Maria Schneider's Forms

Norms and Deviations in a Contemporary Jazz Corpus

Ben Geyer

Abstract   This study assesses twenty-five works by contemporary jazz composer Maria Schneider, tracking her compositional tendencies, identifying areas of continuity with the big-band arranging tradition, and capturing developments and idiosyncrasies apparent in her music. Schneider most often modifies the prototypical big-band arrangement by merging the solo section with the ensemble feature, resulting in a trademark "Solo-Recapitulation trajectory," which creates a deep-level structure comprising three "Spaces." "Space division criteria" capture how broad expectations for jazz performance affect listeners' experiences of Schneider's compositions. Spaces often comprise more than one "section," a formal unit at a shallower structural level; the Space division criteria differentiate sectional divisions internal to a single Space from divisions at the boundaries between Spaces. An overview of the corpus data summarizes the sectional makeup of each of the twenty-two normative pieces. Formal and hermeneutical accounts of three deviational pieces demonstrate the flexibility and expressive potential of the system. A retrofit of the formal framework onto thirteen notable big-band arrangements by Schneider's contemporaries and direct predecessors shows that the Solo-Recapitulation trajectory does not appear in these pieces, suggesting that Schneider may have pioneered the approach.

Keywords   jazz, Maria Schneider, form, corpus

MARIA SCHNEIDER (b. 1960) stands out as perhaps the most prominent composer and bandleader for jazz big band in her generation.[1] While many aspects of her compositional technique are notable, Schneider's formal control is especially salient (Heyer 2007; Martin 2003; McKinney 2008; Stewart 2007), particularly in the context of formal limitations that some writers have perceived in prior large-form compositions for jazz big-band instrumentation. In a discussion of the negative reception of Duke Ellington's *Black, Brown, and Beige*, for example, Gunther Schuller (1989: 150) defends Ellington's apparent formal shortcomings by pointing to a more general issue: "Before we judge Ellington too harshly, we might do well to remember that the whole question of large forms in jazz has not yet been entirely satisfactorily answered

---

1 Among her many accolades, Schneider has earned five Grammy awards and an honorary doctorate from the University of Minnesota. She is in high demand as a guest conductor and a commissioned composer. Her lineage (apprenticeship with Gil Evans and study with Bob Brookmeyer) is unmatched among living jazz composers.

35

by anyone else. And part of the problem—indeed its core problem—is the integration of improvisation and composition."[2] Schuller's assessment resonates with an intriguing statement by Rayburn Wright (1982: 115), then an esteemed jazz composition professor at the Eastman School of Music who would later become Schneider's composition teacher: "One of the persistent cries for liberation in the jazz world has been to break out of the confines of the 32-bar song form and to get away from the predictability of arrangements which follow the sequence of head, solo and shout variations, and recap of the head." It seems that both Schuller and Wright sense a compositional challenge lingering in the enterprise of large-form jazz composition for big band.

I speculate that these authors' critiques originate from circumstances that have constrained and shaped the development of musical structure in the big-band compositional tradition. Historically, most of these compositions have conformed to a widely accepted formal prototype. This "arranging prototype," discussed in greater detail below, can be summarized by two aspects: cyclical repetition of a fixed harmonic-metrical structure, and the organization of these cyclical repetitions into an overall framework of a melodic statement, solos, a shout chorus, and a melodic restatement. The hegemony of the arranging prototype has meant that formal experimentation has been guided not by a passing of formal trends from one generation the next but instead by a repeated return to a centralized reference point.[3] Each generation is surely aware of the prior generation's accomplishments, but a clear teleology of structural development among large-form pieces is elusive. As a result, we arrive at a process different from the one observed in European common-practice music, wherein formal deformations become the next generation's defaults (Hepokoski and Darcy 2006). In jazz it seems that exceptional pieces remain exceptions, and the defaults (as represented in the arranging prototype) remain staunchly static. Of course, this is not to say that jazz does not develop through influence: it has changed rapidly along any number of its musical parameters. Specifically pertaining to formal structure, however, the arranging prototype has been preserved with remarkable consistency in big-band composition.

In this article, I argue that Schneider's personalized compositional approach presents a viable answer (though not the only answer) to the challenge of large-form jazz composition. Her approach strategically alters the jazz arranging prototype to open large-scale formal processes without abandoning a sense of dialogue with that prototype. This approach is internally

---

2 Schuller's assessment can be understood to favor Eurocentric values that simply did not concern Ellington, an African American composer writing in a vernacular tradition with its own system of aesthetic values. The purpose here is not to assert a narrative of teleological progress but to examine a difference between Schneider's compositional focus and that of her predecessors.

3 Schneider's *In a Pinch* (1991) conforms rather directly to the prototype despite its publication postdating other more progressive pieces. (*In a Pinch* is a commission for a student band; it does not appear on a studio album and is therefore excluded from this study's corpus.)

consistent within her oeuvre, reliably guiding schematic comprehension of new cases. Despite its allegiance to the arranging prototype, Schneider's approach is dynamic enough to permit deviations that unlock structures of expansive scale.

This study applies a corpus methodology to the study of form in Schneider's music in an effort to measure claims of frequency, normativity, and deviation in a significant segment of her work. It aims to track Schneider's compositional tendencies, to identify areas of continuity with the arranging prototype, and to capture the developments and idiosyncrasies apparent in her music. The bird's-eye view of the corpus approach supports discussion of Schneider's individual pieces in the context of her output as a whole. Based on an individual analysis of each piece in the corpus, the study presents a theoretical framework designed both to capture the norms guiding Schneider's typical designs and to explain how the three exceptional cases relate to those norms. The corpus includes all of Schneider's pieces that satisfy four criteria: they appear on Schneider's first five studio albums, they are original compositions, they involve a steady pulse for some part of the track (i.e., they are not entirely rubato), and they are composed for jazz ensemble alone (which excludes the dance score *Dissolution*). Twenty-five pieces meet these criteria, and my analysis of them constitutes the basis on which the theoretical framework of this article is built.[4]

The theory aims to address the experience of listening to Schneider's music in real time; in David Huron's (2006: 219–25) terms, my intent is to capture "schematic expectations" that are meaningful for jazz listeners, even if those listeners lack "veridical expectations."[5] Admittedly, top-down analysis sometimes influences interpretation. I listened to this corpus many times as I developed the theory, and my conscious knowledge of the theory has occasionally shaped the analysis of particular pieces. A cautious reader may therefore wish to take the theory as a listening strategy rather than a theory of real-time perception.[6] Nonetheless, the formal features indicated by the theory are often audible in real time: the theory tells us something of how listeners familiar with the arranging prototype might interact with a given piece in an ecological setting such as a concert, even without prior knowledge of that particular piece.

I begin by examining Schneider's personalized modifications to the arranging prototype, whereby a trademark technique that I call the "Solo-Recapitulation trajectory" merges that four-part prototype with a three-part

---

4 All scores were downloaded electronically from www.mariaschneider.com. See also Schneider 1998.

5 David Huron (2006) identifies three types of expectation based on distinctions among the types of memory that they draw from. Episodic memory permits "veridical expectation," based on memory of a particular piece. Semantic memory allows "schematic expectation," involving gener-

alization from past examples. Short-term memory allows "dynamic expectation," which is engendered within the hearing of a piece.

6 While this study includes no empirical component, the issues raised suggest the potential for testing in a music psychology laboratory setting.

conception resonating with sonata form. I proceed by outlining the mechanics of the theory, which includes two formal unit types, "Spaces" and "sections," in which the latter are subordinate to the former.[7] Drawing on the prominent formal theories of William Caplin (1998) and James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy (2006), I introduce "Space division criteria" to establish the listener's formal comprehension process.

An overview of the corpus data follows, including summaries of the sectional divisions for all the Spaces and overall forms in the corpus. Analyses of three deviational pieces then demonstrate the flexibility and expressive potential of the system, resulting in hermeneutical readings mapping the expressive results of the deviations. The conclusion retrofits the formal framework developed here to a selection of pieces by preceding and contemporaneous composers, exploring the question of Schneider's place within her cultural context. An appendix presents a summative analysis of each piece in the corpus.

This theory is a simple one, built from basic (or even banal) assumptions about jazz performance practice. For example, the observation that performances tend to proceed from an exposition to a solo—an important premise of this theory—is no less a premise of jazz performance practice in general; it is certainly not exclusive to Schneider's style. The present theory of Schneider's work may therefore be a useful step toward a deeper understanding of other jazz repertoires, and the conclusion offers an initial attempt along those lines.

The formal framework

The jazz arranging prototype has two aspects. First, the prototype uses a cyclically repeating "scheme," most typically thirty-two measures in duration. A "scheme" in this context is a harmonic-metrical structure that corresponds with a composed melody (Love 2013); each repetition of the scheme, called a "chorus," serves as the ground for a new variation. The second aspect of the arranging prototype identifies four types of sections: a statement of the composed melody, a featured solo, an ensemble feature (or "shout chorus"), and a restatement of the melody.

