# MUSI 431 Composition Portfolio

# Destabilizer

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# Introduction

This year's MUSI 431 Composition Portfolio is made up of the following four components;

- **1.** A thematic album of original compositions.
- **2.** An E.P. Of original compositions.
- **3.** Three television commercials for local firm, Dunedin Print Ltd.
- 4. A short film score for Matt Bird's 'The Exchange'.

I chose to submit both an album and an E.P. of original compositions as I had a selection of songs written that did not fit into the theme of the album. My original intention was to submit an album only, but I deemed these 'leftover' songs still worthy of submission. It will also hopefully show that as well as sticking to a particular theme I can diversify my composing. This diversity also shows itself in the other two sections of my portfolio, the television commercials and the short film score. These projects are 'written to order' compositions as they are written to serve a function so once again I hope that this will show my ability to compose with differing styles and methodologies.

For this written component of my portfolio, the thematic album, 'EDR DeStabilizer', is treated as the main focus of my work. I have made a full analysis of this album, lyrically and harmonically. I have also explained in depth the unifying features that make the album a whole entity as opposed to a collection of individual songs. I have not gone into as greater detail for the other parts of my portfolio as these are included to show my ability to diversify my composing styles to suit specific tasks. I have written some brief notes about each and notated scores have been provided for all components of the portfolio.

# **Main Project**

# **Thematic Album**



# **Origins of the Project**

At the beginning of this year while undertaking research into record production of the 1960's, I read the following excerpt from Glyn Johns' book concerning the impetus behind The Steve Miller Band's 1968 album 'Sailor'.

"We sat and talked, and out of that conversation came the concept for Sailor, which was supposedly the story of a sailor returning to the United States, having been away for two or three years, a long period of time. And therefore it gave Steve a complete vehicle for romantic songs, he could meet his old girlfriend and it could be good or bad, or he could meet a new one and that could be wonderful or whatever. He could write his ballads and his pretty love songs and he could also make any political comment he wanted, since the guy was coming home, and this had changed and that had changed, wasn't this awful and this wonderful." (Grundy & Tobler, 1982)

Johns' continues to explain that 'Sailor' didn't end up being a fully fledged 'concept album', merely a vehicle for Miller's songwriting. I decided to create myself a similar vehicle to approach my songwriting within. Several years ago I began writing a song (that was never completed) concerning a traveler arriving on Earth and being dismayed at what he found on his arrival. I decided on completing this song and using it as a catalyst for my songwriting; the album would be an observation of mankind from point of view of a visitor to Earth. Theme's that could be covered in the album could include consumerism, environmental issues, everyday stress, love, apathy, mortality, technology, over-population and death. As the songwriting progressed I found that the project began developing a direct narrative and that the composing vehicle I had adopted had lead to the creation of an unfolding storyline. The story involves two travelers from space visiting Earth and not liking what they encounter in regards to the effect that humankind is having on the planet. One traveler decides to leave, thinking the situation too far gone for salvation. The second traveler decides to stay on Earth and after assessing the situation, decides in favour of helping not humankind but the planet itself.

# **The Big Picture**

The theme of the album reflects the destabilization of the planet brought about by mankind's disregard and apathy toward it. This is coupled with the feeling of uncertainty as to the future of the planet and the music needed to represent these feelings throughout. In the song "Head in the Clouds", the opening lyric states, "you never question why you bow to convention". If "convention" refers to the popular music constants of stability of key signature and diatonic harmony, then in this case I have chosen to question it. In his essay regarding the Beatles' Revolver, Schleifer (2002) states that "the imported sharps and flats of song and chord – explode (or at least threaten) the key signature of any particular piece they occur in and at the same time also articulate and present the material modality of the music, whether it be major or minor, dorian or lydian". (p.226) The majority of songs that have been written for this album work on the premise of "threatening" the stability of key signature in order to illustrate the disruptive thematic content. Of course to be destabilized the variant in question needs to be measured against stability, which in this instance is standardized diatonic popular song form. The most economically successful songs of today are written very much in this vein. It is not a new phenomenon in popular music. In 1941 Adorno wrote;

"In terms of consumer-demand, the standardization of popular music is only the expression of this dual desideratum imposed upon it by the musical frame of mind of the public, — that it be "stimulatory" by deviating in some way from the established "natural," and that it maintain the supremacy of the natural against such deviations". (Adorno p.24)

The public likes to have something against which they can measure deviation and in popular music it is the standardized song form that forms this frame of normality. The problem faced by the composer of popular songs is whether they become too radical in their approach that they lose their audience or if they attempt originality by being creative within the borders of this frame. Adorno (1941) calls the latter *pseudo-individualism* where the composer creates stimuli within the standardized form and deviations within the music "are apperceived as exciting stimuli only because they are corrected by the ear to the right note". (p.26) This is the approach that I have taken

with the composition of 'EDR DeStabilizer'. Each song attempts to disrupt the standard form whilst remaining within it with the view to 'destabilizing' the standard, still "bowing to convention" but struggling against it. The methods of disruption vary from song to song and these methods are discussed in greater detail in the harmonic analysis section.

As I intend this album to be listened to in its entirety as opposed to listening to individual songs, I decided to group sets of songs together so that the album is divided into three parts. These parts act like three parts to a play. Part One tells of the arrival of the two space travelers to planet Earth, their expectations, and what they find there. Part Two deals with a parting of the ways of the two travelers due to a difference of opinion over the situation, and the remaining traveler's sympathy for the planet and his summation of the human race. Part Three has the Earth and the traveler colluding to end mankind's time on Earth. I have arranged the three parts of the album to loosely follow Sonata form, Part One acts as an Exposition, Part Two as the Development, and Part Three as a Recapitulation. Part One has 'C' as it's tonic center, playing on the tension between the major and minor versions. 'Blue & Green' has the key signature of C major, 'Dirt' is in D major, and 'Patheticism' is in the key of Cm. Part Two (the 'development') is more focused towards the key of G major but still maintains a pull towards the tonicity of the entire album. 'Fly' fluctuates between the keys of G major and G minor, 'Round & Round' modulates between C major and its sub-dominant, 'On the Sun' is in the key of D minor, and 'Head in the Clouds' is in the key of C major but is based around G myxolydian, the song being written to emphasize the tension between the keys of C and G major. These songs work in a circle of fifth type function that is heading towards either C major or C minor. Part Three (the Recapitulation) begins with an instrumental section that is based around the tonicity of C major and the first song 'proper' ('Part to Play') begins in G major but also flirts with chords from the keys of C major and C minor. The next song, 'Miracles' also fluctuates between C major and C minor before the third song in this section, 'Such a Waste', lands the tonicity clearly in C minor. The rest of this section of the album remains in the key of C minor until the last thirty seconds where a brief reprise of 'Round & Round is heard in its key of C Major.

# **Storyline Song by Song**

## Part One

#### Blue & Green

This song serves as an introduction to the story line. Two travelers are flying through space after they have commited some sort of indiscretion. As a punishment they have been sent to Earth to report back on the state of the human race. This song tells of their trepidation as to what they will find when they get there.

#### Dirt

After their initial trepidation, a degree of excitement takes over. This is song is about the travelers' 'cabin fever' and their urge to get outside and start 'digging' around on the planet.

#### Patheticism

The Alien couple have exited their spacecraft and see what is happening on Earth first hand. This song tells of their horror and disbelief at what they discover.

### **Part Two**

#### Fly

This song focuses on the differing opinions of the two alien travelers. One of them wishes to stay on Earth and help the human race sort out their problems. The other wants to leave them to their own devices, knowing that staying and trying to help is futile. It is essentially a breakup song.

#### **Round & Round**

One traveler has been left alone on Earth. In this song he watches his partner leave. At the same time he can hear the Earth communicating with him. He feels justified that he has made the correct decision to remain and help the Earth though it is unclear if this is not just a manifestation of his mental state following his abandonment.

#### On The Sun

This is a song that explains the human condition from the alien's point of view. It tells of the human race's apathy towards the world they live in and their blind acceptance of what goes on around them.

#### Head in the Clouds

This song deals with morals and traditions that mankind passes down through generations and the blind acceptance and apathy of those who never question these morals and traditions.

### **Part Three**

#### Part to Play

This song is narrated from Planet Earth's perspective. She has been ravaged by humankind for centuries and has finally had enough. The song is in the guise of a business deal between Earth and Man.

#### Miracles

The lone traveler has all but given up on his quest to assist the human race. All he has left is blind hope and believes that a miracle occurring is mankind's only chance.

#### Such a Waste

Sung once again from the traveler's point of view, he is expressing his frustration at the human race believing that they had potential for so much more. Unfortunately it is now too late as the eradication of the human race is in full effect.

#### Blue & Green II

This song takes the listener full circle and it is revealed how the traveler came to be on Earth in the first place. It transpires that he is some kind of vigilante 'fix-it' agent who has taken planetary justice into his own hands.

#### **Round & Round II**

This is the traveler's justification to himself for what he has done. The last two pieces work to complete the circular motion of the album.

