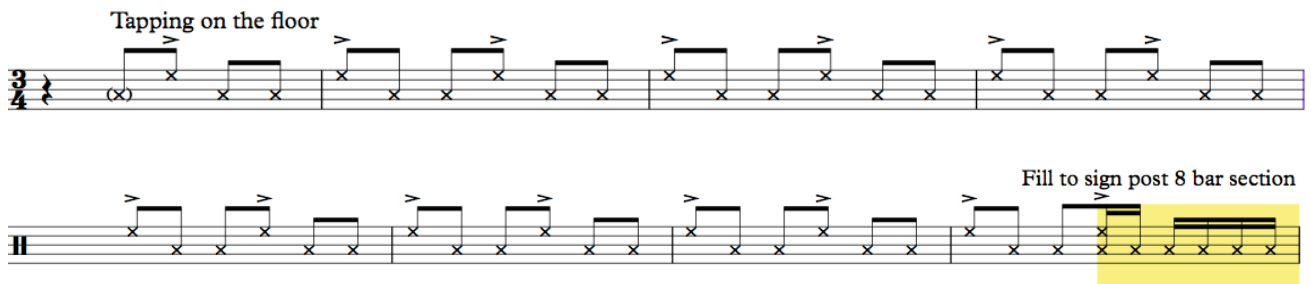


Figure 3.33: *The Court Jester* – Section three - Wood's part (1:47-1:58)

Wood's part is 8th note based, with added 16th note variations. The part is orchestrated with low and high tapping sounds. He repeats the part in bar two through to bar seven which demonstrates that this is the original groove. Bar one has a rest, likely because the melody also rests and comes in on beat 2+. Wood plays a fill in bar eight to signpost the end of the phrase. The main groove for section three is notated in Figure 3.34.



Figure 3.34: *The Court Jester* – Section three - Main groove

This groove continues throughout the section with more fills added and is a good example of Wood's part based playing with added embellishments. Figure 3.35 - Figure 3.41 are some examples of variation throughout this section.

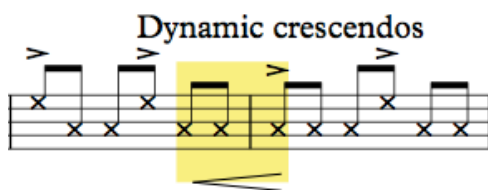


Figure 3.35: *The Court Jester* – Section three examples - Dynamic crescendos (2:01)

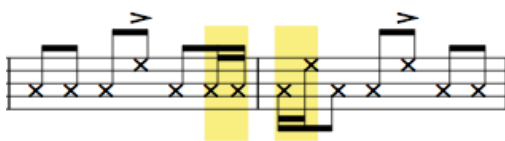


Figure 3.36: *The Court Jester* – Section three examples - 16th note variations (2:06-2:07)

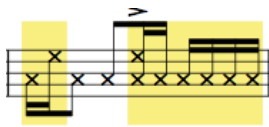


Figure 3.37: *The Court Jester* – Section three examples - More 16th note variations (2:11-2:12)

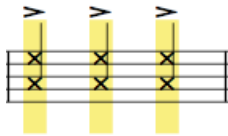


Figure 3.38: *The Court Jester* – Section three examples – 1/4 note variations (2:14-2:15)

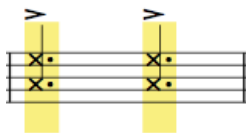


Figure 3.39: *The Court Jester* – Section three examples - Dotted 1/4 note variations (2:15-2:16)

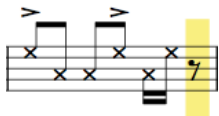


Figure 3.40: *The Court Jester* – Section three examples - Rests (2:45-2:46)



Figure 3.41: *The Court Jester* – Section three examples - 16th notes triplets (2:47-2:48)

Summary of Section three

Wood uses subdivision changes, rests, adding/subtracting 16th notes and dynamic shifts to add interest rhythmically and dynamically to this section. The vocals are playing constant 8th notes and the dynamics are similar throughout the section. The vocal harmony changes frequently, however, Wood's part remains the same.

Section four (2:52-3:16)

Section four is 18 bars long and features all members of the ensemble. This section can be split up into three parts; phrase A, ending A and ending B. Phrase A is a two bar pattern that is played three times followed by ending A. Phrase A is then played three times followed by ending B. Phrase A is two bars long, ending A is two bars long and ending B is four bars long. The saxophone and vocal parts are doubling notes from the piano part.

Phrase A

The piano part for phrase A is notated in Figure 3.42.



Figure 3.42: *The Court Jester* – Section four - Phrase A – Piano part – (2:52)

The piano is playing an E(add9) chord until beat 3+ of the second bar where the piano then plays an accented E(add9)/G# chord. The whole bar crescendos until the accented 3+ of the second bar which then drops down dynamically. This process is repeated exactly the same for the next two bars with the only difference being a C#minor11 chord on beat 3+ of the second bar of that phrase. This is repeated with an E(add9)/G# on beat 3+ of the second bar of the third time of phrase A and then ending A. Wood's part for phrase A is notated in Figure 3.43.

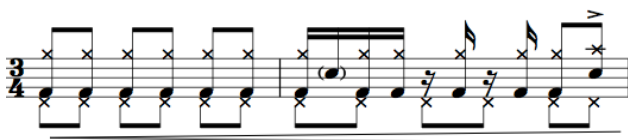


Figure 3.43: *The Court Jester* – Section four - Phrase A first, second and third time

Wood plays the exact same part for these six bars, which matches the ensemble. Since the ensemble harmony is static until beat 3+ of the second bar, Wood matches this by orchestrating his part with the ride, kick and

hats until beat 3+ of the second bar where he then changes his orchestration to the crash/snare/hats. This creates a low and high phrase and also emphasizes beat 3+. Hi-hats are playing an 8th note ostinato. Wood's part dynamically graduates from piano to forte throughout the two bars to match the ensemble's dynamic shape. This is repeated three times until ending A.

Ending A

Ending A is two bars long. Saxophone and vocals are doubling piano notes and bass is doubling the piano's lowest voice. The piano part for ending A is notated in Figure 3.44.



Figure 3.44: *The Court Jester* – Section four – Ending A – Piano part (3:00-3:03)

Figure 3.45 shows Wood's part for ending A



Figure 3.45: *The Court Jester* – Section four – Ending A – Wood's part (3:00-3:03)

The piano part is playing low and high, (Eadd9 to Fadd9) then down to C#add9 and up to Dadd9 for the second bar. Wood's hi-hats continue the ostinato throughout this phrase and he is orchestrating his other limbs low to high. Wood's part is orchestrated as follows; kick and ride followed by snare and ride in the first bar, then kick and ride followed by snare and crash in the second bar to accent the last note of the phrase. He adds an accent on the 1e of bar two to set up the next notes before the last hit of the phrase. The phrase dynamically graduates piano to forte and he does not play hats on beat 1, this helps the drums to start softer dynamically as the hi-hat creeps in and gives the phrase greater dynamic contrast.

Phrase A repeats 3 times and each time Wood is playing the same part. This matches the ensemble as their part is the same repeated 3 times, with the chord change at the end of the second repetition of phrase A. Ending B is then played. Ending B is four bars long and features the ensemble playing figures to end section four. Saxophone, vocals and bass are doubled in the piano part until bar three and four where the vocals and saxophone parts change slightly, compared to the piano part. The piano part is notated in Figure 3.46.



Figure 3.46: *The Court Jester* – Section four – Ending B – piano part (3:11-3:16)

Figure 3.47 highlights the changes in the vocal melody.



Figure 3.47: *The Court Jester* – Section four – Ending B – Vocals part (3:11-3:16)

Wood's part is notated in Figure 3.48.



Figure 3.48: *The Court Jester* – Section four – Ending B – Wood's part (3:11-3:16)

Wood matches the subdivisions of the ensemble, as this phrase is accent based. He accents each note of the phrase on either the kick or the snare to strengthen the ensemble phrase. His part is orchestrated as follows; the hi-hat is playing an ostinato, the snare is accenting the second melody notes and fourth melody notes in the first two bars as well as the higher notes in bars three and four. The kick drum is accenting the first, third and fifth melody notes in the first two bars and the lower melody notes in the third and fourth bars. The crash cymbal is mostly aligning with the kick or snare (except on beat 2 where Wood plays the accents split between two hands). In the third and fourth bar he plays open hi-hats in the third bar on beats 2+, 3, 3+ and

3a. This sets up the bass part and aligns with the hit on beat 3a. Wood switches to the open hi-hats allowing him to control the note duration and match the length of the ensemble. He closes the hi-hat on beat 2 of the last bar to cut off all sound and match a tight hit from the ensemble. The crash cymbal is also used at the end of the phrase (beat 1a of bar four) where Wood immediately chokes the cymbal to match the duration of the short note from the ensemble. The dynamic is consistently forte throughout these four bars to end the section four strongly. Section four is a good example of Wood utilizing Hamasyan's low and high orchestration concept into his drum parts. This is the end of section four.

Section five (3:16-3:28)

Section five features harpsichord, piano, vocals and saxophone. This section is influenced by western art genres and is more in the style of a fugue⁵³. There are no drums and bass in this section until the last bar of the section (3:26). In the last bar the band plays a figure in unison. The saxophone and vocals double fragments of the piano part and the bass plays unison with the piano (bass clef). The piano part is notated in Figure 3.49.