At its most typical, an arrangement begins with a thirty-two-measure head—a statement of the melody. A solo section follows, retaining the schematic elements (hypermeter and harmony) but replacing the melody with a new elaboration. As a harmonic-metrical structure at a shallow middleground level, a scheme is designed to be elaborated differently in each new chorus, and the solo section's particular elaboration comprises improvised inventions by the rhythm section and soloist. The solo section often repeats the scheme for numerous choruses and commonly includes "backgrounds"—

---

7 I differentiate the higher and lower level by capitalizing *Spaces* but not *sections*.

composed horn parts and rhythm section hits that add interest, intensity, or motivic continuity to the performance. Following the solo, the ensemble feature presents yet another cycle of the scheme that draws attention to the full ensemble in a climactic passage, often highlighting the lead trumpet player's high-note technique and drummer's virtuosity. The prototypical arrangement concludes with a recapitulation of the head over a final chorus of the scheme. Thus an invariant harmonic-metric scheme repeats in multiple choruses with varying surface elaborations, each realized according to the generic conventions available to its section type.

Schneider deviates from the arranging prototype in two significant ways, both contributing to a sense of motion pervading the pieces in the corpus. First, with few exceptions, she does away with the cyclical scheme: rather than conforming to a preset, repeating scheme, she generates content freely. Schneider (pers. comm., June 9, 2015) emphasizes the importance of composing without the constraints of standard templates:

> Working on a notebook-size piece of writing staff paper is going to put your brain in four-bar-phrase song form subliminally just because the shape of the paper was designed for the most typical kind of thing—a thirty-two-bar song. That's why I like working on a big piece of score paper with lots of little staves— with no boxes—that aren't barred. It feels like a big empty canvas, so I don't feel like I'm being told what might come next: a bar of the same way.

As a result of Schneider's resistance to the prototypical scheme, each passage in her pieces accumulates phrases flexibly, without deference to the rigid requirements of the thirty-two-bar song form. Such flexibility grants her fine control of motional trajectory and the leeway to compose sections with expansive proportions.

Schneider's second significant divergence from the arranging prototype involves the fusion of the solo section with the ensemble feature, resulting in a hallmark of her style that I call the Solo-Recapitulation trajectory (SRT). In the arranging prototype, the boundary between the solo and the ensemble feature is typically unambiguous, marked by a salient transition from a soloist to a fully orchestrated ensemble texture. Instead, Schneider most often obscures this boundary, creating a sense of continuous process as the solo continues with a level of intensity traditionally reserved for the ensemble feature. As a norm within the corpus, the recapitulation's arrival at the end of this trajectory is audibly perceptible.

The discussion of metaphors of trajectory, motion, departure, arrival, and intensity—central to this perspective—resonates with the "energeticist" school's concern with "music's dynamic qualities" (Rothfarb 2008: 927).[8]

---

8 Though these metaphors have been used at least since Aristotle and remain prominent, Lee Rothfarb's (2002: 936) chapter in *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory* identifies an "energeticist school" centered in the early twentieth century, with writers including Heinrich Schenker, August Halm, and Ernst Kurth. In research predating Rothfarb's essay, Ingrid Monson (1996) applies similar metaphors to jazz in particular.

Schneider often emphasizes energeticist metaphors in her own language. For example, in discussing the process of writing a piece to be performed in collaboration with the popular dance company Pilobolus, Schneider (2012: 20:45–22:24) observes the following:

> To me, music is motion. I largely now figure out my music by dancing. What would happen is I would play something and these incredible bodies [would] start moving . . . and it would be like, I just played this note and I just made you do *that*. . . . Suddenly, I was playing way beyond myself, improvising way beyond myself . . . and I realized it was because I was playing to them. . . . That piece brought textures and ideas out of me and out of the band that were far less typically jazz than what I'd written because I was writing for motion. I wasn't writing with a historic template of an idiom coming at me from behind but I was purely writing to the abstraction of movement. . . . [Kandinsky] was looking to music to find abstraction in his painting. Maybe the movement helped me really find something else in my sound. Now I almost can't write a piece without dancing.

For Schneider, solo backgrounds are integral to the SRT process: in the arranging prototype, backgrounds often intensify toward the end of the solo to prepare the impending climax in the ensemble feature. In contrast, Schneider's backgrounds continue under the solo, never yielding to an ensemble feature. Thus, for Schneider, the final portion of the solo replaces the ensemble feature entirely: the end of the solo section achieves the same climactic intensity as the ensemble feature, but the solo leads straight to the recapitulation, foregoing the ensemble feature entirely. In response to an interviewer who pointed out that "you get used to putting your shout chorus three quarters of the way through," Schneider (2001: 7) replied: "Or that there even is a shout chorus, you know? It's like, 'What is a shout chorus, and why? Hasn't there been music written for centuries and in different cultures and nobody had a shout chorus. Why in jazz do we always have to have a God damn shout chorus?'" Schneider's finely honed control of motional trajectory is the corpus's most salient feature. This sense of trajectory results from her attention to each moment's intensity and her control of changes in intensity over time, on both small and large scales. Her formal designs center on the predictable and audible arrival of a particularly intense moment preparing the melodic return at the onset of the recapitulation, and the SRT is the mechanism used to accomplish that audible arrival.

This tendency for a clear SRT bears out in the corpus data. Of the corpus's twenty-two normative pieces, three include a conventional ensemble feature in lieu of the SRT—this option is a *lack* of SRT.[9] These examples draw directly on the overall form of the arranging prototype. The conditions around the ensemble feature directly oppose the possibility of an SRT: by concluding

---

9 *Last Season, Coming About*, and *Waxwing* include a prototypical ensemble feature in lieu of an SRT. I exclude deviational pieces from the corpus because their deviations are specifically tied to formal problems in achieving the SRT.
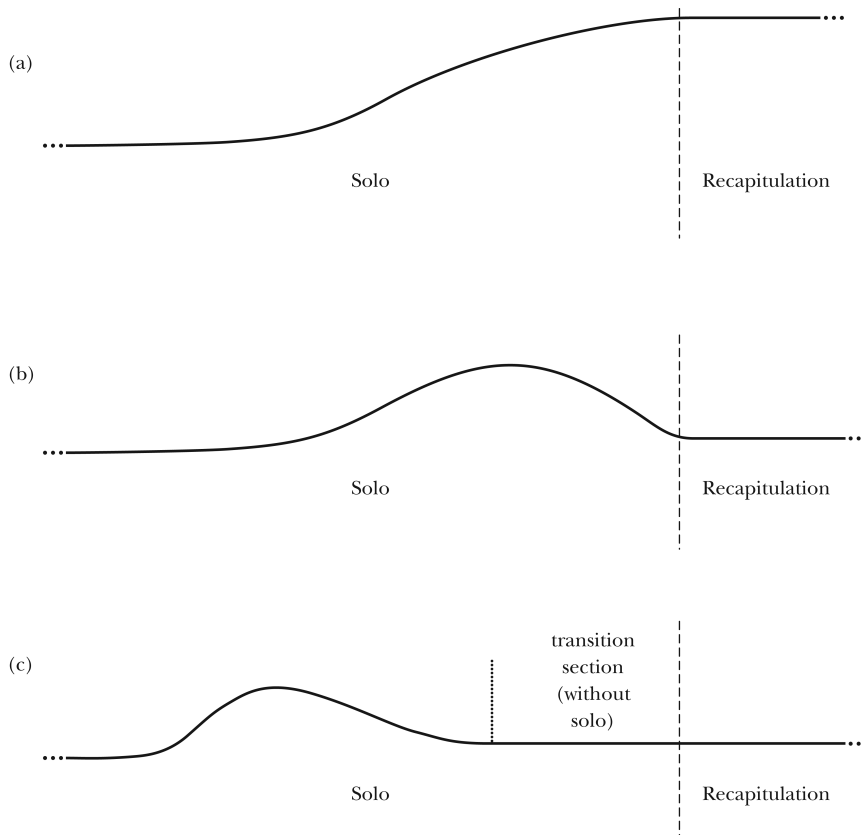
Figure 1. Three designs for the Solo-Recapitulation trajectory. (a) A trajectory of increasing intensity leads directly to the recapitulation. (b) The trajectory dips in intensity just before the recapitulation. (c) The trajectory includes a transition after the soloist drops out.

the solo section, shifting to a markedly different texture, and situating the piece's dynamic arrival well before the recapitulation of the melody, ensemble features override the effect typical in Schneider's work of a smooth passing of the torch from solo to recapitulation.

The nineteen normative pieces that do involve an SRT comprise three types. Figure 1a schematizes the most common type (with twelve instances, over half of the corpus's normative works), where a trajectory of increasing intensity leads directly to the recapitulation to carry momentum forward for a big ending.[10] A second type (Figure 1b) dips in intensity just before a smoothly prepared recapitulation with an understated onset.[11] *Dance You Monster to My Soft Song* and *El Viento* are the only two examples of a third SRT type, dia-

10 These twelve pieces are *The Pretty Road*, *Concert in the Garden*, *Dança Illusória*, *Bombshelter Beast*, *Sky Blue*, *Aires de Lando*, *Gumba Blue*, *Wyrgly*, *Night Watchmen*, *Allegresse*, *My Lament*, and *Hang Gliding*.

11 Understated recapitulations occur in *Evanescence*, *Journey Home*, *Gush*, *Pas de Deux*, and *Green Piece*.

Sonata →	Exposition	Development		Recapitulation
Schneider →	Exposition	Solo		Recapitulation
Big band →	Head	Solo	Ensemble Feature	Head

Figure 2. Schneider's forms as sonata–big-band hybrids.

grammed in Figure 1c, which involves a transition after the soloist has dropped out.[12] Schneider uses the time gained through the transition to defuse the accumulated intensity of the solo in preparation for a new beginning in the recapitulation.