# Harmonic Analysis Song by Song

### **Part One**

#### Blue & Green

The textual material of 'Blue & Green' regards homelessness and traveling into the unknown. The harmony of the song reflects this. The verse section of the song suggests the tonal centre of D minor but the inclusion of a B natural note (a sharpened 6<sup>th</sup> note in the key of D minor) in the first three chords upsets this, making the verse section D dorian and C major the tonic. This is confirmed at measure 9 with a F major chord moving to a G major (IV – V of C major). Rather than move to the tonic at this point, the harmony is subverted by moving to an A major for the end of the verse section, this chord acting as the dominant of D minor. At this point the lyrics begin. The melody, which is centered around the note of A, also makes use of a B natural note, determining the D dorian mode The chorus section of the song begins with a repeat of the IV – V chord movement before finally reaching the tonic chord but only for a brief visit. The harmony quickly moves away from the key centre with the use of the only half-bar chord movement in the entire song (bar 31 and bar 62). This first chorus section contains no text but the textual content in the second chorus section informs this brief use of the tonic ("where in the world could we possibly be?). The bridge section begins with the Asus2 chord. The chord sequence is made up mostly of chords from the key of C major, all played on top of a A pedal in the bass. This sequence is as follows;

#### vi - iic/A - Vb/A - iib/A - iiib/A - IVb/A - V/A - VI

Second and first inversion chord voicings are used as another destabilizing feature. As mentioned, the first chord of this sequence is an Asus2. In the guitar voicing that is performed the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the chord is not present which creates an ambiguity as to whether this is a major or a minor chord. At the end of the bridge sequence the A is played as a full major chord. This is deliberately done to destabilize the tonic centre of the song. Rather than the implied A minor, the sub-mediant of C major, A major is played as the dominant of the supertonic, D minor as the song returns to the verse. In its first appearance this bridge section is 9 bars long. The second time it appears this section is played repeatedly until the end of the song and slowly fades out. This time the chord sequence is reduced to being only 7 bars long as the final A major chord is also utilized as the first chord of the sequence. In both its first and second appearances, I purposely avoid the expected 8 bar structure to add further instability. One more destabilizing element that has been employed in this song is the melody is sung predominantly on the offbeats.

#### Dirt

In the second song of the album the use of harmony is similar to that of the first song as it also works to cloud the true tonic centre of the song. The song's opening chord progression moves from F major to A7 and then to D minor. This gives the impression that the song is in the key of D minor, but the second time through, this progression finishes on a D major chord instead of the D minor creating ambiguity between whether the song is in the key of D major or D minor. It is not until the chorus that it it finally clear that the tonic is D major. The chorus begins on the sub-dominant chord. Instead of using a straight IV - V - I progression as is implied, for the first two times through I have used a IV - V7d - I progression instead. This means that the subdominant chord retains its bass note which works as a type of pedal note between these two chords – a feature that helps link this song with the previous song. This A7/G chord also features later in the album in the 'Part to Play' section of the final track albeit with a different function. The recurrence of features such as this are a deliberate method of subtle unification over the entire album.

#### Patheticism

'Patheticism' is the first song on the album that it is made clear from the beginning which key signature it is in. The entire album is written so that it has an over-arching tonal centre of C. This tonal centre itself is ambiguous as it is unclear whether it is C major or C minor that takes the dominant role. This is a deliberate method employed to once again destabilize the album and create a sense of unknown. This song is in the key of C minor and follows a simple chord progression throughout the song;

#### $\mathbf{i} - \mathbf{VII} - \mathbf{VI}$

Even with a more straightforward chord sequence, I have included many destabilizing elements in this song – the use of a three chord sequence as opposed to the standard four, and the non-use of the dominant chord of the key are two of these elements. Another is that the chord sequence was composed as a 'reverse minor cadence'. A common cadential sequence in a minor key is the VI - VII - i cadence. A cadence marks the returning to the home key. I reversed this cadential sequence to signify the movement 'away' from home, to create a sense of being stranded on another world as the subjects of the storyline are. Also, as with the first two tracks on the album, much of the melody is syncopated, with much of the text falling on the offbeats. The only break from the repeating six bar sequence (Cm – Cm – Bb – Bb – Ab – Ab) is at bar 24 when the chord progression 'grinds to a halt' on the C minor chord. The progression then starts at the beginning again and proceeds to the end of the song without interruption. The last lyric of the previous song is brought to life with this halting of the chord sequence.

### **Part Two**

#### Fly

This song begins with a 4 bar melody played on a vibraphone before the harmony enters. Beginning with the tonic chord of G major, the tonicity is immediately subverted with a F#m7(sus4) chord followed by a B7, a **ii** – **V7** progression in the key of E major. The harmony instead leads to a E minor chord leading to a C major which brings the song back into the key of G major. This sequence provides the harmony for the majority of the verse, repeating four times. This is followed by a refrain (bar 21) where the harmony briefly modulates to the key of G minor with the introduction of a minor sub-dominant. This then moves to the sub-mediant of G minor before returning to the key of G major. The C minor chord returns briefly (bar 23), moves to an Vb chord, and then returns to G major. This refrain not only creates instability between the tonic major and minor chords but also plays on the changing between the major and minor versions of the sub-dominant. As previously mentioned, the tonicity album is based around the keys of C major and C minor and the tension between these two keys in this song is a reduction of this. At bar 37 the chorus of the song begins with a modulation to the key of Bb major. This has been pre-empted by the brief modulation

to G minor during the verses. The chorus chord progression is a typical descending sequence;

This sequence repeats for a second time but heads back to the key of G major via a G minor cadential sequence;

#### I – Vb – vi – vi7c – IV – V – VI (Bb major) IV – VII – I (G minor/major)

The textual subject matter of this song details the two travelers going their separate ways and this explains why I have used this minor cadential sequence. The female traveler is flying away, presumably home. The previous song, 'Patheticism' used the reverse of this sequence to illustrate being stranded a long way from home and this time it is used to illustrate returning.

#### **Round & Round**

This song makes extensive use of major 7<sup>th</sup> chords. My intention with this song was to create destabilization by making a 'sad' song using 'happy' chords. The song begins in the key of C major and moves back and forth between the tonic seventh and the subdominant seventh. At bar six a bVIImaj7 chord is introduced, followed by a classic circle of fifths, ii - V - I chord movement. The move to the bVIImaj7 is both a hint of a future modulation and acts to illustrate the text ("all the while I fall"). The I - IV chord progression is then repeated and is again followed by the move to the VIImaj7 chord which this time is the pivot chord of a modulation to the key of the sub-dominant, F major. It achieves this by moving to a Gm7 and then to a C7 (ii7 - V7 of F major). Once F major has been established as the new tonicity, the same chord progression that was followed in C major is now repeated in F major;

#### ||: I7 – IV7 :|| I7 – bVIImaj7 – ii7 – II7(V7 of C)

The only difference between this progression and the progression used in C major is the final chord is the dominant of C major rather than the dominant of F major. This is to enable the modulation back to C major. The song then repeats through the C major and the F major sections before ending on a chord that is foreign to both keys, an Abmaj7. I chose to use this chord as it belongs to the parallel minor keys of both F and C major. It also pulls the listener out of the tonal area that they have just heard and reminds them of the overall tonicity of the album, that of C minor.

#### On the Sun

'On the Sun' is simplest song harmonically on the album. It is an extension of the harmonic ideas of the previous song ('Round & Round') and also a confirmation of the overall key center of the album. The verse section of the song is a simple  $\mathbf{i} - \mathbf{iv}$  chord progression in the key of D minor. This was composed with the overall tonicity in mind, being a  $\mathbf{ii} - \mathbf{v}$  progression in the key of C minor. The chorus section of the song follows a  $\mathbf{III} - \mathbf{VII} - \mathbf{VI7}$  progression in the key of D minor. As mentioned, this is an extension of the interplay between the tonal centre's in 'Round & Round'. It utilizes the chords of each key area (C and F major) and also the chord that acted as the pivot chord, Bbmaj7. This is the most 'stable' song on the album as there is no modulation, reflecting the textual content of reliability.

#### Head in the Clouds

With 'Head in the Clouds' I have attempted to produce a 'dreamy' sounding chordal pattern by exploiting the uncertainty of key. The song is in the key signature of C major but I 'centered' the song around the fifth chord of this key, G major. The previous song's verse acted as a ii – v progression in the key of C minor and this song being written in G myxolydian strengthens the push back to C for Part Three. Lyrically the song is about apathy regarding extremely serious subject matter. To illustrate this musically I have pitted a 'light' instrument (ukulele) against a darker sound (strings). If the song can be thought of as being in the key of G, the verses follow a I - IV - I - bVII - IV chord progression. The instrumental passage in which the strings come to the fore is composed using chords from both the key signature of G major and the key signature of C major. The following table shows how this progression looks in both different keys.