Figure 3.49: *The Court Jester* – Section five – Piano part (3:26-3:28)

Wood matches the rhythms of these hits (with the exception of a hi-hat note on beat 3e) and orchestrates his drum part to simulate the pitch movement of the line. His part is notated in Figure 3.50.



Figure 3.50: *The Court Jester* – Section five – Wood's part (3:26-3:28)

⁵³ A fugue is a contrapuntal composition in which a short melody or phrase (the subject) is introduced by one part and successively taken up by others and developed by interweaving the parts). Bruce Benward, *Music in Theory and Practise. 2 (3rd Ed.)* (William C. Brown, 1985).

Wood outlines the subdivisions of the accents from the ensemble (1, 1a, 2+, 2a and 3+) with an extra note on 3e to set up the final hit on beat 3+. The melody moves down in pitch throughout the phrase. He orchestrates his part first on the snare (stick shots), then two kick drums followed by a crash/kick drum in unison to accentuate the phrase and outline the pitch movement of the ensemble. The dynamic is forte to match the ensemble. This is another example of Wood employing low and high orchestration and is the end of section five.

Section six (3:28-4:11)

Section six will be split into two parts. Part one features rhythm section only (piano, bass and drums) while part two features this material with a vocal/saxophone/piano melody added on top of the rhythm section. Wood plays in both sections and his part is similar throughout although with slight variation.

Part one (3:28-3:50)

Part one features an eight bar piano/bass phrase that is played twice before the melody enters (part two). Part one has an 8th note anacrusis. Piano and bass are playing in unison and piano is doubling the bass part in octaves. The piano part is notated in Figure 3.51.



Figure 3.51: *The Court Jester* – Section six – Part one - Piano part (3:28-3:39)

Wood's part is notated in Figure 3.52.

Crash signpost

Ghost note off melody

Accent with melody

AG AAGAGA G AAA G GAG GAGA A AG GAGAG GAGA G AAA G GAG GA A

L L L L L L H L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L

Low melody note High melody note

Outlines four note run

Set up accent

Open hi-hat signpost 8 bars

Figure 3.52: *The Court Jester* – Section six – Part one – Summary of Wood’s part - (3:28-3:39)

Wood is playing accents with each note of the melody and playing unaccented ghost notes of every 16th between the melody. This creates texture and fills out the phrase; it also outlines the subdivision. Wood’s part is orchestrated low and high, with the hi-hat/kick drum aligning with the low notes of the phrases and the snare drum aligning with the higher notes of the phrase. He outlines the four note run in bar five on the snare drum, ending that grouping with a kick/hi-hat as the fourth melody note is the lowest of the phrase (beat 4a of bar five). A crash is played for the anacrusis to signpost a new section. The dynamic for this section is forte, which matches the dynamics of the ensemble.

This eight bar phrase is then repeated with a few variations in Wood’s part. He makes two changes, firstly adding a set up hit on beat 3 of the third bar and orchestrating the 1e, 1+ and 1a on the snare, snare and kick/hi-hat which adds interest and variation to develop his part the second time throughout this phrase.

Figure 3.53 is a labelled diagram displaying the set up accent and orchestration change.

Set up accent

Orchestration change

Figure 3.53: *The Court Jester* – Section six – Part one (second time) - Wood’s part (3:39-3:50)

Section six is a good example of Wood’s neoteric orchestration to align with all parts of the ensemble whilst outlining subdivision and signposting sections. This concludes Part one of section six.

Part two (3:50-4:11)

Part two features all members of the ensemble. A vocal/saxophone/piano melody is added. Piano bass clef adds harmony instead of doubling the bass part in octaves, bass is the same. Wood approaches his part almost exactly the same with the exception of an orchestration change on beat 1 of bar three. His part continues in the same way aligning with the bass and piano (bass clef) and outlining the subdivision for the melody to project over. Wood's part is notated in Figure 3.54.



Figure 3.54: *The Court Jester* – Section six – Part two - Wood's part (3:50-3:56)

The second four bars are the same as the second four bars in part one, notated in Figure 3.55.



Figure 3.55: *The Court Jester* – Section six – Part two – Wood's part (3:56-4:00)

The next eight bars are repeated and Wood plays exactly the same as above. This is probably due to the piano and bass part repeating also. This is the end of Section six.

Section seven (4:11-5:20)

Section seven is the final section with drums, before the outro, and features all members of the ensemble. This section will be split into two parts. Part one starts with a harmonised vocal part and a saxophone part playing a sustained melody. The piano and bass parts are the same as part two from section six and Wood plays an open hi-hat ostinato, with the kick and snare aligning with the bass/piano part. This section is played two times.

Part one (4:11-4:33)

Wood aligns his drum parts closely to the piano/bass part. Wood is playing an ostinato on the hi-hat and snare drum for the most part and accentuates the piano/bass accents on the kick drum. Figure 3.56 shows the eight bar piano pattern.



Figure 3.56: *The Court Jester* – Section seven – Part one – Piano eight bar pattern (4:11-4:22)

Figure 3.57 shows Wood's part for this eight bar pattern (4:11-4:22)

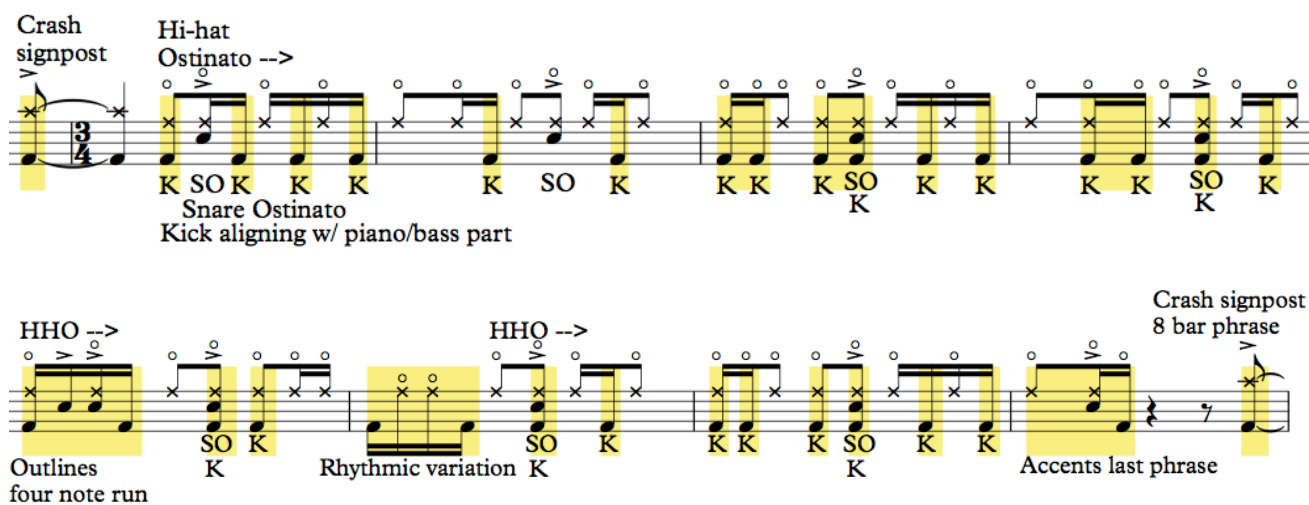


Figure 3.57: *The Court Jester* – Section seven – Part one – Wood's part labeled (4:11-4:22)

Wood uses the kick drum to align with the accents of the piano/bass part to strengthen them. Sometimes the snare and bass are in unison, this is probably because some of the piano/bass parts align with the snare ostinato. He adds extra accents on beat 1 and 1+ of the fifth bar, beat 1 and 1a of the sixth bar which creates rhythmic interest and in the eighth bar stops on 1a to match the piano/bass parts. His hi-hat and snare ostinato outlines the subdivision. Wood's hi-hat/snare ostinato is notated in Figure 3.58.

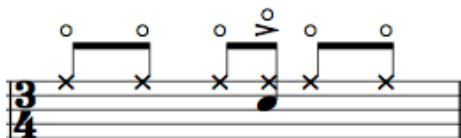


Figure 3.58: *The Court Jester* – Section seven – Part one – hi-hat/snare ostinato (4:11)

This eight bar phrase is then played again by the ensemble. All parts except for Wood's are the same. He makes a few small orchestration changes (snare instead of kick etc) to give this repeated section some small embellishments whilst still keeping the essence of the groove. He adds two crash cymbals in the second half of the phrase to accentuate the piano/bass parts. Lastly, Wood plays a fill at the end of the phrase to transition into part two. Wood's part is notated in Figure 3.59.

