Gary Carner, Belmont/USA

PEPPER ADAMS'S "RUE SERPENTE"

Introduction

Park "Pepper" Adams, III is now considered by historians and musicians to be, along with Harry Carney and Gerry Mulligan, one of the three greatest baritone saxophonists in the history of jazz. Whereas Carney demonstrated in the Ellington band his musical debt to Coleman Hawkins, and Mulligan to this day utilizes the rhythmic and melodic approach of Lester Young, Adams, inspired by the big sound of Carney, but especially by the harmonic and melodic language of Charlie Parker, modernized the approach to the baritone, elevating it to a level equal with all other solo instruments. In terms of sheer technical brilliance on the baritone, Adams's approach is unprecedented and unparalleled, and today, four years after his death, his innovations, particularly his unique sound, original melodic lines, and precise tonguing, continue to inspire the current generation of baritone soloists, such as Ronnie Cuber, Glenn Wilson, and Gary Smulyan, who cite Adams as their principal influence.

Adams was born in Highland Park, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit, on October 8, 1930. His family relocated in Rochester, New York, by the time Adams was seven, and Adams was able to grow musically there since music was an important aspect of the public school curriculum due, in part, to the influence of the Eastman School. In Rochester Adams acquired his nickname, given to him because of his resemblance to the baseball player Pepper Martin, who was finishing his career in Rochester with the St. Louis Browns's minor league affiliate. By age 12, after playing the piano, various wind instruments, and studying sight-singing in grade school, Adams was playing clarinet and soprano saxophone in dance bands in town, and had already taken tenor saxophone lessons from Skippy Williams, the Ben Webster protégé who replaced Webster (the legendary Ellington tenor saxophonist) in Ellington's band in 1943. At age 14, Adams was playing six nights a week at Rochester's E-Lite Club with Ralph Dickinson and John Huggler (presently a Professor of Music at UMass/Boston). By 1947, when Adams and his mother moved back to Detroit, Adams had met Rex Stewart, Harry Carney, Coleman Hawkins, Oscar Pettiford, and Bob Wilber, with whom he practiced clarinet.

Adams, throughout his career, has cited the resettlement in Detroit as the musical turning point in his life. In my interviews with him, conducted during the summer of 1984, he reaffirmed this belief. "By moving to Detroit," Adams said, "I found myself almost immediately within a milieu of fine young players, people pretty much my own age, who were all very eager to play, and get together, and teach one another, and learn together. It was a terrific atmosphere in which to learn music." The Detroit musicians that Adams befriended are some of the most important musicians of the

Twentieth Century: Elvin Jones, Thad Jones, Paul Chambers, Doug Watkins, Tommy Flanagan, Yusef Lateef, Curtis Fuller, Donald Byrd, Roland Hanna, Barry Harris, Kenny Burrell, Frank Foster, Joe Henderson.

Detroit was an extraordinarily musical city, in a sense like Rochester, but on a much greater scale. Detroit's first-chair symphony players, for example, served as music teachers for the city's best public school music students (principally at Cass Technical High School), and many of the finest jazz players to emerge from Detroit studied at Cass. Moreover, some extremely influential older musicians who had international reputations, such as Wardell Gray, Sonny Stitt, Milt Jackson, and Lucky Thompson, worked in Detroit and had bands and workshops where younger musicians on their way up could learn the trade from a master craftsman.

It was in this cultural climate that Adams first began playing the baritone saxophone. "There weren't many baritone players around," Adams told me, "and I had been playing for several years so it wasn't a big deal to learn it." For two years, while attending Wayne University (later Wayne State), Adams played the baritone in the greater Detroit area to support himself.

Adams enlisted in the Army in 1951 with the idea of joining the Army band. Adams hadn't intended to be a professional musician; he wanted to

be a writer. But his Army musical experiences changed his point of view: "Most of the fellows in the Army band", Adams told me, "were considerably older, some who had been on the road with name bands. I didn't even consider myself a professional musician, and here I find myself in a milieu of professional musicians, and they don't know a damn thing close to what I know. You see," Adams continued, "in Detroit the standards were so high that in order to compete for local gigs you had to really play awful goddamn good! If you were good enough to be competitive in Detroit, you were way far ahead of what the rest of the world's standards were."

After a stint in Korea, Adams returned to Detroit in 1953 to begin in earnest his career as a professional jazz musician. Within two weeks, he had begun an engagement at the Bluebird Lounge with Barry Harris and Elvin Jones. During the run at the Bluebird, Wardell Gray, Sonny Stitt, and Miles Davis were brought in as guest artists. For the next few years Adams was a mainstay of the Detroit jazz scene, playing with Yusef Lateef at Klein's Showbar, with Kenny Burrell at the West End Hotel (where he had his first and last "cutting contest" with Gerry Mulligan), and at the World Stage with Donald Byrd.

In 1956, Adams moved to New York, as many of his Detroit peers had done. Some jazz historians affectionately regard the mid-'50s as the time of the Detroit invasion, when the best of the Detroit musicians made a sudden and profound impact on the New York music scene. According to bassist Percy Heath, Adams in particular caused a great deal of excitement in New York when he arrived because here was a white musician playing with the roots, finesse, and mastery of many of the established black players in town with international reputations.[1] And, according to Heath, Adams could play bebop, a highly technical jazz style which uses extended harmonies, fast tempos, and calls for the superimposition and manipulation of substitute chord changes by the soloist.

Adams joined the Stan Kenton band soon after his arrival in New York, and was dubbed "The Knife" by fellow bandmembers because of the way he "carved-up" all of the established soloists in the band such as Sam Noto, Carl Fontana, Bill Perkins, and Lennie Niehaus.[2] In San Francisco, at the end of the Kenton tour, jazz writer Ralph J. Gleason wrote in the *Chronicle* that "Adams is the only baritonist with any class". Adams quit the Kenton band, however, at the end of the tour, and free-lanced in Los Angeles for approximately six months, recording numerous sessions, including, in 1957, *The Pepper Adams Quintet,* his first album as a leader. In 1957 he was awarded *Down Beat's* New Star Award.

