"BEFORE I DIE...": ORIGINAL COMPOSITION WITH A CRITICAL ESSAY EXPLORING
THE TECHNIQUES OF SIX CROSSOVER COMPOSERS

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Candy Chang developed a public art installation where people are given the opportunity to write their answers to "Before I Die I want to ________." in a public space. I created one of these walls in Denton, TX and set it to music in a 12 minutes and 42 second piece titled *Before I Die...*, which combines elements of South Indian carnatic music, gospel, R&B, jazz fusion, and minimalism. The composition was influenced by the music of several crossover artists Becca Stevens, Michael League (Snarky Puppy), Nico Muhly, Poovalar Sriji, Tigran Hamasyan, and James Blake. Crossover music, fusion, and third-stream are all synonymous terms used to describe music where multiple genres or styles are authentically combined. The purpose of this thesis is to examine the balance of musical elements in crossover works as well as how specific works composed by the artists mentioned have influenced the creation of the *Before I Die...* piece.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF EXAMPLES</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PART I  CRITICAL ANALYSIS</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composer Backgrounds</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Word about Transcriptions</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Techniques Applied to <em>Before I Die</em></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polyphony</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parallel Meter and Phrasing</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applying Mora</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhythmic Stratification in Snarky Puppy’s Flood</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel and Groove</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metric Subdivision</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gospel Influence: Implied Harmonic and Rhythmic Elements</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacing in Snarky Puppy’s <em>Flood</em></td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiar Material</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanding Accessibility</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snarky Puppy Marketing Method</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing Model for Before I Die</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaching a Wider Audience</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion of Authenticity</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends not Hired Players</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communal Effect</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix: Extended Musical Examples</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumentation</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Notes</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before I Die...</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Rhythmic Groupings in Becca Steven’s *Weightless* ........................................................ 16
Table 2: Harmonies from Snarky Puppy’s *Flood*, B Section (1:56-2:51) ......................................... 25
Table 3: Harmonies from Snarky Puppy’s Solo of Second A Section (3:20-4:21) ............................... 25
Table 4: Formal Structure of *Flood* .................................................................................................. 28
Table 5: Chord Comparison of m.154-161 and m.174-189 in *Before I Die* ........................................ 33
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example 1</td>
<td>Opening of Nico Muhly’s <em>Mothertongue</em> Melodyne Analysis</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example 2</td>
<td>Opening of <em>Before I Die</em>... Melodyne Analysis</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example 3</td>
<td><em>Before I Die</em>... Canon (m.128-145)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example 4</td>
<td>Transcription of Becca Stevens’ Hocket (2:06)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example 5</td>
<td><em>Before I Die</em>... Polyphony (m.206-213)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example 6</td>
<td>Carnatic Groupings in 7/4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example 7</td>
<td>Carnatic Shapes in 7/4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example 8</td>
<td>Tigran Hamasyan’s <em>Road Song</em> Phrase Groupings</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example 9</td>
<td>Tigran Hamasyan’s <em>Road Song</em> Phrase Groupings Part 2</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example 10</td>
<td>Carnatic Rhythms and Mora in <em>Before I Die</em>...</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example 11</td>
<td>Transcription of Drum Machine in James Blake’s <em>Unluck</em></td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example 12</td>
<td>Drum Machine Part in <em>Before I Die</em>...</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example 13</td>
<td><em>Before I Die</em>... Keyboards (m.206-213)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example 14</td>
<td><em>Before I Die</em>... Keyboards (m.314-325)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example 15</td>
<td><em>Before I Die</em>... Keyboards (m.266-273)</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example 16</td>
<td><em>Before I Die</em>... Keyboards (m.105-111)</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example 17</td>
<td>Comparison of Lines in B Section and Drum Solo of <em>Flood</em></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example 18</td>
<td>Transcription of Middle Section (1:55) of Tigran Hamasyan’s <em>Road Song</em></td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example 19</td>
<td><em>Before I Die</em>... Voice (m.154-161)</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example 20</td>
<td><em>Before I Die</em>... Voice (m.174-189)</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example A.1</td>
<td>Transcription of Becca Steven’s <em>Weightless</em> m.(1-27)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example A.2</td>
<td>Transcription of Snarky Puppy’s <em>Flood</em> (m.1-28)</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART I
CRITICAL ANALYSIS
Introduction

In 2011, Candy Chang developed the art installation *Before I Die*... in New Orleans. The installation was a chalkboard built on the side of an abandoned house covered with a grid of stenciled words that stated "Before I Die I want to ________." The wall gave people the opportunity to write their personal thoughts in chalk and allowed them to connect with the community. The *Before I Die*... wall reminded people that no individual is alone and that people are mortal. Since the first installation in New Orleans, over 400 walls have been created in more than 25 languages and built in over 60 countries.¹

The *Before I Die*... concept, coined by Candy Chang, served as an inspiration for not only my thesis, but it also laid a foundation for my own creative thought and compositional perspectives. I created a piece of music with a text drawn from several *Before I Die*... walls which also included an installation that several colleagues and I constructed at the University of North Texas Library Mall in Denton, Texas. The piece entitled *Before I Die*... is 12 minutes and 42 seconds in length, and it combines elements of South Indian carnatic music, gospel, R&B, jazz fusion, and minimalism. The 21-player piece includes the following instrumentation:

- **4 voices:** 2 sopranos, 2 altos
- **4 winds:** flute, alto saxophone (doubles clarinet), tenor saxophone (double clarinet and bass clarinet), trumpet (doubles flugelhorn)
- **String quartet:** violin I, violin II, viola, cello
- **2 electric guitars** (volume pedal, 1 octave shifter, distortion, reverb)
- **Keyboard** (Fender Rhodes sound)
- **Drum set**

• **Amplified bass** (double bass and electric bass)

• **Electronics** (Ableton Live playback of file, interface, splitters, and headphones for 22 performers)

The musicians who premiered the work included jazz, world music, and classically trained alumni and current students from the University of North Texas. The work was premiered on Saturday, November 23, 2013 at 8:00 pm at The Warehouse; a part of The Panhandle House located at 313 N Locust St, Denton, Texas 76201. The entire *Before I Die...* project included a three-hour concert, a recording session, a documentary, a live video recording, an art installation, and promotion. Thanks to the hard work of my team and I, we successfully raised $1,900 for the project through Kickstarter.

The *Before I Die...* composition begins with a static texture that utilizes swelling chords. The texture thickens with pre-recorded voices and vocoder, both of which state text from the wall. The work then moves through several new textures including a slow groove with a vocal canon and a sobering interjection from the keyboard and voice. The piece also includes compositional techniques of hocketing, improvised solos, canons, pedal points, lush harmonies, and half-step dissonances, which ultimately build to a climax at the conclusion of the piece.

