“AN INTERPRETATION OF THE LOW-DOWN BROWN GET-DOWN BY OMAR THOMAS THROUGH BLAXPLOITATION FILM”

by

DAVARON EDWARDS

(Under the Direction of Cynthia Johnston Turner)

ABSTRACT

The Low-Down Brown Get-Down is a work for wind band by Omar Thomas that was written in 2020 and based on the blaxploitation film music of the 1970s. Omar Thomas wrote this work as a celebration of Black folk music to allow it to take its place alongside other types of folk music within the wind band medium. This paper accompanies a short film created in the style of blaxploitation film, using *The Low-Down Brown Get-Down* by Omar Thomas as its soundtrack. This paper discusses the importance of celebrating Black culture within the wind band, provides a brief rhythmic analysis of the piece, and provides reflections on the film project. The film can be accessed via YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCs5Ek6WmLOVSvM27RecStuA.

INDEX WORDS: Band, Wind Band, Conducting, Blaxploitation Film, Blaxploitation, Inclusion, Omar Thomas, Low Down, Oppositional Gaze, Controlling Image, Standardization, Diversity, Interpretation, Black Folk Music, Folk Music, American Folk Music

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by

DAVARON EDWARDS

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M.M., Winthrop University, 2012

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by

DAVARON EDWARDS

Major Professor:	Cynthia Johnston Turner
Committee:	Gregory Broughton
	Jaclyn Hartenberger
	Rumya Putcha

Electronic Version Approved:

Ron Walcott
Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
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DEDICATION

In loving memory of my mother, Peggie Beauford, my brother, Dr. Robert B. Beauford, and my sister Kendra R. Beauford.

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surrounded by some of the best people in the world. You inspire me to be the best I can be and give all I have to make this world better.

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INTRODUCTION

One can argue that the conversations about diversity, equity, and inclusion that are happening on college campuses across the United States are long-overdue conversations.[1] These conversations are also happening within the world of the wind band. Conductors are conscientiously programming more works by underrepresented composers—women, BIPOC, and LGBTQ+—as evidenced by the many conference presentations and social media discussions.[2]

It seems these discussions started in large part due to the murder of George Floyd in 2020. The United States has always had a complicated relationship with people of color, especially Black Americans, but for the first time, the nation was forced to come to grips with the racist practices that exist.[3] The college campus is no different.[4]

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[1] Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is a part of the strategic plan for most universities in the United States. This is evidenced by the many diversity statements and employment of diversity officers within the administrations of these universities. For further evidence refer to *Diversity Regimes: Why Talk is Not enough to Fix Racial Inequality at Universities* by James M. Thomas.

[2] Social media conversations take place via Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc. See composer diversity resources such as https://www.andwewereheard.org/ and https://www.composerdiversity.com/.

[3] George Floyd, a black man, was murdered by a Minneapolis, Minnesota police officer May 25, 2020 when the officer knelt of the Floyd's back and neck for 9 minutes and 29 seconds. Floyd, who was suspected of using a counterfeit $20 bill, repeatedly told the officer "I can't breathe." These would be his last words and became a rallying cry against police brutality and excessive force in the United States. For more information, see news articles from publications such as *The New York Times*.

[4] Businesses and institutions of higher education released statements affirming Black Lives Matter and expressing a commitment to diversity. The University of Georgia Redcoat Band released a statement affirming Black Lives Matter and changed one of the ensemble standards to "Georgia On My Mind" in the name of inclusion and social justice.

I am a Black man.[5] This project celebrates my culture and heritage and aligns my interests in wind band and film. I am proud to be Black and love my heritage. This project represents all of me.[6]

Even though I did not grow up during the 1970s, I grew up listening to the music—*Move On Up* by Curtis Mayfield, *Theme from Shaft* by Isaac Hayes, and *I Got the Feeling* by James Brown—to name a few of my favorites. I remember listening to my mother and aunts tell stories about the parties and the dances they attended during the 1970s. This is music that I heard at cookouts and large family events. This is even music that I played in the marching band at Hampton University that sparked excitement and joy in the crowd. If we believe music has the power to elicit moods and emotions, certainly joy can be among those emotions. I think the world could use more joy! And, perhaps the world could also use more love. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said "Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that."[7] Love that embraces my Blackness and Black culture and seeks to divest all concepts of whiteness being supreme. James Cone, a Black theologian, calls upon all people—white, black, and other non-black groups—to stand in opposition to white supremacy by choosing to value and love Blackness.[8] bell hooks quotes Cone saying:

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[5] My identity as a Black man is important to this project because I represent the many Black men and women who have been historically excluded from the wind band in terms of teaching, conducting, performing, and composing. I believe the denial of identities has contributed to perceptions of elitism and exclusion. For further reading, please see Tommy J. Curry, *The Man-Not: Race, Class, Genre, and the Dilemmas of Black Manhood*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Temple University Press, 2017.

[6]My identity is also important because it is not only the oppositional gaze (bell hooks) discussed in Chapter 2 but is the oppositional ear as well. Black music has been historically viewed as music of lesser quality than that of other wind band music. See Proksch, Bryan, "Sousa's Vacillating Views on Ragtime and Jazz." *Journal of Band Research 55*, no. 2 (Spring 2020): 29-53, 80.

[7]https://www.nps.gov/mlkm/learn/quotations.htm#:~:text=%22Darkness%20cannot%20drive%20out%20darkness,only%20love%20can%20do%20that.%22

[8] bell hooks, *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1992), 10-11.

> Most whites, some despite involvements in protests, do believe in "freedom in democracy," and they fight to make the ideals of the Constitution an empirical reality for all. It seems that they believe that, if we just work hard enough at it, this country can be what it ought to be. But it never dawns on these do-gooders that what is wrong with America is not its failure to make the Constitution a reality for all, but rather its belief that persons can affirm whiteness and humanity at the same time. This country was founded for whites and everything that has happened in it has emerged from the white perspective…What we need is the destruction of whiteness, which is the source of human misery in the world.[9]

Tearing down white supremacy in the wind band does not mean negating the contributions of white composers, conductors, and musicians, but seeks to not put whiteness above everything else. I believe that loving one another means celebrating all that makes us different, including cultural differences. Within the United States of America are many cultures and those cultures should be represented in the wind band. This project focuses on Black culture because it is my culture, and a part of who I am.

Project Scope

The goal of this project is to create a blaxploitation film based on *The Low-Down Brown Get-Down* by Omar Thomas. The project will be broken into two parts, the sonic and the visual, and will result in a film whose soundtrack is *The Low-Down Brown Get-Down*. Normally, soundtracks for films are created based on the visual. This project reverses that order and has the

[9] hooks, 11.

visual dictated by the sonic, a process that may be gaining momentum. Julie Giroux, a prolific and American composer of wind band music and an experienced orchestrator for film and television music describes this reverse-order practice in a recent Facebook post about her work, *Symphony No. VI: The Big Blue Marble* debuted Sunday, May 1, 2022, "I just love it and will be using it in a film, which I HOPE to finish in the next 2 weeks which will then go to ION Media for them to do their magic! I love making films that back the music instead of the other way around. I think I will keep doing it!!!"[10]

Part 1 of this project deals with the sonic. The UGA Wind Ensemble performed *The Low-Down Brown Get-Down*, which I conducted, on the March 2, 2022, concert. I led rehearsals at the beginning of the Spring 2022 semester and prepared the ensemble for the performance and subsequent recording session.

Preparation began in the fall semester of 2021 with intensive score study. Close attention was paid to identify where the scenes were within the music, how they compare to the complete work, and how the music may imply a scene. I had to familiarize myself with the soundtracks of blaxploitation films to properly identify the influences. I contacted Omar Thomas to discuss the project and to receive his permission.

Part 2 focuses on the visual. Even though I had an introductory course in film editing, the success of this project would be contingent on my ability to collaborate with peers from other disciplines. I contacted Dave Kruetzer, my professor for film editing, to help me select a student director with whom to collaborate. J. Cash Robinson (UGA, 2022) agreed to work with me on the project. We began meeting in November 2021 to discuss the project and create a plan for execution. In December, we created an outline of scenes and a plan for filming. We brought in

[10] Julie Giroux, https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=633381253, accessed April 21, 2022.

UGA film student Mollie Schilling (UGA, 2022) to serve as Assistant Director and help with the organization of the project.

As the producer, I was responsible for ensuring that we minimized mistakes while shooting footage. I was also responsible for securing locations and materials needed for the sets including décor and wardrobe. Ms. Schilling's primary responsibility was to communicate with the actors and ensure that the production schedule (schedule for shooting scenes) was maintained. As the director, Mr. Robinson was responsible for securing the necessary equipment for shooting the scenes and blocking the scenes for the actors. The three of us communicated regularly to ensure that the visuals represented the sonic. Since I was the musical "expert" on the team, I took the lead with how the visuals represented the sonic. As this was a collaborative project, the vision for each scene was open for discussion.

CHAPTER 2

BLAXPLOITATION FILM

Blaxploitation film is a style of film that was popular during the 1970s. This is after the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s when Black Americans fought for equality in the United States. The term "blaxploitation" is a combination of two words: black and exploitation; and accurately depicts Hollywood's goal of monetizing and exploiting the black image.[11] "Blaxploitation" was coined in 1972 by Julius Griffin who, at the time, was president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Beverly Hills-Hollywood chapter.[12]

These films created an "industry shift and ushered in a series of heroes and sheroes on the silver screen."[13] These heroes and sheroes—terms used to describe the triumphant main character by gender—fought against the system and the idea of "The Man." Blaxploitation films dealt with the harsh realities of inner-city street life: drugs, pimps, prostitutes, and political corruption. Despite the raw, intense, and controversial nature of these films, "black audiences could not get enough of these onscreen images."[14]

[11]S. Torriano Berry & Venise T. Berry, *Historical Dictionary of African American Cinema* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc, 2007), 34-35.
[12] Mark A. Reid, *African American Cinema Through Black Lives Consciousness* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2019), 83.
[13] Berry & Berry, 34-35
[14] Berry & Berry, 34-35

Due to the history of minstrelsy in America, Black characters in media were usually aligned with the stereotypes of Zip Coon[15], Jim Crow[16], Uncle Tom[17], or the ol' Mammy[18]. These characters and caricatures have been around since the middle 19th century. Typically, white people did not consider these characters and caricatures to be offensive to Black Americans. Black people have historically emerged as entertainment or comic relief during times when race relations were tumultuous—the first, during the minstrel shows of the 1840s when slavery became a contentious political question; and again, in the 1880s and 1890s after the period of the American Reconstruction. These films were created by and for predominantly white audiences. Therefore, filmmakers reserved the flattering roles for whites and presented the black characters with exaggerated stereotypes.[19]

In D.W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), the stereotype of Black people as comic relief changes to a dangerous savage. The story depicts a black soldier, named Gus, who tries to rape a "delicate young Southern belle." Gus is punished by being lynched by the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). Griffith's goal was to illustrate that Black Americans were savages and should not be allowed to vote. The end of *The Birth of a Nation* shows the KKK holding Black people at

[15] Refers to the title of a song and a character during the minstrel shows of the 19th century. The character, who was in blackface, was a black man who thought he was more fashionable and more intelligent than he was. White audiences, who were confident that they were socially superior, found his misplaced sophistication entertaining. (see https://digital.mtsu.edu/digital/collection/p15838coll7/id/37/ in Bibliography).
[16] Character created by Thomas Dartmouth Rice (white entertainer) that was modeled after a slave. Rice performed a popular song and dance act with Jim Crow. Rice wore blackface (makeup worn to darken the face so as to resemble a Black person), acted like a buffoon, and spoke in a version of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) that mocked Black people. (See Jim Crow Museum in Bibliography)
[17] Character from Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Uncle Tom was a slave who saved the life of his master's young daughter, Little Eva. He is sold to another slave owner and is eventually beaten because he would not give the whereabouts of runaway slaves. During the civil rights movement, Uncle Tom is seen as someone who was a "race traitor." (See Encyclopedia Britannica in Bibliography.)
[18] The Mammy is both a caricature and a character. She was an obese, coarse, and maternal figure that cared more about the white families, especially white children, than her own family and children. Her entire world centered around the white family. (See Ferris State University in Bibliography.)
[19] J. Stanley Lemons. "Black Stereotypes as Reflected in Popular Culture, 1880-1920." *American Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (1977): 102–16. https://doi.org/10.2307/2712263.

gunpoint, preventing them from casting their vote. This is yet a third instance of social-political issues, dictating how Black characters are represented in film. The overt racism of this film brought to the forefront racial discrimination in the film industry. [20]

In *The Birth of a Nation*, the Black characters were used as a method to keep Black people in America "in their place." This is what Patricia Hill Collins refers to as a controlling image: the characters were used to make sure that Black Americans who saw these films understood that white people were superior and that "injustice appear to be natural, normal, and inevitable parts of everyday life."[21] The image of the Black man pursuing the white woman to rape her, paints a picture that Black men should be feared because they are dangerous. White women are portrayed as innocent, delicate, and desired by all men, and therefore, must be protected by the white man. The white man is portrayed as the savior—one who runs to the aid of his woman and will fight to the death to protect her. The Ku Klux Klan, an organization that has terrorized Black people since its inception, is seen as a galvanizing organization that only seeks to protect democracy from the savages that are Black people.