According to Skippy Williams, Adams was a commanding, exciting soloist who played with "fire".[3] His technical bravura, unique, raw-sounding timbre, well-connected, flowing melodic lines, and use of substitution chords distinguished him from other baritonists, specifically Mulligan. Nevertheless, much like Elvin Jones, whose new approach to jazz drumming was not well received by New York critics when he moved there in 1957, Adams was slighted by critics who claimed he was either running, or ignorant of, chord

changes. Such unfavorable reviews deterred Adams's growing reputation, and made work harder to acquire. As Adams told me, by the "early '60s, even through the middle '60s – economically there were hardships. One thing that I always *did* have, and which supported me, was the fact that musicians as a rule always tended to have respect for me. But, most people writing about the music did not at all. I was certainly out of fashion."

Although Adams's economic situation improved somewhat by the mid-'70s, universal critical acclaim was slow in coming. It wasn't until the late '70s, early '80s that Adams overtook Mulligan in the *Down Beat* Reader's and International Critics's Poll – some measure of fan and critical popularity. (To Adams and his fellow musicians, Mulligan's pre-eminence in the trade magazines was always a source of irony.) Furthermore, after some twenty years of critical reservations or indifference, Adams thought it equally bizarre to suddenly encounter, in the '80s, critics extolling his greatness as a jazz soloist.

Much earlier, in 1954, Adams had an opportunity to bring a demo record of himself, Barry Harris, James Richardson, and Elvin Jones to Alfred Lion, owner of Blue Note Records. Lion's reaction to Adams's playing was "very interesting", Adams told me, "something that *might* explain some of the negative reactions that critics felt toward my playing, which didn't seem to be necessarily shared by musicians, for the most part, nor by the public." Lion, Adams said, refused to believe that it was him playing: "That's not you," Lion said, "that's a black baritone player. You're lying, that's not *you!*" "Another thing that Alfred said", Adams continued, is:

> 'You know, that's a black baritone player who is a rhythm and blues player trying to learn how to play jazz.' And, now, that's sort of a clue to me to what I *think* confused critics to a great extent and made them so violently antagonistic to the way I played. My feeling is to play with a strong swing sense, a really strong rhythmic base, and also to play with a sophisticated harmonic approach. And I think to many critics, these were supposed to be two antithetical things. The people that played with a real strong swing are supposed to be the very straightahead, basic players, and the people that play with a sophisticated harmonic approach are supposed to be the intellectual players that don't swing. So if you get someone doing these two things at once, there's obviously something very wrong with him!"

Despite the antagonism, Adams co-led a band with Donald Byrd from 1958–1963 that had Duke Pearson and later Herbie Hancock on piano. During this period Adams recorded twelve albums with Byrd, as well as LPs with Benny Goodman, John Coltrane, Thelonious Monk, Charles Mingus, Coleman Hawkins, and others. In 1964, after touring for a year with Lionel Hampton, Adams put together a quintet with Thad Jones and Mel Lewis that foreshadowed the creation, in 1965, of the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Orchestra, of which Adams was an original member and key soloist.

While a member of the Orchestra, after over one hundred recordings as leader, sideman and session player, Adams recorded a series of LPs, *Encounter* (1968), *Ephemera* (1973), *Julian* and *Twelfth and Pingree* (1975), that featured his own writing. In 1971, he also performed as co-soloist in the world premiere at Avery Fisher Hall (New York) of David Amram's *Triple Concerto,* later recorded by the Rochester Philharmonic under the direction of David Zinman.

Besides Adams's immersion in jazz, he possessed a broad range of enthusiasms, ranging from art history and classical music, to literature and athletics. He was universally regarded by his peers as a Renaissance man, the rare jazz intellectual. Saxophonist and educator Marvin Holladay, particularly impressed by Adams's intellect, believed that Adams had the working equivalent of a Ph.D. in Music, Art History, and Literature.[4] For saxophonist Ed Xiques, Adams's interest in art and literature was an inspiration.[5] For Joe Henderson and vocalist Carol Sloane, Adams was an engaging museum guide.[6] The only known time Adams shared his views on aesthetics with the general public was in the late '70s when he discussed the compositions of Ibert, Stravinsky, Thad Jones, and The Anachronistic Jazz Band (a French jazz band that has recorded jazz standards from various periods in styles different from the original version) at a lecture, "Humor in Music," sponsored by the New York Chapter of the National Association of Recording Arts and Sciences.

Adams's encyclopedic mind and dry wit can also be seen in his playing and composing. A typical Adams solo ranges from the arcane to the slapstick, including paraphrases of jazz, classical, and folk themes, often modified or parodied. Some of the titles of his compositions, such as "A Winter's Tale", "Civilization And Its Discontents", and "Lovers Of Their Time" reveal his interest in literature.[7] His enthusiasm for Prokofiev, Shostakovich, and especially Arthur Honegger, whom he respected for the way he, as Adams put it, "mixed keys", can be seen in Adams's composing, where he uses unusual modulations and dissonance, often accentuated by the nature of his improvisation (his spontaneous compositions) which he constructs above the prewritten piece. His music, in sum, is multifaceted and challenging, much like the man. "I was trying to make my own synthesis out of everything", Adams told me.

In 1977, at the age of 46, Adams married Claudette Hill, and soon quit the Orchestra after twelve years as its baritonist to travel as a "single", playing worldwide with local ("pick-up") rhythm sections. During the last ten years of his life, while his reputation as a soloist grew internationally, based, in part, on his extensive concertizing in Europe, Adams recorded several LPs as leader: *Live in Europe* (1977), *Reflectory* (1978), *The Master* (1980), *Urban Dreams* (1981), *Live at Fat Tuesday's* (1983), and *The Adams Effect* (to be released in 1989). He was nominated for four Grammy Awards, and appeared on the Grammy Awards telecast in 1982.[8] Several Adams albums have been reissued or are planned for release.

"I was conscious of finding my own way to play, and baritone made it

real easy because there were no baritone players I really like (sic) very much anyway", Adams told me. Always a singular voice, never induced to compromise for commercial gain, Adams remained steadfast in perfecting his art. Pepper Adams died in Brooklyn, New York of lung cancer on September 10, 1986.