Key	Fmaj7	D	Fmaj7	Am	Dm	C	G	Fmaj7	Dm	D7	G
G	bVII	V	bVII	ii	v	IV	Ι	bVII	v	V7	Ι
	maj7		maj7					maj7			
С	IV7	II	IV7	vi	ii	Ι	V	IV7	ii	II7	V

### **Part Three**

#### **The Whispered Call**

A string part written in the key of E minor. The key of E minor was chosen as it is a chord belonging to both the keys of G major and C major and this instrument section is a 'bridge' section between Parts Two and Three. This section combined with the following song, 'Part to Play' and the previous song, 'Head in the Clouds' work together to gradually move the album's tonicity back to the area of C.

This piece uses a lot of chromaticism over pedal notes and generally stays in the sphere of E minor with a brief modulation to the key area of C minor, by use of F minor and B flat chords.

#### **Part to Play**

Part to Play begins on a G major chord that is quickly subverted in bar 2 to by revisiting the same chord that appeared in 'Dirt' (bar 9), an A seventh chord in its third inversion. This in turn is followed by a C major in second inversion which returns to G major. This song portrays the Earth finally having enough of humankind's ravaging – she is in a very 'de-stabilized' state. These opening chords convey this instability by clouding the tonic of the song (the key signature could be G, D or C) and by the three chord repeating pattern. The song is based upon chromaticism and these chords of the chorus create a downward moving chromatic figure (B, C#, C, B). In the verse of the song, this chromatic figure's direction is reversed to an upward motion in the first four bars (bars 12-15) over the chord of C (C, Caug5, C6, C7), and is once again reversed over the chords of Fm and C (bars 16-17). It then moves upward again (bars 18-19) and is finally heard in the bass of the chords to lead back to the chorus (bars 20-21). The feeling of instability is increased by using a 14-bar sequence for the chorus and a 9-bar sequence for the verse.

#### Miracles

'Miracles' conveys the essence of the overall albums tension of tonicity, that between C minor and C major, so therefore makes strong use of accidentals and chromaticism. Like the verse of the previous song, 'Part to Play', 'Miracles' utilizes a 9-bar chord sequence. Like 'Head in the 'Clouds', this song utilizes chords from both the keys of C

minor and C major, plus, to add even more instability, a chord belonging to neither key, the chord of A major (bar 5 and 9). This is deliberately used to make a connection between this song and a song in Part One, 'Dirt'. 'Dirt's harmonic role in Part One was to deviate away from the tonicity of C briefly, sitting between the songs 'Blue & Green' and 'Patheticism'. In 'Miracles' this modulation is now in an extremely condensed form and the A major acts as a pivot between C minor and C major. The instrumentation in this song is the most important feature. The transition from ukulele to guitar to strings over the course of the song, signifies overcoming darkness and oppression. The repeating chord progression of the song is as follows;

||: i - V - VII - ii(no b5) - #VI - I - VII - ii(no b5) - #VI :||

#### Such a Waste

'Such a Waste' is supposed to invoke feelings of desolation and armageddon. I have utilized phrases from T'S' Eliot's 'The Wasteland' to assist with this. To illustrate this musically I have made this song (and the remaining songs on the album) harmonically stable – there is no longer a struggle happening and the death of humankind is inevitable. The song stays strictly within the key of C minor with a shift toward the major chord are of the key for the chorus to convey the traveler's justification for his actions. The three chord progressions used are as follows;

$$||: i - ii7 - V - VI :||$$
  $||: i - VIIb - III - iv :||$   $||: VI - III - VII - Vb :||$ 

#### Blue & Green II

'Blue & Green II' is even more harmonically 'still' or 'stable' than the prev ious song, remaining in the key of C minor. Textually, this song has the traveler reflecting on his experience since first setting foot on Earth. This was in the song 'Patheticism' so this song strongly resembles 'Patheticism' harmonically.

The chord progression is as follows;

$$||: i - v - VI7 - v - i - v - VI7 - VII :||$$

#### **Round & Round II**

'Round & Round II' contains no additional material that wasn't heard in the first version of the song (in Part Two). It is a repeated version of the first, the function of which is to allow the listener to understand that even though humankind has been eradicated, the Earth continues to spin and will 'start again'.

# **Unifying Elements**

Several different devices have been employed in my set of songs to give the album cohesiveness and to provide a continuous listening experience. These devices include the re-using and re-visiting of certain chords and sequences, the use of instrumental links and segues between songs, and similarities in instrumentation. I also used similar relationships between main vocals and backing vocals throughout the songs. The idea to make the album into a three part form was made about halfway through the project as a running order took shape. As some of the lyrics had not yet been written this meant that I could place songs in an order that would make their key signatures harmonize together. It also meant that I could had a pre-existing idea of what each song's lyrics needed to regard.

Part One of the album is thematically from the traveler's point of view, an alien points of view. The sounds that I have utilized on this section are synthetic and electronic in timbre. The songs are still guitar or piano based but these synthetic sounds colour the overall section. Part Two is more about the human race. 'Fly' and 'Round & Round' regard the traveler but he is feeling very 'human' emotions; loss of love, anger and disbelief. There are purposefully less synthetic sounds on this section of the album – they are still in evidence but more in the background texture than the previous section. The synthetic and electronic sounds are brought back to the foreground in Part Three to signify the traveler being the only one left on the planet.

Spacecraft related sounds, musical and non-musical appear frequently throughout the album. Part One begins with a sound effect of the ship which is continued at the end

of 'Blue & Green' to segue into 'Dirt'. 'Dirt's guitar solo is also recorded to sound as if it 'flies' in and out of the mix. 'Patheticism' is filled with electrical, robotic noises. Backwards guitar effects play a part in the opening track of Part Two giving it an otherworldliness in places. The overall sound aesthetic of 'Round & Round' is meant to provoke feelings of space and floating with both its delivery, harmonic structure and reverb effects. These space-related effects are more to the background for the next two songs but reappear strongly throughout Part Three; the segue between 'Part to Play' and 'Miracles', the eeriness of the strings and vocals in 'Miracles', the synthetic organ sound in 'Such a Waste' and the lead guitar sound in 'Blue & Green II'.

### **Chord Revisiting**

As the entire album is based around the tonicity tension between C major and C minor, this gave me the opportunity to 'revisit' certain chords over the course of the album. The A7/G chord used in the chorus of 'Dirt' (bar 9) is used again as the second chord of 'Part to Play' (bar 2), albeit with a different function. These chords which play over a 'G' pedal note are also reminiscent of the bridge section of the opening song, 'Blue & Green', in which a series of chords are performed over an 'A' pedal note. The final Abmaj7 (bar 40) chord of 'Round & Round' pre-empts the use of this chord in 'Blue & Green II' (bar ?). The use of the bVII chord is used as a feature throughout the album. It is the pivot chord for the modulation in 'Round & Round' (bar 6), is utilized to bring the song back to the original key center in 'Fly' (bar 43), and is heavily used in 'Head in the Clouds' with the instrumental section (bars 33-48) focused around this chord. In 'Miracles' a chord foreign to the key is used to make connection with the Part One song, 'Dirt', and its D minor key area. Musically 'Patheticism' and 'Blue & Green II' are also linked through the use of the same chords, albeit in a different arrangement. In 'Patheticism' (when the traveler first sets foot on the planet), the traveler is shocked at what he observes on Earth. In 'Blue & Green II' he is thinking back over his time on the planet and what has eventuated since his arrival.

### Instrumentation

I have used particular instruments throughout the album to indicate different moods and feelings. Strings are used to represent oppressiveness and foreboding elements in the story. They first appear in the instrumental introduction as a premonition of what is to follow. 'Patheticism' is the next track that strings appear on. This is the song that tells of the visitor's horror at what they encounter on Earth, leading to their separation. 'Head In The Clouds' makes use of the juxtaposition between the 'light' of the ukulele and the 'dark' of the strings; the ukulele representing the blind hope and the strings underpinning this with a sense of foreboding. Strings are featured heavily in 'Part Three' as this is the darkest point of the album. I once again utilized both the ukulele and the strings finishing it as a means of driving home the same point as 'Head in the Clouds' but with the strings now succeeding over the ukulele. The ukulele subtly turns into guitar which then turns into strings. This is to portray the crushing of any hope that a miracle might in fact occur.

### Links/Segues

Linking songs together has long been a technique used by artists to give the illusion that a collection of individual songs should in fact be viewed as a larger piece of work. The Beatles' 'Sgt Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club Band' has been referred to as being a concept album and this linking of the songs is a contributing factor to this line of thinking. If there is no break between the individual tracks of an album, the listener is 'forced' into listening to more than one song. This was my thinking when I decided to reduce the album tracks down to three 'parts'. I wanted the album to be a continuous listening experience so that certain tracks are 'hidden' to if the listener if they decide to skip through the album tracks.

