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Switchless Multi-Octave Tune-All BPF Manifold Using Low-Pass/High-Pass Diplexer Junctions

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ABSTRACT This paper presents an RF-switchless two-bandpass filter (BPF) manifold with continuous multi-octave center frequency (f_{cen}) and bandwidth (BW) tuning capabilities that are demonstrated in a wide range of frequency range 1 (FR1) bands, spanning from L-band to C-band. Specifically, the proposed RF filtering component operates in three distinct modes of operation, namely: i) single-band, ii) dual-band, and iii) all-reject—achieved by intrinsically switching ON/OFF its two BPF branches. It is based on two tune-all BPFs that are combined with two high-pass/low-pass RF diplexer-based filtering junctions. A technique to minimize insertion loss (IL) using varactors and high- Q static DC block capacitors is demonstrated. The experimental prototype exhibits: i) a single-band mode of operation with f_{cen} tuning between 1.89–7.28 GHz, BW tuning ratio of 3–4.4:1 and minimum in-band insertion loss (IL): 2.3–5.7 dB, ii) a dual-band mode of operation with two independently tuned bands, and iii) an all-reject mode of operation with isolation < 15 dB between DC and 18 GHz.

INDEX TERMS Tunable filter, Band-pass filter (BPF), dual-band, reconfigurable filter, high-frequency filter, octave tuning.

I. INTRODUCTION

Adaptive RF filters will be key for the next generation of communications where dynamic utilization of the RF spectrum will be required to maximize spectral efficiency [1]. Additionally, they have the potential to reduce the deployment costs of new applications through RF hardware re-use. The next generation of RF filters should have multiple levels of RF tuning that go beyond center frequency tuning (f_{cen}). However, the majority of the existing electronically-tunable bandpass filters (BPFs) technologies have limited capabilities, namely f_{cen} tuning ratio (TR) up to 2:1, bandwidth (BW) TR up to 2:1 and operational frequencies up to 1–3 GHz [2], [3], [4], [5], [6], [7], [8]. Thus, making them inadequate to cover the 5G+ expansions within the entire frequency range 1 (FR1) band (0.41–7.125 GHz).

The maximum tuning range of a BPFs is limited by the capacitance ratio of the varactor and its relation to the total capacitance of the resonator. To overcome this limitation,

manifolds comprising multiple RF-switched filters are recently being considered as for example the ones in [9], [10], [11], [12]. However, they are based on lossy RF switches or PIN diodes that increase the RF front-end complexity and power consumption, introduce additional loss to each of the filtering channels (e.g., 1.8 dB for SOI switches [14]) and have limited transfer function (TF) adaptivity. For example, in [9], [10], [11], only f_{cen} tuning is achieved in a 4.4:1 tuning range by incorporating two or three RF-switched f_{cen} -tunable BPFs in the manifold. However, the resulting manifold is fairly large in size, its BW can't be tuned and its operational frequencies are limited to 2.4 GHz. In [12], 2.1:1 f_{cen} TR is achieved up to 3.9 GHz alongside 2.5-3:1 BW tuning, however its passbands exhibit high loss up to 9 dB. Furthermore, these manifolds are restricted in operation to a single band at a time.

Considering the aforementioned limitations, this manuscript reports for the first time a novel RF-switchless integration scheme for BPF manifolds. It utilizes two tune-all