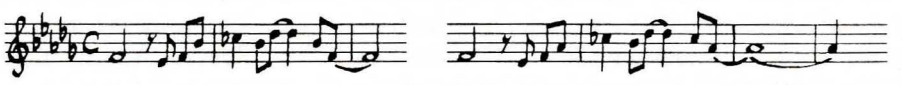
An Analysis of "Rue Serpente"[9]

"Rue Serpente" was composed by Pepper Adams in 1979 and recorded on his album *The Master.* The piece was named both for a Parisian street and for its own undulating, gently ascending and descending melodic phrases. Adams chose for this recording pianist Tommy Flanagan, a longtime friend and accompanist for Ella Fitzgerald; bassist George Mraz, a fellow alumnus of the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra and a member of Adams's group in the '70s; and drummer Leroy Williams, a former member of the Barry Harris group.

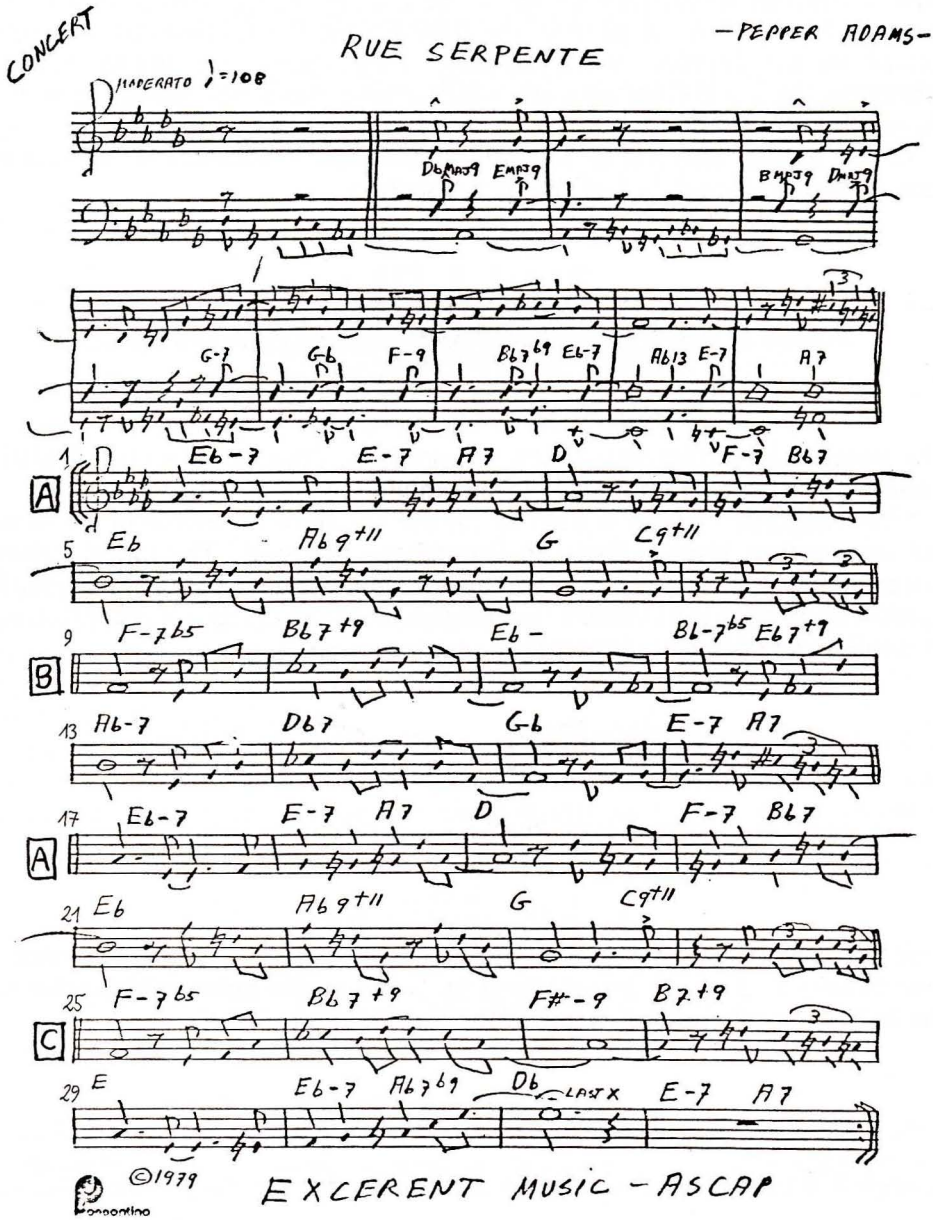
"Rue Serpente" is a binary, 32-bar, ABAC composition with an 8-bar introduction that has a two-and-a-half beat pickup.[10] The introduction prefaces the theme statement, which is played twice, at the beginning and ending of the piece. Solos are taken over the 32-bar structure only. The leadsheet (in Adams's handwriting) appears on the following page; the arrangement is as follows:

Introduction	8	Ensemble
Theme (first chorus)	32	Ensemble
Second chorus	32	Bass solo, with rhythm section
Third chorus	32	Sax solo, with rhythm section
Fourth chorus	32	Piano solo, with rhythm section
Fifth chorus: AB	16	Sax solo, with rhythm section
AC	16	Sax/bass written duet, with rhythm section
Introduction	8	Ensemble
Theme (sixth chorus)	32	Ensemble

The first two bars of the B and C sections of the theme of "Rue Serpente" are virtually identical, rhythmically, melodically, and harmonically.[11] This similarity enhances the overall unity of the composition by suggesting C as variant of B.



Example 1. Pepper Adams, *Rue Serpente,* mm. 9–10, 25–28.



Example 2. Pepper Adams, *Rue Serpente*, 1979 Excerent Music (ASCAP).

The chord changes above are the same, the pitches are identical except for three notes (an A^{b} in place of the B^{b} in measure 1; a C instead of a B^{b} in measure 2; and an A^{b} in place of the final F), and the rhythms are the same except for the duration of the last note. They, simply, *feel* the same. But, otherwise, the B and C sections are two distinct entities, with different chord changes and rhythms.

The C section also has in bars 29–31 the same rhythmic pattern that is heard in bars 1–3 and 3–5 of the first A section.

Example 3. Pepper Adams, *Rue Serpente,* rhythmic figure, mm. 29–31.

This parallelism further unifies the composition. Thus, the C section is both a musical departure from the whole and an integral part of the whole.

