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**AN INVESTIGATION OF THE BACKGROUND, INFLUENCES AND
PERFORMANCE PRACTICES OF FIVE SYDNEY BASED JAZZ DOUBLE
BASSISTS**

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of requirements for the degree of
Master of Music (Performance)

Sydney Conservatorium of Music
University of Sydney
2013

I declare that the research presented here is my own original work and has not been submitted to any other institution for the award of a degree.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Clarke', written in a cursive style.

Brendan Clarke

October 2013

ABSTRACT

The bass player occupies a unique position in a modern jazz ensemble. Originally an orchestral instrument the double bass has evolved to become one of the most significant and important voices in jazz. The role of the bassist is a fundamental one that acts as an essential reference point in the music making process. The aim of this study is to establish how performance and learning practices for professional jazz double bassists have evolved and which methods successful jazz bassists cite as influential. Through a series of interviews with five of Sydney's most respected and experienced jazz double bassists; this research will seek to assess the importance of specific types of study undertaken by individual bass players and the impact of that study on their future development and success as a professional musician. As well as learning and performance practice methodology, this research will observe and document the day-to-day process that professional jazz bassists adhere to in their personal practice. It will also document the major influences of each player as well as each individual's personal history on their instrument and provide an historical folio on each artist. Although there are countless numbers of jazz bass method books and courses freely available; very little has been written on how individual players learn the art of jazz bass and how they process all the information available. The age range of the participants are from between 24 and 56 years old and so represents a significant cross generational representation of jazz bassists working professionally in Sydney, Australia in 2013. The information produced by this study should clearly show which methods are employed by high level bassists as well as define what are the essential fundamentals of learning and maintaining the art of jazz double bass. It

also presents the substantial contribution to Australian jazz double bass performance practice each participant has made.

PREFACE

The primary source for this thesis comes from the interviews with the five bassists who participated. The interviews were conducted with ethics approval from the University of Sydney.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to firstly thank my supervisor Craig Scott for his support, guidance and patience throughout the process. To all the participants Craig Scott, Lloyd Swanton, Jonathan Zwartz, Cameron Undy and Alex Boneham, thank you for donating your time and being so generous and open to sharing your stories, knowledge and wisdom this could not have happened without you. Thanks also to Gai Bryant for all your help and advice and last but not least my beautiful wife Sally Marett for her unwavering love and support.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to take a close look by means of comparison and analysis at the performance practices of five professional jazz double bassists who live and work in Sydney, Australia in 2013. Each individual is a highly respected musician in their own right and as this research will demonstrate, each performer has and continues to develop a decidedly individual style and musical language on the double bass. Through a series of interviews with the author each artist was asked to reveal specific types of study undertaken in their early development; which double bass methods if any were used and whether these methods were considered crucial in their development. The Oxford dictionary defines method as “the quality of being well organized and systematic in thought or action”. To play the double bass effectively one must develop systems and be organized physically and mentally. Double bass learning methods have traditionally come in book form and have been developed and written by prominent educators in the field. This study will discuss some of the more well-known methods of playing the double bass. Personal histories and major influences on each player were also discussed as well as demonstrations of practice techniques and thought processes that professional high-level jazz artists adhere to. An important goal of this study is to understand the similarities and differences between great players as well as providing a folio of information and an historical document of these great performers. The age range of those interviewed is from 56 to 25 and so offers a large cross generational perspective and representation of jazz bassists living and working in Sydney in 2013. The five bassists who have agreed to participate in this study are Craig Scott, Lloyd Swanton, Jonathan Zwartz, Cameron

Undy and Alex Boneham. What contribution if any these individual musicians have made to the practice of jazz double bass in Australia will be discovered.

Issues regarding performance practice techniques continually confront modern jazz bassists.¹ The demands on the modern bass player to be an effective accompanist as well as an original and accomplished improviser and soloist have increased as the music has continued to evolve. Originally an orchestral instrument that was primarily played with a bow (arco), the double bass initially replaced the tuba and sousaphone as one of the most significant and important voices in a modern jazz ensemble. Jazz players soon reduced the use of the bow having found pizzicato technique more sonically effective in the highly rhythmic environment of the jazz ensemble as well as giving the music a forward propulsion that became a radical departure from the longer arco sounds of the bass.² As early as 1907 New Orleans bassist Bill Johnson had begun to play a light pizzicato four-beat to the bar line while most ragtime bassists at the time tended to bow a two-beat style rhythm.³ Since then pizzicato technique has been refined and reenergized by jazz bassists.⁴ Over the past few decades however, an increasing number of bass players have begun to study with classical teachers, helping to develop and refine technique on the bass as well as learning conventional bowing techniques.⁵

¹ Taylor, M. E. (2002). *James Blanton, Raymond Brown, and Charles Mingus: A Study of the Development of the Double Bass in Modern Jazz*. Unpublished Ph.D., University of Pittsburgh, United States -- Pennsylvania.

² Ibid.

³ Shipton, A. (2007). *A New History of Jazz*: Continuum Intl Pub Group.

⁴ Turetzky, B. (1989). *The Contemporary Contrabass* (No. 0520063813, 9780520063815). Berkeley: University of California Press.

⁵ Berliner, P. (1994). *Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation*: University of Chicago Press.

The principal functional expectation of a bass player is to sustain the rhythmic flow of the piece.⁶ The bass is the rock on which the jazz ensemble is built.⁷ With this basic and central responsibility there comes a unique perspective on the music being performed. A bass player's position in an ensemble is quite often seen as being the heartbeat of the band and also one of being a leading force in the music.

Prominent Sydney jazz bassist Steve Elphick describes how he sees his role in an ensemble: "The position of the bass player in a band is sometimes a leading position; it's often directing the music. So a lot of the time I do feel like I am the leader, though not in name or compositionally. The bass is pretty fundamental. You play a note and it suggests a lot of things, both harmonically and rhythmically".⁸

This power of suggestion is what defines the central role of a bassist, which is to act as the bridge or linking point between harmony and rhythm. The bass can be an essential reference point in the music making process and one that other instrumentalists rely on in the moment of music creation. As well as this crucial and at times demanding position as accompanist, a modern jazz bassist must also be able to perform improvised solos with flair and precision over any given tune or composition.

These varied and challenging tasks place considerable physical and mental demands on bassists and thus require great technical facility and stamina on the instrument. The bassist must be prepared for hard work that is quite often void of accolades or attention apart from their fellow musicians. One of the purposes of this dissertation is

⁶ Chevan, D. (1989). The Double Bass as a Solo Instrument in Early Jazz. *The Black Perspective in Music*, 17(1/2), 73-92.

⁷ DeVeaux, G. G. S. (2009). *Jazz*. New York, NY.

⁸ Webster, B. (2011). Steve Elphick in Conversation with Belinda Webster. *Jazz Planet*, (4). www.extempore.com.

to discover what it is that draws an individual to be attracted to this position and responsibility in a musical setting.

American jazz bassist George Duvivier found the string bass to be an especially compelling instrument because its low resonant sound generally provided the foundation of orchestral music, “These big notes pouring out, the powerful descending bottom line.”⁹

Jazz is a style of music whose foundation is built on tradition and in respecting the great players who have helped forge a style and sound that is unique and highly expressive. Those that wish to emulate the music and find a voice of their own on whichever instrument they choose look to the great masters to follow. As a result it is common that musicians have their own personal influences or “heroes” that they look up to and whose personal style they study through transcription and analysis as well as copying certain sounds or musical phrases that they may play. This is no different for jazz double bassists and one of the aims of this thesis is to discover and discuss the major influences of each participant.

Due to its size, the double bass requires the player to have a high level of physical strength and agility. The individual is often required to play for long stretches without a break sometimes accompanying lengthy solos at different tempos and a variety of different “feels” or “grooves”. This level of stamina requires the artist to maintain a certain level of “match fitness” and maintenance through a regular practice regime. During the interview process each bassist was asked to demonstrate on the instrument

⁹ Berliner, P. (1994). *Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation*: University of Chicago Press.

how they deal with this requirement and what methods, techniques and processes they adhere to in their day-to-day practice and why. This has revealed some fascinating insights into the unique approaches utilized by each performer.

Despite there being a vast number of instrumental double bass methods available, very little has been written on the very personal approach of how individual musicians learn and continue to develop their chosen art form as jazz musicians, accompanists and improvisers. Paul Berliner's book *Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art Of Improvisation*¹⁰(1994) is an excellent publication that addresses this subject. This dissertation seeks to broaden discussion in this area and reveal some absorbing insights into the minds of great jazz bassists.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Chapter 2

The Double Bass In Jazz

The first recorded mention of an instrument that was most likely a Viola da Gamba, an ancestor of the modern double bass was in 1493 when Bernadino Prospero, the Ferraris chancellor of Isabella d'Este¹¹ spoke of “viols as big as myself”.¹² The earliest known illustration of a double bass-like instrument dates back as far as 1516.¹³ The bass has undergone some dramatic changes over the centuries; most notably the change from being a three stringed instrument to a four and sometimes five. Before the 1800's there were several different names used for the instrument; the most common being the violone but it was also called at different times the Grosse-Geigen-Bassus, Basso di Viola da Gamba, Violone in Contrabasso and Bass Violon to name a few.¹⁴ Other transformations have not been seen only in the design of the instrument but also in the tuning of the bass, which has experienced a host of changes including being tuned in thirds, fourths and combinations of these before settling on today's standard fourth tuning of E-A-D-G. Austrian music historian and double bassist Alfred Planyavsky has conducted some important research into the early history of the double bass.¹⁵

¹¹ Isabella d'Este was one of the leading women of the Italian Renaissance and a patron of the arts.

¹² Slatford, R. (1985). *The bottom Line : New Prospects for Teaching and Learning the Double Bass* Rodney Slatford & Stephen Pettitt. In S. J. Pettit & G. Funda Calouste (Eds.) (pp. 86 p. : ill). London :: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

¹³ Slatford, R. (2013). History Of The Double Bass. *The Double Bass and Violone Internet Archive*.

¹⁴ Fuller, J. The Double Bass and Violone Internet Archive - EarlyBass.com. *Alfred Planyavsky and The Vienna Double Bass Archive*. <http://earlybass.com/articles-bibliographies/alfred-planyavsky-and-the-vienna-double-bass-archive/>

¹⁵ Ibid.

In the formative years of jazz (1900-1920) the role of the bass was overwhelmingly performed by the tuba and sousaphone. Bass lines consisted mainly of what is known as a “two-feel” which is simply playing the root and fifth of the chord on beats one and three of the bar (in 4/4 time). Many bass players of the day quite often played both double bass and tuba depending on the situation - the louder tuba was useful at outdoor events or when the band marched or recorded.¹⁶ By the 1920’s many New Orleans bands began to slowly make the permanent switch from tuba to the double bass and, as evidenced by photographs taken from the 1920’s, the double bass was a regular part of many medium to large jazz groups.¹⁷ In 1930 John Kirby who had been playing tuba in Fletcher Henderson’s orchestra since 1929 introduced the double bass to the rhythm section. This represented a watershed moment as almost simultaneously several of the jazz orchestras in the urban centres of New York and Chicago permanently replaced the tuba with the double bass¹⁸ where it has remained to this day as the primary provider of low-pitched function in jazz. A similar transition was taking place between the banjo and the guitar.

One of the other major shifts that occurred around this time was the development of the walking bass line. Up to this point the most common groove was the two-feel, which developed from the ragtime piano feel. When performing a walking bass line the bassist plays consecutive quarter notes on each beat providing a solid rhythmic and harmonic foundation.¹⁹ The ability of the string bass to sustain the walking bass line for longer periods of time also helped do away with the tuba.

¹⁶ Porter, L., Ullman, M., & Hazell, E. (1993). *Jazz: From its Origins to the Present*. Prentice Hall.

¹⁷ Shipton, A. (2007). *A New History of Jazz*: Continuum Intl Pub Group.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Brough, R. (2012b). Walk That Dog: The Emergence Of Walking Bass Lines In Jazz. *The Online Journal Of Bass Research, Volume 4*.

Milt Hinton (1910-2000) was one of the early pioneers of walking bass lines and offers a unique perspective on the development of walking bass lines:

Walking bass hadn't come in yet. In fact, bass playing seemed to evolve pretty slowly. In my opinion, some of it was because the bass players around had switched from tuba and didn't know much about the techniques of playing string instruments. So at first the bass was given a percussive role, the same way tuba was used. Musically, it was kept simple. Everyone played the major note in a chord, period. Most things, including stock arrangements, were played in two-beat. So, for example, if you had an F chord you'd play two F's to the bar. But sometimes on the last chorus the band might get hot and then you'd play four beats of the same note. I'd taken harmony courses at Crane [College] so I knew something about chord structures, but nobody had taught me anything about using music theory in a practical way. Just like all the others, I had to learn how to play on a chord by experimenting myself. At some point during this time I began playing the one and five notes in a chord. So if I had an F chord I'd play F and C instead of all F's. Then a little later I began using other notes in the chord too. It was all trial and error and I got more daring as I went. I figured out that my instrument had to identify a chord, so I'd always play the tonic as the first note. But I also realized that after the tonic I could play a lot of other notes in the chord. So for example, if I had an F chord I'd play an F first, and follow it with an A and a C, and then maybe go to a D and put in the sixth. From a harmonic standpoint there are many acceptable notes, but I began to get a feeling for what combination sounded best, especially when I made the transition from one chord to the next. I was walking, but it took a long time

before things flowed naturally. In fact, when I joined Cab a couple of years later, Ben Webster really taught me about connecting chords. There were a lot of other bass players experimenting during this time. I'm not saying I was the originator, but I know I was one of the contributors.²⁰

Some other early contributors to the development of jazz double bass were William Manuel “Bill” Johnson (1872-1972), Pops Foster (1892-1969) and Walter Page (1900-1957) who is considered one of the more important contributors to the style.²¹

The first recognized virtuoso of jazz double bass came to fore in 1939 when Duke Ellington hired Jimmy Blanton to play bass in the Ellington Orchestra. Blanton was discovered at an after-hours nightclub where some members of the band heard and jammed with him after a show at the Coronado Hotel in St Louis. Ellington hired Blanton immediately. Ellington remembers his reasons for hiring Blanton in his autobiography *Music Is My Mistress* (1973):

All we wanted was that sound, that beat, and those precision notes in the right places, so that we could float out on the great and adventurous sea of expectancy with the pulse and foundation behind us. Jimmy Blanton revolutionized bass playing; and it has not been the same since. No one played from the same perspective before. He played melodies that belonged to the bass

²⁰ Hinton, D. B. a. M. (1988). *Bass Line: The Stories and Photographs of Milt Hinton*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

²¹ Brough, R. (2012a). The Online Journal Of Bass Research. *Walk That Dog: The Emergence of Walking Bass Lines*. <http://ojbr.com/4-5.asp>.

and always had a foundation quality. Rhythmically, he supported and drove at the same time. He was just too much.²²

Jimmy Blanton would only last two years in the Ellington Orchestra tragically dying of tuberculosis at the age of 23. His contribution however is unprecedented and he is considered to be the first jazz bassist to truly liberate the instrument from its own structural limitations.²³

Since Blanton the double bass has cemented its place as an equal expressive voice in the art of jazz as both soloist and accompanist. The next great player to emerge and expand on Blanton's innovations in what was to become the bebop era of the 1940's was Oscar Pettiford (1922-1960) who performed, composed and recorded extensively throughout his career as both leader and sideman.²⁴ Charles Mingus (1922-1979) also debuted in this period and became one of not only the great bassists of jazz but also one of the most important composers since Duke Ellington. Ray Brown (1926-2002) whose career spanned nearly six decades also became active in the mid 1940's. Another player who would become a major influence on bassists to come was Wilbur Ware (1923-1979).

The 1950's saw an abundance of fresh talent on the American jazz scene, which included the appearance of Paul Chambers (1935-1969) in Miles Davis' classic quintet in 1955. Chambers' influence stretches right up to the modern era and is without peer especially considering his career only spanned fourteen years. Other

²² Ellington, E. K. (1973). *Music Is My Mistress* (First Edition ed.). Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company Inc.

²³ Green, B. (1972). *This One's for Blanton*. (Album liner notes).

²⁴ DeVeaux, G. G. S. (2009). *Jazz*. New York, NY.

notable bassists to make their considerable mark in this period were Red Mitchell (1927-1992), Israel Crosby (1919-1962), Percy Heath (1923-2005), Sam Jones (1924-1981), Butch Warren (1939) and Doug Watkins (1934-1962) to name a few.

The 1960's heralded a new era of consciousness and with it a new era of music. Many notable double bassists appeared around this time. Like Paul Chambers, Ron Carter (1937) came to prominence in the Miles Davis Quintet. Carter is still very active and has appeared on over 2,500 albums to date. Charlie Haden (1937) became an important figure at this time in Ornette Coleman's band, as did Dave Holland (1946) with Miles Davis. Scott LaFaro (1936-1961) and Eddie Gomez (1944) were both crucial members of the Bill Evans trio at different times and helped forge a new virtuosic approach to double bass playing. LaFaro was tragically killed in a car accident at the age of 25 but he has been hailed as one of the most innovative and promising double bassists on the scene during that period.²⁵ Jimmy Garrison (1934-1976) was the bassist in the famous John Coltrane Quartet and a seminal voice in that group. Coltrane first heard Garrison with Ornette Coleman's band and was so impressed he hired him immediately. Drummer Elvin Jones called Garrison the "turning point" for the quartet.²⁶

In Australia there have been a number of jazz double bassists who have had a lasting impact on the local jazz scene. In 1923 Frank Ellis and his Californians were the first American dance band to visit Australia. They were also one of the first American bands to use a double bassist as a permanent member. On this particular tour their bass player was so fed up with his band mates practical jokes that he refused to

²⁵ Tamarkin, J. (2009). Scott LaFaro: Remembering Scotty. *Jazz Times.com*.
jazztimes.com/articles/25270-scott-lafaro

²⁶ DeVeaux, G. G. S. (2009). *Jazz*. New York, NY.

accompany them. When Ellis arrived in Sydney he recruited Australian bassist Bob Waddington who would become the first Australian musician to tour with an American band.²⁷ Bill Meredith from Melbourne who played both the double bass and the tuba was a frequent member of some of the early Melbourne dance bands including Tom Swift's Green Mill Orchestra.

In the 1930's dance bands were a regular feature in entertainment circles in the capital cities and some well known bassists at the time were Don Barille, Norm Goldie and Pat White who was the bassist in the Sydney Trocadero All-Girl Band in 1938.²⁸

World War II provided an opportunity for Australian musicians to interact with visiting servicemen from the United States. More importantly many of these servicemen were African Americans whom most Australians had not had any contact with at all. One of the places where Australian and American servicemen met and played was the 2KY Jazz and Swing Club in George St. Sydney. It was here that many lasting impressions were made with people like Aaron Bell, who would later play bass in Duke Ellington's band, sitting in²⁹ with the local musicians.

As in the United States, jazz in Australia was thrust into the modern era after 1946 with the birth of bebop. As soon as the first bebop records arrived in the country eager young musicians wanted to try their hands at this exciting new style. One of the earliest proponents of modern jazz bass was John Foster who played in Don Banks Bop-tet. Other significant players of this era were Freddy Logan, Alf Gardiner and

²⁷ Bisset, A., & Johnson, B. (1979). *Black Roots, White Flowers: A History of Jazz in Australia*: Golden Press Sydney.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

Harry Harman. The most influential bassist of this period was Ed Gaston. Gaston was an American double bassist who joined the Australian Jazz Quartet while they were touring the U.S. in 1957.³⁰ He arrived with them in Australia in 1958 where he settled and became one of the leading jazz bassists in Australia for over fifty years. Gaston was one of the original participants in this study but he regrettably passed away before the interview could take place.

From 1960 onwards there has been a strong tradition of jazz double bassists in Australia including such names as Dieter Vogt, Bruce Cale, Dave Ellis, Jack Thorncraft, Darcy Wright, Cliff Barnett, Lyn Christie, Chris Qua (Smedley) and Don Heap. Since 1980 there are many great players who have appeared on the scene including Steve Elphick, Ben Robertson, Gary Costello, Adam Armstrong, Ashley Turner, Philip Rex, Philip Stack, Brett Hirst, Kevin Hailey, Hugh Fraser, Ben Waples and Matt Clohesy and Sam Anning (who both now reside in New York City). There are also a number of female bassists who have made their mark on the local scene including Nicki Parrot and Debbie Kennedy, both of whom live in New York, along with Zoe Hauptmann, Hanna James and Tamara Murphy. Among the current generation we find Jess Dunn, who leads the Sydney based all-female big band “Sirens”.

The five double bassists who have been interviewed for this study are Craig Scott, Lloyd Swanton, Jonathan Zwartz, Cameron Undy and Alex Boneham. Each is a professional working musician living and working in Sydney and are all highly respected figures in the jazz community and among the most in demand bassists in

³⁰ Johnson, B. (1987). *The Oxford Companion to Australian Jazz*: Oxford University Press Melbourne.

Australia. For each interview all the participants were asked the same or similar questions relating to their personal history as a musician and double bassist as well as methods that they may have studied. Major influences were also discussed both from overseas and in Australia. Each participant also demonstrated a range of technical exercises from warm-ups to scales, arpeggios, bowing, pizzicato along with general practice techniques that they adhere to, and an explanation of why these practices are important in their personal development as artists.

The double bass has been an integral and permanent voice in the world of jazz for nearly one hundred years and the tradition as well as membership of this club does not seem to diminish with the passing of time. As with any instrument a serious amount of dedication and study is required to master the skills to play at the highest levels of music. All these great bassists who have become influential artists over the past century both here in Australia and in the U.S.A. have spent, and many continue to spend countless hours of practice on their instrument: their individual journeys are all different. They have studied with mentors and teachers, listened to the masters of the instrument, transcribed solos and bass lines and followed numerous specific methods in order to hone their craft.

Chapter 3

Double Bass Methods

Teaching and learning systems through methods and method books are an accepted way of teaching a student the fundamental techniques required to create music on an instrument. There are a great number of double bass methods, which can vary from country to country. For example, in Germany Simandl's *New Method For Double Bass (1881)* is frequently used, while in France *Method Complete Pour La Contrebasse (1920)* by Edward Nanny is a more common method book. As the following pages will reveal, in Australia and The United States there are a number of preferred methods that classical and jazz players have learnt from and continue to teach from. Within this chapter, through discussion with interviewees, I will highlight some of the better-known bass methods that have been adopted by both classical and jazz double bassists. It should be noted that this study does not intend to offer a comprehensive list of double bass methods available. Instead, the aims are to present a survey of methods utilized by interviewees featured in this study.

New Method For Double Bass by Franz Simandl

One of the most well-known and universal bass methods was written by Franz Simandl (1840-1912) who was Professor of Double Bass at the Vienna Conservatory from 1896 until 1910. He also played for the Vienna Imperial Opera, was the leading

bass for the Vienna Court Orchestra and was principal bass at Bayreuth³¹ a town in Northern Bavaria, Germany.

Simandl's method summarized 19th century double bass technique.³² The basic premise for his method was to divide the fingerboard into twelve positions moving up by a half step at a time. The left hand technique is to only use the index (1st), middle (2nd) and little (4th) finger until the sixth or "thumb" position is reached wherein the 4th finger becomes redundant and the 3rd or "ring" finger takes the place of the third. Simandl uses various different exercises and etudes to link up each position and so provides an excellent foundation on the instrument, especially for both right hand bowing and left hand technique. If there were any criticism of Simandl, it would be that the positions numbers become difficult to remember as they move up the neck. Jason Heath points out in an article comparing Simandl and Rabbath techniques students who learnt from the Simandl method were generally "bored to tears".³³ Despite this Simandl still remains an industry standard double bass method.

Nouvelle Technique De La Contrabass (1977) by Francois Rabbath

François Rabbath is a French contemporary double bassist who was born in Aleppo, Syria in 1931 into a large family of musicians. Rabbath has developed and refined his own unorthodox approach. The Rabbath technique divides the bass into only six positions. It uses left hand thumb as a pivot to move between the positions and, as opposed to the Simandl technique, it employs the 3rd finger in all positions. Rabbath is a highly respected and virtuosic bassist and continues to perform and teach his

³¹ Bentgen, B. (June 29, 2011). Frantisek Simandl. www.billbentgen.com/bass/players/simandl.htm

³² Simandl, F., & Zimmermann, F. (1964). *New Method for the Double Bass: English and German Texts* (Vol. 1): C. Fischer.

³³ Heath, J. (2006). Rabbath Versus Simandl - A Comparative Study. *Jason Heath's Double Bass Blog*. <http://doublebassblog.org/2006/11/rabbath-versus-simandl-comparative.html>

method to this day and, despite being somewhat controversial the Rabbath method has become one of the standard modern bass methods.

Bob Haggart Bass Method, A School Of Modern Rhythmic Bass Playing (1941)

Primarily a jazz bassist, American musician Bob Haggart (1914-1998) was also a composer and arranger. Haggart's method book, which is currently out of print, is based heavily on the Simandl way of dividing the bass into positions and applying 1st, 2nd & 4th fingers. The most significant departure from the Simandl and Rabbath methods is that it introduces the student to more contemporary techniques of bass playing in particular in the jazz idiom by way of introducing the student to constructing walking bass lines etc. Legendary American jazz bassist Buster Williams credits the Bob Haggart method book as being a crucial factor in his early development.³⁴

Ray Brown's Bass Method (1963)

Ray Brown was one of the most influential bassists in the history of jazz. He released his method book in 1963 and is primarily targeted at jazz bassists. In the book, predominantly on jazz techniques, Brown focuses on scales, arpeggios, chord exercises, rhythmic and blues patterns as well as solo and walking bass exercises. Brown's method adopts fingerings and approaches to scales and arpeggio similar to the Simandl method.

³⁴ Berliner, P. (1994). *Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation*: University of Chicago Press.