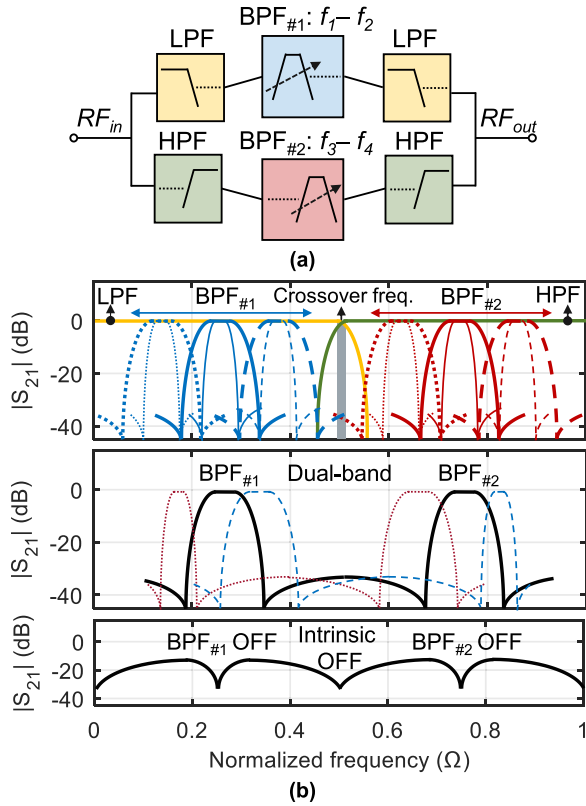


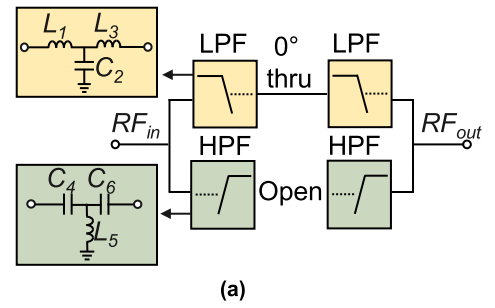
FIGURE 1. RF-switchless two-BPF manifold using a high-pass/low-pass diplexer junction: (a) Block diagram; (b) Conceptual power transmission response exhibiting a tune-all transfer function with: i) a single-band mode featuring ultra-wide and continuous f_{cen} and BW tuning (either BPF_{#1} and BPF_{#2} is ON), ii) a dual-band mode with independently-tuned bands in terms of f_{cen} and BW (both BPF_{#1} and BPF_{#2} are ON), and iii) an all-reject mode (both BPF_{#1} and BPF_{#2} are intrinsically-switched OFF).

BPFs—i.e., having multi-configurable TF parameters, including f_{cen} tuning, BW tuning and intrinsic RF switch-OFF—interconnected with two low-pass/high-pass RF diplexer junctions and exhibiting three distinct modes of operation, namely: i) a single-band TF with continuous f_{cen} tuning between 1.89-7.28 GHz corresponding to a TR: 3.85:1 and BW tuning 3-4.4:1), ii) a tunable dual-band mode of operation with two independently-tuned bands, and iii) an all-reject mode of operation spanning across a wide range of FR1 frequencies. As an important advantage to be highlighted, these modes are achieved by intrinsically switching ON/OFF the BPF branches without using any RF switches and only by tuning their resonators.

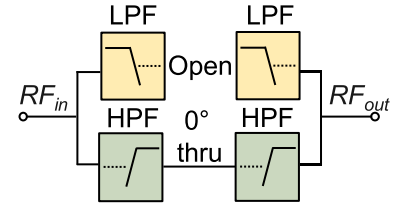
II. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

A. CONCEPT OF THE RF SWITCHLESS MANIFOLD

Fig. 1 depicts the block diagram and the conceptual power transmission response of the switchless tune-all BPF manifold. It consists of: i) two diplexer junctions comprising a low-pass filter (LPF) and a high-pass filter (HPF), whose combined response is shown in Fig. 2 and ii) two fully-reconfigurable five-pole/two-transmission zero (TZs) BPFs



(a)



(b)

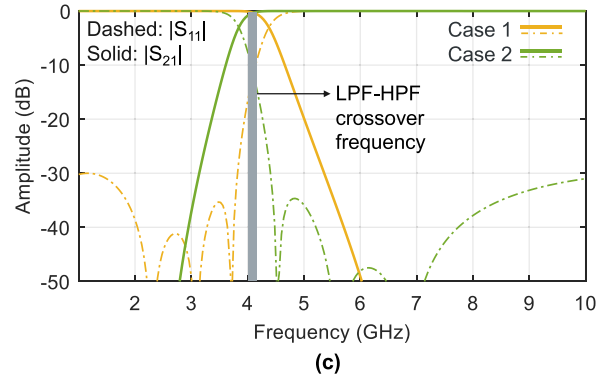


FIGURE 2. Low-pass/ high-pass diplexer in back-to-back configuration: (a) Case 1: LPFs: directly connected, HPFs: open. (b) Case 2: HPFs: connected, LPFs: open; (c) Circuit simulations: LPF: $L_1 = 3.04$ nH, $C_2 = 1.44$ pF, $L_3 = 1.79$ nH, HPF: $C_4 = 0.52$ pF, $L_5 = 1.1$ nH, $C_6 = 0.88$ pF.

(BPF_{#1} and BPF_{#2}) with tune-all TF characteristics. The tuning capabilities of one of these BPFs are illustrated in Fig. 3 for the example case of BPF_{#1}. They include f_{cen} tuning, BW tuning and intrinsic switching OFF. In the manifold configuration in Fig. 1, BPF_{#1} operates through the LPF channel with a continuously tunable TF between f_1 to f_2 , while BPF_{#2} operates through the HPF channel with a continuously tunable TF between f_3 to f_4 . By intrinsically switching ON/OFF the BPF_{#1} or the BPF_{#2}, continuous f_{cen} and BW tuning between f_1 and f_4 can be obtained. A crossover region is considered between the LPF and HPF channels to allow for continuous f_{cen} coverage. Furthermore, the manifold facilitates two additional modes of operation. Specifically, by intrinsically switching ON both of the BPFs a dual-band mode can be achieved. Conversely by intrinsically switching OFF both of the BPFs an all-reject mode is materialized.

