INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

Kurt Rosenwinkel has become a household name in jazz, and is considered to be one of those guitarists at the forefront of what AllMusic.com's Matt Collar calls "genre-bending jazz". He has been said to be "like Miles Davis...too impatient to stand in one place for too long," and that "his brilliant, curious mind will not be constrained to recreating his past successes." While Rosenwinkel has lead many different kinds of ensembles, he does self-title one of them, "Post-jazz Sonic Trio", which perhaps offers insight into not only *his own* acknowledgement of the parameters and stereotypes within jazz, as is it thought of today, but also his conscious awareness of how his approach may offer differences. Even Pat Metheny has stated that he "admire[s] the musician... who transcend[s] the everyday issues of style and idiom, such is Kurt Rosenwinkel – a thinking guitarist who is working hard to come up with answers that meet his own personal criteria of what music is and what music can be."

Rosenwinkel's first album as a leader, *East Coast Love Affair*, debuted on the Fresh Sound/New Talent label in 1996, shortly followed by *Intuit* on Criss Cross in 1998. Kurt was 26 and 28 respectively, and Collar states that "these were intimate, warmly performed standards albums that showcased the guitarist's growing creativity and knack for harmonically rich improvisation." Out of the 18 tracks that comprise those two albums, 14 of them were standards, but, it wouldn't be long before the guitarist would start to push the limits of his own musical conception, and perhaps the way others saw it, as well.

¹ Matt Collar, "Artist Biography," AllMusic, Accessed April 8, 2018, https://www.allmusic.com/artist/kurt-rosenwinkel-mn0000115399/biography.

² Ginger Morawski, "Vermont Jazz Center Presents: Kurt Rosenwinkel and Bandit 65 – IPutney," Accessed April 8, 2018, https://iputney.com/vermont-jazz-center-presents-kurt-rosenwinkel-and-bandit-65/

³ Morawski, "Vermont Jazz Center Presents: Kurt Rosenwinkel and Bandit 65 – IPutney."

⁴ Collar, "Artist Biography".

2 years later, Rosenwinkel's 3rd album, *The Enemies of Energy*, would be released on Verve; a label which is home to hundreds of some of the most well innovative names in jazz for the past 60 years. David Adler, an album reviewer for *All About Jazz*, professes that it was even "Rosenwinkel's *intention* (italics mine)...to make music that transcended the ordinary parameters of jazz, and [that he] certainly succeeded." Adler also adds that "none of [the] tunes [on the album] are constructed as mere blowing vehicles. Solos are often brief, framed by arranged ensemble passages." He even goes on to relay that "there's barely any improvisation at all on the opening title track, as well as on 'Hope and Fear' (another track on the album). The format that predominates on so many jazz recordings—head, solo rotation, head, out—is seldom heard on this one."

We are already getting an idea that Rosenwinkel's 3rd album as a leader, includes elements undeniably reminiscent of those found in the music of quite a few post-bop records of the 60's. "He sometimes writes multi sectioned tunes," says *Cleveland Scene*'s reviewer Carlo Wolff, "and employs varied rhythms derived from sources ranging from Brazilian to R&B within one piece"; the later traits perhaps being reminiscent of Herbie Hancock or Chick Corea's inclusion of non-jazz grooves and rhythms in certain tunes. To boot, Collar states that *The Enemies of Energy*, along with the three others under Kurt's name that were released within a 5 year period of each other, are "primarily centered on Rosenwinkel's original compositions, [and that] these albums detailed his highly inventive approach to *post-bop jazz* (italics mine)."

⁵ David Adler, "Kurt Rosenwinkel: The Enemies of Energy," All About Jazz, Accessed April 8, 2018, https://www.allaboutjazz.com/the-enemies-of-energy-kurt-rosenwinkel-verve-music-group-review-by-david-adler.php.

⁶ Collar, "Artist Biography".

