Stolen Moments
Unpublished

**Background**
Oliver Nelson (June 4, 1932 - October 28, 1975) was an American jazz saxophonist, clarinetist and composer. His most famous recording as a leader was the album “Blues and the Abstract Truth”, recorded in 1961. In the early part of his career he played in territory bands around St. Louis before joining the Louis Jordan big band in 1950. In 1952 he joined the military and in Japan he was exposed to modern orchestra music, and decided that he wanted to be a composer.

The “Blues and the Abstract Truth” album is an exploration of the mood and structure of the blues, though only a few tracks on the album are a conventional 12 bar blues form. This follows in the footsteps of Miles Davis’ 1959 “Kind of Blue” album. Stolen Moments is the most famous tune on this album and has been covered by Frank Zappa, Ahmad Jamal, Booker Ervin, United Future Organization and the Turtle Island Quartet. Stolen Moments was first recorded on the 1960 album Trane Whistle by Eddie Lockjaw Davis.

- Trumpet - Freddie Hubbard
- Alto Saxophone/Flute - Eric Dolphy
- Tenor Saxophone - Oliver Nelson
- Baritone Saxophone - George Barrow (does not take any solos, but adds to arrangement)
- Piano - Bill Evans
- Bass - Paul Chambers
- Drums - Roy Haynes

**Analysis**
**Broad Description:**
16 Bar Cm Blues (with 12 bar blues solo section). Melodic form is 8 - 6 - 2 bar phrases.

Because this is a transcription/arrangement, which adds optional trombone (mostly doubling the baritone saxophone) & vibes (doubles the trumpet), the formal analysis is done of the recording. The arrangement is very simply the introduction, head twice, solos, intro, head twice and coda ending.
Introduction (1-4)
The bass has a two note descending pedal, with an off beat chord in the horn section. The long note in the horns then swells, and the chordal harmony ascends twice before descending.

Measures 5-20 & 21-37 is the melody of the tune. The melody is presented in the trumpet with the harmonized melody in the alto sax, tenor sax, and baritone saxophone. The melody follows an 8-6-2 phrase pattern. The 8 measure section follows a typical blues style of repetition. The repetition of the three note motif during the 6 measure phrase against the ascending chordal pattern creates great tension and release. This is only partially realized when the alto takes over the three note motif. The final two measures provides a nice break for the rhythm section and a horn hit on the last eighth note of the beat. Because of the close harmonies in the saxophones, careful attention must be given to equal balance in the chords. Careful attention must be given to the brushes throughout. I love the wash of the cymbal sound and the brush fills on the out choruses.

Solo #1 - Freddie Hubbard (trumpet). Freddie’s solo starts off in a style very similar to Miles Davis obviously showing the influence that Miles had of music at the time. The first two choruses sound a lot like tunes on “Kind of Blue”. As his solo develops we hear much more Freddie in Choruses 3 & 4.

Solo #2 - Eric Dolphy (flute). Eric Dolphy’s solo style stretches the harmony of the blues.

Solo #3 - Oliver Nelson (alto). Nelson starts off with a 3 note motif based on ascending fourths and develops over the first chorus of the solo. Second chorus builds around minor thirds a whole step apart.

Solo #4 - Bill Evans (piano). Bill Evans has a very sparse comping style, and plays very melodically in his piano solo on Stolen Moments.

Introduction & Head Reprise. Tag Ending. The interaction of the brushes during the reprise of the introduction has a very nice triplet subdivision with a crescendo into beat 4, helping phrase the swell of the chords in the horns.

**Music Selection**
This derivative of a minor blues is a great introduction for students into the cool jazz style of the 1960’s. The solos are very melodic and well developed (and very easy to begin transcribing). The form is very audible and uses a 12 bar minor blues progression for the solos.
Reasons to Perform
Great use of compositional devices
- Cool Jazz Style prevalent during the 1950’s and 1960’s as a reaction to BeBop
- Great Musicians on the Recording
  - Oliver Nelson (alto), Eric Dolphy (tenor), Freddie Hubbard (trumpet)
- Variation on the Blues
- Solos develop sequentially with space
- Development of ideas?
- Chromaticism in the final 8 measures. The use of fourth harmony throughout is very interesting compositionally. McCoy Tyner used it a lot with John Coltrane later in the 1960’s.

Heart Statement
The heart of Stolen Moments is the variation on the typical twelve bar blues and the chromatic undertones emphasized by the clash of the half step between the ninth and minor third when placed in inversion. This dissonance is essential to understanding the blues as a form of emotional expression and eternal optimism.

Introducing the Piece
Take out the piece that is:
- Loosely based on the blues
- In the Cool Jazz style
- Recorded in the style of Miles Davis’ “Kind of Blue” album
- Has a trumpet solo first
- Was written by a saxophonist
**Skill Outcome**
Students will demonstrate and perform in a style that is reminiscent of the late 50’s cool jazz movement.

**Strategies**
- Listening and transcribing 12 measures of the trumpet and alto solos
- Warm-ups in that style (basic swing style, bebop style, latin style)
- Improvisation over the minor blues progression

**Assessment**
- Evaluation of Recording Sessions
- IGSMA Organizational Contest and Clinic
- C Blues Scale Tests
- Minor Blues Heads
- Performing the first chorus Oliver Nelson’s tenor solo collectively as an ensemble

**Knowledge Outcome**
Students will demonstrate knowledge of the minor blues progression and be able to show how Stolen Moments deviates from the typical blues form.

**Strategies**
- Roman Numeral Analysis of Minor Blues Chord Progression (Blues Progression Worksheet)
- Learn C Minor Blues Scale
- Students will track the lineage of Oliver Nelson, Freddie Hubbard, Eric Dolphy and Bill Evans based on their influences and common performances.
- Students will learn several minor blues head, (ex. Mr. P.C. by John Coltrane), then compare and contrast the two progressions, and utilize other melodies for soloing.
- Transcription of Oliver Nelson’s tenor solo

**Assessments**
- Blues Progression Worksheets
- C Blues Scale Test
- Classroom Discussions
- Minor Blues Heads
- Transcriptions of Solo by Oliver Nelson
**Affective Outcome**
Students will explore the emotional concept of the blues, and how the dissonance and consonance from “blue” notes convey an emotional quality to the blues lyric.

**Strategies**
- Discussions: What is the blues? How does it make you feel? Why do we get the blues? Why would composer select these compositional devices? What devices create which moods? If you were composing an introspective piece, how could you use compositional devices to create a richer emotional connection with the audience?
- What is the blues? How is the blues seen as an optimistic form? How does playing the blues make you feel better? Why does expressing your frustrations make you feel better?
- If you were to write a blues about something that happens in your life on a regular basis, what would it be? Blues lyrics writing worksheet.
- How does the emotional expression of the blues translate into a more convincing solo? Empathy towards others and how they are feeling?

**Assessments**
- In Class Discussions
- Performance of emotional convincing solos that express their own feeling of frustration and optimism
- Blues Lyric Writing worksheets