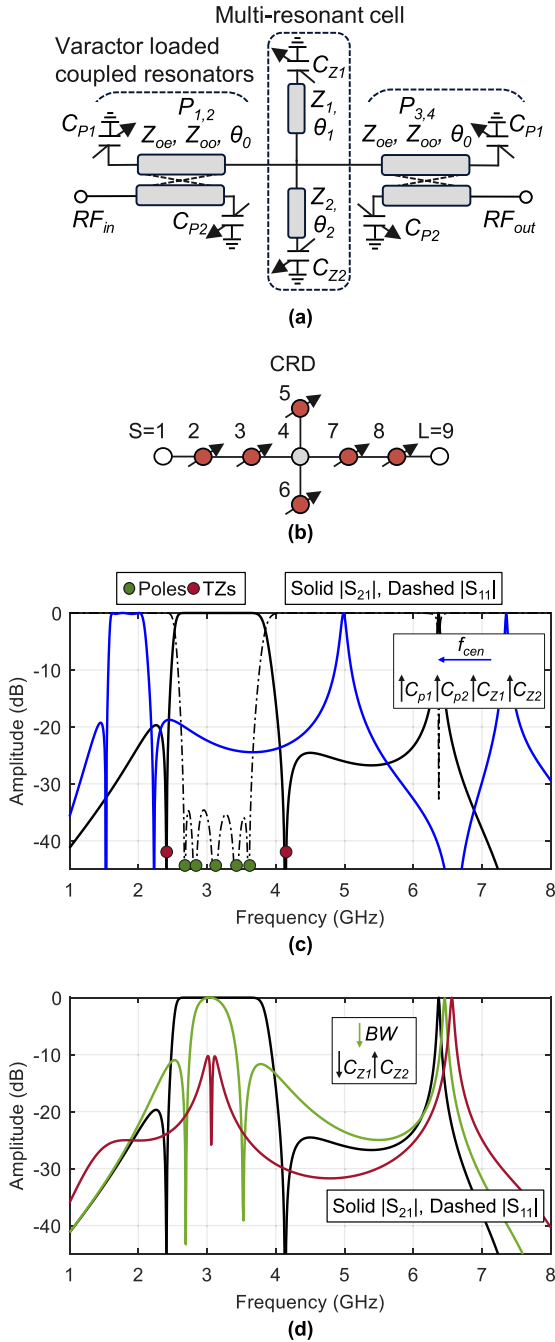


FIGURE 3. (a) Five-pole/two-TZ BPF comprising four varactor-loaded coupled resonators and one multi-resonant cell; (b) Coupling routing diagram; (c) f_{cen} tuning, circuit-simulated response in black with $f_{cen} = 3$ GHz, FBW = 44% obtained for $Z_{oe} = 180 \Omega$, $Z_{oo} = Z_{oe}/2 \Omega$, $\theta_0 = 62^\circ$, $Z_1 = 117 \Omega$, $\theta_1 = 87.8^\circ$, $C_{Z1} = 0.2$ pF, $Z_2 = 123 \Omega$, $\theta_2 = 41.6^\circ$, $C_{P1} = C_{P2} = C_{Z1} = C_{Z2} = 0.2$ pF; (d) BW tuning.

B. IMPLEMENTATION

Using as a basis the aforementioned concept, the RF switchless tune-all BPF manifold is designed for f_{cen} tuning between 1.9 GHz–7.3 GHz, BW tuning $> 3:1$, FBW $> 6\%$, a dual-band and an all reject mode of operation. To meet these design goals, BPF_{#1} is implemented for f_{cen} tuning between 1.9–3.9 GHz, whereas BPF_{#2} for f_{cen} tuning between 3.8–7.3