For the purposes of this paper I have selected 1 composition from the *The Enemies of Energy* to analyze under the lense of a post-bop observer; in that I will be examining those selections for "techniques of postbop composition," as defined by Waters, including but not limited to: "expanded forms; enhanced options for harmonic progression; phrase groupings that depart from conventional 4-and 8-bar frameworks; axis progressions⁷; harmonies that progress in locally functional ways, but within compositions in which a single tonic is uncertain; the absence or suppression of functional harmonic progressions⁸ and/or use of alternative cadential progressions; common structure progressions, sometimes using stepwise motion in the bass⁹; bass pedal points beneath shifting harmonies; characteristic harmonies, such as sus chords and slash chords, along with harmonies characteristic of earlier styles¹⁰; harmonic rhythm with chord changes every half-measure, measure, or every two measures¹¹; transformative aspects of harmonic progressions and harmonic/melodic interplay."¹², ¹³

I will also add that within the post-bop era we see unique freedoms enacted in respect to form and improvisation. We often find ambiguity and circularity in regard to form, usually created by any of the aforementioned elements and/or their combinations. We also find the improvisational component to diverge from the written material; whether it be alternate changes, alternate meter/hyper-meter, alternate form, absence of form, or other manipulations in regard to

⁷ (sequential harmonic, melodic, or bass progressions by single interval such as M3 or m3)

⁸ (such as V-I or ii-V-I)

⁹ (for example, CM7#11-DM7#11-EM7#11)

¹⁰ (major, minor, dominant, half-diminished)

¹¹ (occasionally alternating with sections of slower harmonic rhythm)

¹² (some analyses will show how one dimension of the music, such as melody, may take a familiar pathway while another dimension (such as harmony) does not)

¹³ Keith Waters, "The Studio Recordings of the Miles Davis Quintet, 1965-68", (England: Oxford University Press, 2011), chapter 1, page 3. (source obtained via photocopied handout)

the improvisational sections' divergence from the written material. This Rosenwinkel composition exhibits all of these characteristics.

ANALYSIS

FORM/RHYTHMIC/METRIC COMPONENTS

"Cubism" is such a prime candidate for discussion here because it exhibits so many of the characteristics unique to post-bop mentioned above. Let us begin at the broadest level, from the point of view of form. The tune is 52 bars in length, a structure that while not divisible by 8, still features an overarching formal-hierarchy that pays homage to decades of precursive jazz history: an AABA form. The form features components of conventional divisions, in terms of allotment and function, yet, we have variations in lengths of said divisions. The form as a whole features an A section, which is repeated twice; a slight variation on the second repeat. This leads to an interlude, and then to a bridge, which takes us back to the first A again. I will discuss the musical components of each of these sections in full, but for now, let's start by defining their durations. Even within the first two A sections we see exhibits of formal *and* tonal ambiguity. Not only is the first A, 12 bars, and the second A, 16 bars, but the last 4 bars of the second A is identical to the *first 4 bars* of the first A. Perhaps we are seeing elements of circularity just within these two A sections alone.

After a 28 bar 1st half, we come to an interlude. Interludes have been shown to be commonplace within the post-bop vernacular, their obviousness and point of insertion of course, circumstantial. However, we see passages within tunes, such as Hancock's *Dolphin Dance*, or Corea's *Windows*, to serve as a transitory ways-of-passage forward, often in substitution for bridge-propers. It seems appropriate then, that Rosenwinkel offers a very clear, un-complex, one-chordal, melody-free 8-bar phrase, coming out of a illusory and heady first half, to serve in such

a way. We have noticed post-bop composers make use of the contrast between complexity and simplicity, by way of interludes, in order to maintain the cohesion of a tune while still pursuing various types musical mutations.