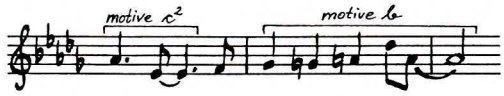
"Rue Serpente" is also unified by the use of call and response or question and answer-type phrases that run throughout the work. The introduction, for example, opens with a five-note figure that is answered by two eighth notes. This pattern is immediately repeated, and then deftly counterbalanced by another set of longer phrases in the introduction.

Example 4. Pepper Adams, *Rue Serpente,* introduction, mm. 4–5, 5–7.

This last pair of question-answer phrases from the second system is punctuated in bars 7–8 of the introduction by two staccato notes, which refer to the feel of the two notes in bar 1 of the introduction.

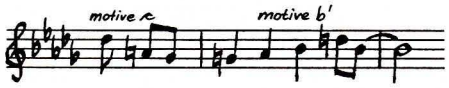
Example 5. Pepper Adams, *Rue Serpente,* introduction, rhythmic figures, mm. 7–8, 1–2.

Adams utilizes the question-answer format in the body of the composition, as well. The A section, starting at bar 1, begins with phrase a, made up of motive c^{2} (in bar 1) and motive b (in bars 2–3), the latter answering the former.



Example 6. Pepper Adams, *Rue Serpente,* mm. 1–3, phrase a.

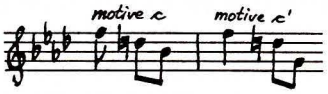
This is echoed in bars 3–5 by another call and response pair, motives c and b¹, both within the larger phrase a¹, a variant of phrase a.



Example 7. Pepper Adams, *Rue Serpente,* mm. 3–5, phrase a¹.

Both b and b¹ are quarter note arrays that begins on the downbeat of a bar, giving them added stress. Motive c² prepares for motive b as c "anticipates" b¹. Furthermore, c and c² have a similar triplet *feel:* c is comprised of three *swing* eighth notes, whereas c², an enlongation of c, is essentially a pair of three swing eighth notes (a dotted quarter note, and an eighth note tied to a dotted quarter).

In the second system of the body of the composition, the A section concludes with two pairs of question-and-answer motives, each motive comprised of three notes. Motive c in bar 5 is answered by motive c¹ in bar 6,



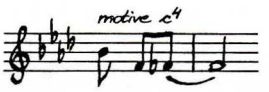
Example 8. Pepper Adams, *Rue Serpente,* mm. 5–6.

and motive c in the second half of bar 6 is answered, in bar 7, by another three-note motive, d, whose variant, d¹, is seen in bars 6–8 of the introduction.

Example 9. Pepper Adams, *Rue Serpente,* m. 7; introduction, mm. 6–8.

As the A section is repeated without variation, the motivic phenomena explained above is repeated in bars 17–23.

The B section, the "bridge", contains two lyrical phrases based on the original phrase a. The first, a^2, stretches from the F half note in bar 9 to the F half note in bar 11. Phrase a^2 is comprised of the three-note motive c^3 (bar 9), a virtual mirror image of c, and b^2 (bars 10–11), which, like motive b, ends with two eighth notes, the last eighth tied to a half note. Tagged onto the end of phrase a^2, in bar 11–12, is yet another variation on motive c, c^4.



Example 10. Pepper Adams, *Rue Serpente*, mm. 11–12.

The ascending motive c^3 in bar 12 (also seen in bar 9) functions as a pickup to a^3, the second phrase in the B section, which stretches from the B^b half note of bar 13 to the tied F of bars 14–15. Like phrase a^2, a^3 is made up of motives c^3 and b^2 respectively, and has the motive c^4 tagged onto it as an ending. The B section, like the A section, has a question-and-answer feeling: the half note F in bar 9 is answered by the rest of phrase a^2 *and* the c^4 tag, and the half note B^b in bar 13 is answered by the remainder of phrase a^3 and its c^4 tag.

The C section consists of two long phrases, both variants of phrase a, strung together by a pair of eighth note triplets. The first phrase, a^2, starting in bar 25, is made up of motives c^3 and b^2, and, because of similar materials, evokes the beginning of the B section. The second phrase, a, with motives c^2 and b, begins in bar 29 and likewise evokes the A section. The C section, therefore, unifies the composition and serves as the perfect summation in the way that it makes reference to the A and B sections.

Adams uses triplet figures at the end of the introduction and A and B sections, and in the C section, as a means of affecting a transition (with the momentary change in rhythm, and as a kind mnemonic device to remind the listener that eighth note triplets, at the end of the A section, signify the arrival of the B and C sections, and that quarter note triplets, at the end of the introduction and B section, and in bar 28 of the C section, lead to the return or evocation of the A section. The eighth-note triplets are arched, much like the opening bass figures and bars 4–5 and 5–7 of the introduction. This overall sense of internal logic, with its highly symmetrical and self-referential architecture, and the utilization of motives and phrases, is the essence of Adams's mature compositional style, and can be heard in several other 32-bar ABAC compositions, such as "Bossa Nouveau",[12] with its three-note motives that are reworked throughout the structure, or "Ephemera",[13] with its motivic use of phrases made up of intervals of fourths.

Adams was also very fond of placing tied notes in the melody over bar lines. He felt that using the melodic line in the manner could create tension and surprise as the chord changes shifted beneath it. This technique can be seen throughout "Rue Serpente", and in many of his other compositions, such as "Conjuration",[14] "Dylan's Delight",[15] "Bossallegro",[16] and "Enchilada Baby".[17]

"Rue Serpente" is dominated by root movement in fourths and fifths due to its numerous II–V–I progressions. Although the composition is written in D^{b}, and the first chord of the introduction is D^{b} major^{9}, the tonality quickly becomes rather amorphous because the subsequent chords, E major^{9}, B major^{9}, and D major^{9}, all have their own strong identity. These chords function well together, however, because the root movement of the first pair and last pair of chords are enharmonically equivalent (an augmented second and minor third), suggesting to the ear a sequence, and the root movement from the second chord to the third, the first grouping to the second, is a fifth.

The G-^{7} chord in bar 4 of the introduction is the first indication that a II–V–I chord progression will ensue. This G-^{7}, a II chord in the key of F, is followed not by a C^{7} chord as the dominant of F but with a tritone substitution of C, G^{b}, which functions as the progression's dominant. Instead of an F major chord completing the II–V–I progression, the next chord is F-^{9}, which, as a minor chord, will not rest as the tonic, but, rather, impel the progession onward to another tonality. But this is thwarted as the chords move as a circle of fifths, from F-^{9} to $B^{b7(b9)}$ to E^{b}-^{7} to A^{b13}. Then, in bar 7 of the introduction, the implied tonality is moved a half-step from D^{b} (the I of E^{b}-^{7}) to D with an E-^{7} chord.