GHz. Both BPFs are realized for a BW TR: 3:1 and wide FBWs $> 6\%$. To accommodate their switchless integration, the LPF/HPF diplexer is designed in a back-to-back configuration using third-order LPF/HPF channels considering two design cases: i) Case 1: LPFs directly connected (via a zero-length thru line), HPFs open-ended, and ii) Case 2: HPFs directly connected and LPFs open-ended. In contrast to conventional RF diplexers designed for 50 Ω terminations [13], alternative zero-length thru and open circuit interconnection terminations are considered when the diplexer junction is designed in a back-to-back configuration as shown in Fig. 2(a), (b). In Fig. 2(a), the two LPFs are cascaded via a zero-length thru line while the other two HPFs are open-circuited, and in Fig. 2(b), the two HPFs are cascaded via a zero-length thru line while the other two LPFs are open-circuited. The values of the lumped-element (LE) components for the diplexer are specified using optimized g-coefficients ($g_1 = 1.527$, $g_2 = 1.813$, $g_3 = 0.9$, $g_0 = g_4 = 1$) at $f_c = 4$ GHz ($\omega_c = 2\pi \cdot f_c$) and the following formulas: $L_1 = (Z_0 \cdot g_1) / \omega_c$, $C_2 = g_2 / (Z_0 \cdot \omega_c)$ F, $L_3 = (Z_0 \cdot g_3) / \omega_c$ H and $C_4 = 1 / (Z_0 \cdot g_1 \cdot \omega_c)$ F, $L_5 = (Z_0) / (g_2 \cdot \omega_c)$ H, $C_6 = 1 / (Z_0 \cdot g_3 \cdot \omega_c)$ F for a return loss (RL) > 30 dB, where f_c is the centre of the crossover region at which the power transmission is transferred from the LPF channel to the HPF channel when arranged in a back-to-back and terminated to $Z_0 = 50$ Ohm. The ideal circuit-simulated S-parameters for Case 1 and Case 2 are provided in Fig. 2(c). As shown, the LPF channel spans between DC–4.34 GHz and covers the desired specifications of BPF_{#1}, while the HPF starts from 3.7 GHz and covers the desired specifications of BPF_{#2}. An overlapping cross over frequency range between 3.7 GHz (3 dB cut-off of the HPF) and 4.34 GHz (3 dB cut-off of the LPF) is considered to allow for continuous f_{cen} tuning.

It should be noted that BPF_{#1} and BPF_{#2} of the manifold implement the same type of TF [Fig. 3(a)], however shifted in frequency. Their TF comprises five poles and two transmission zeros (TZs) as shown in Fig. 3(c) alongside its coupling routing diagram [Fig. 3(b)]. In practice each of the BPFs is realized with two varactor-loaded coupled resonators contributing to four poles and a multi-resonant cell contributing to one pole and two TZs. The simulated S-parameters in Fig. 3(c), (d) illustrate tuning principles of the BPF TF. Specifically, i) f_{cen} shifts to lower frequencies by increasing all capacitances loading the resonators (C_{P1} , C_{P2} , C_{Z2} , and C_{Z1}) [Fig. 3(c)], ii) BW decreases by decreasing C_{Z1} and increasing C_{Z2} (tuning TZs to the center of the passband) [Fig. 3(d)], and iii) intrinsic-OFF is achieved by decreasing C_{Z1} and increasing C_{Z2} until both of the TZs are set at the center of the passband, and by offsetting the capacitances C_{P1} and C_{P2} in the varactor-loaded coupled line [Fig. 3(d)]. These principles are also outlined in [12]. However, two additional poles are introduced in this concept by altering the coupling between the varactor-loaded coupled resonators to widen the BPF's fractional bandwidth (FBW), achieving up to 44%, as opposed to 7.3% in [12].

The performance of BPFs is linked to the varactor's loss and tuning range. For high frequency implementations it is

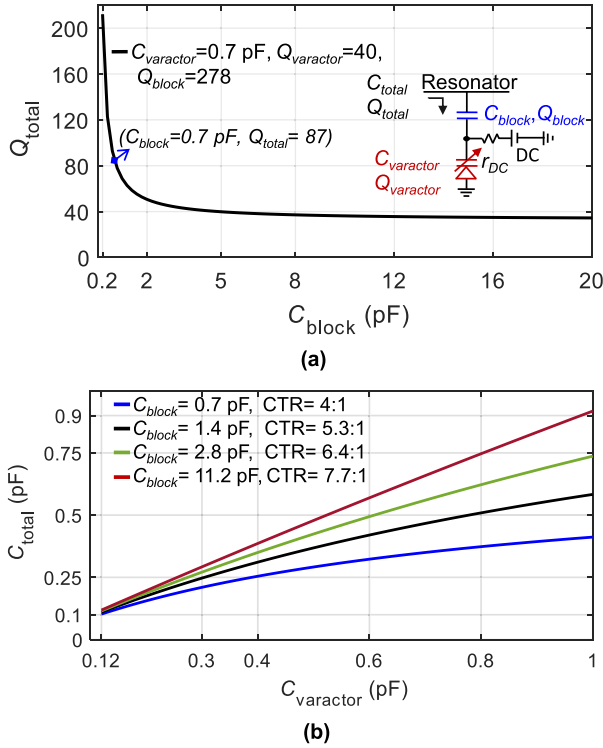


FIGURE 4. DC block effect on: (a) Q_{total} . (b) $C_{varactor}$ and C_{total} .