The Evolving Bassist (1974) by Rufus Reid

First published in 1974 *The Evolving Bassist* has become one of the most respected and standard jazz double bass methods. Rufus Reid is one of the leading jazz educators in the U.S.A. and as a performer has made hundreds of recordings and played with many of the legends of jazz. Reid's book is a comprehensive reference book for the modern jazz double bassist. It includes scales and arpeggio exercises as well as transcriptions of Reid's recorded solos, original compositions arranged as bass duets, ways to conceive better bass lines, and even gives advice on how to travel with a double bass and record the instrument effectively.³⁵

Other notable double bass methods are *My Way Of Playing Bass (1980)* by Ludwig Streicher, George Vance *Progressive Repertoire (2000)* that is based on the Rabbath technique, and also *Methode Complete Pour La Contrebasse* by French bassist Edouard Nanny. It is also worth mentioning *Jazz Bowing Techniques (2010)* by John Goldsby, which is a refreshing study into the often-neglected techniques of bowing and jazz articulation for arco employed by jazz bassists specifically for jazz performance.

³⁵ Reid, R., Ashby, J., Miller, M., & Nash, L. (2003). *The Evolving Bassist*: Warner Bros.

Chapter 4

Craig Scott

“Craig Scott’s outstanding musicianship, strong melodic ideas and beautiful upright bass sound has established Craig as one of Australia’s leading bassists for over 25 years.”³⁶

“Superb Bassist”³⁷

Craig Blakefield Scott was born on the 20th of October 1956. He has been playing professionally since 1975 and has been the jazz double bass tutor at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music since 1984.³⁸ He is currently the chair of the jazz program at the conservatorium. Scott has been a member of a number of seminal Australian jazz ensembles over the past thirty five years led by such luminaries as Keith Stirling, Don Burrows, James Morrison, Kerrie Biddell, Judy Bailey, Roger Frampton and was a long time associate of pianist Julian Lee. He has performed with a number of international artists including Joe Henderson, Red Rodney, Bobby Shew, Clifford Jordan, Lee Konitz, James Williams, Ronnie Scott and George Cables.³⁹ He currently leads his own quintet and released *Timeline*, his debut album as leader on Rufus Records in 2012. To say that Scott has had a major influence over the development of jazz bass in Australia over the past thirty years would be an understatement; proof of this is that three of the participants in this thesis studied with him in their formative years at the Sydney Conservatorium.

³⁶ Hayes, M. (2010). Australian Jazz Musician Craig Scott. *Mike Hayes Guitar Studio*.
<http://www.mikehayes.com.au/Jazz-Guitar/cs.htm>

³⁷ Clare, J., & Brennan, G. (1995). *Bodgie Dada & the Cult of Cool*: University of New South Wales Press Kensington.

³⁸ Johnson, B. (1987). *The Oxford Companion to Australian Jazz*: Oxford University Press Melbourne.

³⁹ Scott, C. Craig Scott - Jazz Bassist. www.craigscott.com.au/Craig_Scott_Website/Musician.html

Craig began playing the bass at the age of 15 when he was a student at Balgowlah Boys High. He describes how he first started on the bass:

Well, I started playing when I was around about 15 years old at Balgowlah Boys High School. I started on the piano prior to that and then I played the tuba a bit in the euphemism for a school band. My brother is a pianist and I could never get near the piano. He was so good at it that it was a bit intimidating playing the piano around him. The school had a bass or they got a bass. They actually got a bass by mistake, they meant to get a cello but they actually got a bass.⁴⁰

BC: So it was an upright bass?

CS: Yeah. I started on double bass. I bought an electric bass much later and stopped playing it much earlier, to the great joy of everybody. So I was 15 and I got the school bass, it's actually still there I think. In fact my first student that I taught at the con way back when was Adam Armstrong. He turned up at my house in Balgowlah with the same bass that I started on. I think Alex Henery started on that bass as well, I think he was at Balgowlah Boys High, there were a few of us. Another guy called Todd Logan played it for a while I think. So that particular instrument has quite a pedigree. It was a plywood bass; I took it home with the neck hanging out the window of the car decapitating pedestrians on the way. So yeah I was 15 and I had no idea what I was doing.

⁴⁰ This and the subsequent quotations in this chapter (unless otherwise specified) are taken from my interview with Craig Scott on 17/12/2012.

BC: Did you just see it in the corner and have desire to play it? What was the initial desire?

CS: That's a good question.

BC: What compelled you?

CS: I was drawn to it, I must say. I think I was also smart enough to realize that it was an instrument that you could play with a piano and my brother was very keen to play music, which was great you know. Also, I don't quite recall now whether it was just before I started to get interested in the bass or just after. My father used to work for an organisation called the "Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust" and they used to bring out international acts of various sorts in the art music area. I went to the Sydney Town Hall and I saw a concert by the Jacque Loussier Trio, which had Pierre Michelot playing the bass and he just fractured me. He was amazing! The trio was amazing and I listened to a lot of classical music so I knew my Bach and I enjoyed what they did to it and I enjoyed the concept of that trio. That was probably the first sort of jazz trio I ever saw live although my brother had some jazz records, my mother had a few and I think dad had a passing interest in it up to a point. There wasn't a huge amount of jazz being played around the house; it was mostly classical music and music theatre type stuff, which is my brother's defining interest. So that was a real eye opener and ear opener and so I either started on the bass just before that or just after that; I can't remember but it was certainly something to aspire to. I saw that group several times over the years. I think they came out two or three

or maybe even four times. I got to meet Pierre Michelot and I got to play his bass.

Craig Scott's first formal teacher on the instrument was Cliff Barnett who was a very in demand bassist on the Sydney scene at the time. Barnett had Scott study from the Simandl bass method playing with the French bow.

BC: Did you find Simandl helpful?

CS: Oh, I found it boring but I'm sure that it was helpful, I'm sure that it was. Not that I got that far through it because I wasn't practicing. Like any good teacher Cliff didn't let me plough through the book if I hadn't practiced the stuff that I was supposed to do. At the same time I did a lot of playing with my brother and he like me was very fired up by the whole Jacques Loussier sort of jazzing up the classical music domain. So he wrote a whole series of pieces for us to play. He's a formidable pianist, he's got an incredible left hand and so he played everything in the left hand and I just had to double it. That meant first of all I had to play it in tune and also play it in time with him which I think is responsible for my dodgy time feel now. But it was a great learning exercise and as I was able to play those things he made them progressively more difficult and more complicated. So that made me explore the bass a bit more.

Scott cites a number of mentors, many of whom are not bass players who were crucial in his development as a jazz musician including trumpeter Keith Stirling and

pianists Roger Frampton and Julian Lee. There were a number of local double bassists of whom he would listen to and watch on a regular basis:

I did certainly go and watch Ed Gaston play a lot. Ed was very busy in the scene of course and a model bass player, as you know. He was an extraordinary bass player so I used to go and sit at the front table every opportunity I had and just watch him and listen to him, but particularly watch him you know. You listen to amazing people on record and you listen to everybody you can get your hands on but the most defining thing is to see them. I used to pluck up enough courage to ask him questions and I always found him to be very willing to discuss the instrument and talk about what he was doing. Not that I asked him that many questions because I was too scared. I was shy but he was always great you know. I used to watch Darcy Wright play; of course Darcy is a great bass player. I used to watch Jack Thorncraft a lot. Jack was not as visible in the scene but he was certainly in it in the Jazz Co Op and things like that. So you learn a lot from watching people. Chris Qua, I used to watch Smedley who was in The Duck [influential Australian jazz ensemble Galapagos Duck] at that stage and they were down at the Basement about four nights a week. There was no shortage of people to watch and talk to and learn from.

Scott also took formal lessons from classical bassist Max Klaxton who was in the Sydney Symphony Orchestra (SSO) at the time. He also studied with American bassist Todd Coolman for six weeks when he came to the Sydney Conservatorium in 1981 as artist in residence. In 1984 he studied in New York City with highly influential bassist and jazz educator Rufus Reid:

Rufus was great. He said, “you’ve actually got to the limit of what you can do with your technique and if you want to get any better you’ve got to change some things”, so he made me sort of start from scratch. He had very specific ideas about how you use your hands, and I wasn’t doing it.

Scott has been the jazz bass tutor at the Sydney Conservatorium for nearly thirty years and was asked about whether he teaches from any specific methods:

Yeah I do. I try not to teach a particular method in terms of I don’t want everyone to sound like me obviously. One of the things that Rufus was very particular about was the reason for how you arrive at a technique that works. When I studied with him I got hold of *The Evolving Bassist* book and worked my way through that. Not as assiduously as I should have but picked out the things that interested me, which was a lot of it I must say. Over the course of my experience I’ve arrived at a conclusion regarding what you shouldn’t do and it seems obvious but people don’t. You shouldn’t do anything that’s physically bad for you when you’re playing an instrument. I mean the instruments bad enough. Playing the bass is shocking for you. It’s bad for your back, it’s bad for your posture and it’s bad for everything. I do try to explain to people why I do things. So your left hand for example. Rufus talks about the claw technique and I fundamentally play like that because he told me I should and I thought, “yes that sounds like a good idea” and that’s what I did. But I think there is a tendency if someone says you have a claw, I think the tendency is you lock your hand into a claw like position. I mean if you do that, then every muscle from here to here is tense. So I ask my students just to consider stuff like what their hand is like when it’s at rest and to just take that at rest thing and dump it on the

bass, don't do anything else at this stage. If that's your natural aspect of your hand then use it. Whatever shape your hand is, you know it's not going to be that because that's not at rest, but if that's at rest, that's my at rest shape so I want to use that. I don't actually ever talk about your thumb; I think your thumbs totally over rated. As long as it is there or there or there, it's whatever works for you at rest. I mean obviously there are some people who you might have to talk about it because their thumbs doing the wrong thing. If you really use that at rest thing then it's just a matter of closing your hand, that's all it is. It's not a tension thing at all. Same with your right hand. I alternate my fingers quite a lot, I know there are a few different schools of thought about whether you should or shouldn't do that. It seems to me that if you can make your two fingers sound the same then there's no reason why you shouldn't alternate. There's plenty of people in the history of jazz who've done it and plenty of people who haven't.

Performance and Practice Methods

Craig Scott plays a German flat-back copy of an Amati⁴¹ circa 1900. This particular bass is often referred to as a factory bass meaning that it was constructed and crafted in a workshop by more than one individual.

The way that one stands at the bass, or stance is a topic of interest and varies from player to player. Scott's concept on stance is thus:

I think the less you do to hurt yourself the better with any musical instrument. I basically try and keep my weight evenly distributed and try and just let the instrument balance itself. I fundamentally try and not to twist myself and just try and let the bass sit more or less where it should be. I like to be fairly side on to it, so around about 45 degrees. I have it at a height that's not particularly high; it's just around about the height of my eyebrows or just slightly more. I try and hold it in such a way that when I go up into thumb position I don't have to hold the bass anymore, rather it will come in and be supported by my shoulder.

Warm ups are an important aspect in any musicians routine whether in performance or personal practice. Scott discusses two different warm ups that he finds effective: "I like to start off by making sure that my hand is relaxed and dump it on the bass and then warm up just by squeezing the strings and get used to pivoting across the instrument. I try and make all my fingers work together."

⁴¹ Amati is the name of a well-known family of Italian violinmakers who were particularly active from about 1549 to 1740.

Figure 1.1 demonstrates this action of moving each finger across the fingerboard starting with 4th finger then 2nd and 1st together then just 1st finger. In reference to the 1st and 2nd fingers working together Scott makes this comment: “I find that if those two work together your hand is really well balanced.

Fig 1.1



The second warm up (Figure 1.2) is one that Scott invented himself and encourages his students to practice. It is basically a chromatic scale and shifting exercise moving up the string by a major third and then glissando down a minor third using the 1st finger then repeat using 2nd finger then 4th etc. The exercise can be played over two octaves ascending then repeated descending in reverse. It promotes left hand finger independence as well as accurate shifting through the positions. The fingerings are of utmost importance for this exercise. In each figure an arrow to the right indicates a glissando up the neck and an arrow to the left indicates a glissando down the neck.

Fig 1.2

0 1 2 4-1 1 1 2 4-1 2 2 2 4-1 2 4 4 4-1 2 4 1 1 1 2 4-1 2 2 2 4-1 2 3 4

4-1 2 3 1 1 1 2 3 -1 2 2 2 3 -1 2 3 3

3 2 1-3 2 2 2 1-3 2 1 1 1-3 2 1-4 3 3 2 1-4 2 2

2 1-4 2 1 1 1-4 2 1-4 4 4 2 1-4 2 2 2 1-4 2 1 1

1-4 2 1-4 4 4 2 1-4 2 2 2 1-4 2 1 1 1-4 2 1 0

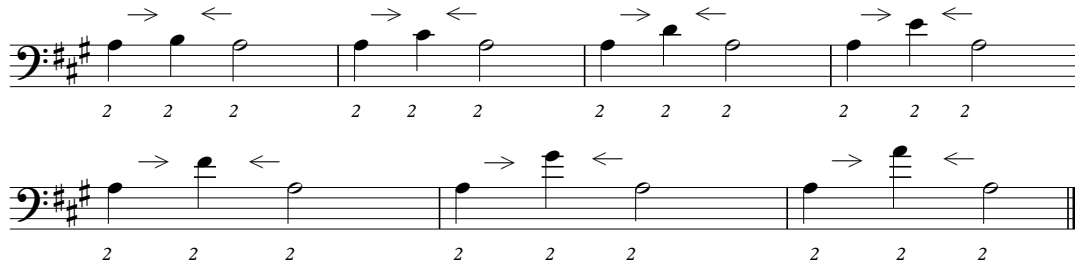
Another warm up exercise that Scott promotes is playing a glissando major scale exercise up a string starting with the 1st finger only in Ab major (Figure 1.3). This exercise exposes any issues with intonation as well.

Fig 1.3

1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1

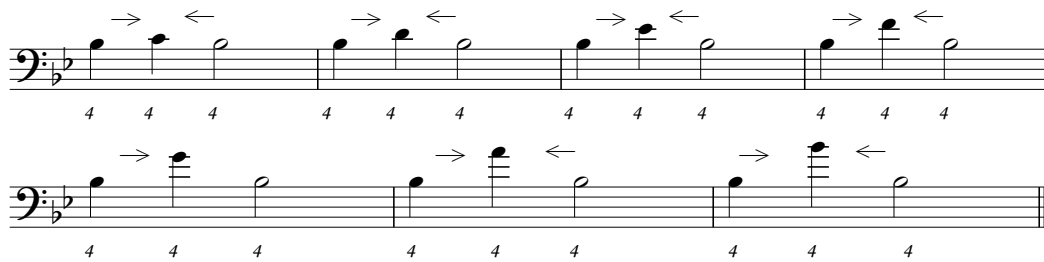
The exercise continues in the key of A major using only 1st and 2nd fingers together (Figure 1.4).

Fig 1.4



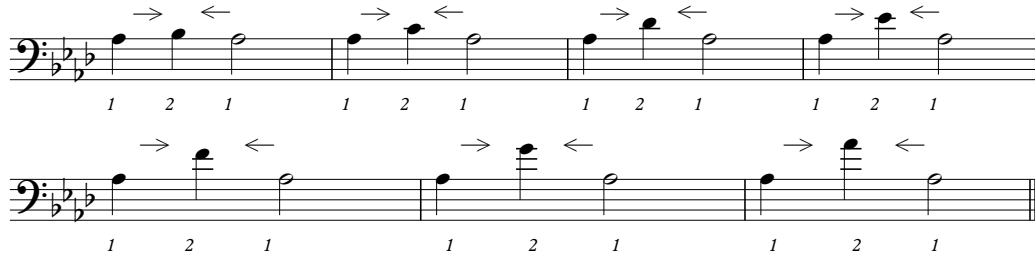
For 4th finger the Bb major scale is employed (Figure 1.5).

Fig 1.5



The next step of the exercise is to alternate fingers beginning with 1st and 2nd fingers in the key of Ab major (Figure 1.6).

Fig 1.6



Then continuing with 2nd and 4th fingers on Bb major (figure 1.7) and can also be applied to 4th and 1st fingers together.

Fig 1.7



Thumb position, or playing in the upper register of the double bass is one of the more challenging regions of the bass to master. The thumb position begins at the octave of the open string, which is the halfway point between the nut and the bridge of the instrument. At this point the 4th finger becomes redundant and the 3rd or ring finger replaces the 4th finger. The thumb comes from around the back of the neck to take on the role of the 1st finger and so is used to play notes as well as being a reference point for the higher register.

Craig Scott has a defined methodology on approaching thumb position. His approach is to divide the thumb position into three different “geometries” which are specific hand shapes and positions that are applied. The first geometry is based on the Bb major scale in the lower position. In this position the thumb plays the 3rd and 6th degree of the scale. The examples in figure 1.8 use firstly a Bb major scale followed by a Bb Aeolian scale or natural minor.

Fig 1.8

Bb Major Scale

Bb Aeolian Scale

The next geometry (Figure 1.9) is the A major shape. In this position the thumb is used to play the tonic, 4th and 7th degree of each scale.

Fig 1.9

A Major Scale

A Aeolian Scale

The third geometry (Figure 1.10) is the C major shape. In this position the thumb is used to play the 2nd and 5th degree of the scale. The scale can begin on the 2nd or 3rd finger preferably both should be attempted.

Fig 1.10

C Major Scale

C Aeolian Scale

These positions can be applied to all keys and positions in the thumb position.

Scales and arpeggios are the fundamental rudiments of music technique on any instrument. The challenge of playing scales and arpeggios on stringed instruments is that there is usually more than one region or string to play exactly the same note and therefore there are many different possibilities for fingerings and shapes. Eminent double bassist Francois Rabbath has counted 130 different ways to play a C major scale over two octaves.⁴² Thankfully there are standard fingerings for all scales and arpeggios on the bass. Craig Scott's are of the standard school: "My fingering approach is fundamentally very much Simandl based. I don't use four fingers ever but

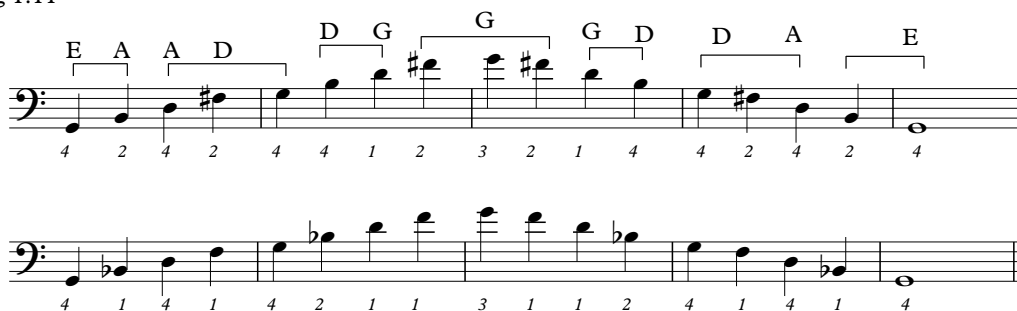
⁴² Rabbath, F. (1977). *Nouvelle Technique de la Contrebasse: Methode Complete et Progressive = A New Technique for the Double Bass : A Comprehensive Tutor*. Paris: A. Leduc.

I have very small hands. I really can't do it and I'm so used to not doing it. I learned initially Simandl and I stuck with it and I mean Rufus Reid fundamentally plays Simandl; Todd Coolman fundamentally plays Simandl. The majority of the world fundamentally uses that Simandl technique.”

The Simandl method book systematically addresses every major scale and shows specific fingerings for each scale. These fingerings have become universal for a large proportion of double bassists both classical and jazz.

Scott's approach to playing arpeggios is based on Rufus Reid's fingering in *The Evolving Bassist*. These fingerings can begin on different notes chromatically and so be in different keys. Figure 1.11 demonstrates the fingerings firstly on a two-octave G Major arpeggio followed by a two octave G Minor Seventh arpeggio. Scott makes one change to Reid's fingering that being the first two notes. Instead of using the 2nd and 1st fingers Scott applies the 4th to 1st. The brackets and letters above the scale indicate which string the note should be played on.

Fig 1.11



Scott considers consistency to be the most important factor in developing technique and fingerings for playing scales and arpeggios. Two octave major scales in different keys and the idea of developing universal fingerings for similar positions are all crucial in technical development. Simandl technique also tends to favor playing in the

lower positions and then up the G string to reach the higher register of the instrument. Scott discusses playing vertically on the instrument, meaning being able to perform scales and arpeggios up each individual string. Rufus Reid also addresses this concept of practicing on individual strings in *The Evolving Bassist*.

Practicing with a metronome is arguably the most effective way for a musician to develop a strong sense of time.⁴³ This is true in particular for a jazz musician who plays in the rhythm section of an ensemble, as it is their responsibility to provide solid groove and time feel for their fellow performers. In a jazz setting the bassist is quite often required to play consecutive quarter notes on the beat (walking bass line) for long periods as well as two-feel grooves (playing on beats one and three of the bar) while at the same time outlining chord changes. They may also be required to play more complicated riffs or ostinato figures. To create music at a high level these varying rhythms must be executed with precision in order to blend with the rest of the ensemble, and create a coherent group concept of time and groove. The development of different metronome practice techniques is a proven device in furthering ones concept of time.

Craig Scott has his own methods of practicing with a metronome. The first exercise (Figure 1.12) is a simple rhythmic exercise using only one note with the metronome set to 80 beats per minute (BPM). The idea is to repeat each four bar section of the exercise until mastered then move on to the next four bar section. Once you have completed all sections of the exercise, increase the metronome marking slightly and repeat. The C note is arbitrary and any note, arpeggio or scale can be used.

⁴³ Garon, H. Using Your Metronome Effectively Practice Tips and Techniques. *Metronome Online*. <http://www.metronomeonline.com/pulse/metronome-effectively-practice-tips-techniques/>

Fig 1.12

A further metronome exercise is applied to the chord changes of the standard jazz tune “I’ve Never Been In Love Before”. Employing a two-feel groove, play only the root notes of each chord with the metronome set to 80 BPM (Figure 1.13).

Fig 1.13

Figure 1.14 employs the same rhythmic idea over the same song only in this instance use only the third degree of the chord.

Fig 1.14

The image shows two staves of musical notation in bass clef. The first staff contains eight measures of music. Above each measure is a chord name: Fmaj7, Dm7, Gm7, C7, Am7, Bb7, Am7, and D7. The notes in each measure are: F (Fmaj7), G (Dm7), A (Gm7), B (C7), C (Am7), D (Bb7), E (Am7), and F# (D7). The second staff contains six measures of music. Above each measure is a chord name: Gm7, C7, Fmaj7, Dm7, Gm7, and C7. The notes in each measure are: G (Gm7), A (C7), B (Fmaj7), C (Dm7), D (Gm7), and E (C7).

Playing the fifth or seventh of each chord or even combinations of chord tones can continue this exercise. The benefit of this exercise is that it works on improving one's time feel as well as acquainting the performer with diverse chord tones available on the same chord.

Chapter 5

Lloyd Swanton

“An Outstanding and imaginative Australian bassist and composer”⁴⁴

Lloyd Swanton has been one of Australia’s most prolific contemporary double bassists for over thirty years. He has been a member of some of the seminal Australian ensembles of the modern era including The Catholics, a group which he leads, as well as The Necks, a collaborative trio he co-leads with pianist Chris Abrahams and drummer Tony Buck. In his formative years Swanton was a member of one of the most electrifying young bands of the 1980’s, The Benders. He was also a member of iconic saxophonist Bernie McGann’s trio with drummer John Pochee for twenty-five years.

Swanton has appeared on over ninety albums as both leader and sideman. He has produced four ARIA⁴⁵ award-winning albums with Bernie McGann and two with The Necks. The Necks have also won three APRA⁴⁶ awards and two Australian Jazz Awards. He is a three-time winner of Best Bassist in Australian Jazz and Blues and with his group the Catholics has won a MO award for Best Jazz Group. As a sideman he has appeared for an eclectic range of artists including Clarion Fracture Zone, Vince Jones, The Dynamic Hepnotics, Wendy Matthews, Tim Finn, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Alistair Spence Trio and The Phil Slater Quartet. He has written several

⁴⁴ Australia, J. Directory - Lloyd Swanton. *Jazz Australia - Adventures In Improvisation*.
http://www.jazz.org.au/index.php?option=com_mtree&task=viewlink&link_id=213&Itemid=84.

⁴⁵ Australian Recording Industry Association.

⁴⁶ Australasian Performing Right Association.

film scores including for the highly acclaimed AFI⁴⁷ award-winning feature *The Boys* as well as the multiple award winning short film *The Beat Manifesto*. Over eighty of his compositions feature on albums by Australian artists.

Swanton's path to becoming a professional bassist was not a clear-cut one, but rather a number of coincidences set him on his path, as he describes in the interview:

There were a number of strands that kind of eventually intersected in my case, when I look back it's funny it was sort of inevitable. I didn't have this burning desire to play the bass like some people have had. It actually sort of started falling into place long before I was born. My dad was working in Adelaide before the war and he was a keen violinist. He wasn't a professional musician he was a businessman. He saw an ad in the newspaper for a double bass for sale and just thought it would be a bit of a lark to play a bass. He went out to this guy's house who was basically just an alcoholic who'd drunk all the rest of his furniture. The only thing he had left in the house was the bass and in fact dad bought the bass and dropped him off at the pub on the way home. Dad quickly concluded that playing bass messed up his hand for violin, with the intonation, so that was it. But he hung onto the bass, which was quite strange. When the war broke out dad was not eligible on medical grounds so he ended up being appointed head of the war damages commission. The army flew him to Sydney and he got them to fly his bass over rather than sell it. He seemed to be really attached to it even though he didn't play it. So growing up that bass was always in the corner in a state of disrepair; no one was really playing it. I had older

⁴⁷ Australian Film Industry

siblings, we all had to learn the piano and other instruments but no one seemed to take a shine to the bass. There was another bass upstairs that had arrived in the house later in life.⁴⁸

When dad set up in Sydney after the war his insurance assessing office was in Pitt Street. On the top floor was Smith's violin shop, which is where Harry Vatiliotis and other people learnt their craft. A fellow from the SSO I think had dropped off his beautiful German bass for repairs and when he came to pick it up, not only did he drop it down the stairs as he was leaving but he fell into it! Dad ended up by coincidence handling the insurance claim and once it was all settled he said, "Well I've actually got a bass at home" (you know it was a write off) he said, "I'll buy it off you for scrap". So we had this other bass upstairs which was just the shell because the whole body was caved in. When I started to play bass in my teens, dad donated it to the school I was at and the school carpenters fixed it up with araldite.