Adams frustrates the resolution of the II–V progression in D (in bars 7–8 of the introduction) with an E^{b}-^{7} chord, a tritone substitution, in the first bar of the A section. This chord, a tritone away from V, prolongs the II–V progression with a foreign chord outside the D tonality, until bars 2–3, where Adams restates the II–V (E- to A) progression in D and resolves it, finally, to D.

The II–V–I (F-^{7} to B^{b7} to E^{b}) progression in bars 4–5 establishes the tonality of E^{b}, but the $A^{b9(+11)}$ chord in bar 6, a fifth away from E^{b} by serving as a tritone substitution of D, the V of G, in bar 7, and resolving the E^{b}-^{7} of bar 1 that was left dangling. The G chord in bar 7 initiates a cycle of fifths – where each chord functions as the following chord's dominant – that stretches to bar 11: G to $C^{9(+11)}$ to F-$^{7(b5)}$ to $B^{b7(+9)}$ to E^{b}-.

The E^{b}-chord of bar 11 is the V of A^{b} in bar 13. In bars 12–15 a cycle of fifths ensues (B^{b}-$^{7(b5)}$ to $E^{b7(+9)}$ to A^{b}-^{7} to D^{b7} to G^{b}), ending with a II–V–I progression establishing the tonality of G^{b}. In bar 16, as in bars 7–8 of the introduction *and* bar 32 of the C section, a II–V turnaround in D prepares for the A section. The repeat of the A section in bars 17–24 is identical to the original A section.

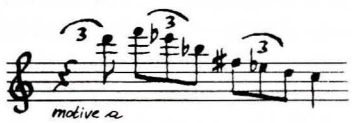
Bars 25 and 26, the first two bars of section C, are identical to bars 9 and 10, the first two bars of section B. A is cojoined with C, therefore, with a

circle of fifths in bars 23–26 as seen earlier in bars 7–10. The F♯ chord in bar 27 momentarily breaks the circle of fifths (the B♭ chord of bar 26 later resolves with the E♭ chord in bar 30), but initiates, in bars 27–29, however, another circle of fifths (a II–V–I progression in E). Adams then concludes the C section with a II–V–I progression in D♭, the key signature, much as he concluded the B section in bars 13–15. The juxtaposition of E (major, as implied by the II–V–I) in bar 29 and D♭ (major, as implied by the II–V–I) refers back to the use of D♭ major and E major in bar 1 of the introduction.

An analysis of Pepper Adams's solo in "Rue Serpente" (see example 11, pp. 131, 132)

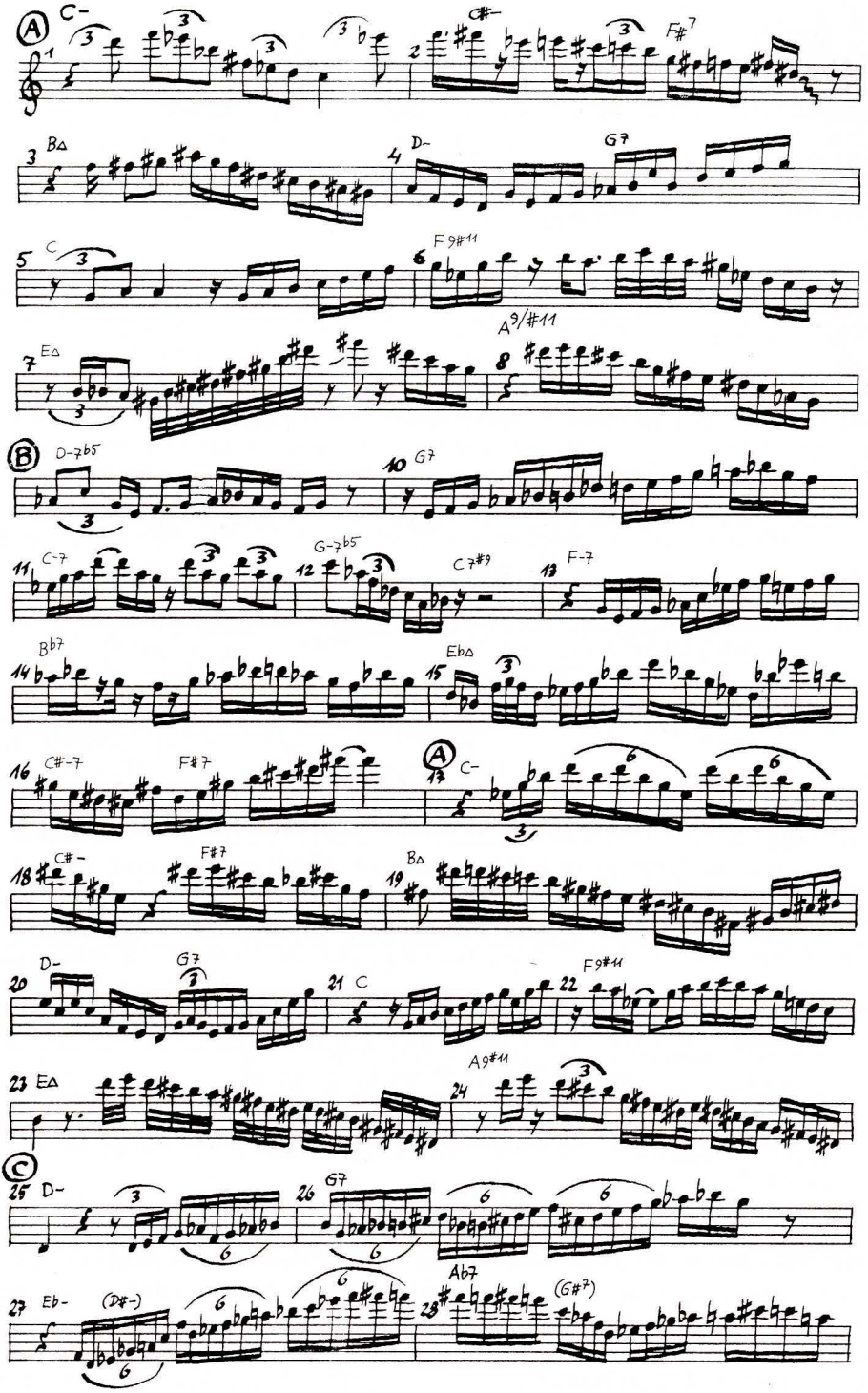
Charles Papasoff, a baritone saxophonist from Montreal, has transposed the chord changes of "Rue Serpente" down a minor third on his transcription of Adams's solo so that the chords suit the transcription, written to be played on the baritone saxophone, an E♭ instrument. Papasoff's transcription has been kept in its original state, without transposition to concert pitch, so the reader can see how Adams's solo fits the range of the baritone. I have numbered the bars and identified each section of the structure of "Rue Serpente" on the transcription for easier identification. Please note that the chords in bars 27–29 have been rendered in enharmonic equivalents, after their transposition, to place them in a more familiar baritone keys: E♭ is changed to D♯, A♭7 is changed to G♯7, and D♭ is changed to C♯. Also note that Papasoff has transcribed the third and fifth chorus of Adams's arrangement. Thus, the last sixteen bars of Papasoff's second chorus is a transcription of Adams's part to the pre-written saxophone-bass duet.

