

Recomposition: a practical approach

A recomposition may be defined as “an original composition having some features taken from an existing musical piece”. The purpose of this presentation is to explain how the process of recomposing works by analysing some examples of the past, by observing patterns, by formalising the data and, finally, by creating the conditions for replicability, i.e. a list of techniques that can make this process virtually accessible to every composition practitioner at all levels.

Recomposing is a practice that could considerably help improve composition didactics, as it forces students to be at once original and consistent with the given material: in other words, it helps shape a more mature artistic approach and, at the same time, a strong control over some of the composer’s creative skills, such as melodic and formal development.

Recompositions have been created, in a certain sense, since the dawn of time: illustrious examples of the past include the two *Missa l’homme armé*’s by Josquin, Händel’s Sarabande and Bartók’s Dance Suite. “K.P. ‘94”, a piece by Bob Brookmeyer based on the notorious jazz standard “King Porter Stomp”, is of particular interest in the context of this research, due to the extremely original way in which the composer dissects and reconstructs the given material: he also radically changes the stylistic approach and reshapes the formal architecture of his source, so that the final result may appear to have nothing in common with it. Indeed, Brookmeyer’s process consists of borrowing some modules, or melodic fragments, from the source and using them as the basis for a brand new composition: this is the foremost method with which a recomposition is created and the explanation of this process, in all its details and implications, is the primary focus of this presentation.

A series of techniques has been formalised and made replicable by the author, who also illustrates some examples of recomposition of his own, particularly apt at demonstrating potential applications of such techniques. Although further studies are necessary to obtain a more comprehensive view of the topic, these tools alone open a vast spectrum of possibilities in the field of musical composition, for both artistic and didactic purposes.



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Gabriele Ceccarelli is a composer, arranger and music teacher based in Rome. Born in 1993, he studied at Saint Louis Music College (Bachelor in Jazz Piano and Master in Jazz Composition) and graduated discussing a thesis on Recomposition and its applications in jazz practice.

He has written music for jazz orchestra, jazz combo, string quintet and other smaller ensembles, as well as arrangements for solo artists such as Paolo Fresu and Javier Girotto; his charts have been

played around Europe and the USA and he himself conducted some of his original music in prominent locations, such as Auditorium Parco della Musica and Teatro Eliseo in Rome. In 2018, he has been one of the finalists of the International Composition Contest *Scrivere in Jazz*.

He has a strong foundation on jazz tradition; at the same time, he looks at the most diverse musical worlds, from folk to ancient music, with genuine curiosity.