A Comprehensive Examination Of The Saxophone Chamber Music Of John Fitz Rogers

Gabriel Michael Anthony Fadale
University of South Carolina

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A COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION OF THE SAXOPHONE CHAMBER MUSIC OF JOHN FITZ ROGERS

BY

GABRIEL MICHAEL ANTHONY FADALE

BACHELOR OF MUSIC
ITHACA COLLEGE, 2009

MASTER OF MUSIC
THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY, 2011

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts in
Music Performance
School of Music
University of South Carolina

2016

Accepted by:

Clifford Leaman, Major Professor
Chairman, Examining Committee

Reginald Bain, Committee Member

Joseph Eller, Committee Member

Rebecca Nagel, Committee Member

Lacey Ford, Senior Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies
DEDICATION

To my parents and family, whose patience, love, guidance, and support has never wavered, even in the most trying of times.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my parents, Carl and Mary Ann, for your constant love, support, guidance, and patience with me over the years and for believing in me when I had trouble believing in myself. To my family, for your encouragement and pep talks while undertaking this endeavor. To my committee members: Dr. Leaman, Dr. Bain, Dr. Nagel, and Prof. Eller, for your help, patience, and advice. To my teachers past and present: Dr. Steven Mauk, for your never-ending mentorship and friendship; Dr. David Stambler, for instilling in me a passion to find my voice; and Dr. Clifford Leaman, for your dedication to me in completing this degree and pushing me to constantly be better. To all of my friends who have encouraged me throughout this process, especially to: Matt, Bill, Traci, Margee, Luke, and Nick—your support throughout this project was greatly appreciated, more than words can express. To my friends and colleagues at Palm Beach Atlantic University, and especially to Tim Thompson, for your guidance and help in creating musical examples, reading and re-reading my chapters, and for your support and understanding as I juggled completing this document with teaching. And finally, to John Fitz Rogers, for your encouragement and support of this project, and for the beautiful music that you have created for the saxophone world. To all of you, my sincerest, most heart-felt thank you!
ABSTRACT

The body of classical saxophone chamber repertoire is an ever-evolving collection of music. Presently, many contemporary composers endeavor to write for the saxophone, some more successfully than others. Modern musical language can be overly obtuse and convoluted with *avant-garde* techniques and sounds that, when performed, may cause an emotional and intellectual disconnect between the performer and the audience. When new pieces are composed that are of high quality and use language that is accessible to performers and audiences alike, it is important for saxophonists to be aware of these compositions and the composers creating them. This document presents the music of composer John Fitz Rogers and details the four chamber pieces he has composed for saxophone to date. These pieces simultaneously challenge performers, please audience members, and showcase Rogers’ unique compositional voice. Upon the submission and dissemination of this document, the author expects that more performers will aspire to perform these challenging works and further commission Rogers to continue to write for the saxophone.
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CHAPTER ONE

HISTORICAL REPERTOIRE DEVELOPMENT

Patented in the mid-1840s, the saxophone initially struggled to find its voice in serious solo, concert, and chamber repertoire. The symphonic traditions established by Mozart, Brahms, Beethoven and the canon of similar composers had firmly established the instrumentation of the symphony orchestra by the time of the saxophone’s general acceptance as a legitimate concert instrument. Upon the introduction of the saxophone to the woodwind family, composers did not know quite how to treat this unique instrument, especially as a solo voice.

As serious, high quality pieces for the saxophone are composed, published, and performed, the canon of concert works continues to expand and evolve. Today, as more and more composers write for the instrument, the newly composed pieces push modern performers and the capabilities of the instrument to their musical and technical boundaries. The creation of new music—especially music composed using complex, modern tonal, rhythmic, and technical devices—presents certain risks of not being understood or unjustly judged as not being of good quality. History will determine which of the plethora of new pieces will become established in the canon of mainstream saxophone literature.

This paper will present a detailed overview of the saxophone concert chamber music written to date by John Fitz Rogers. The saxophone pieces that Rogers has
composed—all within the last fifteen years—are, for reasons that will become apparent, important contributions to the modern saxophone performer’s library.

The development of the saxophone’s initial body of repertoire was due to several important influences. Many of the earliest pieces composed for the instrument were a result of the efforts of its creator, Adolphe Sax. Knowing that acceptance of the saxophone would only occur with the performance of quality music, Sax commissioned numerous friends and acquaintances to write short pieces that he published himself in an attempt to develop a meaningful repertoire for his newest invention.

Further important contributions to the repertoire are attributed to the American amateur saxophonist Elise Boyer Hall, a wealthy Bostonian who commissioned new works from numerous European composers. In 1900, Hall founded the Boston Orchestral Club as a “performing outlet for amateur musicians.”¹ Through the Boston Orchestral Club, she developed a friendship with the French-born oboist and conductor Georges Longy. It was Longy who likely supplied Hall with contact information for some of Europe’s leading composers of the day including Florent Schmitt and Claude Debussy. Hall commissioned them and numerous other composers to write pieces for saxophone and orchestra. Connie Frigo writes:

George Longy, whose French connections and stylistic influence were highly valued by Hall and the members of the new Orchestra Club, was appointed conductor (of the Orchestra Club). Together, Hall and Longy maintained a strong influence over the concert programming, and, as a result, a new work that either featured or included the saxophone (and was likely commissioned by Hall),

appeared on nearly every concert during the Club’s existence.\textsuperscript{2}

With Marcel Mule’s appointment as saxophone professor at the Paris Conservatory in 1942, a number of historically important pieces were written to be performed by his students for final examinations marking the end of each year. Students performed these contest pieces, many of which are still highly regarded for their musical merits and the intense demands they place on the performers’ technique and musicianship. Trained classical saxophonists today will be familiar with many of these pieces such as Alfred Desenclos’ \textit{Prelude, Cadence et Finale} (1956), Paule Maurice’s \textit{Tableaux de Provence} (1954-59), and Paul Bonneau’s \textit{Caprice en forme de Valse} (1950) which were written specifically for Mule.

Another prominent figure in the history of important classical saxophone repertoire was the German-born American saxophonist Sigurd Rascher. As a soloist in both the United States (New York Philharmonic and Boston Symphony Orchestra) and abroad (Berlin Philharmonic), Rascher was a musical ambassador for classical saxophonists, exposing composers and audiences to the vast sonic possibilities of a well-played saxophone. His numerous transcriptions are valuable pedagogical pieces today, and the pieces written specifically for him such as Alexander Glazunov’s \textit{Concerto} in E-Flat Major, Op. 109 (1934), Jacques Ibert’s \textit{Concertino da Camera} (1935), Ingolf Dahl’s \textit{Concerto} for alto saxophone and wind ensemble (1949), and Karel Husa’s \textit{Elégie et Rondeau} (1960) are still considered staple pieces of saxophone literature.

\textsuperscript{2} Ibid.
While the efforts of Sax, Hall, Mule, and Rascher created an important early body of literature, the saxophone struggled to find acceptance as a solo or chamber music voice from the most venerable and prolific composers. A contributing factor to this stunted development of the saxophone repertoire was that many composers who did write for this new, strange instrument were composing lighthearted, novelty style pieces that were not considered serious enough for the formalities of the concert hall stage. Commenting on the earliest body of classical saxophone repertoire, Thomas Liley wrote: “Many of the compositions are solidly constructed and were intended to ensure that the saxophone...would have both a small but important body of literature and the performers to present it.”

The saxophone craze of the 1920s in America led to a plethora of entertaining and “light” novelty music composed by Rudy Wiedoeft and others for Vaudeville and other similarly styled performances. While entertaining and enjoyable to play and listen to, these pieces did not fit the standards of legitimate concert repertoire. Fredrick Hemke wrote in his dissertation:

The 1920s in the United States were saxophone years. The instrument was used in vaudeville acts, jazz ensembles, dance orchestras, and as a vehicle for home entertainment... Before the days of television a person might take pleasure in learning how to play the saxophone in the confines of his or her own home.

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While a popular instrument for home entertainment, a second contributing factor for slow acceptance of the saxophone as a serious solo instrument, especially in America, was that many American saxophonists were self-taught, and thus lacked the refinement of conservatory-trained musicians. Until a consistent and refined pedagogy developed, the music composed for the enjoyment and entertainment of untrained musicians had to be simple and accessible for mass appeal.

Adolphe Sax himself had fittingly served as the first professor of saxophone, initiating a saxophone class at the Paris Conservatory in 1858. However, his position was short-lived. It was terminated in 1870 as the country recovered from the economic effects of the Franco-Prussian War, and would remain vacant until Marcel Mule was appointed to the post in 1944. The early 1950s were pivotal in the advancement of a standardized American pedagogy. For the first time, American classical saxophonists were presented the opportunity to study saxophone in higher education.

Shortly after Mule’s appointment in Paris, the University of Michigan initiated the first collegiate classical saxophone program in the United States under the direction of Larry Teal. As the first professor of saxophone to teach in an American university, Teal’s appointment commenced a tradition of fine, well-trained American classical saxophonists.

With the opportunity for French and American students to study saxophone at the university level, a rise in the creation of new compositions followed. Liley wrote:

> At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the saxophone repertoire continues to receive significant contributions. The instrument will, of course, never have the original music of Bach, Mozart or Schubert, but the heritage of compositions written since the instrument’s creation around 1840 is the equal of any other wind instrument in the past.
150 years. It may yet be too early to determine which works of the most recent decades will establish themselves as permanent members of the repertoire.\(^5\)

Frigo expands on Liley’s statements above in her doctoral dissertation detailing the history of and processes for commissioning new works for the saxophone, stating:

If the saxophone’s reputation as a legitimate, serious instrument has been hampered by its age, or lack of it, then so has its repertoire. Another age-related struggle still exists for the concert saxophone; in other words, the range of the solo and chamber repertoire for the saxophone is, by default, almost entirely from the twentieth century. Despite being a nineteenth-century instrument, many of the contemporary composers who championed the saxophone, such as Hector Berlioz (1803-1869), ironically never wrote works that included the instrument. Instead, most of the solo and chamber repertoire for the saxophone as a concert instrument dates primarily from the twentieth century; additionally, most of this literature dates from the past fifty years as a result of commissions.\(^6\)

Due to the initial need for a thorough pedagogy, a scarcity of well-trained performers, the lack of acceptance by reputable composers, and the resulting paucity of legitimate repertoire, classical saxophonists struggled to find their voice in the realm of serious concert music. As Connie Frigo wrote:

The saxophone enjoys immense popularity and an undeniable sense of belonging in the jazz and popular music idioms, but its place in the realm of the concert hall—in formal orchestral and solo/chamber music settings—is more ambiguous.\(^7\)

It took the efforts of respected composers such as Alexander Glazunov, Paul Creston, Ingolf Dahl, and Karel Husa to write for the saxophone and excellent musicians, soloists,

\(^5\) Liley, 61.

\(^6\) Frigo, 1-2.

\(^7\) Ibid., 1.
and pedagogues like Sigurd Rascher, Marcel Mule, Cecil Leeson, Larry Teal, Frederick Hemke, Jean-Marie Londeix, Eugene Rousseau, and Donald Sinta to perform these new compositions to allow the saxophone to gain its rightful place in the serious recital and chamber repertoire.

Over time, individual performers developed relationships with composers, thus continuing to improve the saxophone’s status as a solo instrument via commissions that have brought many substantial works to the standard repertoire. As the overall quality of performers improved, composers became more willing to write works, often designed to exploit the talents of specific soloists. One especially important collaboration took place in the United States between Italian immigrant composer Paul Creston and saxophonist Cecil Leeson. Frigo writes about the relationship between Creston and Leeson:

Beyond a composer’s respect for a performer and for the sound of the instrument, however, there is another significant factor as to why Creston was initially interested in writing a work for the saxophone. In the 1930s there still existed an enormous need for original works for concert saxophone. Creston’s personal recollection of his and Leeson’s concert tours in 1936-1937 reveals that their collaborations were also a ‘crusade for enlarging the original literature for the instrument… Evidenced by Creston’s use of the word “crusade” several times throughout this recollection, the duo’s mission extended clearly beyond the mere presentation of concerts. They desired strongly to generate both public awareness of the concert saxophone and interest from composers to write for the instrument. Creston’s own commitment as a composer to contribute to this crusade speaks of his belief in the saxophone and in Leeson.⁸

Bernhard Heiden, a student of the prolific and esteemed composer Paul Hindemith, was another important composer in the early growth of the saxophone’s concert repertoire.

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⁸ Ibid., 12-13.
Heiden wrote his Sonata for saxophonist Larry Teal, who like Leeson, influenced many composers to write for solo saxophone. Frigo writes:

The circumstances surrounding composer Bernhard Heiden’s Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano (1937) and its dedication to Larry Teal are strikingly similar to the conditions that produced Creston’s Suite for E-flat Alto Saxophone and Piano (1935). Like Creston, Heiden was inspired to write a work for Teal, both out of admiration for his musicianship after hearing Teal play the saxophone and because of the lack of repertoire for the concert saxophone. Heiden met Larry Teal in 1937 as Teal rehearsed with Heiden’s wife, a respected pianist. According to an interview Heiden gave to the Saxophone Symposium in 1985, he ‘was impressed with [Teal’s] beautiful tone quality and musicianship, and he promised to compose a work for him, and the result was the famous Sonata for Saxophone and Piano.’ In the same interview, Heiden reflects upon his initial encounter with Teal. ‘The saxophone was still for me and around that time in Europe, an instrument of popular music. I was not familiar with really any literature for saxophone in a serious field.’ Statements by Creston and Heiden suggest that, at that time, the concert saxophone and its solo repertoire needed composers’ attention. They speak to the important and early role that “admiration” alone (and not money) has played in helping establish the saxophone as a legitimate concert instrument. For many early twentieth century composers, the sound of the instrument, the skills of particular performers, and even the moral imperative to contribute repertoire to a neglected instrument was incentive enough to compose for the saxophone.9

The saxophone and saxophone repertoire proved themselves to be perfect vehicles of twentieth century musical expression. Many composers writing music during the first half of the twentieth century were impacted by the Second Viennese School composers (Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern) using compositional techniques of serialism and atonality. With the trend in composition becoming highly complex in pitch, rhythm, and

9 Ibid., 14-15.
extended playing techniques, modern composers continue to fight a battle to legitimize their work with an audience generally more accustomed to hearing beautiful melodies.

Some scholars felt that the music was far too academic and strenuous for performers and audiences to enjoy or appreciate. In 1958, composer Milton Babbitt wrote:

> For I am concerned with stating an attitude towards the indisputable facts of the status and condition of the composer of what we will, for the moment, designate as ‘serious’, ‘advanced’, contemporary music. This composer expends an enormous amount of time and energy—and, usually, considerable money—on the creation of a commodity which has little, no, or negative commodity value. He is, in essence, a "vanity" composer. The general public is largely unaware of and uninterested in his music. The majority of performers shun it and resent it. Consequently, the music is little performed, and then primarily at poorly attended concerts before an audience consisting in the main of fellow 'professionals'. At best, the music would appear to be for, of, and by specialists.¹⁰

While the earliest pieces in the saxophone repertoire were deemed too light for serious performance, and judging the validity of new music may befraught with peril, the saxophone chamber works of John Fitz Rogers are quickly drawing the attention from a significant number of saxophonists. This paper will focus on the chamber music of John Fitz Rogers that utilizes the saxophone composed to date, including: *A Savage Calculus* (2002), *Prodigal Child* (2004), *Release* (2006), and *Breaking* (2011).

Renowned performer and pedagogue Eugene Rousseau states the following regarding contemporary saxophone repertoire:

> If the saxophone has a future as a classical instrument, it will be because of its melodic use and not because of *avant-garde* pieces, great though they may be. The basic human spirit responds emotionally to melody. With the other music we might say the music is ‘interesting,’ or that

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we were ‘on the edge of our seats,’ but we’re not sure if we want to hear that piece again or not. Or maybe we do hear it again and then we’re sure we don’t want to hear it any more, or maybe we want to hear it many more times. Regardless of the final decision, the music still doesn’t evoke the same response.\textsuperscript{11}

Rogers’ pieces, which span such genres as saxophone and piano (\textit{A Savage Calculus} and \textit{Breaking}), saxophone and marimba (\textit{Release}), and a saxophone quartet (\textit{Prodigal Child}), have become important additions to the contemporary saxophone repertoire. Each of the pieces are diverse in style, unique and challenging melodically and rhythmically, highly structured, exploit the full technical and acoustical capabilities of the saxophone. They simultaneously pose significant challenges to performers while still maintaining accessibility to a broad audience. In addition, they have been commissioned, recorded, and performed around the globe by today’s leading saxophone performers, chamber groups, and pedagogues.

The remainder of this document will provide information regarding John Fitz Rogers’ background, education, and his career as a composer and teacher, and devote chapters to exploring his saxophone chamber music including a brief performer’s analysis of each work. This document will further discuss how these important compositions fit into the canon of classical saxophone repertoire.

The author, with the help of the composer, has assembled a survey of reported performances of the pieces that will be included in Appendix A. A transcript of an interview conducted with the composer from the spring of 2015 that provided the impetus for this research project can be read in Appendix B. It is the author’s expectation that this

\textsuperscript{11} Christopher Kelton, “Meet Eugene Rousseau: Saxophone Performer and Professor,” \textit{The Instrumentalist}, September, 1983.
document will aid in the dissemination of John Fitz Rogers’ saxophone chamber music and will serve as a reference for performers in their preparation of these fascinating pieces.
CHAPTER TWO

JOHN FITZ ROGERS: BIOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW

John Fitz Rogers was involved in music and the arts from a very early age. As a child growing up in Stevens Point, a small town in central Wisconsin, Rogers would play hymns heard in church once back at home on his family’s piano. Surrounded by an artistic family (his sisters studied piano, and his father was a graphic artist and designer), exposure to and an appreciation of the arts was part of his everyday life. In an interview from 2009 with Tom Moore of Opera Today, Rogers recounts one of his earliest musical inspirations that came from his upbringing in the Lutheran church tradition:

It [the family church] was a Lutheran church and fairly small. At one point, my family and I attended an evening Lenten service when I was a child. The organist played the old hymn *Abide With Me*. I remember it was a magical experience where they then turned out all the lights and sang the hymn in unison by candlelight. I came home that night and played the tune as best I could on the piano. Right before I graduated from college, my father, who had created his own style of calligraphy, presented me with a plaque with the first three verses of the hymn, a beautiful way of recalling my musical beginning.\(^\text{12}\)

As a young boy, Rogers began taking piano lessons with a local teacher as his introduction to the formal study of music. By the time he was thirteen, Rogers also began to privately study composition with Gerald Plain, a professor at the University of

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Wisconsin in Stevens Point. These lessons left a lasting impression on Rogers and gave him his first encounter with contemporary music. Plain exposed Rogers to recordings of works composed by Berio, Stockhausen, and Boulez, which greatly impacted the young composer. Rogers continued his studies with Plain until Plain left Wisconsin to teach at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York.\textsuperscript{13}

With Plain’s departure from Stevens Point, Rogers’ compositional studies continued under Bruce Wise. Wise taught at the University of Wisconsin in Oshkosh, which was about a ninety-minute drive from Stevens Point. Rogers’ father drove his son once or twice a month to Wise’s home for extended composition lessons, waiting patiently in Wise’s living room while his son learned to develop his craft. The hefty commute to Oshkosh for lessons would eventually prove to be worth the family’s time and effort.