The bridge of "Cubism" is 16 bars in length, and while it does fit the multiple-of-8measure standard, the fact that we go back to a 12 bar A section afterwards, only utilizes this seeming regularity as a contributor to a larger formal ambiguity; creating in effect, a 38 bar second half. The last 4 bars of the bridge allow us time to think, like in the case of the end of Corea's "Inner Space". Another example of peace amidst a rather unrelenting form. Despite this 4-bar release, the bridge features another element of formal ambiguity due to the rhythmic displacement harmonically and melodically. Notice the dotted-half notes and dotted half-notes tied to whole notes to be consuming the majority of the rhythmic motion during the bridge, only to be finally offset by bar 36. These phrases amount to beat groupings of three 3s, and one 7, (or 9+7).¹⁴ By the time we get to m. 37, the effect of the 4-bar-long major chord beginning in that bar, which might be perceived to settle or relieve the tension of the 3(9+7), serves as only a brief interlude of its own, before we return to the 12 bar A. The bridge can therefore be seen as 3 groups of 4 measures followed by a vamp of 4 measures. Once again, here, we see a grouping of 12 measures, and then of 4 measures, similar to the outlay of the second A section, furthering the masking of form.

As you can see, the bridge serves as an example of the type of formal ambiguity and circularity happening at multiple levels, as a result of rhythmic and metric displacements.

¹⁴ Perhaps this occurrence is reminiscent of Hancock's "Tell me a Bedtime Story" where, starting at the pick-up to measure 9 of the head, he employes displaced groupings of either 3-eight-note, 3-eighth-note, or 3-eighth-note, groupings over the 4/4 time. In the same tune, Hancock inserts 4 bars of 5/4 into the tune, which is largely made up of 4/4.

Staying with the bridge for another moment, the 4 measure 'vamp' at its conclusion is reminiscent of post-bop-style vamps, which we have seen to serve as not only arrival points coming from tension built from preceding passages, but also as a vehicle to get us to the next part of the tune as well. In this case, it serves a release from the tension built from the prior 12 measures. One last note on form before moving on to the melodic and harmonic aspects of "Cubism": As Rosenwinkel indicates on the chart, the blowing features an AAB form, which diverges from the AABA form of the head (see attached lead sheet). Considering the already cyclical nature of the A section, it may have been a wise choice to cut the last A from the blowing form, as to avoid confusion. Instances of changing blowing form from what it was for the melody to what it becomes for blowing is a tactic we have seen before in post-bop; Shorter's *Iris* comes to mind.

MELODY/HARMONY

While post-bop compositions varied in degree of melodic-independence in-lue of their harmonic vehicles, one of the core elements that most if not all post-bop compositions *did* retain from earlier jazz subgenres, is the harmonic/melodic relationship; in that the two work together (as opposed to perhaps some compositions of the Avant-Garde period). In fact, an argument might be made that in post-bop, melody depends on harmony even more-so than with bebop before it. The variety and plethora of possible chord changes, harmonies, and types of progressions that could be employed, far surpass what was common place in earlier styles, and thus, rose harmony to a new level of importance, if not, at the very least relevance. "Cubism" is a prime example of a tune where harmony serves not only a major role but perhaps the most important role.

Since we finished our discussion of form with the bridge, let's begin there to begin our discussion of the unique melodic and harmonic aspects of "Cubsim." Of course, our discussion is with the goal of exposing this tune from the lense of a post-bop observer, so this first occurence will fit right in. Notice the melody of the first four bars and it's associated harmony. Compare that to the next four bars, and you will notice that only the harmony has changed (see bridge of lead sheet). Compare this to a tune like Hancock's "Tell me a Bedtime Story", specifically the first two A sections. You will see there the same idea of a 'reharmonized' melody. As we go further in the bridge of "Cubism" we find the next four bars to be yet again, the same exact melody, this time modulated up a whole step and with the exception of the first note of the phrase being altered by a semitone¹⁵. Perhaps this occurrence can be comparable to a tune like Joe Henderson's "Inner Urge", specifically from the first four bars to the second four bars, and how the melody is only altered by one note, with the addition of new harmony as well. It can also be compared to Hancock's "Dolphin Dance", in which we see the four note melody modulate at least twice throughout the piece to accommodate new chord changes.