Despite an over abundance of double basses in the house it wasn't until a friend of Swanton's bought an electric guitar that he considered playing the bass, and subsequently, it was the electric bass that Swanton began on.

Yeah an electric bass, so I bought an electric bass and we spent the summer holidays jamming and working out Deep Purple and Led Zeppelin stuff, which did wonders for my ear. My music teacher at school was amazed and actually

⁴⁸ This and the subsequent quotations in this chapter (unless otherwise specified) are taken from my interview with Lloyd Swanton on 29/10/2012.

accused me of cheating. I was like, how can you cheat an aural test! And somewhere along the line as I got into playing bass guitar, I started messing around with the double bass at home, and eventually got that one fixed up and that was the first instrument I learnt on. So that's it basically.

Swanton's first teacher on the electric bass was the local teacher at the Hornsby Yamaha music school who tutored him from the *Bob Haggart Bass Method*. Around this time (1978) Swanton was becoming increasingly interested in jazz and so sought out his first formal double bass teacher in Dave Ellis, who is one of Sydney's better-known double bassists. Swanton's father owned a number of Duke Ellington 78's as well as a Thelonious Monk Prestige double album and so had been exposed to jazz from an early age.

Dave Ellis had Lloyd study from the Simandl method book:

LS: I did Simandl with Dave Ellis and it's pretty boring, you know it really is dull. Dull as dishwater but I guess it's thorough and systematic.

BC: Were they crucial in your technical development do you think?

LS: I think so because of its thoroughness. I'm glad I was able to put up with the boredom of it because it's really not riveting stuff. I think it does give you a basic grounding, a comprehensive grounding in one way of playing the instrument.

In 1979 Swanton auditioned for the Sydney Conservatorium jazz course on electric bass and was accepted into the course. He initially studied with legendary funk and soul bass guitarist Jacky Orzacsky whilst still studying privately with Dave Ellis on the double bass. He also studied with Sydney electric bassist Ron Philpott at the Conservatorium. Eventually the gravitational pull of the double bass was overwhelming and Swanton started to play the acoustic instrument more and more.

Swanton cites as the most crucial point in his development the nine months he spent studying in London, England with Tom Martin who was at the time principal bass with the English Chamber Orchestra.

In 1985 The Benders, the band that I was in, we toured to Europe and I stayed on in London and called up Tom Martin who was at the time principal bass with the English Chamber Orchestra and taught at the Guildhall School of Music. I just called him cold and said “I’d like to take lessons” and he was only too happy which was fantastic. I was there for eight or nine months and it was very intensive. He knew I wasn’t there normally. He’d be teaching students at the Guildhall for three or four years, however long the course is so he tried to give me a sort of compressed version. He did what he does with all of his students taking us right back to absolute basics you know, bow on string and just doing that sort of stuff. Real fundamentals of playing but simultaneously he was giving me his so-called advanced techniques, every trick of the trade that he had. In retrospect I found the fundamental stuff far more helpful, really amazing. A student dropped out of the Guildhall orchestra right at the start of the term and they needed eight in the bass section so he actually swung a place

for me, so then I was going along and rehearsing with the orchestra. They had guest conductors like Vladimir Ashkenazy and Roger Norrington and it was a real education for me. Those players there, I was about 25 or 26 and they were all straight out of school 17 and 18. I felt like I was hanging out with Olympic athletes. They were completely obsessed; they knew nothing about anything except playing classical bass in an orchestra. You know you're in a country where there's a real depth to the thing so you can be that obsessive about what's really not a mainstream thing. Part of it kind of put me off. Up until the end of it I'd always wondered if the classical scene was where I should be, not that I loved the music that much but I could actually see that you just got a better work environment. It's really rare that you actually have to fend off drunks who are about to fall into your instrument! By the end of that time the lessons with Tom were absolutely fantastic. He started mentioning the Bottesini word. That's where I parted company, I just really have real issues with classical bass solo repertoire, I think most of it sucks. Why listen to schmaltzy 19th century romantic composers when there's, and there's some great contemporary music written for double bass but I just knew. Tom absolutely loved that stuff and I didn't want to hurt his feelings or cause a huge standoff. I just couldn't see myself wanting to play that music that's very hard, you've got to spend a lot of time working on and I don't like at all.

Tom Martin had developed his own systems and method of teaching:

Yeah. I'm not actually sure who he learnt from but he was so clear about the way to do it all, he had an answer for everything. Fortunately I was like an open

book, I was willing to learn and I was happy to be kind of stripped down to basics and start again, it really worked for me. I can imagine if you'd reached some conclusions about how to play the bass and they differed from what Tom was teaching, I could see it wouldn't work very well at all. He was quite legendary for having a few run ins with people I believe, but we got on like a house on fire. He was very big on playing the bass in tune, with a good hand position and shifting quickly and accurately. We spent a lot of time working on really simple shifting exercises and maintaining a good hand position. He would often show me a fingering for a particular passage and his fingers would move so little that I'd actually have to ask him, I couldn't actually see which fingers he was pressing down the string with. None of this wild stuff at all. Just the hand moving up and down. It kind of reminded me of some kind of automated device just moving up the fingerboard like that. With the bow arm, it was very much about the enormous amount of muscle and bone you've got in that arm, feeling what that weight is and realizing that if you allow that onto the bass it would kill the note. So it's not actually about getting more pressure it's about getting less pressure and a more penetrating tone. His theory was that when you pluck a string, it's free to vibrate back and forth. But when you bow it, all those tiny teeth on the hair are pulling it and then its only going back to pretty much to whatever that point is called. So he said you want to give it as much freedom as possible and if you're digging in, it might sound loud but it's not penetrating. He was all about getting a clean sound with as little weight as possible so I did lots and lots of really slow bowing.

Players that have influenced Swanton include local musicians Dave Ellis, Darcy Wright, Ed Gaston, Jacky Orzacsky and Ron Philpott as well as American bassists Paul Chambers, Charlie Haden and Wilbur Ware.

Performance and Practice Methods

Lloyd Swanton plays a French bass, which dates back from the late 19th century. His mentor Tom Martin identified it as a Thibouville - Lamy who was a well-known instrument maker from Mirecourt, France.

Swanton has his own concept as to how to stand with the bass. He distributes most of his weight onto the right foot while having the corner of the lower bout (lower bout refers to the bottom section of the instrument) resting on the left knee thus creating a good overall balance of the instrument with the body. He also rests his armpit at the bottom of the neck when playing in the thumb position. Tom Martin also had Swanton practice what he calls “the form” which is similar to the way a marshal artist would practice certain moves only on the bass practicing the movement from the lower position through the transition area and into the thumb position without producing any sound or playing any notes. This would be practiced in front of a mirror. Swanton explains:

You actually didn't play a note at all. It was a theoretical one where you get your position here [starts in the lowest position on the instrument], and slowly slides up. Nothing much happens until you get here [transition area]. Then in terms of the transition to the thumb position the first thing is that the elbow comes up, you don't kind of slink over like that. The elbow starts to come up,

the thumb starts to come around and 4th finger starts to drop off. The angle of the hand goes from 90 degrees to more like 45 and that's when you push back with your hips and start to drop it down into your armpit there. So once you're in the thumb position and the thumb is there, 4th fingers gone off 45 degrees, the string flat here, flat there, everything's bent or not collapsed and then Bob's you're uncle for the rest of the way up.

Swanton employs a number of different warm up exercises which are at the same time excellent left hand shifting exercises. Figures 2.1 through to 2.8 are all to be attempted specifically with the bow some of which he learnt from Tom Martin.

Figure 2.1 is a shifting exercise up the G string on a Bb major scale. Start on the tonic with the 1st finger played as two minims with a down and up-bow respectively. The next note will be the 2nd note of the scale, which is a C, which is to be played with the 2nd finger. The tonic (Bb) is played again using the 1st finger followed by the 3rd note of the scale being a D with the 3rd finger after which you return to the tonic again and continue up the scale in the same fashion. Fingering can be varied from 1st to 1st, 1st to 2nd or 1st to 4th and can be played over one or two octaves and also with larger interval shifts.

Fig 2.1

1 1 2 2 1 1 2 2 1 1 2 2 fingering continues

Figure 2.2 is similar to 2.1 in that it is a shifting exercise in Bb up the G string except in this case the two notes in each bar are slurred by means of same bow direction and the left hand employs a glissando up and back from each note.

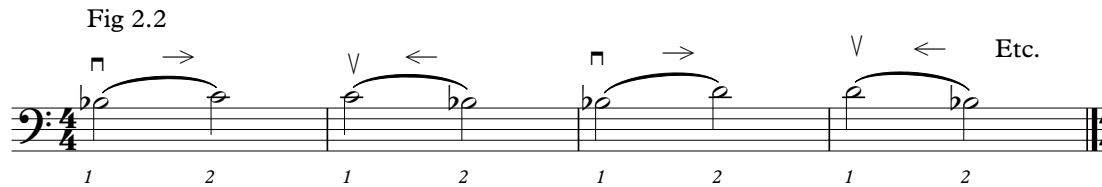
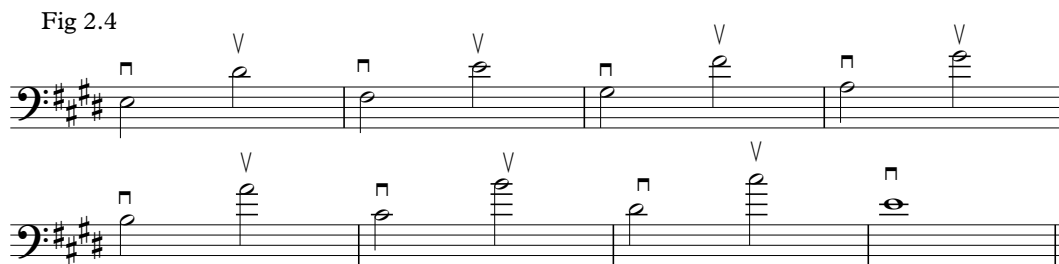
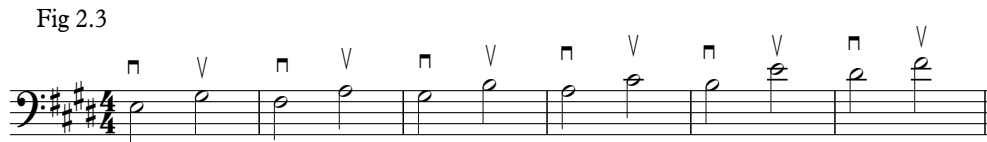


Figure 2.3 is an E major scale in thirds. This should be practiced using all intervals right up to sevenths as in Figure 2.4



As well as being attempted from the bottom register to the top or thumb position register Swanton points out that these sorts of exercises can and should be played from the oft-neglected thumb position down to the bottom register.

Chromatic scales up each individual string is also a good exercise. The idea is to focus on trying to keep the bow very even with the metronome at 60 BPM (Figure 2.5).

Fig 2.5

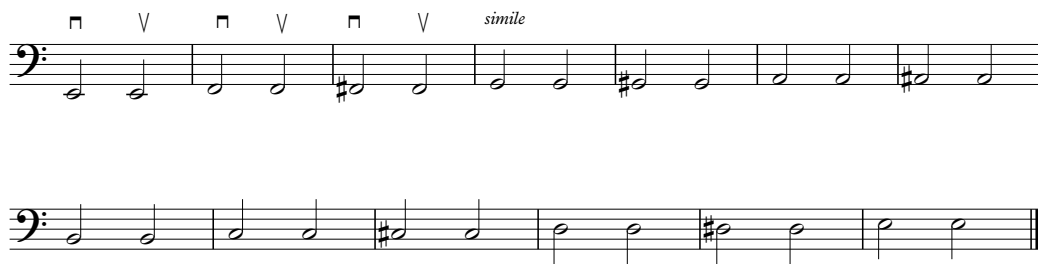


Figure 2.6 is employing double stops (two notes played simultaneously) in thirds starting on a low F#. This becomes increasingly difficult in the transition area of the bass.

Fig 2.6



Figures 2.7 and 2.8 are chromatic trills aimed at increasing dexterity in the left hand and in particular between each finger. Figure 2.7 features chromatic trills slurred in both thumb position and at the D stop, while Figure 2.8 is similar, though in this case one bows and articulates each note. To be played at 78 BPM.

Fig 2.7

Fig 2.7 consists of five staves of musical notation in bass clef, each with a slur over the notes and a specific fingering pattern below. The first staff has a square box above the first note and the pattern *T 1 T 1* with the instruction *fingering continues*. The second staff has a 'V' above the first note and the pattern *1 2 1 2* with *fingering continues.*. The third staff has a square box above the first note and the pattern *2 3 2 3* with *etc.*. The fourth staff has a square box above the first note and the pattern *1 2 1 2* with *etc.*. The fifth staff has a 'V' above the first note and the pattern *2 4 2 4* with *etc.*

Fig 2.8

Fig 2.8 consists of three staves of musical notation in bass clef. The first staff has a square box above the first note, a 'V' above the second, a square box above the third, and a 'V' above the fourth, with the pattern *T 1 T 1* and *etc.* below. The second staff has a square box above the first note, a 'V' above the second, a square box above the third, and a 'V' above the fourth, with the pattern *1 2 1 2* and *etc.* below. The third staff has a square box above the first note, a 'V' above the second, a square box above the third, and a 'V' above the fourth, with the pattern *2 3 2 3* and *etc.* below. The word *simile* is written above the first two staves.

Swanton has developed a number of exercises specifically targeted at right hand pizzicato technique. He has observed that at times if he is having trouble with a particular passage that it is quite often the right hand that's at fault not the left hand: "You're actually hitting the wrong string at the wrong time with this hand so those are good, not just as a warm up but to actually increase your dexterity".

These exercises are similar to rudimentary snare drum exercises that drummers regularly practice on a snare drum, the difference being that instead of playing different combinations of right and left hand stickings, on the bass one employs 1st and 2nd finger combinations. These particular exercises are reminiscent of the type of lines that Swanton plays in The Catholics and in particular The Necks.

Figure 2.9 features cross string octaves played as both one finger pizzicato and two. Figure 2.10 is similar except that it is in intervals of tenths rather than octaves.

♩ = 132 Fig 2.9



Fig 2.10



Figure 2.11 displays a sweep across strings incorporating fifths and octaves. This applies different examples of 1st and 2nd finger combinations.

Fig 2.11

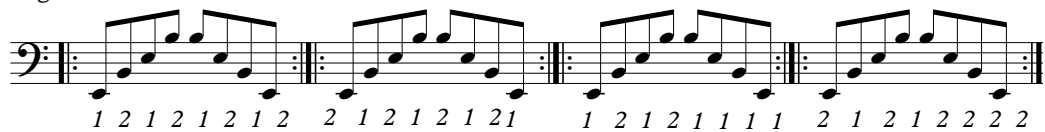


Figure 2.12 through to Figure 2.14 is octaves descending firstly chromatically, whole tones and then in minor thirds. This exercise can also be attempted in fourths, tritones, fifths and tenths and is very useful for intonation and shifting. These are to be played pizzicato alternating fingers.

Fig 2.12



Fig 2.13



Fig 2.14



Swanton has developed a number of tremolando chromatic exercises, which have been developed through working with The Necks and influenced by Charlie Haden's ability to provide forward propulsion without any harmonic interference: "I just want to be able to provide density without upsetting the harmonic appcart and I thought I just need to find different ways of playing tremolando to generate a lot of sound coming from the bass. I identified five different techniques".

Figure 2.15 is to be played using the five different right hand techniques. First: alternating fingers in the right hand. Second: The thumb strum, which is using the outside of the thumb to strike the string. Third: using the first finger pizzicato and striking the string backwards and forwards. Fourth: Applying two-finger together pizzicato. Fifth: 1st finger and thumbnail more like a strumming action.

♩ = 109

Fig 2.15



In Figure 2.16 we find tremolando double stops using thumb and first finger at the same time with a claw action. The thumb plays the E or A string and the first finger plays the G string. The exercise is to be played as octaves and then as tenths.

Fig 2.16



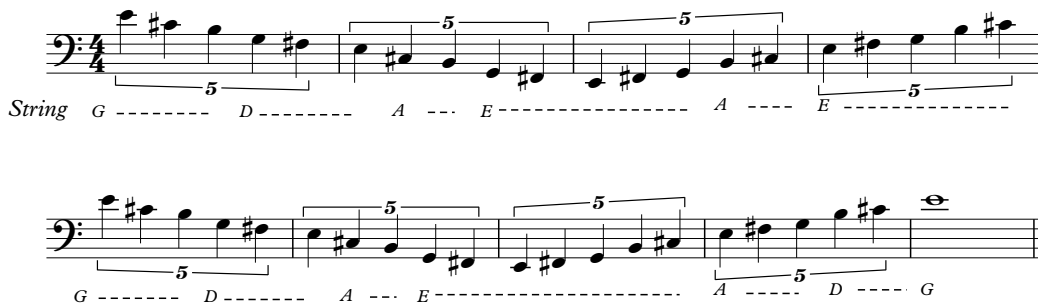
Lloyd combines arpeggio practice with a metronome firstly in Figure 2.17 by playing a two octave E major triad as half note or minum triplets at 100BPM.

♩ = 100 Fig 2.17



He takes this further in Figure 2.18 by playing a two octave minor pentatonic scale as a polyrhythm in which one plays quarter- note quintuplets at a ratio of 5:4 within a 4/4 meter. The left hand fingering and string that each note is played on is varied each time as indicated.

♩ = 80 Fig 2.18



Both these exercises help cultivate both technique and facility as well as developing a more sophisticated concept of rhythm by incorporating polyrhythms.

Lloyd Swanton has developed a unique style that encompasses a variety of musical palettes other than swinging jazz or bebop. He considers himself a groove-based player and has over his career moved away from the more soloistic style of playing that traditional jazz focuses on. His distinctive practice techniques reflect an eclectic taste in music as well as an innovative creative playing style.

Chapter 6

Jonathan Zwartz

“Zwartz has come up with another superb album”⁴⁹

“For a long time he has been one of the top-line bassists in Australian jazz.”⁵⁰

“He has for decades been one of Australia’s ‘most valued/most flexible musicians.’”⁵¹

Born and raised in New Zealand, Jonathan Zwartz first came to Australia in 1983 as bass guitarist with the pop band The Crocodiles led by singer Jenny Morris. Since that time he has become one of the most sought after and influential jazz double bassists on the Australian music scene. He has performed with some of the true legends of jazz including Johnny Griffin, Pharaoh Sanders, Junior Cook, Branford Marsalis, Chico Freeman, Andy Bay, Mark Murphy, Kurt Elling, Larry Goldings, Ben Monder, Tim Ries and Billy Drummond. He has played and recorded with many of Australia’s leading jazz luminaries such as James Morrison, Vince Jones, Katie Noonan, Renee Geyer, Bernie McGann, Mike Nock, Dale Barlow, Sandy Evans, Tina Harrod and Steve Kilby.

In recent years Zwartz has emerged as a composer and bandleader having released his debut album of original compositions to critical acclaim “The Sea” in 2009. The album went on to win two prestigious Bell awards and was the best selling Australian

⁴⁹ Sandford, P. (2013). CD Review The Remembering and Forgetting of the Air. *Australian Jazz.Net*. <http://australianjazz.net/2013/04/the-remembering-and-forgetting-of-the-air/>.

⁵⁰ Editor. (ibid.). Zwartz and his band- Limitless Possibilities. <http://australianjazz.net/2013/01/zwartz-and-his-band-limitless-possibilities/>.

⁵¹ Spencer, D. (2008). Jonathan Zwartz: The Sea. *The Weekend Planet*. <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/weekendplanet/jonathan-zwartz--the-sea-repeat-first-aired-231108-/3138852>.

jazz album at Birdland records in 2010 and 2011. He released his next album in early 2013 “The Remembering and Forgetting of The Air” also featuring all original compositions.

He recently completed a graduate diploma in screen composition from the Australian Film, Television and Radio School. In addition, he has an Associate Diploma from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and a Master of Music from the Australian National University. Zwartz has shown flair for his entrepreneurial skills having co-produced a ten part series on ABC TV called “The Pulse” (2000) as well as presenting the “Starfish Club” which is a monthly live music event held at the Clovelly Bowling Club in Sydney. He has held a number of residencies around Sydney, thus providing performance opportunities for musicians at numerous venues including the Winebanc and the Astral Bar at Star City Casino. Zwartz has been an APRA ambassador since 2010.

Jonathan Zwartz, like many who end up on the instrument became a bass player by default. His initial desire was to be a singer guitarist but destiny chose a different path for him:

We had a rehearsal band that used to perform when I was in high school in a church hall. The brother of the drummer who lived on the church property; his father was the vicar and he recorded us and recorded us on a very early tape machine. I was singing and playing guitar like in a rock band. I heard it back and it was so bad that I gave up any thought of being a guitarist or a singer straight away. We’d been having trouble finding a bass player so I decided to be

the bass player and started playing electric bass. I was so ashamed by my performance, I was mortified. Anyway I became an electric bass player and we formed a band. It was a ten-piece band playing soul music and party music. I then left school and went on the road with that band.⁵²

Zwartz eventually left the band and became a member of The Crocodiles, which at the time had quite a significant following in New Zealand. The band moved to Sydney when Zwartz was 19 but ended up breaking up three months later. At this point he had received no formal training or lessons on the bass guitar and had not yet picked up a double bass or developed an interest in jazz. He was playing around with various different rock and pop bands playing support to major acts which at the time was particularly grueling and included not only playing with these bands but helping set and pack up P.A. systems as well. Around this time a bass player associate who was studying at the Sydney Conservatorium left his double bass at the house at which Zwartz was living. This was to have a major impact on the direction that his life would take:

I looked at this double bass and thought, a few of my friends have gone to the con, maybe I should give that a go, as a kind of way to escape that life. I unwrapped it from its case and plucked a note and something about it just really appealed to me. So I'm a late starter on double bass, I didn't start until I was 23, and I was sort of at a desperate point in my life.

⁵² This and the subsequent quotations in this chapter (unless otherwise specified) are taken from my interview with Jonathan Zwartz on 25/2/2013.

Zwartz decided to audition for the jazz course at the Sydney Conservatorium, was accepted in 1985 and began study with Craig Scott on the double bass. Scott recommended that he follow the Simandl method but Zwartz was limited by the fact that at this point he could not read music. He had only just begun to listen to and take an interest in jazz, and cites the influence of his wife who was a singer in being an early influence:

I came to jazz late and through my wife Jane who's a singer. I came to walking bass lines through singers. Through Ella, through Billy, through quite a lot of obscure singers like Etta James, all sorts of odd singers. Funnily enough a lot of the time the bass player on those sessions was Milt Hinton. That's pretty much when I first started to listen to what bass players were doing, and try and do what they were doing which was a very early form of transcribing for me. I didn't because I couldn't really read music or write it. I didn't write it down, I just tried to learn it by ear which if I have a student I suggest that they do that, because it's a better way to learn it.

Through hard work and sheer determination Zwartz eventually learned to read and has studied the Simandl, Ludwig Streicher, Rufus Reid and Ray Brown method books but by his own admission in the interview "I'm not a work out of a book person". Apart from his time with Craig Scott, Zwartz has also studied with Detroit based jazz double bassist Rodney Whitaker on an Australia Council grant. He has also received lessons from Ray Brown and Rufus Reid.

The bass players who have been most influential to Zwartz are Wilbur Ware, Paul Chambers, Ray Brown and Ron Carter all of whom he has transcribed significantly. Also Jimmy Garrison and Sam Jones as well as Charles Mingus, more for his harmonic concept than his bass playing. In Australia he was initially inspired by Lloyd Swanton and has admiration for a number of players of the modern era including Alex Boneham, Phil Stack, Craig Scott, Matt Clohesy, Phil Rex, Gary Costello and Sam Anning.

Performance and Practice Methods

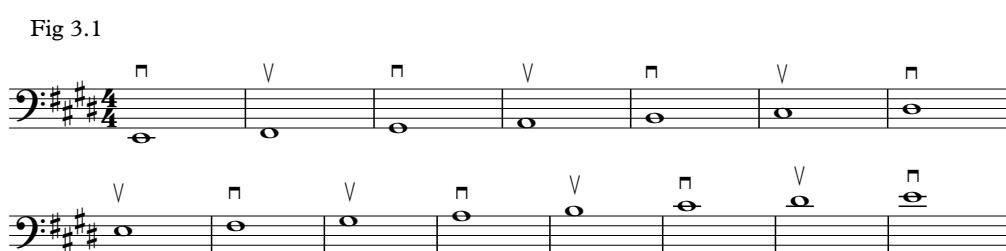
Jonathan Zwartz's double bass was built around 1870 and little is known of its origins and whether it is a French or German made instrument.

Zwartz's stance at the instrument is such that he tries to move as much as possible. The reason for this approach is that he has a ruptured disc in his lower back as a direct result of carrying his instrument, which is particularly heavy.

Jonathan Zwartz believes that the first ten minutes of a practice session should be creative playing with no particular exercise, just free playing. He explains:

When you first come to the instrument that's when you're in love with the sound of it. You're really responsive to that and you're in a creative mode, so I just dig on the sound. Whatever it is you do for the first ten minutes, that warms you up a little bit but it also hooks you into the bass. I have no expectation of exercise at this point. Only when I've satisfied that and realized that I've got a limited amount of time, then I go to an exercise.

After Zwartz completes the ten-minute creative play he would then, as is usual for many instrumentalists, play long notes with the bow. In Figure 3.1 Zwartz plays an E major scale over two octaves at 60 BPM. One full bow length lasts four beats at mezzo forte. He would then repeat the exercise with the bow closer to the bridge to produce a loader sound and play at forte. He would also use only half of the bow for four beats for this phase of the exercise.



Figures 3.2 – 3.4 are exercises that Zwartz learnt whilst studying with Detroit bassist Rodney Whitaker. One of the goals of Zwartz’s time with Whitaker was to discover how to get to the essence of the swing feel and also how to gain more forward propulsion in his playing.

Figure 3.2 is a pizzicato warm up exercise that Whitaker showed him and is as he describes it “quite deeply meditational”. The first part is to set a metronome to 80 BPM and just clap along with it. The idea is to keep clapping until the metronome can no longer be heard. This indicates that the clap is completely and precisely in time with the metronome. The next step is to transfer this to the bass by playing Figure 3.2. Each repeat is open and should be played at different dynamic levels. This exercise is all about control and being able to move down across the different sized open strings, each which require a different velocity from the fingers in the right hand. Zwartz

believes this exercise “teaches you to listen and to make the adjustment that you need to make physically in order to play in time without having to think about it”. This can also be practiced at slower tempos, which increases the difficulty. This can also be subdivided in groups of five. The main purpose of this is to finely hone time feel.