The composition was influenced by the music of several performers and composers including Becca Stevens, Snarky Puppy, Nico Muhly, Poovalar Sriji, Tigran Hamasyan, and James Blake. These artists all have one primary trait in common: their music is considered crossover music. Crossover music, fusion, and third-stream are all synonymous terms used to describe music where multiple genres or styles are authentically combined. The purpose of this thesis is to examine the balance of musical elements in crossover works as well as how specific works
composed by the artists mentioned above have influenced the creation of the *Before I Die...*


Composer Backgrounds

Becca Stevens

Becca Stevens is a composer, singer, lyricist, and multi-instrumentalist that grew up as a member of a musical family. Both her brother and father compose classical music. In high school, Stevens attended North Carolina School of the Arts where she studied jazz and classical guitar. Following high school graduation, Stevens attended the New School in New York City for jazz and contemporary music. She has collaborated with jazz greats such as pianist Brad Mehldau and vocalist Gretchen Parlato. In 2014 Stevens worked with contemporary classical composer Timo Andres at the Ecstatic Music Festival. Her band, *Becca Stevens Band*, is a folk ensemble with the following instrumentation: double bass, percussion, guitar (doubling on ukulele and charango), accordion (doubling on piano), and voices. The members Liam Robinson (accordion, keyboards, vocals), Chris Tordini (upright bass, vocals) and Jordan Perlson (drums and percussion) all attended college for jazz. The ensemble combines elements of classical, jazz, pop, and folk music into well-crafted songs and arrangements. Specifically, Steven’s music has dense harmonies, canons, odd phrase structures, hocketing, and a wide range of timbres.²

Nico Muhly

Nico Muhly is a composer and pianist who received his degree at the Julliard School of

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Music. Muhly has written for many classical mediums and has received a commission for his opera *Two Boys* to be performed at the New York Metropolitan Opera. In addition to his strictly classical music, Nico Muhly collaborates with Bedroom Community label mates Sigur Rós. Muhly has also created string arrangements for Björk. Muhly’s original compositions commonly use electronics, synthesizers, and sampling techniques that are present in popular electronic dance music. Aesthetically, much of Muhly’s music is influenced by minimalism, specifically the styles of Steve Reich. Muhly includes the use of additive samples as well as large swelling sonorities.³

Poovallur Sriji

Poovallur Sriji is a composer and mridangam player who teaches the South Indian Bridge Cross Cultural Ensemble at the University of North Texas. Sriji has created many works for the ensemble and has also performed around the world playing many genres of music. Sriji has given over 1,000 carnatic concerts since 1976. In 1996 Sriji collaborated with Bela Fleck and received a Grammy nomination. Sriji’s original compositions are not typically written for a fixed ensemble, but rather the works are adapted to whatever instrumentation is available for the performance. His music combines rhythmic and scalar concepts from carnatic music and interlocking parts from gamelan music. Sriji often collaborates with his students to create new pieces that can also involve any of the musical influences of the students. These influences typically include jazz, classical, and rock music.⁴

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Michael League

Michael League is a bassist, composer, arranger, and producer who attended University of North Texas. League’s music is primarily written for his ensemble, Snarky Puppy, which is a group that combines elements of gospel, R&B, Afro-Caribbean, and jazz music. The ensemble is a collective of over 30 musicians who studied music through various music institutions, including the University of North Texas, as well as African American gospel churches. While on tour, the ensemble typically consists of bass, drum set, percussion, guitar(s), keyboard(s), trumpet(s), and saxophone. Within the recording studio the ensemble also utilizes strings, singers, and additional players of the previously mentioned instruments. The music is defined on their website as, “music for the brain and the booty,” implying that not only can the music be complex and virtuosic, but it will make the listener want to dance.5

James Blake

James Blake is a pianist, composer, vocalist, and producer known for his electronic music. He attended the University of London and received a degree in popular music. Blake’s self-titled album explores the combination of electronic music, such as dubstep, with elements of gospel, R&B, and hip-hop. The album layers harmony, intricately incorporated autotune and vocoder, glitched drum machines, and well-paced structures.6

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Tigran Hamasyan

Tigran Hamasyan is an Armenian pianist, composer, and vocalist known for his compositions that combine classical, jazz, Armenian folk, and popular electronic music. In 2013, Hamasyan won the Vilcek Prize for Creative Promise in Contemporary Music. During the same year, he also released his most recent album Shadow Theatre. Hamasyan’s ensemble typically consists of piano, drum set, bass (acoustic and electric), saxophone (doubles on flute), and voice. On recordings, violin is often present.7

A Word about Transcriptions

After studying these works in depth I created original transcriptions. Some of the transcriptions show each individual part while others only show specifically excerpted parts that are discussed in further detail. Some transcriptions are presented in graph form while others are in standard notation.

Techniques Applied to Before I Die...

The following section explores techniques from the previously mentioned composers and how the techniques have been applied to the Before I Die... work. The section begins by looking at polyphonic textures.

Polyphony

Polyphony is defined by Oxford Dictionary as “…the style of simultaneously combining a

number of parts, each forming an individual melody and harmonizing with each other.” In the music explored in this document, each musician has an independent linear pattern, which layer upon each other to contribute to the texture. Each is interdependent upon the other parts in order to create the overall experience.

Polyphony in Nico Muhly’s *Mothertongue*

Nico Muhly’s *Mothertongue* opens with a voice saying letters of the alphabet, followed by a second, third, and fourth voice enters speaking syllables at different rates. This creates a cascading effect that is interrupted by bells and flute in the upper register. The high flute and bells are then answered by a heavily bit crushed, or distorted, cello. Example 1 depicts the entrances of the instruments over time. Note that each of the descending voices is accompanied by a violin.

Example 1: Opening of Nico Muhly’s *Mothertongue* Melodyne Analysis
For the opening of my composition, I utilized textural ideas like those of Nico Muhly’s *Mothertongue* to create a wash of sound over swells of distortion. In many of his works, Muhly asks musicians to sing pitches in indeterminate rhythmic patterns while improvising upon a specific text (i.e. states, days of the week, letters, numbers, etc.). Within *Before I Die...*, I used text from the wall that my colleagues and I built, and, after prerecording certain texts, developed a texture of drones, speech, and singing. In contrast to Muhly, I used prerecorded vocoders, which played the various rhythms and pitches of the phrase “before I die.” These various rhythms swell from a distorted bass note. Example 2 demonstrates the entrances of the instruments over time within the *Before I Die...* piece.