The concept of the controlling image is built upon the relationship of the "other." The other is based on a binary relationship, which in this case is Black vs white. Since Hollywood film (leading up to blaxploitation) was designed for white audiences by white filmmakers, white is the dominating force. Black, in this case, is the opposite force. "In such thinking, difference is defined in oppositional terms. One part is not simply different from its counterpart; it is inherently opposed to its 'other'."[22] Further examination of the Black characters in film and

[20]Jesse Rhines. "BLACK FILM/BLACK FUTURE." *The Black Scholar* 33, no. 1 (2003): 47–53. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41069012.
[21]Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (Routledge, 2002), 69
[22] Ibid, 70.

television results in the discovery that Black characters were also portrayed as irresponsible, stupid, lazy (especially the men), dishonest, watermelon addicts, chicken thieves, and even rapists. Black characters were represented negatively and exaggerated in the worst way, but white characters were usually shown "in a flattering pattern." Again, everything was created by and for white people.[23]

Ironically, blaxploitation films can be categorized as films that romanticize pimps, drug dealers, gangsters and super males with 'physical prowess but no cognitive skills.'[24] On the surface it appears as if the Black-led films of the blaxploitation era are participating in the oppression of Black people. I argue that blaxploitation films retake control of how Black characters are viewed and exercise what bell hooks calls the "oppositional gaze." "By courageously looking, we defiantly declared: 'Not only will I stare. I want my look to change reality.' Even in the worse circumstances of domination that would contain it, opens up the possibility of agency."[25] The oppositional gaze is about regaining control of the controlling images. By staring at even the worst instances of control, the oppositional gaze provides the opportunity to change the narrative of the image, thereby opening the "possibility of agency." This agency is where Black people "interrogate the gaze of the Other, but also look back, and at one another, naming what we see."[26] This gaze is a way for colonized Black people of the world to resist and fight against systems of oppression. It is one that is defiant and one that is oppositional to what the gaze is expected to be, "in order to resist."[27]

[23] J. Stanley Lemons, 111-113.
[24] Waddell, Calum., *The Style of Sleaze: The American Exploitation*, 141
[25] bell hooks, 116
[26] bell hooks, 116
[27] bell hooks, 116

CHAPTER 3

A BRIEF HISTORY OF WHITENESS IN THE WIND BAND

The most substantial documentation of the early wind band dates back to the Middle Ages of Western Europe. Initially, the watchmen-musicians were used to alarm the town of oncoming danger from watch towers. Later, their use expanded to playing fanfares to announce the time. As time progressed, these same musicians were used for celebratory events such as banquets and the parading of criminals as they went to whipping posts or public flogging. These civic wind bands had evolved to what we now call the wind band by performing regular public concerts. These concerts were performed simply for the art of music and not necessarily for a specific purpose.[28]

In the 17th century, woodwind makers in Paris started making changes to how oboes, bassoons, and flutes were made. These new modern instruments replaced the old instruments of the Renaissance and gave way to a new type of ensemble, *Hautboisten*—which is a half-French, half-German name. The *Hautboisten* derives from the French ensemble *Les Grand Hautbois,* which was comprised of Renaissance-period shawms and trombones. When French musicians of the *Les Grand Hautbois* migrated to Germany, and began using modern oboes and bassoons, the ensemble became known as *Hautboisten*. "The *Hautboisten* and its repertoire is the bridge from the Renaissance consorts to the *Harmoniemusik* of Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, and Schubert thus giving the modern wind band a continuous, unbroken line of artistic life from the late Middle Ages to the present day."[29]

[28] Sir David Whitwell, *Pocket Version of A Concise History of the Wind Band*, Compiled by Mike Davis
[29] Whitwell, 149.

The partita and divertimento are forms of music written for *Harmoniemusik*. The partita shared the same form as the classical symphony and the two names were almost interchangeable. It does seem that the symphony was more associated with the orchestra of that time and the partita was used for *Harmoniemusik*. Accordingly, the autographs on Mozart's music refer to all his wind band music as 'Partita.' The term 'Serenade' was given by his publishers.[30]

Harmoniemusik spread throughout Europe during the Classical period, in part due to the travels of Josef Haydn. Haydn began writing for Count Ferdinand Maximilian Morzin in 1759 in Bohemia. In 1761, Haydn took *Harmoniemusik* to the court of Prince Paul Anton Esterhazy of Hungary.[31] In the period from 1761 to 1766, Haydn wrote a considerable amount of *Harmoniemusik* compositions. Even though Haydn did not write many *Harmoniemusik* compositions after 1766, the establishment of the ensemble was cemented in the Esterhazy court, as evidenced by the dismissal of the court orchestra in 1790, leaving the wind band to serve in its place.

The development of the wind band in the 19th century was primarily through military bands. Wilhelm Wieprecht, of Prussia, Andreas Leonhardt of Austria, and Adolph Sax, of France, are all important figures in the development of the wind band as it approaches its modern form. Wilhelm Wieprecht began using the new valved brass instruments in the Prussian military bands during the 1830s. He showcased the versatility of these new instruments and his actions "gained immediate attention in military circles."[32] Not long after he became the head of the military music of the Berlin Guard and standardized the instrumentation of the Prussian military bands twice (the latter is reflected in Table 1). "His idea was that if publishers would make

[30] Whitwell, 209.
[31] Whitwell, 211-213.
[32] Whitwell, 271.

compositions available which were scored in accordance with this plan (including the resultant unconventional score order), then the same piece of music could be purchased and used by any of the three basic types of bands."[33]

Table 1 (Wieprecht's Unified Instrumentation System of 1860, Prussia)[34]

	Calvary	Artillery	Jager	Infantry
Cornettino	1	3	1	
Soprano cornet	4	6	4	2
Alto cornet	2	3	2	2
Tenorhorn	2	6	2	4
Baritone-tuba	1	3	2	1
Bass tuba	3	6	3	4
Trumpet	8	12	3	4
Horn			4	4
Flute				2
Oboe				2
Clarinet in Ab				1
Clarinet in Eb				2
Clarinet in Bb				8
Bassoon				2
Contrabassoon				2
Trombones				4
Cymbals				1
Small drum				2
Large drum				1
Halbmondtrager				1
Total	21	39	21	47

Andreas Leonhardt was an administrative figure in 19th-century Austrian military music. Like Wieprecht, Leonhardt helped standardize the basic infantry band to include 48 men with an additional 12, who were allowed to serve as apprentices during times of peace.[35] It was common

[33] Whitwell, 274.
[34] Whitwell, 274.
[35] When discussing standards, it is important to know and understand who sets the standard. Standard is rooted in whiteness as proved by research. For further reading, see Allen, Matthew Harp. 2008. "Standardize, Classicize, and Nationalize: The Scientific

practice, however for individual regiments to add additional players at the expense of the officer. Table 2 represents the Austrian military band instrumentation as it appears in Whitwell's book.[36] The Austrian military band instrumentation shares some similarities with the Prussian military band instrumentation, but there are quite a few differences. Unlike the *Harmoniemusik* instrumentation, military band instrumentation differed greatly from country to country.

Table 2 Austrian Military Band Instrumentation, 1851[37]

1 piccolo in Db
1 flute in Db
1 clarinet in Ab
1 Clarinet in Eb
3 Clarinets in Bb
2 bassoons
4 horns
1 cornet in Eb
2 soprano Flügelhorns in Bb
1 alto Flügelhorn in Eb
1 bass Flügelhorn in Bb
1 euphonium
1 'Obligattrompete' in Eb
4 trumpets in Eb
1 bass trumpets in Bb
3 trombones
2 "Basse"
Small and large drum
cymbals

The most significant contribution to the development of the wind band by the Austrian military band was not instrumentation but the development of a style of march that resembles

Work of the Music Academy of Madras, 1930–52." In Performing Pasts: Reinventing the Arts in Modern South Asia, edited by Indira Viswanathan Peterson and Davesh Soneji, 90–129. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

[36] The numbers for each instrument refer to the number of parts and not the number of players.

[37] Whitwell, 278.

that of modern-day marches. This new style of march is rooted in a form of dance used to recruit troops in the Hungarian portion of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire called '*verbunkos*', which is taken from the German word *werbung*, meaning 'to recruit'.[38] When the recruiters would arrive at a village, they would gather "the young men of military age, and begin the music of the *verbunkos*." The young man who was considered the best dancer, was designated the leader of all the recruits from that village.[39]

Like the modern march, the melodies of the *verbunkos* "were cast in widely arched, binary, nearly symmetrical phrases, with complementary cadences."[40] The character of the melodies was "more vocal than instrumental and, in fact, referred to at the time as 'song without words' (*hallgató-nóta*). There was an introduction and, at the end, a traditional cadence which represented the 'clicking of heels' (*bokázó*, or as we say today, 'stinger' or 'bump-note')."[41] These characters were not prevalent in the 18th-century march style and point to the interest in Hungarian culture, which had been repressed in Austria for years. The form of the new march also differed in that there was not a da capo, which was always prevalent in 18th-century marches.

France was content with maintaining the traditional *Harmoniemusik* instruments and the old traditions, in part because of its alignment with the Parisian instrument makers. Adolphe Sax was recruited to move to Paris in 1842, and "almost immediately corresponded with the Minister of War about the poor condition of instruments of French military music."[42] As one can expect, this put him at odds with the musicians of France, especially Michel Carafa who wanted to

[38] Whitwell, 278.
[39] Whitwell, 278-279.
[40] Whitwell, 279.
[41] Whitwell, 279.
[42] Whitwell, 281.

maintain the old traditions. The Minister of War established a commission to study the conditions of French military music in 1845. This commission put the instrumentation ideas of Carafa and Sax against each other in a public competition to which Sax won easily, thanks in large part to his newly developed saxhorns. Even though the commission sided with Sax, the French government did not standardize the instrumentation until 1854 with the establishment of infantry and calvary (brass) bands (Table 3). This is the first appearance of the new saxophones.