Fig 3.2



To have a deep understanding and concept of the triplet is crucial in developing a strong swing feel and groove. Figure 3.3 is an exercise to enhance the triplet feel within each beat. The metronome is firstly set to 60 BPM with each beat subdividing into triplets (see top line of Figure 3.3). The bottom line of Figure 3.3, which is the first and last note of the triplet, is performed clapped along with the metronome.

Fig 3.3

Metronome



Hand claps



Figure 3.4 is the same rhythmic exercise as Figure 3.3 with metronome continuing only the bottom line is transferred to the bass.

Fig 3.4



Figure 3.5 is the culmination of these exercises where the last triplet is not played. Only beat one is played, as in a walking bass line but the triplet subdivision is still strong in the players mind.

Fig 3.5



This exercise should also be practiced at faster tempos both with the metronome as triplets and also without the metronome. Zwartz goes on to demonstrate some walking bass lines with the triplet feeling in mind. Zwartz's time with Whitaker helped demystify what a swing feel really is, leading him to the conclusion that a swing feel is "The triplet and how that is silently annunciated because you've got it ingrained in you" or "The mental annunciation of whatever the subdivision is without actually playing it." Another interesting technique that Zwartz learnt from Rodney Whitaker was that to project more sound when playing pizzicato, you lock the wrist of the right hand.

For thumb position Zwartz doesn't recommend any particular exercises as such but prefers to be able to pre hear the particular note, which similarly to the previous exercises is more of a mental approach to practice and playing.

Zwartz was fortunate to have one lesson with jazz double bass legend Ray Brown and was taught one crucial element to learning a song and that was to be able to sing the melody.

Jonathan Zwartz's concept focuses heavily on rhythmic conceptions that draw on having a strong intellectual understanding of these concepts. By his own admission his technical approach is not as disciplined as it could be although he still has deep technical knowledge of the double bass. Zwartz is a committed facilitator of the bass and its function in music as is shown in his focus on understanding the essence of time and groove and also placing musicality first.

Chapter 7

Cameron Undy

"Lovely sound, supple rhythm and rare taste."

"A great natural musician...an absolute delight to hear..."

"Superb bassist...highly imaginative soloist."

"One of the top handful of bassists in the country...and he's only getting better."⁵³

Cameron Undy was born in 1969 into a family with a deep love of music. Undy's career has covered numerous genres from jazz to funk, rock, dance and classical music, as a live performer and studio musician on both the double and electric bass. He has shared the stage with a number of international jazz icons including Sam Rivers, Don Pullen, Vincent Herring, Eddie Marshall, Bobby Shew and Nikki Isles as well as prominent Australian musicians James Morrison, Don Burrows, Paul Grabowsky, Mike Nock, Bernie McGann, Roger Frampton, Dale Barlow, Sandy Evans, Phil Slater and Scott Tinkler. He has also played with popular rock and funk artists such as Jimmy Barnes, Ian Moss, Bertie Blackman, D.I.G., and Mark de Clive-Lowe and has also performed as featured soloist with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

He is a respected composer in his own right through his own projects and collaborations such as Happy Tribe, Nude, Twentieth Century Dog, Numerology, Kidzen, The Abstract Brotherhood and The Pillars. In 2005 he released two albums of

⁵³ Brennan, G. *Sydney Morning Herald*.

original music to critical acclaim “Mad Stream” with twentieth Century Dog and “Telepathy” with Numerology. Both albums received mentions in the Sydney Morning Herald’s Metro edition of the best albums of 2005.

Undy is a founding member and inaugural president of the Jazzgroove Association in Sydney. In recent years he has ventured into managing a music club of his own having founded and co-directed Venue 505, which is committed to presenting live music in Sydney. In 2012 he was named one of the top 100 most influential people in the Sydney Morning Herald magazine for his work and influence on the Sydney music scene through Venue 505.

Undy’s early musical influences came directly from his family having grown up in Canberra in a household with a taste for fine music. He initially played the guitar but was encouraged to play the bass guitar through his sister who required a bassist to accompany her guitar playing:

I suppose I had a deep love of music, which came from my mum and dad who had an incredible record collection of jazz and classical music. I was always interested in or had musical taste. I think I had that from my parents because of their passion for it. My sister played the guitar, so there were always guitars around the house and so I would always play those. She was very studied, she studied classical guitar and I could always listen to her practice. It was very easy for me to just go and pick up a guitar and play it. Then I think at about age 16 for Christmas my parents gave me an electric bass because my sister had said, “give Cameron a bass”, she wanted someone to play the bass with her while she

played. She was probably sick of me stealing her guitars. I was just like yeah great, now we've got a bass in the house and so I played that. We used to just swap around and play but I would often play the bass and I would just enjoy playing music no matter what it was really.⁵⁴

On completion of high school and wondering what he was going to do with his life Undy decided that he wanted to study at the Conservatorium of Music in Sydney. On advise from others and especially because he couldn't read music, it was suggested to him to audition on bass rather than guitar as he would have a better chance of getting in because at the time there where a shortage of bass players. He was also advised that if he auditioned on double bass then he would have an even better chance. Undy purchased a double bass as soon as he could:

So I just mowed lawns and washed cars around the neighborhood and saved up and bought a double bass. As soon as I got it something really happened. Around the same time as I bought my first double bass I heard Charlie Haden on record and something just twigged in me. I just wanted to make that sound that he was making. That was probably my first love of double bass really was Charlie Haden. As soon as I got my hands on a double bass even though it was maybe for the wrong reasons and thinking about getting into this tertiary institution, I stopped playing guitar, I stopped playing electric bass and all I wanted to do was play double bass. I became really driven to play that instrument. So I guess that's how I started.

⁵⁴ This and the subsequent quotations in this chapter (unless otherwise specified) are taken from my interview with Cameron Undy on 18/2/2013.

Up to this point Undy had not received any formal tuition or music lessons although he would frequently attend performances to watch respected Canberra bassist Tony Hayes play. Most of his musical knowledge came from his sister Fiona, who had already completed two years at the Conservatorium of Music in Sydney. His father, who was a flautist, had also passed on some ideas about how to study and practice on a musical instrument.

Undy was accepted into the Sydney Conservatorium and began formal double bass studies with Craig Scott with a solid background and foundation of musical principles learnt from his family. Undy had been given the Simandl method book with his double bass and so was already aware of the Simandl technique. He was also working from Rufus Reid's book around the same time and so had a reasonably sound concept of double bass technique from the start of his studies with Scott. Undy speaks of Scott's fluid technical approach to the Simandl method especially with respect to the left hand being relaxed and soft rather than rigid.

Undy also began lessons with classical bassist Gary Reid (who at the time was principal with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra) to focus on bowing technique, which would assist in facilitating a tone on the instrument:

Well I started study immediately in first year with Gray Reid who back then was the principal with the SSO. He was an older gentlemen and I would go around to his house once a week as part of the Conservatorium studies to learn bowing. Mike Nock had actually told me that I should be seriously bowing to get my tone and my sound and Craig backed that up - he said to me, "good

advice yeah”. I wouldn’t say I was studying classical music really or repertoire no. It was more just about the technique of getting the bow working and coordinating with the left hand and bow strokes. I think at that stage I was very headstrong and I kind of would just run with my own ideas a lot but it was certainly good to have a solid grounding in bowing technique and I used to bow a lot. I used to bow a lot of long notes and scales really slow, which were principles that my father had instilled in me as to how to properly build a good solid basis of technique.

Whilst Undy was studying at the Conservatorium influential bassist Francois Rabbath held a workshop and master class for the students. Rabbath’s use of four fingers in the left hand and pivot thumb approach was a dramatic departure from the standard Simandl method and was to have a profound effect on Undy’s own technical approach to the double bass. Rabbath’s method is similar to the guitar one finger per fret technique, which at the time appealed to Undy with his background of being a guitar player himself. Undy utilized and practiced the Rabbath technique for about two years until he saw a video of one of his heroes on the bass:

I saw a video of Dave Holland and at that point in my life Dave Holland was a huge influence, from listening to his music and his bass playing. I’d never actually seen Dave Holland and I saw this video and realized that he was actually using 1-2-4 and his chops were blinding. The speed and the dexterity, the accuracy, intonation and everything were unbelievable and I was like oh wow and his hand looked so relaxed. The thing about the Rabbath technique is that you can’t have a spread grip. His whole thing was that you have a very

loose hand and so when you play each note, the hand just totally relaxes around that note and then it's all in the pivot to the next note, so it sort of looked when he played very fluid. He was using the joint in the thumb to give this sort of fluidity and had the fingers nailing these pitches you know with four-finger dexterity. Then I noticed that Holland seemed to have all that dexterity and fluidity just going 1-2-4 and I thought that was interesting. So I started to go back towards that idea of using the pivoting thumb to get that fluidity across and around in any particular position and not having a spread grip.

This inspired Undy to move back towards the Simandl 1-2-4 right hand fingering approach, which he believes provides more tone and strength whilst retaining the Rabbath pivoting thumb technique. Undy has essentially taken the aspects of both methods that suit him and developed his own approach and technique on the instrument. This will be discussed further later in this chapter.

Undy's main influences on the bass are as previously mentioned firstly Charlie Haden was to be a major influence on his playing. Along with Charlie Haden, Undy's main influences from the so-called jazz tradition include Ron Carter, Jimmy Garrison, Reggie Workman, Paul Chambers, Percy Heath, Oscar Pettiford and Ray Brown. Contemporary players Dave Holland, Eddie Gomez, George Mraz, Eberhard Weber, Marc Johnson and Gary Peacock also influence him. Undy was also heavily influenced by the music of saxophonists John Coltrane, Ornette Coleman and Steve Coleman. Australian bassists Steve Elphick, Lloyd Swanton and Jonathan Zwartz all provided inspiration for Undy.

Performance and Practice Methods

Cameron Undy plays a German flat back bass that is around 150 years old. Nothing more is known about the origins of the instrument as it had sustained an injury by a previous owner, had been repaired and in doing so the signature board with the date and makers name on it had been discarded.

Undy's theory on how to stand at the instrument is he has the endpin out in front of his left foot and one arms length from the bass. He then brings the bass into his left hip at a forty-five degree angle with both feet equally weighted and knees slightly bent. The nut is in line with the eyes.

Undy unusually plays three-finger pizzicato technique and to warm up would just play open strings alternating all three fingers playing in time with a metronome set to 60BPM (Figure 4.1). He makes sure that there is no clipping between notes and also makes sure that the notes are long and last the full distance.



He will continue his warm up now with the bow. Figure 4.2 is arco long notes to be played between 40 and 60 BPM alternating from the open E string up the chromatic scale. This example stops at an A but can be played all the way up the neck.

positions by pivoting the left hand and thumb, therefore covering a greater distance in the one position. Figure 4.5 demonstrates this idea in the keys of G major, B major and Eb major without having to move the hand and using the 1st finger on the first note. Note that the scales do not start on the tonic and also open strings are not used at all. The string on which each scale should be played is indicated. The thumb will pivot from the equivalent of Simandl 1st position or thumb underneath a G on the E string.

Fig 4.5

G Major

B Major

Eb Major

Undy will then work his way up the neck playing through all three key centres in the new position. Figure 4.6 demonstrates the next position the thumb being underneath an A on the E string.

Fig 4.6

G Major

B Major

Eb Major

Practicing in this fashion has enabled Undy to be able to play within all three keys centres simultaneously more effectively as well as cover greater distances without moving the thumb too much.

Scale exercises can be practiced with this same method. Figure 4.7 demonstrates playing a scale in thirds but modulating down a third every four notes. Each key centre is shown in Figure 4.7.

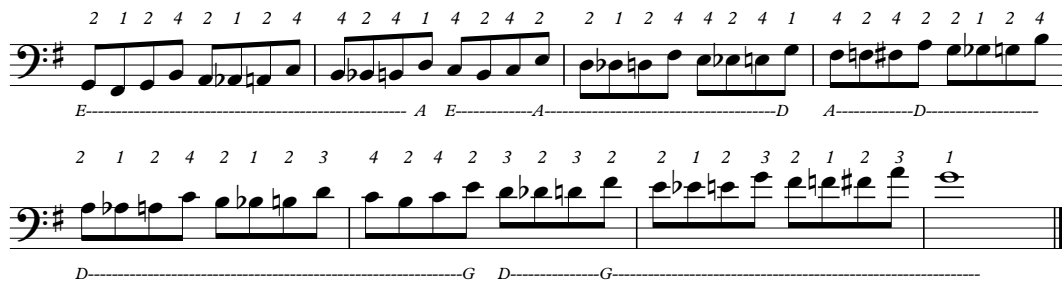
Fig 4.7



Undy does not use open strings in any of these exercises, the idea being able to apply the same fingerings anywhere on the bass. This approach is similar to a guitar-like or bass guitar approach to fingering, which is to play across the fingerboard. This is a definite departure from the standard Simandl approach to left hand fingerings on the double bass. Undy's aim was to extend his left hand reach within a position. The Rabbath four-finger technique and different method of moving through the fingerboard has helped facilitate this approach for Undy. These exercises and approaches can also be applied to arpeggio and thumb position practice.

Figure 4.8 is a G major scale exercise demonstrating a Rabbath style way of moving through the fingerboard whilst using a more standard Simandl style left hand fingering. This clearly shows how Undy has taken aspects of both methods to suit his needs on the instrument.

Fig 4.8



One of the reasons for Undy’s unique approach is to as he says to “try and be able to view and perceive the neck and the bass in as many different ways as I possibly could”. His aim is to be able to apply fluid motion between key centres and have every available melody in all twelve tones.

Undy also has a keen interest in playing over odd times meters as well playing being able to play different rhythmic groupings of notes. Figure 4.9 is an exercise in increasing the numerical density of groupings, each bar using a G pentatonic scale and with the metronome at 60BPM.

Fig 4.9



Undy applies a similar idea to a simple 12 bar blues. In Figure 4.10 we find a two measure, quarter-note based walking bass line in 4/4 meter. In measure three and four the bass line is then played as quintuplets at a ration of 5:4 for two measures. The cycle of two measures of quarter-notes and two measures of quintuplets is then repeated. The tempo of this exercise is 120BPM, however Undy stipulates that the metronome is to be set at 60 BPM, with metronome pulsations outlining beats 2 and 4 only.

Fig 4.10



Cameron Undy has developed a highly individual and unique approach to technique and musicality on the double bass. His approach is always motivated by musicality first. There is certainly scope for further analysis of Undy's musical ideas and his unusual personal approach to double bass technique.

Chapter 8

Alex Boneham

*“Alex Boneham’s solos were a lesson in how vigour can be harnessed to sensitivity”*⁵⁸

*“Superb Young Bassist”*⁵⁹

At 24 years of age Alex Boneham is the youngest participant in this study but has already made a significant contribution to Australian jazz as well as made substantial steps in developing his own style and voice on the double bass. He has performed with a number of visiting international artists including George Garzone, Joel Frahm and Charles Tolliver. He is a regular sideman with a great number of Australian jazz artists such as Mike Nock, James Muller, Dale Barlow, James Morrison, Bernie McGann, The Vampires, Kristin Beradi and Errol Buddle.

In 2007 Boneham was the winner of the James Morrison generations in Jazz scholarship. In 2008 he was a finalist in the National jazz Awards held each year at the Wangaratta Jazz festival and in 2012 he was awarded the Jazz Bell Award for young Australian Jazz Artist of the Year.

Boneham began playing the bass guitar at age 9 in the school music program at Hornsby Heights Public School. His reason for choosing bass was that one of his

⁵⁸ Shand, J. (2011). Convoluted rhythms and the odd wistful melody. *The Sydney Morning Herald*.
<http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/music/convoluted-rhythms-and-the-odd-wistful-melody-20110803-1ibfl.html>

⁵⁹ Clare, J. (2011). Review: Wangaratta International Jazz Festival 2011.
<http://www.sima.org.au/Wangaratta2011ReviewByJohnClare/729/n/3/0/0/>

brother's friends played the instrument thus exposing it to Boneham. He took formal tuition from the beginning from his local bass guitar teacher:

I had the local electric bass and guitar teacher in my suburb David McMahon and he was great. There were a few things that stuck from those days because he was into playing along with Paul Chambers and Ray Brown. Also transcribing Beatles bass lines and a really big range of things. He had a few little things that he would always say like you know, "listen to Ray and Paul Chambers and listen to the difference". He was really into picking between those two bass players. So that was cool.⁶⁰

Although Boneham was introduced to jazz bass relatively early he didn't take up the double bass until the age of 15 when the school bass became available. Around this time he began double bass tuition with Sydney bassist Ashley Turner who had spent a number of years living in New York City, which included some formal study with legendary jazz bassist Ron Carter. Turner had Boneham study the Simandl method book from the very beginning of their lessons. He also passed on what he had learnt from his time studying with Ron Carter:

I definitely did Simandl from the very start. That wasn't before Ashley, the double bass thing started with Ashley really in terms of technique. He had just gotten back from studying with Ron Carter. So we had all the hand written exercises, it was all so fresh in his mind. So a lot of Ron Stuff on constructing bass lines and things like that. I think he made me buy Simandl the first day.

⁶⁰ This and the subsequent quotations in this chapter (unless otherwise specified) are taken from my interview with Alex Boneham on 18/2/2013.

On completion of high school Boneham had already had some significant playing experience having performed at the Montreux and North Sea Jazz festivals in 2004 with the Australian Youth All-Star Big Band as well as tours of New Zealand and China with John Morrison. He went on to study at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music with Craig Scott as his tutor. Whilst there he also focused on classical techniques in particular bowing and studied with Alex Henery and Kees Boesma both of who are principal bassists with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. He has also had lessons with a number of leading American jazz bassists Larry Grenadier, Ben Street, Matt Penman, John Webber, Neil Caine and Matt Brewer all of whom have had a lasting impact on Boneham's playing. He cites Paul Chambers and Ray Brown who he was exposed to at a young age as major inspirations. In Australia Alex found in particular Cameron Undy, Jonathan Zwartz, Ashley Turner and Phil Stack to be particularly inspiring.

Performance and Practice Methods

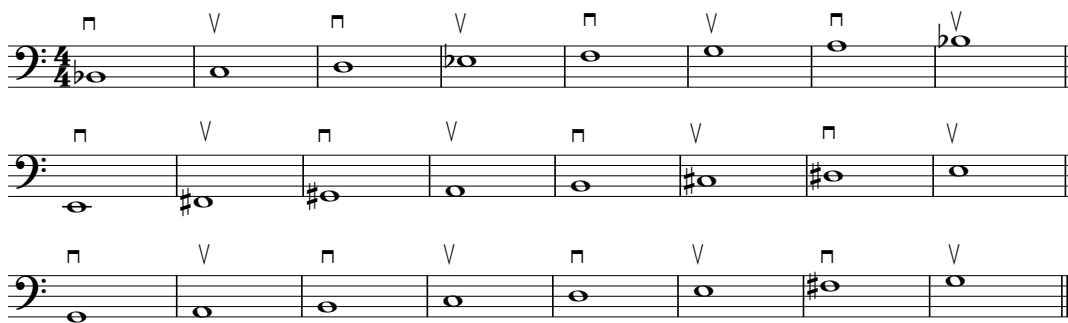
Alex plays a fully carved 7/8 size Chinese made bass with Velvet Anima strings for the A, D and G strings and a Thomastic E string.

Boneham changes his stance at the bass depending on the musical situation that he finds himself in. For straight-ahead jazz he will have the bass height set slightly lower and stand at the bass in a more side on position. This is to keep his right arm more relaxed and closer to the bottom of the fingerboard. Boneham finds that when playing walking bass lines if his right arm is relaxed then he can facilitate a swing feel more easily and the notes can lead into each other more. When playing more modern jazz

styles which require more syncopation or shorter notes he will set the bass height higher and have the bass on more of a 45 degree angle into the body.

Figure 5.1 demonstrates one of Boneham's preferred warm ups which is to play Bb, E and G major scales one octave ascending and descending with the metronome set to 40 BPM, four notes per bow. This is an excellent way to cover all hand positions in half and first position on the bass as well as work on sound and keeping all fundamentals and hand positions solid. The example shows ascending only but should be attempted descending as well.

Fig 5.1



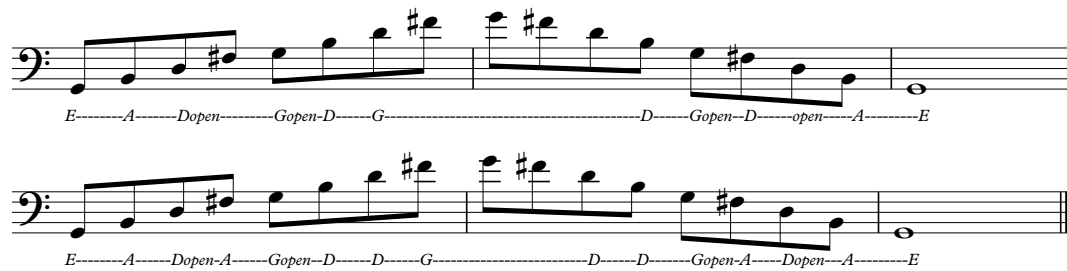
Boneham will also practice this exercise as well as scales in different keys along with an electronic tabla⁶¹ drone called iTabla pro, which is an application available on iPad. This provides a reference note and so is excellent for practicing and refining intonation. He will practice the same key with different reference drones.

For pizzicato warm ups and especially before a performance Boneham will run a major scale through all intervals starting with thirds then, fourths, fifths etc. in different positions on the instrument.

⁶¹ Indian percussion instrument similar to bongos.

Boneham is a proponent of arpeggio practice and also of using open strings when possible. He will practice arpeggios in different positions and fingerings but applying the open string. He would run through different chord qualities in the same key. Figure 5.2 demonstrates alternate ways of playing a G major seven arpeggio but always using the D and G open strings. This approach enables him to cover the range instrument efficiently.

Fig 5.2



Another practice technique of Boneham's is to play hexatonic scales, which is the practice of playing two triads together to form a six-note scale. For example playing a C major and D major triad together with inversions (figure 5.3).

Fig 5.3



Figure 5.4 is developing the same idea but using a different sequence of the same notes.

Fig 5.4



Figure 5.5 is again developing the same group of notes by playing the root position triad for the first chord which is C major and then continuing up the D triad from whichever chord tone is closest in this case A.

Fig 5.5

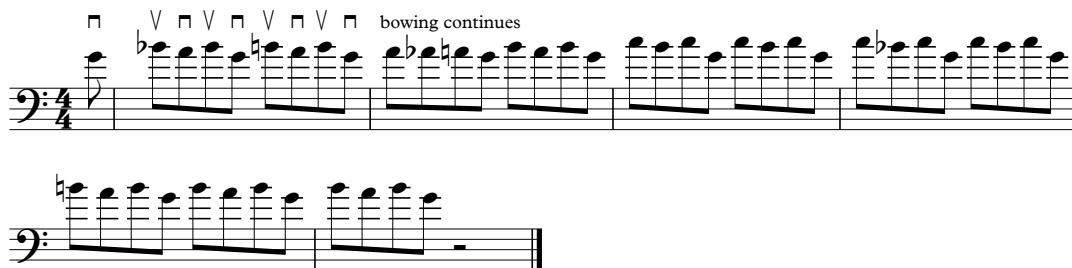


These exercises can be practiced using combinations of any chord and can be played together to create scales for improvising. As part of his routine, Boneham would practice these exercises strictly and then apply them freely as a vehicle for improvisation.

Boneham credits his thumb position technique to his time studying with Craig Scott and utilizes a number of the geometric thumb position techniques described in Chapter 4. He has also spent a considerable amount of time practicing the Bach Cello Suites in the thumb position with the bow, which he says has helped significantly with his thumb position technique. These and the practice of scales and arpeggios in the thumb position of the bass have helped Boneham develop his technique in the upper register of the instrument.

Figure 5.6 demonstrates an exercise that Boneham has practiced in the thumb position; this figure is to be played arco.

Fig 5.6



Boneham sees the bass as a counter point melody to the main melody. Through his studies with New York bassist Ben Street he has taken to practicing the Bach Chorales, which were written by J.S. Bach and were based on popular hymns of his day. They were originally written in four-part harmonization⁶². Boneham will play one of the lower lines on the bass and sing the melody or the alto part at the same time or the other way around. He would then play an improvisation on the bass based on the melody whilst playing bass notes at the same time to accompany himself. He may also just play double stops based on the melody from the original. The chorales become a vehicle for improvisation and creativity.

Alex Boneham is already making significant steps through his practice and technical methods to develop a strong personal voice and style on the double bass. It will be of great interest to watch his career develop.

⁶² Greentree, M. (2011). *Bach Chorales* Introduction. www.jsbchorales.net.

Chapter 9

Conclusion

“The word bass means bottom. Architecturally it’s the lowest part of a building. Musically it’s the lowest voice in the orchestra, it’s the lowest human voice in the choir. It is supporting it should be identifying; it’s meant to support the rest of the singers. It should be strong, like architecturally if the base is strong the building will stand.”⁶³

The aim of this study has been to take an in depth look inside the minds of five Australian professional jazz double bassists, to find the similarities, universals of bass technique as well as the many differences and varying approaches, ideas and attitudes to the very fundamental role that a bassist plays in a jazz music setting. How an artist arrives at a particular approach, how one prepares for performance and what an individual must do on a daily basis to maintain a high level of stamina, musicality and creativity are all questions at the core of this research. In addition, I have examined the motivations, which guide the pursuit of an instrument that is seldom in the musical foreground of a jazz ensemble.

The double bass is historically primarily and fundamentally an accompanying instrument, providing a foundation for a range of musical styles that extends beyond jazz realm.

⁶³ Bailey, S. Jazz Bass Lesson-Milt Hinton, Jazz, Classic. from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iFTqVHEJZ0A>

The desire to improve one's ability as an accompanist is one of the major points to come out of this study. Each participant understands fully the physical and mental strength required to fulfill this role with conviction. The maintenance of basic technique and to realize the role of the bass player as an accompanist at a high level is foremost in the minds of all the participants.