Example 2: Opening of *Before I Die...*  Melodyne Analysis

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Polyphony in Becca Stevens’ *Weightless*

Becca Steven’s *Weightless* is a work for three voices, double bass, guitar, drum set, and accordion. Two different polyphonic textures are present within the work: canon and hocket.
During the first section of the piece listeners are introduced to the original melodic phrase (m.1-10). The phrase operates as a run-on sentence that is quite complex. This idea repeats and is then found in canon in all three voices at 1:14 in the recording: Stevens enters on beat one, Liam Robinson enters on beat three, and Chris Tordini enters on beat four. The singers perform in a staccato style so that each voice’s articulations can be clearly heard. Because Steven’s voice is an octave higher than the other two singers, there is a separation between her part and the other two. Further making this distinction is that Robinson and Tordini’s parts are one beat apart from each other. These staggered entrances contribute to a greater wash. Tordini’s part is lower in the mix, which makes it sound more like a quarter note delay of Robinson’s part. Example A.1 in the appendix is a complete transcription of measures 1-27 of Becca Steven’s *Weightless*.

The intricacy and rhythmic complexity of the canon found from measures 20 to 27 is supported by the diatonic melodic construction and the regular harmonic foundation. Each bar alternates between G major and F major.

My personal examination of Becca Stevens’ canon in *Weightless* gave me knowledge about how canons can be phrased. Studying Steven’s canonic writing also provided me with a deeper understanding of the structural elements involved in the development of canons. When I built the canon for my piece I maintained a simple harmonic rhythm similar to the canon in *Weightless*. The harmony alternates between BbMaj7 and FMaj7. In order to explore other colors I moved the bass around to create other chords with these upper voicings. Example 3 is an excerpt from *Before I Die*... showing the vocal canon and harmonies.
Example 3: *Before I Die...* Canon (m.128-145)

During the 11/8 section of *Weightless* (1:44) the melodic line is hocketed between all three voices. The use of hocket in this particular moment in *Weightless* provided the basis for intense melodic gesture. This section includes seven different musical ideas performed by four performers. No musician plays the same linear idea, but several of the ideas are supported by each other. The drum set supports Stevens’ guitar part, while the accordion line supports all three vocal parts. Audibly studying this particular excerpt reveals that the vocalists embellish and color the line of the accordion.
Example 4: Transcription of Becca Stevens’ Hocket (2:06)

Like the Stevens example, in measures 206-209 of *Before I Die*... there are ten different rhythmic ideas laid on top of one another. The four vocalists construct an ascending hocketed phrase, the guitars interlock a 4+3 phrase, the winds alternate 2+2+3 and 3+2+2 patterns, while the bass, keyboards, and drums play a 2+2+3 phrase. The winds create the melody and the rest of the ensemble plays interlocking supporting textures.
Example 5: *Before I Die...* Polyphony (m.206-213)
These interlocking phrase structures can also be found in other kinds of music, including the Balinese gamelan and the Shona mbira music. In the Balinese gamelan, a type of percussion ensemble, players perform short motives which are layered with other instruments and ornamented, creating a wash of sound. In Shona mbira music, there are interlocking rhythms and call-and-response sections. In both of these kinds of music as well as in Before I Die..., the interlocking parts serve as communal elements in the way the music is performed and experienced.

Parallel Meter and Phrasing

Several elements found within Before I Die... are directly linked to my experiences in the UNT South Indian Cross Cultural Ensemble. After studying South Indian carnatic music for two years with Poovalur Sriji, one specific South Indian rhythmic concept that I learned involves the use of simultaneously occurring meters. This concept is found throughout many of the works studied and examined in this project. In western composition this particular concept is called parallel meter. In his thesis Aspects of Rhythm in the Music and Improvisations in Six Pieces by Avishai Cohen, Nicholas Abbey describes concept of parallel meter as:

the juxtaposition of two or more meters of the same temporal length with the same basic subdivision for deliberate exploitation by the soloists and accompanists. Specifically, this concept is only applicable to rhythmic structures established by the composition, preventing confusion with typical cross-rhythms. (Abbey, 2011, ii.)

Within carnatic music it is possible to hear many divisions of a meter. In 7/4, for example, a western-trained musician may think of the subdivisions of eighth notes in 4+3 or 3+4. A carnatic musician, however, may apply a variety of different groupings. The simplest variations of “subdivision” in carnatic music involve splitting the four into two groups of two.
The musician would then move the location of the grouping of three into different parts of the measure. Below are several examples that depict various carnatic subdivisions through the use of numerical values. They could play all subdivisions of each grouping or just the first note of the grouping. I learned these specific concepts from Poovalur Sriji. Each number represents a grouping of eighth notes, and each line represents a rhythmic phrase.

Example 6: Carnatic Groupings in 7/4

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This grouping could be further divided and manipulated:

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This idea and all previously mentioned ideas could be played backward and forward. The versatility of parallel meters creates crescendos and decrescendos as well as diamond or hourglass shapes. The diamond and hourglass shapes work as palindromes.
Example 7: Carnatic Shapes in 7/4

Crescendo

1 1 2 2 3 3 4 4

Decrescendo

4 4 3 3 2 2 1 1

Diamond

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

Hourglass

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

In addition to my personal uses of these tools in composition, these detailed rhythmic conceptualizations and methodologies can also be applied when listening to works by other artists. During Becca Stevens’ song *Weightless*, the opening melodic line is in 4/4, although her lyrical phrases form groupings that are not commonly found in 4/4. When applying the carnatic method of listening one could hear the opening bar phrased as 3+3+3+3+4 and the subsequent bar as 4+3+3+4. In the following table the groupings are broken down for the opening melodic line of *Weightless*. The parentheses in the following table represent each bar. In the case of measures 4 and 5, two parentheses are given on each side because the groupings continue over the bar line.

Table 1: Rhythmic Groupings in Becca Steven’s *Weightless*

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>((3+3+3+4)(4+3+3+4))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 &amp; 4</td>
<td>((3+3+3+3+4)(4+3+3+4))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 &amp; 5</td>
<td>((3+3+2+2+2+2+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3+3...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When the band enters in measure 10, the groupings continue to generally support the concept of parallel meter through 3+4+3+3+3 phrasing with every fourth bar sounding as 3+4+3+4+2. This concept can also be applied to the third section of Tigran Hamasyan’s *Road Song*.