Table 3 (Instrumentation of French Infantry and Calvary Bands)[43]

Infantry	Calvary
2 flutes or piccolos	1 sopranino saxhorn in Eb
4 Eb Clarinets	2 soprano saxhorns in Eb
8 clarinets in bb	4 soprano saxhorns in Bb
2 soprano saxophones	2 alto saxhorns in Ab
2 alto saxophones	2 alto saxotrombas in Eb
2 tenor saxophones	2 baritone saxotrombas in Bb
2 baritone saxophones	4 bass saxhorns in Bb
2 cornets	2 contrabass saxhorns in Eb
4 trumpets	2 contrabass saxhorns in Bb
4 trombones	2 cornets
2 soprano saxhorns in Eb	6 trumpets
2 soprano saxhorns in Bb	6 trombones (AATTBB)
2 also saxotrombas	
2 baritone saxhorns in Bb	
4 bass saxhorns in Bb	
2 contrabass saxhorns in Eb	
2 contrabass saxhorns in Bb	
5 percussion	

It can be argued that Gustav Holst wrote the first significant music of the 20th century for wind band. *First Suite for Band in E^b* was written in 1909, the very same year *The Firebird* was written for orchestra by Stravinsky. Holst only had an "acute awareness of orchestral traditions."

[43] Whitwell, 284-285.

Therefore, his approach to scoring for the wind band was not hampered by the traditions of orchestral scoring. In 1911, Holst wrote his second piece for band, *Second Suite for Band in F*—which is a collection of English country tunes (which can also be referred to as English folk songs). Holst is the first of many English composers to write the folk songs of English culture. Ralph Vaughan Williams, another Englishman, followed the lead of Holst and wrote *Toccata Marziale* in 1924. All three of these pieces were written for the military bands of the British Army and mark the first-time music was specifically written for the wind band. The British military band is the "prototype for the development of the present-day concert band so closely identified with collegiate institutions."[44]

The choice to model the American wind band after the British military bands was a choice led by economics and "customary inertia." The French military bands featured a majority of reed instruments. This instrumentation did not appeal to the military and civilian authorities in the United States due to the number of reed instruments. The bands of the German Army "contain a complicated instrumentation of brass instruments which has had even less appeal" than the French military band based on Carafa's instrumentation.[45] The British military bands had an instrumentation that was situated in between that of the French and German military bands in terms of reed and brass balance (Table 4). "We have taken the basis of the tables of organization for our army from the Prussians and the French, but our bands follow the British example."[46] Economically, there was already a large catalog of music already written for the British military bands. This music consisted of marches, orchestral transcriptions, and even popular music of the day (from Europe).[47]

[44] Fennell, 38-40.
[45] Fennell, 40.
[46] Fennell, 40.
[47] Fennell, 40-41.

Table 4 (Royal Artillery Band, 1857, England)[48]

2 flutes and piccolo
4 oboes
4 Eb clarinets
22 Bb clarinets
2 Eb saxophones
2 Bb saxophones
4 bassoons
4 cornets
2 trumpets
2 soprano Eb cornets
2 Flügelhorns in Eb, 2 in Bb
4 horns
2 baritones
2 euphoniums
4 trombones
4 bombardons
percussion

As the wind band grew in the United States, conductors, such as Frederick Fennell, Frank Battisti, William Revelli, and others believed that the wind band should be a medium that played music for the sake of playing music as opposed to music for specific events or occasions. They commissioned composers to write for the wind band to elevate its legitimacy alongside the orchestra. As a result, the early part of the 20th century saw an influx of new music being written for the wind band.[49] I believed that William Grant Still and Adolphus Hailstork were the only Black composers of wind band music, because they were the only ones to which I was exposed. I thought there were no Black composers of early wind band literature. It was not until the last few

[48] Whitwell, 287.
[49] Connor Thomas Bowman, "Wind & Rhythm and Race and Gender: Evaluating Wind Band Programming in Relation to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion" (2020), *These and Dissertations*, 2648, https://dc.uwm.edu/etd/2648.

years—specifically 2020—that I learned of Alton Adams and James Reese Europe. Through research for this project, I learned of W.C. Handy, Clarence Cameron White, and Ulysses Kay—who are all Black composers who wrote for the wind band in the early to middle 20th century.[50]

Alton Adams was the first Black bandmaster in the United States Navy. He was born and raised in the Virgin Islands and started the Adams Juvenile Band, which later came to be the U.S. Navy Band of the Virgin Islands.[51] Adams wrote several compositions, with some of his marches "were acclaimed as being among the best of the period."[52] In his memoirs, Adams gives accounts that prove that his music was widely played. He met members of the U.S. Marine Band, led by Captain William H. Santelmann at the time, who complimented Adams on his composition, the *Virgin Islands March*.[53] His music was even played by the Goldman Band, conducted by Edwin Franko Goldman, which Adams was the first Black man to guest conduct.[54]

Adams was extended an invitation to become a charter member of the American Bandmasters Association (A.B.A.) for the first meeting in 1929. He declined because he "did not see fit at the time to join."[55] Later, he "realized the advantages to be gained by aligning myself with the body, and so sent in my application" to which he received no reply.[56] It was not until 1937 when he received the following letter from Goldman explaining what happened and asking Adams to apply again.

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[50] Myron David Moss, "Concert Band Music by African -American Composers: 1927–1998," Order No. 9977227, University of Michigan, 2000, https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/concert-band-music-african-american-composers/docview/304610047/se-2?accountid=14537, accessed May 25, 2022.
[51] Alton Adams, Sr., *The Memoirs of Alton Augustus Adams, Sr.*, ed Mark Clague (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 74.
[52] Adams, 110.
[53] Adams, 113.
[54] Adams, 125.
[55] Adams, 126.
[56] Adams, 127.

You will probably be surprised to hear from me, but the fact that you were black-balled by the A.B.A. at its annual meeting some years ago is still in my mind. President Frank Simon and I have just discussed this matter again and we feel that you should be a member of this organization.

I would suggest that you make formal application for membership again at once, because we are having our next convention on the 5th, 6th, 7th of March…

Mr. Sousa and I were both for you the last time, but it seems there were a few southern members who caused the black-balling. The vote was by secret ballot. Mr. Simon and I would like the thing out in the open this year, and if you care to make application we will fight for you, and I feel that we can bring about better results this time.

If I were you I would just write a letter saying that you would like to make application again. You can say that I know you and will vouch for you. If you care to do this, I would do it at once.[57]

Adams did reapply to the A.B.A. as Goldman requested but was again denied. It seems obvious that Adams was denied membership into the A.B.A. simply because he was a Black man. His accomplishments as a composer and bandmaster in the United States Navy was not enough to earn entry.

James Reese Europe, who founded professional musical organizations known as the Clef Club and the Tempo Club, organized the 15th Infantry Regimental Band for the 15th Infantry

[57] Adams, 127.

Regiment (Colored) of the New York National Guard.[58] During the early 1900s, the United States military did not allow integrated units; therefore, Europe was assigned to a newly established all-Black unit of the New York National Guard based out of Harlem, New York. Europe's task as bandmaster was to build the band to help draw recruits for the 15th New York Infantry. Europe was successful in that many people signed up for the regiment only because of the band. The band played so well that it helped ease racial tensions when the 15th Infantry was temporarily stationed in Spartanburg, SC for combat training at the start of World War I. Once overseas, the 15th Infantry Regimental Band primarily performed for American and British soldiers but did give some concerts for the French people. After being in France for a period of time, the 15th New York Infantry was transferred to the French Army because the United States did not allow regiments of Black soldiers to fight to avoid integrating the U.S. Army. The 15th became the 369th Infantry Regiment.

The 369th Infantry Regimental Band became known as Europe's Band. Badger quotes Hamilton Fish, Jr's account of the band in France, "They were sent to hospitals and locations all over France. They were the best musicians on the Western Front, and that's no idle boast."[59] Upon return to the United States after the war, the band did a national tour that continued to delight audiences with music that was "a gorgeous racket of syncopation and jazzing."[60]

The history of the wind band can differ based upon what is read. The two most accepted histories of the wind band are *Time and the Winds: A Short History of the Use of Wind Instruments in the Orchestra, Band and the Wind Ensemble* by Frederick Fennell, and *A Concise History of the Wind Band* by David Whitwell. Fennell begins with the development of the

[58] Reid Badger, *A Life in Ragtime: A Biography of James Reese Europe*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 141-143.
[59] Badger, 161.
[60] Badger, 206.

orchestra during the late Renaissance and early Baroque periods. Whitwell begins his history of wind music from ancient times. This is not to say that Fennell's account is inaccurate. Fennell is a champion of the wind band and provides some very valuable information. However, the association Fennell makes with the orchestra contributes to the elitism and exclusion that has plagued the wind band. I acknowledge that Fennell may not have done so intentionally as he was only using the resources available to him at the time of his publication.[61]

The orchestra was predominantly funded by the aristocracy of Europe, up until and through the Classical period. The early wind band, as Whitwell accounts, fulfilled a civic function and therefore served the people, in addition to the aristocracy. The early wind band served two purposes—function as well as art—while the orchestra was primarily for art. The wind band was used in a larger capacity than the orchestra, thereby establishing the orchestra as an ensemble for the elite. The desire for the wind band to be viewed as equal to the orchestra, created the circumstance where the wind band excluded populations as it developed in the United States.

In recent years, there have been more calls to diversify the classical music arena, including the wind band, in database projects, social media posts, and newspaper articles and blogs. There have also been calls on social media posts and newspaper articles against diversifying classical music.[62] The resistance to diversifying the wind band is indicative of the problem. I was shocked to learn of the connections between Edwin Goldman and Alton Adams,

[61] According to the Adams State University, Nielson Library, Alamosa, Colorado, *Time and The Winds* was first published in 1954. There have been significantly more studies and, therefore, more information regarding the wind band throughout history since Fennell's publication. This document refers to a copyright date of 2009 because that is the copyright date for the edition used for this research.
[62] Moss,

and how Goldman promoted and sought out Black composers to write for his band. It is evident by his actions that he believed music is more important than color barriers.[63]

The consistent calls for diversification are indicative of the social justice movement that has been sweeping across the United States for the last few years. As society acknowledges the racist past of the United States, there is a desire to right the wrongs of the past, and include voices that have long been excluded, especially from the classical music arena. The Midwest Clinic for Band and Orchestra, a renowned clinic dedicated to the advancement of instrumental music, has increased diversity programming and clinics to include people from different backgrounds. Music students from diverse backgrounds receive music education, therefore, they should see themselves reflected in those who champion music education. Representation matters.

Omar Thomas is one of the composers of our time who is unapologetically who he is, and his essence is reflected in his music. Before he started writing for wind band, he wrote primarily for jazz band. Three of his wind band works—*Of Our New Day Begun*, *Come Sunday*, and *The Low-Down Brown Get-Down*—are examples of how he incorporates Black culture into his compositions.[64] Thomas's first work for wind band, *Of Our New Day Begun* (2015), was written to honor the "Emmanuel 9;" nine people who were killed at the Mother Emmanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church on June 17, 2015. With this piece, Thomas captured the deep emotions of pain and anger, interweaving snippets of *Lift Every Voice and Sing*, The Black National Anthem, within the music.[65] As a Black American man, born and raised in South

[63] An updated, detailed account of the contributions of Black composers to the repertoire of the Wind Band is needed and is an area for future study and research.
[64] Omar Thomas has written six works for wind band to date. All his music is representative of Black music to some degree, but the three mentioned pieces provide a baseline for fighting against whiteness in the wind band and/or are relevant to the project.
[65] https://www.omarthomas.com/of-our-new-day-begun

Carolina, I am moved every time I hear this piece. It perfectly portrays the emotions and intersection of tragedy, memorial, forgiveness, and hope.