also influenced by the DC block capacitance (C_{block}) in its biasing network. Thus, a study of the C_{block} impact on the total unloaded quality factor (Q_{total}) and total capacitance tuning range (CTR) is illustrated in Fig. 4. Specifically, Fig. 4(a) demonstrates the effect of C_{block} while maintaining the varactor diode capacitance ($C_{varactor}$) and Q -factor ($Q_{varactor}$), and the DC block Q -factor (Q_{block}) constant. As observed, when C_{block} is comparable to $C_{varactor}$, Q_{total} rises and is comparable to Q_{block} , indicating that a low C_{block} , comparable to $C_{varactor}$, increases Q_{total} . Furthermore, Fig. 4(b) demonstrates that lowering C_{block} limits the CTR of the resonator. Thus, the DC block selection is based on a trade-off between Q -factor and capacitance tuning.

To analyse the varactor performance before designing the BPFs, a varactor-loaded resonator was manufactured as shown in Fig. 5(a) and tested between 2–5 GHz. MACOM MAVR-000120-14110G varactor diodes (with total capacitance $C_t = 0.128$ – 1.1 pF and Murata DC block capacitors were used. Its measured performance in terms of applied DC voltage and extracted unloaded Q -factor (Q_U) is provided in Fig. 5(b); and Fig. 5(c) illustrates its measured performance in terms of applied DC voltage and center frequency tuning. The results show that a lower capacitance DC block enhances the resonator's Q_U [Fig. 5(b)] but limits the TR of the center frequency [Fig. 5(c)]. This agrees well with the theoretical study in Fig. 4, successfully validating the proposed design method.

Having specified the varactor and resonator performance trade-offs, the manifold can be designed as follows. First the

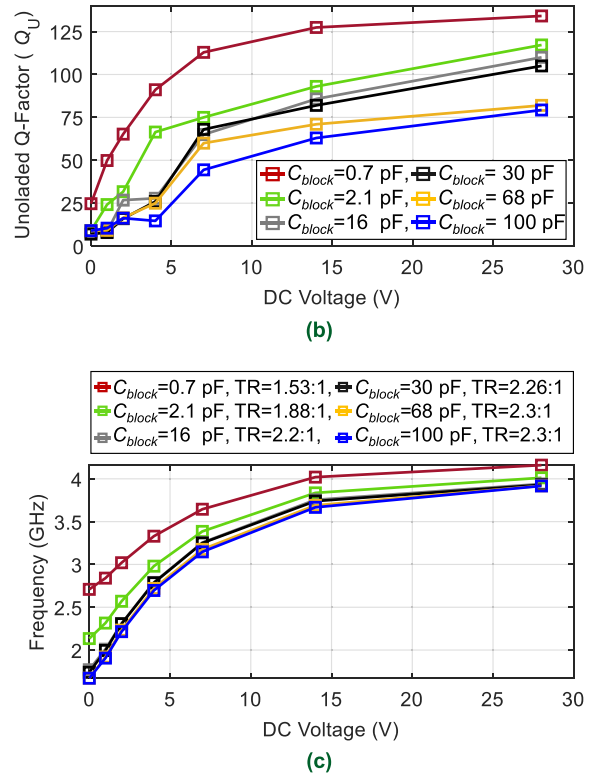
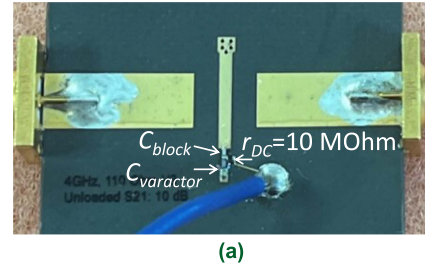


FIGURE 5. Experimental evaluation of the effect of the DC block on the unloaded Q -factor (Q_U) and tuning range of the varactor-loaded resonator: (a) Photograph of the manufactured c resonator. The utilized SMDs and resonator's characteristics are as follow: Varactor: MACOM MAVR-000120-14110G, DC blocks: GJM0335 and GRM0335 Murata series. Resonator characteristic: impedance $Z = 109 \Omega$, electrical length: 55° at 4 GHz, substrate: RO5880 with a height of 1.575 mm; (b) Relationship between applied DC voltage and extracted Q_U ; (c) Relationship between center frequency, where TR is the frequency tuning ratio. .