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All songs written, recorded and produced by Brad Martin All instruments and vocals performed by Brad Martin

Blue & Green Dirt Patheticism

#### Part Two

Fly Round & Round On the sun Head in the clou

(05:32:07) (08.00.00 The Whispered Call (00:00:00)

Part to play 
 Miracles
 (06:51:08

 Such a waste
 (10:34:16)

 Blue & Green II
 (14:41:19)

 Round & Round II
 (17:33:19)
(10:34:16) (14:41:19)

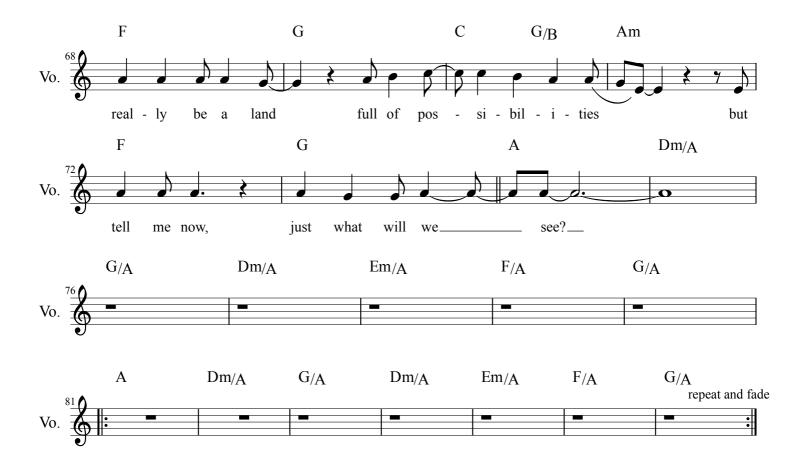
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# EDR DeStabilizer

# Blue & Green (00:00:00)







# Dirt (04:39:18)





Patheticism (06:41:16)



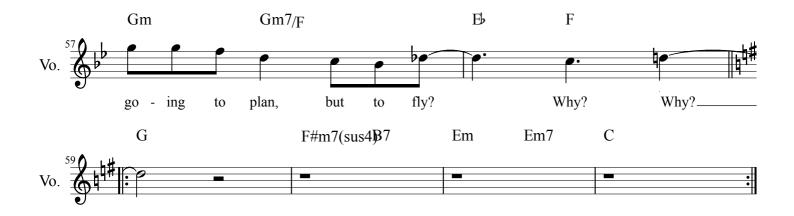




# Fly (00:00:00)

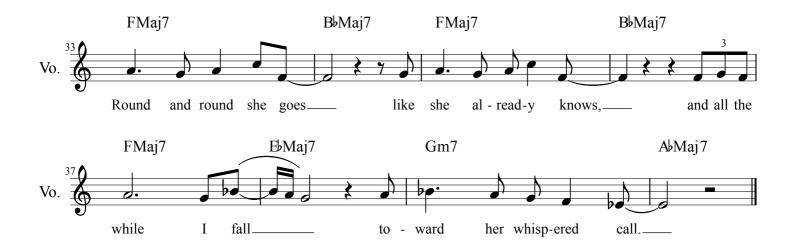






# Round & Round (05:32:07)





On the Sun (08:00:00)

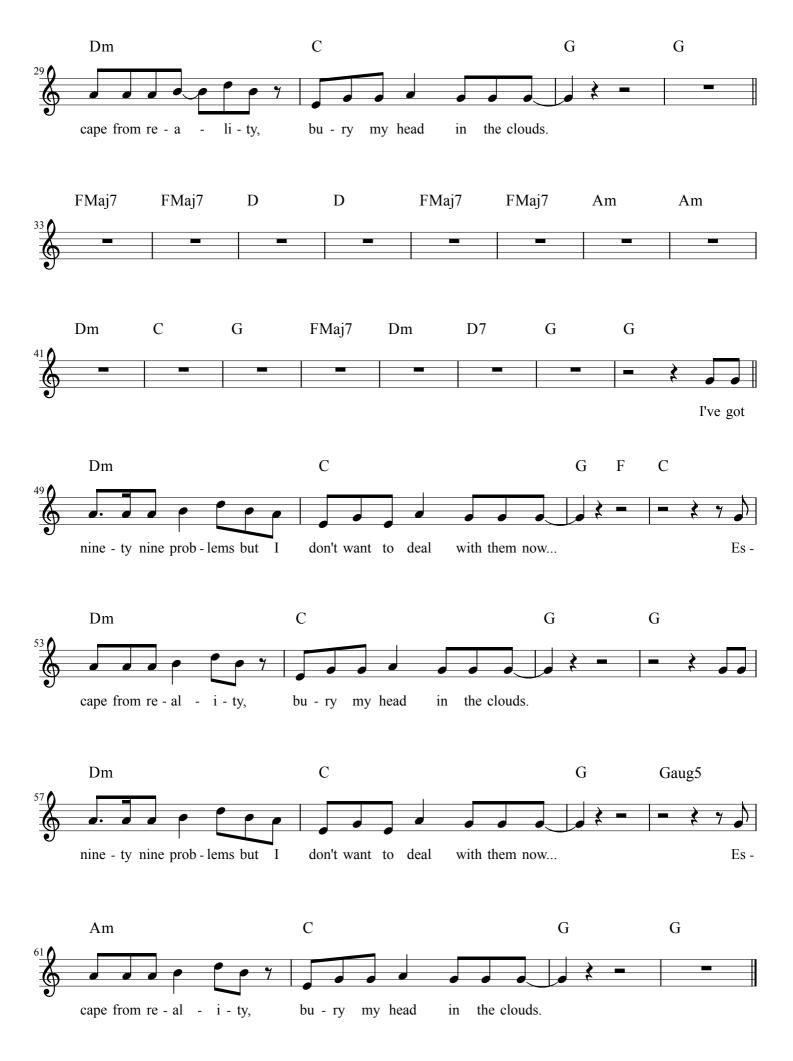






#### Head In The Clouds (13:13:21)

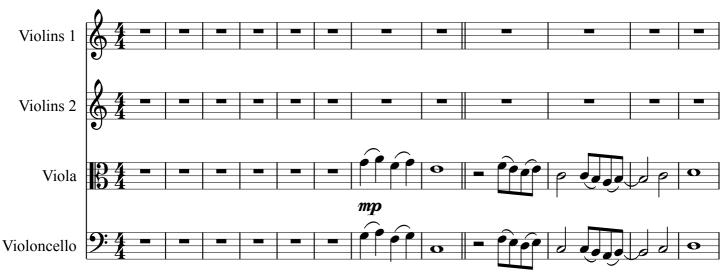




Head In The Clouds (13:13:21)