*Road Song*, a work for piano, violin, two voices, double bass, and drum set, presents a micrometer at 1:55 that operates as follows: 10+12+12+14. These particular groupings were determined by the volume and the register of each note of the melody. The C-D on the last two beats of the 2nd, 4th, and 6th measure represent the beginning of each phrase (see example 8a). When the phrase repeats, the groupings stay the same (example 9). Examples 8 and 9 show how the groupings may be heard:

Example 8: Tigran Hamasyan’s *Road Song* Phrase Groupings

Example 9: Tigran Hamasyan’s *Road Song* Phrase Groupings Part 2

Measures 206-229 of *Before I Die*... contain parallel meters: the winds play 4+3 continuously while the keyboards play 2+3+2+2+2+3. The melody, in groups of 4+3, occurs in two-bar phrases through the use of long rhythmic durations that soar over the texture. At measure 265 the groupings change, so that the melody sounds as though it is in 4+3 and the accompaniment is in groupings of (2+2+3) (2+2+3) (2+3+3+3+3). The use of parallel meters provides rhythmic tension and ultimately creates a sense of unpredictability and continuous forward momentum. Measures 206-213 can be viewed in example 5.
Applying Mora

_Before I Die..._ begins with metric groupings of 4/4 in the winds, strings, voices, and electronics. In measures 56-89 in _Before I Die..._ guitar 1 and acoustic bass double a reducing rhythmic idea from South Indian music. First the idea is introduced as five held beats, which gradually introduce five groups of five sixteenth notes. The idea then reduces to five quarter notes three times, and finally appears as groupings of five eighth notes three times.

The first figure occurs seven times, the two-note figure occurs five times, the three-note phrase occurs six times, and the ascending four-note motive occurs twice. Starting at rehearsal letter D, the final phrase acts as a rhythmic cadence also known in carnatic music as a mora. In a mora, or rhythmic cadential pattern, each motive occurs three times and each idea is a diminution of the previous motive. In this case, the mora is three repetitions of a four-note phrase consisting of a duration of five eighth notes, followed by three repetitions of four quarter notes, and finally three repetitions of a four dotted eighth note phrase. Example 10 demonstrates the reduction and utilization of mora.

Rhythmic Stratification in Snarky Puppy’s Flood

In Snarky Puppy’s _Flood_ there is a singable melody as a primary focal point. The melody is accompanied by a danceable groove. A closer analysis of the song will show that the groove is in 7/4; the drum set plays in large phrases of 7/4 while the keyboard and guitar phrase in quicker measures of 7/8. The beginning of the melody sounds as though it occurs on the upbeat, because the listener perceives the time in 7/4, as opposed to two smaller measures of 7/8.
Example 10: Carnatic Rhythms and Mora in *Before I Die*...

It should be noted that the bassist and drummer phrase lines across the bar line which connect the sparse melodic phrases. This creates a more interactive energy in the band and pulls the listener further into the piece. Example A.2 in the appendix provides a detailed transcription of the first 28 measures.

Another example from the same composition is found in the B section. The melody contains long sustained notes that float above a groove; the meter feels like a large two in a compound meter that indicates a 6/8 time, though in actuality, the larger two is divided into two groups of 5/8 and the 5/8 meter is ultimately masked by layers of polymeter. The percussionist plays a groove of two dotted eighths and a quarter note which masks the feeling of the first three eighth notes. 3+2 is generally a more difficult rhythm to feel than 3+2, which
makes it seem more disorienting. The bass supports the idea of two, as well as the long soaring melody. When focusing on the duration of the individual notes in the melody, it becomes clear that the groupings are uneven, which implies the 3+2 phrasing.

*Flood* is similar to *Before I Die*... in several aspects including meter and groove. Like *Flood*, the meter for my piece can be felt in either a quick 7/8 or a moderate 7/4. As mentioned previously, *Before I Die*... contains several layers with different rhythmic groupings, relating to both the South Indian style and to the music of Snarky Puppy. It must also be mentioned that the idea of feeling a piece simultaneously in two different time signatures is an indigenous trait to African music, such as Shona mbira music, as well as Afro-Carribean music.

*Feel and Groove*

Ben Ratliff’s article, *Music: Out of a Rut and Into a New Groove*, describes the change from the R&B sound of the 90s to the development of neo-soul. Ratliff explains that early 90’s R&B was focused on releasing singles, cookie-cutter designs, and primarily electronically-produced sounds. In 2000 came D’Angelo’s sophomore album *Voodoo*, which defined a new sound. One of the album’s singles, *Untitled*, defies all rules of this previous style. The music is more groove oriented, focused on the band (the vocals were lower in the mix), and had live musicians on the record as well as live performers. Artists like D’Angelo and Maxwell became singer-songwriters and were including elements of other genres such as jazz and music of other cultures. This was the beginning of neo-soul music, which made references to the music of the 60’s and 70’s, with modernized grooves and additional influences.
In much of the music that influenced *Before I Die...*, there is a specific feel and groove that is essential for performance. This is the sound made famous by producer J-Dilla, drummer Ahmir Questlove Thompson, bassist Pino Palladino, keyboardist James Poysner, trumpeter Roy Hargrove, and vocalist D’Angelo. In D’Angelo’s album *Voodoo*, J-Dilla started to develop drum machine parts that were not perfectly in time. This unevenness created a more human feel. Instead of quantizing and making short two-bar drum loops, J-Dilla recorded lengthy 128 measure tracks of programmed drums. Within these tracks, small metric glitches would occur such as a late snare. This human feel is part of what set J-Dilla’s production apart from many other producers. Once the drum machine was recorded, Questlove and Piano Palladino would record a groove that locked with the “off the grid” programmed drums. Often Questlove’s snare and high hat consistently laid behind the beat, while the bass drum was on the beat. Palladino’s bass line laid before and behind the beat. Palladino describes this feel in an article in Slate by Jason King:

> Hip-hop is music that’s been deconstructed, it’s made up of bits of samples arranged in different places and often placed behind the beat. The way people sampled stuff influenced D’[Angelo] in terms of the way he would write his music. When I first heard the backing tracks for *Voodoo*, it struck me as the kind of thing J-Dilla would do, how he would deconstruct and reconstruct rhythms and just kinda deliberately mess things up. So you get these messed-up wobbly rhythms. You know, Dilla might take a four-chord pattern and start it on the second chord. D does that kinda thing too in his writing. (King, 2013)

This particular style and feel can be found in a variety of music that inspired the *Before I Die...* project including African American gospel, the music of Snarky Puppy, Tigran Hamasyan, and James Blake. On Blake’s track *Unluck*, the opening section contains the J-Dilla feel.
Metric Subdivision

In *Unluck*, the drum set provides a loose foundation for the song. In the first section of the song, the snare sample lies incredibly far behind the beat; this instability creates an uneasy sensation. During the chorus section (0:55), the high hat alternates between various subdivisions of 4 and 3. The drum machine part is a six-beat loop that occurs in a four-bar phrase, which helps intensify that feeling of instability.

Example 11: Transcription of Drum Machine in James Blake’s *Unluck*

During *Before I Die*... I used alternating subdivisions of the bar moving between tuplets of 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, which can be seen in Example 12. The prerecorded drums and electronics from measures 117-173 are in a style reminiscent of both J-Dilla and James Blake: the prerecorded electronics push and pull much like J-Dilla’s drum tracks, while the keyboard parts recorded into the electronics are modeled after the sound of Blake’s Prophet ’08 keyboard. Similar to Blake’s song *I Never Learnt to Share*, there is a chromatic build-up that utilizes glitched drums and dissonant keyboards.