The bridge also exhibits a few other characteristics, some similar to ones seen in the A section. First, the bass motion of major thirds, minor thirds or half steps (see figure 4 - minor thirds in yellow, major 3rds in blue and half-steps in red). Secondly, I'd like to make note of the abundance of major and minor third movements in the melody itself (see figure 5), and do note that in the 3rd and 7th bars of the B section, both the melody *and* the harmony move in minor thirds in the same direction. Again, as with the A section, there are no traceable patterns of consistency to the occurrence of minor/major thirds or half-steps in the chords or in the melody of

¹⁵ I believe Rosenwinkel may have adjusted that one note in order to avoid direct repetition of the melody for a third straight time, even though a G would have also worked over the chord change.

the B section, and while I have not investigated the specifics of these occurrences, it might be appreciated to at least perhaps be non-coincidental given the abundance of instances of major third/minor third, and half-step relationships throughout the tune.

"Cubism", which has been said is meant to parallel "the way cubist painters fragmented the basic elements of their art...features a "12-bar arrangement of the 12 major keys--one key per bar." These 12 bars of course referring to the A sections (minus the additional 4 bars on the second A). Since the European Avant-Garde artwork of the 1920's is not an aspect of post-bop that is of particular commonality, Kurt must be drawing from another inspiration in "Cubism's" harmonic outlay; one that is more relevant. At a workshop at Uppsala International Guitar Festival in 2011, Kurt explains that "Cubism" "started out as an exercise." He says that he "wanted to learn how to play through lots of different key changes without always having to start [his] line over again; to gain fluidity through the keys; through scale changes." In a masterclass at Berklee College of Music, Kurt is reported to having stated that at the time he wrote "Cubism" he was interested in "the idea of playing 'through' changes," and wrote "Cubism" "using all 12 keys in order to force himself to improvise through them." This idea of playing 'through' or 'over' changes is an idea that Miles Davis has also spoken about. 18,19

It has also been said that Kurt's compositional process in regard to "Cubism" "started as an attempt to switch keys within an improvised line[,] the result [being] a twelve-measure form

¹⁶ Kurt Rosenwinkel, *The Enemies of Energy*, Audio CD, (CA: Verve Records, 2000).

¹⁷ StefanLofv, "Cubism", YouTube, Accessed April 27, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JUgIh7ptpuE.

¹⁸ Liquidweight, "So Much Sound: Kurt's Sonic: Goes Pentatonic," *So Much Sound* (blog), Accessed April 24, 2018, http://somuchsound.blogspot.com/2009/07/kurts-sonic-goes-pentatonic.html.

¹⁹ In class, there has been multiple mention of Miles Davis' approach to playing 'over' or 'across' the changes. This theory can be supported by Davis' writing and playing modally, which was in response to the complexity and demand of playing over fast moving bebop changes. His approach to modal improvisation, using scales not chord structures, is also related to his idea of improvising using the melody of the tune.

going through twelve keys[,] (kind of like going four times through a Coltrane three tonic Giant Steps cycle)."²⁰ While 'Cubism,' which is suggested to be "perhaps a contemporary answer to Coltrane's 'Giant Steps', is, of course a *composition*, Rosenwinkel's *improvisation* has in fact been said to, at times, exhibit "sheets of sound;" a Coltran-ian ism specific to his recording of the iconic *Giant Steps* album.²¹ It might be safe to say that Rosenwinkel's musical tendencies can cater to not only the written-down expressions of post-bop vernacular. Even the playing of Mark Turner, who is featured on tenor saxophone on the album, is compared to that of Coltrane and, you guessed it, Wayne Shorter, one of our most beloved post-bop horn-men.²²

Before we examine the 12-key centers that occur in bars 1-12, we can start by carrying on the Coltrane-ian relevance and observe another construct therein; one that is all too familiar to post-bop compositions: the axis progression. Without even going too far in depth we can observe the major third/minor third axis at play during the first 12 measures. With the exception of bars 9 and 10, we have sets of minor third (yellow) and major third (blue) axis progressions. What's interesting is that there doesn't seem to be a pattern as far as there movement from one another, either in regard to quality, direction (up or down) or interval between sets of chords. However, we do see a pattern in regard to metric placement.