Strings Score

Brad Martin



mp









mp

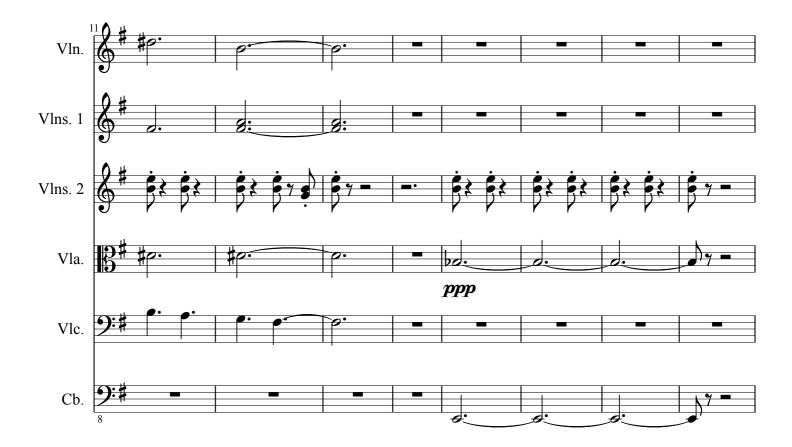


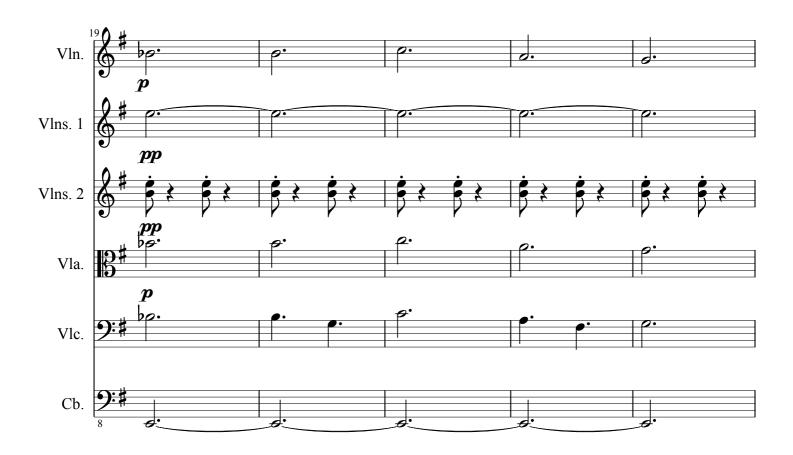


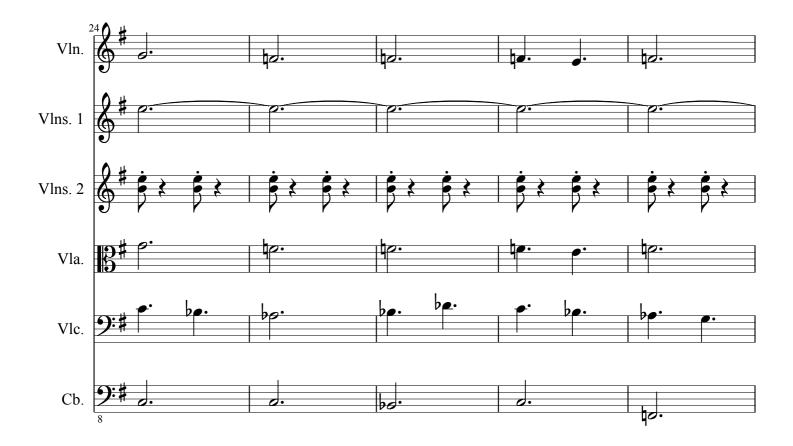
### The Whispered Call

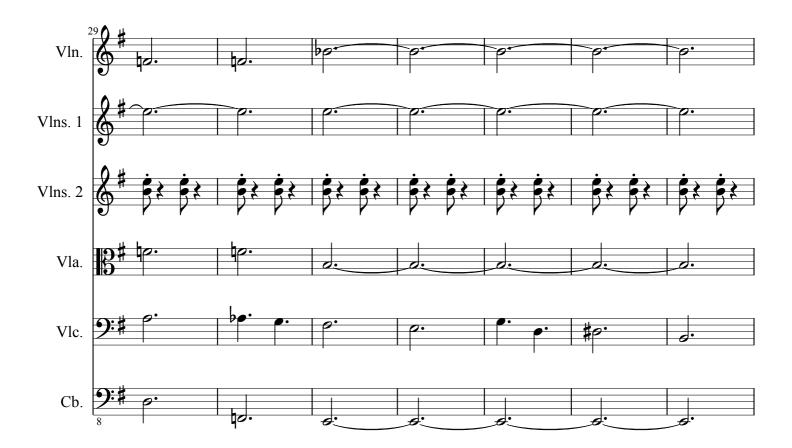


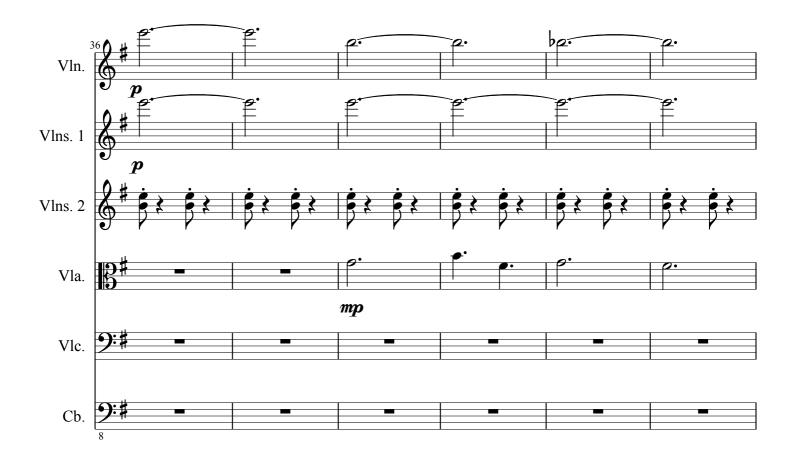


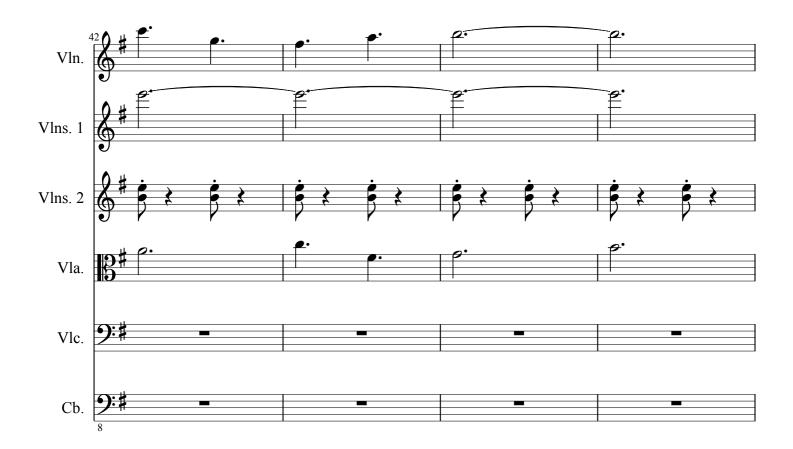


















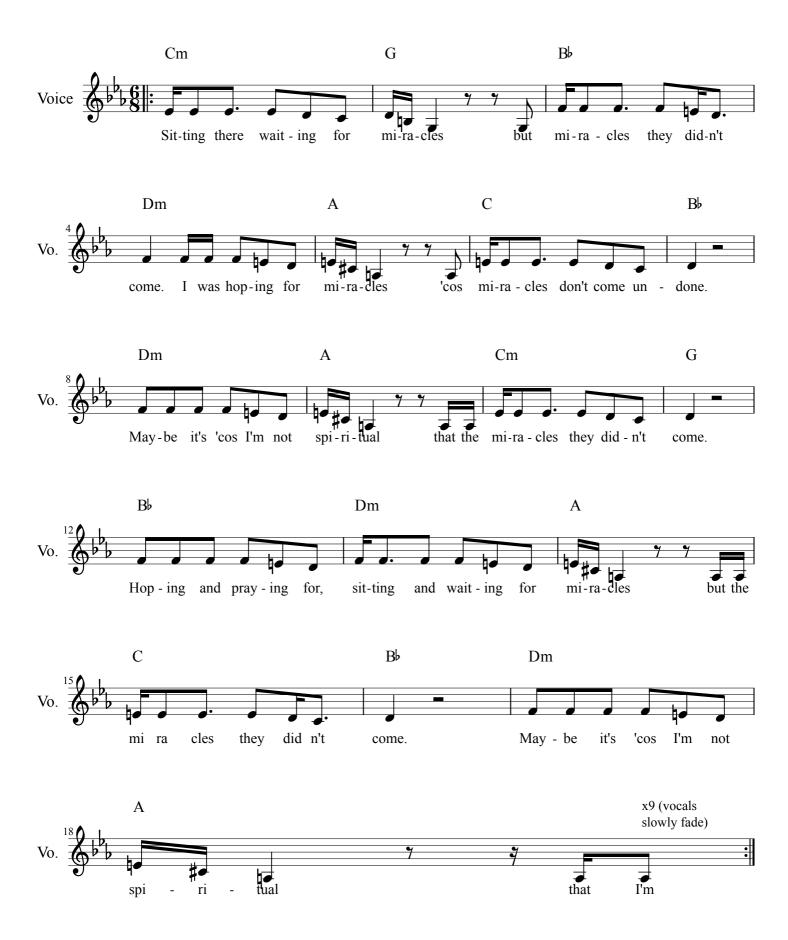


Part to Play (03:03:00)





#### Miracles (06:51:08)



Such a Waste (10:34:16)





Blue & Green II (14:41:19)



#### Round & Round II (17:33:19)



# EDR DeStabilizer

# Bucketboy

# Song Lyrics & Album Information

# **ALBUM INFORMATION**

## **SONG NAMES**

#### **PART ONE**

Blue & Green 0:00:00 Dirt 04:39:18 Patheticism 06:41:16

#### **PART TWO**

Fly 00:00:00 Round & Round 05:32:07 On The Sun 08:00:00 Head In The Clouds 13:13:21

#### **PART THREE**

The Whispered Call 00:00:00 Part To Play 03:03:00 Miracles 06:51:08 Such a Waste 10:34:16 Blue & Green II 14:41:19 Round & Round II 17:33:19

# **CREDITS**

All songs written, recorded and produced by Brad Martin All instruments and vocals performed by Brad Martin Artwork by Manson Wright Copyright 2013

# **PART ONE**

#### Blue & Green 00:00:00

Falling out of grace In outer space Sent me off to live with a Far lesser race Flying through the stars Jupiter and Mars Finally touching down on blue and green

Other places we have seen Have fulfilled all hopes and dreams But already we have seen a hole Where a layer should have been We usually win the game But this doesn't feel the same When we're touching down on blue and green

Where in the world can we possibly be? It's scaring the shit right out of me. It should really be a land full of possibilities But tell me now Just what will we see?"