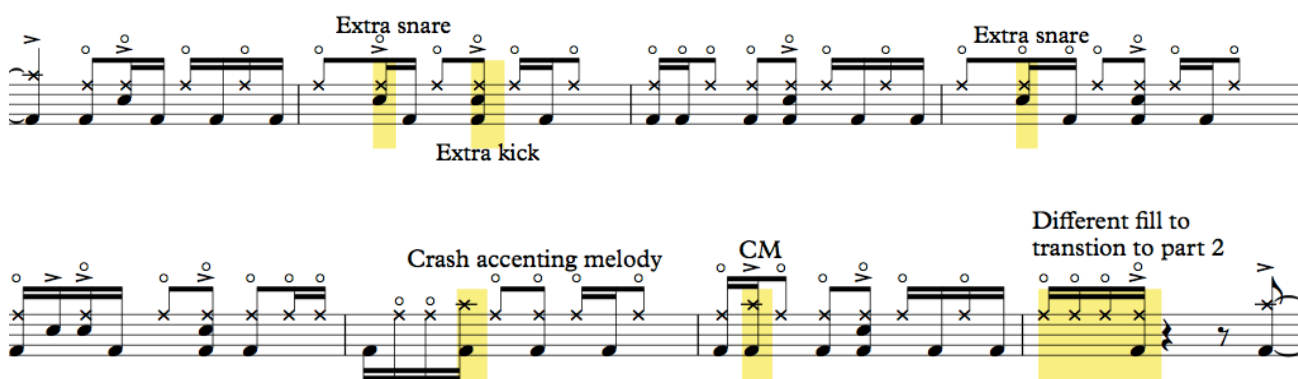


Figure 3.59: *The Court Jester* – Section seven – Part one – Piano eight bar pattern (4:22-4:33)

This is the end of section seven, part one.

Part two

Part two is 32 bars long and is split into four phrases, all eight bars in length. The first 16 bars feature the melody from section six. A new melody is played in the second 16 bars. The piano (bass clef)/bass part is the same eight bar pattern, repeated four times. There are two tempo changes, which Wood says are “Completely unrelated...you just speed up or slow down almost like a jump cut, it has no relation.”⁵⁴ These tempo changes happen in the second half of the second and fourth phrases. Figure 3.60 is a diagram of the section layout for more clarity. In section seven, part two, Wood changes to the ride cymbal/bell for the last 32 bars (including

⁵⁴ Wood, "Nate Wood Interview with Ryan Daunt."

tempo changes), adds a back beat, accents parts of the phrase on the crash cymbal, adds rhythmic variation and plays a fills into band figures. The outro is then played.

with the crash on 3+ to signpost then end the eight bar phrase. Figure 3.62 shows the second eight bars notated.

Figure 3.62 displays two staves of musical notation for Wood's part in 'The Court Jester'. The notation includes various drum symbols (K for kick, B for back-beat, OHH for open hi-hat) and specific performance instructions. The first staff covers the first four bars, with annotations such as 'Switch to ride bell', 'Back-beat on snare', 'Extra kick', and 'rit.' (ritardando). The second staff covers the next four bars, with annotations including 'Outlines four note run', 'Crash signpost', 'Fill to end phrase', and 'A Tempo'. The notation is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat.

Figure 3.62: *The Court Jester* – Section seven – Part two – Second eight bars - Wood's part (4:45-4:56)

The second time through this eight bar phrase Wood makes some changes. He switches to the ride cymbal and plays with more density. This adds rhythmic interest and develops this eight bar phrase. He also adds more open hi-hats (marked by an 'O') which adds rhythmic interest. The hi-hat (left foot) is still playing an 8th note ostinato and the kick drum is still aligning with the piano (bass clef)/bass accents (with an added kick on the 1a of bar three to add rhythmic interest and develop the part). Wood outlines the four note run in bar five. Wood plays a fill on beat 3 of the fourth bar to transition into the slower tempo, then again on beat 2+, 3 and 3+ of the eighth bar to transition back to A tempo. Again, he signposts 3+ in bar eight to end this eight bar phrase. The next eight bars (third time) is notated in Figure 3.63.

Figure 3.63 displays two staves of musical notation for Wood's part in 'The Court Jester'. The notation includes various drum symbols (K for kick, B for back-beat, OHH for open hi-hat) and specific performance instructions. The first staff covers the first four bars, with annotations such as 'Fill outlines four note run' and 'OHH'. The second staff covers the next four bars, with annotations including 'OHH', 'Fill into 3+', and '3+'. The notation is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat.

Figure 3.63: *The Court Jester* – Section seven – Part two – Third eight bars - Wood's part (4:56-5:07)

The third time Wood part is similar to the second time. Ride bell variations, hi-hat playing an ostinato, open hi-hat for rhythmic interest, kick aligning with the piano/bass part and snare is back beat based. The differences are; the fill in bar five is orchestrated kick, floor tom, floor tom, kick/crash which adds orchestration interest. The fill at the end of bar eight Wood plays 16th note triplets to set up the hit on beat 3+. This helps develop the third phrase from the second. The last eight bars of part two section seven are notated in Figure 3.64.

Further embellished ride bell rhythms

F

F

F

rit.

Fill to transition tempo change

Bell/Crash

B/C

Fill

Crash signpost

Fill into 3+

Figure 3.64: *The Court Jester* – Section seven – Part two – Last eight bars - Wood's part (5:07-5:19)

The final time Wood embellishes the ride bell part further (F), fills into the tempo change and adds crash cymbals on the end of the piano/bass accented runs. He plays two fills in the last bar to finish of the section. The first fill aligns with the piano/bass rhythms (1e, 1+, 1a) and the first snare accent acts as a set up for those three notes. The last fill is 16th note triplets on the floor tom followed by a kick on beat 3 to set up the final G# minor chord on 3+, Wood plays a kick/crash cymbal on 3+ to end the eight bar phrase and the section. Section seven highlights Wood's hybrid, idiosyncratic approach to drum set orchestration and his drum parts extending the role of the drummer in a contemporary jazz setting. This is the end of section seven.

Outro (5:20-5:45)

The outro features the harpsichord and vocals playing a similar phrase as section one, this phrase ends and the song is completed. There are no drums in this section, (same as section one).

Part Four: Nate Wood – *Vardavar* – Tigran Hamasyan

*Vardavar*⁵⁵ by Tigran Hamasyan features Vocals, Duduk⁵⁶, Piano, Bass and Drums. The analysis will be split into four main sections, all of which are in 4/4 time (apart from superimpositions, where the 4/4 time is still present, this will be explained later). This composition displays odd groupings of 16th notes, is rhythmically complex and has a progressive sound. Nate Wood's drumming will be analysed into these four sections and discussed, comparing his parts to the other instrumental parts. The analysis will use the musical elements; accents, subdivisions, orchestration, dynamic and compositional elements to discuss Wood's drumming.

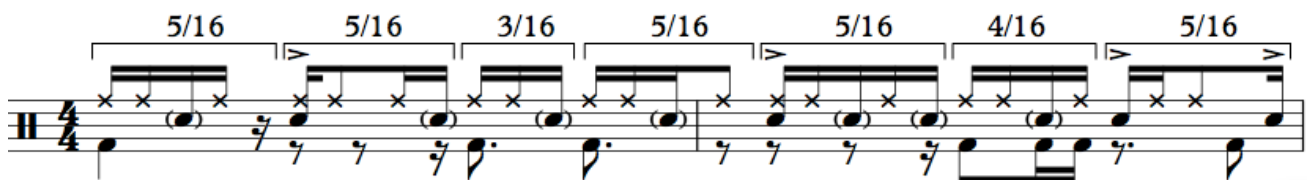
Section one (0:00-1:52)

The first section the piano is playing continuous 16ths notes; the groupings here are 5, 5, 3, 5, 5, 4, 5 (in 16th notes). Figure 4.1 shows the piano part in 4/4 time with the groupings above.



Figure 4.1: *Vardavar* – Section one - Piano part (0:00=1:52)

Wood outlines these groupings by playing either kick or snare on the start of a new grouping, and playing hi-hat to outline the subdivisions throughout the groupings. Wood's drum part is notated in Figure 4.2.



⁵⁵ Hamasyan, "Ep No1."

⁵⁶ One of the oldest indigenous Armenian instruments is the Duduk, a woodwind instrument usually made from apricot wood, with a double reed mouthpiece. Jamie Stokes, *Encyclopedia of the Peoples of Africa and the Middle East*, Facts on File Library of World History; Facts on File Library of World History. (New York, NY: Facts On File, 2009).

Figure 4.2: *Vardavar* – Section one – Wood’s part (0:00)

Wood aligns his kick drum with the bass part to strengthen it. His snare accents happen in two places, first; aligning with the first note of a grouping, if that grouping is not emphasized with the kick drum, i.e. the second 5/16, fourth 5/16, sixth 5/16 groupings; and secondly; anywhere in the grouping, to add rhythmic interest. He rarely plays unisons but there are some throughout. Wood states in an interview with Ryan Daunt, “I like to hit the kick and the snare together, I like that weird sound of like low and high together”.⁵⁷ In the example above, Wood plays a snare accent on the last 16th of the second bar. This accent aligns with the highest note in the phrase, (a high C in the piano part). The un-accented notes are mostly to reinforce the subdivisions, with some rests to fill out the groove dynamically. The orchestration is as follows; the snare/kick drum part is orchestrated low and high, as follows; low, high, low, low, high, low, high, (high). Figure 4.3 shows the hi-hat ostinato.

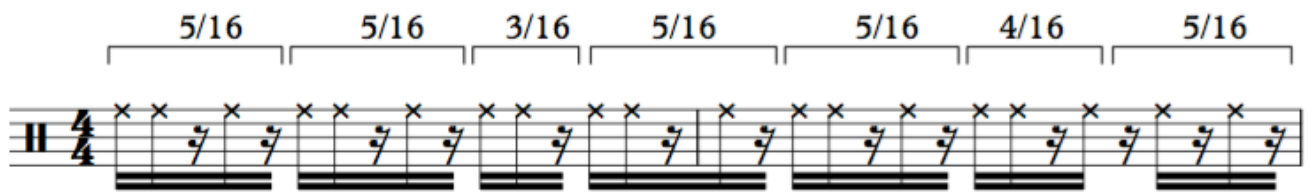


Figure 4.3: *Vardavar* – Section one – Wood’s part – Hi-hat ostinato

This suggests Wood is playing a pattern-based part with some variations and improvised embellishments.