In any instance in Figure 1 the axis chords are all displaced by one passing chord. In figure 2, observe other sets of axes that *are not* separated by a passing chord. In every case within these two instances, each set of chords moves either up or down minor thirds only. Again, we do not see any detectable pattern occurring in terms of the motion of the sets of axis

²⁰ Christian Rover, "Kurt Rosenwinkel 'From A Guitarist's Perspective'", Rosenwinkelengl.html, " Accessed April 19, 2018, http://www.christianrover.com/Englische%20Seiten/Rosenwinkelengl.html.

²¹ Adler, "Kurt Rosenwinkel: The Enemies of Energy."

²² Carlo Wolff, "Kurt Rosenwinkel", Cleveland Scene, Accessed April 8, 2018. https://www.clevescene.com/cleveland/kurt-rosenwinkel/Content?oid=147347.

structures aside from metricly in Figure 1. Figure 2 is certainly a weaker example of axis than Figure 1, but helps to reinforce the occurrence of such axes in the first 12 bars. Before moving on the fun part, I'd like to mention one more occurrence within the first 12 bars. In figure 3, we can see the occurences of upward half-step bass motion, and I will emphasize that in every case, the half-step movement is in fact upward. Another interesting occurence, and as you will soon see, these different types of axes may actually be resultant of yet another phenomenon occuring within the first 12 bars.

APPLICATION OF COLTRANE-IAN TECHNIQUES

As noted earlier "Cubism" is influenced by Coltrane-ian compositional methodology, but in what way? Again, earlier I mentioned, that the first 12 bars was compared to 'kind of like going four times through a Coltrane three tonic Giant Steps cycle.' While this would serve as important information toward my discovery of what it actually translated to for this tune, I didn't have much to go on. Was I looking for something in the chord changes, or the melody; or both? After taking the chord scales of the two chords found in the first bar and combining them, I soon realized the key centers couldn't be derived in that way. So, I charted out the melodic fragments as they appear in each bar along with all the possible major scales that they could exist within (see figure 4). I knew that because the hybrid chord-scales made by combining the chord-scales in each bar *did not* produce major keys, or any keys for that matter, that there *had* to be something to be found either within the notes of melody or the chord tones themselves.

So, I thought about Coltrane changes, the 'three-tonic' system, and how "Giant Steps" is based on the equal division of the octave by major thirds, which produces the resolute key

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²³ This was mentioned in an interview that was conducted in May 2000 and first published in the german guitar magazine *Gitarre & Bass*. The source of this information has previously been cited during the mention of "Cubism's" relationship to Giant Steps.

centers of the tune (B major, G major and Eb major). I eventually realized that if the first 12 bars of "Cubism" was said to be like going through that cycle 4 times, that could be referring to each of the four 3-note augmented triad groupings that exist within the chromatic scale. So, if I was going to see if there was something to that approach, I knew I had to find key centers that were major thirds apart. The only problem was I didn't know where the pattern would start or how the groupings would move. Fortunately there were only 2 possible options for the first three measures, and eventually saw that one of them wouldn't work all the way through the 12 bars (I couldn't achieve a 12-tone row). I eventually found the only four groupings of three augmented triads that would produce a 12 row, in the only sequence that would work (see figure 5).