In all three SRT types, Schneider prepares the recapitulation with obvious deliberation: our arrival at the piece's final stage is smooth and seemingly inevitable. Schneider (2012: 10:17–10:31) notes: "What I'm looking for in a piece of music is inevitability. I want, when somebody hears a piece, to feel like it takes them to all these places—even surprising places—but that the surprises feel inevitable." This inevitability is in contrast to what I hear as an interruption of trajectory imposed by the arranging prototype's ensemble feature. The SRT is an important outcome of Schneider's compositional process and often represents the crux of a piece's formal design; this very feature creates an opportunity for Schneider's formal deviations.

Figure 2 schematizes Schneider's formal approach as a hybrid of the arranging prototype and sonata form, each of which captures different aspects of the music. Schneider's melodic construction resonates with the motivic-thematic mind-set of sonata form (particularly the more sprawling manifestations of the nineteenth century), as do the free unfolding of her sections' internal organization and overarching three-part design. The arranging prototype accounts for the solo-based middle, and the SRT is a mutation of the jazz tradition's ensemble feature. As an informed musician in the twenty-first century, Schneider certainly has access to both conceptions.

The theoretical framework: Terminology and principles

Terminology

The fusion of the arranging prototype's solo and ensemble feature into a single unit suggests a conceptual shift from a form with four units to one with

12 The term *transition* here refers to a neutral, connective passage, unrelated to the sonata form transition. Its meaning in this study is defined more precisely below.

Spaces:	Exposition Space		Solo Space			Recapitulation Space	
Sections:	introduction	expositional section	soloistic section	ensemble feature	transition	recapitulative section	coda

Figure 3. Formal diagram of *Last Season*.

three units. I refer to the units at this structural level as "Spaces." These Spaces occupy the deeper of two discrete structural levels; they are distinguished from the seven types of formal units at the shallower "section" level. Figure 3 diagrams the Space and section formal levels in *Last Season*; as the only piece in the corpus with exactly one section of each type, *Last Season* is instructive.

The three higher-level Spaces, in the figure's top row of boxes, are the Exposition Space, Solo Space, and Recapitulation Space. Of the seven section types, three are endemic to a particular Space type and are labeled with the corresponding Space's root word: expositional, soloistic, and recapitulative. Thus *Exposition Space* and *expositional section* carry distinct meanings since a Space occupies a higher structural level than a section, but their common root word indicates an affinity between them. Likewise, soloistic sections and recapitulative sections are lower-level sections that correspond with higher-level Solo and Recapitulation Spaces, respectively.[13] Each particular Space in the corpus comprises its corresponding section at minimum, but Spaces are by no means limited to just one constituent section. For example, every Exposition Space includes an expositional section, but many also include other section types, such as the introduction in *Last Season*.

I identify sections according to their function in a sense resonant with Caplin's (1998: 9) *Classical Form*—the manner in which a section fits into and contributes to a piece's form. Broadly, expositional and recapitulative sections are thematic: the expositional section introduces new themes, while the recapitulative section occurs after a Solo Space and refers directly to themes from the Exposition Space.[14] The soloistic section paradigmatically features a soloist but also admits group improvisations.

In addition to the three section types corresponding to Spaces, the corpus includes four other section types: the introduction, ensemble feature,

---

13 Space labels are capitalized (e.g., *Solo Space*), while section labels are lowercase (e.g., *soloistic section*). For the three root words applied as labels for both Spaces and sections, I use noun forms for Spaces (*Exposition, Solo, Recapitulation*) and adjectival forms for sections (*expositional, soloistic, recapitulative*). For section types that do not overlap terminologically with Spaces, I retain the typical noun forms (*introduction, transition, ensemble feature, coda*).

14 Schneider is prone to thematic resettings and transformations, but the judgment of relatedness to the exposition is usually relatively straightforward.

transition, and coda. The introduction precedes the first expositional sec-
tion, and the coda succeeds the final recapitulative section. The transition is
distinguished by its internal placement: it separates two other sections rather
than occurring at the beginning or end of the entire piece. The three cases
of ensemble features occur when a soloist drops out and the ensemble exe-
cutes a texturally distinct passage, usually climactic. The three ensemble fea-
tures are unlikely to be confused with a recapitulative section by experienced
listeners: they feel distinctly developmental rather than thematic in function,
and they are not directly related to the melodic material from the Exposition
Space.

Principles

The boundaries between sections are usually clearly perceptible, owing to
salient changes in surface features such as instrumentation and texture. Each
new sectional boundary offers a provisional opportunity for a boundary at
the deeper Space level. Such an opportunity is confirmed or denied accord-
ing to broad expectations for how Spaces tend to be ordered as form unfolds
within a typical jazz performance. For example, jazz listeners recognize for-
mal significance in the moment when the head statement yields to the first
soloist, and this sensibility holds weight in listening to Schneider's composi-
tions. If we are situated in Exposition Space, reach a sectional boundary, and
hear a soloistic section begin, a Space boundary is confirmed. In contrast, if
this same sectional boundary reveals a transition instead of a soloistic section,
the provisional opportunity for a new Space is denied, deferring the antici-
pated Solo Space for a later sectional boundary.

This process of taking surface rhetorical cues as the "when" of impor-
tant events at a deeper structural level echoes the perspective of Hepokoski
and Darcy (2006: 9), who describe the work of a composer as "the task of
creating an engaging musical pathway through pre-established, generically
obligatory stations," requiring that "audible goals be successively articulated
and secured." These generic stations are audible to competent listeners based
on cultural knowledge. For example, in a sonata movement, a listener expects
a return to an ordered presentation of the materials of the exposition after
hearing an active dominant at the end of a development section, and such a
return affirms their place in the form when it occurs as expected. We take in
these cues as features of the extreme surface, yet they guide our comprehen-
sion of form as it unfolds at a deeper level.

Three "Space division criteria" guide listeners' formal expectations in
Schneider's pieces:

1.   Each piece begins with Exposition Space.
2.   The initiation of Solo Space coincides with the beginning of the
      first passage that features a soloist *and* abandons expositional func-
      tion, that is, the presentation of themes.

3. Recapitulation Space begins at the onset of the first recapitulative section, that is, the return of thematic materials from the Exposition Space.

These criteria are framed simply to reflect the straightforward expectation that jazz performances begin with a melodic statement, continue with solos, and conclude with a melodic return.

The plans of lower-level sections reflect order rather than proportion. Multiple, audibly distinct passages of expositional function, for example, may accumulate expansively without articulating the beginning of a new higher-level Space. In the context of the corpus data, I count consecutive modules of the same function as a single, sustained section if no other section of differing function intervenes. Schneider's Spaces are rather flexible in the way they unfold; distinguishing between consecutive sections of the same type (e.g., expositional section 1, expositional section 2, etc.) would add little to the formal readings and would distract from the sense of Space-level design that emerges from a zoomed-out view of the corpus. Whether we hear a single expositional module or a series of them, we feel situated in Exposition Space until the Solo Space takes over.

An analysis of *Last Season*, from the album *Evanescence* (1994), demonstrates the system.[15] Table 1 presents each piece's section and Space labels, along with the time stamp of their onsets.[16] The Exposition Space begins with two introductions: a rubato piano introduction by pianist Kenny Werner at 00:01 / m. 1, followed by the establishment of the tempo through an E♭mi7 vamp in the rhythm section and woodwinds at 00:36 / m. 10. Because both of these roles are introductory in function and precede any thematic statement, they collectively form an introduction, since no other section of differing function separates them.

The expositional section begins with the plainly audible entrance of a thematic statement at 00:51 / m. 18, with sparkling responses from Harmon-muted trumpets and straight-muted trombones. A reorchestrated repetition at 01:46 / m. 47 subtly gains intensity as a newly introduced countermelody creates greater density. The repeated thematic statement arrives at a peak at 02:18 / m. 63, beat 4, followed by a local denouement to end the Exposition Space.

At 02:33 / m. 72 Schneider abandons thematic content in favor of a flügelhorn solo by Tim Hagans, initiating the Solo Space according to Space division criterion 2. The solo begins with accompaniment by bass alone for a dynamic low (it later builds through the addition of the rest of the rhythm

15 *Last Season*, one of the more conventional pieces in the corpus, could be heard as a modification of the arranging prototype. This resonance with the prototype does not preclude the application of the framework proposed in this study.

16 I suggest that the reader evaluate these analyses by beginning playback about fifteen seconds before a section starts in order to hear the preceding context and the conditions of the change from one section to the next.

Table 1. Form summary of *Last Season*

Time stamp	Measure	Comments
00:01	1	**Exposition Space**: *introduction* [rubato piano]
00:36	10	[time established through E♭mi7 vamp]
00:51	18	*expositional section* [thematic statement]
01:46	47	[repetition of thematic statement]
02:33	72	**Solo Space**: *soloistic section* [flugelhorn solo: Tim Hagans]
03:32	103	[backgrounds]
04:30	136	[saxophone solo: Tim Ries]
05:27	166	[backgrounds, far greater intensity than in first solo]
06:24	199	*ensemble feature* [conventional "shout chorus": high trumpet, busy drums, rhythmic ensemble hits]
06:50	214	*transition* [return of vamp from m. 10]
07:05	222	**Recapitulation Space**: *recapitulative section* [abridged restatement of the thematic material]
08:00	251	*coda* [returns to the vamp from m. 10 and decays]

section and, eventually, horn backgrounds). At this point the cessation of thematic content, the entrance of an improvisational solo, and the accompanying changes in texture and dynamics are as formally significant as they are obvious.