Rogers’ pre-college musical experience was further enriched at the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point where he studied piano with Michael Keller and performed with the university’s jazz ensemble. Through Keller, Plain, and Wise, Rogers was exposed to a wide variety of quality classical, contemporary, and jazz music. Rogers also spent time exploring the holdings of the local public library, leading him to discover Igor Stravinsky’s legendary ballet, \textit{The Rite of Spring}. With a wide palette of musical styles peaking his interest, Rogers also credits rock bands like \textit{Led Zeppelin}, and \textit{The Talking Heads} as influences on his diverse musical language. The harmonies and rhythms of jazz

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
also inspired Rogers, who specifically mentions “Bird [Charlie Parker], [Art] Tatum, Miles Davis, [John] Coltrane—swing as well as bebop and modal jazz in the Sixties.”

In addition to composition lessons and performing in ensembles with collegiate musicians, Rogers spent several summer breaks from high school attending the National Music Camp in Interlochen, Michigan. Rogers found himself amazed by the talent of the young child prodigies and virtuosic pianists participating in the camp. Many of the attendees were younger than him. These experiences at Interlochen helped Rogers realize that he had a “greater aptitude and more interest in being a composer.”

In his interview with Moore, Rogers states: “At a certain point the conversation turned to whether I would pursue this [composition] in college, and it never occurred to me that I would pursue anything else—I was very focused on music.” Rogers graduated from high school in 1981 and began his undergraduate studies at the Oberlin College and Conservatory.

At Oberlin, Rogers was enrolled in a double degree program that afforded him the opportunity to earn degrees from both the Conservatory and the College. He majored in composition through the Conservatory while also completing coursework through the College that focused on contemporary art and aesthetics with classes such as philosophy, art, history, literature, and music. Rogers recounts:

My parents and teachers in high school urged me...not to go to a conservatory and just study music. Education abroad,

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14 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid.
liberal arts education, was important, and that is a principle I still adhere to. I encourage my students to read all kinds of books, to travel, to go to art openings and dance performances, to expose themselves to the wider world of art and ideas.\(^{18}\)

When examining the numerous compositions in Rogers’ portfolio to date, one can clearly observe his diverse influences and sources of inspiration that resulted from the liberal arts education he received at Oberlin.

As a composition student, Rogers had the opportunity to meet visiting composers including John Cage, Iannis Xenakis, and Jacob Druckman, with whom he would eventually study under at Yale.\(^{19}\) Rogers also began building friendships and establishing connections with skilled performers at the Conservatory. Classmate David Stambler, a budding clarinetist and saxophonist, would later participate in several consortia to commission saxophone pieces from Rogers and would lead the consortium for the creation of a saxophone quartet as will become evident in subsequent chapters of this document.

During his final year at Oberlin, Rogers interviewed to enroll in graduate studies and was accepted at Yale. Like many young graduates, he was experiencing financial constraints and thus delayed his graduate studies. After completing his degree at Oberlin, Rogers moved to Boston where he continued to write music and to work, saving money for his eventual enrollment in graduate school. He furthered his musical involvement as an active performer, singing in the Tanglewood Chorus. His experience at Tanglewood served to further broaden his musical palette through exposure to high quality repertoire

\(^{18}\) Ibid.

\(^{19}\) Ibid.
performed by outstanding musicians. Rogers recounts singing masterworks by Bach, Beethoven, Poulenc, and Mahler. With access to skilled musicians, large ensembles, and experienced conductors, he would occasionally bring orchestral scores to rehearsals to watch the interaction between the conductor and orchestra musicians in a live setting.

As in any large city with a diverse population and great cultural variety, Boston was host to many musical festivals throughout the year. At the *Making Music Together Festival* of 1988, Rogers attended concerts featuring music of Soviet composers who at that time were relatively unknown to the Western world due to the oppressive restrictions of the Soviet government. Composers such as Schnittke, Gubaidulina, and Shchedrin came to Boston to attend this new music festival, which was designed to improve the relations between the United States and the Soviet Union through music. The music presented over the course of the festival fascinated the Western audience, Rogers included, and offered exposure to these formerly obscure composers.

When not composing or performing, Rogers pursued another interest—woodworking and cabinetmaking. He built furniture in his own shop and continued to save money for graduate school. Rogers considered becoming a full-time furniture maker, but, music was deeply engrained in his soul, or as he puts it, in his “DNA.”

On the art of furniture making, Rogers said: “Building furniture taught me about design, balance, practicality, and letting the beauty of the materials show through.”

In 1989, Rogers re-applied to the graduate program at Yale where Martin Bresnick and Jacob Druckman served as professors in the composition department.

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20 Ibid.

Rogers spent an intensive two years at Yale composing, studying, and performing. It was during this time as a graduate student that Rogers was afforded the opportunity to study West African hand drumming. The complexities of polyrhythm and polytempi found in West African drumming technique greatly intrigued Rogers. Likewise, the way in which composers like György Ligeti and Conlon Nancarrow used these techniques were also important influences on Rogers, and his early music frequently incorporated these elements. About this time as a graduate student, Rogers said:

Graduate school was a period of focus and discovering my own voice as a composer. At Yale I realized a number of things about my music: first and foremost that I think melodically and harmonically, and that I hear tonally. My music became more tonal than it had been at Oberlin. Plus my interest in jazz and exposure to West African music as well as the music of Ligeti and Nancarrow sparked a continuing interest in polyrhythm and polytempi. Many of my pieces explore the idea of rhythmic and textural complexity over relatively clear tonal harmonies. But my two years at Yale and four years at Cornell were a period where I figured those things out and who I was as a composer. Despite my early start, maybe I was a bit of a late bloomer.22

After completing his studies at Yale in 1992, Rogers enrolled at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. At Cornell, Rogers studied with composers Steven Stucky and Roberto Sierra until 1996 when he graduated with the Doctorate of Musical Arts degree. His time as a graduate student at both Yale and at Cornell shaped his future career as a teacher in terms of his philosophy toward his students: “Yale and Cornell were supportive environments that didn’t impose stylistic restrictions” reports Rogers.

22 Moore, Interview.
“As a teacher I also don’t put restrictions on my students—I just try to help them figure out and refine what they are doing.”

After graduating from Cornell, Rogers returned to Boston to teach at the Longy School of Music. There, Rogers taught courses in composition and music theory. He held a composition seminar for the students, and also taught classes in harmony, counterpoint, and orchestration.

Rogers joined the music faculty at the University of South Carolina in 2000, where he currently teaches a private studio of composition students as well as undergraduate and graduate academic classes. Joining the faculty of the School of Music at the same time was renowned saxophonist Clifford Leaman. An avid performer and supporter of new music, Leaman immediately began discussing a commission for a new saxophone piece with Rogers. By the end of 2001, Rogers had completed his first major piece for the saxophone, *A Savage Calculus*.

In addition to his academic teaching responsibilities at the University of South Carolina, Rogers founded the *Southern Exposure New Music Series*, greatly enhancing the contemporary arts scene in Columbia. Established in 2001, the *Southern Exposure New Music Series* has afforded the students of USC, public schools in surrounding counties, and audiences alike incredible opportunities to see world-class performances, master classes, and presentations by new music composers, performers, and artists.

Rogers’ website biography reads:

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23 Ibid.

24 The abbreviation “USC” will be used to refer to the University of South Carolina throughout this document.
Since its inception in 2001, *Southern Exposure* has become one of the most dynamic and innovative concert series in the southeast, regularly hosting enthusiastic standing room audiences for performances by local and regional artists as well as internationally recognized artists such as Alarm Will Sound, So Percussion, International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), and the Los Angeles Piano Quartet.\(^\text{25}\)

As director of *Southern Exposure*, Rogers was the recipient of 2007 Chamber Music America/ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming for its 2005–2006 season.\(^\text{26}\) This prestigious award “recognizes ensembles and presenters for outstanding and innovative approaches to the programming of contemporary classical, jazz, and world chamber music.”\(^\text{27}\)

In 2012, Dr. Michael Harley, a colleague of Rogers at the University of South Carolina, became the artistic director of the concert series. Harley is a respected teacher and bassoonist, performing new music as a founding member of the group Alarm Will Sound, and with the bassoon ensembles Dark in the Song and Rushes. As the artistic director of *Southern Exposure*, Harley featured Rogers’ music on a concert as part of the 2013–2014 season. The John Fitz Rogers Composer Portrait concert of November 11\(^\text{th}\), 2013 featured several USC faculty members and graduate students performing works that spanned Rogers compositional career to date. To pay tribute to Rogers’ significant


contributions to the *Southern Exposure* series, the concert also featured a world premiere performance of *Harmony* by fellow composition professor, Dr. Reginald Bain, written specifically for this special concert.

In addition to his many successes as a teacher and director of *Southern Exposure*, Rogers has been honored with many significant awards and commissions, and his music has been recorded and performed worldwide throughout his distinguished career. Honors have been bestowed upon Rogers from the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP), the American Composers Forum, the Jerome Foundation, the American Music Center, the National Flute Association, the South Carolina Arts Commission, and the Massachusetts Cultural Council. His orchestral piece, *Symphony of Cities* (1996) was the recipient of the Heckscher Foundation Composition Prize.

Rogers’ tenure at the University of South Carolina and in Columbia has led to multiple other commissions including: *The Arc of Winter* (2002) commissioned by the University of South Carolina for solo clarinet and string orchestra; *Once Removed* (2003) for two marimbas dedicated to Scott Herring; *Blue River Variations* (2003) for solo piano for professor Marina Lomazov; *Sonata Lunaris* (2005) for violin and piano written for the Opus Two violin and piano duo featuring violin professor William Terwilliger; *Qui Habitat* (2006) for SATB choir commissioned by Jared Johnson and the Trinity Cathedral Choir in Columbia; *Ad Pacem* (2007) for 8 cellos or cello choir commissioned by the University of South Carolina Cello Choir and the American String Teachers Association; *Ad Lucem* (2007) for two pianos—the faculty husband and wife piano duo of Joseph Rackers and Marina Lomazov; *Songs of Time and Tide* (2008) for soprano and piano written for Tina Stallard and Lynn Kompass; *Magna Mysterium* (2009) for SATB choir,
organ, and orchestra written for Johnson and the Trinity Cathedral Choir; his *Double Concerto* (2010) for two piano soloists and orchestra for the South Carolina Philharmonic Orchestra; *Come Closer* (2011) for four low winds and click track written for Harley’s bassoon quartet *Dark in the Song*; *Lilies* (2011) for the cello and piano duo of Robert Jesselson and Charles Fugo; *Winter Music* (2012) for violinist and pianist Rebecca Hunter and Lynn Kompass; *Narragansett* (2013) for Dr. Scott Weiss and the University of South Carolina Wind Ensemble; and most recently, *Sehnen* (2015) for soprano, oboe, bassoon, violin, viola, and piano, commissioned by oboe professor Rebecca Nagel.

In the spring of 2016, Rogers will be the featured guest composer at the *Frontwave New Music Festival*, hosted by Dr. Timothy Thompson at Palm Beach Atlantic University in West Palm Beach, Florida. While there, he will work with Thompson’s composition students, present a masterclass to the composition studio, and select compositions (including *Breaking* and *Prodigal Child*) will be performed over the course of the three-day festival. As of this writing, Rogers continues to actively teach, compose, and accept commissions.

The remainder of this document will detail the saxophone chamber music composed by Rogers to date. Following the creation of *A Savage Calculus*, subsequent saxophone compositions include: *Prodigal Child for Saxophone Quartet* (2004) commissioned by the Capitol Quartet, New Century Saxophone Quartet, and the San Francisco Saxophone Quartet; *Release* (2006) for the RoseWind Duo (Leaman and colleague Scott Herring, marimba); *The Rivers Concerto for alto saxophone and wind ensemble* (2006) commissioned by a consortium of seven university wind ensembles and saxophonists, led by the University of South Carolina. Also included on the consortium
were the Bowling Green State University Wind Symphony, Drake University Wind Symphony, the Eastman Wind Ensemble, Furman Wind Ensemble, Penn State University Symphonic Wind Ensemble, and the University of Tennessee Wind Ensemble. Rogers’ most recent piece for saxophone, *Breaking* (2011) for soprano saxophone and piano, was commissioned by Leaman, Christopher Creviston, Joseph Lulloff, and David Stambler.
CHAPTER THREE

A SAVAGE CALCULUS

Upon joining the School of Music faculty at the University of South Carolina in the fall of 2000, Rogers’ talent as a composer was immediately noticed by his colleagues. One of Rogers’ first commissions from a USC faculty member was a piece for saxophone and piano, composed for saxophone professor Clifford Leaman, who was appointed the same year. Coincidentally, this commission, A Savage Calculus, would also be the first piece that Rogers wrote specifically for the saxophone as a solo voice. A Savage Calculus was dedicated to Leaman and his pianist, Derek Parsons, who performed together as the Ambassador Duo. The duo recorded the work on a compact disc entitled Illuminations in 2005 on the Equilibrium label, the only commercially available recording of the piece to date.28

Rogers set to work composing A Savage Calculus in August of 2001. Like so many people around the country and the world, Rogers was deeply shaken by the terrible, tragic terrorist attacks of September 11th. His compositional process and will for creativity came to an abrupt halt. As the stunned and grieving nation began to recover from the shock of the attacks, Rogers slowly returned to his work on the piece. The completion of the piece is marked at the end of the score, dated December 11th, 2001.

28 Ambassador Duo, Illuminations, by John Fitz Rogers, performed by Clifford Leaman and others, Equilibrium (EQ 77), CD, 2005.
Leaman and Parsons premiered the work soon after in March of 2002 at the North American Saxophone Alliance Biennial Conference at the University of North Texas.  

While *A Savage Calculus* is not specifically about the September 11th terrorist attack, the attentive performer and listener will find musical and compositional devices that highlight the idea of surprise brought on by sudden, drastic changes in the music. In the program notes at the beginning of the score, Rogers writes:

I began work on *A Savage Calculus* in August 2001, but after the horrible and tragic events of September 11th, I found I could not continue on its composition. When I did resume working several months later, I decided that while I couldn’t write a piece that addressed the enormity of September 11th, I also couldn’t ignore my feelings about the event either. If the resulting music is ‘about’ anything, it is about the idea of surprise.

In an interview with the author, (a full transcription of the interview can be found in Appendix B) Rogers describes the elements of surprise observed in *A Savage Calculus*:

Savage Calculus, I think, as you know, is a piece that deals with extreme juxtapositions in many different ways. And that was kind of the original idea of that piece, given the nature of when I wrote it, after 9/11. So I took, kind of as my creative idea for that piece, a very extreme juxtaposition between silence and attack, between different kinds of music, things that have a different character: boogie-woogie or tin-pan alley, between things that are extremely quiet, or things that are loud to the point of being garish and shrill. And so, when I started to work on the piece, I took out a piece of legal paper and just kind of thought about different ways of creating musical surprise. I just sort of made a list of all the different ways I could think about making musical surprise. And so that’s the kind of the initial impetus for that piece.

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29 See Appendix A: Performance Tracking.


31 Appendix B. John Fitz Rogers, Interview by author, Columbia, April 15, 2015.
The shocking events of September 11\textsuperscript{th} certainly horrified and stunned the country, and altered the social, economic, and political landscape of the entire world. The musical surprises in the score in many ways mirror the sudden, violent changes that the attacks caused. Despite the composer’s statement that the piece is not programmatically about September 11\textsuperscript{th}, there is a section of the piece that the author interpreted to be comparable to the collapse of the World Trade Center towers as will be demonstrated in the following pages.

As a title for the composition, \textit{A Savage Calculus} is a fitting description of the approximately nine–minute work. “Savage” certainly describes with accuracy the sudden and drastic shifts of range, tempo, and dynamics that Rogers demands of both the saxophonist and the pianist performing this piece. It is these extreme juxtapositions of musical devices that so clearly depict the element of surprise. Effectively conveying each musical surprise that Rogers incorporated into the score is nothing short of demanding on the musicians in performance.

Of the three solo saxophone pieces to be discussed in this document, \textit{A Savage Calculus} poses the most significant rhythmic and ensemble challenges to the performing ensemble. Similarly, it tests the comprehension and enjoyment of the music to the audience for whom the piece is performed. The rhythmic complexity that is prevalent, especially in Rogers’ works from the late 1990s through the early 2000s, is intense and extremely intricate, to say the least.

The seemingly sporadic interplay of sounds and silence and the resulting textures of off-set attacks and releases between the saxophone and the piano test the accuracy of the performers. Similarly, it sets an audience yearning to grasp on to a flowing melody or
a metric pulse on edge. It is especially important—in the preparation stages of learning A Savage Calculus—to use a metronome to aid in the accurate metric placement of entrances and releases. It can be quite difficult at first to perceive any semblance of a meter until the performers are certain of each entrance and release.

Three principle motivic ideas comprise the piece. The first theme, heard only at the beginning, consists of a sharply angular melody created by either long notes or short bursts of notes in a similarly disjunct rhythm in the saxophone part with pointillistic piano chords. The second motivic idea consists of a walking bass line and dissonant, syncopated piano chords, and highly chromatic, frenetic, jazz-like passages in the saxophone part. The third thematic idea is a melody that is significantly and startlingly slower than the surrounding sections. This third idea also makes use of the saxophone’s altissimo register, calling for notes in a much higher tessitura than in other sections of the piece.

With regard to form, the piece can be visually and aurally divided into seven distinct sections that correlate to the rehearsal letters placed in the score by the composer and which use the thematic ideas previously described. Figure 3.1 provides a performer’s analysis of the formal sections of A Savage Calculus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Motivic Theme</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1–78</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>78 measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>79–138</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>60 measures</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>139–149</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11 measures</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>150–156</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7 measures</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>157–189</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33 measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>190–207</td>
<td>3/2/3/2 alterations</td>
<td>18 measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>208–235</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>28 measures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.1. A performer’s analysis of the form of A Savage Calculus.
Section 1 (measures 1–78)

The piece begins with dissonant piano chords played at a fortissimo dynamic. They are marked as both accented and staccato, yielding a sharp, pointed attack to be played as short as possible followed by lengthy rests. In the first section, the element of surprise can be observed in this interplay of the abrupt, pointillistic piano entrances juxtaposed with irregular durations of silence. The infrequency of the chords and their unusual metric placement makes it difficult for the audience to understand the meter. The unpredictability puts the listeners on edge with a sense of unease. As a note to the performer, Rogers writes in parenthesis: “The silence is filled with tension.” The same chord is repeated eight times before the saxophone entrance in measure eight. The saxophonist and pianist must take great care in preparing this piece for performance to internally perceive the tempo. Familiarity with the precise metric placement of each chord is vital so as not to visibly show the pulse to the audience, heightening the sense of tension and anxiety.