The next realization was the most interesting. Once I figured out that the melodic content adhered to Coltrane-ian or three-tonic system order, I thought about the chord changes. There was no pattern to their progression; nothing that would imply an order within *just* the chord changes alone. However, I knew that the chords complimented the melody notes in every case, and I needed to see if my theory about the majority of post-bop compositions 'being dependant' or the chord changes applied here. I quickly found that it did. In the first measure, the two chords (Gmin11 and Amin11), when arpeggiated, both include notes that pertain to F Major. In measure two, I found that the notes in Bb-11 and Eb-11 each worked with Db Major. This occurrence ended up being consistent through the 12 features of the A section.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Kurt Rosenwinkel's "Cubism" is undoubtedly packed full of compositional devices and improvisational vehicles seen often enough in post-bop compositions of the 1960's. Of course, there is surely more to discover, but for now, I believe what has been covered here, provides some enticing components to chew on. Lastly, I want to point out my appreciation of how an

improvisational exercise can lead to composition, and I don't believe I'd be incorrect in saying that we don't really see that type of approach prior to the post-bop period.

FIGURES

Figure 1



Figure 2

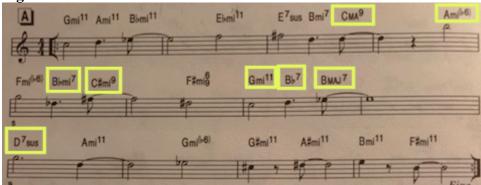


Figure 3



Figure 4

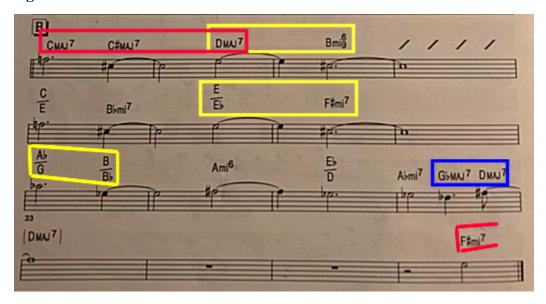


Figure 5

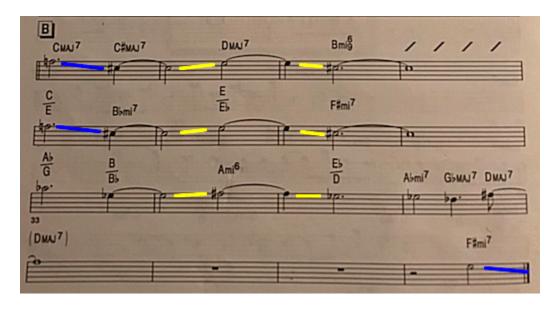


Figure 4 NOTES | POSSIBLE KEY CENTERS

WILLS	FOSSIBLE RET CENTERS											
C/D	С	F	Вb	Eb								G
Eb/F			Въ	Eb	Ab	Db	Gb					
F#/D										Α	D	G
D/B	C									Α	D	G
G/Db					Ab						D	
F#/D#						Db	Gb	В	Е			
C/D	C	F	ВЪ	Eb								G
Eb			Вb	Eb	Ab	Db	Gb	В	Е			
G/D	C	F	ВЪ	Eb							D	G
D/Eb			Вb	Eb								
C#/D#					Ab	Db	Gb	В	Е			
E/B	C							В	Е	Α	D	G

Figure 5 | NOTES | POSSIBLE KEY CENTERS

NOTES	POSSIBLE RET CENTERS											
C/D	C	F	Bb	Eb								G
Eb/F			Bb	Eb	Ab	Db	Gb					
F#/D										A	D	G
D/B	С									A	D	G
G/Db					Ab						D	
F#/D#						Db	Gb	В	Е			
C/D	С	F	Bb	Eb								G
Eb			Bb	Eb	Ab	Db	Gb	В	E			
G/D	C	F	Bb	Eb							D	G
D/Eb			Bb	Eb								
C#/D#					Ab	Db	Gb	В	E			
E/B	С							В	E	A	D	G

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