

## Jazz Behind Bars Notes on the Tunes

Contributed by Larry Lawless  
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### Happy Thoughts - David Bugher

A light samba by the youngster of the group. David put this tune together in about a week after I contacted him to join our group. Starts with a unison flashy mallet lick, contrasted by offsetting triplet hits in the bass and drums, then a short drum intro by Bart on the set using brushes takes us into the catchy melody by Doug, with Larry doing the counterpoint. At the end, we pull out the latin toys, and overdub a samba school from the auditorium seats!

### Sharptooth - Rich MacDonald

This funky tune in 3/4 has a jagged melody, reminiscent of some sea creature's intimidating fangs, hence the name. After the bass, vibe intro, with Rich laying down his groove, the marimba and xylophone double a very syncopated riff. The introduction of the melody doubled in bells and crotales makes for an interesting texture that leads into a unison hit in all parts that sets up the solo section. David takes a ride on vibes, followed by a masterful drum solo by Rich over the chord changes, playing with the feel and time signature into a flurry of notes bringing back the unison hit.

### Tone Down - Bart Elliott

Bart based this tune on the changes to the Miles Davis standard, "Tune Up", but with the chromaticism inverted and in 3/4 instead of 4/4. David gives us the melody in very free style, accompanied by a marimba chorale. The form is a standard head tune, with open-ended solos by David and Doug. Listen for Doug turning the beat into a half time 2 in his marimba solo, and Rich laying down the walking bass lines.

### The Doctor and the Deacon - Larry Lawless

This was originally composed as a jazz duet for vibes and marimba, and could be performed that way. The addition of bass, drums, and hand percussion gives it more of a combo feel. The solo section is designed to trade 8's, then 4's, then 2's.

### The Tortoise and the Hare - Rich MacDonald

The use of only non-pitched percussion instruments (with the exception of "Call to the Colors" on the xylophone to start the race) make the Tortoise and the Hare unique on the album. The bass drum provides the plodding 8th note ostinato of the tortoise, while everything else hops around in 7/8. In the middle section, parts enter randomly, crescendo and decrescendo to give a rich, weaving texture.

### Insomnia - David Bugher

David wrote the basic tune when he was in 8th grade, but thoroughly fleshed it out into a full blown ensemble for the recording. Mostly a 4/4 medium samba, there is a wicked Afro-cuban section in 6/16 that sets up the solos. Bart's "moose call" on the conga adds a masterful touch.

### Attack of the 10 Octave Marimba - Larry Lawless

The creepy sound effects in the beginning were performed live by grabbing anything we could find to make an unusual sound, and running around the auditorium with the overhead mics lowered. Lion's roar, bowed crotales, ocean drum, a mixing bowl half filled with water, and Doug sloshing around Bart's gallon water drinking jug give the impression of a creature arising out of the swampy woods. The idea was from an exchange on Bart's DrummerCafe where a young student insisted his teacher had a 10 octave marimba, leading to Bart doing a Photoshop of a giant marimba coming down the streets, creating a panic. The overall structure is in 10 measure phrases in 7/4, but with break strain in 5/4.

### Hevy Revy - Bart Elliott

Hevy Revy is an exercise in groove, with Bart's evolving drum patterns over the ostinato bass line in alternating measures of 5/4 and 9/8. Unusual sounds include bowed gong, pitched javanese gongs, and a frame drum.

### Poupres minus Rouges - Doug Walter

Although this piece is just a simple Bb Blues progression, the way the parts are laid out is anything but simple. Each mallet instrument outlines the chords in contrasting patterns of groups of 3's, 4's and 5's, making this a very challenging work. In the middle, Rich again puts on his walking bass shoes, as Doug gets down and dirty. The title is French for "purples minus reds", which equals "blues".

## Homonyme Fils - Doug Walter

An opening canonic section in the style of Renaissance counterpoint, but with definite Bartok influences leads to a gorgeous melody and accelerates to a "happy little samba". Doug opens up on the solos and displays his mastery of the mallets as well as his exquisite taste.