The saxophone’s first entrance is on beat two of the eighth measure, immediately following a piano chord on beat one. In contrast to the pianist who is striking loud and short chords, the saxophonist makes his entrance at a pianississimo dynamic as another auditory surprise. The saxophonist’s note is held for ten-and-a-half beats with a crescendo underneath the entire duration, increasing the volume to a fortissimo release. Rogers writes the release as a glissando up to the next note, marked with a staccato and an accent mark. The instruction to the saxophonist reads “sharp cut-off with tongue.”

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32 Rogers, A Savage Calculus.

33 Ibid.
Stopping the sound with the tongue yields a harsh but precise, immediate termination of the tone with no decay. This is certainly not a typical “classical saxophone” articulation, but one that adds a great deal of surprise to the section.

This first section of the piece continues in a similar fashion—short, loud piano chords and long saxophone notes with abrupt endings. Rogers eventually expands the saxophone part to include short bursts of technical flourishes paired with explosive changes in the dynamic range. Beat two of measure thirty-eight is important to note. After four beats of silence in the saxophone and piano parts, both instruments have a unison attack at the same marked dynamic for the first time. For the next two measures (measures 39–40), both the saxophonist and pianist are aligned and play in sync—matching entrances, dynamics, articulation, and duration.

By measure 42, the saxophone writing abandons long, held notes and becomes more melodic, showcasing a strong jazz influence. The melodic lines are angular and highly disjunct, utilizing the entirety of the saxophone’s range. The quarter note triplets in measure 43 give the impression of pulling back the tempo, a common jazz element. They are to be played as “guttural, raunchy.”\textsuperscript{34} This sound concept is popular among jazz players but perhaps foreign to classical saxophonists. Another jazz element in this section is the \textit{glissando} technique, written in between low notes to high notes, imitating the scooping effect mastered by jazz musicians like Johnny Hodges.

The piano part is also melodically and rhythmically disjunct. Rogers’ fondness for rhythmic complexity shows in the score through the various levels of polyrhythm in

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
measures 43 and 44 as observed in figure 3.2 below. The polyrhythm between the right and left hand of the piano part is further complicated by the saxophone melody.

![Figure 3.2](image)

Figure 3.2. One of several instances of polyrhythm, measures 43–44.

Measure 56 through measure 60 is another texturally significant area, as the piano abruptly changes to an exuberant “boogie-woogie” style. Contrasted against the saxophone part, which continues with an angular, intense melody, the difference in musical styles serves as yet another surprising musical juxtaposition found throughout this piece.

In addition to complex polyrhythms, Rogers makes use of articulations and phrase markings to imply meter. As seen in figure 3.3, the saxophone plays a continuous stream of sixteenth notes in measure 76 through measure 79 in which Rogers uses the accents and slurs in the saxophone part to obscure the meter. The accented articulation on different divisions of the beat and measure is yet another element of surprise found throughout the piece. As can be observed in the example, each succeeding group of notes is shorter than the previous except for the last two groupings before rehearsal letter A.
Section Two (measures 79–138)

The second section of the piece is marked by immediate changes to the texture, rhythm, and volume. The cacophony of the saxophone and piano ending in the previous section is replaced by a quiet and ominous walking bass line played in the left hand of the piano. Instructions written to the piano performer read: “Sinister, yet jazzy; absolutely steady.”\(^{35}\) The piano quarter notes are all written with *staccato* markings underneath to emulate the *pizzicato* effect of an upright bass. The walking bass line, occasionally interrupted by rests, ceases immediately as the right hand plays syncopated chords four octaves above. The extreme contrast in *tessitura* between the left hand bass line and the “dreamy,”\(^ {36}\) syncopated right hand chords is another way in which Rogers highlights the element of surprise.

The saxophone melody enters at measure 86 and consists primarily of low, long pitches that give way to brief flourishes of fast notes. Many of the long notes highlight the highly dissonant interval of a tritone (for example, the saxophone’s long concert F starting in measure 86 to the concert B in measure 94, and the concert B-flat in measure 113 to the concert E in measure 116).

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\(^{35}\) Ibid.

\(^{36}\) Ibid.
Rogers utilizes some of the same melodic techniques of the opening section—entrances on strange divisions of the measure or of the beat, and articulations within groupings of sixteenth notes to imply a different metric scheme. After a brief interjection of virtuosic sixteenth notes, the long and extended notes return on beat three of measure 110. Instead of the melody gradually ascending, the B-flat repeats and leaps up immediately to a much higher concert E, another ascending tritone. Tritones are again heard in measure 119 between the concert G and concert D-flat, in measure 122 between the concert A and the concert E-flat, measure 123 between the concert B-flat and the concert F-sharp.

In addition to the tritone, Rogers also uses major sevenths throughout the melody. Like tritones, major sevenths and their minor second inversions are also highly dissonant intervals. Examples of important major sevenths or minor seconds occur in the following places in the saxophone part: measure 110 and 113 between the concert A and concert B-flat, the concert E-flat on the upbeat of beat two of measure 129 to the concert D on beat four, the concert A-flat on beat four of measure 130 to the concert G on the upbeat, and most prominently in the quarter note triplets in measures 135 and 136 alternating between concert G-sharp and A.

Section Three (measures 139–149)

Section three begins at rehearsal letter B, measure 139, following another “boogie-woogie” piano interjection all but covered by the loud, disjunct melody in the saxophone part. It is similar melodically to the previous section, but different rhythmically and texturally. The piano part becomes more harmonic than rhythmic, as it no longer includes a walking bass line. After a loud first chord, both the piano and
saxophone parts are marked *subito mezzo forte*, a contrast to the loud volume that ended the previous section. While the saxophone melody and piano chords retain the feeling of a jazz style, this section may feel more ambiguous in terms of the pulse as the rhythmic motor created by the left hand walking bass line has been terminated. The quieter dynamic marking also makes the section less aurally intense.

Figure 3.4 demonstrates how the rhythmic pulse is obscured further in measure 147 with the complex polyrhythms between the saxophone and the piano. The saxophone and piano each separate into their own complicated subdivisions; the saxophone melody is divided into five eighth notes over two beats while the piano has a grouping of four sixteenth notes, followed by a quintuplet and two sextuplets.
Figure 3.4. Complicated polyrhythms between the saxophone and piano, measures 147–149.

Rogers utilizes this division of 5 saxophone notes over 2 beats against the piano’s 12 notes over 2 beats until the last two beats of measure 149. To further complicate a difficult section to perform, the tempo of these polyrhythms gradually decrease until the downbeat of measure 150, rehearsal letter C, marking the start of the fourth formal section.

Section Four (measures 150–156)

At the start of section four, marked as rehearsal letter C (measure 150), the tempo is immediately reduced to a much slower speed than the previous section—the quarter note marked “around” 54 beats per minute. The reduction of tempo is two-thirds of the initial tempo marking of “at least” 156 beats per minute. Musically, it seems as if time comes to a jarring halt. This is the first of four such occurrences of extreme tempo juxtapositions, and yields yet another surprise to the audience, as well as an ensemble challenge for the performers. Rogers describes this section of music as “towering, majestic,” which is achieved via the extremely loud dynamics, the drastic range

\[\text{Ibid.}\]
difference between the piano and the saxophone, and with accelerated technical
flourishes in the saxophone part.

**Section Five (measures 157–189)**

Following a flourish of gradually accelerating notes and a *glissando* to a shrill
altissimo A that crescendos to a triple *forte* dynamic, section five begins at rehearsal
letter D. The music is characterized by a return of the driving jazz style reminiscent of the
second section. In another radical tempo change from the material of the previous
section, Rogers contrasts this section by returning to a blisteringly fast tempo, now
marked as a quarter note of 160 beats per minute or faster, challenging the technical
capabilities of the saxophonist and pianist. The walking bass line, initially written as
*staccato* quarter notes, returns in section five, appearing in eighth notes to further
heighten the sense of anxiety and tension. As the section progresses to measure 178,
marked “raucous,” the eighth note bass line becomes even more agitated through the
subdivision of the beat in sixteenth notes in alternating octaves.

Melodically, the saxophone and piano parts are highly chromatic. These
chromatic fragments and passages of sixteenth notes serve to propel the intensity and
energy of the performance into section six with virtuosic flares of technical control.
While this section poses a number of technical challenges, it is one of the texturally easier
sections to assemble as an ensemble as the rhythms are straightforward and the pulse is
ever-present thanks to the walking bass line played by the pianist’s left hand.

**Section Six (measures 190–207)**

Rehearsal letter E marks the start of the sixth formal section. Within this section,
Rogers alternates between both the slow, “towering” motive and the fast, “driving”, jazz
material to create condensed subsections. The juxtaposition of these two highly contrasting melodic themes and tempi serves as the surprising element to the audience. However, the listener may not be aware of the underlying musical form implications, as they will hear melodic material previously presented.

Upon an initial analysis of the form, the author attempted to label these short subsections as individual units because the motivic content previously defined large sections. Closer inspection of the score led to the conclusion of one formal section that mixed melodic motives. The use of subsections to analyze this portion of the piece made logical sense when referring back to the interview conducted with Rogers in which he discussed his compositional process when writing a new piece. The following statement from this interview demonstrates his adherence to using rehearsal letters to delineate structure and to identify formal sections:

...form, and its relationship to harmonic progression, overall harmonic progression, and thinking about big changes in texture, landing spots, things where big rehearsal letters might go...I think those are the things that are helpful to me when I am just starting out a piece, and then I start to move in towards the details.\(^{38}\)

The first two measures of the section (measures 190 and 191) are at the slow tempo (marked at 54 beats per minute). The saxophone is loud and piercing as it plays in the altissimo register and adding many special jazz effects to the sound. Marked as “wailing, bluesy, low-down, with ‘growl ad lib.’” marked in parenthesis, the saxophone shrieks over the piano chords. In measure 191, Rogers calls for the saxophonist to

\[^{38}\text{Appendix B.}\]
*glissando* from a high written F-sharp to an altissimo G played a quarter-tone flat and to slide back down to the F-sharp.

The microtonal pitch is a “blues note,” or, the flat seventh harmonic of the overtone series. Performance instructions state to scoop up into the “blues note” without fingering the pitch. These instructions may prove to be confusing, as it would be impossible to play this pitch as the seventh partial overtone. To produce the pitch as a seventh partial in the overtone series, the fundamental pitch would have to be the note A3 a note below the range of the alto saxophone’s key system, which terminates with the note B-flat 3. Additionally, the microtonal note occurs so quickly that the fingering change would not be practical or possible.

In performance, the author suggests playing the high F-sharp using the front fingering (as opposed to a palm key fingering), and partially opening the side B-flat key on the right side of the saxophone to raise the pitch slightly to the altissimo G approximately a quarter-tone flat. Doing so allows also for a quick return to the front F-sharp which is held under a *fermata*.

The saxophone then plays a flourish of notes that gradually accelerate as it ascends, leading in to the downbeat of measure 192 and beginning a “driving” subsection. The saxophone trills a tritone (concert E to concert B-flat) as the pianist plays the boogie-woogie motive on top of the eighth note walking bass line. This driving subsection occurs for four measures, immediately dropping tempo again at measure 196. Measures 196 through 198 present another slow, towering, majestic subsection again ending on an accelerating saxophone line that ascends and descends. Measure 199 is

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39 In American Standard Pitch Notation, the note “middle C” is designated as C4.
marked as “wild” and includes the saxophone trilling between chromatically ascending pairs of tritones (concerts E to A-sharp, F to B, F-sharp to C, G to C-sharp, and G-sharp to D).

The peak of the entire piece comes at measure 204, and is marked by a concert E6 (a written altissimo C-sharp 7) for the saxophonist. This long, loud, piercing note is perhaps reminiscent of the shrieks and turmoil of the terrified victims trapped within the World Trade Center towers, and is played over the top of a cascade of descending sextuplets in the piano part. The saxophone soon joins in the descending motion of the piano, perhaps alluding to the collapse of the attacked landmark.

**Section Seven (measures 208–235)**

Rehearsal letter F marks the final section of *A Savage Calculus*. By far the loudest section of the piece, the saxophonist and pianist each play at quadruple-forte, both instruments scored with notes approaching the lowest in their respective ranges. The tempo of this final section again returns to 54 beats per minute, but instead of being marked as “towering” and “majestic” as the previous slow sections, the directions now read “sorrowing, desolate.”\(^{40}\) In the piano part, Rogers writes chromatic cluster chords—a simultaneous sounding of all chromatic pitches between the two written notes. The playing of chromatic cluster chords is a contemporary piano technique first introduced by Henry Cowell in his 1917 piece entitled *The Tides of Manaunan*. Figure 3.5 demonstrates Cowell’s notation of the cluster chord technique.

\(^{40}\)Rogers, *A Savage Calculus*. 
As can be seen from the sample of Rogers’ score in figure 3.6, his chromatic cluster chords are to be played by both hands very low on the piano keyboard. The resulting sounds create a very harsh, muddy effect perhaps portraying the cloud of dust and debris created by the collapse of the World Trade Center towers. As the cluster chords and saxophone notes decrease in volume over time, the piano re-enters playing high, ethereal chords at a pianissimo dynamic.

Rogers again startles the audience on the last sixteenth subdivision of beat four in measure 216 by writing a subito quadruple forte cluster chord in the piano left hand with an extremely dissonant chord in the right hand. The pianist’s hands are separated by a
significant distance. Meanwhile, a triple piano note in the saxophone part is to be performed in a “very expressive” manner.

The energy and tension begin to increase as the saxophone part ascends in register and the rhythmic motion accelerates against a piano part that obfuscates a clear rhythmic pulse. On the final sixteenth subdivision of beat four in measure 225, short, loud, and pointillistic chords are written, reminiscent of the opening of the piece. The saxophone and piano parts remain written with opposite dynamic schemes until measure 229. As the parts begin again to sync with their written dynamics and the piece begins to fade out, Rogers writes one final jarring jab for the last note that seems to come out of nowhere. With the final very loud and low attack, the saxophone note gradually fades, terminated by an extremely quiet and low piano chord.

While A Savage Calculus is not programmatically about the terrorist attacks of September 11th, the composer effectively uses musical elements to portray the drastic changes to the nation’s social and political climate, and the citizens’ highly emotional and fearful state that the events caused throughout the country. The musical surprises created by the juxtaposition of radical differences in dynamic, tempo, range, and style in the piece are numerous.

For his first work written specifically for the saxophone, A Savage Calculus is remarkably complex and idiomatic for the instrument. Rogers clearly demonstrates his knowledge and understanding of the instrument by utilizing the entirety of the saxophone’s range, along with elements of jazz styling and avant-garde playing techniques. His collaboration with Leaman in the creation of this work produced a highly challenging piece that should be studied by any serious saxophone and piano duo. With
its rhythmic and technical complexities, *A Savage Calculus* requires an acute attention to detail for a successful performance, but, the satisfaction gained from a performance and the unique qualities it offers to an audience make the piece worthy of an in-depth study and programming on a concert.
In 2004, just three years after completing his first solo piece for saxophone, John Fitz Rogers composed a saxophone quartet, *Prodigal Child*. Like *A Savage Calculus*, *Prodigal Child* is incredibly complex rhythmically and texturally, utilizing many of the same rhythmic devices such as multi-layered hemiola, polyrhythms, and obscured meters. Other similarities to *A Savage Calculus* include drastic changes in musical character, and an angry, intense energy that permeates the texture. These complexities will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

The commissioning consortium for *Prodigal Child* was led by former Oberlin classmate and the current professor of saxophone at Penn State University, David Stambler. In addition to his teaching responsibilities at Penn State, Stambler is also the founder and tenor saxophonist of the Capitol Quartet, a professional saxophone quartet that regularly tours and records new music. Rogers dedicated the piece to Stambler for his work in spearheading the commission. The New Century Saxophone Quartet (abbreviated as NCSQ) and the San Francisco Saxophone Quartet also contributed to the commissioning of *Prodigal Child*. Connie Frigo, a former member of the NCSQ, writes in her dissertation:

In 2004, a consortium among three saxophone quartets (Capitol Quartet, New Century Saxophone Quartet, and San Francisco Saxophone Quartet) commissioned the American composer John Fitz Rogers. Rogers dedicated the work to David Stambler of the Capitol Quartet; because
Stambler approached him for the new work and subsequently organized the consortium that resulted in the creation of *Prodigal Child*. The three quartets were then cited on the first page of the score, underneath the title, as the commissionees, as each was equally responsible for contributing monetary funds toward the composer’s commissioning fee. Similar to Creston’s dedication [of *Rapsodie*] to Londeix, Rogers dedicates the work to the performer who was responsible for both suggesting the creation of the new work, and in this case, seeing through the details that allowed the consortium commission to materialize.\(^{41}\)

Of all of Rogers’ saxophone music to be presented in this document, *Prodigal Child* is the most frequently performed. According to the composer, the piece has received over one hundred documented performances, due mostly to the active touring schedules of the Capitol Quartet, the NCSQ, and the students of the saxophone professors that comprise these ensembles. As shown in Appendix A, the piece has also been performed in student chamber recital concerts and used in competitions at national conferences.\(^{42}\)

The NCSQ and the Capitol Quartet have both released commercially available recordings of the work. *Prodigal Child* can be heard on the New Century Saxophone Quartet’s recording entitled *On Track: Commissions, Volume 2*, their second recording of saxophone quartet music that they commissioned. The album was recorded in October of 2007 and released the following year. More recently, *Prodigal Child* was recorded by the Capitol Quartet on an album released in 2012 entitled *Flex*. In the program notes to their recording, the NCSQ members write:

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\(^{41}\) Frigo, 9.

\(^{42}\) Appendix A
One of the things that has remained a constant in our career is the desire to commission composers to continue writing good music for the saxophone. Like any artist that strives to better his craft, we feel that working on music that is totally new, with challenges that haven’t been presented before, can only help improve us as musicians.\(^{43}\)

In the same liner notes, the quartet writes a personal message to each of the composers whose work they recorded. To Rogers, they write: “John—you delivered a piece that lights us and our audiences on fire, no matter where we perform.”\(^{44}\)

*Jasper Magazine*, a bimonthly publication featuring artists from central South Carolina, featured an interview with Rogers by Tom Dempster in which Rogers discussed his compositional influences for the musical complexities found throughout his musical output. From this conversation with Rogers, Dempster writes:

Rogers cites Stravinsky and Ives—both musical chameleons unbound and uncowed by convention—as his primary influences…Rogers makes it clear that unlike Ives (and early Stravinsky), quotation does not figure prominently into his work—but, rather, he cites their fluidity. Elements arising through a musical texture and then disappearing; melodic ideas or colors coming into and out of focus before being lost in the mix; devising miniature, controlled, momentary harmonic systems in parallel with something purely tonal or non-tonal. Rogers also points to their pioneering usage of time’s mutability: Stravinsky for his ability to change pacing on a dime or recall small motives in unlikely ways, Ives for his ability to, in effect, break time through unbridled simultaneity and slippage...‘That kind of fluidity is something I like to think of regarding primarily time and rhythm, but with harmony as well.’ It can be confusing, perhaps, for some people who really want to pin down Rogers’ work but can’t. Works that include elements moving at different speeds, with

\(^{43}\) NCSQ Program notes to On Track, accessed online on website, September 5, 2015

\(^{44}\) Ibid.
numerous polyrhythmic or polytemporal devices—from orchestral works down to solo works—have been native to Rogers’ output for the past twenty years.\

*Prodigal Child* is indeed a piece that will excite and impress audiences with its energy and virtuosity, and, like his solo pieces, will pose significant challenges to the performers. Rogers describes the piece as:

...a kind of anguished response to domestic and international politics. The work features jarring shifts of character: sometimes lamenting and sorrowful, sometimes driving or sarcastic, oftentimes angry, and at the end of the work, nearly apocalyptic, with chromatic layerings of polymeter and complex cross rhythms.\

In the score’s preface, Rogers includes the text to Psalm 43:

> Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation: O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.  
> For thou art the God of my strength: why dost thou cast me off?  
> Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?  
>  
> O send out thy light and thy truth:  
> let them lead me;  
> let them bring me unto thy holy hill,  
> and to thy tabernacles.  
> Then will I go unto the altar of God,  
> unto God my exceeding joy:  
> yea, upon the harp will I praise thee,  
> O God my God.

