

"Driftin'" with Herbie Hancock
A Study in Mapping

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Mapping Basics

Mapping, for me, is a way to show how one feels the flow of music. There is no single way to "feel the flow" of any music, and this is clearly one of the beautiful things about music. So, any map is as much like a performance as any dance. Reading a map, which one does by tracing the line it presents with one's hand and arm, then is very much like participating in a choreography based on the music.

A bit of map history. Mary Helen Richards, author of the Threshold to Music materials and founder of Education Through Music, was struggling to get students to do a group movement activity to the tune of 'Yankee Doodle.' Frustrated by the effort, she retreated to a table and sat down. A small group of students came over and asked, "What are we trying to do?" Mary Helen then, with her arms, demonstrated the actions on the table, which involved the left arm marching into the center of the table on the first part of the song, followed by the right arm sweeping across the table to me the left, and for the last section she pulled her two arms towards herself and had them "fall off the table." The students were delighted and wanted to try it themselves. This led to drawing the three actions with lines, one line moving from the left to the center, a second line moving from the right to the center and a third line, perpendicular to the other two, running down the center. The students all wanted to follow the three lines on their own.

This little vignette demonstrates two topics about maps:

- 1) Students enjoyed following the lines as they sang the song, as if they were "reading" a song score.
- 2) The lines "showed" the form of the song (three phrases).

As teachers began exploring how this kind of mapping could be used with other songs, they found that the maps could show the structure, the rhythm, the metric/beat structure, and even the melodic contour. Teachers could make "beat" maps, "form" maps, "rhythmic" maps and so on, and use these maps teach these musical concepts.

At the same time, however, Mary Helen and others were exploring how students could make their own maps. These student maps were not precise, like those of the teachers', in illustrating music concepts. They were, on the other hand, wonderful tools for exploration and sharing as students shared reading each other's maps. Student maps were interesting diagnostic tools, showing how the students "felt" the music, but they could also be quite free-flowing and even messy.

This brief description of the early mapping experience shows two sometimes conflicting aspects of the mapping experience. There is a tension between personal expression, "how you feel" the music, and instruction, guiding students to notice (and feel) musical concepts, using the maps as directed teaching aids.

- 1) Lead maps (almost always teacher made) can be used to help students focus on various dimensions of the musical experience (structure, beat, rhythm, and so on).
- 2) By letting students make their own maps, they are given the freedom (and the challenge) of showing what their experience and understanding of the song is. Student-made maps present rich creative opportunities but can be difficult to harness into a curriculum of study.

In my lesson today, my exploration will begin with a lead map, a teacher made map, that by its construction leads student to hear structure in the music and gives students a "road map" that will help guide discussion of "what happens" in a song. But in doing so, I rob the students of the chance to freely explore how the music feels to them. On the other hand, the challenge of "reading the map" gives them a way of focusing and internalizing the musical elements that produce a certain, particular sense of flow.

My presentation will begin with what clearly is a "lead" map, one which focuses students on certain aspects of the music and gives a road map that lets students talk about what they hear in the music, with specific reference to where on the road map certain things occur.

Driftin'
The Tune

- 1) Examine the map. Make predictions about how it will sound, how it will feel...
- 2) Follow the map, having students use their arms to follow my "reading" of the map...
- 3) Have students make observations, how did the music fit what they expected, were there any surprises, were there any places that felt "just right"?

Herbie Hancock's Driftin'

Handwritten musical notation for the first line of the piece, featuring a series of rhythmic notes and rests.

Handwritten musical notation for the second line of the piece, continuing the melodic and rhythmic sequence.

Handwritten musical notation for the third line of the piece, showing a more complex rhythmic pattern.

Handwritten musical notation for the fourth line of the piece, concluding the sequence with a final note and rest.

- 4) Have students follow without your guidance. Reflect and observe how they did, what they liked, where they got lost...
- 5) Elicit observations about what they noticed in the music and where in the map these events occurred...
- 6) Have students lead the map reading, with the music, always.

"Driftin'" comes from Hancock's debut recording as a leader, *Takin' Off*, and he is joined by trumpeter Freddie Hubbard, tenor saxophonist Dexter Gordon, bassist Butch Warren, and drummer Billy Higgins. (Blue Note, 92757).