Solid technique in left and right hand as well as an intimate knowledge of the instrument through practice of scales and arpeggios in all keys covering the full range of the instrument are all considered crucial by each participant. Systems must be developed and studied whether from the Simandl, Rabbath or Rufus Reid method books, or by developing one's own systems through merging aspects of the various methods, as several of the participants have achieved. The variety of approaches represented in this study provides pathways to unlock and develop fluidity, as well as technical proficiency on the instrument. All of the participants featured here studied the Simandl method at some point in their development and, of particular note Cameron Undy has developed his own unique technique combining principles from both the Simandl and Rabbath methods.

The double bass is an exquisitely beautiful and rich sounding instrument. The ability to produce depth, projection, as well as fine tuning intonation are best developed by the use of the bow. All five participants in the study are well versed in the art of the bow. The ability to draw a sound with a bow requires patience and many hours of practice and dedication. Long tones at slow tempos playing scales and other exercises are the most effective way to develop the craft of bowing. Participants dedicate a portion of their time to the practice of long tones with the bow despite the fact they are jazz bassists and not classical or orchestral players. Each of them offered differing

exercises for the practice of long tones. The use of the iTabla iPad application by Alex Boneham was a modern take on what is an old tradition in the learning of a musical instrument. Arco technique also helps refine intonation, develop a sound on the instrument as well as being the most efficient way to get the double bass to resonate at its full potential. The art of the bow is not and should not be overlooked by an aspiring modern jazz double bassist. The participants did not consider that being familiar with and the learning of traditional classical repertoire was necessarily important in learning and mastering jazz double bass.

For a jazz bassist pizzicato technique and the development and maintenance of this technique are of particular importance. A jazz bassist spends the majority of their playing and performance time utilizing the pizzicato technique. Each participant in this study realizes the importance of this technique. Lloyd Swanton in particular has paid close attention to his right hand technique through the development of various exercises. These range from one finger pizzicato exercises to two finger alternating fingerings much like rudimentary exercises that a drummer would practice on a snare drum. His use of tremolando and strumming effects on the bass create interesting sonic affects as well as help create a highly individual style on the instrument. Jonathan Zwartz's pizzicato with metronome exercise is an excellent warm up for the right hand, becoming more familiar with the subtle differences in execution required on each different string as well as being a focus for time feel and metronome practice. Cameron Undy has adopted the unusual three finger pizzicato technique to help facilitate his right hand technique. Craig Scott prefers to use alternating two finger pizzicato for most of the time rather than just one finger pizzicato. His justification is

that if both fingers can be used consistently then there is no reason to not apply two finger pizzicato at all times.

As one of the primary roles of the bassist is as timekeeper the development of one's time feel is of utmost importance. The application and use of a metronome is one of the most effective ways to develop and hone this skill. All contributors to this study have adopted various metronome skills and practice. From practicing long tones with the bow at slow tempos, pizzicato exercises, scale and arpeggios to rhythm subdivision practice the metronome was a constant companion when undertaking these various exercises. Craig Scott employs the metronome to practice playing feels on a chosen tune, which applies the metronome to a more musical context. All of these exercises are attempted at various different tempos with a metronome playing all root notes of each chord then only thirds etc. Undy and Boneham both discussed practicing increasing note groupings and subdivisions each bar with a metronome over a major scale (Figure 4.9) also known as a rhythm pyramid. Zwartz offered a similar exercise by way of clapping and using open strings (Figure 3.2). These exercises all address similar issues by utilizing differing methods which is being able to execute a variety of rhythms with precision and accuracy. Undy's 12 bar blues walking exercise (Figure 4.10) is also an excellent way of refining time feel and rhythmic understanding. The importance of the use of the metronome and metronome techniques for developing time feel and enhancing rhythmic concepts for any musician cannot be overstated.

Because of the very physical and physically demanding nature of the double bass, hand and body positioning is of utmost importance to a performer who wishes to have

a long and injury free career. A concept as basic as stance at the instrument can have long-term effects on one's playing career. Each of the participants had different ideas on stance at the instrument. Undy and Scott were the most similar in their concept, which was to stand upright with the back straight, have the bass rest onto the body and not use the left leg to support the instrument. Lloyd Swanton's technique for stance was the opposite as it encourages the use of the left leg to support and balance the bass. Undy and Scott's stance ensures that the body is not twisting in unusual positions and thus not putting any unwanted stress on the body which could potentially cause injury. Jonathan Zwartz's tendency to constantly change and adjust his stance is a direct result of injury and wear and tear from years of carrying the bass as well as playing in awkward positions. Unusually Alex Boneham changes his stance depending on the style of music that he is playing and to be in the optimum position to play a certain feel effectively. As with other methods that this reveals, stance quite often comes down to personal preference and comfort at the instrument. Basic hand position and in particular left hand position was discussed by each participant. Left hand shape and position is crucial to sustain the physical rigors of bass playing and to create music as effortlessly as possible. The left hand must be in a relaxed, natural, curved and fluid position.

Jazz is an aural tradition, which can be traced by lineage on each instrument. This is just as true for double bassists and as this research has shown, each participant spoke of players in the history of jazz who have influenced them as players, and whom they cite as heroes on their instrument. American bassists Paul Chambers, Ray Brown, Wilbur Ware, Ron Carter, Charlie Haden, Sam Jones, Jimmy Garrison and Charles Mingus all of whom are giants of jazz were all mentioned as being major influences

by the participants in this study. To aspire, be inspired by, transcribe and respect great players on the instrument is an important aspect of developing one's own voice. Each participant is well aware of the need to respect the traditions of the music and in doing so finding their own way in the music. As well as the great American players the participants would equally cite the importance of hearing and especially seeing many of the local players that they grew up with. Many local bass players would have a profound effect on their development, including inspiration from each other.

The fundamentals of playing the bass are crucial. From long notes with the bow to practicing scales and arpeggios at different tempos are all critical in one's development. The individual approaches to these fundamental principles are as varied as they are important. One of the interesting facts to come from this research has been how differently each participant approaches similar techniques and practice methods, despite the fact that all of them initially trained on the Simandl method and, three of the five participants studied formally with Craig Scott.

Despite the differences and various practice techniques developed by the participants, the fundamental principles of learning an instrument and being able to play jazz are essentially the same for each of them. Scales, arpeggios, physicality, sound production, the development of a solid time feel, being a strong accompanist and a creative soloist. These primary functions are at the core of what drives each of the musicians to work on and improve in their own playing. What is different is the person's particular approach. How a musician decides or arrives at the decision to be a bass player is a fascinating individual story in itself. Each individual has come to the instrument for very different reasons and with their own story to tell.

What information each participant would bring to this study was unknown. The participants were considered primarily because of their professional reputation. Their knowledge on the instrument is vast and they have all spent countless hours studying, practicing and performing. What has become clear from this thesis is the influence, contribution and development of jazz double bass performance practice in Australia each one has made and continues to have. This dissertation has revealed a significant amount of information on the practice of the art of jazz double bass in Sydney, Australia. There is definitely scope for greater discussion and research into this fascinating subject of the study of a jazz performers physical, mental and creative approach to their chosen art form.

APPENDIX A

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEWS

Craig Scott

Interview took place on Monday 17th December 2012

BC: Ok let's start from the very beginning. How and why did you take up the bass?

CS: Well, I started playing when I was around about 15 years old at Balgowlah Boys High School. I started on the piano prior to that and then I played the tuba a bit in the euphemism for a school band. My brothers a pianist and I could never get near the piano. He was so good at it that it was a bit intimidating playing the piano around him. So the school had a bass or they got a bass. They actually got a bass by mistake, they meant to get a cello but they actually got a bass.

BC: So it was an upright bass?

CS: Yeah. I started on double bass. I bought an electric bass much later and stopped playing it much earlier, to the great joy of everybody. So yeah I was 15 and I got the school bass, it's actually still there I think. In fact my first student that I taught at the con way back when was Adam Armstrong. He turned up at my house in Balgowlah with the same bass that I started on. I think Alex Henery started on that bass as well, I think he was at Balgowlah Boys High, there were a few of us yeah. Another guy called Todd Logan played it for a while I think. So that particular instrument has quite a pedigree. It was a plywood bass; I took it home with the neck hanging out the

window of the car decapitating pedestrians on the way so yeah I was 15 and I had no idea what I was doing.

BC: Did you just see it in the corner and have desire to play it? What was the initial desire?

CS: Well yeah that's a good question.

BC: What compelled you?

CS: I was drawn to it I must say. I think I was also smart enough to realize that it was an instrument that you could play with a piano and my brother was very keen to play music, which was great you know. I don't quite recall now whether it was just before I started to get interested in the bass or just after. My father used to work for an organization called the "Australian Elizabethan Trust" and they used to bring out international acts of various sorts in the art music area. I went to the Sydney Town Hall and I saw a concert by the Jacque Loussier Trio, which had Pierre Michelot playing the bass and he just fractured me. He was amazing. The trio was amazing and I listened to a lot of classical music so I knew my Bach and I enjoyed what they did to it and I enjoyed the concept of that trio. That was probably the first sort of jazz trio I ever saw live and although my brother had some jazz records and my mother had a few, and I think dad had a passing interest in it up to a point. There wasn't a huge amount of jazz being played around the house, it was mostly classical music and music theatre type stuff which is my brothers defining interest. So that was a real eye opener and ear opener and so I either started on the bass just before that or just after

that I can't remember, but it was certainly something to aspire to. I saw that group several times over the years I think they came out 2 or 3 or maybe even 4 times, I got to meet Pierre Michelot, I got to play his bass.

BC: Wow! Did you really?

CS: Yeah I played 2 notes and he went "Thank you so much." No actually he was charming and he was very supportive he was great. So yeah I was 15 and my mother thought it was a good idea to have lessons. My first teacher was Cliff Barnett.

BC Ah! Dan's dad!

CS: Dan's dad yep. Cliff was at that time a very in demand bass player; he mostly worked up at the old Wentworth Supper Club, The Wentworth restaurant actually. I think with Doug Foskitt and others, he worked there for years. Very good bass player and very well schooled. I was a typical 15 year old in so much as I didn't practice ever. I didn't really pay much attention to what he said. I think he did manage to get through to me the fundamentals of how your hands work and what you're supposed to do with them. After about a year I sort of lost interest and stopped being serious. I didn't stop playing the bass I just stopped having lessons, I think he finally decided that he'd had enough of me, because I wasn't practicing.

BC: Did he sack you?

CS: Yeah basically I think so. It was sort of a mutual arrangement I think. Looking back it was very valuable. I mean he had me studying out of the Simandl book of course and playing with the bow, which I hated because I was playing a bit of pizzicato.

BC: French bow?

CS: Yeah I started on the French and retained the French bow. In fact the German bow was very uncommon back then, hardly anybody played it that I was aware of. I mean I can't say that there was nobody say in the SSO who didn't but the French bow was certainly the thing that you saw most of the time.

BC: Did you find Simandl helpful?

CS: I found it boring but I'm sure that it was helpful, I'm sure that it was. Not that I got that far through it because I wasn't practicing. Like any good teacher Cliff didn't let me plough through the book if I hadn't practiced the stuff that I was supposed to do. At the same time I did a lot of playing with my brother and he like me was very fired up by the whole Jacques Loussier sort of jazzing up the classical music domain. He wrote a whole series of pieces for him and I to play. He's a formidable pianist, he's got an incredible left hand and so he played everything in the left hand and I just had to double it. That meant first of all I had to play it in tune and also play it in time with him which I think is responsible for my dodgy time feel now. It was a great learning exercise and as I was able to play those things, he made them progressively more difficult and more complicated. That made me explore the bass a bit more.

BC: Were you reading music at this point?

CS: Yeah I could read up to a point. I wouldn't describe myself as a fantastic reader and I still don't which I'm ashamed to say. I learned obviously to read when I was playing the piano. I learned to read the treble clef pretty well, less so on the bass clef but I knew "good boys deserve fun" all that or "fruit" all those or whatever your particular teachers desire was. "All cows eat grass" and all that crap. They weren't rhythmically complicated those things that my brother wrote out although some of them were. I also had the benefit of lots of rehearsals and lots of opportunities to learn what it looked like, so yeah I could read up to a point but not fantastically.

BC: What was the major factor in your development? When did you become serious?

CS: When I finished school or actually when I was in the equivalent of year 12 it used to be called the sixth form. My brother got the gig as the second piano player on a production of a show by Harvey Schmidt and Tom Jones called "The Fantastics" which was a small musical with a cast of six and a band of ostensibly two, two pianos. It was originally written for two pianos, harp, cello and percussion. As you would! It was condensed to two pianos for this production; it was the opening of the Bondi pavilion in Bondi. My brother was the second pianist on it and they sacked the musical director after about two weeks because he was basically not doing a very good job and I think he was a bit of a lush and everything else. So my brother became the musical director for it and he said to me "I can actually play the two piano thing

myself, so why don't you play bass and percussion on it." It was basically just tuned percussion and the odd sort of gong and stuff and most of it was just playing the bass. My HSC year was six months of The Fantastics and it made me realize that it was actually really fun to be a musician, which was good because I sort of had my doubts I suppose. Also I realized that, I mean I could play the bass to a point, certainly not to any great degree but in my own mind I could. So I thought, oh I could do this. My aspirations to becoming a lawyer or a doctor immediately plummeted and were replaced by a desire to do something that I liked. I think that intrinsic love of something; you know it's so essential in whatever you choose to do. My mother by this time had bought me a double bass. It was a plywood thing. It still exists, my daughter's actually got it.

BC: Oh good!

CS: When I say it exists it barely exists it wasn't a great instrument but at the time there was no Neville Whitehead's or Bass Shop's or anything like that and most of the people who had good instruments were quite young. There weren't a million great instruments in Australia at that stage. It was a plywood thing; it was a copy of a Stradivarius it said on the sticker. Stradivarius the fruit shop owner! I played that for a while, it had a pickup and a dreadful amplifier and stuff. I didn't really do anything much apart from music theatre with my brother. We did a series of shows from about 1974 to about 1981 at the theater, which is now a children's theatre in Killara called the Marion street theatre. At that time it was a professional theatre company and we did a series of shows and I played the bass on all of them. We Played some shows in Melbourne a couple of times when they went elsewhere so I met people and sort of

got more interested in the whole thing of being a musician, but it was all musical theatre. I think I might have done one or two gigs that weren't that, and I wasn't equipped to do it. I didn't know jazz repertoire. I didn't know really at that stage what jazz was supposed to be like because I was still just listening to Jacques Loussier most of the time.

BCL: So after this period did you do any formal study, did you come to the conservatorium or study with any other teachers?

CS: Yes I did. After I finished my parents thought I should have a career apart from being a musician, so they made me go to university and I started to be a music teacher. Well actually a high school English teacher originally. I did that for about six months at New South Wales Uni and I thought, no fuck this and dropped out. The next year I went to Alexander Mackey teachers college, which is now part of New South Wales Uni and started to study as a music teacher. By that stage I was playing more and I started to listen to a bit of jazz at that point because this is such a synonymous instrument with jazz. I also realized that a lot of the musical theatre repertoire was also jazz standards, so I sort of half knew them. I knew the musical theater changes, which of course are nothing like the standards. By the time I finished the first year of that I realized that first of all I didn't want to be a teacher. I did a show for the whole year while I was studying there at the musical theatre restaurant in Manly, which is also no longer around, and there was a bit of jazz in that show. I started to listen to jazz and then I met a series of people who I played with a lot over the years in Melbourne because that show went to Melbourne in 1978. Yeah '78, '77 we went to Melbourne in '77 for about six weeks and I met David Jones the drummer

and a few other guys. Also a fantastic guitar player who was blind and played just like Jose Feliciano. I can't remember what his name was. We used to just get together and jam after the show in a little café called "The Little Riata" in Little Riata Lane Melbourne. We just played lots and lots and lots of music and I started to buy jazz records and listen to jazz. That led me to the Conservatorium; I didn't ever study at the con as an undergraduate student because the jazz course I think was just starting at that point. There had been some electives previously and I think the first cohort, I think Lloyd might have been in the first cohort of that, when it first started out.

BS: He didn't get in straight away.

CS: Oh look there's lots and lots of guys who are at the vanguard of jazz on the scene now who didn't get in the first time. It's a strange thing. I didn't audition for it but I did audition to come into what is the Open Academy now. It was called the External Studies. There was a class one night a week where you turned up and did an improvisation class. It's where I met Steve Brien who's my longest standing musical colleague. Although we weren't in the same class we'd sort of speak to each other in the corridor and got to know each other a bit. I also had a teacher called Keith Stirling.

BC: I knew Keith very well.

CS: Yeah. Well Keith was an extraordinary teacher you know, I learnt much more about his teaching style later. He certainly knew how to enthuse people he was very analytical. He was very aware of the sort potentiality of chord scale theory and

realized that we knew nothing. He didn't dazzle us with science. He was very methodical in his approach to talking about the Dorian minor scale and exercises over that. He'd just bring in tunes where you could just play on the one scale for eight bars or whatever and then the next chord would happen and you'd have to play the different scale. I had him for I guess the equivalent of the first half of the year and then he got a grant to go and study in the States for six months so Roger Frampton took over that class. Roger was terrifying; he was so amazingly great as a musician. I think also he was a little disdainful of that group because it was not people who were smart enough or dedicated enough to come into the jazz program. At first he softened, he was obviously full of information. He made us all learn Miles' solo off "So What" as an example of the use of Dorian minor scales. We had to all internalize it, which was my introduction to transcription. I did that for a year those two classes. I was really interested in the jazz thing by then although I still wasn't the possessor a gigantic record collection but what I had, I listened to a lot. There were fairly obviously examples with a couple of exceptions. One of the first records I bought was a Dudley Moore Trio thing and it's actually just been re released and I thought, I wonder what it's like. I recently wondered if I actually had any musical taste back then and I put it on and was actually pleasantly surprised, it's actually great! I was still playing the piano a lot I think. Something that I got from those first things at the con was how important it is to at least to have knowledge of what the piano can do and understand voice leading and stuff. You can see it, it's very visual, and it's really useful. Then I got onto "The Fairstar" with a piano player called Jay Stewart and a drummer called Cary Bennett and we were the trio that did little bits and pieces all over the ship. The main band was in the auditorium and we raced around doing half hours here and three hours somewhere else, they worked us to death it was ridiculous!

It was great because when we got on, between the two of us because obviously the drummer has a different imperative but between the two of us we probably knew five tunes. We had to play four and a half hours a night so we basically started to work through “The Real Book”. Learning tunes out of the real book or just playing them not actually learning them but playing them and reading them. There was a woman on there called Lola Nixon who was a singer around the club scene and she absolutely despised the main band because they were an Italian dance band. They were actually really good players but they weren’t that into backing singers. So she used to come and hang out with us and she’d say “Oh you must learn this song” and if we didn’t know it she would have some sort of chart that she would drag around with her and she made us play all these things. We got off the boat at the end of that six months with quite a degree of experience. Jay had an incredible record collection actually and so did Cary. It was all cassettes in those days and Sony Walkman so I heard a lot of music. Cary was disembarked about half way through for various different reasons and another drummer came on. He was the first person to ever play me “Dolphin Dance”. No kidding he put it on, we were sitting on the deck, he put Dolphin Dance on and immediately a pod of dolphins came up to the surface and started swimming in front of the ship, it was amazing!

BC: Seriously?

CS: Yeah I thought, wow this must be a pretty good song. That experience was really important to me and it was professional experience and it was learning on the job and having to upgrade my skills because I didn’t have any. Oh I should have answered your question a bit earlier sorry. I did have some other lessons; I had some with a guy

called Max Klaxton who was in the SSO and he played German bow but I didn't so he let me play the French bow. That was when I was at Alexander Mackey College; I only did it for six months because I still wasn't that inspired by playing classical music.

BC: Was that classical style?

CS: Yeah it was. I love classical music but just the idea of being in an orchestra never resonated with me as much as my limited amount of experience of playing pizzicato and playing that kind of music, it just didn't grab me as much. Although from a listening point of view I still loved to listen to it. They were the only teachers I had formally. I did certainly go and watch Ed Gaston play a lot. Ed was very busy in the scene of course and a model bass player, as you know. He was an extraordinary bass player so I used to go and sit at the front table every opportunity I had and just watch him and listen to him. But particularly watch him you know, you listen to amazing people on record and you listen to everybody you can get your hands on but the most defining thing is to see them. I used to pluck up enough courage to ask him questions and I always found him to be very willing to discuss the instrument and talk about what he was doing. Not that I asked him that many questions because I was too scared. I was shy but he was always great you know. I used to watch Darcy Wright play; of course Darcy is a great bass player. I used to watch Jack Thorncraft a lot. Jack was not as visible in the scene but he was certainly in it in the Jazz Co Op and things like that. So you learn a lot from watching people. Chris Qua, I used to watch Smedley who was in The Duck at that stage and they were down at the Basement

about four nights a week. There was no shortage of people to watch and talk to and learn from.

BC: I bet!

CS: It was an incredible learning experience because it was the same kind of application that he had at the con. We went through tunes, we looked at every possibility that he could come up with and obviously much more than I could come up with. We would play one tune for six hours. We'd also do some pretty funny things like sit in the dark for two hours with the metronome on sixty until everyone's heart rate slowed down so we all played more together.

BC: Sounds very Keith.

CS: Oh very Keith. Look we did Tai Chi in the backyard we did all kinds of things. After about two months I think Gary Norman got tired of sitting in the dark with the metronome on sixty and decided he wanted to go back to Melbourne. Keith said to me, "who should we get in the band?" I said Steve Brien because I think by that stage I'd started to do the odd gig with Steve at a joint up in Newport called the "Port Bistro". I had met quite a few people through that and Steve would play the guitar. Steve was very active in the scene in a band called "The Billgola Bop Band" which was sort of a rock band kind of thing and some others stuff as well. Dale Barlow used to come and play at the Port Bistro and I think Andrew Gander used to come and play.

BC: I think he did I was talking about this with him the other day yeah.

Lloyd Swanton

Interview took place on Monday 29th October 2012

BC: Ok so lets just start from the beginning, start with the most obvious question really that is; why and how did you take up the bass?

LS: There were a number of strands that kind of eventually intersected in my case, when I look back it's funny, it was sort of inevitable. I didn't have this burning desire to play the bass like some people have had. It actually sort of started falling into place long before I was born. My dad was working in Adelaide before the war and he was a keen violinist; he wasn't a professional musician he was a businessman. He saw an ad in the newspaper for a double bass for sale and just thought it would be a bit of a lark to play a bass. He went out to this guy's house who was basically just an alcoholic who'd drunk all the rest of his furniture. The only thing he had left in the house was the bass. In fact dad bought the bass and dropped him off at the pub on the way home. Dad quickly concluded that playing bass messed up his hand for violin, with the intonation, so that was it. But he hung onto the bass, which was quite strange. When the war broke out dad was not eligible on medical grounds so he ended up being appointed head of the war damages commission. The army flew him to Sydney and he got them to fly his bass over rather than sell it. He seemed to be really attached to it even though he didn't play it. So growing up that bass was always in the corner in a state of disrepair; no one was really playing it. I had older siblings, we all had to learn the piano and other instruments but no one seemed to take a shine to the bass. There was another bass upstairs that had arrived in the house later in life.

BC: Wow!

LS: We'll get out of this soon...

BC: No that's all right it's interesting. It's good.

LS: When dad set up in Sydney after the war, his insurance assessing office was in Pitt Street. On the top floor was Smith's violin shop, which is where Harry Bottelliotis and other people learnt their craft. A fellow from the SSO I think had dropped off his beautiful German bass for repairs and when he came to pick it up, not only did he drop it down the stairs as he was leaving but he fell into it! Dad ended up by coincidence handling the insurance claim and once it was all settled he said, "Well I've actually got a bass at home" (you know it was a write off) he said, "I'll buy it off you for scrap". So we had this other bass upstairs which was just the shell because the whole body was caved in. When I started to play bass in my teens, dad donated it to the school I was at and the school carpenters fixed it up with araldite.

BC: Carpenters!

LS: Yeah and got it going you know it was probably horrible, I believe it's still there. So that was that, there were two basses. I had to learn piano from an early age but I really didn't enjoy it. It wasn't till a best friend announced he was buying an electric guitar. I guess we were about 14 and I said, "Well I'll get a bass", not even knowing. I vaguely knew they had four strings. That was about it.

BC: An electric bass?

LS: Yeah an electric bass, so I bought an electric bass and we spent the summer holidays jamming and working out Deep Purple and Led Zeppelin stuff, which did wonders for my ear. My music teacher at school was amazed and actually accused me of cheating. I was like how can you cheat an aural test! Somewhere along the line as I got into playing bass guitar, I started messing around with the bass at home, the double bass. Eventually got that one fixed up and that was the first instrument I learnt on, so that's it basically.

BC: Did you initially seek a teacher when you took up the instrument?

LS: When I was playing bass guitar I took some lessons from the Yamaha music school in Hornsby from a guy, can't remember his name. He was sort of a rock and roll bass player and he was teaching me from the Bob Haggart bass method.

BC: Aah! I was going to mention that, I know it!

LS: Which wasn't that applicable to bass guitar.

BC: No

LS: For a heavy metal bass guitarist, but anyway.

BC: I've just discovered that, it's out of print but there's a website you can download it from and it's very good.

LS: Yeah. Then I left school and auditioned for the conservatorium but didn't get in. I went and worked in my dad's office for a year and started taking bass lessons from Dave Ellis because my older brother Johnny is a drummer and percussionist and he was playing with Dave at the time. They had a band at the basement called "Fifty Fingers", with Ray Aldridge, Jeff Oaks and I think Neddy Sutherland. So he lined up lessons with Dave who was fabulous. His enthusiasm for the instrument is very infectious, we're still great mates.

BC: So was he your first formal double bass teacher would you say?

LS: Yeah. I do remember taking a few lessons from John Gray, classical lessons, outside of the Conservatorium. I think this is when I was still playing dad's bass. I think I recall him saying "It's just not set up for classical you know you're not getting a good sound out of it with those strings". At the time I didn't want to, my focus was still learning to play jazz so we kind of agreed to disagree.

BC: When did you first encounter jazz?