Come Sunday (2018) was written as a celebration of Black music, specifically music from the Black church. It consists of two movements, "Testimony" and "Shout!" The first movement, "Testimony" is the point of the service where the Hammond organ, a staple instrument of the Black church, prepares the "congregations' hearts, minds, and spirits to receive The Word via a magical union of Bach, blues, jazz, and R&B."[66] "Shout!" represents the portion of service where "The Spirit has taken over the service." Thomas says explicitly in the program notes that *Come Sunday* is for "all the Black musicians in wind ensemble who were given opportunity after opportunity to celebrate everyone else's music but our own—I see you and I am you."[67]

Omar Thomas himself described *The Low-Down Brown Get-Down* as the "drunk uncle" to *Come Sunday* right before it was released in 2020. In the program notes for the piece, Thomas writes,

> This piece unapologetically struts, bops, grooves, slides, shimmies, head bangs, and soul claps its way straight through its thrilling "chase scene" finale. It was my intention with the creation of this piece to go full steam ahead on bringing African-American folk music to the concert stage to take its place amongst all other types of folk music that have found a comfortable home in this arena. May this work push back against notions of "sophistication," "appropriateness," and "respectability" that have been codified in the concert music setting for a century and more.[68]

[66] https://www.omarthomas.com/come-sunday
[67] Ibid.
[68] https://www.omarthomas.com/the-low-down-brown-get-down

It can be argued that sophistication, appropriateness, and respectability are coded terms that reference white musical norms as being superior. These norms have excluded many Black concertgoers and musicians in the wind band concert hall. Thomas writes that he is embracing all forms of Blackness and pushing against white supremacist ideals associated with wind band literature. He is, as previously outlined, "loving Blackness." This piece is the musical equivalent of the oppositional gaze about which bell hooks writes. Thomas uses blaxploitation film, the oppositional gaze of Black film characters, as a model for embracing Black music in the wind band medium. There have indeed been some adaptations of Black music in wind band literature, but those have mainly been spirituals.[69]

But what is "Black music?" In *Cultural Codes: Makings of a Black Musical Philosophy*, William C. Banfield provides some context for understanding:

> One can cite specific African retentions, those cultural attributes which mark Black music throughout the diaspora and the social-spiritual values that consistently thread Black culture and experiences to a West African sensibility. This includes functionality, participation, communality and spirituality, the role of the musician-griot, melodic conception in blued notes (3-5-7) or glides, phrasing, rhythmic dynamism, cross and polyrhythmic conception, forms of call and response, riffs, soloing, ostinato backbeat grounding patterns, the styling of growls and moans, falsetto, glisses, word fluidity, meaning, flexibility, improvisation, and dance forms, intricately locked with musical performance. Music is always a human expression. Black music is reflective and symbolic of these kinds of twists and

[69] This further emphasizes my earlier point that sacred music is viewed as acceptable.

> changes. Black musicians took musical materials and formed grooves and turnarounds, melodies, songs, and whole traditions of making music that sounded out life experiences. They twisted, remade, and reinvented forms from preexisting song traditions to create new music that resulted from all these views, interpretations, and sayings about what it feels like to be alive. The artistic result, experimentation, was this music in the Black tradition.

Black music in America reflects the ebb and flow of life for Black Americans. The tumultuous history of Black people in America is reflected by the many different forms of Black music. Black music in America may have started with spirituals and work songs from the days of slavery, but it includes, ragtime, blues, rock n roll, jazz, R&B (rhythm & blues), funk, neo-soul, hip hop, and trap music. To talk about Black music as a singular form does the culture a disservice because Black music itself is diverse and nuanced. Musical expression is one of the few things that survived the middle passage when the colonists brought Africans to America (at the time, the New World) to be slaves. West African music traditions were mixed with the hymns and sacred music of the slaveowners and sparked what would begin the origins of Black folk music in America.[70]

Spirituals have origins in the worksongs of Africa. West African tribal societies did most of their labor to rhythm and song. When Africans were brought to the United States to be slaves, the tradition of singing continued. Worksongs could be heard wherever work was being done. The slave owners and overseers encouraged the use of slave songs, especially if it had a positive

[70]Romeo Eldridge Phillips. "Black Folk Music: Setting the Record Straight." *Music Educators Journal* 60, no. 4 (1973): 41–45. https://doi.org/10.2307/3394478.

effect on productivity and morale.[71] The only difference between a spiritual and a worksong is the subject matter. Spirituals centered around biblical topics such as Jonah in the fish's belly, Noah on the ark, Daniel in the lion's den, and Jesus on the cross. These were the redeemers and saviors of the slaves, Old Pharaoh and Old Satan were considered the enemies.[72] Both spirituals and worksongs were spontaneous in nature and often told stories about life as a slave. Often, however, the lyrics of spirituals and worksongs had double meanings so that the white listeners had a completely different understanding of the lyrics than the Black listeners.[73] Lyrics and melodies may have changed over time because they were not written down.

From worksongs to spirituals to minstrel shows, to the present day, Black music, and Black culture, are a driving force of popular American culture. With every generation, Black music serves as a time capsule for events and emotions. During the 1970s, it was the music of Isaac Hayes, Curtis Mayfield, James Brown, and others. Based on this argument, the music of the 1970s acts as a form of folk music because it preserves the events of that time for future generations. The music of the blaxploitation era heavily influenced today's Black music. As the wind band profession continues to be an environment that welcomes composers, conductors, and musicians from all walks of life, it is exciting to see a new era of inclusivity. This project is indicative of the direction of the profession.

[71] Thomas L. Morgan and Williams Barlow, *From Cakewalks to Concert Halls: An Illustrated History of African American Popular Music from 1865 to 1930*, (Washington, D.C.: Elliott & Clark Publishing, 1992), 10.
[72] Morgan and Barlow, 7.
[73] Morgan and Barlow, 9

CHAPTER 4

RHYTHMIC ANALYSIS OF *THE LOW-DOWN BROWN GET-DOWN*

The Low-Down Brown Get-Down by Omar Thomas was written for a non-existent blaxploitation film. A consortium of wind band conductors from various universities in the United States, led by Dr. Daniel Tembras, Director of Instrumental Studies at Purdue University, Fort Wayne commissioned the work. It de-emphasizes melody and "elevates rhythmic bass lines and tightly woven percussion grooves."[74] A groove "is a term that can refer to the beat or feel of the music. Music that is 'in the groove' generally feels good or is enjoyable to listen to, while music that does not 'groove' lacks those qualities…it is generally employed as a part of an opinion and as such is difficult to define."[75]

The title reflects African American Vernacular English.[76] "Low Down" is a term that refers to discovering the unadulterated truth about a particular topic or event, also called "the scoop." Brown refers to James Brown, a musical pioneer of funk music, whose music influences Omar Thomas within the work. "Get Down" refers to a joyous celebration that features "funky music and dancing." *The Low-Down Brown Get-Down* is divided into 4 "scenes" with a codetta (small coda). Each section coincides with the plot of the non-existent movie as presented in Figure 1.[77]

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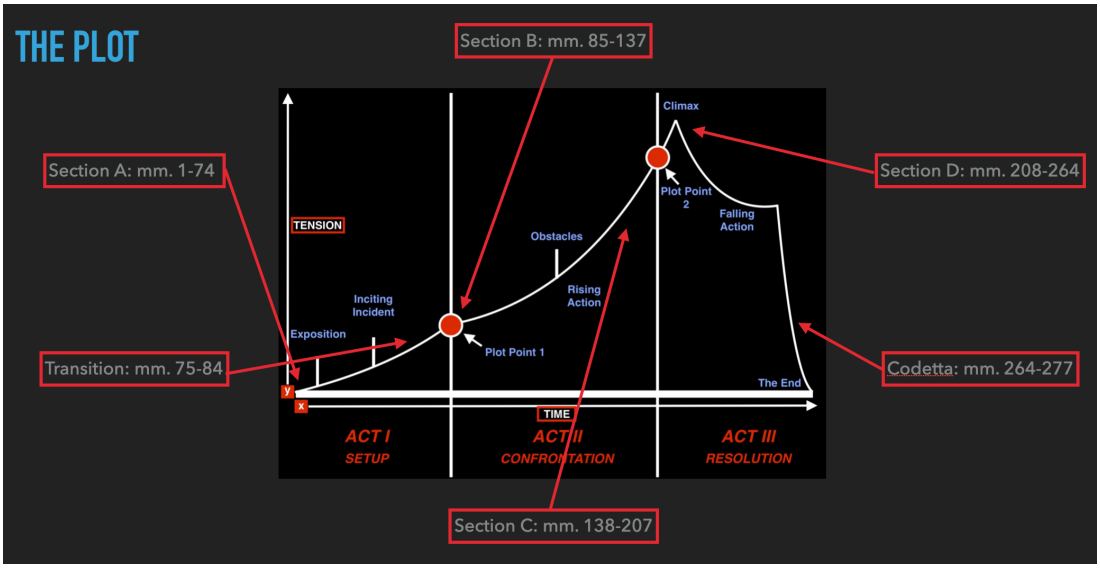
[74] Jamaal William Nicholas, *The Low-Down Brown Get-Down for wind ensemble*, University of South Carolina, Doctoral Lecture Recital, October 6, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L6t2RDAAtAk&list=PLJlaspBL5aA81CZvnaE_4vrzmd09mnF4c&index=2&t=5s

[75] John S. David, *Historical Dictionary of Jazz*, (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 2012), 145

[76] African American Vernacular English (AAVE) refers to the form of English that is commonly used by Black Americans. It is also known as Black English, Ebonics, and other names.

[77] Jamaal Nicholas published a thorough analysis of *The Low-Down Brown Get-Down* by Omar Thomas. My analysis uses his analysis as a foundation and builds upon his analysis. Citations are present whenever his analysis is used.

Figure 1 (Plot diagram of Omar Thomas, *The Low-Down Brown Get-Down*) [78]



There are three plot sections, the Setup (Act I), Confrontation (Act II), and the Resolution (Act III). The setup establishes the characters and builds tension for the upcoming conflict. The confrontation is when the conflict between characters manifests. The resolution is when the conflict is resolved, and the story comes to an end. Musically, Thomas reflects what is happening in the plot.

Syncopated rhythms are prevalent throughout the piece, which is indicative of jazz and musical styles that have evolved from jazz, such as funk. Articulations are also important to this piece. Thomas creates a notation that is not normally used in wind band music that looks similar to an equilateral triangle. He explains it as a representation of the "DAHT! or AHT!" vocal syllable. He calls it a "FAT" accent because the note should be "fat". In the program notes, he writes, "What's most important is the continual fullness of the note (represented by the AH sound) and the sharp, tongue cutoff of the note (represented by the T at the end of the sound)."[79]

[78] Jamaal William Nicholas
[79] Omar Thomas, *The Low-Down Brown Get-Down*, Omar Thomas Music, v2 Nov 2021.