Notice that Table 1 uses boldface for Spaces and italics for sections. The table also includes certain annotations, in brackets, that are useful in tracking formal progress yet irrelevant to the analytic system. For example, the entrance of backgrounds at 03:32 / m. 103 marks a noticeable phenomenological event, but it does not trigger an essential formal shift at the section level and therefore does not register in the corpus data. Backgrounds do not impact a passage's essential status as a Solo Space, and they do not disrupt the ongoing continuity of a soloistic section.[17] Further, the entrance of a saxophone solo in place of the flügelhorn at 04:30 / m. 136 does nothing to disrupt the passage's ongoing identity as a soloistic section; since no other section type intervenes, the section's soloistic identity remains. This procedure resonates with the free accumulation of solos in conventional jazz performance practice: passing from one solo to the next does not undermine the larger sense of situatedness in a solo section.

An ensemble feature takes over for the solo at 06:24 / m. 199, differentiated from a recapitulative section primarily by its lack of thematic parallelism with the materials of the Exposition Space. This ensemble feature is typical of the jazz arranging tradition: trumpet high notes, busy drums, and rhythmic ensemble hits. A return of those expositional thematic materials in a recapitulative section signifies the Recapitulation Space at 06:50 / m. 222, and a coda at 08:00 / m. 251 takes the piece to its end.

17 This feature of the theory is congruent with Schenkerian theory, for example, in that structural status can be independent of phenomenological salience.

Table 2. Functional designs of formal Spaces

Key	Expositions		Solos		Recapitulations	
i: introduction	ie	11	s	13	rc	18
e: expositional	e	6	st	2	r	4
t: transition	iet	3	sts	4		
s: soloistic	iete	2	sf	1		
f: ensemble feature			ststf	1		
r: recapitulative			sft	1		
c: coda						

Last Season follows the Space division criteria without incident, but its sectional design represents only one of many possibilities. In what follows I examine Schneider's range of normative possibilities for the internal designs of her Spaces and for her overall forms.

The corpus's spaces and overall forms

Table 2 tallies the designs for the Exposition, Solo, and Recapitulation Spaces in the corpus's twenty-two normative works according to letter labels applied to the seven section types, as listed in the key to the left.[18] Table 2 lists four Exposition Space designs. An introduction (i) precedes the first expositional section (e) in sixteen pieces (73 percent). Two Exposition Spaces include an internal transition (t), helping the listener recognize the boundary between two distinct parts of a single Space, and three feature a transition leading into the subsequent Solo Space. Space division criterion 2 instructs us that a transition located between expositional and soloistic sections (s) belongs to Exposition Space. Solo Spaces therefore cannot begin with a transition, reflecting the intuition that the emergence of a soloist (not the preparation for one) marks the Solo Space.

Of the three types of Spaces, Solo Spaces are the most flexible, with six distinct normative designs. The most common design for Solo Spaces includes a soloistic section (s) alone (59 percent), but many Solo Spaces also include transitions between different featured soloists (23 percent). The two examples of the third type of SRT (see Figure 1c) use a transition at the end of the Solo Space to defuse intensity and prepare the Recapitulation Space. (This excludes *Last Season*, whose ensemble feature precludes an SRT.) Three Solo Space designs include an ensemble feature (f); I read the ensemble feature as a continuation of the Solo Space rather than the beginning of the Recapitulation Space, based on Space division criterion 3. Recapitulation Spaces demonstrate far less flexibility: each Recapitulation Space design consists of at least one recapitulative section (r), and eighteen pieces (82 percent) end with a coda (c).

18 This discussion excludes deviational designs.

Table 3. Normative forms in the corpus

	Piece	*Copyright*	*Exposition*	*Solo*	*Recapitulation*
1	*Pas de Deux*	2001	e	s	r
2	*Allegresse*	1997			
3	*The "Pretty" Road*	2007			
4	*Aires de Lando*	2006	e	s	rc
5	*Sky Blue*	2004			
6	*Evanescence*	1991			
7	*Journey Home*	1999			
8	*Dança Illusória*	2001	ie	s	rc
9	*My Lament*	1990			
10	*Wyrgly*	1989			
11	*Gumba Blue*	1984			
12	*Green Piece*	1987	ie	sts	rc
13	*Night Watchmen*	1996			
14	*Bombshelter Beast*	1995	iet	s	r
15	*Hang Gliding*	1999	iet	s	rc
16	*Dance You Monster*	1991	iet	st	r
17	*El Viento*	1994	e	st	rc
18	*Gush*	1992	iete	s	r
19	*Concert in the Garden*	2004	iete	s	rc
20	*Waxwing*	1993	ie	sf	rc
21	*Coming About*	1995	ie	ststf	rc
22	*Last Season*	1985	ie	sft	rc

Table 3 describes the sectional makeup of the corpus's twenty-two normative pieces. The thirteen distinct designs are roughly ordered from simplest to most complex. Notice that the pieces' copyright dates do not correspond to this ordering: Schneider's formal designs have not followed a teleology of simplicity to complexity. I suggest that she develops forms according to the needs of each piece, selecting from a range of normative designs that were available even at the outset of her career. The first of Schneider's deviational forms (discussed below) was copyrighted in 2001, relatively late in the corpus's chronology.

Only the table's first listed piece, *Pas de Deux*, consists of the three Spaces' corresponding section types without further adornment, schematized as esr (expositional-soloistic-recapitulative). Pieces 2–5 decorate this basic rubric by adding a coda (esrc); pieces 6–9 further add an introduction (iesrc), and pieces 10–13 add a transition between two soloists within Solo Space (iestsrc). Pieces 14–19 vary these basic designs through variously placed transitions. *Waxwing* and *Coming About* (pieces 20 and 21) lead to the Recapitulation Space through an ensemble feature, as does *Last Season* (piece 22), which additionally includes a transition between the ensemble feature and Recapitulation Space. The most recent piece to include an ensemble feature is from 1995: Schneider seems to have phased out the ensemble feature by one third of the way through the corpus. Twenty-two of the corpus's twenty-five

pieces map onto the framework readily; the following section discusses the three exceptions.

Deviational designs

As in Hepokoski and Darcy's sonata theory, the theory I describe in this article identifies deviations from formal norms and attempts to explain those deviations through hermeneutical analysis. I map the normative design onto a standard narrative arc and read deviations as complications in that narrative, requiring hermeneutical interpretation.[19] Each of the corpus's three deviational designs overrides two types of norms: the SRT and the progression of Spaces, as guided by the Space division criteria. The achievement of the SRT seems to be an obligatory signal that a piece is sufficiently complete, and its subversion presents a formal problem. Schneider solves each of these problems through infractions to the Space division criteria: she resuscitates some section that should no longer be available since its corresponding Space has already culminated. In each case this backtracking in our sense of place ultimately creates a second opportunity for an SRT, whose eventual success marks the satisfactory completion of the form.

Table 4 summarizes the form of *Cerulean Skies*, from the album *Sky Blue* (2007). The track begins with an eerie collection of rubato piano, bass, and accordion, set against a collage of bird sounds; Schneider informs us in her liner notes that the piece's "core" image is the "fertile earth full of trees and life." She further notes that, with one exception, "every bird you'll hear throughout this piece comes from our mouths, instruments, or various whistles." Despite the extramusical focus of the opening bird sounds, the formal division criteria indicate that it opens with Exposition Space and that anything occurring before thematic materials is categorized as introductory in function.

The first expositional section begins with a short vamp at 01:33 / rehearsal letter K, followed by a thematic statement at 01:46 / m. 1. Example 1a notates the theme, a simple statement-restatement-departure-conclusion design with a slightly varied restatement (Everett 2001). This theme is repeated directly to create a paired unit, and this paired unit occurs three times, with each pair separated by a brief piano-centered interlude (notated in Example 1b).

The section at large gradually accumulates intensity through orchestration, dynamics, added countermelodies and accompaniment figures, and a variety of unsettling phrase-rhythmic deviations. As the Exposition Space ends, the intensity fades into a new dynamic starting point, preparing Donny McCaslin to begin his saxophone solo over an eight-measure open vamp, grounded in the rhythm section by a 12/8 variation on the tresillo rhythm

---

19 See, for example, Hepokoski and Darcy's (2006: 315) discussion of the i–v harmonic plan in minor mode expositions.

Table 4. *Cerulean Skies* form summary

Time stamp	Measure	Comments
00:01	A	**Exposition Space**: *introduction* [piano, bird sounds, no time]
00:46	D	[ascending bassline creates (weak) sense of direction]
01:33	K	*expositional section* [short vamp followed by melodic entry]
01:46	1	[thematic statement: in 3/4, richly orchestrated]
04:26	76	**Solo Space**: *soloistic section* [saxophone]
06:04	76	[backgrounds enter on the sixth repetition of rehearsal 76]
08:09	128	["faux recapitulative section"]
08:40	141	[time decays into rubato]
08:49	145	[rubato accordion solo over piano figures]
12:18	185	*transition* [solo piano, still rubato]
13:01	195	**Recapitulation Space** [theme in accordion—rubato (no SRT)]
13:28	204	[brass chorale]
14:10	214	[accordion melody]
14:37	223	[chorale, lots of fermatas]
15:16	237	[regular time returns]
15:54	253	[vocals—theme from Exposition Space, transformed]
17:02		[theme repeats: more literal, but still transformed]
17:40	300	*soloistic section* [too late!]
18:54		[backgrounds achieve SRT]
19:32	348	*recapitulative section* [recomposed again; soloist continues]
20:16		*coda*

with D13sus harmony (notated in Example 2, 04:26 / m. 76). The soloistic section builds intensity typically over its first 01:40 and is bolstered by backgrounds entering on the sixth repetition of the vamp (06:04, but still notated as m. 76). These backgrounds begin a process of motion toward a Recapitulation Space. Up to this point, despite the expansiveness of the Exposition and Solo Spaces, we have heard no transgressions of the formal framework as theorized above.