Figure 4.4 - Figure 4.6 show examples of his embellishments.



Figure 4.4: *Vardavar* – Section one – Wood’s part – Embellishment example one (0:06)



⁵⁷ Wood, "Nate Wood Interview with Ryan Daunt."

Figure 4.5: *Vardavar* – Section one – Wood’s part – Embellishment example two (0:13)



Figure 4.6: *Vardavar* – Section one – Wood’s part – Embellishment example three (0:26)

These examples are small embellishments that maintain the essence of the original groove but add texture, rhythmic interest and development to the music. This similar groove continues throughout the first one minute and 24 seconds when Wood then changes to the ride/stack cymbal.⁵⁸ Figure 4.7 shows Wood’s groove on the stack cymbal.

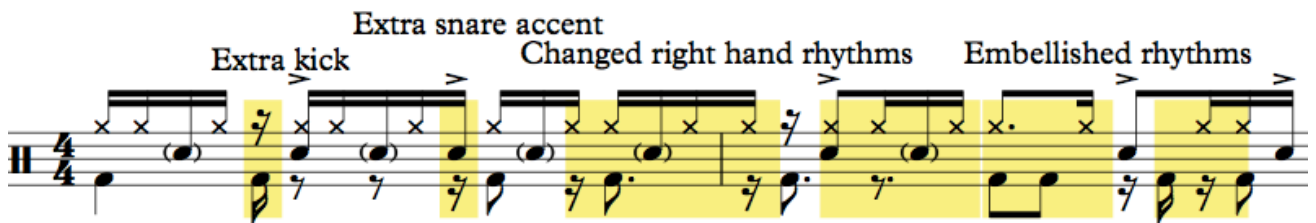


Figure 4.7: *Vardavar* – Section one – Wood’s part – Stack cymbal (1:25)

Wood has embellished the groove considerably since the original pattern, yet he is still playing in the 16th note groupings 5, 5, 3, 5, 5, 4, 5. He develops the groove, whilst still maintaining the groupings. At 1:38 the groove is almost new, but still has the same accent points and keeps its essence, this develops the song and is a compositional device. This section is orchestrated, low and high again with the kick aligning with the bass notes, and the snare aligning with the higher notes (piano part). Below is a comparison of the original groove (Figure 4.8) to the groove now at 1:38 (Figure 4.9). The sections highlighted in yellow are the key differences from the original groove.



⁵⁸ Stacking cymbals refers to mounting one or more cymbals on top of another cymbal. Luke Snyder, "Why Every Drummer Should Stack Cymbals," Luke Snyder, <http://www.lukesnydermusic.com/2011/02/why-every-drummer-should-stack-cymbals.html>.

Figure 4.8: *Vardavar* – Section one – Wood’s part – Original Groove (0:00)



Figure 4.9: *Vardavar* – Section one – Wood’s part – Groove at 1:38

Figure 4.9 demonstrates Wood’s development in orchestration whilst still outlining the subdivisions, groupings, and referencing the melody.

Section two (1:52-2:40)

In section two the piano is playing a high register sustained pattern, the bass is playing the subdivision accents and Wood is playing a groove similar to the original groove. His part is notated in Figure 4.10.



Figure 4.10: *Vardavar* – Section two – Wood’s part – Original Groove (1:52)

The next part of this section is a superimposition⁵⁹ of two bars of 3/4 over two bars of 4/4 (6/4 over 8/4), here Hamasyan is superimposing 3/4 over 4/4. Figure 4.11 is a diagram explaining the superimposition.

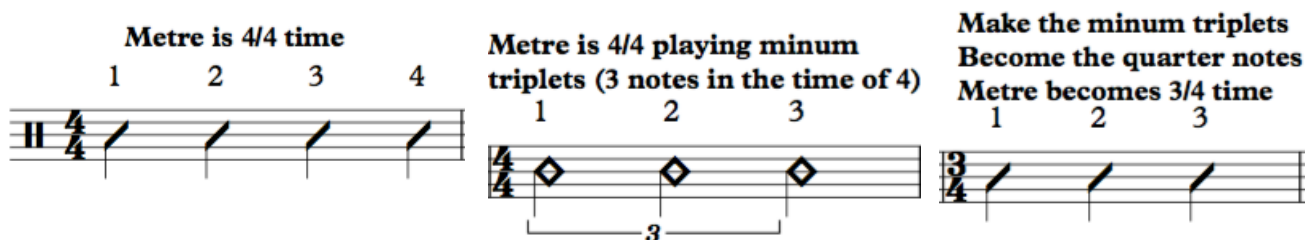


Figure 4.11: *Vardavar* – Section two – Superimposition (1:59-2:12)

Wood’s part (Figure 4.12) will be written in two bars of 3/4. (In the time of 4/4).

⁵⁹ Superimposed rhythms are defined as placing a new rate of notes over the original without changing the pulse. (Jerad Lippi, 2008)



Figure 4.12: *Vardavar* – Section two – Wood’s part (1:59)

Orchestration is still low and high; the snare accents are back beat based. (Snare is on beat 2, then 1 and 3 in the second bar, which is a backbeat over 6 beats). The kick drum aligns with the bass part. The subdivision has changed from 16th note to triplets.

In the next part of this section, Wood plays a similar groove to the first, with the subdivision returning to 16th notes. Wood’s part is notated in Figure 4.13.



Figure 4.13: *Vardavar* – Section two – Wood’s part (2:12)

The orchestration is low and high, which again aligns with the piano pitches low and high. Accents are at the start of all groupings, with some added snare accents on the last note of the second grouping of 5/16, last note of the fourth 5/16, and last note of the last 5/16, this gives rhythmic momentum into the next subdivisions.

This groove develops throughout the section with small embellishments. An example is given in Figure 4.14.



Figure 4.14: *Vardavar* – Section two – Groove development (2:30)

The subdivision is the same (16ths), the orchestration is the same (low and high) and the accents are similar (start of groupings). Some accents added (highlighted in Figure 4.14) and a variation for the 4/16 grouping.

The fill (highlighted last), Wood plays snare followed by hi-hat/kick drum for each sixteenth of the 5/16 grouping. This fill is acting as a transition into section three and highlights Wood's compositional drumming.

Section three (2:40-3:14)

Section three is a sustained, pedal over a Gsus4 chord. Piano (muted sound) is playing a 16th note part and playing accents (unmuted) on beat 3+ of the first bar and beat 1+ of the second bar. Wood plays the rhythm of the piano (muted) on the hi-hats and emphasizes the piano accents (unmuted) on the snare. The piano accents are forte which is likely why he accents them. The hi-hat however is softer, which reflects on the 16th note piano parts volume, (softer). The groupings remain 5, 5, 3, 5, 5, 4, 5 in 16ths, which is the original pattern. Hamasyan is keeping the groupings consistent throughout the composition. Figure 4.15 shows Wood's part notated with groupings.

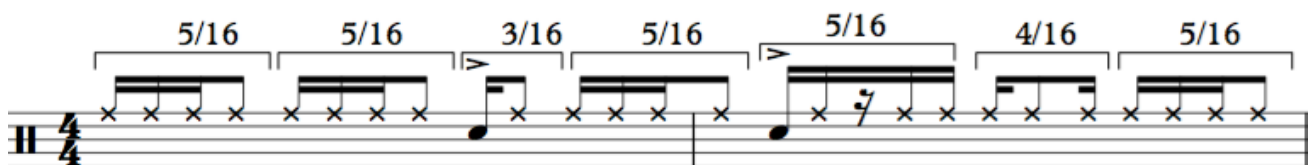


Figure 4.15: *Vardavar* – Section three – Wood's part - Rewritten in groupings (2:40)

This pattern repeats six times and then the Wood drops out on beat 1 by playing the kick and hi-hat on beat 1. Piano (muted) plays the melody for eight bars and then drums enter for the final section of the piece. Wood's orchestration in section three is part based, which is one of Hamasyan's common compositional devices.

Section four (3:15-5:16)

In section four, the piano and bass are playing a four bar pattern, outlining the starting point of each grouping. Figure 4.16 shows the piano/bass pattern.

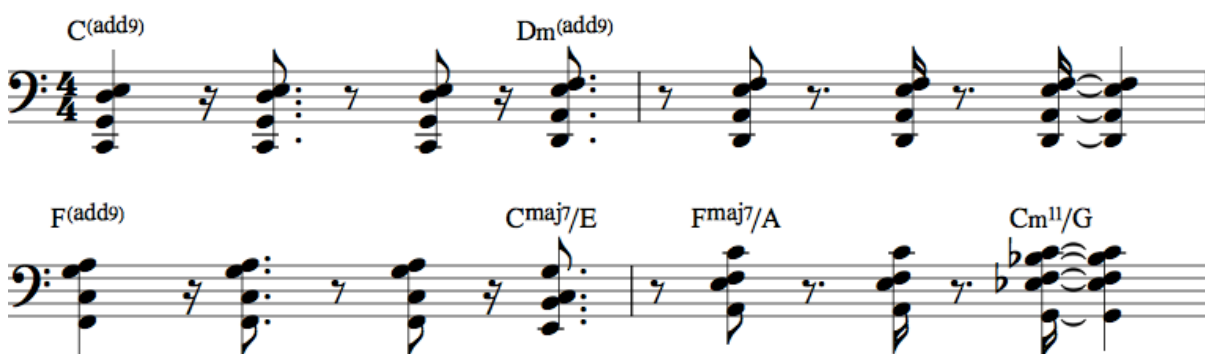


Figure 4.16: *Vardavar* – Section four – Piano part (3:15-3:21)

Wood's kick drum follows the groupings 5, 5, 3, 5, 5, 4, 5. He plays a backbeat, perhaps because Hamasyan wanted this compositionally. Wood's part is notated in Figure 4.17.