LS: Very first encounter was a couple of 78's that dad had of Duke Ellington. One had "East St Louis Toodle-oo" it's correctly called, "Black and Tan Fantasy", "Mood Indigo" and I can't remember what the fourth side was. There were two 78's. Also my brother moved into a house about the time I left school and there was a double album of Thelonious Monk, a Prestige double album that really blew me away. Concurrent to all of that I guess starting out listening to heavy metal like Deep Purple and Led Zeppelin. I started getting into guitar heroes like Jeff Beck. His album "Blow by

Blow” came out which was one of the early jazz-rock albums so that kind of got me onto the jazz side. I still love that album I think it’s a classic. So yeah more and more I started working into jazz from there, I sort came at it from playing rock.

BC: You mentioned that you studied from the Bob Haggart book a little bit. There are a number of other methods available that a lot of people have studied with including Simandl, Rabbath and Rufus Reid. Are you a student of any of those methods or any other?

LS: I did Simandl with Dave Ellis and it’s pretty boring, you know it really is dull. Dull as dishwater but I guess it’s thorough and systematic.

BC: Were they crucial in your technical development do you think?

LS: I think so because of its thoroughness. I’m glad I was able to put up with the boredom of it because it’s really not riveting stuff. I think it does give you a basic grounding, a comprehensive grounding in one way of playing the instrument.

BC: So you were doing this at the same time you were studying jazz as well?

LS: Yeah there was a bit of overlap. I was studying, when I think back this is kind of 1979. 78’. I first started learning with Dave and I was working in my dads’ office because I left school in 77’. 79’ I got into the course at the con, which at time was a two-year course.

BC: Who was teaching bass then?

LS: I actually got in on bass guitar; my double bass chops weren't really up to it yet. My first teacher was Jacky Orzacsky and then at the end of that year Roger Frampton, who had been the head of the course, was replaced by Don Burrows who changed a lot of the teachers. I ended up with Ron Philpott on bass guitar but at least through the first year I was still learning from Dave on double bass. I'm not sure if I continued through my second year. Somewhere along the line I actually started to bring the double bass along to the con and I remember playing it in big band rehearsal. By the time I left the con I was focusing on the double bass although I'd never studied it.

BC: So you were studying classical at the same time? Would you say seriously studying classical repertoire?

LS: No. Dave is very experienced in classical and that was the sort of technique he was teaching but he was very aware that I was focused on jazz. He knows jazz so that's where he was pointing me. We didn't really study improvisation per se but we were studying classical technique with the awareness that it was going to be used in a jazz context yeah.

BC: What would you say are the major factors in your development as a bass player?

LS: Well actually, if we then jump forward a few years because I then had a very intense period of classical study in London in the mid 80's. From memory once I left the con there were a lot of gigs happening. It was a good time to be a double bass

player in Sydney if you could half find your way around the instrument. With all due respect to the older generation, there weren't that many, there were one or two really good players and then the standard dropped off enormously you know. I found the work was coming thick and fast and I was learning on the job. I was sometimes doing seven or eight gigs a week and just playing heaps, rehearsing and practicing. In 1985 The Benders, the band that I was in, we toured to Europe. I stayed on in London and called up Tom Martin who was at the time principal bass with the English Chamber Orchestra and taught at the Guildhall School of Music. I just called him cold and said I'd like to take lessons and he was only too happy which was fantastic. I was there for eight or nine months and it was very intensive. He knew I wasn't there normally. He'd be teaching students at the Guildhall for three or four years, however long the course is, so he tried to give me a sort of compressed version. He did what he does with all of his students, taking us right back to absolute basics you know, bow on string and just doing that sort of stuff. Real fundamentals of playing, but simultaneously he was giving me his so-called advanced techniques, every trick of the trade that he had. In retrospect I found the fundamental stuff far more helpful, really amazing. A student dropped out of the Guildhall orchestra right at the start of the term and they needed eight in the bass section so he actually swung a place for me, so then I was going along and rehearsing with the orchestra. They had guest conductors like Vladimir Ashkenazy and Roger Norrington and it was a real education for me. Those players there you know I was about 25, 26 and they were all straight out of school 17, 18 and I felt like I was hanging out with Olympic athletes. They were completely obsessed; they knew nothing about anything except playing classical bass in an orchestra. You know you're in a country where there's a real depth to the thing so you can be that obsessive about what's really not a mainstream thing. Part of it kind of put

me off. Up until the end of it I'd always wondered if the classical scene was where I should be, not that I loved the music that much but I could actually see that you just got a better work environment. It's really rare that you actually have to fend off drunks who are about to fall into your instrument! By the end of that time, the lessons with Tom were absolutely fantastic. He started mentioning the Bottesini word. That's where I parted company I just, I really have real issues with classical bass solo repertoire, I think most of it sucks. Why listen to schmaltzy 19th century romantic composers when there's, and there's some great contemporary music written for double bass, but I just knew. Tom absolutely loved that stuff and I didn't want to hurt his feelings or cause a huge standoff. I just couldn't see myself wanting to play that music that's very hard, you've got to spend a lot of time working on and I don't like at all.

BC: What about Tom, did he teach from a certain method or did he have his own way of doing it?

LS: I'm not actually sure who he learnt from. I think he was American and then spent years in the UK and that's where he lives now, he's a maker.

BC: You play French bow?

LS: Yeah. I'm not actually sure who he learnt from but he was so clear about the way to do it all, he had an answer for everything. Fortunately I was like an open book. I was willing to learn and I was happy to be kind of stripped down to basics and start

again, it really worked for me. I can imagine if you'd reached some conclusions about how to play the bass and they differed from what Tom was teaching, I could see it wouldn't work very well at all. He was quite legendary for having a few run ins with people I believe, but we got on like a house on fire. He was very big on playing the bass in tune, with a good hand position and shifting quickly and accurately. We spent a lot of time working on really simple shifting exercises and maintaining a good hand position. He would often show me a fingering for a particular passage and his fingers would move so little that I'd actually have to ask him, I couldn't actually see which fingers are pressing down the string. None of this wild stuff at all. Just the hand moving up and down. It kind of reminded me of some kind of automated device just moving up the fingerboard like that. With the bow arm, it was very much about the enormous amount of muscle and bone you've got in that arm, feeling what that weight is and realizing that if you allow that onto the bass it would kill the note. So it's not actually about getting more pressure it's about getting less pressure and a more penetrating tone. His theory was that when you pluck a string, it's free to vibrate back and forth. When you bow it, all those tiny teeth on the hair are pulling it and then its only going back to pretty much to whatever that point is called. He said you want to give it as much freedom as possible and if you're digging in, it might sound loud but it's not penetrating. He was all about getting a clean sound with as little weight as possible so I did lots and lots of really slow bowing.

BC: Do you teach?

LS: Not really. I'm happy to give those sort of basic Tom Martin raves to students because even though I haven't perfected them myself, I hate to see people playing without clarity. When there's just this sort of smudgy kind of what note was that? I mean having said that, the thought occurs to me particularly in the jazz context. I've often knowingly said goodbye to some of that technique and gone, no I'm actually going to hold it like I'm hanging on a branch. I'm not gonna be poised like that, I just want to sit on this one note and groove and that to me is more important at that point in time.

BC: I know what you mean; sometimes you can get a bit wrapped up in "correct" technique.

LS: Yeah, but I'm so glad I know it, particularly with a few weeks practice, I can kind of reignite my awareness of that sort of technique and everything and re activate, that's the word I'm looking for. So what was the question?

BC: Do you teach?

LS: Over the years I have done but not particularly since moving to the mountains. I still play bass guitar but no one seems to come to me for bass guitar lessons.

BC: They come to you for double bass lessons? Beginners mostly?

LS: Mostly people that are a little way along the track.

BC: Do you teach the Tom Martin method?

LS: Yeah I tend to basically just blurt at them for two hours and say come back in six months. I don't have a syllabus worked out at all. I haven't really been very systematic about it or methodical but I'm always happy to criticize others. If someone says I want some pointers. That seems to be what people ask for anyway.

BC: I think so yeah. So who would you say your main influences on the bass are?
From overseas and Australia.

LS: Dave was a very big influence early on, as I say his enthusiasm for the instrument is so infectious you know he just loves the bass. I was really lucky to hook with him early on. In terms of local players in the jazz scene Jack Thorncraft was terrific. Darcy Wright, Ed Gaston were all really good strong players. Then Jacky Orzacsky, he was a great teacher you know, as was Ron Philpott. Ron's concept was totally about ear playing .We just spent a year sort of playing melody. He wasn't too interested in talking about a lot of complicated chord theory or anything. Jacky on the other hand you know, we'd be attempting to read Bartok string quartets or something just to expand my knowledge. I have to stress I could barely play the bass back then. I feel like I got in under the quota system. It really kicked my ass and I really practiced hard and I felt like by the end of my two years at the con I was starting to actually make an account of myself, but I was hopeless. Phil Scorge was one of the other students at the time and James Morrison, Dale Barlow, Chris Abrahams who were all tearing around the instrument already. I didn't have a clue. A lot of what Jacky was

teaching was probably going over my head at the time; I was still trying to work out how to get around it.

BC: What about American players, who would you cite as influential?

LS: Probably the first big influence was Paul Chambers. That's who I really honed in on. Charlie Haden probably came along somewhere; I actually spent a bit of time with Charlie Haden when he came out in the early 80's with that band "Old and New Dreams". I was his driver and that was a real experience. I wish I'd known a bit more about the bass.

BC: Did you get a lesson with him?

LS: No he didn't want to but I kind of pestered him for information. It keyed in very much what Ron Philpot had been telling me. He said "I've practiced scales and arpeggios for maybe three hours in my life; I just work on what I'm hearing in my head". In retrospect I can see in some ways that it was a kind of a "don't bother me" kind of thing. It was probably absolutely the truth but I know there's more to it than that. I actually went jogging with him and I learnt a lot about pacing myself! Just his approach to getting the sound out of the instrument. He did do a workshop at the Paradise jazz cellar, which blew me away. He just raved about all sorts of stuff; he talked about politics and cooking from memory and just didn't play much at all. That bass of his is incredible. The set up he had with the gut strings. I think not long after that I thought that was the way to go. So he really turned me around. I loved the idea of if you play a note that's that beautiful, no need to move onto the next one. He

doesn't have a lot of chops like most people call chops. Somewhere along the line, I can't remember which came first but that led me to Wilbur Ware who also really blew me away.

BC: Charlie Haden sort of comes out of that school doesn't he?

LS: Very much. I'd be interested to know. I don't know if anyone's ever asked Charlie how much Wilbur influenced him. To me you could tell that Wilbur was playing an instrument with an action that was about three inches high and there were only so many things he could do with that instrument. He kind of played like it was sort of a tuned drum. That linked up with things that I was listening to like African music and traditional Caribbean music like the Marimba. That great big thumb piano that you just sit on and go "dum dum dum". I started to get this idea that the bass is just a drum with a few more pitch options. Wilbur's rhythms and the way he turned rhythms back to front, rather than looking at harmonic possibilities. He'd play a phrase and sort of offset a little bit.

BC: He played root notes a lot wouldn't he? He'd play those two-note walking feels that he does. Yeah I love all that stuff.

LS: Yeah and even playing the harmonic half way up the string and doing rhythmic things with the open string and the harmonic. I jumped on all that. Charlie Haden and Wilbur were big.

BC: Have you transcribed much of anyone? Bass lines or solos?

LS: Yep a few Paul Chambers solos, even a couple of arco ones. Some Wilbur Ware solos. Charlie Haden's a little harder to annotate, or notate, because so often he plays out of time. I mean he's an easy guy to do a cheap copy of. To really get into it you'd have to work a lot more at it, but yeah I did. Not so long ago maybe five or six years ago I did just out of the blue, I got really infatuated with an Oscar Pettiford Solo on "Honeysuckle Rose", the trio with Thelonious Monk. That's actually a very Wilbur Ware kind of solo really and that's a beauty.

BC: Do you transcribe a whole solo or do you just take a particular line that you like?

LS: No I tend to do the whole solo to kind of get the whole statement. I wasn't really into cherry picking. I actually transcribed a couple of Lester Young solos too; they were great because they were very pretty and easy to play in the thumb position on the bass.

BC: So not just bass solos necessarily?

LS: I'd like to do more of that and we can get onto it later but I also did have a brief chat with Michael Moore the bass player.

BC: Oh right yeah!

LS: He played with a trumpet player, who then died, at the Chicago Jazz Festival when I played there with Bernie McGann whenever that was. Anyway Michael's

soloing really blew me away, it was so melodic. He's since written a book on the subject.

BC: What about Red Mitchell have you heard much Red Mitchell? I just got a DVD of him. He tunes his bass in fifths; he's beautiful you know plays solos like a horn player, really clear and melodic.

LS: Don't know his playing that well.

BC: Yeah I didn't either someone gave me a Zoot Syms DVD with lots of Red Mitchell and it's just beautiful playing.

LS: I've got that Gene Lees book the "Cats of Many Colors" where Red Mitchell actually explains why he goes for the tuning in fifths because he didn't start out like that. He basically locked himself away for a couple of weeks and relearned the instrument.

BC: Why did he do it?

LS: I'd have to dig it out. I can't remember.

BC: It works for him though. Just a quick question about composition. You obviously compose a lot, you've composed a lot over the years. Maybe I don't even need to ask this but do you think that composition is an important aspect of being a jazz musician necessarily?

LS: What compelled me into it was more, I mean it wasn't financial because no one's going to make a living writing jazz composition. I actually had a very interesting chat with Cameron Alan a film and TV composer from Australia who's lived in L.A. for many years. I spent six months in L.A. on a study grant learning from Bill Neidlinger and I got to know Cameron quite a bit there. He gave me a little bit of a pep talk about the concept of horizontal money, which is basically money that you make when you're horizontal i.e. asleep. I just, I kind of thought well, I had no training as a composer. I'd actually formed my own band at the time The Catholics and written the best part of an album's worth and I thought, I should actually do more of this. It enhances your playing and it gives you new situations you can express yourself in. As a bass player particularly in The Catholics I actually wrote a lot of pieces based around my bass playing. I would often come up with a bass line and think of a drum rhythm to go with it and only then start adding a chord progression and a melody. I've always been pretty fastidious about attractive melodies. Probably my first love was pop music of the 60's and 70's; I've always been a sucker for a good poppy tune. It's rare that the melody comes to me first; I usually write the melody after I've already decided what the other stuff was. I think that was a very "bassist" way of composing and I was happy to pursue that because I felt it made the sound of The Catholics different to if I'd played another instrument.

BC: Is that how you still write?

LS: Maybe a little less so but occasionally I'm just mucking around on the instrument and I go, oh hang on and I pursue that for a while. I'll jot it down and I think that could actually be a tune.

BC: Would you write the melody on the bass as well or maybe go to the piano?

LS: Usually on the piano.

BC: And the chords and stuff on the piano?

LS: Yeah

BC: That's interesting.

LS: Well it was another string to my bow, to use a terrible pun. Yeah another way to express myself as I said the imputes was more the royalties. You can't live on them but they've certainly smoothed out some the (sic).

BC: They help.

LS: Ups and downs you know. There are things I wrote twenty-five years ago that I'm still getting a little.

BC: Little taste!

LS: Yeah taste it all ads up even if it is only three cents from Romania.

BC: What about The Necks? That's obviously a very different approach to what you do in The Catholics. When you do a gig with The Necks do you have some idea of what you're going to play before you go or do you just go in with a clear head?

LS: Well yeah the rule of engagement is we don't tell each other if we do have an idea. We don't walk on stage and say "hey I've got this great idea listen to me guys". I'd keep it to myself if I did have a great idea. I wouldn't want to shock the others anyway, "Lloyds got a good idea!". Certainly if an idea has occurred to in my practice or even just driving to the gig I'm only too happy to pursue that. That's on an immediate performance-by-performance scale but on the long, broader scale I would definitely think that that music represents my feelings about the bass. I really like playing the bass as an instrument in that band and I really like just investigating what the bass can do as a bass. Coming out of that whole Charlie Haden, Wilbur Ware thing versus the more virtuosic horn-like approach, I definitely have followed the first approach. Charlie Haden's thing of holding down an octave letting both notes ring and going [demonstrates]. Every bass player kind of knows that now, I don't know anyone else that quite did it like that. I kind of got to thinking why does he do that? What's that about? My conclusion was that it's about providing forward propulsion without any harmonic movement. That's something that I really pursue with The Necks because we'll often sit on a chord or a very small turnaround or something for ten, fifteen, twenty minutes. The challenge is finding ways to maintain the sense that it's moving forward. Although sometimes with The Necks we actually really love getting into the sense that it doesn't have to move forward. It's like bang here we are we've arrived; let's just tumble round like this. We're only going to break out when something sort of snaps and off we go again. So yes, that one little aspect of Charlie

Haden's playing really triggered a lot of thought about the whole concept of music that we do with The Necks.

BC: So do you have a favorite style that you like to play? For example do you like to play standards do you like to play swing, do you like to play original music, free? Is there a preference for you?

LS: When it comes to capital J jazz, I guess post bop. I personally think that a lot of where jazz went in the 80's and 90's got a little bit too obsessed with harmonic complexity. Even going back to my time at the conservatorium where I didn't really know all that much about music, I wasn't in a position to criticize but I must say a lot of the harmonic sounds we were being taught I just didn't actually like that. I'm not a huge fan of the major seventh raised five and those sort of sounds.

BC: Yeah I know what you mean.

LS: That probably goes back to Ravel or Debussy or something as some kind of passing orchestral tone. I like the funkiness of the sort of minory, majory, dominant seven things that people jam on for half an hour. It's all just about personal taste. I really think maybe the 70's and 80's we really saw the rise of jazz education as an industry and tertiary courses devoted to jazz springing up everywhere. It seemed to very much become the domain of people that were very fixated on the harmonic side of things.

BC: Is it the Berkeley approach and that sort of thing?

LS: Most of them probably have incredible time feels and can play all sorts of amazing polyrhythms but that wasn't their focus. They focused on the kind of harmonies that I wasn't really in to. I think again, the first music that really moved me was the British pop of the mid sixties.

BC: So would you say fundamentally you're a groove-based player?

LS: Yeah. Pretty early in the piece I ended up preferring that end of the spectrum.

BC: Whether that is whatever feel you're playing, that's kind of your concern.

LS: Yeah. Most people would probably say they're into that, but they can't help themselves.

BC: I know what you mean.

LS: I just think I'm not bright enough to be distracted by a lot the stuff that's going on around me.

BC: I know exactly what you mean, haven't got the time.

LS: I'm just trying to lock in here!

BC: Slash chords you know! What! And finally for this sort of section, do you play for yourself, the audience of musicians? When you're playing live I guess.

LS: To take a snapshot of what's going through one's brain at the time it would be, it's pretty elusive you know. On the one hand I think music really is a sort of portal to the universal. I know there was a quote about The Necks, which I since found out, was a quote from William Blake. I thought it was just a very good journalist but it said "The Necks can find eternity in a grain of sand". Not boasting or anything but taking that out of context and saying I really like the idea that just by playing a note you are triggering the fundamentals of the physics of the universe. Those overtones and everything are according to certain rules, which don't ever change and yet because we can't quite pin them down, because acoustics is such a wonderfully inexact science, it's constantly enticing and fascinating to us. So yeah there's that and yet I don't see myself as a particularly cosmic person. When people do start talking like that I love trying to pull the rug out from under their feet and say I was actually thinking about, I actually have to buy two litres of milk on the way home you know! Or I was thinking what's that smell?

BC: Or, what's the time?

LS: How many more choruses to go on this particular one! Actually there's no names but one band I used to play in, one horn player used to take a solo on this particular piece every night, or every time we'd play it. I'd check my watch at the start of the solo and at the end and it was extraordinary how close to the minute it was. Even though it was a really extended feature. From memory it was about seven to seven and a half minutes every time we'd play it. That sounds like I was actually not focusing on the gig. It was just a little kind of curiosity because we did this every time so I'd I just got curious about it. That actually told me a lot about the sort of bigger rhythms that

we as humans are not even conscious of. To do that solo, to go through the peaks and troughs and explore the areas that he wanted to explore, it wasn't like it was the same solo every night. It was based on particular themes that kept recurring, it was always different, he was always improvising freshly but it always clocked in at about the same time.

BC: Maybe he had a seven and a half minute play along that he liked to play.

LS: Don't know where he got it from because it wasn't us.

BC: So in answer is it for the audience?

LS: I think yeah, I think everyone. Another of my clichés, which I think the point of, it is, about don't get too obsessed with any one performance. Always be striving for long-term improvement. One of my clichés is the way you can walk off stage feeling like you're the John Coltrane Quartet incarnated and someone who knows you quite well will go, what's wrong with you guys you're just not happening.

BC: Yeah.

LS: On the other hand you can walk on stage thinking I don't even want to be here you know, I've got a cold or I don't like this person I'm playing with. The venue manager's a jerk and blah blah blah. You feel like a complete fraud, here I am getting up on stage, people are paying money to see this sort of rubbish and you walk off stage and someone says "that music just changed my life thank you so much!"

BC: Yeah

LS: Neither of those situations is absolute and I think anyone that gets too fixated on either of them is not going to go very far. I think you take it with a grain of salt. Sometimes you are just thinking nuts and bolts and discovering later that you've really connected with someone in the audience. Other times you're really playing out to the audience going "this is wonderful thanks for being here we're all one big happy family" and it's not really connecting at all. Maybe you do need to think more nuts and bolts about what I'm doing and what they're doing and you know.

BC: It's all perception really isn't it it's really.

LS: Yeah I hope that made some sense.

BC: That's great! Well thanks Lloyd we might have a little break for a minute.

LS: What you want me to play?

BC: Yeah I want you to play!

Jonathan Zwartz

Interview took place on Monday 25th February 2013

BC: Starting from the beginning how was it that you became a bass player?

JZ: First of all I became an electric bass player by default; I wanted to be a singer guitarist. We had a rehearsal band that used to perform when I was in high school in a church hall. The brother of the drummer who lived on the church property; his father was the vicar and he recorded us on a very early tape machine. I was singing and playing guitar like in a rock band. I heard it back and it was so bad that I gave up any thought of being a guitarist or a singer straight away. We'd been having trouble finding a bass player so I decided to be the bass player and started playing electric bass. I was so ashamed by my performance, I was mortified. Anyway I became an electric bass player and we formed a band. It was a ten-piece band playing soul music and party music. I then left school and went on the road with that band in a Bedford truck driving around with all the P.A. stacked almost to the roof. We put thin mattresses on top of the gear and then we'd lie like sardines in the truck as it went. The manager would drive the truck. He owned the truck and had a dog and two lucky band members up the front who were in favor at the time. The rest of us were like sardines in the back. We went around New Zealand like that. I left that band and joined The Crocodiles, which was like a big sort of thing for me at the time because they were a big band in New Zealand. They came to Australia when I was nineteen. I came with them and then the band broke up three months later and I bummed around another couple of bands for a couple of years. Then another bass player who I knew who was going to the con left his double bass where I was living at the time. After a

particularly horrible gig, it was really hard being in a band doing supports and stuff in those days, it was the early 80's. For example we would go and help the other bands sound guys move all the equipment in. We'd wait for them to sound check then we'd have a half an hour sound check and then performance to do the support. We would only be allowed half the P.A. and half the lights and we also had to pay them to operate or we had to find someone else to operate on our behalf. Then we had to wait around through their performance and then help load the P.A. out. So after a couple of years of that it was pretty grueling. I looked at this double bass and thought you know a few of my friends have gone to the con maybe I should give that a go as a kind of way to escape that life. I unwrapped it from its case and plucked a note and something about it just really appealed to me. So I'm a late starter on double bass, I didn't start until I was 23 and I was sort of at a desperate point in my life.

BC: That is quite late isn't it yeah.

JZ: I said to myself, right if I pass the audition then I'll go for it and if I don't pass the audition then I'll give up music altogether and find something else to do. Luckily for me that year there were only two other double bass applicants, they were short of double basses and they really needed them so I got in.

BC: This the Sydney con?

JZ: Sydney con.

BC: What year was this?

JZ: '84 '85 I think it was.

BC: Did you study with Craig Scott?

JZ: Craig Scott was my teacher yep.

BC: Was he the first person that you had formal lessons with?

JZ: Yes. In fact he was the first person I had a formal lesson with. I knew that he was the teacher at the con and I wanted to get in really badly. I wanted to do this so I thought the best way to go about this was to try and get a lesson with him and ask him specifically what skills I would need to get through the audition process. He was very helpful.

BC: Had you had any lessons before that on electric bass?

JZ: No

BC: When you started having lessons with Craig did he recommend you follow any bass methods like Simandl or Rabbath.

JZ: Yeah he recommended I follow Simandl but the thing was I couldn't read. That was the weak area of my audition. I think I did ok on the ear test and the actual swinging and playing along. I mean I started so late I still remember what it felt like

to be playing behind the beat. When you don't have the technique to play and you hear something back it's just instant depression because you don't think you're ever going to be able to do it. You have to really summon all your resolve and determination to keep going. The first lesson I had; I think I had maybe one or two before the audition and prior to that I'd just been practicing scales. He showed me how a blues worked and he got me to learn "Well You Needn't" no "Straight No Chaser". It took me weeks to get my head around that; the way the syncopation works but I did, I learnt it. I learnt how to kind of get through the blues walking and then when I went to the audition I couldn't read. It was Don Burrows, Roger Frampton and Craig. Roger Frampton I remember gave me the curliest bloody ear test. He was such a shit that guy. I take it back I love Roger! No I love Roger.

BC: Were you already listening to jazz or did you only start listening because you wanted to get into the con?

JZ: I started listening to it because that's the area I wanted to go. I came from a classical music background; both my parents are classical musicians. I rebelled when I was a kid as kids do and so I didn't learn as much as they made me try to learn. I didn't really learn anything. I was passionate about music but I wanted something I could really sink my teeth into, something that had some intellectual aspect to the music as well as just more visceral kind of groove thing. I'm very much into the idea of groove and jazz seemed to be a good way to serve that.

BC: Yeah right that's interesting, so you came to jazz late as well.

JZ: I came to jazz late and through my wife Jane who's a singer and I came to walking bass lines through singers. Through Ella, through Billy, through quite a lot of obscure singers like Etta James, all sorts of odd singers. Funnily enough a lot of the time the bass player on those sessions was Milt Hinton. That's pretty much when I first started to listen to what bass players were doing and try and do what they were doing which was a very early form of transcribing for me. I didn't write it down because I couldn't really read music or write it. I just tried to learn it by ear which if I have a student I suggest that they do that because it's a better way to learn it.