Example 12: Drum Machine Part in *Before I Die*...
Many elements of African American gospel music involve the concept of implied musical materials. In the second B section of *Flood*, Robert “Sput” Searight, a gospel drummer from Dallas, performs virtuosic metric modulations. Many gospel drummers often practice or “shed” together, where one drummer holds a groove while the other solos.

On Saturday, October 19, 2013 I had the privilege of attending one of the most successful Dallas drummer’s clinics at Zion Chapel in Lancaster, Texas. The drummer’s name is Cleon Edwards and he currently plays for Erykah Badu as well as RC and The Gritz, RSVP, Jill Scott, Snarky Puppy, and in the gospel field.

Cleon explained the concept of a drummer shed, where two drummers play at the same time. One holds groove while the other solos and fills. They then switch roles, with the idea that each player is supposed to improve over time. He had all of the members of the clinic participate in a mini-shed. As each person played, Cleon brought up other musical techniques to make the drumming more interesting. He talked about dynamics, which many of the younger drummers lacked, as well as the idea of supporting the main idea. When soloing, Cleon explained that the soloist may play anything he/she desires—including various time signatures, feel, metric modulation—as long as the soloist ends in the phrase. Another way of describing this is that the original groove is to be implied during the solo.

This implied rhythmic element can also be applied to the role of the bass player. Michael League, a seasoned gospel bass player, often implies grooves when performing. From the first 28 measures of *Flood*, it becomes clear that the bass player plays many variations of the same line with different syncopated rhythms. In measures 20-21, League plays a phrase over the bar
line which ends inside of the implied groove. Unlike other styles where the bass plays the same pattern in an ostinato fashion, this style allows the player to improvise around the groove, not just create exact repetitions.

Another example of implied musical materials is found within the harmonies of Snarky Puppy’s *Flood*. The piece opens with two alternating chords, each of which is relatively ambiguous and allows for the chord to be heard many different ways. The first chord is F#-C#-D#, the D# resolves to the E, implying that we are perhaps in the key of E major. The second chord, spelled as A-B-C#-G#, more clearly suggests an AMaj7 harmony. The bass player enters in the 5th measure playing a lick in B minor pentatonic to further obscure the key center in the work. With a B sounding in the bass, the resulting first chord is a B-11 (B-F#-C#-E). The same bass lick occurs over the second chord, continuing the harmonic ambiguity, as the chords seem to float over the bass part.

This type of ambiguity is an example of implied musical materials. Throughout the song’s A section, the keyboard part has the same two alternating chords, while the changing bass notes result in different harmonies, allowing for more improvised reharmonizations and more freedom in the bass part. Such elements commonly occur in traditional and contemporary African American gospel music.

Another example of implied harmonies can be found in *Flood*’s first B section. The keyboard and guitars play the notes F#-G#-D# for the first chord and G-A-E for the second. The bass line moves to different notes creating unique sonorities, even though the same two alternating chords continue in the keyboards and guitar. Both chords in the keyboard and guitar parts are suspended chords. Below is a table describing the various bass notes and the resulting
harmony throughout the first B section of *Flood*. In measures 47-48 the resulting harmony is an A7sus because the string melody includes a D, thus completing the chord.

Table 2: Harmonies from Snarky Puppy’s *Flood*, B Section (1:56-2:51)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Piano/ Guitar Notes</th>
<th>Bass Part</th>
<th>Resulting Chord</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29-30</td>
<td>F# C# D#</td>
<td>C#</td>
<td>C#sus9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-32</td>
<td>G A E</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Gsus9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33-34</td>
<td>F# C# D#</td>
<td>C#</td>
<td>C#sus9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-36</td>
<td>G A E</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Gsus9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37-38</td>
<td>F# C# D#</td>
<td>C#</td>
<td>C#sus9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39-40</td>
<td>G A E</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Gsus9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-42</td>
<td>F# C# D#</td>
<td>C#</td>
<td>C#sus9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43-44</td>
<td>G A E</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Emin(add11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-46</td>
<td>F# C# D#</td>
<td>F#</td>
<td>D#sus/F#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47-48</td>
<td>G A E</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A7sus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the second solo section in the song (3:20), there is another example of implied harmonic materials. Instead of playing phrases in B minor pentatonic or E major, this time League alternates between a C# Minor pentatonic, A Lydian, and occasionally F# Dorian.

Table 3: Harmonies from Snarky Puppy’s Solo of Second A Section (3:20-4:21)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Piano/ Guitar Notes</th>
<th>Bass Part</th>
<th>Resulting Chord</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>F# G# E</td>
<td>C#</td>
<td>C#min(add11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>A B C# F#</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>AMaj(add13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>F# G# E</td>
<td>C#</td>
<td>C#min(add11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>A B C# F#</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>AMaj(add13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>F# G# E</td>
<td>C#</td>
<td>C#min(add11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>A B C# F#</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>AMaj(add13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>F# G# E</td>
<td>C#</td>
<td>C#min(add11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>A B C# F#</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>AMaj(add13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>F# G# E</td>
<td>F#</td>
<td>F#min9(no 3rd)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>A B C# F#</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>AMaj(add13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>F# G# E</td>
<td>F#</td>
<td>F#min9(no 3rd)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>A B C# F#</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>AMaj(add13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>F# G# E</td>
<td>F#</td>
<td>F#min9(no 3rd)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>A B C# F#</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>AMaj(add13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>F# G# E</td>
<td>C#</td>
<td>C#min(add11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>A B C# F#</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>AMaj(add13)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A comparable framework applied to several parts of *Before I Die*.... In measures 174-246, a four-chord harmonic pattern occurs, as shown in example 13.

Example 13: *Before I Die*.... Keyboards (m.206-213)

The chord sequence starting measure 314 uses the same GbMajor7(no3rd) and Ab Major7(no3rd) voicing, but now with new bass notes, a B for the first chord and a Db for the second.

Example 14: *Before I Die*.... Keyboards (m.314-325)

Another example of this harmonic approach occurs in measure 266 where the bass note plays a pedal F as the chords move from GbMaj9(no 3rd) to AbMaj9(no 3rd) to BbMaj7(add11).
Example 15: Before I Die… Keyboards (m.266-273)

A more abstract relationship to the gospel-style chord construction is at the beginning of the work, when the keyboard part consists of two stacked triads on top of one another. Measure 105 has an A major chord in the right hand for the whole measure, while the left hand plays A major, B major, and finally G major chords.

Example 16: Before I Die… Keyboards (m.105-111)

The descending bass line during the canon of Before I Die… is a reflection of the implied musical materials mentioned previously during the discussion of Flood.