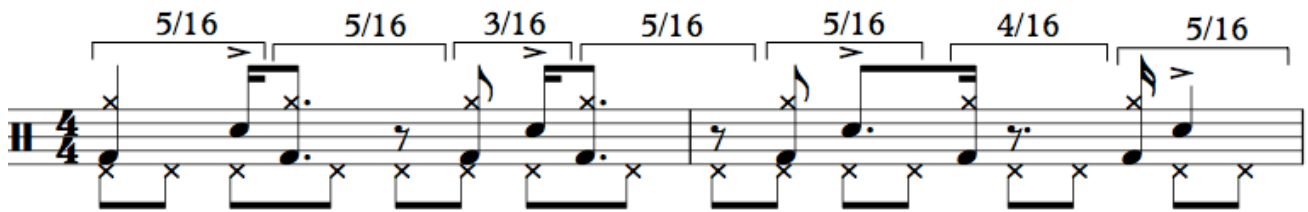


Figure 4.17: *Vardavar* – Section four – Wood's part - Groupings (3:15)

The subdivision is still 16th notes, with a back beat on beats 2 and 4. Orchestration is as follows; stack cymbal and kick drum are together and playing the first note of each grouping with the bass and piano. Snare is backbeat on beats 2 and 4. Hi-hats are playing an 8th note ostinato, which grounds the groove. Accents are on 2 and 4, which gives the groove the back beat feel. The dynamic is forte as it is the last section of the tune and provides a sense of finality.

Wood embellishes the groove further within the groupings, whilst still keeping the original groove. Below are three examples of embellishments. In example one (Figure 4.18), Wood adds an extra kick, to add rhythmic development.



Figure 4.18: *Vardavar* – Section four – Wood's part – Embellishment example one (3:20-3:21)

In example two, in the bar before the melody, and right on the downbeat of the melody, Wood adds extra crash cymbals that replace the ride stack cymbal. This acts as a transition from the groove to lead the melody in. Wood's part is notated below in Figure 4.19.



Figure 4.19: *Vardavar* – Section four – Wood’s part - Embellishment example two (3:27-3:28)

In example three, Wood embellishes the groove slightly, whilst still keeping the kick accents with the groupings (5, 5, 3, 5, 5, 4, 5) and back beat on 2 and 4. He adds an ostinato on the stack cymbal to add rhythmic forward momentum. He also adds open hi-hat hits on the last 16th of the last three groupings (5/16, 4/16, 5/16) to give the groove more forward momentum. Extra ghost notes are added for texture; these are orchestrated on the snare drum. Example three is notated below in Figure 4.20.

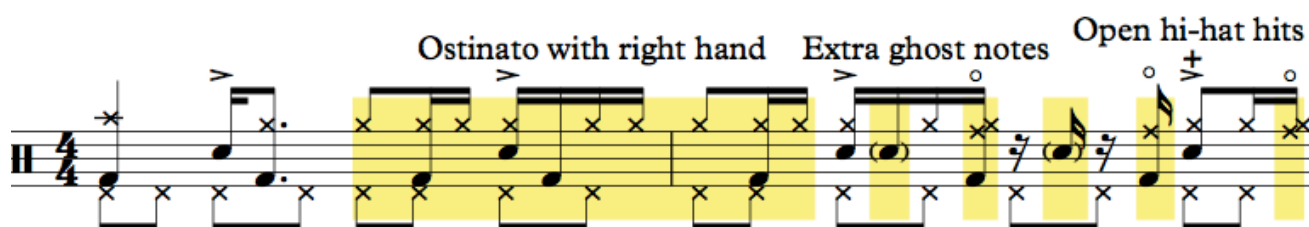


Figure 4.20: *Vardavar* – Section four – Wood’s part - Embellishment example three (3:28-3:31)

Finally, the last part of this section finishes with another superimposition, this time two bars of 5/4 time are superimposed over four ‘original tempo’ bars of 4/4 time. Figure 4.21 and Figure 4.22 display the superimposition.

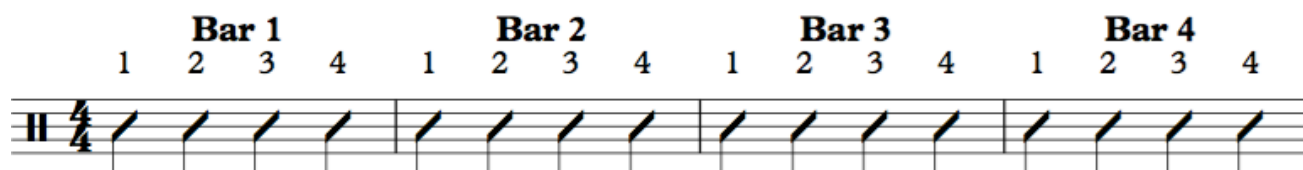


Figure 4.21: *Vardavar* – Section four – Original - Four bars of 4/4 time.

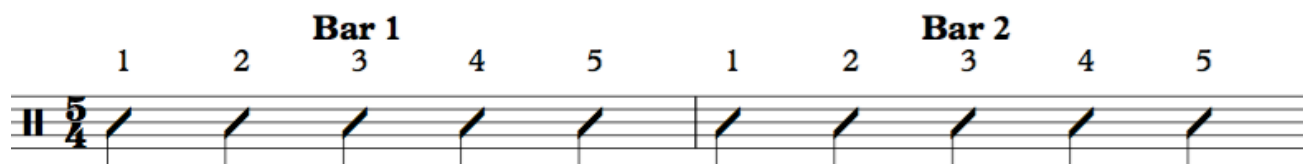


Figure 4.22: *Vardavar* – Section four – Superimposition – two bars of 5/4 time (In the time of four bars of 4/4 time).

The bass line is repeated. Wood is playing 10 beats in the time of 16 original beats. Figure 4.23 is a diagram displaying 10 beats over 16 beats.

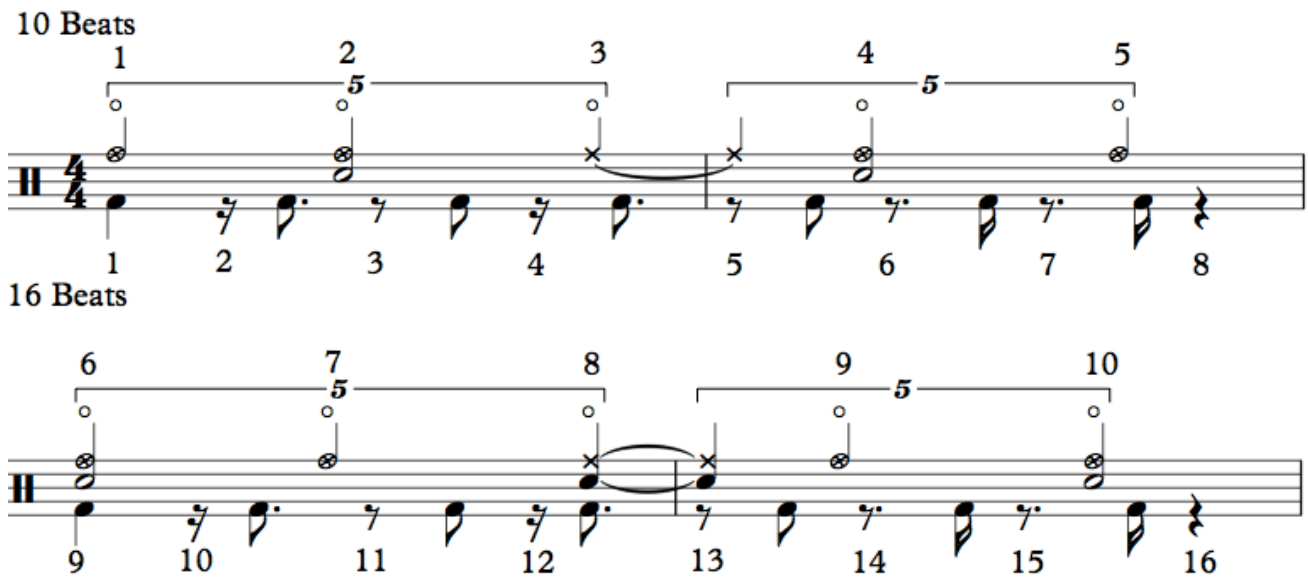


Figure 4.23: *Vardavar* – Section four – Superimposition diagram – 10 beats in the time of 16 beats (4:09)

Wood's part is orchestrated as follows; Wood is playing minim quintuplets on the open hi-hats, bass rhythm on the kick drum, and every second minim quintuplet on the snare drum (back beat). He is playing long notes on the hi-hats (open) to match the ensemble's long notes. The dynamic is forte, matching the ensemble. Section four is a good example of Wood's part based orchestration and hybrid approach to Hamasyan's music. This is the end of section four.