The instrumentation is listed in Table 5. What is interesting about the instrumentation is that Thomas uses four saxophones, soprano, alto, tenor, and baritone, without any split parts—and four trombone parts—trombone 1, 2, 3, and bass trombone—and hand claps in the percussion section. There are many works within the wind band repertoire that use soprano saxophone, but absence a split alto saxophone part, coupled with four trombone parts, Thomas's instrumentation resembles the instrumentation of a jazz band. Hand Claps are not a typical percussive instrument in wind band repertoire, yet Thomas notates them in percussion 2, 3, & 4.[80]

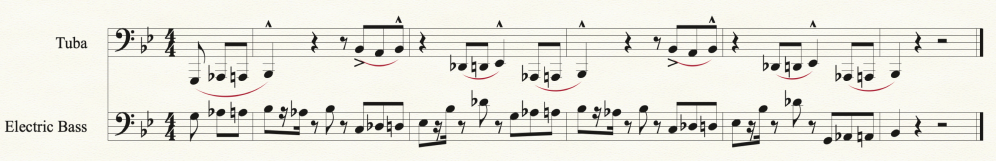
Table 5 (Omar Thomas, *The Low-Down Brown Get-Down,* Instrumentation)

Piccolo
3 Flutes
2 Bassoon
Contrabassoon
3 Clarinets in Bb
Bass Clarinet
Soprano Sax
Alto Sax
Tenor Sax
Baritone Sax
3 Trumpets in Bb
4 Horns in F
3 Trombones
Bass Trombone
Euphonium
Tuba
Piano
Timpani
Percussion 1
Percussion 2
Percussion 3
Percussion 4

[80] Hand clapping as an important aspect of Black music will be discussed later in this chapter.

Section A (measures 1 – 74), is centered around the key of B-flat major. This music is influenced by Herbie Hancock and James Brown. Figure 2 shows the bassline from *The Low-Down Brown Get-Down* measures 5-8 (labeled Tuba) alongside the bassline for *Chameleon* by Herbie Hancock (1973) (labeled electric bass). The first four notes and last three notes of the two basslines are identical. In the first complete measure, Thomas leaves omits the additional A-flat and B-flat leading into and on the downbeat of 2, respectively. Thomas concludes the measure with a lower neighbor note versus the chromatic motion in *Chameleon*. Thomas uses ascending half-step motion in a quasi-sequence, which differs slightly from the arpeggiation of an E-flat dominant 7 chord (minus the 3rd) followed by upward half-step motion.[81] Measures 3 and 4 of the excerpt are identical to measures 1 and 2.

Figure 2 (Herbie Hancock, *Chameleon* & Omar Thomas, *The Low-Down Brown Get-Down*) [82]

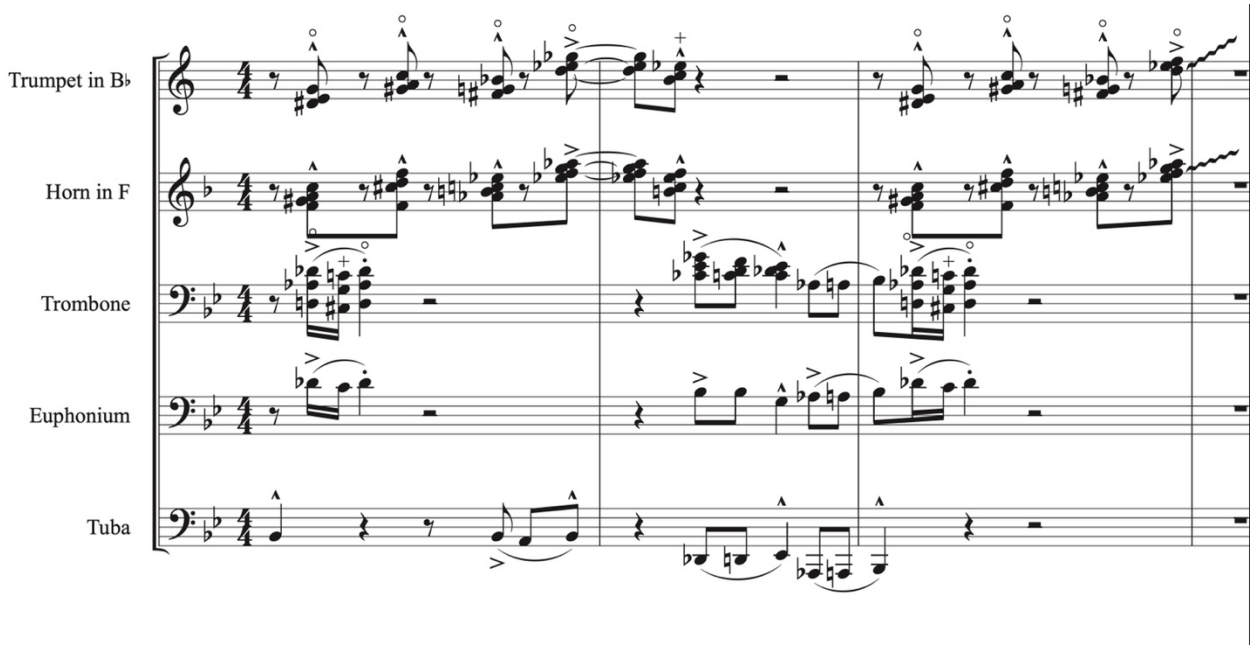


Measures 5 – 7 also show the influence of James Brown. Figure 3 shows how Thomas composes out a two-measure lick from James Brown's *I Got The Feeling*. In the original, the entire motive is played by the accompanying instruments. Thomas breaks up the motive over several instruments. Soprano and alto saxophone and all trumpet parts (1 – 3) and all horn parts (1 – 4) play the first portion of the motive in measure 5. Bass clarinet, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone, all trombone parts (1, 2, 3, and bass), and tuba play the second half of the motives in

[81] The E^b dominant seventh is implied based on the key signature and the third of the chord appearing later in the measure.
[82] Jamaal William Nicholas.

measure 6. The first half of the motive reappears in measure 7 in the same voices as measure 5, with a glissando at the end, marking an end of the quote.

Figure 3 (Omar Thomas, *The Low-Down Brown Get-Down* mm 5 – 7)



The bassline in measures 5 – 8 connects the two influences. As explained in Figure 2, it differs slightly than *Chameleon* but also reflects the influence of James Brown from *I Got The Feelin'* (Figure 3). Even though the pitch center is centered around the key of B-flat and sounds major, Thomas primarily uses the B-flat Blues scale (B-flat, D-flat, E-flat, E, F, A-flat) to write the licks in the woodwinds.[83] The entire ensemble comes together rhythmically in measure 25 with a unison lick before transition material is played in the percussion section.

Trumpets 2 and 3 and trombones 1, 2, and 3 mimic the guitar in *Shaft* by Isaac Hayes in measures 35 – 47 (Figure 4). The use of the Harmon mute allows the trumpets and trombones to recreate the "wah" sound that is heard from the guitar in *Shaft*. Licks permeate the following

[83] A lick is a jazz term that means a "specific phrase or sequence of notes." *See John David in Bibliography.*

measures, still centered around B^{b}. The first melodic material (Figure 5) is played by the bassoons, clarinets (parts 2 and 3), and horns from measures 58 – 64 accompanied by a groove-based ostinato. The melodic motive is primarily stepwise in nature and are parallel major 7th chords in second inversion. The transition material of measures 75 – 84 is a lick that starts in the upper woodwinds and is passed down through the ensemble to the low woodwinds and brass, getting progressively slower approaching a fermata in measure 85 on the tonic note in the lowest register.

Figure 4 (Omar Thomas, *The Low-Down Brown Get-Down* mm 35 – 47)

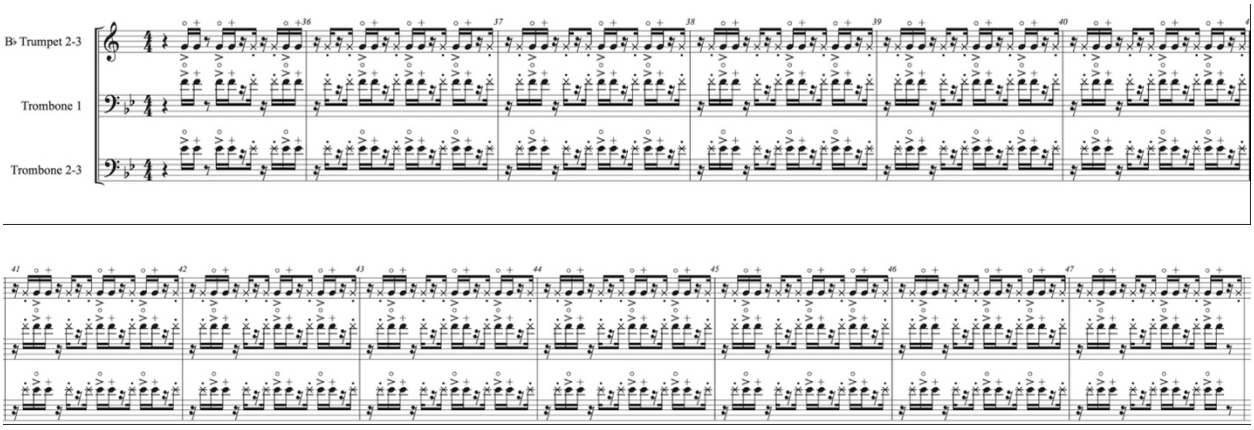
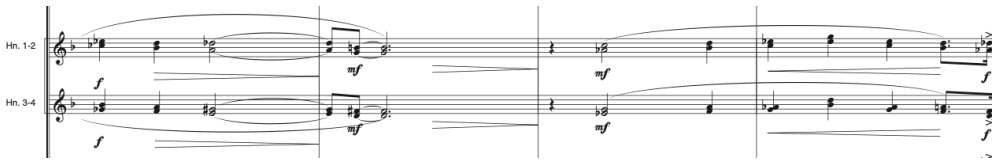


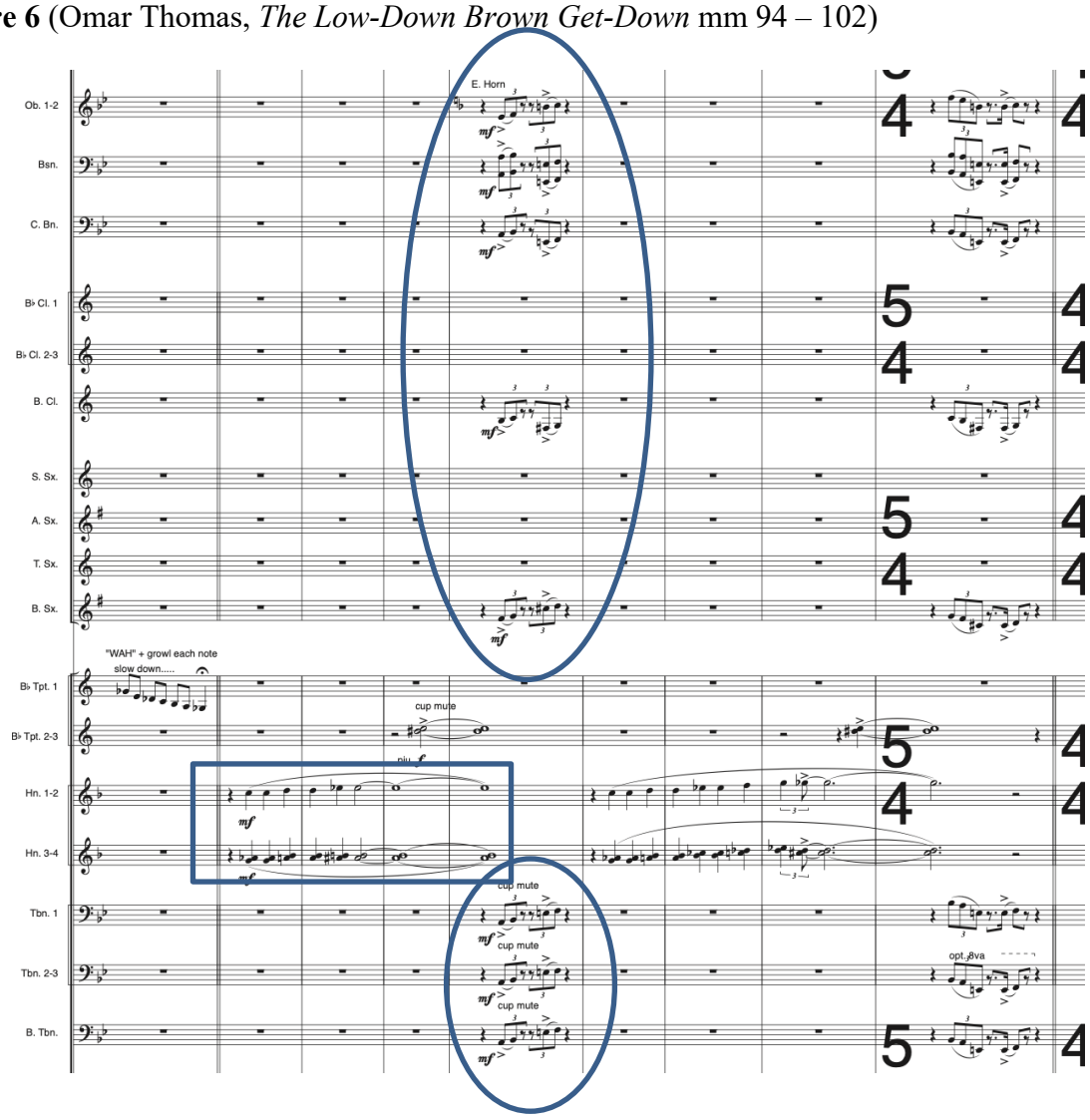
Figure 5 (Omar Thomas, *The Low-Down Brown Get-Down* mm 60 – 63)