#### Dirt 04:39:18

Inclement weather driving me Inside, insane This cabin fever mood drives me Out in the rain

It's such a good time To dig around in the dirt It's been such a long time But I suppose it can't get worse

Periodic brainstorms causing Sharp pains in my head It's being one of those days Should have stayed in bed

Sense is making none nowadays

Try and curb this natural urge Perfection to a fault As luck would have it My world's grinding to a halt

#### Patheticism 06:41:16

Eyes wider than most A look of disbelief Mouth open wide but not to eat Been away a while But not that long, he thinks

Once they sang so sweetly But now they scream and yell Stuck in the vacuum of their Manufactured hell

Burn your own house down Eating Plastic food Wonder why they don't feel well Exhausted driving cars He wipes away her smile His eyes swell her heart sinks

Once they sang so sweetly But now they scream and yell Locked in the four walls of their Fabricated Cells

## **PART TWO**

#### Fly 00:00:00

It all comes down to a difference of opinion (That's my opinion) Now you're going your way and I'll go mine (About time!) It's a very warm gun that you stick to (I won't restrict you) Anger dictates that I'll go it alone without you (It's always about you!) Now I'm too tired to convince you to stay So fly, fly, fly

Now you've always been a difficult girl to hold on to (Was I wrong to?) To let you throw your mood around the room You've got your own way, had the final say Now I'm too tired to stop you running away So bye, bye, bye

Now I know that you don't understand Why I want to live in this world I realize that things aren't going to plan But to fly? Why? Why?

#### Round & Round 05:32:07

There she goes Into the sky she blows And all the while I fall Spinning round As she calls

Round and round she goes Like she already knows And all the while I fall Toward her whispered call

I can see the end When we will start again Don't think about the time We were taken for a ride

Round and round she goes Like she already knows And all the while I fall Toward her whispered call

#### **On The Sun 08:00:00**

Addicted to religion, television You're living a lie Consuming far more than your Physical money can buy The pillowcase faces are fading Back into the crowd You're skimming the surface, is it worth it? No thinking allowed

Rely, rely on the sun

Suspected animation of a nation Being just cause to die? Distractive idols on display, It's not okay If you're the wrong size

You rely, rely on the sun

No emotion for the raising of the ocean You're just watching it rise There's a reason for the upset of the season You feign your surprise

Rely, rely on the sun

#### Head In The Clouds 13:13:21

You never question why you bow to convention You never stray from the flock Follow the rules made by someone unlike you Don't rattle the cage 'cos it's locked

I've got 99 problems but I don't want to deal with them now

Your media's been censored, you've been rendered senseless You're too busy minding your cross Return to the same point as that's where they feed you Subservient to the boss

I've got 99 problems but I don't want to deal with them now Escape from reality, bury my head in the clouds

# **PART THREE**

#### Part To Play 03:03:00

You don't have a part to play anymore You threw it away

You smile your crooked smile You furrow your brow You look me in the eye Then you lie

You don't have a part to play anymore You threw it away

You write whatever you like Your blind ambition Has clouded your mind Don't deny...

You don't have a part to play anymore You threw it away

#### **Miracles 06:51:08**

Sitting there waiting for miracles But miracles they didn't come I was hoping for miracles 'Cos miracles don't come undone Maybe it's because I'm not spiritual That the miracles they didn't come Hoping and praying for Sitting there waiting for miracles But miracles they didn't come Maybe it's because I'm not spiritual (that I'm)

#### Such A Waste 10:34:16

In the fields of the departed They're planting out more stones Rats are in the alley Where the dead men lost their bones Out on the rusted skyline Ruined buildings of decay A heap of broken images Of those that lost their way

It picks at bones in whispers The shouting starts to cease Those that haven't disappeared Are dying from disease The mother she has rid herself Of the virus on her skin The chapter must come to a close For a new one to begin

Such a waste You no longer have a part to play Such a waste Your mother has the final say

#### **Blue & Green II 14:41:19**

You've fallen out of grace In out of space You flew through the stars Past Jupiter and Mars

You've fallen out of grace Exterminated race Believing that you stood For the greater good

#### Round & Round II 17:33:19

Round and round she goes As if it's all she knows And all the while I fall Towards a whispered call

# **Project 2**





# **Portfolio E.P.**

About halfway through the year I stood back and took stock of what I had written so far during the year. I was still writing songs with my thematic album in mind but I had also found myself writing lyrics and music that didn't entirely suit the album. I made the decision to also put together an E.P. of songs that didn't suit the thematic piece. With the inclusion of this set of songs in my portfolio I wish to show that the writing of thematic albums is not the only songwriting that I do. It also allowed me to include a couple of songs that I'd written previous to 2013 but I deemed worthy of inclusion in this year's portfolio. The songs on the E.P. are individual pieces of work with no binding theme as in 'EDR DeStabilizer', but all concern loneliness in some way. All of these songs are more 'guitaristic' as they were composed on the guitar rather than piano. Instead of conducting a thorough analysis of these songs I have instead summarized any key compositional elements within each song.

#### **Hide The Lie**

This song is a leftover from the songs written for 2012's 'The Song & The Girl' album that was submitted for MUSI 331. For that album I was experimenting with a technique that I called 'manipulation of thirds' where I would upset chords by altering the diatonic harmony either within chords or chord sequences. In this particular song I deliberately change to the 'wrong' chord III. For instance, the song is in the key of A major so instead of changing to C# minor (III) I change to C major (iii of A minor). The idea of C# is evoked in the riff on the tonic chord but the change to C major upsets the notion that this is a happy major song. The changes to the 'wrong' chord III also happens in the other key areas of the song; Gm changing to a B major and Em changing to a G#major. The meaning of the lyrical content is deliberately veiled, the words intended to create a 'feel' rather than hold obvious meaning but it is generally about deception and being deceived. The imagery is purposely dark and sleazy.

#### **Died Inside**

This is a simple four chord guitar song with the verse alternating between the chords of E major and D major. Both of these chords contain added notes due to open guitar strings. The E major chord sounds both a G sharp and a G natural note ringing against each other creating a interesting clash of notes and creating an ambiguity as to whether the chord is a major or minor. The following D chord contains a open G string, an added fourth that also creates a clash of notes as it is voiced in the same octave as the third of the chord. The overall effect of these chords is intended to be that of 'dreamy' sounding chords to reflect the narrator's lack of involvement in the relationship he is describing. The chorus chord alternate between V7 and IV7 of the key but these chords also contain added notes, once again due to open guitar strings. The B7 has an sus4 due to the open E string of the guitar and the A7 has a added ninth due to the open B string. The guitar solo is played modally to enhance the dreaminess of the song. The E dorian mode is utilized as it utilizes a minor third and seventh but retains a major sixth. The ambiguity of the mode matches the ambiguity of the opening chord.

#### **Making it Worse**

A straight forward song with a country-rock feel written in the key of D major. This song was written quickly and even though it is a song of lost love, it is supposed to convey a sense of humour and is a deliberate piece of pastiche writing. Lyrically the song is about hanging on to the past even when all hope is gone.

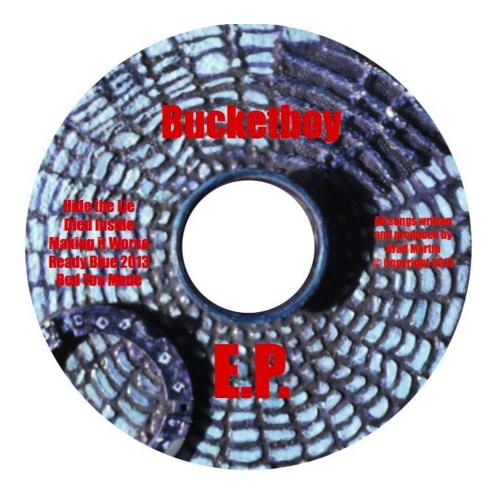
#### **Ready Blue**

This song was originally written and recorded in 2005 but I was unhappy with certain aspects of the original version so re-recorded it using some of the original 2005 tracks. The song begins in the key of G major before modulating to A major in the chorus. Lyrically it describes being kept waiting by external forces when you've done everything in your power to run on time.

#### **Bed You Made**

This song was composed on the guitar using alternate tuning (DADGAD). It utilizes a tamboura drone throughout the song so that all chords are heard over a D-pedal note. Lyrically it is from the viewpoint of someone who has experienced love in the past but is now alone and self-pitying.