This normative path begins to falter at 08:09 / m. 128, when the backgrounds arrive at what could plausibly be a recapitulative section. In the context of the corpus, we have heard a sufficient amount of material by the eight-minute point to warrant a move to Recapitulation Space. Several musical features coincide with Schneider's typical markers for recapitulative sections: the melody is orchestrated in a high register in a unison of voice, clarinet, soprano saxophone, and the entire trumpet section, allowing the ensemble to compete with the soloist in what could be a move to take the baton. (Recall that, according to Space division criterion 3, the entrance of a recapitulative section initiates Recapitulation Space even if the soloist continues). The harmony breaks away from several minutes' worth of tresillo-based vamps comprising only one harmony per eight-measure span, returning at this point to the theme's harmonic progression (I6–vi–IV–V–I) and one-chord-per-measure harmonic rhythm. In sum, these markers create the expectation that the soloist will step to the side in favor of a Recapitulation Space.

(a)

(b)

Example 1. *Cerulean Skies*. **(a) Theme, mm. 1–8. (b) Intermittent piano vamp, m. 16.**

Example 2. *Cerulean Skies*, **12/8 tresillo rhythm variation, m. 76, repeated 4:26–6:43.**

Example 3. *Cerulean Skies*, "faux recapitulation," mm. 128–35.

But Example 3 reveals that this passage lacks the most salient aspect of the expositional theme: the repeated-note motive (see Example 1a). This climax of the solo backgrounds is not satisfyingly recapitulative after all. Thus this provisional opportunity for an SRT fails, creating a formal problem to be solved later in the piece. At the moment of this theme's melodic resolution (08:49 / m. 145), the time decays to prepare a rubato accordion solo by Gary Vercase.[20] Despite the suggestion of Recapitulation Space, this is a "faux recapitulation": more than half of the piece remains to be heard.

Vercase's solo is a directionless daydream: splashes of color paint a meterless, rubato canvas of piano, bass, and bowed cymbal effects. At 12:18 / m. 185 Frank Kimbrough's piano gently nudges the accordion with a newly introduced "chorale melody," seemingly reminding it to wake: there is more left to do. Finally, at 13:01 / m. 195 the accordion returns to the characteristic repeated-note motive of the expositional theme, notated in Example 4. I take this to be the onset of the Recapitulation Space based on Space division criterion 3 (the return of thematic material from the Exposition Space), but this thematic return has been prepared by an understated rubato accordion solo rather than a climactic close of the Solo Space, as we might expect in a more formally normative piece. It is too introverted and lacks preparation by an SRT; this is a formal problem that will ultimately demand a corrective as well. Still, this reemergence of the thematic motive is a tentative first step in what will be a slow process of attaining SRT.

20 In jazz practice, *time* refers not only to tempo but also to the active expression of the beat by musicians, especially in the rhythm section.

Example 4. *Cerulean Skies*, rubato recapitulative section, 13:01 / mm. 195–98.

Spaces:	Exposition Space		Solo Space		Recapitulation Space			
Sections:	introduction	expositional section	soloistic section	transition section	recapitulative section	soloistic section	recapitulative section	coda

Figure 4. *Cerulean Skies*, form diagram.

The chorale melody alternates with this problematized thematic statement through a succession of oscillations between the melodies, as listed in Table 4. Each oscillation gains momentum as Schneider transitions from rubato into steady tempo. The drums revive a groove at 15:16 / m. 237, with the quarter note marked at 74 bpm (the recording is slightly faster). Finally the return of the solo saxophone at 17:40 / m. 300 opens an opportunity for another attempt at an SRT. Yet this solo is too late, as the Solo Space has already culminated with the reentry of the theme. At 19:32 / m. 348, thematic material from the Exposition Space returns, this time with a proper SRT: although the saxophone solo at 17:40 / m. 300 occurs "too late," it nonetheless provides adequate support for the requisite SRT.

Figure 4 summarizes the form in *Cerulean Skies*. The faux recapitulation within the first soloistic section overrides the expected onset of Recapitulation Space. When we do later hear the theme return in the first recapitulative section, we encounter a different problem: the absence of any strong SRT. As a corrective, Schneider brings back a soloistic section even after the Recapitulation Space has begun in earnest, redeeming the form by replacing its missing SRT. The reemergence of this soloistic section after the Solo Space has already culminated challenges our basic expectations for form in jazz, as expressed through the Space division criteria.

Bulería, Soleá y Rumba, from the album *Concert in the Garden* (2004), employs similar techniques in a different way. *Cerulean* and *Bulería* are respectively the longest and second longest pieces in the corpus, and both fall toward the end of the corpus's copyright chronology (2007 and 2004). It seems that Schneider has unlocked a technique for dramatically expanding a piece: undermining the SRT and reverting to an earlier part of the form for a second attempt. Whereas *Cerulean* reverts to a solo section once Recapitulation

Table 5. *Bulería, Soleá y Rumba* form summary

Time stamp	Measure	Comments
00:02	1	**Exposition Space**: *introduction* [Bulería pattern played in cajons: notated as 12/8 but actually alternates between 12/8 and 3/2]
00:19	3	*expositional section* [theme]
01:55	54	*transition* [reed-focused; decreasing intensity]
02:20	66	[out of time: ritardando/fermata]
02:34	68	*expositional section* [new tempo]
03:44	89	["soleá," in 3, flute enters]
05:25	113	**Solo Space**: *soloistic section* [with backgrounds]
10:53	206	*transition*
11:19	209	*expositional section* [too late!]
11:31	215	[vocal melody]
12:44	263	[ensemble melody]
13:56	311	*soloistic section* [flügelhorn]
14:43	327	[backgrounds]
15:13	349	[backgrounds drop out]
15:25	355	[backgrounds reenter for clear SRT]
16:00	372	**Recapitulation Space**: *recapitulative section* [elaborated; climactic]
16:56	394	*coda* [long-range trajectory of decreasing intensity]

Space has already emerged, *Bulería* presents a new expositional section during the Solo Space.

As shown in Table 5, the first soloistic section in *Bulería* (05:25 / m. 113) begins as a mysterious rubato setting; Donny McCaslin's emotive saxophone evokes "Psalm" from John Coltrane's *A Love Supreme*. The solo leads to a significant climax toward its end, suggesting an approach to the expected SRT. Instead, the intensity decays to near silence, and a transition leads to a half cadence with a fermata at 11:10 / m. 208, marking the nadir of a large-scale trajectory of decreasing intensity. As in *Cerulean*, *Bulería*'s momentum has stalled in a rubato passage at the end of a featured solo. In contrast to the understated recapitulative section that follows in *Cerulean*, however, the transition in *Bulería* leads to the reemergence of a thematic section, supported by a steady pulse, at 11:19 / m. 209.

Because we have already heard a featured soloist, this thematic section's entrance suggests the onset of Recapitulation Space. However, its function seems not to be recapitulative: it has not been prepared by an SRT, and it feels like a new beginning rather than an arrival. Further, the initial expositional theme in Example 5a, with its 12/8 meter and meandering contour, has only an opaque relationship to the present theme, notated in Example 5b. This section is neither soloistic nor recapitulative: I hear it as a return of expositional function. Like the soloistic section in *Cerulean*'s Recapitulation Space, this expositional section's placement in the Solo Space is too late.

This expositional section is expansive. The numerous restatements of its melody gradually become more elaborate, densely orchestrated, and dynam-

(a)

(b)

Example 5. Comparison of themes in *Bulería*: (a) the initial expositional theme and (b) the theme at 11:19 / m. 209.

ically intense; each statement gains energy as it modulates in an ascending minor third key cycle. At 13:56 / m. 311 a new, in-tempo soloistic section begins featuring Greg Gisbert on flügelhorn, carrying a dual meaning as both a continuation of Solo Space (which we never left) and exactly the soloistic section we expect after an expositional section (which returned unexpectedly). This time the solo establishes a consistent trajectory into the Recapitulation Space. Thus, in the second opportunity to prepare the Recapitulation Space through a soloistic section's momentum, the form overcomes the problem manifested by the first soloistic section's rubato decay by achieving an SRT.

Figure 5 diagrams the form of *Bulería*. The too-late expositional section within the Solo Space feels like a focal point of *Bulería*'s overall form. In a sense, it begins a normative esrc form, nested into the piece's last seven minutes. The piece as a whole could be schematized as ietest(esrc), where these last four sections are parenthesized to show their internal formal completeness. Through extensive development of the piece's themes and moods, the first eleven minutes of the piece have prepared us for, effectively, a second chance at an Exposition Space. To my ear, the depth of preparation for this too-late expositional section makes it one of the most beautiful passages in the corpus.

