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An Application of the Musical Style of Jazz Saxophone to the Double Bass

By Gareth Hill

A dissertation submitted in partial
fulfilment of requirements for the degree of

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In Jazz Performance

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Declaration

The contents of this dissertation are the result of my original work, except where stated and it has not been submitted, fully or in part, for any other course at this or any other institution.

Gareth Hill, 2008

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gareth Hill', written over the printed name.

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Abstract

The aim of this dissertation is to explore improvising on the double bass through an investigation of the improvised solos of prominent jazz saxophonists. This involves a melodically focused analysis of solos of Charlie Parker, Dexter Gordon, Sonny Rollins, Joe Henderson, Oliver Nelson and Eric Dolphy. My melodic analysis is in aid of furthering my melodic concept on the double bass and consists largely of analysis in three areas: intervallic content, phrasing and melodic devices. It is through this process that I hope to develop techniques for the double bass and further my own concept for improvising. The disparity between saxophone and the double bass means that there is much to be gained from transferring ideas from each instrument. There are differences in dexterity, phrasing abilities and acoustics that have allowed the saxophone to develop an improvising style entirely different to that of many double bassists. While saxophonists I enjoy, solo in an exciting and complex way, my soloing on the double bass is generally slower, less melodic and lacking in intensity and concept. I believe that this study can give great insights into my playing as well as creating a model which may be used by others to develop their own improvising on the double bass.

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