BC: Have you had any classical training on the bass? Have you done much study with the bow?

JZ: I've done a little bit of study with the bow when I went to Detroit to study with Rodney Whitaker on an Australia Council grant I studied; I can't remember the guys name, he was fantastic. He was at the Detroit Michigan State University and he gave me a couple of lessons in bow technique. I mean it's very much self-taught for me and it's very much just whenever I need it. I like to draw a good sound when possible but I don't have any illusions about my abilities as a bowler. There are plenty of people out there who really study it. I just use it for whenever I need it for. I don't have any desire to become a classical musician, especially after seeing Alex Henry play.

BC: Do you teach?

JZ: No.

BC: You don't teach at all.

JZ: No not really.

BC: Do you just give the odd lesson to people or you're not really into that.

JZ: I do give the odd lesson to people, I'm into that. I feel like the way to be is what you just described to me earlier, which is to get an actual series of lessons going. People sign up to one, two or three lessons. I've never got it together to work out exactly what the curriculum should be and everybody's needs are so different. I find teaching is very much like being a G.P. and you have to cure people's problems. Whatever questions they have, its very much tailor made to the individual and it's quite exhausting to do that.

BC: Would you encourage students to follow a method like Simandl or something similar?

JZ: I would encourage students to follow a good teacher and if that good teacher recommended a method then by all means. I think it's a really good place to start. I had a couple, I had Simandl one and two. I had who's the guy from Eastern Europe? Can't remember his name because it's so long since I looked at it.

BC: Streicher?

JZ: Streicher.

BC: And there's Bob Haggart have you seen that one?

JZ: No I haven't.

BC: That's an interesting one.

JZ: I also have Rufus Reid's book and I had Ray Brown's book for a while. I'm not a work out of a book person and that is in all areas of my life. I find it very difficult to read a manual it's kind of sad actually. I'm constantly ringing people up if I have a question in Pro Tools I'll ask them. I respond really well to having somebody there doing it. I think that there's so many ways to practice wrongly just going out of a book. So many little things that you can get wrong.

BC: Who would you say are you're biggest influences both overseas and in Australia?

JZ: It's really hard to say because I love them all. There are certain people that I transcribed a lot when I was coming up. Wilbur Ware was one of them, Paul Chambers of course and a couple of Ray Brown transcriptions. Lot's of Ron Carter. I really love what Ron Carter does, he seems to me to be pretty much the pinnacle of a certain kind of mainstream jazz playing. He was super groovy, like he had the funk. Super groovy but also highly intellectual about what he was doing and then of course he was shaped by the group that he was ultimately was in. I also love Jimmy Garrison. I love them all for different reasons Sam Jones I love, Charles Mingus I'm hugely influenced by Charles Mingus. Not so much as a bass player more as a harmonist. The bass players here I like them all for different reasons.

BC: Was there anyone in particular when you were starting?

JZ: I really admired Lloyd and watched Lloyd. For me how you play and individual style is shaped so much by finding your own way. I think I'm a very different person from Lloyd and I'm a very different player to Lloyd. One time Lloyd borrowed my bass and I had gut strings on it and we were in Wangaratta. He was playing with Bernie and he hadn't seen my bass or played it, I think he played it just a little bit before they went on stage. I was sitting with Steve Elphick in the audience and he comes on stage and plays with that trio, which you had to have a resolute kind of vibe to get anywhere within that trio, I mean you know. He did this killer solo on my bass with strings that were gut where he uses normally steel strings and not such a high action I think at that time but these were up you know. I just remember going you bastard! He's so good, he was so good and Steve and I were just looking at each other and just shaking our heads he was so happening. So whilst there were all these bass players around who I really admire, I don't aspire to be like them or play like them. I admire you and how you play. I love watching you play; I particularly like how you construct walking lines and how effortlessly you solo. That's something I'm going to ask you about later. Equally I really admire Phil Stack; I really admire Alex Boneham, and Craig for what he can do. I like them all. Brett he's great. I love the Melbourne bass players, I think they've got something really special and different, like Matt Clohesy. Phil Rex is just a giant as was Gary Costello, and Sam Anning. Love Sam Anning's playing. I feel very proud of the scene here and I think that we have gone about it as individuals and I think that really shows.

BC: Obviously you compose. Do you see this as an important aspect of being a jazz musician?

JZ: Yep. I mean obviously when you're improvising you're composing. If you're lucky enough to be in that moment when you're not aware of what you're playing and you're channeling something from some subliminal part of your brain or some higher source depending on how you look at it, because I think musicians are spiritual people. I tend to think of it as channeling some sort of energy from some incredible cows udder in the sky or something. Anyway if you're lucky enough to do that, and you hear it back, you've just played a whole lot of stuff you didn't even know you had in you, then I think that's writing on a very highly elevated level. I think that's what we aspire to do, but we are composers, improvising is composing.

Cameron Undy

Interview took place on Monday 18th February 2013

BC: So Cam I just want to start at the beginning. Can you just tell me how it was that you came to be a bass player?

CU: I suppose I had a deep love of music, which came from my mum and dad who had an incredible record collection of jazz and classical music. I was always interested in or had musical taste. I think I had that from my parents because of their passion for it. My sister played the guitar, so there were always guitars around the house and so I would always play those. She was very studied, she studied classical guitar and I could always listen to her practice. It was very easy for me to just go and pick up a guitar and play it. Then I think at about age 16 for Christmas my parents gave me an electric bass because my sister had said, "Give Cameron a bass". She wanted someone to play the bass with her while she played. She was probably sick of me stealing her guitars. I was just like, yeah great, now we've got a bass in the house and so I played that. We used to just swap around and play but I would often play the bass and I would just enjoy playing music no matter what it was really. In the end she had a drum kit as well, we used to enjoy playing the drum kit. We'd always be jamming. When I got to the end of high school and was wondering what I wanted to do with life, I decided that I wanted to go and study at the Conservatorium Of Music in Sydney, which is what my sister Fiona had gone and done before me. Because I couldn't read music at the time it was suggested to me that if I played the bass and auditioned on bass instead of guitar then I had a better chance of getting in. On top of that, if I auditioned on a double bass because there was so few of those then I had a

really good chance of getting in to study music after high school at a really high level. So I just mowed lawns and washed cars around the neighborhood and saved up and bought a double bass. As soon as I got it something really happened. Around the same time as I bought my first double bass I heard Charlie Haden on record and something just twigged in me. I just wanted to make that sound that he was making. So that was probably my first love of double bass really was Charlie Haden. As soon as I got my hands on a double bass even though it was maybe for the wrong reasons and thinking about getting into this tertiary institution, I stopped playing guitar, I stopped playing electric bass and all I wanted to do was play double bass. I became really driven to play that instrument. So I guess that's how I started.

BC: Did you seek out a teacher or did you not start to study formally till you went to the con? Even on electric bass did you have a teacher at first?

CU: Well I used to go out to gigs all the time. There was a bass player in Canberra who you would know Tony Hayes.

BC: He was my teacher.

CU: There you go. We never had a lesson. I'd go to every gig that he was playing pretty much.

BC: Great player.

CU: Yeah wonderful electric bass player. He also played a little bit of upright. I saw him play a little bit of upright bass but basically was a brilliant electric bassist and really interesting and quirky musician as well. Not like a straight up and down guy, he had really interesting taste. I would just watch and listen to him really closely. When I asked him for a lesson one time he said “no you don’t need a lesson from me mate you’ve been watching and listening to me”. I really wanted a lesson and he didn’t want to teach me. I ended up going to another guy for a couple of lessons. I think I went to one lesson with George Urbezcek when I first bought my double bass. I went to him for some double bass and that was about it. My audition at the con was literally two weeks after I bought the double bass. I practiced really hard and my sister, having already done the jazz course had shown me all the theory. I’d been playing jazz bass on the electric and watching Tony play. I’d already had a feel for that, so just getting the technique on the double bass, I had two weeks to do it before that audition. When it came down to harmony and theory and all that sort of stuff and walking bass lines; I already knew all that from my sister having done two years at the Conservatorium of Music whilst I was still at high school. So I had all that ear training stuff sort of covered.

BC: You obviously got into the con?

CU: I got into the con yeah.

BC: Were you studying with Craig Scott then?

CU: I was studying immediately with Craig Scott.

BC: So was he your first formal teacher.

CU: Absolutely. Fiona my sister was my teacher of the guitar and theory and technique I suppose and my dad who had studied flute had given me a lot of ideas about how to study and practice on any instrument. General principles on how to practice in a disciplined way. But yeah, Craig Scott was certainly my first.

BC: When you started getting formal lessons, did he get you to follow a bass method such as Simandl or Rabbath or anything like that?

CU: We talked a little bit about technique.

BC: You must have had some technical issues.

CU: Having only just started!

BC: Yeah, you know what I mean, hand positions etc.

CU: With my first double bass I was given the Simandl book and I was so keen, I was keen as mustard, so I really looked at it very seriously. I'd also been given Rufus Reid's *Evolving Bassist* very early on. I can't remember if it was before I saw Craig or around, it was very early on in fact it might have even been Craig who told me to get that book. My memory's quite foggy it's a long time ago but yeah, we certainly spoke about that. He helped me with how to get stance, you know just very basic

technique, but I think we moved on pretty quickly from the basics. I suppose he felt like I had a reasonable aptitude for the basics of how to hold it and that.

BC: Yep. But you definitely had checked out one of those method books?

CU: I had checked out Simandl yeah. I suppose Craig has quite a fluid approach. He uses Simandl but he has very relaxed technique so I went in for that idea of a very sort of relaxed soft hands I suppose you would say.

BC: Were you bowing at this point as well?

CU: Well I started study immediately in first year with Gray Reid who back then was the principal with the SSO. He was an older gentlemen and I would go around to his house once a week as part of the Conservatorium studies to learn bowing. Mike Nock had actually told me that I should be seriously bowing to get my tone and my sound. Craig backed that up he said to me, “good advice yeah”.

BC: So you were definitely studying classical bass from the beginning?

CU: I wouldn't say I was studying classical music or repertoire no. It was more just about the technique of getting the bow working and coordinating with the left hand and bow strokes. I think at that stage I was very headstrong and I kind of would just run with my own ideas a lot, but it was certainly good to have a solid grounding in bowing technique and I used to bow a lot. I used to bow a lot of long notes and scales

really slow, which were principles that my father had instilled in me, as to how to properly build a good solid basis of technique.

BC: Do you teach at all?

CU: I have over the years taught but at the moment I'm not teaching very much at all. I have a student maybe once every couple of months. I usually try to give them a whole bunch of information so that they can run away with it and do their thing.

BC: Do you encourage them to follow certain methods for example Simandl or anything like that?

CU: Yeah not particularly Simandl. Very early on at the con Francois Rabbath actually came and did a workshop master class, which I was very fortunate to be able to attend. I guess I was about 18 years old and so it was a very impressionable time for me. I'd only really been playing the bass six months and he hit us all with his technique, which was using four fingers and playing using each finger independently rather than 1-2-4. He'd use 1-2-3-4 and in two positions he was already in thumb position. On the G string It'd be G A with the first finger, B with the second, C with the third and D with the fourth finger and it was like whoa!

BC: Is that utilizing pivoting technique?

CU: Yeah pivoting. Or he'd go A with the first and B with the third. It's like you would play on an electric bass I suppose and the C [shows fourth finger] and then D

[shows first finger] E [shows second], F# [shows fourth] and then G so in two positions with the pivoting he was already in thumb position.

BC: I noticed in that email that you sent you mentioned that you've got your own version of that.

CU: Well yeah I guess I really went with that. I went that's great because I played guitar, I played electric bass and everything my sister had taught me about technique was the one finger per fret method you know, and that really appealed to me because I was kind of used to that and so I ran with that big time. I was like, yeah this is me, we use each finger independently and I did that for about a year and a half, two years. I saw a video of Dave Holland and at that point in my life Dave Holland was a huge influence, from listening to his music and his bass playing. I'd never actually seen Dave Holland and I saw this video and I realized that he was actually using 1-2-4 and his chops were blinding. The speed and the dexterity, the accuracy, intonation and everything were unbelievable and I was like, oh wow and his hand looked so relaxed. The thing about the Rabbath technique is that you can't have a spread grip. His whole thing was that you have a very loose hand so when you play each note, the hand just totally relaxes around that note, and then it's all in the pivot to the next note. So it sort of looked when he played, very fluid. He was using the joint in the thumb to give this sort of fluidity and had the fingers nailing these pitches you know with four-finger dexterity. Then I noticed that Holland seemed to have all that dexterity and fluidity just going 1-2-4 and I thought that was interesting. So I started to go back towards that idea of using the pivoting thumb to get that fluidity across and around in any particular position and not having a spread grip.

BC: I'll get you to show me that later yeah. It makes sense now because I've seen you play hundreds of times, I've often wondered about how you use you hand and yeah I've never asked you about it, so it's interesting.

CU: I spent maybe eighteen months or more really into the Rabbath thing, really into it you know. Bowing and re-fingering everything on the double bass to do with you know, four finger technique, independence and getting the most I could out of every position in terms of using the pivot. Then going back to the Dave Holland thing I realized or the Simandl thing, the 1-2-4 thing was that the tone he got and the strength, the strength of it much better. I felt that when I returned to that I got a deeper tone and groove out of it. With the Rabbath thing, even though you're not spreading the fingers you're sort of trying to do a lot. You're still trying to do a lot with your hands so kind of blending the fluidity of the thumb movement but keeping a kind of more solid hand not spreading it out. The thing is about spreading it is that you immediately add tension. Like the difference between that and that [demonstrates both hand positions] is huge, and I feel it through my thumb and you feel it in your wrist and these are where all your tendons are going. Something that I'll come to later is that the real speed and dexterity and fluidity comes from the speed of the tendons ability of the brain to speak to the hand and have the tendons do what you want them to do. It's not so much about muscle. As soon as you do this [demonstrates claw] you strain all the tendons and slow everything down. So that was my thing was to go from a Rabbath style thing back to Simandl via Dave Holland.

BC: You've already answered this a little bit but who were your main influences on the bass both in Australia and overseas?

CU: I guess Charlie Haden was the first love. The tone, the sound and the musicality of the instrument. Shortly thereafter without a doubt was Ron Carter because of my dad's record collection. He had albums like "My Funny Valentine" and "Four and More" and albums by McCoy Tyner on there with Reggie Workman who I loved. I already had all those sounds in my head even though I wasn't necessarily aware of it. So when I finally got into my own tastes in jazz, I realized I was already quite familiar with Paul Chambers, Ron Carter, Percy Heath, Oscar Pettiford and Reggie Workman. All these kinds of people who I already was really familiar with.

BC: You were raised on it.

CU: Kind of yeah but not aware of it.

BC: Pretty helpful.

CU: It was really helpful. But the real love I had came from Haden, Ron Carter and a little bit farther down the track actually early on I was very much into Eddie Gomez and George Mraz. They were very sort of fast and soloistic kind of players and there was something about that. I was into Eberhard Weber and all these ECM style of thing and Marc Johnson, Gary Peacock. I mean really anyone who was good.

BC: It's cool isn't it, it's before you're sort of told you're not meant to be into certain people isn't it? I was the same, almost anyone that played a bass!

CU: Yeah that's right I mean I certainly met certain attitudes when I started at the Conservatorium Of Music about you know, you should be listening to this.

BC: That's how I found it too when I moved to Sydney because it wasn't like that in Canberra. You were the same probably you know, it's a small town. It wasn't till I came to Sydney that people said, "You've gotta be listening to this". It's interesting isn't it?

CU: It is interesting. Not that that's bad. You come across strong attitudes and beliefs about what music is and I suppose through that, I mean I had to define myself when I moved to Sydney as well at the age of 18. I defined myself very much at that point I think through Charlie Haden, Ornette Coleman's music that was very powerful, very strong to me at that point. I suppose that brought into play people like Scott LaFaro.

BC: Jamaaladeen?

CU: Oh well Jamaaladeen Tacuma on bass yeah sure but I was thinking the other great bass player Jimmy Garrison.

BC: Oh of course!

CU: Who played with Ornette as well, so yeah. Getting into Coltrane's music as well, that was my passion. The real freedom with the way that Ron Carter played with Miles, Wayne, Herbie and Tony. Then a bit later Dave Holland was obviously influenced by someone like Ron Carter, and the history of the double bass.

BC: What about Australian players?

CU: Australian players. Well I was completely into Steve Elphick when I first arrived because he was the guy who was playing with Mark Simmons and The Freeboppers who were a huge influence on me. Being into free music like Ornette Coleman and that stuff that Mark was in to. Steve Elphick would be playing with people like Dave Addes and Mark Simmons, and then there was Lloyd of course. I mean Lloyd Swanton playing with what was the early days of The Necks, that was the very beginning of The Necks. Lloyd was really interesting to me, I didn't really understand what he was doing because he wasn't trying to play the bass like anybody else. It was like he had this very simplified approach, and I was kind of like "what's this all about" you know. Of course I knew straight away that his technique was just beautiful. Steve Elphick's technique was much more sort of, it was radical he had such big hands he's such a big man and I couldn't quite relate to how he'd get around the way he did. I just figured I was never going to be able to play the bass like that, but Steve had this incredible ability to just be everywhere and very melodic and very much an ensemble player. Really hard on himself as well, he's really trying to make it all work. I love that he's just such a passionate player and a very unusual technique because he's such a big fella. Lloyd's a big fella too but Lloyd's got a very Simandly technique, very soft hands though much like Craig which I always thought was great you know, and perfect intonation and technique. I wanted to aspire to that. Jonathan Zwartz was on occasion just unbelievable. I would just be in awe of listening to him because of what he could do. I would be like how can anyone play the bass like that? Those were I guess the three guys who were really influential to me early on in helping me to define what I wanted to do, because I also I didn't want to sound like

any of them. I've always had this passion to be different. I want to be myself and I felt like those three guys really defined that.

BC: Have you done much transcribing?

CU: Not a huge amount. When I was doing my masters degree I got serious about transcribing Paul Chambers, Charlie Haden and Dave Holland, but I think I probably transcribed two or three solos from each of them. Prior to that I had only really transcribed sections or a thing here and there not entire solos or I would listen to a Ron Carter bass line through a blues and figure it out.

BC: I was going to say, so you've done bass lines and solos as well?

CU: Yeah I guess I started out with that. I remember the first transcription I ever did was an Eddie Gomez solo on a Steps Ahead album. It was just a one-chord thing, it was in G minor and he was just blistering on it. I came back and went "maybe I need to learn some more simple things". Working out the bass lines that people like Ron was playing. Oscar Pettiford I loved and Paul Chambers was always really curious to me. Listen to those Coltrane albums and those lines. He had such an incredibly wily way of getting through changes that still swung so hard and yet wasn't like he was sort of Percy Heath kind of approach which was a bit more easy to kind of grasp in a way. It was like the Chambers thing was so wily and crafty and yet still so strong. So yeah, I was transcribing bass lines and just listening a lot really. I would never write the stuff down, I'd just sort of play along with it figure it out but the pen would never come out. Actual transcribing no.

BC: Now obviously I know that you've composed a lot. Do you feel that composition and playing original music is an important aspect of being a jazz musician?

CU: Yeah. I mean there are certainly some great musicians out there who probably aren't known for composing so for them it may not necessarily be an essential part of it. For me, I remember from the very first time I started playing music, I started to have my own ideas and want to communicate them and write them down and remember them. I guess because I wasn't that schooled I was just kind of picking up the guitar around the house and just playing them and going off what I was hearing my sister do and what I was doing on record. I was just figuring it out rather than going straight into a formal lesson. My early learning was very much just about discovering a sound I like. I would go to my sister and say, "can you show me how to write this down on paper so that I can remember it?" So she showed me notation. It would take me forever to notate stuff then I'd go "is that right?" She'd go and correct it and go "no you've got to do this and you'll need a key signature for this one, this is how a key signature works" and whatever. So my early development of theory and technique was very much driven in a way by my desire to compose. I've always written stuff down and composed, so for me it's almost they're one in the same.

BC: You were probably already composing before you knew you were composing in a way. Just mucking around and going, that sounds good, and not doing it in a formal way maybe.

CU: Not at all!

Alex Boneham

Interview took place on Friday 18th January 2013

BC: Ok so lets start at the beginning Alex. How and why did you take up the bass?

AB: So I played electric bass in primary school.

BC: How old were you?

AB: 9 when I started that, so year three in the school music program. It was Hornsby Heights Public School and we had a good charismatic band conductor called Steve Wells and he just (sic). I chose electric bass because one of my brother's friends played and I thought it was pretty cool. Then I went through some extra curricula jazz things through the end of primary school and into high school and that just pretty much led to double bass.

BC: Did you have a teacher from the beginning? When you first started?

AB: I had the local electric bass and guitar teacher in my suburb David McMahon and he was great. There were a few things that stuck from those days because he was into playing along with Paul Chambers and Ray Brown.

BC: That's pretty cool!

AB: He had a few little things that he would always say like “listen to Ray and Paul Chambers and listen to the difference”. He was really into picking between those two bass players. So that was cool.

BC: He was getting you into jazz from the very beginning.

AB: Yeah I don't know whether I would have been doing that when I was 9. That might have been year six, year seven you know, when I was at the end of my time with him. I picked up double when I was about 15. I think it was year nine in high school because the bass became free. The previous bass player at the school left because there was only one, one bass. It wasn't a music school at all, it was an academic school. When I got the bass I started looking around for a teacher. I had a teacher for a brief while that wasn't great and then I saw Ashley Turner play. Actually Ashley and Craig Scott, I saw them both on the same night at one of John Morrison's jazz camps I mean I probably saw you there too.

BC: Yeah maybe.

AB: I saw them both on the same night. I must have gone home and said I want to get double bass lessons and my parents said “alright you can choose between those two guys you saw”. I was like “hmm, Craig or Ashley?” You know, it's just funny. I ended up learning from Craig in the end but I went to Ashley first maybe because he was younger or lived at the beach, thought that was cool!

BC: Did he teach you a particular method? You know there's Simandl, there's Rabbath, there's Rufus Reid, Bob Haggart. Did you learn from any of those?

AB: I definitely did Simandl from the very start. That wasn't before Ashley, the double bass thing started with Ashley really in terms of technique.

BC: He got you onto Simandl?

AB: He drew heavily from Simandl. He had just gotten back from studying with Ron Carter. He had all the hand written exercises; it was all so fresh in his mind. So a lot of Ron stuff on constructing bass lines and things like that. I think he made me buy Simandl the first day you know.

BC: Were you already reading?

AB: Yeah because we went through playing electric bass in the concert band. You know, you play concert band for the first couple of years so you're reading like say "George Of The Jungle", and then you start playing in stage bands. Up until then I was playing double bass more in small groups. I'd been playing in big bands for years so I was pretty confident reading by then.

BC: Do you think studying Simandl was that important in your development?

AB: Definitely. I mean now days I'm aware that it's not the be all and end all you know. It's someone's take on how to play bass but I think it's so successful.

BC: Were you bowing at this point?

AB: Not really no.

BC: He getting you to pizz it was he?

AB: I can't really remember. I was still kind of young and new to the bass so it wasn't hardcore like hand shape practice. It was more like "ok this is how you get around the bass, this is how you play things and this is how you get around tunes and play changes". I think Ash was really good, he got me really interested in thinking seriously about playing jazz but not bowing or hand shapes. That came later for me.

BC: Do you teach?

AB: Only one off lessons when I'm not in Sydney.

BC: Do you pull out the Simandl book and teach from a method?

AB: Yeah definitely. I mean most of them have already used it. I'm amazed at how it's so universal.

BC: It really is yeah.

AB: Yeah. I sometimes question whether that's right, that it's got such a monopoly. I'm not sure because I've never really studied anything else in the same depth. I've

had a little resurgence lately of going back to trying to keep my hand shape a bit more solid. You know you get in and out of it, check out a bit of Rabbath, get a little looser and kind of come back in. So yeah, I definitely still, especially people whose intonation is a bit of a problem I definitely get them thinking about the idea of if your hand shape doesn't falter you're cool for a certain amount of time.

BC: Sure. With bowing you play German bow, how did that come about? All your teachers are French bow players.

AB: Yeah I know. I probably should have when I realized that, when all my teachers with the French bow you know on the first day just gone "oh I should do that". I think I just, I mean it was obviously from just watching videos of Paul Chambers. I'd assume that was on some subconscious level that would have been; you know I thought it was cool. Everything starts with thinking something's cool I reckon. Also when I got to the con in first year I was learning off Craig who obviously plays French. Then the next year I think I started with Alex Henery as well and he's French. In first year I also met one of the other student bass players in the classical course and we became quite good friends, Joe Bissets. He played German. He's from Newcastle, there's some teacher up there I'm not sure who and he gave me a whole bunch of tips to get it moving and I kind of liked it and I liked hanging out with him.

BC: Yeah right that's interesting man, that's cool.

AB: Then none of like Alex and Kees, neither of them played, like they both play German bow better than I ever will so it was probably fun for them to try and teach German bow.

BC: What would you say are the major factors in your development as a bass player? Like is there anyone that you studied with in particular?

AB: Yeah there are some really clear points for me. Obviously meeting Ashley and starting up that routine of going to him every week. It was a massive journey. No one else I knew would do that. I used to leave school like leave sport. Maybe I even skipped sport I think to get to my lessons with him which is probably bad in hindsight because I gained a lot of weight. I used to have to go and catch a train on two lines and then meet my mum and drive out to the northern beaches. So meeting Ashley and then getting into the con. Craig just drilling me on a few things and sorting me out. The biggest ones would be definitely when I started doing classical bass and the bow and that. Everything lifted up a considerable notch straight away, like intonation wise. Then I've had a few American jazz superstar lessons, maybe ten in my time and each of those is pretty clear. It's really changed me each one.

BC: So have you done a lot of classical study? Like repertoire and stuff like that?