> Why art thou cast down, O my soul?  
> And why art thou disquieted within me?  
> Hope in God: for I shall yet praise him,  
> who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

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46 Ibid.

This psalm is frequently interpreted to be a prayer by the psalmist to return to God’s favor, much like the parable of the prodigal son returns home to his father. Further, it represents the psalmist’s spiritual journey from depression to joy, from despair to hope, and illustrates the psalmist’s faith in spite of hardship.

As suggested by the inclusion of Psalm 43 and by the title “prodigal child”, the ideas of a journey from anger to joy and the concept of making a “return” are found throughout the piece. Rogers musically suggests the idea of “return” via a recurring motives. The piece begins with a plaintive chant-like theme in the soprano saxophone part. Most of the time this motive is presented as a singular voice, perhaps representing the feeling of isolation felt by the psalmist. This theme is interjected into the piece multiple times. The alto saxophone has the solo motive three times in the first part of the piece in a similar character—angry and intense. A fourth appearance in the alto saxophone part occurs at rehearsal letter I but in a different context, as a counterpoint to the melody in the soprano saxophone. Lastly, the tenor saxophone plays the solo at a slower tempo and in a gentle, expressive manner. The different appearances of the solo depicts, in the author’s opinion, a journey and ultimate transformation, as depicted in the Psalm and in the parable of the prodigal son.

As illustrated in figure 4.1, the form of Prodigal Child further demonstrates the idea of “return” or symmetry via sections that have similar character markings, tempo, and duration. The rehearsal letters coincide with the major structural divisions of the piece. The figure shows the score markings (rehearsal letters, character, and tempo) given by the composer.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Tempo</th>
<th>Duration (measures)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0–26</td>
<td>Turbulent</td>
<td>♩ = 120</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>27–53</td>
<td>(turbulent)</td>
<td>♩ = 120</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>54–66</td>
<td>Broader, Passionate</td>
<td>♩ = 104</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>67–79</td>
<td></td>
<td>♩ = 120</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>80–105</td>
<td>Calmer, playful</td>
<td>♩ = 120</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>106–119</td>
<td>(calmer, playful)</td>
<td>♩ = 120</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>120–135</td>
<td>Broader, passionate</td>
<td>♩ = 104</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>136–149</td>
<td></td>
<td>♩ = 120</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>150–233</td>
<td>Driving, relentless</td>
<td>♩ = 120</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>234–317</td>
<td>Soaring</td>
<td>♩ = 120</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>318–334</td>
<td>Calmer, Playful</td>
<td>♩ = 120</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>335–361</td>
<td>Majestic</td>
<td>♩ = 116</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>362–372</td>
<td>With freedom</td>
<td>♩ = 90</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>373–468</td>
<td>Driving, relentless</td>
<td>♩ = 120</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>469–524</td>
<td>Manic, crazed</td>
<td>♩ = 120</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>♩ = 180</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.1. A performer’s analysis of the form of *Prodigal Child*.

The piece begins with the solo motive played by the soprano saxophone. Rogers establishes the centricity of the opening around the pitch E. At rehearsal letter A, the centricity shifts to D, and by measure 35, the dissonant interval of a tritone (D and G-sharp) becomes prevalent. Interestingly, section F (with a centricity of G-sharp) and section J (with a centricity of D) are structurally similar, and harmonically linked by the tritone heard in measure 35.

At rehearsal letter B, the tempo is decreased slightly and the alto saxophone starts a solo is reminiscent of the opening soprano saxophone melody. The soprano saxophone joins in and plays part of the motive, split between the two voices. At measure 67, the tempo returns to 120 beats per minute with a new centricity of C. An increase in volume to rehearsal letter C occurs throughout the ensemble, but Rogers promptly terminates the
growth with a quarter note rest on the downbeat followed by a *subito piano* on beat two of measure eighty.

After the tempestuous opening sections, rehearsal letter C is the first of the “calmer, playful” sections. Rogers utilizes a variety of textures, including solo playing and duets in hocket-style writing. As in the end of the rehearsal letter B section, the ending of rehearsal letter C builds to a climax with volume, texture, and complexity, only to immediately drop again at rehearsal letter D. The shorter section of rehearsal letter D to rehearsal letter E acts as a continuation of the previous material, ending with a surge of notes.

The downbeat of measure 120, the start of rehearsal letter E, is marked at a slower tempo (104 beats per minute). The alto saxophone is again featured, playing the solo motive against an accompaniment of tenor and baritone saxophone and a countermelody in the soprano saxophone part. Within rehearsal letter E, the tempo returns to the original rate of 120 beats per minute at measure 136, which features another alto saxophone solo. The motive is marked as “angry, *molto espressivo*.” With an accented and explosive attack, the alto saxophonist propels the piece into rehearsal letter F, the first of the “driving, relentless” sections.

The musical material of rehearsal letter F establishes a rhythmic groove. Accuracy with articulation and emphasis of the accent marks to define beat groupings is absolutely essential to a successful performance, especially at the quiet dynamic range Rogers writes. There are a few one-measure loud interjections, but for much of the section, the rhythms and quiet dynamics create a simmering, seething effect. The volume and *tessitura* of the ensemble expands two measures before rehearsal letter G. Rather than
immediately drawing back as in the other sections, rehearsal letter G features the soprano saxophone melody “soaring” above the underlying turbulent rhythmic groove. At measure 286, the parts are marked “joyous” with a *forte* dynamic marking throughout the ensemble.

With another drastic shift of color and character, Rogers again terminates the climactic material at rehearsal letter H with a rest on the downbeat followed by a *subito pianissimo* marking on beat two. The section is again marked “calmer, playful” and directly correlates to the section at rehearsal letter C in regard to texture. With an acceleration of tempo and flourishes of notes throughout the ensemble, the piece is thrust into rehearsal letter I, marked at a *fortissimo* dynamic.

The alto saxophone again plays the solo motive from the beginning of the piece. This fourth and final statement of the solo in the alto saxophone voice is marked as “majestic” instead of being angry or biting in nature. Most of the piece is full of bubbling, frenetic energy that explodes in volume or textural density. There are a few moments of sheer calm and clarity however—moments where rich chords are suspended in time and the piece is finally allowed to breathe and release the tension created from rhythm, meter, and tempo. Amidst the turbulent activity, there is a brief section of calmness that begins in measure 351 with a long, quiet note played by the soprano saxophone and followed by a section of long chords.

In measure 360 the tenor saxophone emerges from the chord with a beautiful solo that further dissolves the intensity of the piece. A new section emerges, marked “slower, with freedom.” Rogers, *Prodigal Child.*
voice in a gentler style recalls the chant-like soprano saxophone solo at the beginning of the piece. Figure 4.2 demonstrates this radical change to the texture and mood as the tenor saxophone plays a solo written diatonically in concert D-flat major.

Figure 4.2. Tenor saxophone solo in measure 360, a section of textural calmness and transparency.

It is interesting to reflect on Rogers’ choice in composing the solo in this section for the tenor saxophone, as it was David Stambler, the tenor saxophonist with the Capitol Quartet, to whom the piece was dedicated as the head of the commissioning consortium. This is the only time that the solo is truly gentle, reflective, and diatonic, transformed from the journey through the turbulent and angry sections. Unlike the end of the alto
saxophone solo at rehearsal letter F (measure 150), the tenor saxophone solo does not end with an explosive articulation to start rehearsal letter J (measure 373). Rather, the note is marked at a triple piano dynamic. The tritone relationship of G-sharp to D makes a return as well. The centricity of rehearsal letter F was G-sharp and the centricity of rehearsal letter J is D.

As was the case with rehearsal letter F, rehearsal letter J is marked as “driving, relentless.” A similar rhythmic groove is established, but as will be subsequently discussed, Rogers uses complex rhythmic devices to disintegrate the texture as the piece approaches the final section, rehearsal letter K. Labeled as “manic, crazed” rehearsal letter K to the end of the piece is highly intricate with multi-layered rhythmic devices at work. The piece comes to a climactic and crashing end with each saxophonist playing an explosive note that when played together forms an E major-minor seventh chord.

In addition to being highly structured in regard to form, Prodigal Child is also extremely intricate in regard to rhythm. For performers, the greatest challenges to learning and performing this intricate and challenging quartet are the numerous complex rhythmic devices. Filled with tension, turbulent energy, angst, and turmoil, much like A Savage Calculus, Prodigal Child is reliant upon hemiola, frequently changing meters, and irregular beat divisions. To obscure the meter, Rogers often uses ties to obfuscate downbeats, or starts phrase entrances on weak divisions of beats. From a performer’s standpoint, listening for the accented emphasis of metric groupings and an awareness of instrument pairing are two essential considerations throughout the piece. The accent marks will especially help clarify beat groupings and shed a light through the darkness of obscured meter and texture.
Of these rhythmic devices, the most prevalent throughout *Prodigal Child* is hemiola. The use of hemiola is common in Rogers’ music, due in part to his study of hand-drumming techniques as a graduate student as discussed in chapter two.

Percussionist Eugene Novotney confirms the importance of hemiola in West African music in his doctoral dissertation from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He writes: “The 3:2 relationship (and permutations of it such as 3:4 and 3:8) is the foundation of most typical polyrhythmic textures found in West African music.” In addition to the 3:2 hemiola, there are several other ratios that Rogers uses that pose a challenge to performers, including 5:4 and 6:5.

As can be seen in figure 4.3, measure 446 has a compound meter of 6/16 that is defined in the lower two parts. The alto saxophone part creates a hemiola against the two lower voices (tenor and baritone saxophone) by dividing the measure into three eighth notes. Another layer of 3:2 hemiola is created by the relationship between the soprano saxophone part and the lower parts.

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Another rhythmic device found throughout the piece is a stacking of different beat divisions. In figure 4.4, Rogers combines complex beat divisions in measure 99 using 5:4, 6:5, and 3:2 ratios. Rogers also uses irregular divisions of beats to manipulate time in a similar fashion to *A Savage Calculus*. Figure 4.5 demonstrates just one of several instances in which irregular groupings of notes occur. As can be seen in measure 104, the first two beats should be occupied by four eighth notes, but Rogers forces five eighth notes into two beats. Beat three should be also be comprised of two eighth notes in this simple meter, but Rogers uses triplets instead, further compounded by obscuring the downbeat of beat three via a tie to the last note of the second beat. A feeling of early arrival to beat three is felt because of the accented note tied to the downbeat of beat three.
After the calmness and beauty of the tenor saxophone solo, the piece begins to regain its turbulent rhythmic energy again at rehearsal letter J. The piece reaches its height of intensity and dense rhythmic complexity at rehearsal letter K as the texture collapses into a “manic, crazed” state. A metric modulation converts the sixteenth note into a triplet sixteenth note, again highlighting the ratio of 3:2. In the measure before rehearsal letter K, the quarter note is marked at a tempo of 180 beats per minute. After the metric modulation, the new quarter note tempo at rehearsal letter K is 120 beats per minute. This final rehearsal letter to the end of the piece presents music that is controlled cacophony and displays Rogers’ compositional style at its densest.

The ending of the piece is filled with polyrhythms, cross-rhythms, and hemiola. Rogers attended a rehearsal of the piece when the Abraxas Saxophone Quartet was preparing to perform it at a *Southern Exposure New Music Series* concert in the fall of 2013. His comment to the group about “the infamous rehearsal letter K” to the end of the piece was: “It is easy once you get it”. Figure 4.6 demonstrates the rhythmic complexity and the tempo modulation that occurs at rehearsal letter K.
Multiple layers of hemiola can be observed between the four saxophone parts in the way they are notated throughout the changing meters. It further demonstrates the importance of the accent mark that Rogers uses to help define rhythmic groups. To successfully rehearse this section, score study by all members of the ensemble is a critical initial step. Rogers frequently pairs two instruments together, their individual parts locking together like puzzle pieces. It is crucial to know which instrument each is pairing with to help the parts securely lock into place. The texture, as can be seen in the example, is visually dense, and is no less dense aurally when performing the work. Careful study of the score and excruciatingly slow practice as an ensemble will be necessary, but worth the effort for a successful performance.

Figure 4.6. Metric modulation leading into rehearsal letter K and hemiola in dense textural writing. The quarter note tempi are related by the ratio of 3:2 (180:120), measures 467–477.
The ending of *Prodigal Child* is similar in many ways to *A Savage Calculus* in its chromatic layering of pitches and rhythms that cascade downward to the final note. Figure 4.7 (measures 517–524) demonstrates the overlap of note groupings and the absolutely apocalyptic manner in which the piece ends. By beat four of measure 519, the ensemble members should focus their attention on the soprano saxophone part to ensure that all four parts correctly align for the final five measures.
Figure 4.7. Ending of *Prodigal Child* demonstrating the height of the rhythmic and textural complexity, measures 517–524.

Despite the dense texture and complicated rhythms of the ending section, the rhythms throughout the score do intricately lock together. Rogers, with his simple, yet profound comment was completely correct. Once rehearsed slowly enough, and once the group understands the composite rhythms taking place, the rhythmic texture will lock into place if the members of the ensemble are secure with their individual parts and perform with great attention to detail and accuracy.

From a performer’s point of view, *Prodigal Child* is a high quality piece of chamber music that is worthy of the effort, time, and challenges to accurately learn and perform the piece. Rogers’ use of varied textures that feature solo playing, pairing parts together to form duets, as well as thickly scored sections in which each individual part is responsible for playing its own set of music make the piece suitable for chamber music concerts and competitions. With driving rhythms and rich harmonies, it is a piece that impeccably fits into the standard repertoire for collegiate and professional saxophone quartets as it will excited audiences. While *Prodigal Child* is full of rhythmic challenges and the score and parts look intimidating at the surface, as Rogers himself said, “it is easy once you get it.”
CHAPTER FIVE

RELEASE

The year 2006 brought with it two more important saxophone compositions by Rogers—*Release* for alto saxophone and marimba, and *The Rivers*, a concerto for alto saxophone and wind ensemble. While *The Rivers* is a fantastic piece, it will not be discussed in this document meant to focus on chamber music. *Release* was commissioned by the South Carolina chapter of the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) and dedicated to the RoseWind Duo, a saxophone and percussion duo of Rogers’ colleagues Clifford Leaman (saxophone) and Scott Herring (percussion). Rogers completed work on the score in September of 2006, and the piece was premiered on November 3\(^{rd}\) of the same year at the South Carolina Music Teachers Association Conference held at Winthrop University in Rock Hill, South Carolina by the RoseWind Duo.

Clifford Leaman and Scott Herring have commissioned pieces, performed, toured, and recorded together since 2005, when they formed the RoseWind Duo. The duo recorded *Release*, along with pieces written by their colleagues including *Luminescent* (Reginald Bain), and *A Mile of Phrygian at 60* (Tayloe Harding), at the School of Music Recital Hall. They released their recording, named after Rogers’ piece, in 2008.

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\(^{51}\) Appendix A.
The earthy, deep, and rich sound of the marimba combined with the soulful, powerful, and sweet sound of a saxophone provides a plethora of textural and timbral options for composers to manipulate. Percussionists and composers have an assortment of pitched instruments available that are keyboard-based including marimba, vibraphone, xylophone, glockenspiel, crotales, bells, and chimes. With so many potential pairings, the specific combination of saxophone and marimba is unique. Despite the possibilities offered by this instrumentation, it remains an underrepresented pairing in chamber music literature.

Writing and performing chamber music that includes marimba or other keyboard percussion instruments poses a set of logistical challenges and obstacles that must be taken into consideration. Perhaps composers have not further explored this combination because of the difficulties it presents to performers. One such performance challenge arises when considering the acoustical properties of the marimba in relation to the performance venue. Unlike a piano, the marimba is not capable of achieving the same dynamic as an open-lid grand piano played at full volume. Both the percussionist and the saxophonist must be highly alert to the volume and acoustic properties of the ensemble and the performance hall to ensure a proper balance of parts at all times.

In a piece like Release, the percussionist must also carefully select his mallets. Professional percussionists typically have a graduated set of mallets to produce different timbres and articulations on the marimba bars. The clarity of the marimba’s articulation is crucial to rhythmically holding the ensemble together. However, the blending of timbres of the saxophone and marimba is also a key component of this piece. The marimbist must select a mallet that allows for a soft, rounded sound when played gently and a sharper,
clearer sound when firmly struck to aid the saxophonist in hearing the rhythmic patterns clearly.

A final performance challenge for the saxophonist to consider is accounting for the slight difference in matching intonation with the marimba. Pianos are the more frequent chamber partner for saxophones and are traditionally tuned to a reference pitch of A4 equaling 440 hertz (Hz). Most commercial marimbas are set to a slightly higher fixed pitch of A4 equaling 442 Hz, producing a brighter tone that assists the marimba’s sound to clearly project against a densely scored ensemble like a wind band or an orchestra.\textsuperscript{52} While a reference tuning difference of two hertz may not seem significant, the prudent saxophonist will notice the change and must account for this divergence when tuning and performing. Matching the slightly higher intonation of the marimba is imperative to blending timbres as playing under pitch (flat) is a more undesirable and detectable error than playing slightly above the pitch (sharp).

Despite the challenges listed above, \textit{Release} has received numerous performances both nationally and abroad. As documented in Appendix A, performances of \textit{Release} have taken place at the University of South Carolina, throughout the state of South Carolina, across the United States, as well as around the world.\textsuperscript{53} It should be noted that the RoseWind duo and both current and former University of South Carolina saxophone students of Clifford Leaman have been largely responsible for many of these performances. However, Appendix A may not accurately reflect every performance of


\textsuperscript{53} Appendix A.
the piece, or any of the other pieces tracked, as its assembly was contingent upon
performers reporting their performances to Rogers. Thus Release may be performed more
frequently and widely by duos who have not reported their performances to Rogers. It
should further be noted that Rogers created a version of Release for solo clarinet in place
of the solo saxophone voice. The author did not account for performances of the clarinet
version, as it would exceed the scope of this document.