Chapter four: Summary of findings

This dissertation analysed Nate Wood's drumming on two original compositions, *The Court Jester and Vardavar* by Tigran Hamasyan and focused on the way in which Wood orchestrated these compositions on the drum set. The findings from analysing both compositions were quite similar, aside from a few small differences. The findings are presented into the sub-categories; subdivisions, accents, orchestration, compositional elements and dynamics.

Subdivisions

The subdivisions throughout *The Court Jester and Vardavar* were predominantly 16th notes. Wood in most cases outlined these subdivisions by playing ostinatos, playing around parts of the melody/bass parts or filling his part with ghost notes. In rare cases, Wood changed the subdivision to create rhythmic interest or if a superimposition is present, in which case Wood played the subdivision of the superimposition to imply a new metre.

Accents

In both compositions, Wood predominantly used accents to strengthen and enhance the melody and/or bass parts. Wood used accents to set up ensemble hits, similar to the big band drumming tradition. Wood also added accents to create rhythmic interest and to aid in developing his parts. In *Vardavar*, Wood played accents on the kick or snare to outline the start of a new grouping.

Orchestration

Wood altered his drum set orchestration in a few ways to help shape and develop both *The Court Jester and Vardavar*. Wood used changes in orchestration to transition between sections or to develop his part i.e. hi-hats, to open hi-hats, to ride cymbal, to ride bell etc. Wood often used one or two limbs to play ostinatos (outline the subdivision), which freed up the other limbs to emphasize fragments of the melody, strengthen bass parts and/or embellish his part rhythmically. Wood employed Hamasyan's concept of low and high orchestration in sections to follow the contour of the other ensemble parts and to differentiate between the kick and the snare. In some rare cases, Wood played the kick drum and snare together, this is often when a bass part aligns with an ostinato.

Dynamics

In most cases Wood's dynamic level would follow that of the ensemble. Wood discussed his thoughts on matching the dynamics of the ensemble in an interview with Ryan Daunt.

RD: Some of Tigran's phrases have dynamic shaping's, so in those scenarios do you try to catch those? NW: Oh yeah, it's all totally deliberate".⁶⁰

In rare cases, (such as section three of *The Court Jester*), Wood added small dynamic shapes to create interest when other members of the ensemble were not playing. Wood also used ghost notes on the snare and cymbals to add texture, contrast of dynamic and to outline the subdivisions.

Compositional Elements

Wood utilized many compositional elements throughout *The Court Jester and Vardavar*. Through repeating parts then embellishing them, Wood achieved compositional development throughout whilst still keeping the essence of the original part. If sections repeated, Wood mostly repeated his part with slight variations to add interest whilst still maintaining the essence of the section. Through the use of rhythmic variation, Wood created rhythmic interest within his parts. Wood used fills to act as transitions between section to create fluid and smooth connective tissue between *The Court Jester and Vardavar*. Wood often played a fill or changed his orchestration at the end of eight bar phrases to signpost a new phrase taking place.

⁶⁰ Wood, "Nate Wood Interview with Ryan Daunt."

Chapter five: Conclusion

Nate Wood's orchestration on the drum kit emanates from his influences, Hamasyan's compositional devices and Wood's improvisational ability. Tony Williams, Keith Carlock, Jack DeJohnette, Deantoni Parks, John 'Jabo' Starks, Zach Danziger and Tigran Hamasyan have all played a part in shaping Wood's neoteric drum set orchestration and expression. These influences, in combination with Hamasyan's innovative compositional devices and Wood's creativity and improvisational ability result in deep and inspiring music. In this study, key orchestration devices have been identified in Wood's drumming. Through analysis of Wood's drumming on two compositions by Tigran Hamasyan, analysis showed the underlying compositional framework for Hamasyan's music is part based. It is present through repetition and development in Wood's parts on *The Court Jester* and *Vardavar* that Wood's drumming frameworks were crafted and improvised within.

Wood's used accents to emphasize melodies, accentuate bass lines, set up ensemble hits and used ghost notes for texture. Wood used ostinatos, filling between limbs, and outlining the subdivisions in his parts to create a solid foundation of time and subdivision for the ensemble to play over. Wood also varied subdivisions on rare occasions to provide rhythmic interest.

In terms of orchestration, Wood's use of low and high orchestration, change of orchestration to create transitions and orchestrating his parts thoroughly to align, play off or set up other ensemble parts creates well constructed drum parts that complement Hamasyan's compositions.

Wood often followed the dynamics of the ensemble to create a blend of the ensemble moving together and having greater impact. Wood used small dynamic variations to create interest.

In terms of compositional elements, Wood used rhythmic embellishment, repetition, rhythmic variation, fills, signposting and development in his parts to help shape the music and create fluid transitions and interesting development throughout *The Court Jester* and *Vardavar*.

This investigation has uncovered a number of interesting devices of orchestration used by Nate Wood in Tigran Hamasyan's music, but it has far from exhausted the research possibilities in the field. Different avenues of inquiry are available for further study by other researchers, and these may include:

- a study of how Wood's orchestration devices have developed by examining a selection of pieces spanning beyond the music of Tigran Hamasyan;

- an investigation into the orchestration devices borrowed by Wood from his influences;
- a direct comparison piece contrasting Wood's orchestration of the drum set to another contemporary drummer, such as Arthur Hnatek or Mark Guiliana;
- a holistic analysis of a particular album, including orchestration and compositional aspects.

Through transcribing Nate Wood's neoteric drum set orchestration in relation to the music of Tigran Hamasyan, it is envisaged that the findings from this study will contribute to knowledge on contemporary jazz drumming and specifically Nate Wood's drumming concepts. The findings will also be a useful resource to contemporary jazz drummers and help individuals use Nate Wood's approach as inspiration to form their own unique approach to contemporary drum set orchestration.

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Appendix A - Musical Key

For added clarity and to make the analysis section easier to decipher in this thesis, some definitions, keys and disclaimers are explained below.

Drum Set Notation Key

All of the drum transcriptions in this paper use drum set notation. Drum set notation can often be confusing, as there are many different methods of notating drums. This paper will use the notation from the drum set notation key (figure 5.1) displayed below. Stick shot and low/high tapping on the floor are specifically defined, as they are not widely used in drum notation.

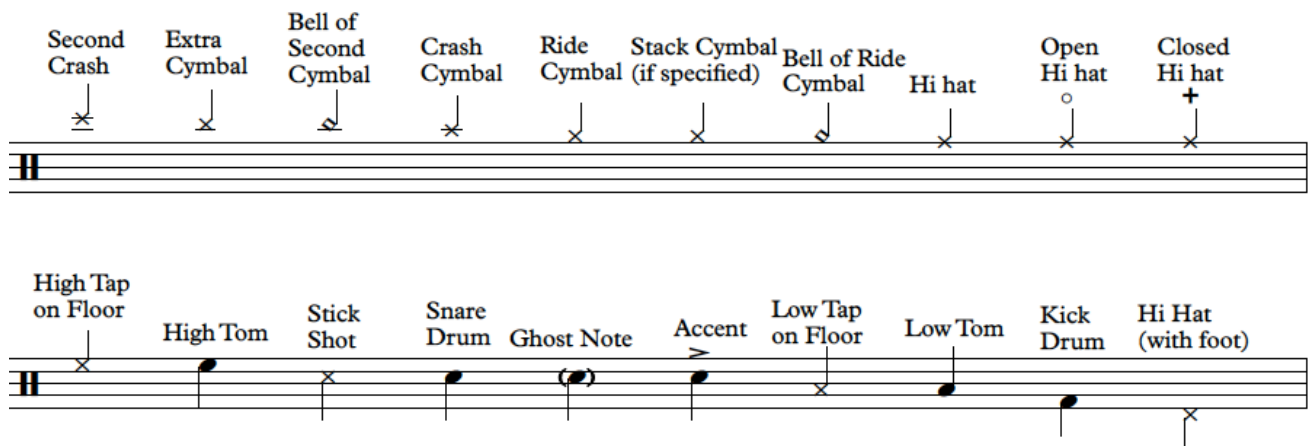


Figure 5.1 Drum Set Notation Key

Stick Shot – This sound is obtained when one presses one drumstick tip against the head at approximately 30 degrees, while striking that stick at the shoulder with the other stick.⁶¹

Low/High Tap on the Floor – This sound is produced by tapping on the floor, perhaps in different places or with different pitched sticks to produce a low and high sound.

Abbreviations for Analysis Table

Some of the figures in chapter three are dense with labels and would be harder to view if each individual orchestrational device were written out in full. To alleviate this, below is a table stating each technique and its

⁶¹ Steve Fidyk, "Jazz Drummer's Workshop: The Stick Shot," in *Jazz Drummer's Workshop* (Modern drummer.com: Modern Drummer, 2013).

corresponding abbreviation (figure 5.2). In most transcriptions the first occasion of an orchestrated device is written in full, if that device is used again in the same figure then it is abbreviated. E.g. Kick aligning with the bass part becomes ‘K’.