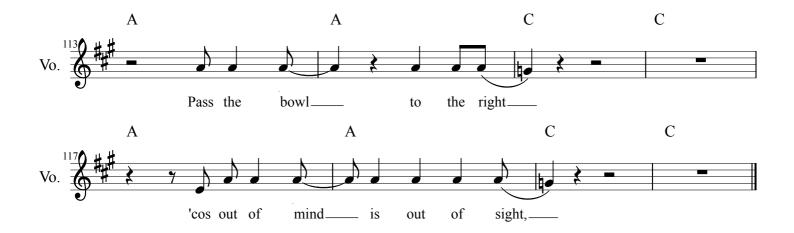


#### Hide the Lie





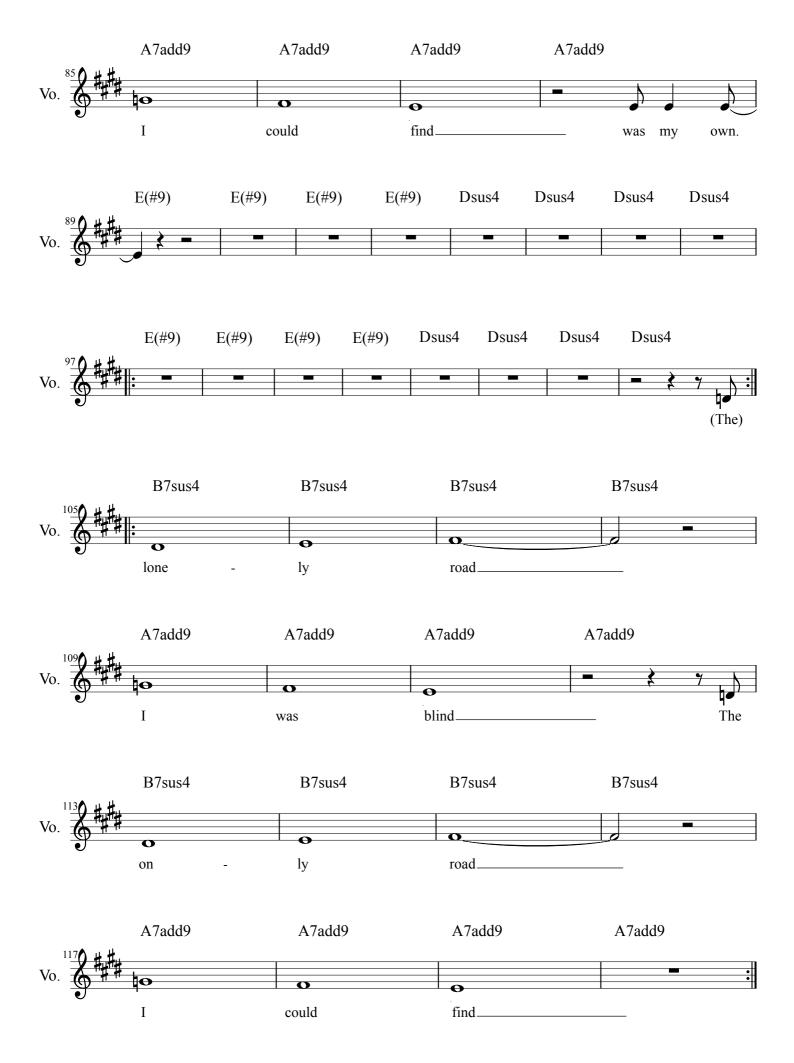




#### Died Inside



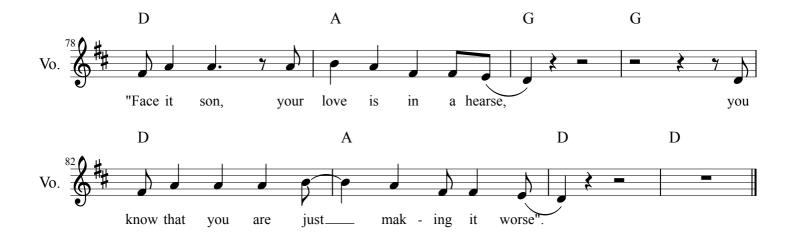




Making It Worse







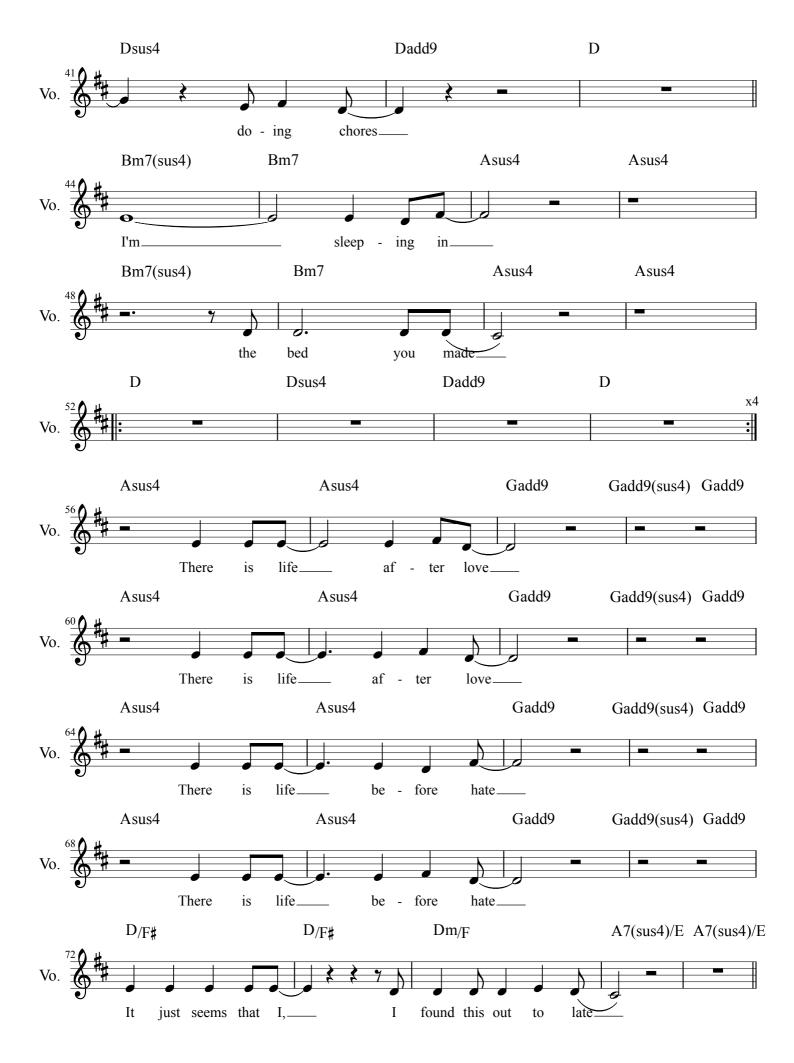
#### Ready Blue

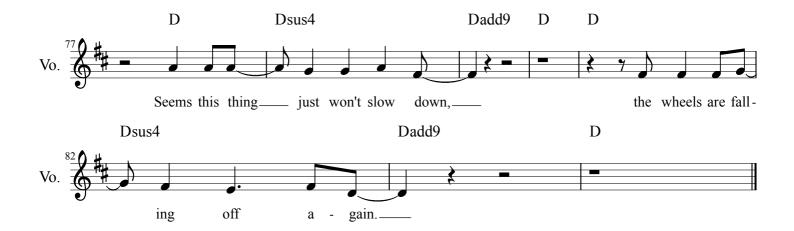




#### Bed You Made









# **Bucketboy**

# Song Lyrics & Album Information

## **ALBUM INFORMATION**

### **SONG NAMES**

- 1. Hide the Lie
- 2. Died Inside
- 3. Making it Worse
- 4. Ready Blue 2013
- 5. Bed You Made

## **CREDITS**

All songs written, recorded and produced by Brad Martin All instruments and vocals performed by Brad Martin except drums on 'Hide the Lie' by Taylor Sizemore Artwork by Jeanette Cleaver Copyright 2013

#### **Hide the Lie**

The room is dark and so am I Cut the air and take a slice Take this thing and pass it on What was right is going wrong Eat it straight from the knife Is it murder to kill with kindness? Is it wrong to see with blindness? Smothering the life right out of me We need to put this thing behind us Shouldn't need a rope to bind us Covering your eyes to try and see

Hide the lie, Slice the eye, Realize, Adjust the size

The room is dark and so are you Stick with one or try a few Pass the bowl to the right Out of mind is out of sight Swallowing before you chew We need to put this thing behind us Shouldn't need a rope to bind us Covering your eyes to try and see Is it murder to kill with kindness? Is it wrong to see with blindness?

Hide the lie, Slice the eye, Realize, Adjust the size

The room is dark and so am I Cut the air and take a slice Pass the bowl to the right Out of mind is out of sight

#### **Died Inside**

I've always been an optimist But I must have missed when you insisted I'd died inside So I took the time to contemplate, To penetrate my mental state I tried and tried But to my surprise The only road I could find was my own So I took a stroll through memories

I hadn't seen the wood for trees I'd died inside I realized That you'd been hanging on so long To something wrong where love had gone Your fingers bled You'd died instead The lonely road, I was blind The only road I could find was my own

#### **Making it Worse**

How long has it been since you broke up the team? The sharp lines are beginning to blur Your picture, it seems, is distorting all my dreams You speak but I just can't hear a word

The mist just isn't clearing Between us I am hearing "Move on son, you're just making it worse"

I used to hold dear what was so crisp and clear But now it's like you've gone and closed the door But I'll join you again in one last picture frame If you would only wait for me to change

Situation ain't improving I plead but you're unmoving "Face it son, your love is in a hearse"

The mist just isn't clearing Between us I am hearing "Move on son, you're just making it worse" Situation ain't improving I plead but you're unmoving "Face it son, your love is in a hearse"

#### **Ready Blue 2013**

Sit there ready to go The clock hand's move too slow The plants appear to grow I've got the ready blues

I've been waiting far too long My finger taps along The timing's all gone wrong I've got the ready blues

And I'm waiting...(x6)

I've never been so prepared And I followed every step But now it's all gone weird I've got the ready blues

And I'm waiting...(x6)

#### **Bed You Made**

It seems this thing just won't slow down The wheels are falling off again There won't be another round You'll have to jump before the end

I'm sleeping in the bed you made

Sell your soul once a day Wait in line at the store Staring at your number plate At the sink doing chores

I'm sleeping in the bed you made

There is life after love There is life after love There is life before hate There is life before hate It just seems that I, I found this out too late

It seems this thing just won't slow down The wheels are falling off again

# **Project 3**

# Dunedin Print Television Advertisement

#### **Dunedin Print Television Advertisement**

In early April 2013 I was commissioned to produce music for a 30 second television advertisement for Dunedin Print. The advertisement was to be aired on Dunedin's Channel 9 (soon to be re-branded Dunedin Television) as the channel was going digital, which largely increases its viewer population. In discussions with the client it was agreed that I would produce three pieces of music and the most suitable would be chosen for the final advertisement.