In general, Release is rhythmically simpler than A Savage Calculus to
comprehend and to perform. However, the piece is not without its challenges. Whereas A
Savage Calculus demonstrated Rogers’ affinity for complex rhythmic devices like sudden
and drastic tempo changes and polyrhythm, Release highlights another part of Rogers’
oeuvre—octatonicism and chromaticism. Both the saxophone and marimba parts feature
these contemporary scales throughout the piece. The saxophone part contains multiple
passages of idiosyncratic and virtuosic woodwind-style writing showcasing the technical
proficiencies of the saxophonist through fast-paced linear melodies that require agility in
finger technique and, at times, knowledge of alternate fingerings.

Rogers previously used chromatic and octatonic scales in rapid, technical
flourishes in a composition for solo electric guitar nine years prior to composing Release.
The piece, entitled Push, was written in 1997 for solo electric guitar with distortion at the
request of guitarist Michael Nicolella. Push is visually, formally, rhythmically, and
melodically similar to Release, but via intensity and electronic distortion of the sound,
achieves a very different aural effect.

In the liner notes to the RoseWind Duo’s recording of Release, Rogers
acknowledges the similarities between the pieces when he writes:
‘Release’ is a kind of companion piece to an earlier work titled ‘Push’. The previous piece, scored for solo electric guitar, consists of unrelentingly fast lines and repeated notes played at loud volume with distortion. Those fast lines move headlong into guitar power chords and blues-like passages, only to return to the repeated notes of the beginning. In ‘Release’, I took a similar approach in that there are fast lines as well as repeated notes and chromatic figures articulated by both the saxophone and marimba. Though the form of both works is similar, in ‘Release’ the music is much quieter and gentler, and rather than ‘pushing’ forward into distorted chords and heightened energy, the momentum and tension of the repeated notes ‘releases’ into a somewhat more playful, dance-like section.⁵⁴

Suffice it to say that while many similarities exist in the form and musical content between Push and Release, and that Rogers clearly used techniques and ideas from the initial composition in the latter, this research project focuses on saxophone repertoire, hence the following analysis will concentrate on Release. Comparative references between the two pieces will be made, but only select aspects of Push will be mentioned in how they relate to similar features in Release.

To begin the exploration of Release, the first task is to observe the form of the piece. Other important and unique aspects of the piece include the musical textures Rogers uses to define the form, and the specific challenges posed by closely matching the timbres of the saxophone and marimba. The following pages will address issues of form, texture, and timbre from a performer’s perspective to aid future ensembles in preparing this piece for public performance.

As demonstrated in figure 5.1, the piece is a large-scale ABA’ form with a very short transition between the opening A section and B section.

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<thead>
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<th>Duration</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1–73</td>
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<td>Transition</td>
<td>74–76</td>
<td>3 measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>77–199</td>
<td>123 measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A’</td>
<td>200–259</td>
<td>60 measures</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Figure 5.1. A performer’s analysis of the form of Release.

The melodic material of the two outer A sections can be described as frenetic, tense, and full of angst while the volume is confined within a soft to medium-soft dynamic range. Technical proficiency in playing octatonic scales is critical to the outer A sections, as is the use of chromatic or alternate fingerings to navigate the passages and to blend timbre. The musical material of the A sections is very similar in sound, rhythm, and harmonic content to Push. In contrast to the A sections, the longer, middle B section of Release is dance-like, melodic, and playful.

Performers must be cognizant of how Rogers employs the element of texture in Release and how the changes in texture define the form. A musical texture is defined as the interplay between melody, accompaniment, harmony, and rhythm to create a unified tapestry of sound. In the outer A sections, Rogers weaves the saxophone and marimba parts together as if the instruments were involved in a musical game of tag. There are several rhythmic and melodic occurrences of one instrument starting a musical line or phrase slightly before the other. As can be seen in figure 5.2, sometimes the saxophone initiates the line, and sometimes the marimba initiates the change. Unless the performers
are aware of which part leads, the change can prove to be aurally and metrically deceiving.

Figure 5.2. Altered initiation of melodic lines. In measure 19, the saxophone initiates the change. In measure 25, the marimba initiates the change.

Another frequently used device in the A sections is hocket—a technique in which a musical line is divided between musical voices, with one voice dropping out and the other voice filling in the melody. These short call-and-response instances demonstrated in figure 5.3 can also prove to be deceiving to performers in the midst of a live performance.
As in *Push*, the use of thirty-second notes in a tremolo-like effect helps to establish a sense of centricity. Expansion and contraction of intervallic tremolos around the centric pitch occur in the A sections in the saxophone part while the marimba part adds the notes encompassed in a cluster chord.

The first A section comes to an end by texturally “releasing” the tension and angst of the opening. This effect is achieved when the saxophone’s held high concert B in measure 72 *decrescendo* above the repeated B minor seventh chord in the marimba. The marimba chord condenses to the seventh of the chord, concert A, as a single centric pitch, signaling the start of a brief transition.

Measures 74 through 76 serve as a bridge from the opening material to the dance-like middle section. On the last sixteenth note on the downbeat of measure 75, the saxophonist enters on concert A5, an octave lower than the marimba, and at the same
extremely quiet dynamic on which the marimba ends. The saxophonist then crescendos the alternating octaves, propelling the piece into the middle section.

The middle B section, marked as rehearsal letter E, is a beautiful, soaring, dance-like section with changing meters and open “power chords”—dyads alternating between open perfect fourths and perfect fifths—in the marimba part. Texturally, a two-bar rhythmic groove is established by the marimba as the meter alternates between 6/16 and 4/16. At rehearsal letter F, the meter changes to 4/4. Rogers marks the section as “gently, dreamy.” A new, one-measure rhythmic groove is established by the repetitive patterns in the marimba part. The saxophonist must carefully count the rests before his entrance in this section as Rogers again employs a challenging textural device—a rhythmic misalignment the saxophone melody. As shown in figure 5.4, the saxophone enters on the weak second sixteenth subdivision of beat four in measure 97 playing a melody that is out of synchronization with the marimba part. The marimba continues the metric groove underneath saxophone entrances that frequently occur on irregular subdivisions or on metrically weak beats.

\[55\text{ Rogers, Release score.}\]
Rehearsal letters G and H similarly pair together and are analogous in style and texture to rehearsal letters E and F in their meter and rhythmic grooves. The alternation of the material of the two sections (E and F with G and H) serve as foils to each other within the B section, which is a foil itself to the outer A sections. As the middle section of the piece progresses, the alternations of these subsections becomes slightly more complex, as if variations. The middle, dance-like B section of the piece serves as a stark contrast to the agitation and angst brought on by the surrounding material.

Rehearsal letter M marks the start of the final section of the piece. As with large rounded binary form, Rogers returns to the textural, rhythmic, and motivic material from the beginning. Through the use of octatonic scalar passages and pulsating, repeated chords, Rogers crafts the piece to its exciting climax in the last measure marked at a triple forte in both the saxophone and marimba parts. The intense ending is both the loudest dynamic peak in the piece, as well as the highest note for the saxophonist—a concert E-flat (transposed for the saxophone, the written altissimo note C). The climax of volume
and tessitura is texturally interesting to note because the zenith of the piece does not resolve or offer a sense of calm. The energy and texture simply releases into silence.

Like form and texture, another important musical element worthy of discussion that serves to set Release apart from other repertoire is Rogers’ compositional use of timbre. As will be demonstrated, striving to achieve a unified timbre between the saxophone and the marimba is another key aspect to a successful performance of Release. Both the saxophonist and marimbist must have a familiarity with the other part. An understanding of the other player’s part is crucial to not becoming hopelessly lost in the wash of sound and notes created by the melting of timbres, especially in an acoustically active room.

Distinguishing the difference between the sound of the saxophone and the sound of the marimba is one of the major challenges in performing Release. Though the instruments have distinctly different timbres, both instruments frequently play at a minimal dynamic and in the same register, causing the aural identification of each specific timbre to become more challenging. At the beginning of the score, Rogers includes specific instructions for the performers with regard to timbre: “In sections where pitches and lines overlap (such as the beginning section until rehearsal letter ‘E’), the alto saxophone and marimba should strive to balance and blend their individual timbres together as much as possible”. Another performance request from Rogers written in the score is to “keep lines as fluid and smooth as possible; do not accent or pulse groups of notes; keep key clicks as quiet as possible”. It was due in part to the key noise of the saxophone that Rogers created a version of Release for clarinet.

\[56\] Ibid.
The final musical element to be discussed in *Release* is its tempo. As an intuitive composer, Rogers possesses a deeply ingrained and acute sense of tempo and time. In an interview with the author, Rogers discusses his compositional use of tempo and time:

> I think a lot like a playwright. I think about trying to create a dramatic arc to a piece. One thing that I think is really important is understanding how a piece moves dramatically, and how composers play with a sense of time—of pushing time forward or relaxing time. Because that is our medium—we are dealing with only sound and silence and time.\(^{57}\)

Since *Push* and *Release* are akin in their rhythmic content, reliance on timbral effects, and technical proficiency playing octatonic and chromatic scales, it is curious that the tempo of the two pieces is similar, but not exactly the same. *Push* is marked at a quarter note of “circa 88 beats per minute,”\(^ {58}\) while *Release* is marked at a quarter note of “circa 80 beats per minute”.\(^ {59}\) The score to *Release* includes the words “mysterious, fervent”\(^ {60}\) as a mood description next to the numerical tempo marking. No mood descriptors appear in the score to *Push* although Rogers does specify for the guitarist to use distortion. The opening of these two pieces in nearly identical, save for the tempo. Figure 5.5 and figure 5.6 demonstrate the visual similarities between first few measures of the saxophone part of *Release* and the guitar part of *Push*, respectively.

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\(^{57}\) Appendix B.


\(^{59}\) Rogers, *Release*.

\(^{60}\) Ibid.
In his compositions, Rogers is keenly aware of the tempo that will allow the music to be most effective and playable. Because *Release* and *Push* are so similar in style, the author asked Rogers why the tempo marking of *Release* was marked eight beats per minute slower than the tempo marking of *Push*. Rogers’ response to the question was as follows: “It’s been a long time since I’ve thought about those pieces, but I doubt I was thinking consciously about the difference between 88 and 80 in the two works. I probably just thought 80 worked better for *Release*."

It is possible that Rogers settled on the slightly slower tempo to *Release* while working with the performers, as even the most technically proficient of saxophonists will have to diligently practice the numerous technical passages. Additional challenges arise due to the fact that the melodic passages are written with thirty-second note rhythms which gives the visual and aural impression of a frantic, frenetic speed, further complicated because of the changing meters and odd metric placement of phrases. Another tempo consideration could have been that a successful performance of *Release*

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61 John Fitz Rogers, email to author, July 20th, 2015.
requires absolute precision from two musicians performing technically challenging parts whereas *Push* is an unaccompanied work, making the slightly slower tempo of *Release* much appreciated.

The use of saxophone and marimba as a duo certainly makes *Release* a diverse and important piece in the contemporary saxophone’s repertoire. While a multitude of pieces exist for saxophone and piano, pieces for saxophone and marimba such as *Release* should not be overlooked by performers. Likewise, the combination of saxophone and marimba should not be ignored by today’s contemporary composers. While the instrumentation poses certain logistical concerns and creates an interesting set of challenges for performers, the concerns and challenges can easily be overcome. This composition features Rogers’ affinity for octatonicism and chromaticism in his masterful textural writing and beautiful melodies. While not without its challenges, the piece is decidedly easier to comprehend for performers and audiences than *A Savage Calculus* and *Prodigal Child*, and will provide enjoyment for the performers and the audience alike.
CHAPTER SIX

BREAKING

*Breaking* for soprano saxophone and piano is Rogers’ most recent saxophone composition as of the submission of this document. It was completed in June of 2011. Rogers composed *Breaking* for a consortium of saxophonists led by Christopher Creviston, professor of saxophone at Arizona State University. Other members contributing to the commission included Joseph Lulloff, professor of saxophone at Michigan State University, David Stambler, professor of saxophone at Penn State University, and Rogers’ colleague from the University of South Carolina, Clifford Leaman. As with *Release*, Rogers created an alternate version of *Breaking* for solo clarinet in place of soprano saxophone.

In comparison to his other chamber works for saxophone, *Breaking* is the most easily comprehensible piece in his output for performers and audiences. It is rhythmically, melodically, and texturally straightforward to learn and perform, especially when compared with the extreme challenges posed by his earlier pieces. That is not to say, however, that *Breaking* is a “light” piece of repertoire like the early commissions of Adolphe Sax or the novelty pieces of Rudy Wiedoft. On the contrary, *Breaking* requires a wide range of performance styles and utilizes a broad spectrum of emotions in each of its multifarious movements that will delight audiences and test performers.

Unlike his previous pieces, which are written as one continuous movement, *Breaking* is a “suite of ten short character pieces, each of which portrays a different idea
of ‘breaking’.” The ten movements of Breaking exhibit Rogers’ eclectic and diverse sources of inspiration and his command of modern musical languages. The movements navigate through a variety of twentieth-century musical styles including serialism, jazz, and minimalism. A portrait of various genres of twentieth-century musical styles, Breaking will entertain and please audiences while simultaneously satisfying and challenging performers. In the program notes at the beginning of the score, Rogers writes:

The movements range from bold and joyous (break open, break into, break away); to fragile and fractured (break with, break off, break up); to shades of dark and light (break down, break through); to lyrical (break free); to playful (break in—which borrows musical ideas from Anton Webern’s Symphony, Opus 21). The work also exploits various kinds of saxophone techniques, including alternate fingerings (break with) and jazz idioms (break into, break down).

Despite being the most recent composition discussed in this document, Breaking has already proven to be the most performed of Rogers’ solo saxophone pieces when compared to the number of documented performances of A Savage Calculus and Release. As stated in chapter four, Prodigal Child is the most performed of Rogers’ four saxophone chamber pieces. Tracking performances of the saxophone and piano version of Breaking has yielded at least forty known performances, and most likely many more performances not reported to the composer. As with Release, the performance tracking research in Appendix A has not taken into account any performances of the clarinet and piano version.


63 Ibid.
In the author’s estimation, the piece’s broader accessibility for performers and audiences of the general population who have not been trained to musically understand complex polyrhythmic devices or other advanced techniques found in Rogers’ earlier works alike is the greatest contributing factor as to why it is the most frequently performed of his solo saxophone works. *Breaking* will also soon become the most recorded of Rogers’ solo saxophone works. Christopher Creviston and Clifford Leaman have both professionally recorded the work, though the recordings are not yet commercially available as of the writing of this document.

On the whole, a performance of *Breaking* will last approximately sixteen minutes. Each of the ten movements is unique in sound, mood, character, and style. Throughout the piece, Rogers utilizes a few modern avant-garde performance techniques, more so than in the other chamber saxophone pieces discussed in this document. Jazz-inspired sounds such as “scooping” up to a written pitch and growling to create a vocal, guttural sound on a pitch can be heard, as well as the use of alternate fingerings to shade pitch and alter timbre through timbre trills. Additionally, Rogers calls for circular breathing in the last movement, although he does include ossia parenthetical markings to delineate specific locations for the saxophonist to take a breath should the performer struggle with the circular breathing technique.

**Movement One: “break open”**

The first movement, entitled “break open”, begins with three beats of powerful, ascending octave F’s in the piano part that crescendo to silence on beat four. The saxophone enters with a rapid, ascending natural minor scale on the second half of beat 64.

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64 All movement titles in *Breaking* have been left as lowercase by the composer.
one followed by a “suspended” silence in both parts. Rogers describes the performance instructions in the score as “bounding, bold,” an effect achieved by powerful ascending octaves in the left hand of the piano and the blazingly fast scale played by the saxophone.

In measure ten, the saxophone and piano play a brief canon in a markedly jazz-influenced style. Rogers uses a similar technique observed in Release, writing lines in which the saxophone and the accompanying voice chase each other. Figure 6.1 demonstrates this canonic technique, as the saxophone starts the melody and the piano entrance echoes the saxophone an eighth note later.

![Canonic jazz melody in saxophone and piano parts, measures 10–13.](image)

Figure 6.1. Canonic jazz melody in saxophone and piano parts, measures 10–13.

In measure eleven, the left hand of the piano starts a descending E whole tone scale motif from the fourth note of the scale to the first (A-sharp, G-sharp, F-sharp, E), and then the pattern is repeated on a G-flat whole tone scale, an enharmonic major second higher (C, C-sharp).

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65 Rogers, Breaking.
B-flat, A-flat, G-flat). These patterns are written as eighth notes, which nicely fit into the simple meter of the movement. In measure twelve, Rogers augments the rhythm as the left hand plays a descending A-flat whole tone scale from the fourth tone (D), writing the rhythm as dotted eighth notes, or as an eighth note tied to a sixteenth note when needed to clarify the downbeats, instead of as eighth notes. While the left hand plays the whole tone scalar figures, the right hand plays quartal figures in sixteenth notes (A, D, G), (C, F, B-flat), (D-flat, A-flat, E-flat), (B-flat, F, C).

Measure twenty serves as the start of a recapitulation of the beginning melody, but the saxophone melodic material is transposed a fourth higher than the original presentation. Figure 6.2 shows an excerpt from the score from measures two through five, and the same melodic material transposed up by a fourth in measures twenty through twenty-three.
Figure 6.2. Measures 2–5 and measures 20–23 demonstrating a higher statement of melodic material by the saxophone.

**Movement Two: “break with”**

The second movement is a stark contrast to the bold, powerful opening movement. The directions at the beginning of the movement read “sweet, sad, delicate.”\(^66\)

In this movement, Rogers calls for the saxophonist to use alternate fingerings to shade the timbre of repeated pitches. This contemporary saxophone technique is called a timbre trill, or using a *bisbigliando* fingering. Likewise, the pianist plays repeated pitches in irregular rhythmic intervals to give the impression of a “ghostly mandolin.” Rogers writes specific instructions for how this effect in both parts should sound:

\(^{66}\) Ibid.
The repeated notes should be played as rapidly, *legato*, and unaccented as possible. However, the timbral trill should be a little irregular, like extremely soft, rapid Morse code, or a slightly shuttering, ghostly mandolin. (Simply trilling on the same note with the same hand on the piano will produce such irregular rhythms.) The effect should be exceedingly delicate and fragile, but also a little choked and struggling. The saxophonist is free to explore various combinations of alternate fingerings beyond the ones given, provided such fingerings are audible but do not change the pitch by any discernable amount. (Audible key clicking should be avoided).\(^{67}\)

The extremely quiet volume and timbral trills of the saxophone paired with the stuttering, repeated piano notes yields an unearthly, ghostly mood. Both the saxophone and piano parts are delicate and fragile with the music living in the irregularity of the sounds and rhythms.