Pacing in Snarky Puppy’s Flood

The musical and technical facility of the Snarky Puppy aids in shaping the overall contour of their composition Flood. Even though the keyboard part stays the same, the bass groove changes rhythm and serves to push the music forward. Players perform fills and secondary gestures over the bar line, which also help provide forward motion through the work.
There are only a few motives found in *Flood*: an A section melody with accompaniment, a B section melody with accompaniment, and B’ section, which has a longer melody than the original B section. The texture of the B section motive becomes more intense over time by changing the guitar riff to a half-step in the bottom. Example 17 compares the guitar line from the first B section of *Flood* (1:56) with the solo section of *Flood* (5:57).

Example 17: Comparison of Lines in B Section and Drum Solo of *Flood*

The B’ section advances with a feel of the larger 5/4, combining elements of the A section groove into the B’ accompaniment. An augmented version of the B section melody is introduced at the end of Sput’s drum solo while the tension continues building.

Table 4: Formal Structure of *Flood*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Meter</th>
<th>Melody</th>
<th>Accompaniment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-8</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>7/4</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-28</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>7/4</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>5/4</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>7/4</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A' New Bass Line</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B' (Drum Solo)</td>
<td>5/4</td>
<td>B'</td>
<td>B' + A' Bass Line</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>4/4</td>
<td>B''</td>
<td>C+ A’ Bass line</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The piece builds progressively until 7:10, where there is only drum set and guitar, creating an element of uncertainty before the band falls into a backbeat 4/4 groove. This continues until a false ending (C section) where the groove returns one more time. Table 4 shows sections of *Flood* and the derivation of the composition’s musical materials.
Snarky Puppy’s *Flood* is a well-paced piece, developing each motive slowly and deliberately. Its additive block form effectively supports an improvised framework by the rhythm section and soloists. As a result, the work invokes a visceral response and an energy that must be engaged by the audience. This pacing as well as similar models such as The Funky Knuckles’ song *Rain Journey* were incredibly influential on the creation of *Before I Die*....

Specifically, the end section of *Before I Die*... builds with a drum solo and then with a guitar solo at the climax. The work alternates between sections and doesn’t introduce new material, specifically the BbMaj7(add11) chord, until late in the piece. *Before I Die*... also operates on an additive structure where ideas are layered on top of each other.

**Familiar Material**

When listening to the drum solo in *Flood*, the listener can follow the guitar part throughout the entire section. Familiar or constant material can keep a listener grounded through more complicated musical textures. For example, the opening descending third motive of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony can be heard throughout the first movement of the piece. This motive becomes distorted and the amount of musical information increases as the composer takes the listener on a journey. Similarly, the opening texture in *Mothertongue* is a constant that keeps the listener grounded as interjections occur from high winds and pitched percussion. During many carnatic performances the mridangam, much like the drummer in a gospel setting, the player often performs virtuosic rhythms while the rest of the ensemble keeps tala, a form of conducting.
In the case of Becca Steven’s *Weightless*, the melody is difficult to sing and may not be easily retained in the listener’s ear. The rhythm is complex, and involves parallel meter. The most constant element of this piece is the text, which repeats and serves as a guide through the various textures of the piece:

There’s nothing like witnessing
the moment that a life lets loose
and falls to the ground
weak autumn winds tip
and easy like a wish upon weightless
dandelion seeds
each life beaming at its brightest now
falling the road rises up
to greet and is painted for the day
sacred to witness when life lets loose
and be grateful for this gift (Becca Stevens 2011).

The repeated text occurs three times before moving to a different text; with each iteration, the texture becomes additively more intricate.

When the text first enters, it is sung by two voices and accompanied by guitar. The bass enters during the first stanza and the drums enter during the interlude after the first stanza. The texture builds during the second repetition, with the swelling accordion chords and sustained background vocals providing forward motion. In the third stanza, the melody is presented in canon, adding to the intricacy of the texture and building until a release in the second section in 11/8.

A similar model of introducing materials with an additively complicated texture may be found in Tigran Hamasyan’s *Road Song*. In this work, Hamasyan takes an idea and repeats it with alterations. Once the idea has started to develop, he will occasionally restart with a new idea. The opening gesture of *Road Song* he begins with solo piano, with the voice and violin
joining in the fourth bar, soon after accompanied by the bass. This second four-bar phrase ends with a “hiccupped” gesture and then the opening motive is repeated. This gesture is then replaced by another solo piano idea, which is a rhythmically more complex version of the original idea that develops again into something still larger.

Another example of a constant musical element may be found in the middle section of *Road Song*. During this 6/8 section, the piano is playing a quick and constantly-changing motive while the vocalist and violinist perform a long legato line above the melody. The complexity of the piano part is grounded by the simplicity of the melody. Example 18 is a transcription of the middle section of this work.

**Example 18: Transcription of Middle Section (1:55) of Tigran Hamasyan’s *Road Song***

During the following section when the drum set enters, the accompaniment becomes even more complicated while the melody remains simple. This provides the listener with something to focus on while the background changes at a fast rate.
When composing the transition (m. 174-230) in *Before I Die*... it was difficult to find a way to connect the electronics section and the large melody at the end of the piece. After my first listen to Tigran Hamasyan’s *Road Song*, I realized that a keyboard-driven section would work wonderfully as a transition in my work. I used to the melody from the previous section at the start of the transition, but modulated it through the key of the next section of the work. Using this melody provides continuity that the listener can recall through the changing context of the transition. Example 19 shows the original melody from measure 154, while example 20 shows the melody used during the transition in measure 174.

**Example 19: Before I Die... Voice (m.154-161)**

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>m. 154</th>
<th>m. 155</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mf</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold her in my arms... say good-bye to everyone,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

**Example 20: Before I Die... Voice (m.174-189)**

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>m. 174</th>
<th>m. 175</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mf</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold her in my arms... say good-bye to every one... good-bye,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

The transitional version of the melody has several features that create a sense of forward motion. At this point, the piece is moving at double speed with an arpeggiating piano
part based on four chords: one new chord (Gmin9), one chord from the canon (Dmin(add11)), and two chords from the 7/8 section (Ebmin11 and GbMaj7(omit3)). These chords continue repeating until the end of the section.