BPFs and the diplexers are designed independently. Afterwards the diplexers are optimized for realistic loads. i.e., the open circuit is replaced by the corresponding BPF in its intrinsically switched-OFF state and the thru load is replaced by a BPF in its ON state to accommodate for finite loading effects. Then the BPFs and diplexers are connected in a manifold configuration and their performance is co-optimized with full EM simulations in ADS and ANSYS HFSS.

III. EXPERIMENTAL VALIDATION

To validate the switchless tune-all BPF manifold concept, a prototype was designed, manufactured and tested for a wide span of frequencies in the extended FR1 band starting from

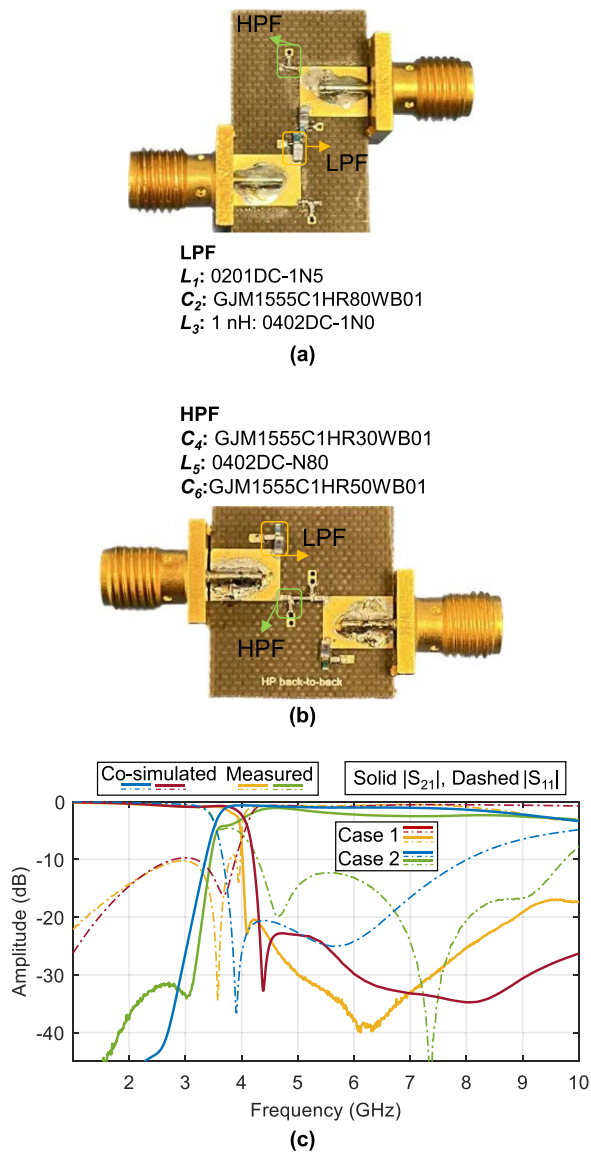


FIGURE 6. Measured and EM simulated back-to-back duplexers: (a) Case 1: LPFs: connected and HPFs: open; (b) Case 2: LPFs: open and HPFs: connected. (c) RF measured response for Case 1 and 2. .

the edge of L-band and up until C-band. The prototypes were built on RT/duroid RO5880 substrate. Test structures of the duplexers for both Case 1 and Case 2 were also manufactured and measured and are shown in Fig. 6 along with their corresponding co-simulated states. In Case 1, the insertion loss (IL) was measured < 0.8 dB for frequencies between 1–3.6 GHz, with the LPF channel cutoff at 3.97 GHz, while the out-of-band isolation was measured > 23 dB from 4.2 GHz to more than 10 GHz. In Case 2, the IL was measured < 2.4 dB for frequencies between 4.1–10 GHz, with the HPF channel cutoff at 3.76 GHz, while the out-of-band isolation was measured > 31 dB from 3.14 GHz to frequencies lower than 1 GHz. As it can be seen, the RF-measured states agree well with the EM-simulated ones. The observed small deviations are due to the lack of discrete commercially-available