To begin the movement, the saxophonist must wait for the pianist to silently depress and “catch” the following notes with the *sostenuto* pedal: F-sharp, G-sharp, A, B, C-sharp, D, E, F-sharp, and A. Using the *sostenuto* pedal will allow these strings to vibrate when they are played and will also allow the strings to be activated by natural overtones when they are part of the overtone series of other notes sounding. The effect of this pedaling technique is an eerie, hollow sound like a musical echo or a whisper.

The *una corda* pedal is also depressed to alter the piano’s timbre and create as delicate a sound and attack as possible. Having both the *sostenuto* and the *una corda* pedal depressed at the same time will allow for the soft, delicate timbre, but will also permit the staccato notes to speak shortly in the left hand. It will also allow the notes silently depressed at the beginning of the movement to ring faintly and not decay

\(^{67}\) Ibid.
immediately when struck and released. The piano and saxophone should strive to match their individual sounds and timbres as closely as possible.

Throughout the saxophone part, Rogers suggests appropriate fingering choices to create the desired timbral effect. Rogers’ fingering suggestions come from his collaborations with Christopher Creviston while composing the piece. When the author performed this movement, he utilized the alternate fingerings as suggested under the guidance of Dr. Clifford Leaman found in figure 6.3. The note names shown in the “Notes” column of figure 6.3 are given as the written, transposed soprano saxophone notation, not in concert pitch.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Note</th>
<th>Notated Timbral Fingering</th>
<th>Alternate Suggestion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F#5</td>
<td>Chromatic (fork) F# and trill on key 5</td>
<td>F# (regular fingering) and trill key 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E5</td>
<td>Trill palm keys D and D#</td>
<td>Trill palm D# key only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D#5</td>
<td>Trill top Right Hand palm key (E)</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C#5</td>
<td>Vent C# fingering with octave key and key 3, trill right hand keys 4, 5, 6</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A#4</td>
<td>Play with bis key, trill keys 4, 5, 6</td>
<td>Play with bis key, trill key 4 only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4</td>
<td>Trill on key 3</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6.3. Comparison of timbral fingerings (“Alternate Suggestions” by Clifford Leaman and author).

**Movement Three: “break in”**

The third movement is a “mechanical, but playful, mischievous”\(^{68}\) homage to serialism. In this movement, Rogers uses ideas from Anton Webern’s *Symphony*, Opus 21. A masterpiece of twelve-tone serialism, Webern’s *Symphony* has a much different instrumentation—clarinet, bass clarinet, two French horns, harp, and strings.

\(^{68}\) Ibid.
One of the most striking resemblances to Webern’s work is the interplay between the piano and the saxophone through hocket-like writing, or, dividing the melody between the voices. While there appears to be open spaces created by rests, Rogers states that performers should “hold note full duration” giving every pitch the exact value indicated. The textural space created by this technique places a great deal of emphasis and importance on each individual sound. This technique used by Rogers and Webern visually creates seemingly large gaps on individual staves and aurally sounds pointillistic and random if the parts are played in isolation, but when performed together form a complete, comprehensible melody.

**Movement Four: “break into”**

Movement four abandons the serious, academic side of twentieth-century music displayed in the previous movement in favor of another mainstay of contemporary music, jazz. “Break into” is a boisterous and exuberant movement in which the saxophonist and pianist imitate the call and response of a preacher and the congregation in a Southern Gospel-like style. Throughout the movement, Rogers’ appreciation of boogie-woogie piano and jazz can be heard. While not nearly as difficult for either player as the jazz styling in *A Savage Calculus*, this particular movement recalls many of the same harmonies and boogie-woogie style octave eighth notes played by the pianist’s left hand.

In the saxophone part, Rogers marks specific places to include the technique of scooping pitches. This is a common technique used by jazz saxophonists in particular, as early players imitated the intricacies of the human voice singing gospel and blues songs. The author has been in the audience for live performances of the piece by Christopher Creviston and Clifford Leaman who also used another common jazz technique, growling,
on certain notes. Although the growling effect is not notated in the score by Rogers himself, and while fastidious with his markings, Rogers personally indicated to Leaman that he approves of the occasional addition of a growl or other idiomatic jazz tone techniques so long as it fit within the character of the music. Jazz is, after all, an inherently more spontaneous form of music that relies on imitation of sound, not written notation.

An interesting element to point out in this movement is a tempo modulation that occurs between measure 27 and measure 28. Rogers converts the quarter note tempo of 120 beats per minute of the opening to a new quarter note tempo of 160 beats per minute. The conversion occurs via the dotted eighth note of the original tempo. In measure 27 the left hand of the piano plays the dotted eighth notes to aurally allow for the conversion. Figure 6.4 shows the tempo modulation by bracketing the dotted eighth note rhythms that serve to convert the tempo. The first measure of the new tempo should be easy to align as the pianist simply plays quarter notes at the faster speed.

The movement’s faster middle section is stylistically similar to *A Savage Calculus*. The left hand of the piano plays a boogie-woogie style bass line while the
saxophone plays fast, jazz-inspired passages. Polyrhythms are present in this section as well, most often as quarter note triplets in the saxophone part against quarter notes and eighth notes in the piano part.

The ending of the movement is also analogous to the ending of *A Savage Calculus* as it comes to a crashing conclusion. The saxophonist plays a descending chromatic scale to a very loud low C held for fourteen beats over a huge cluster chord in the left hand of the piano, and a low, closely voiced chord in the piano right hand. The saxophone releases the held note while the piano maintains the chords for an additional fourteen seconds. As the loud piano chord slowly decays, the saxophonist must remain in playing position to heighten the sense of tension in preparation for the start of movement five. Rogers marks in the score: “remain motionless; quasi *attacca* next movement.”

**Movement Five: “break off”**

Like the previous movement, “break off” shares similar features to *A Savage Calculus*, including extreme dynamic contrasts and seemingly sporadic, pointillistic entrances. Marked as “skittering, paranoid” by Rogers, this is the shortest movement of the entire work. In its entirety, the movement is only twenty measures in duration, and a majority of the movement is silent. The heavy reliance on silence yields tricky entrances for both the saxophonist and the pianist. Precise and careful counting during the rests is essential, but the performers must take great care to not visibly show the pulse. Performance instructions read: “continue to remain motionless (do not show counting).”

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69 Ibid.

70 Ibid.

71 Ibid.
The title of the movement, “break off”, suggests that the happy, exuberant mood of the previous movement is to be abruptly terminated. As the loud chord ending the previous movement fades away, the fifth movement begins very quietly with two quick, fleeting notes followed by a long silence and then two additional very soft notes. In a manner reminiscent of A Savage Calculus, this particular movement of Breaking pairs very quiet chords against very loud chords. The pianist strikes an extremely loud chord in the fourth measure. The loud, brazen chord is answered by a very quiet note in the saxophone followed immediately by a piano chord on beat four marked pianissimo.

There is another very loud piano chord on the second sixteenth note subdivision of beat two in measure fifteen followed by two extremely quiet saxophone notes and a long period of silence. Finally, on beat three of measure seventeen, the piano and saxophone play quietly together, followed by numerous silent beats. The movement ends with a single, extremely quiet B-flat played staccato by the pianist at the end of measure twenty. In an effort to not give away the ending and increase the amount of suspense, both the saxophonist and pianist are instructed to hold their position until the sounding of the piano’s final note.

Movement Six: “break down”

“Break down” is another jazz-influenced movement, using the style of a jazz ballad. The saxophone performer may play with rubato to stretch time on some of the notes, imitating a “washed-up lounge singer” at the end of a long night singing in a gloomy, smoke-filled bar. The composer writes some scoops and bends between pitches, but in his instructions at the start of the movement, Rogers permits the performer to tastefully add his or her own interpretation to the music. Rogers writes: “throughout the
movement, the saxophonist should play with a more jazz-like sound, and is free to use
tasteful and bluesy bends, slightly laid-back rhythms, idiomatic articulation and vibrato,
etc.”

Rhythmically, the saxophone and piano parts frequently create hemiola. The entire movement is written within the confines of time signatures, however, feeling a pulse can be a challenge because of the frequency of tied notes, changing meter, hemiola between the saxophone and piano, and entrances that come on weak portions of beats. This obscurity gives the aural impression of a dream-like state of being, clouding the pulse as if with a thick veil of smoke lingering in the club at the end of a long night.

**Movement Seven: “break up”**

As the title “break up” implies, this movement portrays an argument and a parting of two people represented by the progressive dynamic separation of the saxophone and piano parts. Marked at a quarter note equal to 138 beats per minute, the metric pulse feels tense, unemotional, and robotic. Performance instructions read “mechanical, not dance-like.”

The piano begins the movement with repetitive, dissonant chords. The left hand plays a minor second dyad that repeats underneath alternating notes in the right hand (a B-flat and a C-flat, which are a half-step and a whole-step respectively above the top note of the dyad in the left hand). These repetitive dyads are like a monotonous argument with another person who continues to repeat the same, annoying, jabbing points over and over

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72 Ibid.

73 Ibid.
again. In measure two, the saxophone enters with an off-kilter melody alternating between measures with meters of three beats, five beats, and four beats.

The saxophone plays solo descending quarter note triplets in measure 12, joined in measure 13 by chromatically descending root position major chords in the piano part. This new material continues until measure 16, which consists of only a partial statement of the quarter note triplet theme that is abruptly interrupted by the same melodic material first presented by the saxophone.

Rogers interrupts the melody suddenly again in measure 19 with an open chord held for four beats in the piano part paired with silence in the saxophone part, like giving the “cold shoulder” treatment to someone after an argument. The piano begins the closely voiced repetitive dyads with alternating notes in the right hand in measure 20 as the saxophone resumes its melody. Rogers writes: “picking up where it left off, as if resuming a conversation in mid-sentence.”74 A brief return to the saxophone melody follows, and is again interrupted by the same open chord, the duration truncated this time by an eighth note.

The saxophone melody and piano dialogue resumes in measure 25 and continues until measure 34 when both parts are halted by an empty measure of silence. The piano continues in measure 35 as in the beginning of the movement. The dynamic of the saxophone entrance in measure 36 is mezzo forte as in the beginning, but the saxophone and piano parts begin to separate dynamically as the movement comes to an end. Measure 37 is again a long, open chord in the piano, this time marked at a piano dynamic. When the saxophone melody re-enters, it is again marked as mezzo forte. By

74 Ibid.
measure 41, the dynamic and textural split between the piano and the saxophone is official. The piano plays the long repeated chord, always played quietly. The mechanical saxophone interjections start at *mezzo forte* and get progressively louder until the final utterance in measure 44, which is marked triple *forte*. Both parts observe a written silent measure to terminate the movement.

**Movement Eight: “break free”**

The eighth movement, “break free”, features a lyrical saxophone melody and a graceful, flowing piano part. Notated in 5/4 time, the movement is described by Rogers as “dancing gracefully”. Upon initial inspection, one may be concerned about how to make an asymmetrical meter flow like a dance. However, after a closer examination, the fears of the performer can be assuaged by observing how the melodic lines flow from phrase to phrase in a repetitive pattern of rhythmic cells in such a manner that a graceful dance would be possible.

The piece never truly feels like the meter is written with five beats per measure. One might argue that Rogers notates the first section in 5/4 time to avoid frequent meter changes which visually obstruct the flow of the music. Starting in measure two, the distinct pattern of beats mentioned above can be observed even though the pattern at times crosses over bar lines. The pattern, in number of beats per unit, is as follows: 2, 8, 2, 8, 2, 7, 3, and 8, through the end of measure nine. At the beginning of measure ten, the pattern of 2, 8, 2, 8, 2, 7, 3, 8 repeats as an A’ phrase. The second phrase, also a duration of 8 measures, terminates at the end of measure 17 following the second statement of the melodic theme. Figure 6.5 demonstrates the melodic cell groupings, bracketing the cells for clarity. Rogers similarly notes the phrases with a dashed phrase marking in the score.
Figure 6.5. Melodic cell groupings. Slur marks and dashed slur marks are the composer’s markings found in the score and the saxophone part. The author has used brackets for visual clarity of the pattern, especially when the rhythmic cell involves a rest, measures 2–9.

The middle B section of the movement starts at measure 18 and goes through measure 33. It is marked by a change of key signature as well as time signature. Rogers scores this middle section in 3/4 time, but as in the previous section, the melody is not necessarily confined to the meter. Rhythmic cells adhere to a new melodic cell beat pattern: 2, 3, 2, 2, 3, 2, 4, 6 followed by a second phrase of 2, 3, 2, 2, 3, 2, 4, 6 beats. Figure 6.6 below shows the cell pattern of the B section.

Figure 6.6. Measures 18–25 showing a second pattern of grouped melodic cells.

At the start of measure thirty-four, Rogers returns to the key signature and the time signature found at the beginning of the movement. In this return of the A section, Rogers again makes use of the repetitive rhythmic cell idea of 2, 8, 2, 8, 2, 7, 3, 8 pattern. Instead of repeating the melodic idea in the saxophone part, Rogers imbeds the melody within the piano texture while the saxophone part adds a new countermelody on top of the melody now in the piano (but buried within the texture). Partway through the piano
melody, the melodic material is handed off to the saxophone. It is interesting to note that even though the orchestration changes, Rogers continues to adhere to the rhythmic pattern previously established, with an additional iteration of cells of 2 beats and 8 beats to complete the movement.

**Movement Nine: “break through”**

The second shortest movement of the piece, the twenty-three measures of the ninth movement, “break through,” display Rogers’ compositional voice at its most transparent. The saxophone part utilizes a restricted range of concert B-flat 4 to F-sharp 5, the span of only an augmented fifth. Throughout the movement, the piano part is written with a stark, barren texture as well. The opening bars of the movement are simply the pianist expanding and contracting intervals, demonstrated by figure 6.7.

![Figure 6.7](image)

*Figure 6.7. Expanding and contracting piano intervals.*

The few chords the pianist strikes in this short movement are jazz-influenced, for instance, a C-sharp minor chord with an added ninth (C-sharp, E, G-sharp, D-sharp) in measure eleven, and a second-inversion E major seventh chord with an added ninth (E, G-sharp, B, D-sharp, F-sharp) found measure nineteen. In his program notes in the beginning of the score, Rogers describes this movement as exploring various shades of darkness and light. The light shades are achieved through the transparent texture of intervals, and the dark shades are added when richer, more complex harmonies are scored.
Movement Ten: “break away”

The final movement of Breaking is called “break away”. In an homage to American minimalism, the saxophone and piano play a moto perpetuo stream of sixteenth notes for the entire movement to create a dramatic, impressive, and climactic ending to the piece. Much like in Release, Rogers calls for the blending of timbres and musical lines as closely as possible in this movement.

To allow for the continuous stream of sixteenth notes to remain unbroken, the saxophonist should circular breathe throughout the movement, though this contemporary performance skill may elude some saxophonists. To alleviate concern, Rogers has designated certain notes in parenthesis to indicate that a breath could be taken at that specific point in the phrase if circular breathing is not a possibility.

The piano punctuates through the constant sixteenth note texture with left hand “power chords”. The “power chords” allude to the blues, another distinctly American musical genre. In this movement, Rogers uses three sets of “power chords”. The first “power chord” is based on F (in figure 6.8, the I chord) in various octaves, the second is based on B-flat (in figure 6.8, the IV chord) in various octaves, and the third is based on C (in figure 6.8, the V chord) in various octaves. Taking into account the movement being scored in F major, the “power chords” clearly outline a I-IV-V harmonic progression commonly found in blues and rock music.

![Figure 6.8. “Power chords” outlining a blues progression.](image-url)
Another element that can be observed as coming from the American minimalism movement is phasing, a technique pioneered by composer Steve Reich. Unlike the music of Reich, Rogers’ phasing is not a gradual separation of the parts, but an immediate parting of the piano and saxophone from beat two of measure one as the saxophone is consistently one pattern ahead of the piano.

Figure 6.9. Boxed sixteenth notes shows the immediate phasing between the saxophone and piano, measures 1–3.

The two parts remain out of sync until the downbeat of measure 11, which is consequently the first C “power chord”, or, the V chord of the blues progression. However, the parts phase again starting on beat two of measure 11 and remain out of sync until the last beat of measure 14, which sets up another C “power chord” on the downbeat of bar 15.

The middle section of the movement abandons the use of “power chords”, and relies entirely on the steadiness of the ensemble’s sixteenth notes. The remainder of the section continues in a similar fashion pushing to a climax in measure 45. The final section of this movement is reminiscent of the first section. The saxophone has the same melodic figures of the opening, but the melody is scored an octave higher. However, the
right hand of the piano part is at a different pitch level than the opening. The key of the piece is made clear when Rogers brings back the F, B-flat, and C “power chords”.

Though not without its performance challenges, *Breaking* is by far the most accessible of Rogers’ saxophone chamber pieces for musicians and audiences alike. It takes the audience on a journey through various styles of twentieth-century music and showcases Rogers’ diverse tonal compositional style and harmonic palette from jazz, serialism, gospel, blues, and minimalism.

As his most recent contribution to the saxophone repertoire, *Breaking* clearly demonstrates the direction of Rogers’ compositional trend away from intense rhythmic complexity to melodies with subtler complexities like mood and character. Of the chamber music discussed in this paper, it relies on a few contemporary saxophone techniques such as timbral trill fingerings, jazz tone, scooping pitches, and circular breathing to achieve a successful performance while not overusing any of the techniques. The use of *avant-garde* playing techniques are meant to serve the musical material. Simultaneously a challenge for the performers and an enjoyable piece to listen to, *Breaking* is a piece that should appear on recital programs and in performances around the country.
CONCLUSION

This document has presented biographical information on composer John Fitz Rogers and discussed the saxophone chamber music he has composed to date. It has further explained why his compositions are important contributions to the modern classical saxophonist’s repertoire. Additionally, a performer’s analysis of each piece has been included in chapters three through six to aid musicians in the future preparation of these challenging, complex, and high quality works. The author anticipates that Rogers will continue to compose pieces for the saxophone under commission from today’s most active classical saxophone performers.

With the help of the composer, the author has included a list of known performances of these important pieces in Appendix A. It is the author’s expectation that as more performers become aware of the saxophone music of John Fitz Rogers, the number of performances will increase, as these pieces are all worthy of study. As is evidenced by this tracking of known performances, the dissemination of Rogers’ music thus far has been primarily reliant on those few saxophonists who have commissioned these works and their students. Rogers’ music has been performed in academic recitals, guest artist recitals, and at large national and international conferences such as North American Saxophone Alliance Biennial Conferences, NASA Regional Conferences, The United State Navy Band International Saxophone Symposium, the World Saxophone Congress events, and used in competitions by student performers and ensembles in the Music Teachers National Association and NASA competitions.
The author has also included in Appendix B the full text of his interview with Rogers from the spring of 2015. The conversation with Rogers and the opportunity to perform each of the works presented in this document during the course of his doctoral studies provided the main impetus of this research project.

With the variety of styles and influences that Rogers uses, the complexity and challenges to performers that his compositions pose, and the quality of these pieces, the author is confident that future generations of saxophonists will consider these works as standard repertoire and that they will stand the test of time, challenging performers and delighting audiences for years to come.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX A

PERFORMANCE TRACKING

A Savage Calculus
Ambassador Duo (Clifford Leaman, saxophone; Derek Parsons, piano)

July 2002: South Carolina Governor’s School for the Arts
Greenville, SC.