Table 5: Chord Comparison of m.154-161 and m.174-189 in *Before I Die*...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Original</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Transition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>154</td>
<td>BbMaj7</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>Gmin9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>175</td>
<td>Dmin(add11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>155</td>
<td>Dmin11</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>Ebmin11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>177</td>
<td>GbMaj7 (omit3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>156</td>
<td>BbMaj7/F</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>Gmin9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>179</td>
<td>Dmin(add11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>157</td>
<td>Amin7</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>Ebmin11</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>181</td>
<td>GbMaj7 (omit3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>158</td>
<td>BbMaj7</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>Gmin9</td>
</tr>
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<td>183</td>
<td>Dmin(add11)</td>
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<td>159</td>
<td>Fmaj7/A</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>Ebmin11</td>
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<td>185</td>
<td>GbMaj7 (omit3)</td>
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<td>160</td>
<td>BbMaj7</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>Gmin9</td>
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<td>Dmin(add11)</td>
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<td>161</td>
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<td>Ebmin11</td>
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<td>189</td>
<td>GbMaj7 (omit3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Expanding Accessibility

In addition to examining these artists’ works, I have also studied the methods these artists have used to make a living and to reach an audience. This is a subject that often goes unexplored in academia, yet is an integral part of being a professional musician.

*Snarky Puppy Marketing Method*

During the Question-and-Answer session at Dan’s Silver Leaf on February 19th, 2014, Mike League discussed Snarky Puppy’s approach to touring and creating a fan base. League explained that they would play locations where people encouraged them to go. During set
breaks they would talk with the audience members and make friends. The band didn’t just talk, but would make a connection with individual audience members. League and the rest of Snarky Puppy tell their fans inside information, which allow the fans to feel special. These fans and new friends then help draw larger audiences and connect them with venues to play in other areas. In addition to performing concerts, Snarky Puppy offers master classes and lessons to local high schools, music organizations, and colleges. These grass roots marketing campaign and educational outreach activities connect the audience to the band at a deeper level.

*Marketing Model for Before I Die...*

The *Before I Die...* project was approached in a manner similar to Michael League’s marketing method. Creating the wall on campus was a way for the general public to see the project in its early stages. Once the wall was constructed, people gathered around the wall and began to engage with it. Some people would pick up pieces of chalk and write their thoughts on the wall. Others would read the entire wall and contemplate the messages. People would often ask questions about the project to the person who was running the wall. These conversations led to developing relationships with the audience and making a connection with them. People would exchange stories with one another and develop a larger sense of community. When the event at the Warehouse Room occurred, more than half of the audience consisted of people from outside the music school, many of whom were people that I met personally at the wall.

*Reaching a Wider Audience*

One of the benefits to crossover music is that it has the capability to reach a wider audience than music composed in a single style. For example, Snarky Puppy combines elements
of jazz, gospel, and R&B. The crowd that they draw includes people that enjoy all three of these genres collectively, as well as people who only listen to one of these genres. Consequently, if Snarky Puppy played only jazz they would not draw as many audience members.

While Nico Muhly’s music is primarily heard by the contemporary classical audience, he has also collaborated with Björk, has created string arrangements for Sigur Rós, and has improvised on piano in concert with Jónsi Birgisson, Sigur Rós’ front man,. Engaging in this popular music vein has allowed Muhly to be exposed to audiences that would not have heard his work, thus serving as a gateway for those listeners to experience his original pieces.

Part of the beauty of reaching a wider audience is that the music can be enjoyed and appreciated at various levels of understanding. From my own experiences at their concerts, Snarky Puppy may make inside musical references to the music of D’Angelo or Chick Corea, which may relate specifically to the R&B and jazz fans in attendance, though everyone in the room will enjoy it.

Discussion of Authenticity

Many composers throughout Western classical music history have combined elements of other styles in a new musical composition. For example, Renaissance composers would borrow a cantus firmus melody; in the Romantic period, Tchaikovsky used folk songs, and in the Twentieth Century, Stravinsky used elements of jazz. Such borrowing still occurs today, the difference between the musical collaborations of the past and contemporary third-stream or crossover music is that the latter often incorporates musicians associated with these different styles: in order for crossover music to sound authentic, the players must be familiar with the
style they are playing. For example, if a Baroque string player articulates a line of stacatto eighth notes in a connected manner with heavy vibrato, specialists of the style would criticize the performance as being inconsistent with performance practice of the period. Similarly, if a classical musician is playing an excerpt of a third-stream piece in a jazz style, the player must be able to emulate the rhythmic feel and phrasing of the proper style or the result will sound inauthentic.

In his book *Musings The Musical Worlds of Gunther Schuller*. Schuller describes the combination of jazz and classical music in third-stream music by what it is not:

- It is not jazz with strings.
- It is not jazz played on 'classical' instruments.
- It is not classical music played by jazz players.
- It is not inserting a bit of Ravel or Schoenberg between be-bop changes—nor the reverse.
- It is not jazz in fugal form.
- It is not a fugue played by jazz players.
- It is not designed to do away with jazz or classical music; it is just another option amongst many for today’s creative musicians. (Schuller, 1986, 120)

*Friends not Hired Players*

A trend among the music of Becca Stevens, Snarky Puppy, Nico Muhly, Poovalur Sriji, Tigran Hamasyan, and James Blake is that the music is created and performed by friends. In all of these musical entities, the relationships go beyond just performing on stage. Having deep and trust-based relationships with your performers leads to a deeper understanding of the music.

Almost all of the players on the *Before I Die*... project were close friends of mine. Having a close bond with the performers creates a realm of trust. The player and composer know each other’s strengths and weaknesses. We are able to be honest with one another and work
efficiently and effectively. Knowing the players allows the composer to write idiomatically to the skill sets of the performer. This leads to a deep personal and musical connection. If the music were given to a different musician, it would be more difficult to be performed in the intended manner.

The first guitar part, for example, was written for my friend Kent Shores. The part involves heavy use of effects pedals, specific carnatic music ideas, an understanding of gospel stylistic traits, and the ability to improvise with rock and jazz vernacular—all elements that are part of Shores’ musical experience. A similar example can be made of the drum set part, composed for my friend Anthony Corsaro. Corsaro is familiar with playing behind the beat grooves, improvisation in odd meters, and gospel-style drum set phrasing. If the player is not familiar with these styles, the music will not sound authentic.

Communal Effect

Similar to the music of the gamelan, or Sub-Saharan African music this music is designed to be a communal experience. Members of the Denton cultural community were able to interact with the Before I Die... wall and make a connection. This communal experience was translated into the music by incorporating prerecorded versions of text read from the wall, similar to John Adams’ On the Transmigration of Souls. Many of the audience members were people who had written on the wall and were curious how the text would be used. Several of these audience members came up to me after the performance and mentioned to me what they had written and how it affected them when they heard their comments read during the piece.
In addition to the people drawn to the performance from the Before I Die... Wall, there were many people in attendance to hear the band The Funky Knuckles, who were also featured on the program. This band, a group of excellent musicians from Dallas, hosts a weekly Monday night jam at The Freeman on Commerce Street in Dallas. The Funky Knuckles jam session is mostly a tight group of Dallas professional and student musicians playing and watching music together. Many of these people attended the Before I Die... performance, creating a diverse crowd of new listeners for my music.