AB: Yeah not so much in that kind of thing. It's always just been getting the fundamentals together. I think I was not the best student but it still had such a great impact that I'm so happy I did it and I hope they were happy that they had me. I have a bit of repertoire that I can play. I still do but I'm pretty limited, that's definitely

something on the list to go do. Like I said, I met some of the other bass players in my year when I was at the con, and it's serious. They put all their time into this, and playing repertoire and I knew I didn't have that time. I didn't want to make that time and stop doing gigs just to like play repertoire. It didn't seem right so I don't know if I'll ever get to that.

BC: Who would you say your main influences are on the bass?

AB: Well this is going to be a bit embarrassing. You obviously.

BC: Oh well that's cool!

AB: Cameron and JZ and Ashley would be the ones that I probably saw the most of in the early days. Stack, I saw Phil Stack a lot. I never really honed in on one Australian bass player as far as the whole emulation thing. I don't know whether it was because by the time I got to that desire I had access to CD's and probably just pre You Tube (sic). You know videos and DVD's. So you know, I think I just went straight there. In a way I'm a bit sad about it because I kind of think that I'm not straight out of the like, I never molded myself on another Aussie bass player. In America definitely Ray Brown and Paul Chambers for many years in high school, that's all I would have listened to. Then Larry Grenadier, definitely with that extra-added advantage of being able to meet them and study with them. You already know their playing so well from a video or something, you know CD's and then you can meet them and you can ask them questions about that. That was just it, just really ties it all in for me.

BC: So you did some study with Larry Grenadier?

AB: Yeah. So the guys out of that would be like Larry, Ben Street and Matt Penman. They're probably the biggest influences of the modern guys for me. Actually Matt Brewer in the last few years, he's definitely the one of sort of yeah (sic). They're the main guys for me.

BC: Do you transcribe much?

AB: Yeah. I haven't been in the last few weeks but it's been a strange few weeks you know.

BC: Do you transcribe whole solos or do you just take bits?

AB: I always get off on the idea of starting it and I'm going to make it perfect because there's not a lot in my life I can do. It's cool to have something you can start and finish. That's somewhat perfect in that, there's a definable start and end, so yeah I've had a lot of fun doing but I wouldn't have done that many solos on that same intensity. Lately I've gotten into more just taking you know, a line, just getting snippets out of a solo more to just conserve time. Bits that I actually like and then seeing well how does that work.

BC: Take it around the cycle and things like that? Try it in other keys?

AB: I'm probably not the most disciplined with the taking it around the cycle thing.

BC: What about bass lines as well, do you transcribe bass lines?

AB: I haven't done that much of that. That's something that I'm kind of sad about and it's something that needs to change, but I'd like to yeah. I'd like to think that I can listen pretty well. Yeah and obviously little bits in bass lines, you hear it and its just like ooh.

BC: Do you compose?

AB: Not in any kind of, I don't have a band. It's definitely part of, its built into my practice now. It's not like I'm going to sit down at this time and compose because I don't have a band to compose for or a deadline or anything so I don't have that pressure. It definitely always gets there when I'm playing with something and you've got some sound you like and I think, "How does that work?"

BC: So you feel that that's an important part of being a jazz musician?

AB: Yeah. I was talking to somebody about this the other day and I think it's a really good way of exploring sounds and harmony because you're one step closer to it, you're kind of making it. But yeah, there'll be more of that. I hope.

APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANT PRACTICAL EXAMPLES

Craig Scott

Figure 1.1- Left hand pivot exercise in keeping fingers moving across the fingerboard together.

The image displays three staves of musical notation for a left hand pivot exercise. Each staff is in 4/4 time and contains eight measures of music. The notes are grouped in pairs, indicating a pivot exercise where fingers move together across the fingerboard.

- 4th finger:** The notes are G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. The first four notes have flats (b) and the last four have sharps (#).
- 2nd finger:** The notes are G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. The first four notes have sharps (#) and the last four have flats (b).
- 1st finger:** The notes are G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. The first four notes have flats (b) and the last four have sharps (#).

Figure 1.2 - Chromatic scale shifting exercise.

The exercise consists of six staves of music in 4/4 time, all in bass clef. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The notes are chromatic, moving in eighth-note patterns. The first four staves show ascending and descending chromatic runs with various fingering techniques. The fifth and sixth staves show more complex patterns, including slurs and accents.

Fingering numbers for the six staves are as follows:

- Staff 1: 0 1 2 4-1 1 1 2 4-1 2 2 2 4-1 2 4 4 4-1 2 4 1 1 1 2 4-1 2 2
- Staff 2: 2 4-1 2 4 4 4-1 2 4-1 1 1 2 4-1 2 2 2 4-1 2 3 4
- Staff 3: 4-1 2 3 1 1 1 2 3 -1 2 2 2 3 -1 2 3 3
- Staff 4: 3 2 1-3 2 2 2 1-3 2 1 1 1-3 2 1-4 3 3 2 1-4 2 2
- Staff 5: 2 1-4 2 1 1 1-4 2 1-4 4 4 2 1-4 2 2 2 1-4 2 1 1
- Staff 6: 1-4 2 1-4 4 4 2 1-4 2 2 2 1-4 2 1 1 1-4 2 1 0

Figure 1.3 - Major scale glissando exercise 1st finger.

The exercise consists of two staves of music in 4/4 time, both in bass clef. The key signature is two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The notes are held as half notes, and the exercise focuses on glissando movements (indicated by arrows) using the first finger.

Fingering numbers for the two staves are as follows:

- Staff 1: 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1
- Staff 2: 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1

Figure 1.4 - Major scale glissando exercise 2nd finger.

Figure 1.5 – Major scale glissando exercise 4th finger.

Figure 1.6 – Major scale glissando exercise 1st & 2nd fingers.

Figure 1.7 – Major scale glissando exercise 2nd & 4th fingers.

Figure 1.8 – Thumb position Bb geometry exercise.

Bb Major Scale

Bb Aeolian Scale

Figure 1.9 – Thumb position A geometry exercise.

A Major Scale

A Aeolian Scale

Figure 1.10 – Thumb position C geometry exercise.

C Major Scale

C Aeolian Scale

Figure 1.11 – Left hand fingering for G major 7 and G minor 7 two-octave arpeggios.

Figure 1.12 – Metronome rhythm pyramid to be practiced at 80 BPM firstly then slowly increase tempo.

Fig 1.12

Figure 1.13 – Two feel practice with metronome playing root notes only over chord changes of “I’ve Never Been In Love Before”.

Fig 1.13

Figure 1.13 shows two staves of bass clef music in 4/4 time. The first staff contains measures 1-4 with chords Fmaj7, Dm7, Gm7, C7, Am7, Bb7, Am7, and D7. The second staff contains measures 5-8 with chords Gm7, C7, Am7, D7, Gm7, and C7.

Figures 1.14 – Two feel practice with metronome playing thirds only.

Figures 1.14 shows two staves of bass clef music in 4/4 time. The first staff contains measures 1-4 with chords Fmaj7, Dm7, Gm7, C7, Am7, Bb7, Am7, and D7. The second staff contains measures 5-8 with chords Gm7, C7, Fmaj7, Dm7, Gm7, and C7.

Lloyd Swanton

Figure 2.1 – Arco shifting exercise.

□ V □ V □ V □ V etc.
1 1 2 2 1 1 2 2 1 1 2 2 *fingering continues*

Figure 2.2 – Arco shifting with slur.

Fig 2.2 □ V ← □ V → □ V ← □ V → Etc.
1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2

Figure 2.3 – Arco major scale in thirds.

□ V □ V □ V simile

Figure 2.4 – Arco major scales in sevenths.

□ V □ V simile

Figure 2.5 – Chromatic scale up the E string.

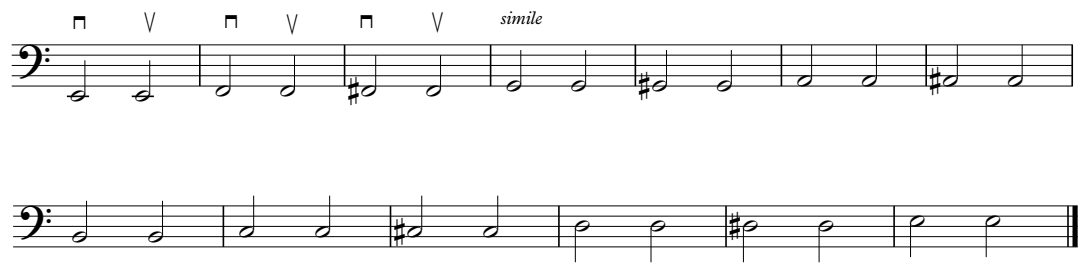


Figure 2.6 – Double-stops in thirds.



Figure 2.7 & 2.8 – Chromatic trills slurred then each note articulated.

Fig 2.7

The figure consists of five staves of musical notation, each representing a different chromatic trill exercise. Each staff begins with a square box symbol (□) above the first note, indicating a slur. The notes are quarter notes, and the trills are slurred across the entire staff. Below each staff, the fingering is indicated by numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, and the text "fingering continues" or "etc.".

Staff 1: *T 1 T 1 fingering continues*

Staff 2: *1 2 1 2 fingering continues.*

Staff 3: *2 3 2 3 etc.*

Staff 4: *1 2 1 2 etc.*

Staff 5: *2 4 2 4 etc.*

Fig 2.8

Fig 2.8 consists of three staves of musical notation in bass clef. The first staff shows a sequence of notes with fingering 'T 1 T 1 etc.' and bowing directions 'V' (upbow) and 'v' (downbow). The second staff shows a similar sequence with fingering '1 2 1 2 etc.' and bowing directions 'V' and 'v'. The third staff shows a sequence with fingering '2 3 2 3 etc.' and bowing directions 'V' and 'v'. The word 'simile' is written above the second and third staves.

Figures 2.9 & 2.10 – Pizzicato cross string exercises.

Fig 2.9

Fig 2.9 is a musical exercise in bass clef, 4/4 time, consisting of a single staff. It features a sequence of eighth notes across four measures, with a double bar line at the end.

Fig 2.10

Fig 2.10 is a musical exercise in bass clef, consisting of a single staff. It features a sequence of eighth notes across four measures, with a double bar line at the end.

Figure 2.11 – Cross string sweep exercise with right hand fingering variations.

Figure 2.11 is a musical exercise in bass clef, consisting of a single staff. It features a sequence of eighth notes across four measures, with a double bar line at the end. Below the staff, the right hand fingering variations are indicated: 1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2, 2 1 2 1 2 1 2 1, 1 2 1 2 1 1 1 1, and 2 1 2 1 2 2 2 2.

Figure 2.12 – Octaves descending chromatically.

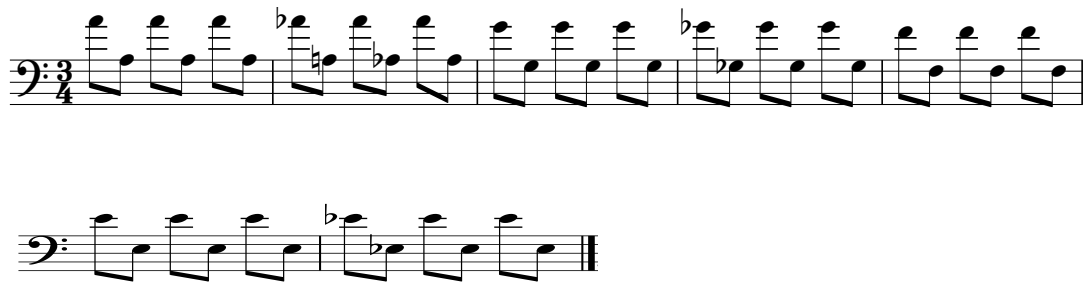


Figure 2.13 – Octaves descending in whole tones.



Figure 2.14 – Octaves descending in minor thirds.



Figure 2.15 – Tremolando exercise.



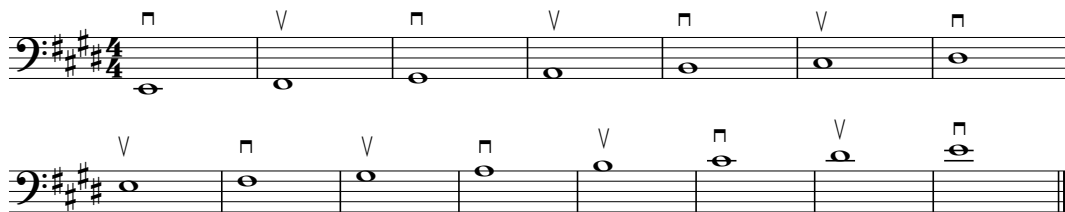
Figure 2.16 – Tremolando in octaves.

Fig 2.16



Jonathan Zwartz

Figure 3.1 – Arco two octave E major scale played at varied dynamic levels from *piano* to *forte*.



3.2 – Pizzicato open string exercise to be played with a metronome firstly at 80 BPM and then faster and slower tempos.

The musical score consists of seven staves in 4/4 time. The first two staves show quarter notes and eighth notes. The third staff features eighth-note triplets. The fourth and fifth staves feature quarter-note triplets. The sixth and seventh staves feature sixteenth-note triplets. Each staff begins with a repeat sign and ends with a double bar line.

Figure 3.3 – Clapping exercise with metronome spelling out triplets.

Metronome

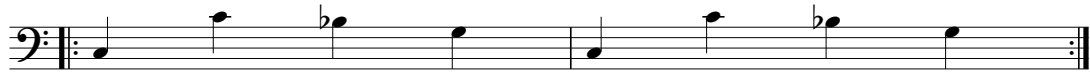
Hand claps

The metronome exercise consists of two staves. The first staff shows eighth-note triplets with a '3' above each group. The second staff shows eighth-note triplets with a '3' above each group and a 'z' (representing a clap) below each note.

Figure 3.4 – Triplet exercise to be played along with metronome spelling out triplets.

The musical notation is in bass clef and shows eighth-note triplets. The first triplet consists of notes G, A, B. The second triplet consists of notes A, B, C. The third triplet consists of notes B, C, D. The fourth triplet consists of notes C, D, E. The fifth triplet consists of notes D, E, F. The sixth triplet consists of notes E, F, G. The seventh triplet consists of notes F, G, A. The eighth triplet consists of notes G, A, B. The ninth triplet consists of notes A, B, C. The tenth triplet consists of notes B, C, D. The eleventh triplet consists of notes C, D, E. The twelfth triplet consists of notes D, E, F. The thirteenth triplet consists of notes E, F, G. The fourteenth triplet consists of notes F, G, A. The fifteenth triplet consists of notes G, A, B. The sixteenth triplet consists of notes A, B, C. The seventeenth triplet consists of notes B, C, D. The eighteenth triplet consists of notes C, D, E. The nineteenth triplet consists of notes D, E, F. The twentieth triplet consists of notes E, F, G. The twenty-first triplet consists of notes F, G, A. The twenty-second triplet consists of notes G, A, B. The twenty-third triplet consists of notes A, B, C. The twenty-fourth triplet consists of notes B, C, D. The twenty-fifth triplet consists of notes C, D, E. The twenty-sixth triplet consists of notes D, E, F. The twenty-seventh triplet consists of notes E, F, G. The twenty-eighth triplet consists of notes F, G, A. The twenty-ninth triplet consists of notes G, A, B. The thirtieth triplet consists of notes A, B, C. The thirty-first triplet consists of notes B, C, D. The thirty-second triplet consists of notes C, D, E. The thirty-third triplet consists of notes D, E, F. The thirty-fourth triplet consists of notes E, F, G. The thirty-fifth triplet consists of notes F, G, A. The thirty-sixth triplet consists of notes G, A, B. The thirty-seventh triplet consists of notes A, B, C. The thirty-eighth triplet consists of notes B, C, D. The thirty-ninth triplet consists of notes C, D, E. The fortieth triplet consists of notes D, E, F. The forty-first triplet consists of notes E, F, G. The forty-second triplet consists of notes F, G, A. The forty-third triplet consists of notes G, A, B. The forty-fourth triplet consists of notes A, B, C. The forty-fifth triplet consists of notes B, C, D. The forty-sixth triplet consists of notes C, D, E. The forty-seventh triplet consists of notes D, E, F. The forty-eighth triplet consists of notes E, F, G. The forty-ninth triplet consists of notes F, G, A. The fiftieth triplet consists of notes G, A, B. The fifty-first triplet consists of notes A, B, C. The fifty-second triplet consists of notes B, C, D. The fifty-third triplet consists of notes C, D, E. The fifty-fourth triplet consists of notes D, E, F. The fifty-fifth triplet consists of notes E, F, G. The fifty-sixth triplet consists of notes F, G, A. The fifty-seventh triplet consists of notes G, A, B. The fifty-eighth triplet consists of notes A, B, C. The fifty-ninth triplet consists of notes B, C, D. The sixtieth triplet consists of notes C, D, E. The sixty-first triplet consists of notes D, E, F. The sixty-second triplet consists of notes E, F, G. The sixty-third triplet consists of notes F, G, A. The sixty-fourth triplet consists of notes G, A, B. The sixty-fifth triplet consists of notes A, B, C. The sixty-sixth triplet consists of notes B, C, D. The sixty-seventh triplet consists of notes C, D, E. The sixty-eighth triplet consists of notes D, E, F. The sixty-ninth triplet consists of notes E, F, G. The seventieth triplet consists of notes F, G, A. The seventy-first triplet consists of notes G, A, B. The seventy-second triplet consists of notes A, B, C. The seventy-third triplet consists of notes B, C, D. The seventy-fourth triplet consists of notes C, D, E. The seventy-fifth triplet consists of notes D, E, F. The seventy-sixth triplet consists of notes E, F, G. The seventy-seventh triplet consists of notes F, G, A. The seventy-eighth triplet consists of notes G, A, B. The seventy-ninth triplet consists of notes A, B, C. The eightieth triplet consists of notes B, C, D. The eighty-first triplet consists of notes C, D, E. The eighty-second triplet consists of notes D, E, F. The eighty-third triplet consists of notes E, F, G. The eighty-fourth triplet consists of notes F, G, A. The eighty-fifth triplet consists of notes G, A, B. The eighty-sixth triplet consists of notes A, B, C. The eighty-seventh triplet consists of notes B, C, D. The eighty-eighth triplet consists of notes C, D, E. The eighty-ninth triplet consists of notes D, E, F. The ninetieth triplet consists of notes E, F, G. The hundredth triplet consists of notes F, G, A. The hundred and first triplet consists of notes G, A, B. The hundred and second triplet consists of notes A, B, C. The hundred and third triplet consists of notes B, C, D. The hundred and fourth triplet consists of notes C, D, E. The hundred and fifth triplet consists of notes D, E, F. The hundred and sixth triplet consists of notes E, F, G. The hundred and seventh triplet consists of notes F, G, A. The hundred and eighth triplet consists of notes G, A, B. The hundred and ninth triplet consists of notes A, B, C. The hundred and tenth triplet consists of notes B, C, D. The hundred and eleventh triplet consists of notes C, D, E. The hundred and twelfth triplet consists of notes D, E, F. The hundred and thirteenth triplet consists of notes E, F, G. The hundred and fourteenth triplet consists of notes F, G, A. The hundred and fifteenth triplet consists of notes G, A, B. The hundred and sixteenth triplet consists of notes A, B, C. The hundred and seventeenth triplet consists of notes B, C, D. The hundred and eighteenth triplet consists of notes C, D, E. The hundred and nineteenth triplet consists of notes D, E, F. The hundred and twentieth triplet consists of notes E, F, G. The hundred and twenty-first triplet consists of notes F, G, A. The hundred and twenty-second triplet consists of notes G, A, B. The hundred and twenty-third triplet consists of notes A, B, C. The hundred and twenty-fourth triplet consists of notes B, C, D. The hundred and twenty-fifth triplet consists of notes C, D, E. The hundred and twenty-sixth triplet consists of notes D, E, F. The hundred and twenty-seventh triplet consists of notes E, F, G. The hundred and twenty-eighth triplet consists of notes F, G, A. The hundred and twenty-ninth triplet consists of notes G, A, B. The hundred and thirtieth triplet consists of notes A, B, C. The hundred and thirty-first triplet consists of notes B, C, D. The hundred and thirty-second triplet consists of notes C, D, E. The hundred and thirty-third triplet consists of notes D, E, F. The hundred and thirty-fourth triplet consists of notes E, F, G. The hundred and thirty-fifth triplet consists of notes F, G, A. The hundred and thirty-sixth triplet consists of notes G, A, B. The hundred and thirty-seventh triplet consists of notes A, B, C. The hundred and thirty-eighth triplet consists of notes B, C, D. The hundred and thirty-ninth triplet consists of notes C, D, E. The hundred and fortieth triplet consists of notes D, E, F. The hundred and forty-first triplet consists of notes E, F, G. The hundred and forty-second triplet consists of notes F, G, A. The hundred and forty-third triplet consists of notes G, A, B. The hundred and forty-fourth triplet consists of notes A, B, C. The hundred and forty-fifth triplet consists of notes B, C, D. The hundred and forty-sixth triplet consists of notes C, D, E. The hundred and forty-seventh triplet consists of notes D, E, F. The hundred and forty-eighth triplet consists of notes E, F, G. The hundred and forty-ninth triplet consists of notes F, G, A. The hundred and fiftieth triplet consists of notes G, A, B. The hundred and fifty-first triplet consists of notes A, B, C. The hundred and fifty-second triplet consists of notes B, C, D. The hundred and fifty-third triplet consists of notes C, D, E. The hundred and fifty-fourth triplet consists of notes D, E, F. The hundred and fifty-fifth triplet consists of notes E, F, G. The hundred and fifty-sixth triplet consists of notes F, G, A. The hundred and fifty-seventh triplet consists of notes G, A, B. The hundred and fifty-eighth triplet consists of notes A, B, C. The hundred and fifty-ninth triplet consists of notes B, C, D. The hundred and sixtieth triplet consists of notes C, D, E. The hundred and sixty-first triplet consists of notes D, E, F. The hundred and sixty-second triplet consists of notes E, F, G. The hundred and sixty-third triplet consists of notes F, G, A. The hundred and sixty-fourth triplet consists of notes G, A, B. The hundred and sixty-fifth triplet consists of notes A, B, C. The hundred and sixty-sixth triplet consists of notes B, C, D. The hundred and sixty-seventh triplet consists of notes C, D, E. The hundred and sixty-eighth triplet consists of notes D, E, F. The hundred and sixty-ninth triplet consists of notes E, F, G. The hundred and seventieth triplet consists of notes F, G, A. The hundred and seventy-first triplet consists of notes G, A, B. The hundred and seventy-second triplet consists of notes A, B, C. The hundred and seventy-third triplet consists of notes B, C, D. The hundred and seventy-fourth triplet consists of notes C, D, E. The hundred and seventy-fifth triplet consists of notes D, E, F. The hundred and seventy-sixth triplet consists of notes E, F, G. The hundred and seventy-seventh triplet consists of notes F, G, A. The hundred and seventy-eighth triplet consists of notes G, A, B. The hundred and seventy-ninth triplet consists of notes A, B, C. The hundred and eightieth triplet consists of notes B, C, D. The hundred and eighty-first triplet consists of notes C, D, E. The hundred and eighty-second triplet consists of notes D, E, F. The hundred and eighty-third triplet consists of notes E, F, G. The hundred and eighty-fourth triplet consists of notes F, G, A. The hundred and eighty-fifth triplet consists of notes G, A, B. The hundred and eighty-sixth triplet consists of notes A, B, C. The hundred and eighty-seventh triplet consists of notes B, C, D. The hundred and eighty-eighth triplet consists of notes C, D, E. The hundred and eighty-ninth triplet consists of notes D, E, F. The hundred and ninetieth triplet consists of notes E, F, G. The hundred and ninety-first triplet consists of notes F, G, A. The hundred and ninety-second triplet consists of notes G, A, B. The hundred and ninety-third triplet consists of notes A, B, C. The hundred and ninety-fourth triplet consists of notes B, C, D. The hundred and ninety-fifth triplet consists of notes C, D, E. The hundred and ninety-sixth triplet consists of notes D, E, F. The hundred and ninety-seventh triplet consists of notes E, F, G. The hundred and ninety-eighth triplet consists of notes F, G, A. The hundred and ninety-ninth triplet consists of notes G, A, B. The two hundredth triplet consists of notes A, B, C.

Figure 3.5 – ¼ note exercise to be played along with metronome spelling out triplets.



Cameron Undy

Figure 4.1 – three-finger pizzicato warm up.

Right Hand 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3

The musical notation is in bass clef with a 3/4 time signature. It consists of a single line of music with six measures. Each measure contains a triplet of eighth notes. The notes in the six measures are: E2, F2, G2; A2, B2, C3; D3, E3, F3; G3, A3, B3; C4, D4, E4; F4, G4, A4. The notes are beamed together in groups of three.

Figure 4.2 – Arco long tones chromatic scale up the E string.

bowing continues

The musical notation is in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. It consists of two staves. The top staff has six measures of music, each with a square bowing symbol above the first note and a 'v' symbol above the second note. The notes are: E2, F2, G2, A2, B2, C3. The bottom staff has six measures of music, each with a square bowing symbol above the first note and a 'v' symbol above the second note. The notes are: D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3. The notes are beamed together in pairs.

Figure 4.3 – Arco long tones and permutations' of lowest four notes on the bass.

The musical notation is in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. It consists of a single line of music with six measures. Each measure has a square bowing symbol above the first note and a 'v' symbol above the second note. The notes in the six measures are: E2, F2; E2, G2; E2, A2; E2, B2; E2, C3; E2, D3. The notes are beamed together in pairs.

Figure 4.4 – Arco long tones minor third intervals played chromatically up E string.

The musical notation is in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. It consists of a single line of music with six measures. Each measure has a square bowing symbol above the first note and a 'v' symbol above the second note. The notes in the six measures are: E2, G2; F2, A2; G2, B2; A2, C3; B2, D3; C3, E3. The notes are beamed together in pairs.

Figure 4.8 – G major scale exercise demonstrating *Rabbath* method of moving through the fingerboard.

Figure 4.9 – Metronome timing exercise subdividing every bar.

Figure 4.10 – Twelve bar blues alternating every two bars with $\frac{1}{4}$ notes and groupings of five.

Alex Boneham

Figure 5.1 – Major Scale Long Note Warm-Ups (Arco)

Figure 5.2: Two Octave Arpeggios Utilizing Open Strings

Figure 5.3-5.5: Hexatonic scale exercises

Fig 5.3

Fig 5.4

Fig 5.5

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