October 2002: University of South Carolina School of Music
Columbia, SC.


October 2002: Penn State College of Arts and Architecture
University Park, PA.

December 2002: South Carolina Governor’s School for the Arts, Greenville, SC.

March 28, 2003: College Music Society Mid-Atlantic Conference, Davidson College,
Davidson, NC.

July 11, 2003: The World Saxophone Congress, Minneapolis, MN.

October 14, 2003: University of North Texas, College of Music, Denton, TX

August 9, 2005: Yantai International Music Festival, Yantai, China

August 19, 2005: Xian International Clarinet and Saxophone Festival, Xian China

October 2, 2007: Pittsburgh, PA, Duquesne University

October 3, 2007: Youngstown, PA, Youngstown State University

October 10, 2007: Rochester, NY, Eastman School of Music

Clifford Leaman, saxophone; Joseph Rackers, piano
October 24, 2007: Yantai, China, Yantai Music Festival

November 1, 2007: Shanghai, China, Shanghai Conservatory of Music
October 21, 2013: University of South Carolina School of Music, Columbia, SC.

October 29, 2013: University of North Carolina-Greensboro, Greensboro, NC.

October 30, 2013: University of North Carolina-Wilmington, Wilmington, NC.

**Connie Frigo, alto saxophone; Rebecca Grausam, piano**
November 19, 2003: USC School of Music, Columbia, SC

January 10, 2004: The United States Navy Band 27th International Saxophone Symposium, Washington, DC.

February 1, 2004: Ithaca College School of Music, Ithaca, NY.

October 31, 2004: UNC-Greensboro, Greensboro, NC.

January 21, 2005: Georgia State University School of Music Atlanta, GA.

January 23, 2005: Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, PA.

January 26, 2005: Grand Valley State University, Allendale, MI.

January 27, 2005: Interlochen Arts Academy, Traverse City, MI.

January 28, 2005: Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI.

January 28, 2005: Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI.

January 29, 2005: Nazareth College, Rochester, NY,

March, 29, 2005: University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN.

**Various Performers:**
Arno Bornkamp, alto saxophone
Summer/fall, 2004: Three performances in Amsterdam (NL), Nova Gorica (Slovenia), and Gap (France). Exact locations and dates are not known.

Adam Estes, Alto Saxophone; Rebecca Grausam, Piano
February, 2006: University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC

Ian Jeffress, Alto Saxophone; Rebecca Grausam, Piano
April, 2006: University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC

Claudia Meures, alto saxophone; Ere Lievonen, piano
January 21, 2008: Amsterdam, The Netherlands, Conservatorium van Amsterdam.
February 5, 2008: Amsterdam, The Netherlands, Conservatorium van Amsterdam.

Andrew Allen, saxophone; Claudio Olivera, piano.
October 2, 2012. USC School of Music, Columbia, SC.

Gabriel Fadale, alto saxophone; Claudio Olivera, piano
March 24, 2015. USC School of Music, Columbia, SC

**Prodigal Child**

**Performances by the New Century Saxophone Quartet**
January 8, 2005: 28th International Saxophone Symposium
Washington, DC.

February 5, 2005: North Carolina School for the Arts
Winston-Salem, NC, Whittier College (official world premiere)

March 22, 2005: Whittier, CA,

April 10, 2005: Brasstown Concert Association, Brasstown, NC.

April 13, 2005: University of Memphis, Memphis, TN.

April 14, 2005: Chamber Music Society of Little Rock
Little Rock, AR.

June 19, 2005: Wildacres Saxophone Retreat, Little Switzerland, NC.

June 25, 2005: Rockport Chamber Music Festival, Rockport, MA

September 12, 2005: Lipscomb University, Nashville, TN

September 13, 2005: University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN

October 20, 2005: Howard University, Washington, DC

October 21, 2005: Levine School of Music, Washington, DC

October 22, 2005: Sitar Center for the Arts, Washington, DC

November 10, 2005: University of Nevada, Reno, NV

November 12, 2005: Cal State at Sacramento (American New Music Festival)

February 5, 2006: Statesboro Universal Methodist Church, Statesboro, GA

February 8, 2006: University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, TX
March 9, 2006: Levine School of Music, Washington DC

March 10, 2006: Evergreen House (part of Johns Hopkins University), Baltimore, MD

March 11, 2006: Methodist Church, Bedford, PA (as part of Bedford Chamber Music Society Series)

April 3-4, 2006: Five performances throughout residency at Indiana University of Pennsylvania

June 24, 2006: Sparta, NC, Community Concert

October 6, 2006: Littleton CO, St. Mary's Catholic Church

November 11, 2006: Columbia, SC, Southern Exposure New Music Series

November 12, 2006: Wilmington NC, Church Chamber Music Series

January 20, 2007: Trappe, PA, Community Music School Concert Series

January 24, 2007: Glens Falls, NY, Wood Theater

January 28, 2007: Stony Brook, NY, Staller Center for the Performing Arts

March 13-15, 2007: Hart, MI residency, various elementary schools

March 15, 2007: Ypsilanti, MI, Eastern Michigan University, School of Music

March 16, 2007: Hart, MI, Evening Concert

March 31, 2007: North American Saxophone Alliance Region 7 Conference; University of North Carolina-Greensboro, Greensboro, NC

July 10, 2007: South Haven, MI, Fontana Chamber Arts Kalamazoo

July 11, 2007: Augusta, MI, Fontana Chamber Arts Kalamazoo

September 29, 2007: Greenville, NC, Jarvis United Methodist Church

October 28, 2007: Rocky Mount, NC, Church of the Good Shepherd

January 31, 2008: Ames, IA, Iowa State University

February 2, 2008: Ames IA, Ames Town & Gown Chamber Music Association

February 4, 2008: Denver, CO, Metropolitan State College of Denver

March 16, 2008: Bald Head Island, NC, Bald Head Islands Series

March 20, 2008: Winston-Salem, NC, Winston-Salem State University

April 13, 2008: McLean, VA, Waterford Concert Series

April 14, 2008: Collegville, PA, Ursinus College

April 17, 2008: North Bethesda, MD, Strathmore Hall Foundation

April 18, 2008: Columbia, SC, North American Saxophone Alliance Convention

July 26, 2008: Wildflower Music Festival, White Mills, PA

August 9, 2008: Music at Gretna, Elizabethtown, PA

November 15, 2008: Four Seasons Concerts, Berkeley, CA

December 5, 2008: Pawling Concert Series, Pawling, NY

January 24, 2009: 32nd International Navy Band Saxophone Symposium, Fairfax, VA

February 20, 2009: Gordon College, Wenham, MA

February 22, 2009: Impromptu Concerts, Key West, FL

February 23, 2009: Middle Keys Concert Association, Marathon, FL

March 8, 2009: Allied Concert Services, Redwood Falls, MN

March 14, 2010: Morrison Artists Series, San Francisco State University

**Performances by the Capitol Saxophone Quartet**

October 17, 2008: Potsdam Single Reed Summit, SUNY-Potsdam, Potsdam, NY

January 24, 2009: 32nd International Navy Band Saxophone Symposium, Fairfax, VA

March 27, 2009: Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, KS.

October 2009: Single Reed Summit, Penn State University

November 2009: Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI.

January, 2010: Chamber Music America National Conference, New York, NY
April 2, 2011: Crane Saxophone Chamber Music Festival; Crane School of Music, SUNY-Potsdam, Potsdam, NY.

October 24, 2011: University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, CO.

October 25, 2011: Ridgeview Classical School, Fort Collins, CO.

October 26, 2011: University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY.

October 27, 2011: University of Colorado, Boulder, CO.

October 28, 2011: Loveland High School Concert, Loveland, CO.

October 21, 2012: University of Arkansas- Fort Smith, Fort Smith, AR.

November 9, 2012: Penn State University, University Park, PA.

March 3, 2013: North American Saxophone Alliance conference (Region 5), Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.

October 5, 2013: Wolfeboro Friends of Music, Wolfeboro, NH.

October 7, 2013: Penn State University, University Park, PA.

October 9, 2013: Michigan State University School of Music, East Lansing, MI.

January 28, 2014: Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ.

January 29, 2014: Musical Instrument Museum, Phoenix, AZ.

February 19, 2014: University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ.

**Performances by Assembly Quartet**
April 8, 2008: Columbia, SC, Allen University

April 9, 2008: Greenville, SC, Governor’s School for the Arts

April 15, 2008: Columbia, SC, University of SC – Rutledge Chapel

April 16, 2008: Columbia, SC, North American Saxophone Alliance Convention

February 11, 2009: Rutledge Chapel, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC

April 16, 2012: Western Carolina University, Culowhee, NC

June 22, 2012: Sibyl Center, Stanley, ND.
June 27, 2012: Carolina Saxophone Camp, Fort Mill, SC.


November 18, 2014: Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH

April 11, 2015: Georgia State University, NASA Region 6 Conference

**Performances by Abraxas Saxophone Quartet**
April 22, 2013: USC School of Music, Columbia, SC.

November 13, 2013: USC School of Music, Columbia, SC. *Southern Exposure New Music Series: John Fitz Rogers Composer Portrait*


April 18, 2014: University of South Carolina School of Music, Columbia, SC.

*April 2, 2016: Palm Beach Atlantic University, West Palm Beach, FL. *Frontwave New Music Festival.*

**Performances by MOSAIC Saxophone Quartet**

January 3, 2015: TNA Southwest Regional Competition, Santa Barbara, CA

February 18, 2015: Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ

February 19, 2015: The Graduate Hotel, Tempe, AZ

March 21, 2015: MTNA National Finals, Las Vegas, NV (Second Place award)

**Performances by Melange Saxophone Quartet**
February 22, 2015: University of Oklahoma, NASA Region 4 Conference

March 19, 2015: Baylor University, Waco, TX

March 31, 2015: Midwestern State University, Wichita Falls, TX

April 1, 2015: Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX

April 6, 2015: University of North Texas, Denton, TX
Other performances
April 21, 2009: Furman University, Greenville, SC – (performers from Furman Univ.)

Release
Performances by the RoseWind Duo
(Clifford Leaman, saxophone; Scott Herring, marimba)
November 3, 2006: SC Music Teachers Association Conference; Winthrop University, Rock Hill, SC

January 6, 2007: 30th International Navy Band Symposium, Washington, D.C.

March 28, 2007: University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC

March 30, 2007: North American Saxophone Alliance Region 7 Conference; University of North Carolina-Greensboro, Greensboro, NC

November 13, 2007: Knoxville, TN, University of Tennessee
November 14, 2007: Ann Arbor, MI, Kerrytown Concert House
November 15, 2007: Mt. Pleasant, MI, Central Michigan University
November 16, 2007: Evanston, IL, Northwestern University

April 10, 2008: Columbia, SC, Still Hopes Retirement Home
April 17, 2008: Columbia, SC, North American Saxophone Alliance Convention

May 18, 2010: Conservatory of Aragon, Zaragossa Spain
May 20, 2010: Conservatory of Catalonia, Spain
May 25, 2010: Conservatory of Strasbourg, France
May 27, 2010: Selmer Instruments, world headquarter, Paris, France

December 15, 2010: 1st International Wind & Percussion Music Festival CCOM, Beijing, China

January 27, 2012: Palmetto Artist Series, St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, Irmo, SC.
February 24, 2012: Union United Methodist Church, Irmo, SC.
March 2, 2012: Lulea Technical University, School of Music, Pitea, Sweden.
May 5, 2012: Crane Saxophone Chamber Music Festival, SUNY Potsdam, Potsdam, NY.
October 14, 2012: Schwob School of Music, Columbus State University, Columbus, OH.

October 16, 2012: Troy University, Troy, AL.

October 17, 2012: Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL

November 2, 2012: Percussive Arts Society International Convention, Austin, TX.

June 2, 2014: Trinity Episcopal Church, Asbury Park, NJ


**Other performances of Release, various performers**

November 8, 2007: Lansing, MI, Michigan State University Bobby Young, alto saxophone

November 12, 2007: Lansing, MI, Michigan State University Bobby Young, alto saxophone

February 1, 2009: University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC, Matt Younglove, saxophone; Brandon Arvay, marimba

March 30, 2009: University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC Matt Younglove, saxophone; Brandon Arvay, marimba

March 15, 2010: South Dakota State University – Nathan Jorgensen, saxophone; Aaron Ragsdale, marimba


November 13, 2014: University of Maryland, College Park, MD Noah Getz, alto saxophone; Lee Hinkle, marimba

January 13, 2015: The Church of the Epiphany, Washington, DC. Noah Getz, alto saxophone; Manny Arciniega, marimba

March 24, 2015: USC School of Music, Columbia, SC. Gabriel Fadale, alto saxophone; Kelly Grill, marimba

May 15, 2015: University of Debrecen, Faculty of Music; Debrecen, Hungary. Eszter Toth, alto saxophone; Gabor Palotas, marimba
**Breaking**

**Performances by Clifford Leaman, saxophone; Joseph Rackers, piano**

October 27, 2011: Indiana University – Purdue University Fort Wayne Department of Music, Fort Wayne, IN.

October 28, 2011: Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.

November 8, 2011: University of South Carolina School of Music, Columbia, SC.

January 15, 2012: Epiphany Concert Series, Florence, SC.

January 20, 2012: Navy Band International Saxophone Symposium, George Mason University Center for the Arts, Fairfax, VA.

September 30, 2012: USC School of Music, Columbia, SC.

September 3, 2014: Brighton Academy, Ypsilanti, MI.

September 4, 2014: Michigan State University, Lansing, MI.

September 5, 2014: Wayne State University, Detroit, MI.

September 8, 2014: College-Conservatory of Music, Cincinnati, OH.

October 13, 2015: University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY

October 14, 2015: University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, CO Clifford

October 15, 2015: Midwestern State University, Wichita Falls, TX

October 18, 2015: Mayesville Presbyterian Church, Mayesville, SC

**Performances by Christopher Creviston, saxophone; Hannah Creviston, piano**

February 24, 2012: WMP Concert Hall, New York, NY.

February 27, 2012: Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ.

February 28, 2012: Crane School of Music, SUNY-Potsdam, Potsdam, NY.

March 7, 2012: Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX.

March 8, 2012: Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK.

March 9, 2012: Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, TX.

March 12, 2012: Portland State University, Portland, OR.
March 13, 2012: University of Oregon, Eugene, OR.

July 9, 2012: Crane Youth Music Faculty Showcase, SUNY-Potsdam, Potsdam, NY.


April 14, 2014: University of North Carolina-Greensboro, Greensboro, NC.

April 15, 2014: University of Georgia, Athens, GA

April 16, 2014: University of South Carolina School of Music, Columbia, SC.

April 17, 2014: University of North Carolina School of the Arts, Winston-Salem, NC.

April 26, 2014: Scottsdale, AZ (private house concert).

April 7, 2015: Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ

July 7, 2015. 2015 Cortona Sessions for New Music; Cortona, Italy

**Performances by David Stambler, saxophone**


April 20, 2012: Penn State University, University Park, PA
Cecilia Dunoyer, piano.

**Performances by Joseph Lulloff**

November 3, 2012: Middle Tennessee State Saxophone Symposium, Murfreesboro, TN.

**Other Performances**


February 4, 2013: USC School of Music, Columbia, SC. Andrew Allen, saxophone; Claudio Olivera, piano.

March 16, 2013: Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI. Connor Mikula, saxophone; ?, piano.

April 12, 2013: North American Saxophone Alliance conference (Region 4), Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, TX. Joey Resendez, saxophone; Hannah Creviston, piano.
April 14, 2014: North Dakota State University, Fargo, ND.
Matthew Patnode, soprano saxophone; ?, piano.

April 27, 2014: Crane School of Music (SUNY-Potsdam), Potsdam, NY. Kristina Martorano, soprano saxophone; ?, piano.

May 5, 2014: University of Akron School of Music, Akron, OH. Todd Gaffke, soprano saxophone; ?, piano.

November 11, 2014: USC School of Music, Columbia, SC
Gabriel Fadale, soprano saxophone; Claudio Olivera, piano

November 24, 2014: USC School of Music, Columbia, SC
Brian Bethea, soprano saxophone; Claudio Olivera, piano

March 25, 2015: USC School of Music, Columbia, SC
Po-Fang Chang, soprano saxophone; Claudio Olivera, piano

October 26, 2015. USC School of Music, Columbia, SC Sheldon Johnson, soprano saxophone; Claudio Olivera, piano

*April 1, 2016. Palm Beach Atlantic University. West Palm Beach, FL. Frontwave New Music Festival. Gabriel Fadale, saxophone; Michael Lubben, piano.
APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW WITH THE COMPOSER

GF: Do you think you could talk to me a little bit about your compositional process in terms of maybe how it starts. Do you wake up every morning at 5Am and jog for 3 miles and start writing because you feel so inspired?

JFR: (Laughing) I wish. I wish I had that discipline. I don’t think I have a set process. For me every piece is a little bit different and the things that inform the piece, every piece is a little bit different. So, I think once I start working on something, I like to commit as much time as I can. And I think many composers who teach find summers and breaks are good times to compose because you can work for long hours. I think a lot of times initially you have a little bit of an idea, a sense of maybe the direction of the piece, and then it’s like your dissertation, you just kind of jump in. I have a quote on my door from Stravinsky that says: bit by bit you sort of figure out a piece as you work. So for me, there’s no moment where I have everything set to go and then I sit down to write. I think I figure out what the piece is as I’m writing it. The intellectual work goes into just spending long hours working on a piece, and then, at a certain point, I think this is probably true for all composers, but really all creative artists, at a certain point the piece itself kind of takes over. You have to let go of whatever your original ideas might be and kind of let the piece tell you what it wants to be, regardless of whether that was the original plan. And that’s also a function, I think, of just getting involved with material and spending a lot of time with it. So it’s a long answer to your question, but I don’t think that I have a simple, set process, nor does a musical idea for me mean the same thing. I don’t, for example, I don’t start out with a chord progression and then I work from that, or I don’t start out with an abstract idea and work that. Or I don’t set up with a melodic idea and work from that. It could be any of those. It could be something else. I just have some little nugget of something that strikes my fancy and then see where that leads me. And sometimes it leads down alleys that go nowhere and I have to backtrack and start somewhere else, and sometimes they prove fruitful, even in ways that might be unexpected.

GF: I guess the unexpected aspect of it might lend itself into A Savage Calculus.

JFR: Yeah, I mean, I think for me the unexpected qualities are a bit of a different thing. I mean, I think for me, the compositional process is about kind of letting the material take you, at a certain point. You look at the material, you see what you have, you see what its possibilities are, and sometimes things present themselves that you didn’t imagine in the first place and then you’ve kind of have to go with that. A Savage Calculus, the idea of that piece was unexpectedness, or surprise, and that’s sort of a different part. That’s the
compositional idea rather than unexpected as applied to the compositional process. Even in the compositional process, it isn’t unexpected, it’s just being sensitive to where the material takes you. So in *Savage Calculus*, I think, as you know, it’s a piece that deals with extreme juxtapositions in many different ways. And that was kind of the original idea of that piece, given the nature of when I wrote it, after 9/11. So I took, kind of as my creative idea for that piece, a very extreme juxtaposition between silence and attack, between different kinds of music, things that have a different character…boogie-woogie or tin-pan alley, between things that are extremely quiet, or things that are loud to the point of being garish and shrill. And so, when I started to work on the piece, I took out a piece of legal paper and just kind of thought about different ways of creating musical surprise. I just sort of made a list of all the different ways I could think about making musical surprise. And so that’s the kind of the initial impetus for that piece.