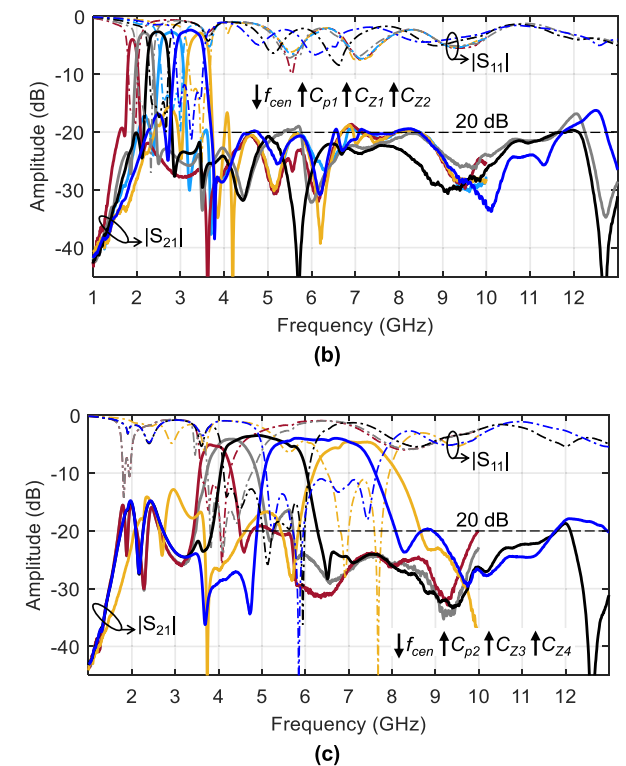
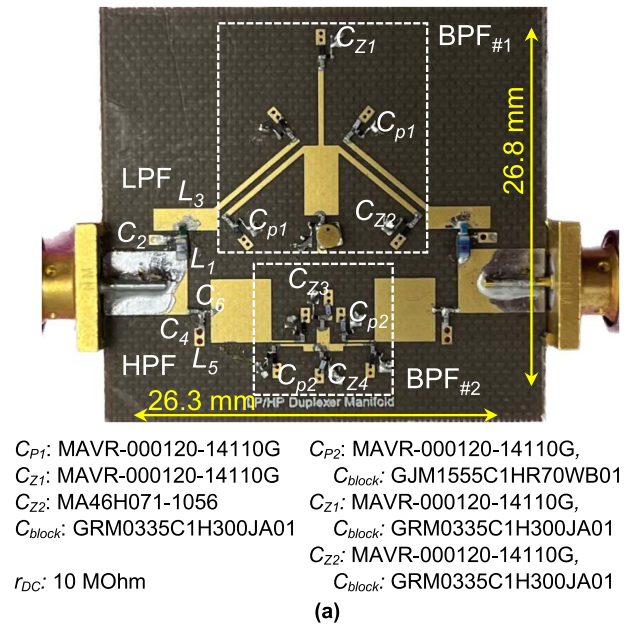


FIGURE 7. Manufactured prototype of the switchless two-BPF manifold and its RF-measured S-parameters: (a) Prototype; (b) BPF#1 ON exhibiting continuous f_{cen} tuning and BPF#2 intrinsically-switched OFF; (c) BPF#2 ON exhibiting continuous f_{cen} tuning with BPF#1 intrinsically-switched OFF.

SMD components with the exact same optimal inductance & capacitance values specified in EM simulations.

The manufactured manifold is shown in Fig. 7(a) alongside its SMD elements. Its RF measured performance in terms of f_{cen} tuning is summarized as follows: i) Fig. 7(b): BPF#1 is ON

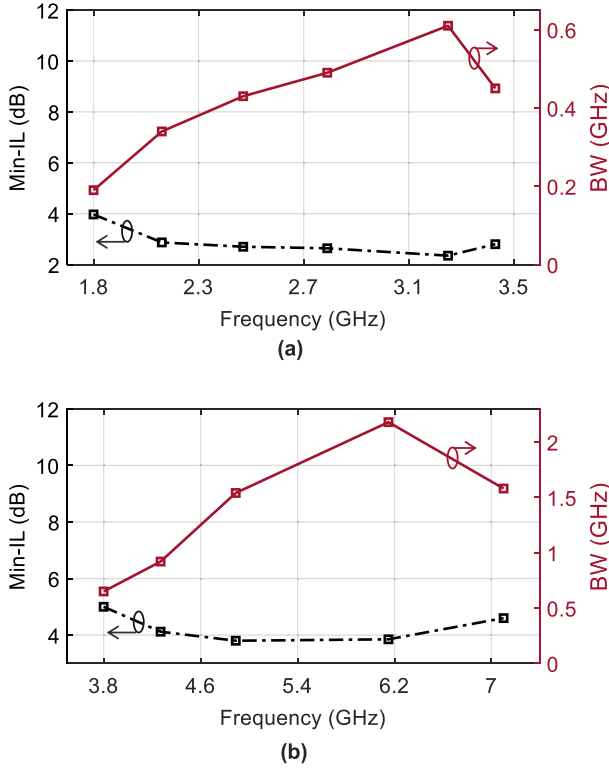


FIGURE 8. RF performance summary of the measured f_{cen} tuning states presented in Fig. 7 in terms of BW and minimum IL (min-IL): (a) BPF#1 f_{cen} tuning performance when BPF#2 is switched OFF [Fig. 7(a)]; (b) BPF#2 f_{cen} tuning performance when BPF#1 is switched OFF [Fig. 7(b)].