Adams's solo on "Rue Serpente" begins with a figure virtually identical to the opening of his solo on the Joe Henderson composition "Serenity".[18]



Example 12. Pepper Adams, *Rue Serpente,* transcription of Adams's solo, m. 1.

This opening figure, motive a, is answered motivically by two variants of a, a1, which begins on the last eighth note of bar 1 and ends at the end of bar 2, and a2, which, with its F♯ and G♯ pickups and altered rhythmic scheme, begins and ends in bar 3. Motive a2 is tied to a phrase in bar 4 that culminates – with the last sixteenth note of bar 4 and the beginning three notes of bar 5 – with a paraphrase from the opening theme of Gershwin's *An American in Paris.*[19]


A
C-
C#-
F#7
B∆
D-
G7
C
F9#11
A9/#11
E∆
B
D-7b5
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C-7
G-7b5
C7#9
F-7
Bb7
Eb∆
C#-7
F#7
A
C-
C#-
F#7
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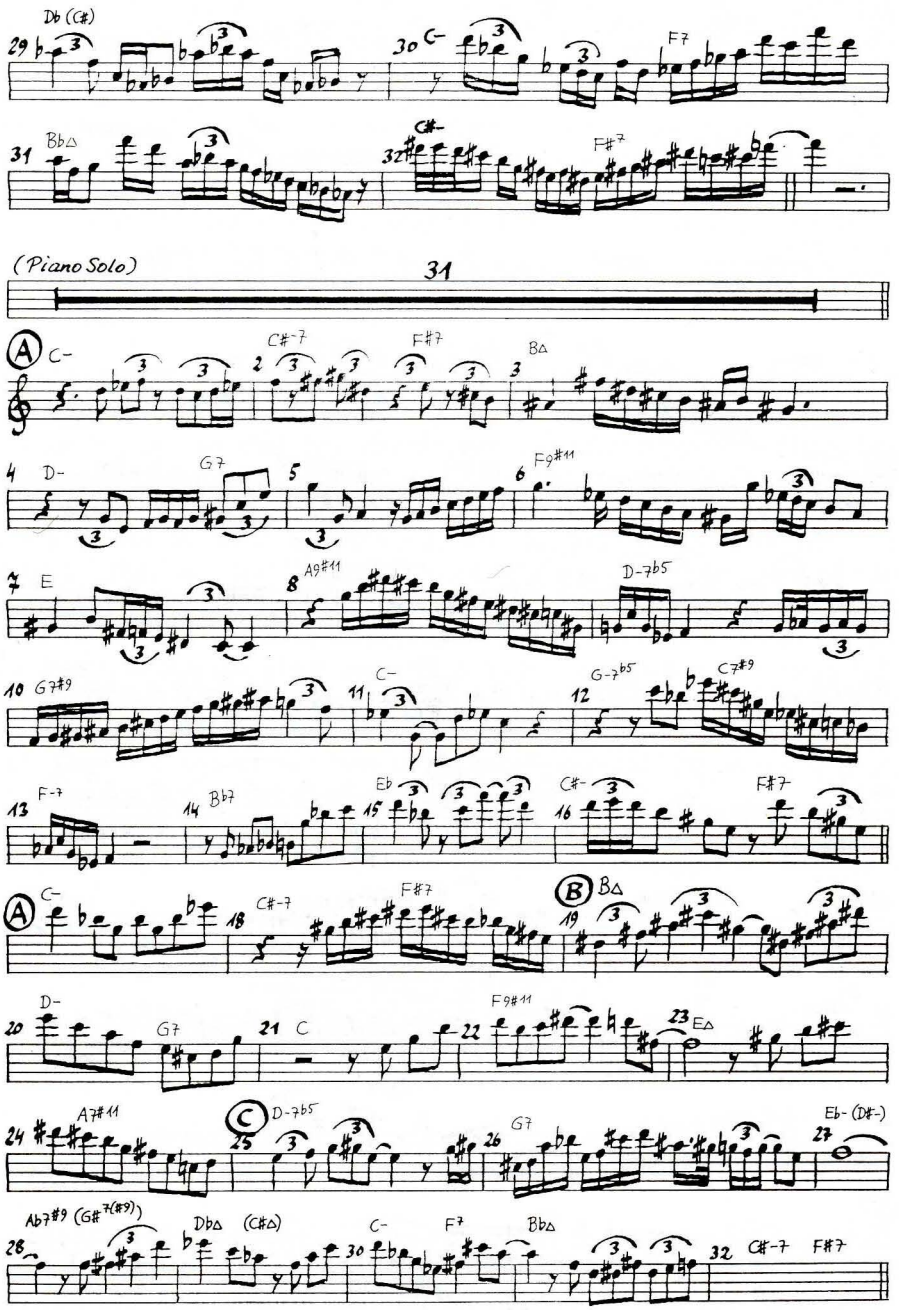
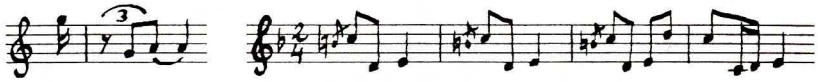


Example 11. Pepper Adams, *Rue Serpente,* transcription of Pepper Adams's baritone saxophone solo by Charles Papasoff.