Orchestration Device	Symbol	Orchestration Device	Symbol
Open Hi-hat	OH	Referencing the Melody	R
Backbeat	B	Ghost note off Melody	G
Crash Cymbal	Cr.	Accent with Melody	A
Rhythmic Embellishment	RE	Low Melody	L
Extra Kick	E	High Melody	H
Melodic Emphasis	M	Snare Ostinato	SO
Further Embellish	F	Hi-hat Ostinato	HHO
Kick Aligning with Bass/Piano parts	K	Crash Accenting Melody	CM
Melodic Changes	MC	Bell/Crash	B/C
Set up Accents	S		

Figure 5.2: Analysis Abbreviations Table

Musical Counting System

Chapter three has orchestration devices used by Wood at multiple times through the music. In order to pinpoint certain parts of any bar, a counting system will be used to assist in identifying certain parts of the beat. The subdivision for all of the musical examples in chapter three will be 16th notes and a counting system will be used to clearly identify partials of the beats and bars. Some exemptions to this structure do occur and will be fully explained in chapter three. Figure 5.3 below, is a diagram explaining the 16th note counting system.



Figure 5.3: Counting System for 16th Notes

Kick Drum Disclaimer

Throughout *The Court Jester and Vardavar*, Wood’s kick drum always has a strong dynamic. Although each note is not exactly the same volume, there are no distinctly low volume or ghosted strokes in either of these

pieces. For the duration of this thesis, assume every kick drum is accented, even if there is no accent symbol present. This will save clutter and make the transcriptions easier to interpret.

Appendix B - *The Court Jester* Nate Wood's Drum Part

Intro/Rubato

Transcribed by Ryan Daunt

8

Section one

Section two

Section three
(Tapping on the floor)



Section four



Section five

7



Section six

Section six consists of eight staves of music. The notation is complex, featuring many beamed notes, slurs, and various articulation marks such as accents (>) and breath marks (v). The music is written on a single-line staff with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature (C). The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature change to one flat. The notation includes many beamed eighth and sixteenth notes, often with slurs. There are also many 'x' marks above the notes, possibly indicating fingerings or specific articulations. The music ends with a final note marked with a breath mark (v).

Section seven

Section seven consists of three staves of music. The notation is simpler than Section six, featuring fewer beamed notes and slurs. It includes various articulation marks such as accents (>) and breath marks (v). The music is written on a single-line staff with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature (C). The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature change to one flat. The notation includes many beamed eighth and sixteenth notes, often with slurs. There are also many 'x' marks above the notes, possibly indicating fingerings or specific articulations. The music ends with a final note marked with a breath mark (v).

The musical score is written for a drum set, using a standard notation system with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The score consists of eight staves of notation, each representing a different drum or cymbal part. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, rests, and dynamic markings.

The score is divided into sections by tempo changes and an 'Outro' section. The tempo changes are marked as follows:

- 109**: A tempo change to 109 beats per minute, indicated by a double bar line and the number 109.
- 135**: A tempo change to 135 beats per minute, indicated by a double bar line and the number 135.
- A Tempo**: A tempo change to the original tempo, indicated by the text 'A Tempo'.
- rit.**: A tempo change to a slower tempo, indicated by the text 'rit.'.

The 'Outro' section is marked at the end of the score, indicated by the text 'Outro'.

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Appendix C - Nate Wood Interview with Ryan Daunt

Ryan Daunt: What series of events led you to playing with Tigran?

Nate Wood: Tigran moved to California when he was 17 or 18 so that would have been 2005, and he made his first record with Ben Wendel, François Moutin and Ari Hoenig. I'm not sure how he met Ben but I think he knew about Kneebody and liked his playing and he wanted to hire Ben. I remember meeting Ari and I think that's when I met Ari and François all at like a party after they had recorded Tigran's album, Tigran was 17. I met Tigran around that time and he couldn't drive I think he still can't drive so I drove him around from time to time and we played a bunch of gigs together actually, he would hire me and this bass player Harish Raghavan who plays in Ambrose Akinmusire's band now and also lives in New York, but both of Harish, Tigran and I all lived in Los Angeles at this time. So Tigran, Harish and I would play trio gigs all the time, we'd play jazz stuff. I don't think we even played any of Tigran's music I think we just played standards, and I think the second record was with François and his brother, and that was recorded in France and that was kinda the last 'jazz' record Tigran made and he didn't really want to make a jazz record I remember talking to him he was like "they want me [Tigran Hamasyan] to make this record with François and those guys but I'm kind of hearing this other thing" and so he made that second trio record and it was really cool and everything but he was heading towards writing Meshuggah stuff and all that stuff, so you know, he put the red hail band together, just of the people he thought would be best out of LA musicians, which was Ben [Wendel] Sam [Minaie], Areni Agbabian. That was the first time I had really heard Tigran's music but it was really ambitious and used to make demos of all the songs on his keyboard, on his Roland keyboard, and they would be fully fledged demos, so a lot of the songs from Red Hail were complete demos that he had demoed on his synth, including drum parts.

RD: Wow yeah.

NW: So the second track, I think is in 5 (claps), and the drum part is pretty specific, in terms of here you go to the cymbals and you play 3 over 5 and then here you bring in with the back beat and at the end of the song you play this 4 over 5 part, and he had them written out, but not by chart, I had learned them all by ear along to his demos, and we did one rehearsal, one gig and then we recorded that whole Red Hail album in 3 days,

most of it was in 2 days so it was really fast, very hard music and we kind of just went in and did it really fast, and I still love how that record came out.

RD: Yeah that records great, I have listened to that.

NW: Yeah, so that's how I came about to be playing with Tigran, just being in L.A. and just playing with him, you know, because he liked Kneebody and he hired Ben [Wendel], and he wanted to do something that was kind of crossover, and I guess that's maybe how I'm known as like I can play jazz, I can play rock and like I'm a good drummer to hire for multiple genres.

RD: Yeah cool.

NW: Yeah so that's how that happened, and then I think Tigran was very specific about what he wanted but then I think what he started to want, was what I started to do naturally, so it's like, when he would write stuff with me in mind or my bass drum sound or you know whatever.

RD: Yeah

NW: So Shadow Theater was a lot more rehearsal.

RD: Yeah, that was one of my questions "What was the rehearsal process for the Shadow Theater project?"

NW: Yeah that was a lot more rehearsals, he [Tigran Hamasyan] is very nit picky about very specific ways of feeling time, I don't remember the names of any of the songs but I know there was a song that's in 5 but he didn't want it to feel like 5/8 he wanted it to feel like either 5/4 or 5/16, but I couldn't imply 5/8 I can't remember what song it is, but to me that was like a very small difference, but to him it was a really huge difference because he really hears odd time in a very specific way, and a lot of his requests are like that. He would say "No, I'm really not hearing this, I'm hearing this, I really want it to feel like this, but not that in between thing". So that record was a lot of rehearsal of that very thing, getting part way through a song and him stopping and being like "No don't play an Eb there" or whatever but you know, just being very specific. Then I think we did a couple of gigs and then we went to the south of France to record the record and the record took maybe a week, it took kind of a long time, and it was just doing a lot of takes, a lot of over dubs and was just a lot more work than Red Hail. I didn't engineer it, mix it or master it, so I could just play drums on it, which was nice. So yeah that was the process,

RD: For the tunes on Shadow Theater did Tigran have specific drum parts?

NW: Yeah kind of, he did, although as I said before sometimes he would be like “I’m hearing a back beat here” and then I [Nate Wood] can do whatever else.

RD: Like frameworks?

NW: Yeah, I think a good example of that is like listening to his newest record Mockroot.

RD: Yeah, I have checked that out.

NW: I only play on one song and that is a Shadow Theater song that didn’t get put on Shadow Theater, and the rest of it is Arthur Hnatek, who’s a great drummer, but there is just less improvising, more playing parts that Tigran wants him to play, and he is improvising less, where as Tigran would give me a part to play and I would just improvise a lot, because that’s just the way I play, so a lot of the stuff you hear on Shadow Theater is Tigran’s idea with me embellishing, you know. But as I said he has very specific things he wants.

RD: Yeah because I have done a bit of transcribing and I think some of those parts you have the essence of a groove in there and you kind of do your own thing around it.

NW: mhm

RD: So Tigran gave you that freedom but almost within little limitations?

NW: mhm exactly! We did an EP I’m not sure if it came out here but there’s a song...

RD: Is it Vardavar?

NW: Yeah Vardavar! So theres the version of me playing Vardavar, but that ones.... Like here is a detail, I’m just gonna play.

RD: Yeah that’d be great.

NW: We originally did a version of that song for his solo piano record, and it was using.

RD: I might just chuck my earplugs in.

NW: That’s fine. It was using his electronic track that he programmed, I wasn’t playing drums on the original version it was his programmed part, so it was him on a synthesizer you know. But one detail that I didn’t catch, like here is an example of how detailed Tigran is, I think it starts with (plays drums). And there somewhere in the middle the hi-hat changes from (demonstrates rhythm) to this (demonstrates rhythm). The double is on the second part. So its just a really small thing but he really wanted it to be (demonstrates rhythm), as appose to (demonstrates rhythm), very small difference but it’s one that I didn’t catch when I was

mixing it, and I went to record it and he was like “Hey, you know that’s a double that time right?’ So that’s an example of a Tigran detail.

RD: This is great, you have already answered some of the other questions I had, so apologies if I repeat myself. What’s your approach to orchestrating the melodies of phrases of Tigran’s music on the drums? I notice a lot of the time if you play a riff based thing and the melody goes low to high, do you orchestrate it that way?