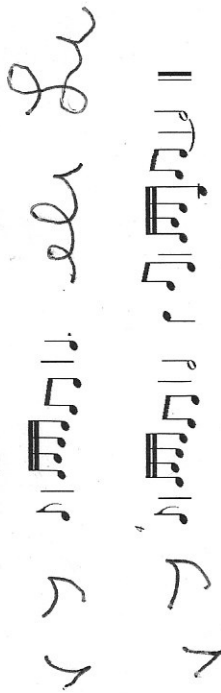
Blending Notations

Jumping into seeing music notation

When children are learning to read, namely when they are sitting on someone's lap and being read to, looking at the pictures, listening to the story,, watching when pages are turned and so, they are also seeing the words, seeing what words look like, hearing the words that they are seeing. They are not reading in the way we usually think about reading, and they are certainly not spelling the words, but they are seeing how the words that they are hearing look. It is a common and very basic early experience of notation that children rarely get when it comes to music notation. They rarely have the score in front of them, on an adult's lap, listening to the music while the adult turns the pages of the score. This may sound crazy, but it highlights something that I think is missing in early music notation teaching: just seeing the notation for what they are hearing. Here is an example of what this might look like, as we incorporate music notation into the mapping experience.

In the case of the "Driftin'" map, the rhythmic notation could be added underneath (or above) any individual section of the map so that as students track the map they see the notation. Or the rhythmic notation could simply replace a section of the map. The rhythmic notation could be contoured as if it would be on a staff, and for that matter the notation could be on a staff even. The point is less to teach eighth and sixteenth notes, and more to let students see what the music they are listening to looks like.

Blending map segments and rhythmic figures from the A section



The Solos

I have attempted to map two of the solos, those of Freddie Hubbard and Herbie Hancock, from this recording. These maps are less like the lead map of the tune because of the nature of jazz improvisation, which can range from almost predictable elements to flights of musical imagination that are difficult to capture on the page. Still, these solos have their own fascinating flow, sometimes quiet, sometimes turbulent, and much in between. They also breathe. While several of the musical lines are long, there are motivic and phrase divisions apparent. The solos have strong rhythmic elements. I have tried to capture some of the melodic contours, although the emphasis, for me, much of the time, is on the rhythmic and motivic content. While I have tried to capture this sense of flow, or my sense of this flow, these maps are a bit like student generated maps. In my case they are a little messy in places. It's easy to get lost while following until you have a better mental image of the musical units. Multiple listenings are almost required, and still these are just my interpretations.

I present these two experiments as a kind of enrichment, a suggestion of what is possible, and where one might go in thinking about maps and the exciting possibilities inherent in improvisation.

Hubbard's solo follows Dexter Gordon's saxophone solo (not mapped) in the recording. Hubbard's solo is one chorus long, has several lyrical elements, and motivic exploration.

Hancock plays two solo choruses, mixing swingy, bluesy, and bebop elements. Some of his left hand interjections find a way into the map, contributing to the musical flow and almost demand to be represented. I have presented the maps for the two solos separately. For the bold, one could tape the two maps together to get a better sense of the whole.

Finally, I have excerpted the musical materials by means of the software program Amadeus Lite, available at Apple's App store. This program also permits slowing down and speeding up passages. I will be using both the regular tempo of the piano solos and somewhat slowed down versions. Forgive me this heresy, but even at the slower tempo, the lines can be difficult to keep up with. To the extent that this alteration permits the listener to keep up with the musical ideas, prepares them to do this at tempo, and prepares them to expect intensive listening like this for other improvisations, I plead not guilty.

Freddie Hubbard's trumpet solo

Freddie Hubbard
Driftin'

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Douglas Bartholomew
Herbie Hancock's "Driftin'" from his 1962 album *Takin' Off*.
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Herbie Hancock's 1st chorus piano solo

The image shows a handwritten musical score for a piano solo. The notation is written in a cursive, shorthand style. It consists of several lines of notes and rests, with some notes beamed together. The first line starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The notation is dense and fluid, capturing the essence of the original performance. There are some small annotations, such as 'v' and 'see', interspersed among the notes. The handwriting is clear and legible, though it is a personal shorthand rather than a formal musical notation.

Herbie Hancock's 2nd chorus piano solo

5 4 3 2 1

4 3 2 1 2 3 4 5 4 3 2 1

3 2 1 2 3 4 5 4 3 2 1

2 1 2 3 4 5 4 3 2 1

1 2 3 4 5