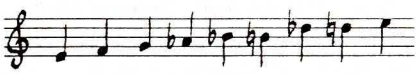
Example 13. Pepper Adams, *Rue Serpente,* transcription of Adams's solo, mm. 4–5. George Gershwin, *An American in Paris,* theme.

(Adams loved to quote freely from a broad range of musical styles, among them popular and classical music.) Motive a and its variants have a pronounced triplet feel that make reference to the quarter note and eighth note triplets of "Rue Serpente's" theme.

In bar 6 Adams displaces the beat with rests, eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and thirty-second notes. In bar 7 he plays a very fast ascending thirty-second note line up to motive a, which he squeezes out with pinched, fragmented sound. Bar 8, a long, downward, scale passage that nicely counterbalances the melodic ascent in bar 7, ends in bar 9 with a reworking of Charlie Parker's "Marmaduke", a tune Adams liked to paraphrase.[20]

Example 14. Pepper Adams, *Rue Serpente,* transcription of Adams's solo, m. 9. Charlie Parker, *Marmaduke* (1948), theme.

In bar 10, beginning on the E, Adams runs the half tone/whole tone "diminished" scale up to the B♭, an octave and a tritone away. The use of this scale, popularized by John Coltrane, Sonny Stitt, and other jazz soloists of the '50s, characterizes much of Adams's later playing, and will be seen at great length in this solo.[21]



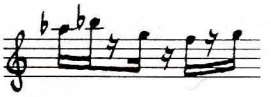
Example 15. The diminished scale.

In bar 11 Adams twice repeats the very bluesy motive b, whose emotional effect is increased with each repeat due to Adams's change in timbre. Motive b in bar 11 organically flows into a new variant of motive a, motive a^3, which is a very characteristic ending formula that Adams has articulated since his earliest recorded solos in the '50s.[22]

Example 16. Pepper Adams, *Rue Serpente,* transcription of Adams's solo, m. 11.

Example 17. Pepper Adams, *Rue Serpente,* transcription of Adams's solo, m. 12.

The first two beats of bar 14 comprise a formula commonly used by Adams.



Example 18. Pepper Adams, *Rue Serpente,* transcription of Adams's solo, m. 14.

From the third beat of bar 15 through the first beat of bar 16 is another pattern that Adams used throughout the '70s and '80s.

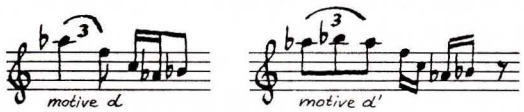
Example 19. Pepper Adams, *Rue Serpente,* transcription of Adams's solo, mm. 15–16.

Here, Adams outlines from the seventh degree back to the root, with a repeat of the seventh degree, a five note line that speels a major seventh chord. This fits nicely with the II–V–I harmonic progression of which the I is $E^{\flat}$ ($G^{\flat}$ on Adams leadsheet). This five note line leaps up a minor ninth, back to the root of the $E^{\flat}$ major chord, after first stating a $B^{\flat}$ (yet another factor of $E^{\flat}$), and descends as a six note phrase incorporating, first the $E^{\flat}$, and then the factors of the II minor chord (in this case $C^{\#-7}$), again, from the seventh degree down, with a $D^{\#}$ as a passing note from the third degree to the root. This pattern prepares for the tritone substitution, the $E^{\flat-7}$, in the return of the A section in bar 17.

In bar 17 Adams develops a sextuplet motive, motive c, above the $E^{\flat-7}$ chord by repeating it verbatim, then stating only the last four notes of the

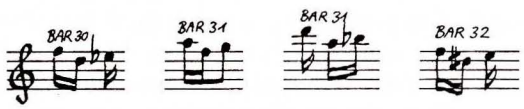
motive (which becomes motive c^1). Later, in bar 23, the long, very fast downward line beginning with the $D^{\#}$ neighbor tone is a commonly used lick by Adams. It is repeated almost note for note in bar 24 with a slight rhythmic variation that gives it a sense of much longer duration. The descending and ascending solo lines heard in bars 19–24 nicely balance one another, and, in their serpentine fashion, further unify the composition by reflecting on the arched phrases of the introduction and theme, and, of course, the programmatic element of the titel.

Bars 25–27 are comprised of the diminished scale and groups of sextuplets. Bars 25–27 are answered by 27–28, where, in the last bar, an alternate fingering climaxes the second long run.[23] In bar 29 the motive d, beginning on the first beat, is answered by its variant, d^1, on the third and fourth beat of the same bar.



Example 20. Pepper Adams, *Rue Serpente,* transcription of Adams's solo, m. 29.

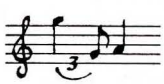
Bars 30–32 also have variants of this motive, distinguished by four different phrase endings.



Example 21. Pepper Adams, *Rue Serpente,* transcription of Adams's solo, mm. 30–32.

Bar 31 is a common Adams approach, much like that heard in bars 15–16, where, on a major chord, he begins a downward run, steps up, and then resumes the downward plunge while, almost exclusively, using notes from the major scale.

In the fifth chorus of "Rue Serpente", after Tommy Flanagan's piano solo, Pepper Adams takes a sixteen bar solo during the A and B sections that is far less technically oriented – with few very fast phrases, and no dimin-



Example 22. Pepper Adams, *Rue Serpente,* transcription of Adams's solo, second chorus, m. 5.

ished scalar passages – and far more lyrical, a nice preparation for the relaxed 16 bar duet in bars 17–32 written for saxophone and bass. In bar 5 Adams restates the *American in Paris* reference.
In bars 9 and 13 Adams again reworks the "Marmaduke" theme.

Example 23. Pepper Adams, *Rue Serpente,* transcription of Adams's solo, second chorus, mm. 2, 13.

Bar 11 is made up of a typical lick of Charlie Parker that is reworked in bar 15, and bar 12 reworks motive a, integrating this 16 bar solo with the full chorus saxophone solo heard earlier.

The pre-written duet, prepared by a pickup in bar 16, establishes a medium groove that nicely bridges the exchange of solos to the recapitulation of the introduction and theme.[24] The saxophone and bass lines are played in unison for the first seven bars, answered by a mostly unison line (except where the bassist plays in harmony) for the remainder of the chorus.