It will be useful to begin analysis of a third deviational design, *Choro Dançado* (also from *Concert in the Garden* [2004]), with a brief discussion of its thematic materials. Example 6a notates the piece's opening theme, an ‖:A:‖:B:‖ binary form whose C-minor A section is saturated with accented neighbor and

Spaces:	Exposition Space				Solo Space				Recapitulation Space	
Sections:	introduction	expositional section	transition section	expositional section	soloistic section	transition section	expositional section	soloistic section	recapitulative section	coda

Figure 5. ***Bulería, Soleá y Rumba*, form diagram.**

(a)

(b)

Example 6. Thematic materials in *Choro Dançado*: (a) the initial theme with reduced-out elaborations and (b) the second theme.

passing tones. The theme arrives at a half cadence at the end of A, and B continues with a sequence of ascending thirds, with local arrivals on F and A♭ on a larger trajectory to C, the parallel major of the global tonic. I have reduced out its surface elaborations because, in a compositional technique typical for Schneider, this shallow middleground skeleton repeats with a different surface elaboration in each iteration; this particular structural level of the theme represents numerous iterations throughout the piece. Compare this initial theme to Example 6b, another theme that emerges later. The distinction between these themes is an important point to take from this discussion: the second theme bears no clear relationship to the first.

Table 6 summarizes *Choro*'s form. Like *Cerulean* and *Bulería*, *Choro*'s first soloistic section decays into rubato after 05:17 / m. 184, undermining the expected SRT. Whereas *Cerulean* and *Bulería* follow this formal problem with

Table 6. *Choro Dançado* **form summary**

Time stamp	Measure	Comments
00:01	1	**Exposition Space**: *expositional section* [A and B subsections]
02:16	88	**Solo Space**: *soloistic section* [saxophone]
03:48	136	[backgrounds]
05:17	184	[decay into rubato]
05:40	197	[New theme with piano solo; too late for new theme]
06:50	237	**Recapitulation Space**: *recapitulative section* [B-based]
07:32	261	*soloistic section* [too late! second chance at SRT]
07:59	277	*recapitulative section* [amalgamates A and B subsections]
09:25	317	*coda*

rubato transitions, *Choro* recovers more quickly. The decay in tempo is less extreme than in the other two pieces and requires less effort to overcome: time returns at 05:33 / m. 193, after only a short passage of rubato. Despite this rubato passage's brevity, its disruption to the tempo suffices to undermine the potential for an SRT.

A new expositional section enters at 05:40 / m. 197; this section is "too late," coming after a soloistic section featuring saxophonist McCaslin has taken us beyond Exposition Space. This is the second theme, discussed above and presented in Example 6b; its lack of recognizable parallelism with the expositional theme prevents us from hearing it as recapitulative—the only thematic function still available after the Solo Space has begun, according to the Space division criteria. This section's identity has a further complication beyond its expositional function: an improvised piano solo by Kimbrough decorates the melody, flavoring the section as a hybrid between soloistic and expositional functions.

In normative forms, the broad expectations captured in the Space division criteria disambiguate such hybridized sections: soloist activity in Exposition Space does not cue Solo Space until thematic material subsides (Space division criterion 2), and the return of thematic material declares Recapitulation Space even if a soloist continues (Space division criterion 3). But in this deviational environment, the disarray of sectional functions muddies our sense of formal location to create functional uncertainty: soloistic or expositional? Ultimately, I hear this section as being expositional—the piano improvisation is decoration to a salient melodic statement—but the tension in this reading demonstrates the sort of challenge to normativity that the theoretical framework aims to capture.

Kimbrough stops improvising toward the end of this section, instead doubling the woodwind melody as intensity increases. This would seem to be just the opportunity for an SRT, but two issues complicate this reading. First, this is not a proper soloistic section, as the solo was never central to the texture and drops out too soon to usher in the Recapitulation. Second, although the trajectory arrives at a new section at 06:50 / m. 237, that section is not imme-

diately recognizable as the theme—or at least not as the theme's incipit. Instead, this section begins with several iterations of the binary theme's B section. Thus it fits the criteria to be a recapitulative section—it brings back a theme from the Exposition Space—yet it defies the usual obviousness of the thematic return since the melody does not come from the beginning of the theme. The initial theme eventually emerges in a recognizable form, but the choice to start in the middle of the theme and delay the incipit has already disguised our arrival at the recapitulative section.

Owing to the smooth trajectory from the expositional/soloistic hybrid to this recapitulative section, and the initially disguised thematic identity of that recapitulative section, we realize only retrospectively that we have entered the Recapitulation Space. This recapitulative section satisfies Space division criterion 3 sufficiently to initiate the Recapitulation Space through thematic material from the Exposition Space, yet it lacks the comprehensible thematic return that typically occurs at this juncture. The Solo Space has yielded to the Recapitulation Space with no clearly perceptible cue: we have walked from one room to the next without noticing the doorway.

Such smooth growth from soloistic to recapitulative function defies two norms: to climax at the end of the Solo Space in preparation for Recapitulation Space in an SRT, and to mark the Recapitulation Space's onset with a clear melodic return. Schneider is apparently aware (consciously or subconsciously) that the form has still not corrected itself. She therefore employs yet another attempt to correct the lingering formal problem, bringing back McCaslin's saxophone solo for a second time at 07:32 / m. 261 in what feels like a last-ditch effort to achieve an SRT. As in the other deviations we have seen, this soloistic section is too late since the Solo Space has already ended, but it satisfies the requirement for an SRT in a particularly short, intense soloistic burst, preparing an unambiguous recapitulative section at 07:59 / m. 277.

Figure 6 diagrams *Choro*, which includes two deviations based on the Space division criteria. Both the expositional section's occurrence after the Solo Space has begun and the soloistic section's occurrence after the Recapitulation Space has begun violate the expectations established by Schneider's normative practice. *Choro* is relatively short (about half the length of *Cerulean* and *Bulería*) and is the chronologically first deviational piece (2001). Perhaps it is here that she discovered the possibility for her strategy of too-late reinstatements of the Space-specific section types. In any case, the congruency between the deviational strategies in these three pieces is noteworthy: it is a single strategy—albeit in different guises—that unlocks the possibility for expressive formal deviation within Schneider's otherwise consistent system.

The cross-sectional view of this study's corpus data affords a sense of proportion in Schneider's compositional practice. A certain consistency emerges from that data: twenty-two of twenty-five pieces (88 percent) follow relatively straightforward expectations by beginning with Exposition Space, yielding to a Solo Space, creating through the solo a strong trajectory to a

Spaces:	Exposition Space		Solo Space		Recapitulation Space			
Sections:	expositional section	soloistic section	expositional section	recapitulative section	soloistic section	recapitulative section	coda

Figure 6. ***Choro Dançado*, form diagram.**

Recapitulation Space, and clearly marking the arrival of that Recapitulation Space with a return of the Exposition Space's theme. *Choro, Bulería*, and *Cerulean* are the only three designs that directly challenge the paradigm captured by the Space division criteria. The formal technique common to all three, involving the too-late return of a Space that has already culminated, emerged relatively late in the corpus's chronology. Despite its concentration in relatively recent works, the technique did not supplant Schneider's typical approach: since its emergence in 2001, six normative pieces have been published as well. It will be interesting to discover how Schneider's continued output corresponds with her practice as captured in this corpus.

Expanding the context

Schneider's context is difficult to define with precision. Scholarship on big-band composition has been relatively rare, especially considering the extraordinary amount of music that has been written in this genre. Further, in the postmodern cultural climate in which Schneider is working, it would be reductive to assume that her compositional influences draw from the big-band arranging tradition with any insulation. Nonetheless, as a cursory step toward understanding Schneider's musical context, I examine a loose collection of thirteen pieces analyzed by Rayburn Wright (1982), Alexander Stewart (2007), and Scott Belck (2008). While these should not be taken as a representative sample of big-band compositional practice, I take these pieces' inclusion for analysis by these writers as a sign of reasonable importance. Table 7 lists the thirteen pieces, their composers, their dates, and the authors of the analyses.

I begin by observing that seven of these pieces, skewed chronologically early, conform to the arranging prototype. *ABC Blues* is slightly unusual in the extent to which it repeats its blues scheme before yielding to a solo; it also includes a number of interludes that break from that scheme. Nonetheless, these deviations are not uncommon, even for earlier eras of the big-band tradition; I take *ABC Blues* to be basically prototypical, even if pointed toward the future.

This theory's Space division criteria apply without incident to these (and any other) prototypical forms. The criteria correspond precisely to the

Table 7. Pieces analyzed by Wright, Stewart, and Belck

Title	Date	Composer	Analyst	Comments
Kids Are Pretty People	1963	Thad Jones	Wright	Prototype
ABC Blues	1966	Bob Brookmeyer	Wright	Prototype (despite abstraction and development)
Basie—Straight Ahead	1968	Sammy Nestico	Wright	Prototype
Hay Burner	1968	Sammy Nestico	Wright	Prototype
Three and One	1970	Thad Jones	Wright	Prototype
Us	1970	Thad Jones	Wright	
First Love Song	1979	Bob Brookmeyer	Wright	Prototype
Hello and Goodbye	1980	Bob Brookmeyer	Wright	
On the Stage in Cages	1993	Carla Bley	Stewart	
Sticks	1997	Jim McNeely	Stewart	
Extra Credit	1997	Jim McNeely	Belck	
In the Wee Small Hours of the Morning	1997	Jim McNeely	Belck	Prototype
Absolution	1997	Jim McNeely	Belck	

arranging prototype, registering at a more generalized level. In other words, any piece that conforms to the prototype will also necessarily conform to the Space division criteria. In fact, the very purpose of the criteria is to conceptualize Schneider's more flexible practice in relation to the prototype.