GF: Do you find as a composer that you like having more free-reign or do you prefer someone coming to you and saying “Can you compose a ten minute piece for piano, trombone, French horn, and kind of being confined to time limits and instrumentation?”

JFR: I think most composers are used to working within certain confines. So often when I get a commission, the instrumentation is specified, and the duration, say between 10 and 14 minutes or something. Those kinds of things are specified. I do write pieces on occasion just because I want to write something, but I think that is pretty common for most composers. Many composers work from commission or work within specific guidelines, and the occasionally as he or she has time write things on their own. So I’m not sure I prefer one to the other, it’s just kind of the way the composing life is.

GF: Are their specific composers from the far past or still living, or specific pieces that you feel have impacted your compositions, your ideas, or your style?

JFR: I get asked that question pretty frequently, and I never have a good answer for it. And it’s not because I’m trying to be evasive, it’s just that there are so many composers, and in particular, so many pieces that have held sway in my life and have affected me. So I can’t really pinpoint specific composers and specific pieces. I think as I grew up, I started to become more involved with contemporary music. Early on I was really involved in the music of Copland, and then as an undergraduate of course the classics of Beethoven, and I think for me, having written my dissertation on Stravinsky, and then a student of his music for most of my life, I think Stravinsky has always held a really strong pull for me. Although, I’m not sure that his music, I don’t think my music sounds like Stravinsky in any way. But there are certainly, at least for me, Stravinsky-esque aspects. But it’s a difficult question to answer because there are too many composers. And even more than that, there are too many pieces by various composers that have been important to me throughout my life.

GF: You hinted at it a little bit earlier when you don’t necessarily sit down with a chord progression in mind or a melody in mind, but when you are sitting down to compose, do you have a hierarchy of elements that you think about in terms of melody, harmony,
texture, orchestration, rhythm? Anything like that? Would you put any of those elements into a hierarchical order?

JFR: That’s a good question, and I think, in general, yes, the answer to that is yes. Again, my musical ideas could be anything. It could be a chord progression or it could be a melodic fragment. It could be a color, it could be an abstract idea, it could be anything. I think one thing that I think about pretty quickly is the general arc of the piece, the form of the piece. I tell this to students sometimes: if you just start at the beginning of a piece, it’s a little like starting to write a short story, and you had in mind a few characters. You could start to write a story, but it would be really helpful to have an outline of the story in advance. Just some sense of where a story takes place, and what’s going to happen. You know, as you go, the characters develop, maybe they do things that surprise you and the story takes a turn. And that is totally fine, and probably normal. But I think it’s a little hard to write a story if you really don’t have any idea what the story is about, if you just have a character or two in mind. But that is just me speaking personally. I’m sure there are composers and authors who feel very different from that, but for me, my hierarchy I would say one of the first things I do is think about how long the piece is going to last. Is it a multi-movement piece? Is it a single-movement piece? How am I thinking about the form? What is the drama of the piece? I think a lot like a playwright. I think about trying to create a dramatic arc to a piece. One thing that I think is really important is understanding how a piece moves dramatically, and how composers play with a sense of time—of pushing time forward or relaxing time. Because that is our medium—we are dealing only with sound and silence and time. That’s it. Those three elements. So, I think pretty quickly about form and then I sort of start to look at my material and I think ‘ok, well, does something like this belong at the beginning, would this little nugget here be better in the middle of the piece or maybe towards the end? And then after that, I think a lot about harmony because I’m primarily a tonal composer although again, I think of my musical language as being flexible to the needs of the material. Sometimes it’s quite dissonant, sometimes it’s overtly tonal. It really just depends on what the material wants. I don’t even think of it as what I want. It’s kind of what the material suggests. So, um, after kind of figuring out the form and along with that I start to think about harmonic landscape and where things are moving harmonically. I find it’s really hard to think about things motivic ally or melodically without understanding the harmony first. The melody or any kind of motive really comes out of harmony first and foremost for me. And I think part of my study at Cornell was the study of Lutoslawski, and of course, my teacher there, Steven Stuckey, is a renowned scholar on Lutoslawski. And I think this was something I really took away was the primacy of harmony can really drive many different aspects. John Adams talks about harmony as the pillars of the cathedral, or the pillars of the building, and I agree with that. I think it is really important to have that somewhat figured out at least. You can’t map everything out when you start. But, form and its relationship to harmonic progression, overall harmonic progression, and thinking about big changes of texture, landing spots, things where big rehearsal letters might go…I think those are things that are helpful to me when I am just starting out a piece, and then I start to move in towards the details.
GF: Do you feel that you have to adhere to rondo form, or sonata-allegro form, or do you let the piece develop form-wise in its own way?

JFR: Never. I’ve never written a ‘sonata’. I have no interest in doing that. I have no interest in forms that relate to a musical past, nor do I think I could write a good sonata even if I wanted to. That’s not to say I don’t use those kinds of techniques, or gravitate toward passacaglias or ground basses… I think that’s a really useful tool, and it’s something I’ve used on a handful of occasions. But, no, again, I think for me, everything kind of comes out of the material. I think about the dramatic arc of a piece, and I think about whatever length of time I have, and then I just try to shape it from there. But I don’t write in classical forms at all.

GF: Just out of curiosity, say someone comes to you and wants to commission a piece, do they ever, is it primarily a time deal, or do they say I specifically want you to write me a ten-movement piece for soprano saxophone?

JFR: That’s never happened, it’s usually just a time thing. You know, if you’re thinking about Breaking, when I was initially talking to Christopher Creviston about the piece, he said “I want a piece for soprano saxophone and piano, and we talked about length of time. And actually, I think that piece wound up being a little bit longer than we had talked about in our initial discussion, but we didn’t talk about one movement or ten movements or anything like that. I think for me it’s usually just instrumentation and length. Those are usually about the only two parameters. And that’s fine. I think that’s true for most composers, it’s kind of what most composers get.

GF: Has jazz influenced your classical compositional style?

JFR: To a degree, yes. Occasionally in Breaking or in A Savage Calculus, you’ll hear little echoes of jazz or ‘boogie-woogie’. Yeah, I think it has. I think a lot of it again has to do with thinking about harmony, and drawing a bit on jazz theory and thinking about harmonic motion. There was a time when I was a kid where I just couldn’t get enough of Bill Evans. And of course, if you love Bill Evans, you’ve got to love Debussy. I mean, their kind of mining a lot of the same harmonic landscape. So I would say that none of my pieces sound jazzy, I don’t think, maybe with just one exception in the one movement of Breaking. But there are probably echoes of that and there are echoes of lots of different kinds of music in my work.

GF: I’ve been doing some reading, and one of the angles that I’d like to explore is you know, when the saxophone was first invented, some composers didn’t really take it seriously. We had to fight to get Debussy to write a piece for orchestra with saxophone.

JFR: right, right, right.

GF: And then we had a bunch of light, fluffy music. Do you feel that the saxophone specifically is an expressive tool or a modern voice that can express some sort of contemporary musical ideas?
JFR: Yeah, sure. Of course! I mean, I’ve written a fair amount of pieces! I had never written for the instrument, or frankly, even considered writing for the instrument until Clifford Leaman approached me. He and I both arrived at USC at the same time, and he had talked early on about having me write a piece for him and Derek when they were still part of the (Ambassador) duo. So that was really my initial adventure into writing for saxophone. And I found it just an incredibly wonderful instrument to write for. And I think it wasn’t that I had dismissed the idea, I just hadn’t known that much about saxophone and saxophone music until Leaman helped introduce me to the repertoire and the playing and to all the many incredible saxophonists who are out there now, yourself included.

GF: Haha, oh, thanks! Initially, when you started to write for saxophone, were there pieces or performers that Dr. Leaman suggested that you listen to?

JFR: No, I don’t think so. I don’t think we ever did that. I don’t really go and listen to other music or listen to repertoire to get ideas. That was a while ago and I’m honestly not sure. I think maybe I read up on the saxophone I maybe did a little listening on my own, but I can’t quite recall.

GF: Ok. So one thing I really like about your music compared to other 20th and 21st century saxophone music is first of all that it is very melodic, very rhythmic, really cool stuff. But it doesn’t rely on extended techniques like multiphonics or slap tongue or some of these other crazy, very contemporary extended techniques. Are you opposed to using them, or just don’t feel a need to use them?

JFR: I’m not in any way opposed to using them. I think that some composers find extended techniques or using instruments in really interesting ways is part of their musical language. For me, I think it’s a little bit less in my DNA to do that. As you say, I’m a bit more of a melodist, or as Lou Harrison would say, ‘a melode’. So I think that I’m in no way opposed, and again, it really kind of comes back down to what the material wants. If the material seems like it needs a multiphonic, then I’ll figure out what the multiphonic is. You know, there are moments in Breaking, for example, that use alternate fingerings or call for glissandi or growls or circular breathing, if that’s available. These are all kinds of extended techniques and I think that they are the appropriate techniques in those particular pieces. So while I don’t…I’d say that the basis of my music is not about extended techniques, I’m in no way opposed to using them if it makes musical sense. If it is what the music demands, then sure, I’ll figure it out. I’ll talk to you or some other saxophonist to figure out what the fingering for a multiphonic would be. And even in The Rivers, there are multiphonics here and there, so it just depends a little bit on the piece.

GF: This is kind of not music or saxophone related, but if you were to advise a younger student, or someone like me, someone who is finishing up a master’s degree or even finishing up a bachelor’s degree, do you have a suggestion of books that you would say as an informed, artistic, creative, passionate human being, you should read or you should check out these books, or this author?
JFR: That’s an impossible question for me to answer. I wish I could, Gabe. There are too many books, and there’s too many ideas. I mean, I think that all artists should be sponges and read as much and as widely as possible, and go see art forms outside their own discipline. I tell this to my composers: If you want to learn how to write a symphony, start getting scores of string quartets, and if you want to learn how to write for the voice, study the Beethoven violin sonatas. If you want to learn how to write for the violin, check out Debussy songs. I mean, you learn in oblique ways. And so I think for me, any advice along those lines would be ‘don’t assume that if you want to learn to be a great saxophonist, you should only study saxophone music’. Go to a dance concert, study the great orchestral literature, study widely, because all of those things will eventually inform how you develop as an artist. But as for particular books, the list could go on and on and is endless. Sorry.

GF: I remember I had a discussion one time with Eugene Rousseau, because he’s had tons of compositions written for him or dedicated to him. He really put it into perspective…he’s probably in his eighties now, and he said “I’ve got a stack of music on my desk that I’ve never played. In my lifetime, I’ll never get to the bottom of that stack, and who knows, the gem might be two pieces down, you just never know.” For me that really put it into perspective because there is so much great material out there.

JFR: Yeah, there is so much out there. I mean that’s the thing. I think the longer you stay in music, the more you realize how little you know. It’s amazing how people who are young think that they have a real grasp, and if you stay in music long enough, that you really know nothing. It’s part of the humbling experience of being a musician I think.

GF: Well, that’s kind of the list of questions I had for come up with for today. I’d love to pick your brain more specifically about pieces as I have a better chance to really sit down and kind of talking about form and stuff.

JFR: Well, I think my suggestion to you is as this is your document, you may want to dig into the pieces yourself and see what you derive from them rather than me telling you my particular thoughts. I’m certainly happy to give you ancillary information for your document, but, I think it might be more fruitful for you to dig into the pieces yourself and figure out what you want. And if you have questions, I’d be happy to address them, if I can.

GF: I really appreciate you being willing to talk to me and helping me to get the ball rolling. I do feel like I’ve been dragging my feet, and I think it’s because I’ve been nervous about coming to you and seeming to not really have much because I know how busy you are.

JFR: Its totally fine! Don’t worry about it. Like we were talking about at the beginning, my suggestion is to jump in! Talk to Leaman, get your prospectus approved, and just dive in and let the process, and the writing, and the revision process be were you spend more of your time rather than trying to conceptualize everything at the beginning, and get
everything perfect before you start and then trying to write. It's much harder to do that.
And I kind of am terrible at that sort of thing, so maybe I’m just giving you advice that I
would give myself.

GF: No that’s good because I know for a fact that I will overthink just about anything,
and its one of those things that I’m really trying to work on

JFR: Well, as you know, composition is a good lesson for me in that regard because as I
tell my students, composition is not about coming up with a musical idea and then writing
it down. It’s about revision. And when I write a piece of music, in order to get it to sound
what I think is hopefully is natural and sounds like a decent piece of music is the product
of many, many, many hours of revision. So I don’t sit down and have a piece all thought
out and then I write it. For me it’s not possible, but maybe it’s different for other
composers. I make missteps and I write terrible first drafts and I have things that I think
are awful and clichéd, and then I have to fix that. And so I recognize where the problems
are and I try to tweak the piece and just let the process help me along. And I think writing
a big document it’s better to do that and not overthink things at the beginning, just start
writing. And what you get initially is junk. It’s terrible. And it’s disjointed, and maybe
the writing doesn’t make sense. But then you start to see the landscape. You start to see
the outline of what the thing is and ‘well, that’s good, and this is good. This needs a lot of
work, and that needs to go away altogether. And pretty soon you start going through that
process more and more and more. I always think of it as a piece tightens up, it gets more
and more condensed, and becomes more of what it is. And that can’t happen unless you
give yourself over a little bit to letting things be chaotic. I think one issue that we deal
with as artists is that we are by nature perfectionists. And you have to be, right? I mean,
you have to be a perfectionist if you are going to make any progress and take your art-
form to a level that you want to be. But there’s a time and a place for perfectionism. And
the initial time for perfectionism is not when you are starting out a project, because that
will just paralyze you. As you jump in and you get better and better, then you can start to
become more of a perfectionist and let things get refined, later on in the process. But,
there is a time when you have to tamp that little devil down on your shoulder and just
jump in and let things be chaotic and crappy for a while, and then they start to get better
and you just revise and work and work and work. That’s my advice.

GF: Well thank you! I appreciate it.

JFR: Sure

GF: Well thanks again so much for your time and

JFR: Sure! Yeah! I’m happy to chat, Gabe…I just hope the subject is worthy of the time.

GF: It is! I have no doubts.
APPENDIX C

DISSERTATION RECITAL PROGRAMS

This Appendix includes programs from the three solo Dissertation Recitals and one chamber Dissertation Recital that, together with this document, comprise the dissertation requirements of the Doctor of Musical Arts Degree at the University of South Carolina.
GABRIEL FADALE, saxophone
in
GRADUATE RECITAL
Claudio Olivera, piano

Tuesday, September 24, 2013
7:30 PM • Recital Hall

Two Preludes (1993)
   I. Adagio e espressivo

Music for saxophone and piano (1969)
   I. Fast
   II. Slow
   III. Moderato
   IV. Fast

Balafon (1996)
   (from Neuf Études, cahier 1)

Lilith (1984)
   I. The Female Demon
   II. Succuba
   III. Will-o’-the-Wisp
   IV. Child-Stealer
   V. The Night Dance

Sonate en C# (1943)
   I. Très modéré, expressif
   II. Noel
   III. Fileuse
   IV. Nocturne et Rondel

Dorothy Chang
(b. 1970)

Leslie Bassett
(b. 1923)

Christian Lauba
(b. 1952)

William Bolcom
(b. 1938)

Fernande Decruck
(1896-1954)

Mr. Fadale is a student of Dr. Clifford Leaman.
This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Performance.
SHELDON JOHNSON, soprano saxophone
GABRIEL FADALE, soprano and tenor saxophones
PO-FANG CHANG, baritone saxophone
in
GRADUATE CHAMBER RECITAL

Andrew Wassum, alto saxophone

Friday, April 18, 2014
6:00 PM • Recital Hall

Quartette (Allegro de Concert) (1879)  Caryl Florio
   (1843-1920)

Alaric I or II (1989)  Gavin Bryars
   (b. 1943)

Sechs Bagatellen (1953)
   Allegro con spirito
   Rubato. Lamentoso
   Allegro grazioso
   Presto ruvido
   Adagio. Mesto (Béla Bartók in Memoriam)
   Molto vivace. Capriccioso  György Ligeti
   (1923-2006)

Prodigal Child (2004)  John Fitz Rogers
   (b. 1963)

Tango Virtuoso (1993)  Thierry Escaich
   (b. 1965)

Mr. Johnson, Mr. Fadale, and Mr. Chang
are students of Dr. Clifford Leaman.
This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Performance.
GABRIEL FADALE, saxophone
in
GRADUATE RECITAL

Claudio Olivera, piano

Tuesday, November 11, 2014 • 7:30 PM • Recital Hall

Six Studies in English Folksongs
I. Adagio
II. Andante
III. Larghetto
IV. Lento
V. Andante tranquillo
VI. Allegro

Ralph Vaughan Williams
(1872-1958)
arr. Clifford Leaman

Illuminations
Reginald Bain
(b. 1963)

I Never Saw Another Butterfly
I. Prologue: Terezin [Theresienstadt]
II. The Butterfly
III. The Old Man
IV. Fear
V. The Garden

Ellwood Derr
(1932-2008)

Stephanie Beinlich, soprano

Eli, Eli

David Zahavi
(1910-1977)
(arr. Michael Bies)

Breaking
break open
break with
break in
break into
break off
break down
break up
break free
break through
break away

John Fitz Rogers
(b. 1963)

Mr. Fadale is a student of Dr. Clifford Leaman.
This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Performance.
GABRIEL FADALE, saxophone
in
GRADUATE RECITAL
Claudio Olivera, piano

Tuesday, March 24, 2015
7:30 PM • Recital Hall

Fantaisie (1984) Denis Bédard (b. 1950)

Partita in A Minor, BWV 1013 Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
I. Allemande
II. Corrente
III. Sarabande
IV. Bourée Anglaise

A Savage Calculus (2002) John Fitz Rogers (b. 1963)

Caprice en forme de Valse (1950) Paul Bonneau (1918-1995)

Kelly Grill, marimba

Prélude, Cadence et Finale (1956) Alfred Desenclos (1912-1971)

Mr. Fadale is a student of Dr. Clifford Leaman.
This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Performance.
APPENDIX D

PERMISSION TO REPRINT

March 15, 2016

Dear Gabriel Fadale,

As copyright owner, I hereby give you my permission to reprint selected excerpts from *A Savage Calculus*, *Prodigal Child*, *Release*, *Push*, and *Breaking* as part of your dissertation document.

Sincerely,

John Fitz Rogers
Professor of Composition
Composition Program Coordinator
University of South Carolina School of Music
jrogers@mozart.sc.edu; 803-576-5753