This performance of "Rue Serpente" is illustrative of many of the things that make Pepper Adams unique as a composer and soloist: There is an unflagging attention to the sense of swing and rhythmic variety; its theme is graceful and elegiac, a characteristic seen in several of his ballads and not unlike his personality; the arrangement is unusual and inventive, with Mraz, not the leader, taking the initial solo, and then Adams and Mraz, working as two equal voices in the duet section; there is an attention to variations in timbre and dynamics that effectively articulate his ideas; there is the paraphrasing of other themes at the beginnings of sections or at their mid-points; and, there is the use of the diminished scale. By all accounts, Adams was the kind of musician who will be greatly missed.

Discography

The following recordings are listed by leader. (Albums recorded without a leader are listed by title.) Some have been reissued or remain out of print.

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____. *10 to 4 at the 5 Spot.* Riverside RLP 12-265, 1958.
____. *Motor City Scene.* Bethlehem BCP 6056, 1960.
____. *Encounter.* Prestige PR 7677, 1968.
____. *Ephemera.* Spotlite PA 6, 1973.
____. *Julian.* Inner City 3014, 1975.

_____. *Twelfth and Pingree.* Enja 2074, 1975.
_____. *Live in Europe.* Sun SR 115, 1977.
_____. *Reflectory.* Muse MR 5182, 1978.
_____. *The Master.* Muse MR 5213, 1980.
_____. *Urban Dreams.* Palo Alto Pa 8009, 1981.
_____. *Live at Fat Tuesday's.* Uptown 27.16, 1983.
_____. *The Adams Effect.* (unissued), 1986.
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_____. *At the Half Note.* (Vol. 2) Blue Note BST 84061, 1960.
_____. *Jammin' with Herbie Hancock.* TCB 1006, 1960.
_____. *Out of This World.* Warwick 2041, 1960.
_____. *Chant.* Blue Note LT 991, 1961.
_____. *The Cat Walk.* Blue Note BST 84075, 1961.
_____. *Live at Jorgies.* VGM 2, 1961.
_____. *Royal Flush.* Blue Note BST 48101, 1961.
Goodman, Benny. *Happy Session Blues.* Columbia CS 8129, 1958.
_____. *Benny Goodman Rides Again.* Chess 1440, 1958.
_____. *Swing into Spring.* Texaco (unnumbered), 1959.
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_____. *At Town Hall.* United Artists UAJ 14024, 1962.
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_____. *Charlie Mingus-Cecil Taylor.* Ozone 19, 1962.
_____. *Me Myself an Eye.* Atlantic SD 8803, 1978.
_____. *Something Like a Bird.* Atlantic SD 8805, 1978.
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_____. *At Town Hall.* Riverside RLP 1138, 1959.
Perkins, Bill. *Confluence.* Interplay IP 7721, 1978.
Prestige Blues-Swingers. *Stasch.* Prestige Swingville 2013, 1959.

Notes

1 Author's interview, 1987.
2 Author's correspondence with Kenton trumpeter Phil Gilbert, 1988.
3 Author's interview, 1988.
4 Author's interview, 1987.
5 Author's interview, 1988.
6 Author's interview with Carol Sloane, 1988.
7 "Lovers Of Their Time" is a collection of short stories by the Irish writer William Trevor.
8 Adams was nominated in 1979, 1980, 1981 and 1984 for Best Jazz Soloist.
9 I gratefully acknowledge Charles Papasoff for providing me with his transcription of Adams's solo on "Rue Serpente," and Claudette Adams, Adams's widow, for giving me a copy of the tune's leadsheet. (The editor added the measure signs.)
10 Although Adams uses "A" and "B" to denote the first and last sixteen bars of the theme, each of these sections is actually comprised of two 8-bar subparts. For the purpose of this discussion, the first eight bars of "A" and "B" will both be redefined as section "A", and the last eight bars of Adams's "A" and "B" sections will be redefined as sections "B" and "C" respectively.
11 The theme, and all musical examples taken from it, are written in concert pitch.
12 See Adams's LPs *Live in Europe* and *Twelfth and Pingree.*
13 See Adams's LP *Ephemera.*
14 See Adams's LP *Live at Fat Tuesday's.*
15 See Perkins's LP *Confluence* and Adams's forthcoming LP *The Adams Effect.*
16 See Adams's LP *The Master.*
17 See Adams's LP *The Master.*
18 See Adams's LP *Encounter.*
19 I thank Lewis Porter for pointing this out to me.
20 Listen to Adams's solo on "Cindy's Tune" (on his LP *Encounter*), or his solo on "Ephemera" (from his LP *Live in Europe*) for the way he reworks "Marmaduke".
21 Listen to any of Adams's solos made during the 1970s or 1980s for his use of the diminished scale.
22 Listen to "The Cat Walk" (from the Byrd-Adams LP of the same name) for one such example.
23 According to Lewis Porter, Adams uses two different fingerings of a F♯ at the beginning of bar 28, which he alternates between, to produce four sixteenth-note Fs, not a F♯, F natural, F♯, F natural sequence as seen in Papasoff's otherwise excellent transcription. Listen to "Ephemera" (from Adams's LP *Live in Europe*) for Adams's use of the false-fingering technique in another setting.
24 The term "groove" is not used euphemistically. It describes a specific musical phenomenon where a jazz ensemble is unified by their adherence to the swing eighth rhythm.

Summary

Pepper Adams' Komposition „Rue Serpente" kennzeichnet den reifen Stil eines der größten amerikanischen Komponisten, der für Jazz-Quartett arbeitete. Dieses Werk wird in seinem harmonischen, melodischen und rhythmischen Aufbau analysiert. In ähnlicher Weise wird Adams' Solo für Baritonsaxophon einer Analyse unterzogen. Die Grundlage dafür ist die einzige bekannte kommerzielle oder private Aufnahme von "Rue Serpente"; es werden Adams' Tempi, Wendungen und der Gebrauch musikalischer Zitate diskutiert. Im Anhang befindet sich eine ausgewählte Diskographie von Aufnahmen, die im Text zitiert sind. Die Analyse wird von einer Einführung in Adams' Leben und Laufbahn eingeleitet.