Of the remaining pieces, four are idiosyncratic, resisting correspondence with either the present theory or the arranging prototype. Thad Jones's *Us* draws its generic origin from jazz fusion. In Wright's (1982: 94) assessment, "It has a jazz-rock feel rather than swing, its melodic form is unusual, its arrangement form is unconventional . . . and improvisation is not a principal feature of the arrangement." In fact, *Us* has no distinct solo section, and Space division criterion 2 therefore never activates. Several of Schneider's pieces draw from the funk-fusion style, but these nonetheless conform to the formal framework introduced in this study.

A second idiosyncratic piece is Carla Bley's *On the Stage in Cages* (1993), which Stewart (2007: 146) describes as "a series of vividly contrasting musical contexts, or 'cages.'" Stewart notes that Bley "links the different time feels by various motivic devices such as the wide dissonant intervals, the minor third relationship, and various melodic fragments" (155). To characterize a third idiosyncratic piece, Jim McNeely's *Extra Credit* (1997), Belck (2008: 40) coins the term *moving rondo* and schematizes the form as "A–B–C–**X1**–B–C–D–**X2**–C–D–E–**X3**–D–E–F–**X4**–E–**X5**–A," where "X" is a solo vamp that later underpins the shout chorus. Finally, in Stewart's (2007: 160) characterization of *Sticks*, another work by McNeely, the composer "repeatedly alternates between the soloist and the ensemble in almost a ritornello format."

The application of this study's formal framework to McNeely's *Absolution* (1997) reveals certain similarities to Schneider's work, particularly in its

freely developed thematic areas (as opposed to the prototypical scheme). However, this piece seems to resist the tripartite design captured in the Space division criteria. Belck (2008: 85) summarizes: "Imitation, repetition and variation are the primary developmental devices in *Absolution*. The line between improvised and composed material is often blurred as McNeely integrates controlled improvisation by the full ensemble to achieve imitative and random effects." According to the present theory, it is exactly this "line between improvised and composed material" that indicates formal division.

Of these thirteen pieces, Bob Brookmeyer's *Hello and Goodbye* (1980) holds the strongest resemblance to Schneider's work; this is perhaps unsurprising given that Schneider studied with Brookmeyer after studying with Wright. Wright (1982: 115) notes that this piece "bears studying . . . because its form does break out [of the arranging prototype], yet does so without sounding contrived." Despite this spirit of deviation, *Hello and Goodbye* responds exceptionally well to the terminology of *Spaces* and *sections* and to the Space division criteria.

After a sixteen-measure introduction, Brookmeyer composes a sprawling expositional section. This exposition's internal form might be roughly characterized as a rounded binary (without repeats), where A is mm. 17–72, B is mm. 73–100, and A′ is a repetition of mm. 49–70, notated via a D.S. indication.[21] Despite the grand proportions of this expositional section, accounting for nearly three minutes of music, Space division criterion 2 is triggered only once the solo enters at m. 101 (notated as a coda but not a coda in the formal sense). The Space division criteria further guide the identification of an ensemble feature in mm. 167–80, serving as a perceptual boundary between two soloists. As a continuation of Solo Space, this section is clearly not recapitulative and therefore retains Solo Space status. Schneider similarly includes ensemble passages to separate soloists, but hers are consistently shorter and less intrusive. A return to the expositional theme in m. 267 unambiguously initiates the Recapitulation Space according to Space division criterion 3.

As Wright suggests, *Hello and Goodbye* abandons the arranging prototype in several ways: Brookmeyer avoids a cyclical scheme, composes phrases with a sense of free accumulation predictive of Schneider, and includes an ensemble feature internal to the Solo Space. The Space division criteria translate smoothly to this piece: in the absence of the arranging prototype as a guide to formal understanding, this aspect of the theory provides a meaningful frame for the piece's formal process. While the Space division criteria apply effectively to *Hello and Goodbye*, the SRT is clearly absent. An ensemble feature at m. 229 precedes the Recapitulation Space in precise accordance

---

21 This analysis departs slightly from Wright (1982: 116), who refers to the three parts as the "main theme 'A,'" secondary theme 'B,'" and "recap end of main theme."

with the arranging prototype. This effectively cuts off any direct trajectory from the soloist to the Recapitulation Space; Brookmeyer is apparently not Schneider's model in this respect—at least not in this piece.

In fact, none of the thirteen pieces under discussion here has an SRT. As jazz composer Jay Ashby (pers. comm., fall 2014) has noted, members of the jazz composition community refer to Schneider's treatment of solo sections as "Maria backgrounds." It is surely conceivable that other composers have used similar strategies. However, this specifically named association between technique and composer may suggest that this hallmark of Schneider's approach—one possible answer to the challenge of integrating improvisation and composition in jazz—is special to Maria Schneider.

Appendix: Twenty-five analyses

This appendix presents the twenty-five pieces in the corpus as summative tables. They follow the order of tracks on each album.

Evanescence (first released in 1994)

	Wyrgly
Time stamp	*Comments*
00:00	**Exposition Space**: *introduction* [drums]
00:08	*expositional section*
03:42	**Solo Space**: *soloistic section* [saxophone solo]
05:44	[backgrounds]
06:30	*transition*
06:46	*soloistic section* [trombone]
07:58	[backgrounds]
08:27	**Recapitulation Space**: *recapitulative section* [solo continues]
09:40	*coda*

	Evanescence
Time stamp	*Comments*
00:00	**Exposition Space**: *introduction*
00:19	*expositional section*
02:21	**Solo Space**: *soloistic section* [saxophone]
04:15	[backgrounds]
05:45	[trumpet solo]
07:55	[backgrounds]
09:09	**Recapitulation Space**: *recapitulative section*
11:00	*coda*

Gumba Blue

Time stamp	Comments
00:01	**Exposition Space**: *introduction*
00:39	*expositional section*
01:56	**Solo Space**: *soloistic section* [trumpet]
03:18	[backgrounds]
04:09	*transition*
04:17	*soloistic section* [piano]
05:57	[backgrounds]
06:27	**Recapitulation Space**: *recapitulative section*
08:19	*coda*

Green Piece

Time stamp	Comments
00:01	**Exposition Space**: *introduction*
00:08	*expositional section*
01:43	**Solo Space**: *soloistic section* [saxophone]
02:01	[backgrounds]
02:28	[backgrounds drop out]
03:50	[backgrounds]
04:21	*transition*
04:40	*soloistic section* [piano]
06:09	[backgrounds]
06:31	**Recapitulation Space**: *recapitulative section*
07:13	*coda*

Dance You Monster to My Soft Song

Time stamp	Comments
00:01	**Exposition Space**: *introduction*
00:08	*expositional section*
01:22	*transition*
01:36	**Solo Space**: *soloistic section* [guitar]
03:25	[backgrounds]
04:20	[trumpet solo]
05:39	[backgrounds]
06:21	*transition*
06:41	**Recapitulation Space**: *recapitulative section*

Last Season

Time stamp	Comments
00:01	**Exposition Space**: *introduction*
00:51	*expositional section*
02:33	**Solo Space**: *soloistic section* [flügelhorn]
03:32	[backgrounds]
04:30	[saxophone solo]
05:27	[backgrounds]
06:24	*ensemble feature*
06:50	*transition*
07:05	**Recapitulation Space**: *recapitulative section*
08:00	*coda*

Gush

Time stamp	Comments
00:00	**Exposition Space**: *introduction*
00:18	*expositional section*
01:14	*transition*
01:23	*expositional section*
02:26	**Solo Space**: *soloistic section* [saxophone]
05:52	**Recapitulation Space**: *recapitulative section*

El Viento

Time stamp	Comments
00:01	**Exposition Space**: *expositional section*
03:46	**Solo Space**: *soloistic section* [guitar]
05:23	[backgrounds]
06:01	[trombone solo]
07:16	[backgrounds]
07:35	[trumpet solo begins, backgrounds continue]
09:08	*transition* [intensity decay preps Recapitulation Space]
09:19	**Recapitulation Space**: *recapitulative section*
10:48	*coda*

My Lament

Time stamp	Comments
00:00	**Exposition Space**: *introduction*
00:55	*expositional section*
01:59	**Solo Space**: *soloistic section* [saxophone]
03:11	[backgrounds]
03:50	**Recapitulation Space**: *recapitulative section*
04:09	*coda*

Coming About (2008, originally released in 1996)

Bombshelter Beast

Time stamp	Comments
00:08	**Exposition Space**: *introduction*
00:53	*expositional section*
02:10	*transition* [motion into solo]
02:43	**Solo Space**: *soloistic section* [saxophone, begins with backgrounds]
03:25	[backgrounds drop out]
04:07	[backgrounds return]
05:32	[guitar solo (no backgrounds)]
06:42	[backgrounds]
08:04	**Recapitulation Space**: *recapitulative section* [solo continues]

Night Watchmen

Time stamp	Comments
00:00	**Exposition Space**: *introduction*
01:03	*expositional section*
02:43	**Solo Space**: *soloistic section* [saxophone]
05:03	[backgrounds]
05:57	*transition*
06:10	*soloistic section* [trumpet]
07:32	[backgrounds]
08:57	**Recapitulation Space**: *recapitulative section*
10:04	*coda*