When given the video file, music had been added as an idea of what they deemed suitable. The music was generic, license-free music that had been found on the Internet. The client explained the features of this sample music that appealed to him; it started off simple and built throughout the 30 seconds, and it had a 'busy' feel that matched both the visuals and the activity of a busy printing firm. I used these points as a platform for my compositions.

#### **Version 1**

As I was working to a 30 second time frame, I firstly had to come up with a tempo that would give me a good amount of bars to work with. I decided that the jingle would have a final chord that would ring on for 2 seconds. If I worked with a time limit of 28 seconds and worked at 120bpm I would have 14 bars. With this tempo I could have three '4-bar' passages and a '2-bar' coda.

А	А	В	С
(4 bars)	(4 bars)	(4 bars)	(2 bars + final
			chord)

Section A is in the key of C major but employs a bVII chord (I - V - bVII - IV). The flat seventh chord allows for a smooth modulation into the key of F major for section B and utilizes a ii - V - iii - VI progression. This then leads into the 2-bar coda. For

this I used a classic C minor cadence (VI - VII - I) but resolved onto the major chord (C major).

I used the first four bars to 'set up' the chord progression. In the second 4-bar sequence I introduced an arpeggiated synthesizer line to illustrate the 'busy' feel that the client required. In section B I replaced the synthesizer with strings. I deemed strings suitable for this part as the text on the video places emphasis on wedding invitations during this part. For the final section the arpeggiating synthesizer returns as the firm's logo is shown.

#### **Version 2**

For the second version of the advertisement I decided to steer away from another major version. As I thought a straight minor key could be too 'dark' sounding, I decided to work in A Dorian, as it is a little brighter. I would also change the timbre of the piece by making it guitar focused as opposed to piano. I was aiming at a 'classy' sounding piece of music. This piece of music is faster in tempo than Version One and allows for twenty bars of music. The main guitar part is played by arppegiating chords on the guitar. The progression, in the key of A minor, is as follows;

$$\begin{split} \mathbf{i} &- \mathbf{III} - \mathbf{i} - \mathbf{III} - \mathbf{i} - \mathbf{III} - \mathbf{IV} - \mathbf{III/IV} \\ \mathbf{i} &- \mathbf{III} - \mathbf{i} - \mathbf{III} - \mathbf{i} - \mathbf{III} - \mathbf{IV} - \mathbf{III/IV} - \mathbf{VII/III} - \mathbf{i} - \mathbf{III} - \mathbf{I} \end{split}$$

There are two other guitar parts in this piece. One is climbing an A minor scale with syncopated notes, and the other is playing a melodic figure. The syncopated part joins with the melodic figure at bar 6 and again at bar 14 to harmonize the melody at the ends of phrases. Another harmony part is added to the melodic figure at bar 10 to thicken the texture and emphasize that things are 'getting busier'.

#### **Version 3**

Version three is the closest sounding re-production of the music that I was originally presented with. It is the simplest in terms of harmony of all three versions, the chord progression in C major as follows;

$$I - I - I - I - V - V - IV - IV$$
  
 $I - I - I - I - V - V - ii - V - I - I - I$ 

The main idea with this version was to create a 'busy' sound with the piano part. This part was composed first and the other parts were improvised over this until complimentary lines and feels were established.



# Dunedin Print Television Advertisements

#### Dunedin Print TV Advertisement

Version One













### Dunedin Print TV Advertisement

Version 2

Brad Martin







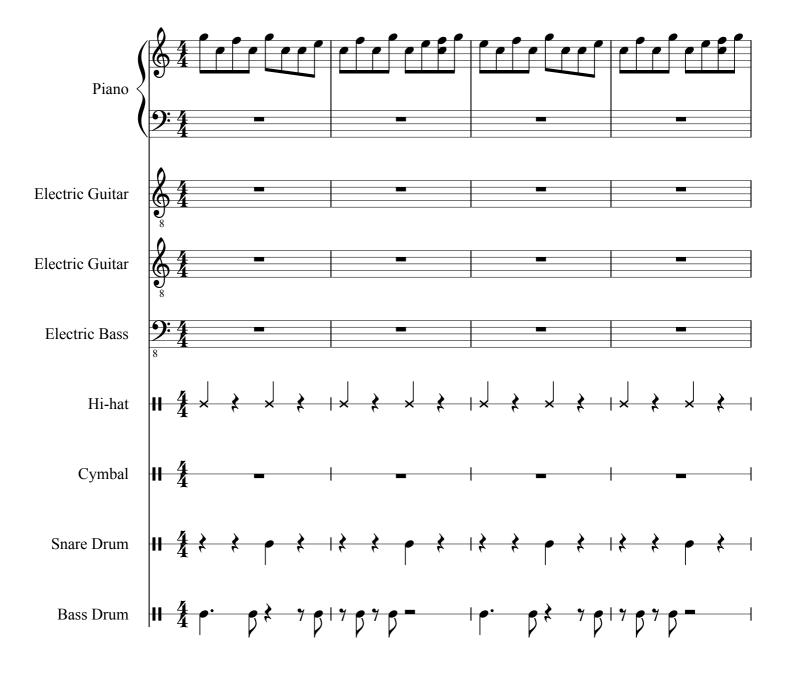




### Dunedin Print TV Advertisement

Version 3

Brad Martin











# **Project 4**

# APRA Tropscore Competition

## **About the APRA Tropscore Competition**

'Tropfest' is Australia's most prestigious short film festival and one of its most iconic cultural events. It is also the largest short film festival in the world. Alongside this festival runs the APRA Tropscore competition. Below is the official explanation of the competition, as written on the APRA Tropscore website:

'The object of APRA Tropscore is simple – produce a musical score or synch for a short film clip provided by Tropfest.

The winning score is picked by a panel of judges, which in past years have included – Paul Mac; Clare Bowditch; Antony Partos (Animal Kingdom); and Andrew Lancaster (Accidents Happen with Gina Davis)

Musician Pluto Jonze won Tropscore in 2009 and has since nabbed a recording contract, released an EP, and works with hot ticket bands like The Jezabels, Cut Copy, The Holidays and Midnight Juggernauts.

"Winning and playing the score live in The Domain to tens of thousands is something I will never forget," says Jonze. "It gave me the confidence to whole-heartedly pursue my musical ambitions."

"Tropscore was a real stepping stone for me and a great opportunity not just for classical composers, but for young bands and artists to explore their craft," he says.'

#### "The Exchange" – A film by Matt Bird

I based the score of this film on a song I had written earlier in 2012, "Part to Play" (this song has subsequently been placed within Part 3 of 'EDR DeStabilizer'), so can be considered a variation on a theme. As the song has an 'eerie' quality to it, I felt that it would suit the content of the film. The film is about a mother and son visiting a second-hand store. The son discovers a hidden room with an disused fairground clown in it that exchanges souls.

One of the main compositional devices employed in this piece was the use of two contrasting textures. The first texture (which I will label 'texture A') involves a staggered octave figure in the left hand and two-note chords in the right (example bars 1-6). The second texture ('texture B') involves 'block' octaves in the left hand and three note chords in the right (example bars 11-22). The frequency of the left-hand and right-hand parts varies between the two textures also. In texture A the right-hand part moves in dotted minims and the left-hand part moves in quavers and crotchets (right-hand notes longer than the left-hand notes). In texture B, the right-hand notes moves in dotted minims (left-hand notes longer than the right-hand notes).

'Half' Bars are used as a 'tension' device at important places in the film (these occur at bars 72 and 104 in the score). This is to match the on-screen action and also to illustrate anticipation.

Many diminished chords and added chord notes are used throughout the music and the chromaticism of the original 'Part to Play' song is still at the forefront of the music.



# APRA Tropscore Competition **The Exchange**'

The Exchange Tropscore Competition 2013

Brad Martin