Measures 85 – 95 act as transitional material with only trumpet, piano, and congas, and are the beginning of a new scene. This section resembles two jazz musicians trading improvised solos, only Thomas composes what each instrument plays. The trumpet solo is written as a cadenza, with the piano and conga parts are in time. The melodic material introduced in measure

58 is reprised in measure 94 in the horn. Thomas again uses the major 7th chord harmonically, only this time, the 5th of the chord is excluded. Up until measure 85, the texture of the music has been mostly polyphonic, but here, the texture is homophonic (Figure 6, rectangle). The horn is accompanied by two sustained notes in the trumpet (creating a cluster chord) and a rhythmic motive played by the trombones, bass clarinet, baritone saxophone, bassoons, and english horn (Figure 6). The rhythmic motive sonically represents danger approaching (Figure 6, oval shape).[84]

Figure 6 (Omar Thomas, *The Low-Down Brown Get-Down* mm 94 – 102)

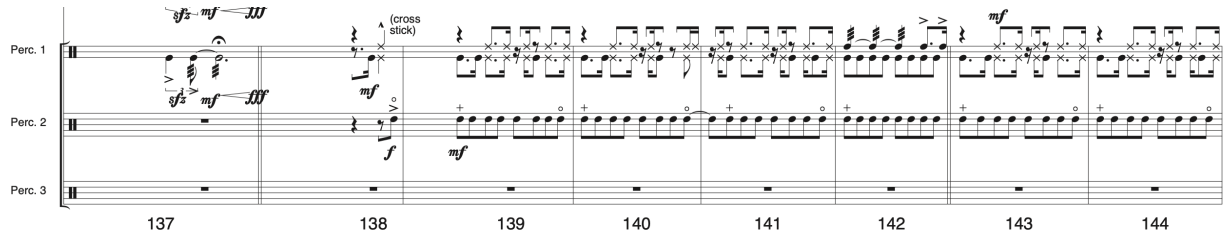


[84] Jamaal William Nicholas.

The melodic motive of measure 95 is expanded in measure 108 and is played by the saxophones (all except baritone saxophone), clarinets (minus bass clarinet), and flutes, and expands to new melodic material from measures 113 through 121. Measure 121 features new melodic material that builds toward the climax of the "film."[85] Thomas uses repetition of the previous melodic motives to build tension. Measure 132 takes the first melodic material—introduced in measure 58 and expanded in this section—only this time he uses minor triads with an added 9th instead of the major 7th chords as before. This sudden usage of the minor mode further builds tension approaching the climax at the fermata in measure 137.

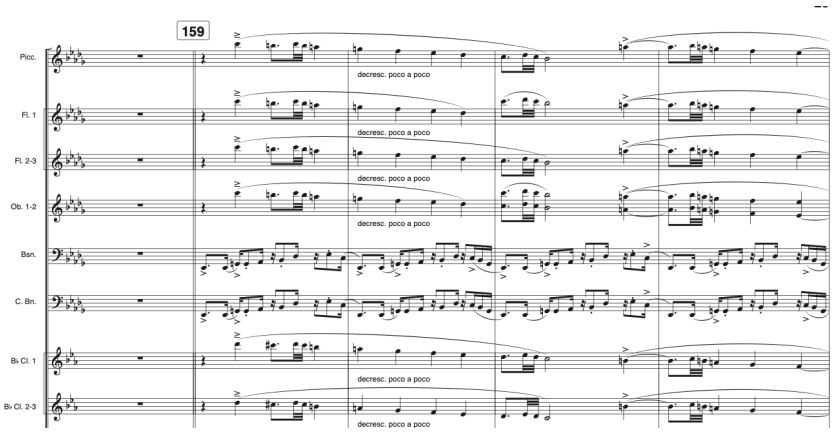
Like so many times before, Thomas uses the percussive grooves as transition material to the next section (Figure 7). The groove is accompanied by licks in the low reeds, which then expand to include the low brass, leading to full ensemble transition material. The main motive of this transition material appears in measure 159 in the piccolo, flute, and oboe parts (Figure 8). This motive is passed throughout the ensemble and is descending, possibly indicating the dénouement.

Figure 7 (Omar Thomas, *The Low-Down Brown Get-Down* mm 137 – 144)



[85] Recall that Thomas wrote *The Low-Down Brown Get-Down* for a film that does not exist. The climax of this project will be discussed in a later chapter.

Figure 8 (Omar Thomas, *The Low-Down Brown Get-Down* mm 158 – 162)



The transitional section of measures 138 through measure 158 is similar to measures 5 – 26 in that the melody is replaced by melodic motives that function as grooves juxtaposed onto each other. Even though the key signature changes at the beginning of this section, the "key change" occurs at measure 132. This is not the traditional key change, rather than a transition to the minor mode that Thomas began in measure 132. The full ensemble comes together with a unison lick over measures 173 and 174 with a percussion fill that leads into a 16-measure clapping section. Every instrument, with exception to a few percussion parts, participates in the clapping section. It is unison for the first 8 measures, then breaks into polyphonic texture for the second 8 measures. The syncopation becomes more complex in the last four measures only to come together before the final motives for this large section. The syncopated clapping rhythms resemble drums in West African traditions. The complexity of the syncopation is what William C. Banfield describes in the aforementioned definition of Black music. These rhythms are commonplace in the Black church—whose musical traditions have heavily influenced Thomas, as evidenced by *Come Sunday*—jazz, and other musical styles that have arrived from those traditions.

The final section of *The Low-Down Brown Get-Down* is a "chase" scene.[86] The ostinato bassline (Figure 9) propels the music forward and gives the feeling of anticipation. After the ostinato is established, muted trumpet (2nd part only), baritone saxophone, tenor saxophone, and flute, enter with a soli (also Figure 9). Thomas uses percussion to create the sense of urgency (Figure 10).

Figure 9 (Omar Thomas, *The Low-Down Brown Get-Down* mm 208 – 212)

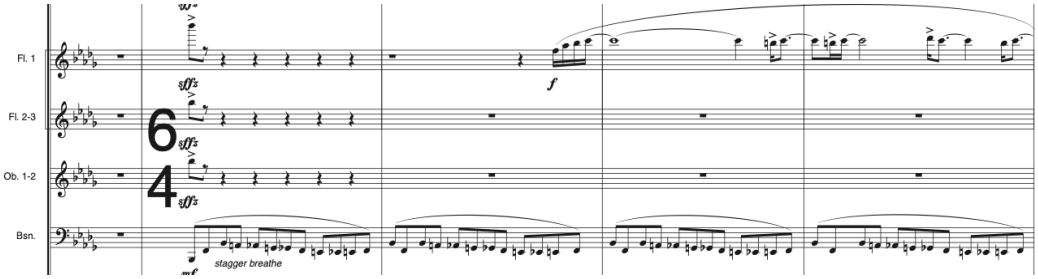
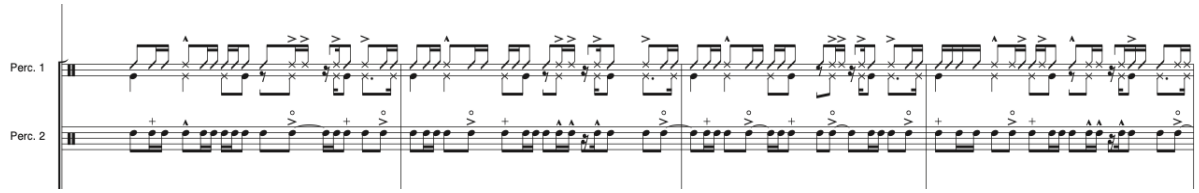


Figure 10 (Omar Thomas, *The Low-Down Brown Get-Down* mm 208 – 212)



The music continues to build until Thomas uses a quote from the *Shaft* by Isaac Hayes (Figure 11). In *Shaft* (1971) this music is heard when Shaft breaks through a window to rescue the crime lord's daughter from her kidnappers and saves the day. The original motive is written in common time, has a quarter note stinger at the end of the measure, and is repeated immediately (Figure 12). Thomas elongates the measure (6 beats instead of 4) and condenses the motive into one measure.

[86]Thomas refers to this section as a chase scene in the program notes.

Figure 11 (Omar Thomas, *The Low-Down Brown Get-Down* mm 236)

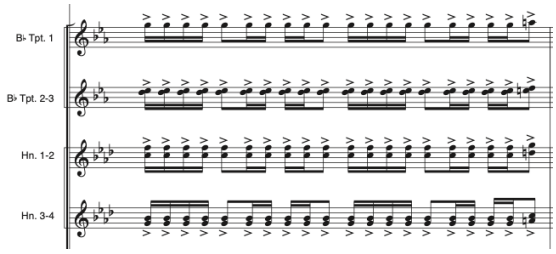
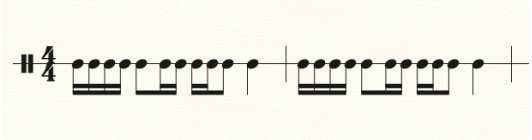
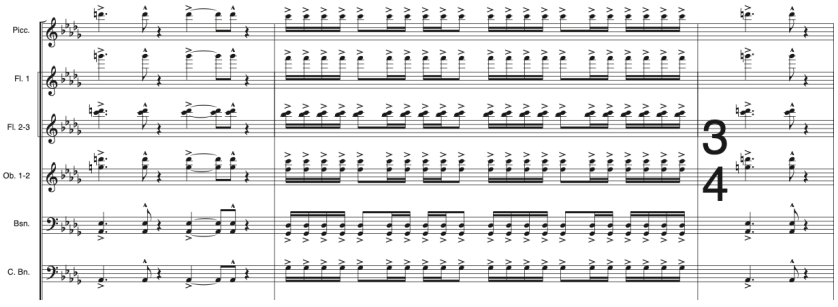


Figure 12 Isaac Hayes, *Shaft*[87]



Thomas repeats the motive a total of 5 times. The first two times he follows with a percussion fill that goes back into the "chase" music. The third time—and every time thereafter—Thomas introduces a new motive (Figure 13). Thomas prolongs the new motive by rhythmic shifts—it appears in different time signatures (as also seen in Figure 13) and starts on different beats within the measure. He alternates between this new motive and the *Shaft* motive to build toward the climactic end.