Coming About

Time stamp	Comments
00:00	**Exposition Space**: *introduction*
01:12	*expositional section*
03:45	**Solo Space**: *soloistic section* [piano]
06:37	*transition*
07:44	*soloistic section* [saxophone, with backgrounds]
08:20	[backgrounds drop out]
09:55	[backgrounds return]
10:49	*transition*
10:58	*ensemble feature*
11:33	**Recapitulation Space**: *recapitulative section*
12:11	*coda*

Waxwing

Time stamp	Comments
00:01	**Exposition Space**: *introduction*
00:12	*expositional section*
02:52	**Solo Space**: *soloistic section* [flügelhorn]
04:15	[backgrounds]
05:23	*ensemble feature*
06:17	**Recapitulation Space**: *recapitulative section*
07:12	*coda*

Allegresse (2000)

Hang Gliding

Time stamp	Comments
00:03	**Exposition Space**: *introduction*
00:11	*expositional section*
02:38	*transitional section*
02:47	**Solo Space**: *soloistic section* [flügelhorn]
05:43	[backgrounds]
06:55	[saxophone solo, backgrounds continue]
08:07	[backgrounds out]
08:38	[backgrounds return]
10:53	**Recapitulation Space**: *recapitulative section*
12:17	*coda*

Allegresse

Time stamp	Comments
00:01	**Exposition Space**: *expositional section*
02:10	[trumpet solo begins; expositional section continues]
03:25	**Solo Space**: *soloistic section* [trumpet continues; thematic materials end]
05:16	[backgrounds]
05:59	[saxophone solo, no backgrounds]
07:00	[backgrounds]
08:01	[motives signal faux recapitulation, but inadequate intensity; saxophone trades with trumpet]
09:41	**Recapitulation Space**: *recapitulative section*
10:33	*coda*

Journey Home

Time stamp	Comments
00:02	**Exposition Space**: *introduction*
00:20	*expositional section*
01:26	**Solo Space**: *soloistic section* [saxophone]
03:13	[backgrounds]
04:14	[guitar solo, backgrounds continue]
04:49	[backgrounds out]
06:14	[backgrounds in]
07:25	**Recapitulation Space**: *recapitulative section*
08:27	*coda*

Concert in the Garden (2004)

Concert in the Garden	
Time stamp	*Comments*
00:00	**Exposition Space**: *introduction*
01:52	*expositional section*
03:56	*transition*
04:17	*expositional section*
05:21	**Solo Space**: *soloistic section* [guitar]
06:19	[time decays to rubato]
06:55	[time returns for piano and accordion feature]
09:23	[backgrounds enter]
10:10	**Recapitulation Space**: *recapitulative section* [solo continues]
11:10	*coda*

Choro Dançado	
Time stamp	*Comments*
00:01	**Exposition Space**: *expositional section* [‖:A:‖:B:‖]
02:16	**Solo Space**: *soloistic section* [saxophone]
03:48	[backgrounds]
05:17	[decay into rubato; time back in at 5:33]
05:40	*expositional section* [new theme with piano solo; too late!]
06:36	[piano joins winds, intensity gain (but no solo!)
06:50	**Recapitulation Space**: *recapitulative section* [B-based]
07:32	*soloistic section* [too late! second chance at SRT]
07:59	*recapitulative section* [amalgamates A and B subsections]
09:25	*coda*

Pas de Deux	
Time stamp	*Comments*
00:01	**Exposition Space**: *expositional section*
03:03	**Solo Space**: *soloistic section* [backgrounds for entirety]
07:24	[arrival at end; decays into Recapitulation Space]
07:54	**Recapitulation Space**: *recapitulative section*

Dança Illusória	
Time stamp	*Comments*
00:00	**Exposition Space**: *introduction*
01:16	*expositional section*
03:08	**Solo Space**: *soloistic section* [piano, with backgrounds]
03:46	[backgrounds exit at 3:46]
04:21	[backgrounds return]
05:12	[trombone solo]
06:30	**Recapitulation Space**: *recapitulative section*
08:14	*coda*

Bulería, Soleá y Rumba	
Time stamp	*Comments*
00:02	**Exposition Space**: *introduction*
00:19	*expositional section*
01:55	*transition*
02:20	[out of time: ritardando/fermata]
02:34	*expositional section* [new tempo]
03:44	["soleá," in 3, flute enters]
05:25	**Solo Space**: *soloistic section* [with backgrounds]
10:53	*transition*
11:19	*expositional section* [too late!]
11:31	[vocal melody]
12:44	[ensemble melody]
13:56	*soloistic section* [flügelhorn]
14:43	[backgrounds]
15:13	[backgrounds drop out]
15:25	[backgrounds reenter for clear SRT]
16:00	**Recapitulation Space**: *recapitulative section*
16:56	*coda*

Sky Blue (2007)

The Pretty Road	
Time stamp	*Comments*
00:02	**Exposition Space**: *expositional section*
02:54	**Solo Space**: *soloistic section* [flügelhorn]
05:29	[backgrounds]
05:59	[rubato; flügelhorn uses effects pedals]
10:42	**Recapitulation Space**: *recapitulative section*
12:31	*coda*

Aires de Lando	
Time stamp	*Comments*
00:02	**Exposition Space**: *expositional section*
02:10	**Solo Space**: *soloistic section* [saxophone; rubato]
03:47	[backgrounds]
06:17	**Recapitulation Space**: *recapitulative section*
08:12	*coda*

Cerulean Skies

Time stamp	Comments
00:01	**Exposition Space**: *introduction* [piano, bird sounds, no time]
00:46	[bass in]
01:33	*expositional section*
04:26	**Solo Space**: *soloistic section* [saxophone]
06:04	[backgrounds enter]
08:09	[faux recapitulative section]
08:40	[time decays into rubato]
08:49	[rubato accordion solo over piano figures]
12:18	*transition* [solo piano, still rubato]
13:01	**Recapitulation Space** [theme in accordion—rubato (no SRT)]
13:28	[brass chorale]
14:10	[accordion melody]
14:37	[chorale, lots of fermatas]
15:16	[regular time returns]
15:54	[vocals—theme from Exposition Space, transformed]
17:02	[theme repeats: more literal, but still transformed]
17:40	*soloistic section* [too late!]
18:54	[backgrounds achieve SRT]
19:32	*recapitulative section* [recomposed again; soloist continues]
20:16	*coda*

Sky Blue

Time stamp	Comments
00:01	**Exposition Space**: *expositional section*
01:32	[repetition with sax feature; still thematic, so still expositional]
02:56	**Solo Space**: *soloistic section* [saxophone]
04:10	[backgrounds]
05:04	**Recapitulation Space**: *recapitulative section* [transformed theme]
05:27	*coda*

Works Cited

Belck, Scott. 2008. "Lickety Split: Modern Aspects of Composition and Orchestration in the Large Jazz Ensemble Compositions of Jim McNeely: An Analysis of 'Extra Credit,' 'In the Wee Small Hours of the Morning,' and 'Absolution.'" DMA diss., University of Cincinnati.

Caplin, William Earl. 1998. *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Everett, Walter. 2001. *The Beatles as Musicians: The Quarry Men through "Rubber Soul."* New York: Oxford University Press.

Hepokoski, James, and Warren Darcy. 2006. *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late Eighteenth-Century Sonata*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Heyer, Allison. 2007. "Analysis of Maria Schneider's *Green Piece*." MA thesis, University of Oregon.

Huron, David. 2006. *Sweet Anticipation: Music and the Psychology of Expectation*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Love, Stefan. 2013. "Subliminal Dissonance or 'Consonance'? Two Views of Jazz Meter." *Music Theory Spectrum* 35, no. 1: 48–61.

Martin, Henry. 2003. "Maria Schneider's *Hang Gliding*: Aspects of Structure." *Tijdschrift voor Muziektheorie* 8, no. 1: 16–24.

McKinney, Elizabeth. 2008. "Maria Schneider's *Hang Gliding*: Dual Analyses for a Hybrid Musical Style." MM thesis, Duquesne University.

Monson, Ingrid. 1996. *Saying Something: Jazz Improvisation and Interaction*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Rothfarb, Lee. 2002. "Energetics." In *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, edited by Thomas Christensen, 927–55. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schneider, Maria. 1991. *In a Pinch*. Kendor Music, Inc., 3248. Score.

Schneider, Maria. 1998. *Maria Schneider Orchestra: Evanescence*, edited by Fred Sturm. Universal Edition.

Schneider, Maria. 2001. "Maria Schneider." Interview by Monk Rowe. Fillius Jazz Archive, Hamilton College. contentdm6.hamilton.edu/cdm/ref/collection/jazz/id/1252.

Schneider, Maria. 2012. "Big Think Interview with Maria Schneider." Big Think video, YouTube, April 23. www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vl7ngJ6Tnnk.

Schuller, Gunther. 1989. *The Swing Era: The Development of Jazz, 1930–1945*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Stewart, Alexander. 2007. *Making the Scene: Contemporary New York City Big Band Jazz*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Wright, Rayburn. 1982. *Inside the Score*. Delevan, NY: Kendor Music.

Ben Geyer is assistant professor of music theory and director of jazz studies at the University of West Georgia. He is active as a jazz pianist and composer.