NW: Yeah, a part of that is what he wants, one of the things, this is funny this is one of the things people are never supposed to say in interviews but one of the things that he doesn’t like that I do a lot, is I like to hit the kick and the snare together, I like that weird sound of like low and high together, like a block of sound and he really hears it orchestrationally like low high, and he wants to hear a differentiation between the two, so he would tell me sometimes... you know the beat would be (sings a beat that has low and high bits), that’s Vardavar, so he is hearing (sings) “Low, High, Low, Low, High, Low, High” he is either writing the melody to the drum part in his head or vice versa, but yeah a lot of the orchestration is intentional its like low to high, and I think a lot of the improvisation I did around the beats that he had me play were based on his idea on orchestration and his music is so composed, that I try to think low to high in my orchestration as well.

RD: Great! Some of Tigran’s phrases have dynamic shaping’s, like one example is in “The Court Jester” (sings a section).

NW: Right.

RD: So in those elements do you try to catch those?

NW: Oh yeah, it’s all totally deliberate.

RD: So do you follow what he is doing a lot of the time?

NW: Yeah, or he will just tell us, or we will be playing the song and he will say “You know what, really want this to crescendo” and sometimes he will change his mind but a lot of the rehearsing with Tigran was that, he wants to try something he is thinking and then he would be like “ahh it doesn’t sound good” and do that, but he wants to try a bunch of different things until he finds the elements that he likes. So he is very specific.

RD: Yeah right, so I have read in some interview that you have mentioned Tony Williams and Jack DeJohnette a lot..

NW: (agrees)

RD: So how much do you think they influence what you play when you do some of those linear patters or things like that? Like did you ever transcribe stuff and then it comes out?

NW: I never transcribed ever I'm not a very good reader and I don't work out of books. All the stuff I did was listening and playing along, all the drummers I like have a thread, who have an idea that goes for a certain amount of time, that's melodic and sounds like a composition, my playing is not necessarily jazz, it's modern, but I like the idea of it having the same thread that the jazz guys had, like Jack [DeJohnette] and Tony [Williams] had when they played jazz. I want to portray the same sense of melody and theme that those guys are [Jack DeJohnette and Tony Williams] in my own way. Playing in this more modern less swing kind of way.

RD: What knowledge prior to playing with Tigran did you have on Armenian folk music?

NW: None, and I would still say I don't really have that much, I've just learned from Tigran some things, but it's been cool because we got to travel a lot together, and we played this festival in Morocco and we got to play with these Moroccan musicians, percussionists, they have very specific beats that they play and a very different way of hearing one and all these things like call and response and some of them have a lot in common with Armenian folk music, so Tigran kind of felt right at home, I mean there are differences, but there is more in common with that than American folk music, for instance, because they are closer geographically, so that was interesting to me, some commonalities between just geographical folk music, from hundreds and hundreds of years ago, so I learned whatever I learned from Tigran with that in terms of Armenian folk music.

RD: Awesome, Tigran mention in an interview that you two had worked on a lot of that odd time playing, can you talk a bit about that?

NW: Honestly, I would say that it all comes from Tigran, he knows how to do all that stuff really well, and I think it came from his interest in Meshuggah and all that stuff but also, his work with Ari Hoenig, Ari really understands the depth of odd times and how to permutate them all and stuff like that so Tigran kind of learned all that stuff maybe from Ari I'm not sure, but he [Tigran] has the same kind of knowledge of those things that Ari does, if not deeper. So we would be on a gig playing that tune Shoghar Jon. (Demonstates) and then Tigran would just play a phrase in 5, over 6, and I was like oh I'm gonna play 5 now, that's really easy, he's [Tigran's] so good at it that in the middle of all this chaos going on his computing power is so high that he

would be like 5, and I would be like oh this is so easy. (Demonstrates). So that's going from 5 to 6 but the length stay the same. Superimposing one over the other, and he would do that anywhere, he could do 4-5-6-7-8-9 he hears it all in the same time, he could just drop in and out of them, and so it wasn't so much us working on them together, it was just him playing it and me following it because I'm always listening, and he would make it really clear because he is playing like a drummer, and I'm just like "Oh that groove" I can just go to that, that's fine. So it really wasn't us working it out together it was just him being really good at it.

RD: I had some questions about "The Court Jester"

NW: Sure

RD: (Plays excerpt) So how do you count this section?

NW: I just hear it all in 6 (counts 1,2,3,4,5,6)

RD: Cool, yep ok (song goes to the next section) and then this is still in 3?

NW: Yeah, 3 I guess counts (1,2,3)

RD: I guess it's easier to hear it as a big 6?

NW: Yeah

RD: Then this part? You still hear it in the big 6

NW: Yeah (counts 1,2,3,4,5,6)

RD: Then you go to dotted's [quarter notes] here?

NW: Yep (counts 1,2,3,4,5,6)

RD: (counts 1,2,3,4,5,6)

NW: Yep

RD: And then this bit is a sample pad or something?

NW: That's me playing on the floor, he [Tigran] heard me practicing on the floor and was like "I'm gonna use that".

RD: Awesome, that's so cool, (next section) so then this bit?

NW: (counts 1,2,3,4,5,6)

RD: Is it 6 the whole way through?

NW: All of his songs are one time signature they never change

RD: Really?

NW: All of them. (counts 1,2,3,4,5,6) I think that's where it is, I never knew where 1 was on this section, but I think that's right. (counts 1,2,3,4,5,6) this is cool music (laughs), I haven't heard this in a while. Should go to a backbeat right? Yeah I think it goes to a back beat eventually. (counts 1,2,3,4,5,6) (back beat comes in), 6 the whole time, all of his songs never changes, so if a song is in 9 its 9 the whole way. (song slows down) well that's just a slow down.

RD: That has no relation to the previous tempo?

NW: Completely unrelated, it's the Wayne Krantz thing, I don't know if you know about that, but when you're playing with Wayne [Krantz] and he goes up or down [in tempo] you just speed up or slow down almost like a jump cut it has no relation.

RD: Yeah right

NW: So I think he [Tigran] heard me playing with Wayne and was like that's really cool and kinda wanted to do that.

RD: So all the tunes on the album, they are all the same?

NW: They are all the same.

RD: Because there is that tune, *Part 2. The universe* which goes (sings) I can play it for you if you want. I think its in 4/4 but groupings of 3, 3, 3, 2.

NW: Yeah that's right.

RD: I have it on my itunes somewhere but it's not synced. (Plays song)

NW: Yeah it's in 4, (counts 1, 2, 3, 4) Yeah!

RD: That's awesome because when you play a lot of these things they sound different, like that one sounds like it's in 11 (3, 3, 3, 2) (sings).

NW: Yeah

RD: It sounds like its that

NW: I never think of it in that way

RD: Yeah and at the end you play the back beat with it

NW: Yeah

RD: Cool because it sounds like it starts off in an odd time and you play 4/4 over the odd time but it's actually just in 4

NW: 4/4 yeah

RD: Another one, A Crane Came from Van? It's in 19/16 I believe.

NW: Can I hear it?

RD: I think it starts in 6?

NW: Oh this one! Right this is on the EP, this is off the EP [No1} I was talking about, It's me playing drums and bass. Not at the same time though.

RD: This one [live version] has got Sam [Minaie] on it I'm pretty sure

NW: Yeah it has, but I mean the Ep version is me playing

RD: Ah cool

NW: (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6) yeah I always try and think as big as possible, that's the way that I think

RD: Yeah, when it gets to the solo section

NW: Oh yeah that's really hard!

RD: It's in 19/[16] right?

NW: Yeah I think it's in 19/[16]

RD: (Claps)

NW: Yeah that's right

RD: [Gets towards the end of the song] That groove you do on the [ride] bell, those ride grooves , how did you work on that?

NW: I don't know, just listen to people who do it and try to imitate. (demonstrates). I haven't played that in a while, but what I do is just keep the bass line in my head and improvise around that. In terms of linearly.

RD: I guess you lower your sticks heights for those when you get really busy?

NW: Well, you have earplugs in right?

RD: Yeah

NW: (demonstrates very loud). Those are bigger stick heights, so I can do it at any volume, it's' just using bounce and improvising.

RD: And everything is syncing up

NW: Yeah, I mean that language comes from, again, Wayne Krantz to me that's all. Zach Danziger and Keith Carlock are kind of the genesis of that, and out of Dennis Chambers, Billy Cobham. So I would say

Philly [Jo Jones], Dennis Chambers, Zach [Danziger] and Keith [Carlock] and then Mark [Guiliana] and I are the next guys, and then whoever else. But it comes from listening to those guys. Listen to those Wayne Krantz records with Zach [Danziger] and Keith Carlock.

RD: I'm sure I can find them but do you know the names of them?

NW: Yeah, go in order, I would say listen to Two Drink Minimum first [Wayne Krantz] which is the last record that Zach [Danziger] did. That was when Zach [Danziger] was 22 or 23 and it's a little different to how I play now, there isn't much kick and snare lining up with each other it's more orchestrational, of like a Vinnie [Colaiuta] school, but it's still very linear, open, and improvisational. Then check out the records with Keith [Carlock]. Check out Greenwich Mean and You're Basic Live. And that's kind of the beginning for me of this more modern sound or playing really in the 16th note grid.

RD: Wicked, thanks so much man!

NW: Totally!