Figure 13 (Omar Thomas, *The Low-Down Brown Get-Down* mm 245 – 247)



[87] *Shaft* by Isaac Hayes, transcribed by Davaron Edwards

The ending codetta (beginning in measure 264) features unison licks with pitch bends that slow in tempo as the double bar approaches. This signifies an end to the film and is as if the hero sighs in relief that the conflict has been resolved.[88]

[88] Jamaal William Nicholas

CHAPTER 5

OUTLINE OF SCENES

That Omar Thomas wrote *The Low-Down Brown Get-Down* as a soundtrack for a film that does not exist made it easy to create a film! Figure 1 (page 20) illustrates the form and how it relates to the plot. The following is an outline of the scenes, followed by a more detailed explanation of why these scenes were chosen. Time stamps are used because it is an easier form of communication amongst the collaborators (not everyone is familiar with music notation). There is no speaking in this film as the visuals attempt to fully convey the storyline. The blocking for each scene was done on location during filming.

0:00 — 1:12

Overture, opening credits over block party. Male and female leads introduced.

1:12 — 3:30

Party continues, villain(s) introduced, they try to cause trouble/keep people from having a good time, two leads send them away.

3:30 — 6:55

Leads head home. We see that the villains from earlier have stuck around in order to follow them home. Cuts between leads walking and villains stalking.

Leads arrive home, passionate moment/dance between them, villains look on from outside.

Villains burst in, try to grab female lead, male lead is knocked out, female lead runs.

6:55 — 7:45

Villains pursue the female lead, cut between female lead, villains chasing her, male lead coming to and following.

7:45 — 8:15

Female lead continues running; sees church up ahead.

8:15 — 9:00

Cut to inside church, service going on, female lead runs into church.

9:00 — 9:35

Villains enter church. Church members help protect female lead.

9:35 – 12:30

Final chase. Male lead catches up to them, sees villains trying to flee from church. He follows.

Chase leads them back to neighborhood from beginning. Villains have nowhere to run. Fight scene. Leads victorious.

Act I – Set-up

The A section is reserved for opening credits and establishing the characters. The joyous celebratory nature of the music warrants an opening that is light and fun. A block party is a large community event. It is a time for food, fun, and fellowship amongst the community. I think it is important to show that the main characters are involved within the community, which is important in Blaxploitation film. Every film I watched in preparation for this project showed the main character in their community, especially Shaft.

Act II – Confrontation

The B section of this piece suggests passion and longing, as well as confrontation. The flowing melodic motives and rich harmonies are indicative of expressing love interest. As the passion builds between the two main characters, the villains are setting the stage for the main confrontation. As the music builds toward measure 138, the tension in the film also builds. A

home invasion allows the tension to build simultaneously between the lovers and the anticipation of the main confrontation. The passion between the two main characters builds sensual tension between them. The audience sees what is about to happen to the main characters which build anticipation. The dissonant chords and repeated motives help build the tension aurally. The attempted kidnapping releases the tension and sets up the future fight scene.

Act III – Resolution

I love a good church service. Church is something that is important to me, Omar Thomas, and many in the Black community. The large clapping section in the middle is the perfect opportunity for a church scene. Moreover, the church is a place of safety for many in the Black community, based on my own personal experience. Historically, churches have been training grounds[89] and places for refuge with the many programs and services offered, especially to young people. There are churches in some blaxploitation films, and the relevance varies. In *Sweet, Sweetback*, the pastor is corrupt, but the church still plays an important role in the film. I would like the church in this project to reflect more of my childhood experience than that of corruption. The hero always needs help to "save the day," why not have that help from the people in the church.

Thomas calls Section D chase scene music in the program notes. The driving bassline provides forward motion in the music to suggest moving forward at a rapid pace. The male lead

[89] Wayside Chapel Baptist Church in Florence, SC exposed and trained me for many different things. I participated in different church choirs since I was a young boy. I attended field trips to different conferences, such as the South Carolina Baptist Congress of Christian Education and Sunday School Convention, where I learned appropriate behavior for different situations. I learned how to speak in front of audiences by giving holiday speeches and participating in youth services. I learned how to act through the many Christmas and Easter plays and productions. I was taught Robert's Rules of Order and how to conduct business through business meetings at church and at the New Hope Union of Churches. I learned about being a church musician by leading the Music Ministry in between music directors. All training that I received in life began at church.

chasing the villains as they flee the house set the stage for an epic ending fight scene. The codetta signifies the “hero sigh;” the hero has triumphed over his opponents.

CHAPTER 6

PROJECT REFLECTIONS

Completing this project was a rewarding and learning experience. In this section, I discuss challenges that arose during the process, how those challenges were overcome, what I would do differently, and opportunities for further research.

Part 1 Reflections

In Part 1, I led the UGA Wind Ensemble in rehearsals and performance of *The Low-Down Brown Get-Down* by Omar Thomas. Rehearsals were set to begin at the start of the Spring 2022 semester. Unfortunately, the University of Georgia, and the United States, experienced a significant spike in cases of the Omicron variant of the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) virus. This is significant because vaccines were not required for UGA students, faculty, or staff, though they were strongly encouraged. The vaccination status of students was unknown because it violated personal health information rights and university policy to inquire about students' vaccination status. Due to these factors, the decision was made by the administration of the Hugh Hodgson School of Music to postpone the start of all large ensembles within the School of Music for two weeks in hopes of reducing the risk of exposure to SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19).

During this two-week time frame, rehearsals were permitted with the following guidelines: performers equaled fewer than 20, masks were always to be worn, and rehearsals were to last no more than 30 minutes followed by an hour of air exchange. I led one percussion and brass sectional and two woodwind sectional rehearsals.

The first sectional was the woodwind sectional. During this sectional, the woodwind performers struggled to play the music with accuracy. Though the parts were assigned and available before that rehearsal, it was immediately evident the musicians had not looked at the parts before rehearsal. One performer commented that she underestimated the technical proficiency required for *The Low-Down Brown Get-Down*. The overwhelming majority of the rehearsal was spent drilling the difficult passages under the marked tempos so that performers could build technical proficiency. As a conductor, this was frustrating because the expectation for the top ensemble at the University of Georgia is to begin rehearsing the first rehearsal rather than drilling passages that could and should have been practiced before rehearsal. Therefore, the second woodwind sectional was scheduled.

The percussion and brass sections were able to read the entire piece during the sectional time. My greatest concern resulting from the brass sectional would overpower the woodwinds. Subsequent rehearsals affirmed my initial concern. Even though the piece only has 5 percussion parts (Percussion 1 – 4 and timpani), it requires 7 percussionists. Percussion 1 and Percussion 2 should be played by two people. Unfortunately, only 5 percussionists were assigned to the Wind Ensemble. As a solution, another percussionist was asked to assist with percussion 2 for the concert and the bass drum from percussion 1 was also played by the timpanist.

Omar Thomas provided legends for each percussion part, but some instrument assignments in percussion 2 and 3 were not provided. Omar Thomas was not available to contact due to his demanding teaching and composition schedule, so I reached out to different colleagues that had already performed the piece. Dr. Dennis Llinás from the University of Oregon provided the instrument assignments.[90]

[90] Omar Thomas and I discussed the project before film production started. Based on his schedule, I knew that any response from him would take longer than I could wait for a response.

The second woodwind sectional was substantially better than the first. The preparation for the sectional by the musicians provided an opportunity to develop consistency of style throughout the section for different passages. Despite the musicians being better prepared for rehearsal, there were still quite a few passages that required individual attention. However, I looked forward to the first full ensemble rehearsal because of the progress made in the sectional rehearsals. The musicians, however, made mistakes during the first full rehearsal that they had not made during sectionals. My concerns about the brass overpowering the woodwinds were affirmed. The woodwinds, especially the clarinet section, struggled to play some of the technical passages. Early in the rehearsal process, I was quite concerned that this was too difficult for the ensemble. Under normal circumstances, the Wind Ensemble mostly consisted of graduate and upper-level undergraduate musicians. Due to the UGA Symphony Orchestra performing Mahler's 5th Symphony, a large majority of the graduate-level musicians were playing in the orchestra.[91] As a result, the woodwind section was significantly younger than the brass and percussion sections. The clarinet and horn sections, respectively, were the two least experienced sections in the ensemble and faced the most technical challenges.

The ensemble overall struggled with stylistic accuracy and maintaining the written tempo. I explored different conducting techniques to improve the style and tempo with guidance from Mr. Dennis Glocke, who was serving in an interim role during the search for the next UGA Director of Bands.[92] As a part of the Director of Bands search, I had lessons in front of the ensemble with Drs. Jaclyn Hartenberger and Robert Ambrose, respectively.

[91] There may be other contributing factors to which I am not privy, such as the nature of the ensemble assignments. The graduate-level musicians being assigned to the orchestra is a factor to which I was privy.
[92] During the rehearsal process, I also received conducting and rehearsal lessons from Dr. Jaclyn Hartenberger and Dr. Robert Ambrose as a part of their respective interviews for the UGA Director of Bands position.

Dr. Hartenberger's lesson focused on personifying my interpretation of the music. There was a disconnect between my musical interpretation and what my conducting showed. She challenged me to be more expressive and stop overthinking. If the passage was big and flowing, she challenged me to make sure my gestures were big and flowing. The caliber of musicians enabled me to be extremely expressive as they are sensitive to the most subtle movements. As my conducting became more connected to my musical interpretation, the ensemble played more expressively. However, we still had issues maintaining tempo.

Dr. Ambrose's lesson primarily focused on gesture of syncopation (GOS).[93] He remarked that my gesture of syncopation was larger than it needed to be. He told me to stop all movement in preparation for the GOS; then flick my baton as if I were flicking a drop of water off the tip of the beat immediately preceding the syncopated rhythm. The flicking motion is very small, but immediately improved the performance of the ensemble.

The concert featured performances from the Symphonic Band, Wind Symphony, in addition to the Wind Ensemble. The Wind Symphony and Symphonic Band were added to the concert due to the cancellation of their concert which would have been at the beginning of February 2022.[94] The additional ensembles greatly increased the length of the concert. The Wind Ensemble played two pieces at the beginning of the concert, one in the middle, and two at the end; *The Low-Down Brown Get-Down* was the last piece on a concert that lasted over two hours. There were two issues with the performance. We had major tempo issues in section A. The tempo slowed down by approximately 10 clicks. Initially, I tried to get the ensemble to speed up

[93] Gesture of syncopation or GOS is a conducting technique that emphasizes a beat right before a syncopated rhythm.
[94] The concert was canceled due to the three-week pause at the beginning of the semester to mitigate the spread of the omicron variant of COVID-19

by conducting smaller and getting the percussion to speed up, but unfortunately, not everyone in the percussion section was watching. I was forced to simply go with it.

My favorite portion of the performance was from measures 108 to 137. The ensemble and I were not always on the same page in rehearsals, but on concert night, we were locked into each other. It was a magnificent connection that sent chills down my spine. We again failed to maintain tempo in the next section but stayed together as an ensemble. Measure 208, however, presented a problem that was one of the scariest moments as a conductor.