Conclusion

When composing, I find myself constantly dealing with obstacles. In order to overcome these obstacles, I look to the music of others for inspiration and solutions. Examining the build-up in Snarky Puppy’s Flood was a good model for Before I Die..., as an example of proper pacing and to reaffirm that only a few motives are needed to make a powerful work. It should be mentioned that in addition to Snarky Puppy, many of the implied materials techniques were brought to my attention by a band called the Funky Knuckles. During their weekly jam sessions, I was able to learn about how drum solos over vamps work, as well as how implied harmony and rhythm can be applied to any song.

Additionally, the music of many other artists have influenced my compositions, whether through specific musical materials or more general concepts. The music of Jeff Buckley, Porcupine Tree (composer Steve Wilson), and John Adams are always fresh in my mind when working on a new project. These musicians are able to develop musical materials in interesting ways, unhindered by traditional boundaries.
The musicians mentioned in this thesis are considered crossover artists because their music is informed by multiple genres. Such crossover music can serve as a gateway into other kinds of music because it may introduce audiences to styles of music they have never experienced before. Approaching music without genres allows the composition to be freer and to take a direction that could not be imagined if the composer’s mind was limited to a single aesthetic.
Appendix: Extended Musical Examples

Example A.1: Transcription of Becca Steven’s *Weightless* m.(1-27)

**Weightless**

There’s nothing like witnessing the moment that a life lets loose... and falls to the ground...

---

Tuning: DGDGBD

---

Becca

Liam

Chris

Acoustic Guitar

Accoration

Acoustic Bass

Drum Set

---

There’s nothing like witnessing the moment that a life lets loose... and falls to the ground...

weak autumn winds... up... and easy like a wish upon weightless dandelion seeds

weak autumn winds... up... and easy like a wish upon weightless dandelion seeds

---

---
Becca

There's nothing like witnessing the moment that a life lets lose, and falls to the ground.

Liam

There's nothing like

A. Gtr.

weak autumn winds... nip... easy like a wish upon weightless dan... de... li... on seeds

Accord.

A. Bass

De.
Becca: each life: beating at its brightest now full: ing the road rises up to greet

Liam: each life: full: ing

A. Gtr.: Cm

Accord.

A. Bass:

Dr.

Becca: and is painted for the day: sacred to witness a life

Liam: and is painted for the day: sacred let

Chris: let

A. Gtr.: Cm

Accord.

A. Bass:

Dr.
each life, beating at its brightest, now falling, the road rises up to greet
dandelion seeds, each life, beating at its brightest, now falling, the road rises up
weightless dandelion seeds, each life, beating at its brightest, now falling, the

A. Gtr.
Gm
Bm

Accord.

A. Bass

Dr.
Example A.2: Transcription of Snarky Puppy’s *Flood* (m.1-28)

**Flood**

- **Electric Piano**
  - Notation and staff notation for Electric Piano.
- **E. Pno.**
  - Notation and staff notation for Electric Piano.
- **Bass**
  - Notation and staff notation for Bass.
- **Dr.**
  - Notation and staff notation for Drums.

The music notation includes the score for Electric Piano, E. Pno., Bass, and Drums, with specific measures indicated (m.1-28). The notation is typical of jazz and improvisational music, with dynamic range and rhythmic complexity.

At the top, the tempo marker is indicated as 108 quarter notes per minute.


Chang, Candy. Before I Die I want to... Presentation at TED Global, Edinburgh, Scotland, July 2012.


League, Michael. UNT Question and Answer Presentation at Dan’s Silver Leaf, Denton, TX, February 19 2012.


PART II

MUSICAL SCORE
Instrumentation

Soprano I
Soprano II
Alto I
Alto II

Flute
Trumpet in Bb (Flugel Horn)
Alto Saxophone (Clarinet, Bass Clarinet)
Tenor Saxophone (Clarinet)

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello

Electric Guitar I (Volume Pedal, Octave Shifter, Distortion, Reverb, Slide)
Electric Guitar II (Volume Pedal)

Keyboard (Fender Rhodes Sound, and Lead Synth sound)
Bass (Double bass and Electric)
Drum set

Electronics (Ableton Live playback of file, interface, splitters, and headphones for 22 performers)

Performance Notes

The electronics start in the first measure with no one else playing; therefore the conductor should start directly on bar 1 with no count-in.
use slide, octave pedal (set to one octave below),
and reverb wash (5-10 second decay)
Hold her in my arms,

before I die,

before I die,

before I die,

before I die,

before I die,

before I die,

before I die,

before I die,

before I die,

before I die,

before I die,
my arms,

Ho-I'd her,

live
Ho - ld her,
in
ho

\begin{align*}
\text{G}\text{m}^{11} & \quad \text{Dm}^{11} & \quad \text{Gm}^{11} & \quad \text{Dm}^{11} \\
\text{Electric Bass} & \quad \text{Gm}^{11} & \quad \text{Dm}^{11} \\
\text{Drum Set} & \\
\end{align*}
say goodbye to everyone, and kiss my mother's
Hold her in my arms, say goodbye to everyone, goodbye.

\[ B\text{maj}\] Dm\text{I}\ B\text{maj}\ f\text{maj}\ Gm\text{I}\]
and kiss my mother's head,

and kiss my mother's head,

and kiss my mother's head.

S. I

S. II

A. I

A. II

Fl.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Tpt.

E. Gtr. I

E. Gtr. II

E. Piano

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Bass

Dr.

Dr.

Em\textsubscript{11} Sub

Bm\textsubscript{11} G/D F\textsubscript{7m7}

Dm\textsubscript{11} B/F Am\textsubscript{7}

Gm\textsubscript{11} Dm\textsubscript{11} B/F Am\textsubscript{7}

Dm\textsubscript{11} B/F Am\textsubscript{7}

Gm\textsubscript{11} Dm\textsubscript{11} B/F Am\textsubscript{7}

Comp Soloist

FOR REVIEW ONLY
Hold her in my arms and say goodbye to everyone goodbye.

S. I

S. II

A. I

A. II

Fl.

Alto Sax.

Cl.

Tpt.

E. Gtr. I

E. Gtr. II

E. Piano

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Bass

Dr.

Dr.
kiss my mother's head, Hold her

and kiss my mother's head for the last time

and kiss my mother for the last time

Bass Clarinet in B

octave down with heavy distortion

start to build

FOR REVIEW ONLY
Hold her in my arms say good-bye to everyone
good bye and kiss my mother's head, - - - -
Fl. with slide and light reverb

E. Gtr. I

E. Gtr. II

E. Piano

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Bass

Dr.

keep time and continue soloing
gradually slow down out of time

S. I

S. II

A. I

A. II

Fl.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Tpt.

E. Gtr. I

E. Gtr. II

E. Piano

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Bass

Dr.