I felt the bassoons rush the bassline and showed them more attention to tempo. As a result, I was late giving the trombones a cue at measure 217 and they missed their entrance. Almost immediately, the principal trombone player and I looked at each other. His expression was that of fear and panic. The entire section missed the cue and none of them knew where they were. In every rehearsal, I always gave them a cue. My attention to the bassoons prevented me from giving them a cue. I also knew that I had to remain calm because the ensemble had no idea what was going on, but I had to do something to help the trombones. My thought about the trombones caused me to miss the cue for the trumpets in measure 221. It was at this moment I realized that I had lost where I was in the music. My face was calm and confident, and my pattern was secure, but internally, I was in a whirlwind of panic. So many thoughts and scenarios ran through my brain. The next 4 measures seemed like an eternity. At this point, other members of the ensemble started figuring out that something was wrong and were looking puzzled. Alas, the flutes came in strong with their pickup to measure 226, and almost immediately, we all got back together.

We almost fell apart. But we didn't. We pulled through together and completed the performance without the audience (and some members of the ensemble) knowing how close we

were to falling apart. I knew this recording was not the caliber we needed for the film, so I collaborated with Mr. Casey O'Neal—through Dr. Peter Lane, Associate Professor of Composition and Director of the Dancz Center for New Music—who is the graduate assistant for the Dancz Center for New Music, to schedule a recording session in the band room, which took place Tuesday, March 29, 2022, in the band room, Leebern Hall.

The recording session was scheduled for the end of rehearsal, from 3:15 pm until 4:30 pm. We recorded a run-through of *The Low-Down Brown Get-Down*, and then went back and recorded each section. After the recording session, Mr. O'Neal and I met in the Peter and Cynthia J. Turner Office Suite to listen to the recordings. We selected the best recording for each section. Mr. O'Neal then combined everything into one track. Everything was completed before we left the Hugh Hodgson School of Music that evening.

There were 9 total full ensemble rehearsals totaling 5 hours 35 minutes; two woodwind sectionals of 40 minutes and 30 minutes, respectively; one 40-minute brass and percussion sectional for a total rehearsing time of 7 hours 25 minutes. Each rehearsal required a minimum of 1 hour of preparation time for an estimated time of 13 hours. Before rehearsals began, I estimate that I spent an estimated 20 hours studying and learning the score. Unfortunately, I did not keep accurate records of my score preparation time because I did not think it was relevant to the project. I will keep track of all aspects of future projects and decide what information is relevant at the conclusion of the project.

Part 2 Reflections

Part 2 of the project was everything that dealt with creating the visuals for the film. This part began in November with a meeting with Cash Robinson, the director of the film. Mr. Robinson and I were connected by Mr. Dave Kreutzer, a professor in the Department of Theatre and Film Studies.[95] Our initial meeting lasted approximately an hour to discuss the project and schedule subsequent meetings. During the month of December, we met for a total of 8 hours to outline the script of the film as outlined in the previous chapter. We decided an outline would better suit the project due to the film being silent. We decided to wait until we were on location before doing any blocking.

Reverend B.A. Hart, Pastor of the First African Methodist Episcopal Church of Athens, Georgia allowed us to the church as one of our locations. We had total access to the church, free of charge. I coordinated dates and times with the church secretary and one of the church trustees. Ms. Aurelia Scott, who is a member of the First A.M.E. Church of Athens, allowed the use of one of her vacant rental properties as a filming location, also free of charge.

To find members of the cast, a casting call went out through the Grady College listserve and postings in the UGA theatre and film departments for the female lead and extras.[96] The original meeting had to be changed due to a lack of interest. Only three people attended the second casting meeting, and one person, Ms. Kassadi Saunders, was cast in the film.[97] The remaining members of the cast are either connected to Cash Robinson or me.

Filming was originally scheduled for the weekend of February 18, 19, and 20, but due to conflicts with the cast, it was rescheduled for the following weekend, February 27. In the weeks

[95] Mr. Kruetzer is also the professor that taught Intro to Film Production, which I took in the Spring 2021 semester.
[96] There was also an invitation extended to the UGA Wind Ensemble to be in the film.
[97] Actors in the film were required to be fully vaccinated, which prevented some participation.

leading up to February 27, we made every effort to secure extras for the block party scene and the church scene. We sent emails to different Grady College listservs; I made a post in the GroupMe chat for UGA Black graduate students; and made an appeal to the congregation of Thankful Baptist Church, Stephens, GA.

The block party was set to be a large community event with grilled food and a DJ. Mr. Richard Cornelius, Sr. donated the use of his grill, and I used personal funds to purchase the necessary materials for the event totaling almost $500. The items included a box each of hamburgers and hot dogs, four slabs of ribs, assorted chips, condiments, buns, napkins, a box of utensils, beverages, and buffet-style serving dishes. Unfortunately, the weather report for that weekend was for rain starting late Saturday night and continuing Sunday afternoon, which meant the block party had to be canceled. Due to schedule conflicts and weather, we—Mr. Robinson, Ms. Mollie Schilling, and I—decided it was best to rewrite the beginning of the film to not prolong the project. This meant that we would be unable to film everything within that weekend because all the outside shots would take place at night and at the point of the decision, we were unsure of how to start the film.

The set for the house consisted of moving boxes that I purchased from U-Haul Moving and Storage, tea candles, a fire, and an old piano that was already in the house.[98] All wardrobe for the female lead, and some wardrobe for the male lead was purchased from thrift stores in Athens, Georgia.[99] All other clothing was provided by the actors. The camera equipment was loaned to us by Mr. Kreutzer, I purchased 10 rolls of film, and Mr. Robinson provided the lighting and 5 rolls of film.

[98] The choice was made to have a minimalist set to save time and money. Any furniture we used had to be either purchased and/or moved to the filming location.

[99] The wardrobe was purchased with two shopping trips. Jonathon accompanied me on the first shopping trip and did the second trip alone. The actors were allowed to keep the clothing as a thank you for participating in the project.

When Sunday, February 27 arrived, we met at 4:00 pm at the house Ms. Aurelia Scott allowed us to use. We decided it would be best to arrive early to block the scenes and rehearse with the actors since this was the first instance of all cast and crew members present. Our production day began with me choreographing the dance sequence leading up to the moment of passion between the two lead characters; since I had the most experience with dance and choreography.[100] This took a couple of hours to rehearse. I knew the actors did not have much acting experience, but I did not appreciate the amount of time it would take for the lead actors to get comfortable with each other. After dinner—which I provided—we began shooting the film.[101] The first few scenes took several takes due to the actors laughing. We quickly realized that we needed additional practice with the camera but without rolling to conserve film. We had an issue with the film not cycling through the camera, which contributed to the amount of film we used. We would later discover a major issue that was happening but will be discussed later in this chapter. Shooting for the day concluded around 10:00 pm.

All efforts to secure extras for the church scene failed, which meant the entire church sequence had to be rewritten. Mr. Robinson, Ms. Schilling, and I had a few informal conversations about how to rewrite the scenes for the church. This was an opportunity for me to trust Mr. Robinson's creative process and provide feedback about how ideas may or may not work with the soundtrack. It was also my responsibility as the producer to make sure things were as consistent within the film, and the scenes followed the plot. I was quite nervous about this role at first; because I was not sure how to be assertive when necessary but also respect the creative

[100] I was a member of Tiger Production, the show choir and honors chorus at Wilson High School, Florence, SC for all four years of high school. Through this experience, I learned several dance styles and maneuvers. I received basic instruction in choreography at various camps I attended throughout high school. In my teaching career, I taught one section of musical theatre at Fairfield Central High School, Winnsboro, SC.

[101] A shot is "the continuous recording of a scene of object from the time the camera starts until it stops." (See Beaver in Bibliography).

opinions of others. I thought to approach this much like I would approach rehearsing an ensemble. My approach to an ensemble rehearsal is more of guidance rather than dictation, so as the producer, I figured I would ask guiding questions about the things that did not seem right to me, which seemed to work well. There was a point when Mr. Robinson reassured me that I was doing what I was supposed to do as a producer.

We met on Saturday, March 12, 2022, at 6:00 pm to shoot the scenes in and around the church. All the shots after the house are within a one-block radius of the church. It was interesting to me that we did not shoot the scene in chronological order. We got different shots and angles and then later put them together in the editing process. This shooting session concluded around 10:00 pm. We had to schedule another day to shoot the opening sequence since the block party was rained out. We met Tuesday, March 22, 2022, to shoot around downtown Athens, GA. We continued to have issues with the film not cycling through the camera. Thankfully, we had two cameras to use. When one malfunctioned, we would simply use a different camera. We went through so much film, that we wound up using approximately 20 rolls of film. Mr. Robinson provided the additional rolls of film since I had already spent over $1,000 for different aspects of the film.

Since the semester was quickly ending, there was a concern about completing this film before the end of the semester. The film had to be sent off to be developed, and there was an option to pay an additional $250 for priority processing. The normal processing time is 4-6 weeks, and the priority processing would take approximately 1 week. I paid $250 for the priority processing, and Mr. Robinson paid $650 to get the film developed.[102] When the film returned, we discovered that we lost 5 complete rolls of film. We lost the footage of every roll that did not

[102] At the time, Mr. Robinson would not tell me the price to develop the film. The price was revealed only for the completion of this document.

cycle through the camera. I wondered if we would need to reshoot some scenes to make up for the lost footage. That indeed would have to happen.

The developed footage was given to Mr. Nathan Alligood for editing. Mr. Robinson provided the initial plot details to Mr. Alligood, who then created the first rough cut. A rough cut is "an early version of an edited film in which shots and sequences have been placed in general order. Precise cutting points have not yet been made…The rough cut is an important phase of the film editing process since it gives the editor, director, producer, and musical composer a sense of how the final version will look."[103] I was excited to see the first rough cut. It was interesting to see how Mr. Alligood interpreted the raw footage and the direction given by Mr. Robinson. However, I was gravely concerned because several scenes did not reflect the music. As the producer, I shared many detailed notes with concerns about the cut. It was at this point in the process that we learned the gravity of the lost footage. Mr. Alligood simply did not have enough footage to address some of the timing concerns. We decided to shoot the new footage using a digital camera because we did not have the time or financial resources to deal with film. Mr. Alligood would be tasked with making the footage shot digitally look like the footage shot with camera and film. Once we had the additional footage, there were approximately 4 additional cuts over the course of the next few weeks before we had a finished product. There were 4 days total of shooting scenes, totaling approximately 18 hours. Approximately 4-6 hours were spent shopping for materials and preparing locations for shooting.

[103] Frank Eugene Beaver, *Dictionary of Film Terms*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1983), 255.

Overall Reflections

I learned many things during this process. Films really are a team effort. There were over 60 people involved in this project—each one vital to its success. Films are expensive. The total cost for the film was over $2,000. All money was paid by either Mr. Robinson or me, except for $300 from the Grady College Creative Funds Grant.[104] Film production is something that interests me, and I would like to explore more ways to combine filmmaking and the wind band. I am specifically interested in exploring how the wind band can be used for film soundtracks. I do not seek to replace orchestral film scoring but wonder how using the wind band may enhance the film experience in addition to an orchestra.

This project sparked some interest in learning more about Black wind band composers, especially from the early 20th century. I want to know more about the lives of James Reese Europe and Alton Adams, especially the curriculum Adams wrote for the music programs of the Virgin Islands. I set out to complete this project because I wanted to do a project that celebrated Black culture and align my interests of film and music. The wind band is comprised of people from many different backgrounds and walks of life. The literature and practices of the wind band should reflect the lived experiences of a certain group of people but should be a place where everyone can see themselves reflected in the literature. It is my hope that the conductors take heed to the calls for more diversity within the wind band and create cultural environments of inclusion and belonging.

[104] Applications for addition funding were submitted but were not awarded.

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