TABLE 1 Performance Summary for Various Tuning States When Either the BPF#1 or the BPF#2 are ON Using As a Basis the Measured Data in Fig. 7(a), (b)

	f_{cen} (GHz)	Min-BW (GHz)	Min- IL (dB)	Max-BW (GHz)	Min- IL (dB)
BPF#1	2.2	135	4.6	590	2.44
	3	240	3.6	725	2.3
BPF#2	4.9	500	5.7	1880	3.6
	6.2	695	5.1	2625	3.6

and BPF#2 is switched OFF and its f_{cen} is continuously tuned from 1.89 to 3.43 GHz (i.e., TR: 1.81:1). The spurious signals in the upper stopband of BPF#1 are naturally suppressed by the network of the LPF channel, allowing for broadband spur-free out-of-band isolation around 20 dB up to 13 GHz. ii) Fig. 7(c): BPF#2 is ON and BPF#1 is switched OFF and BPF#2 continuously tunes its f_{cen} from 3.8 to 7.28 GHz (i.e., TR: 1.91:1). As such, the manifold demonstrates a combined ultra-wide f_{cen} tuning between 1.89 and 7.28 GHz (i.e., TR: 3.85:1). A detailed performance summary of its measured RF f_{cen} states in terms of BW and minimum IL is provided in Fig. 8.

The BW tuning capabilities of the manifold alongside its dual-band and all-reject modes of operation are provided in Fig. 9. Namely, Fig. 9(a) shows BW tuning of BPF#1 (BPF#2

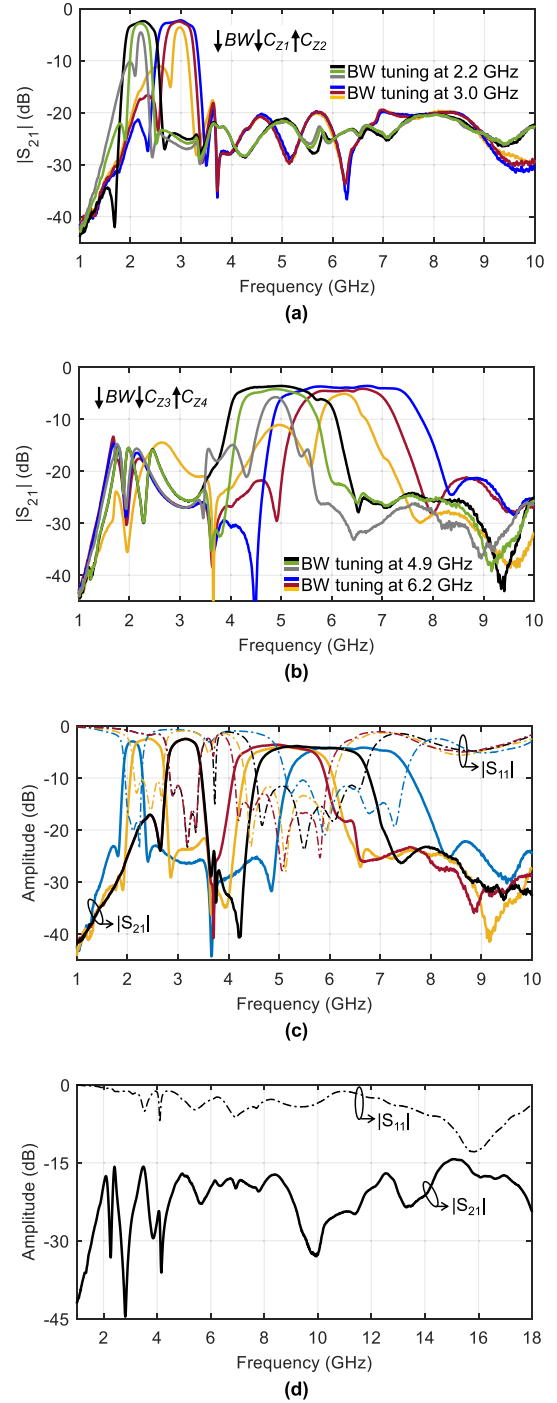
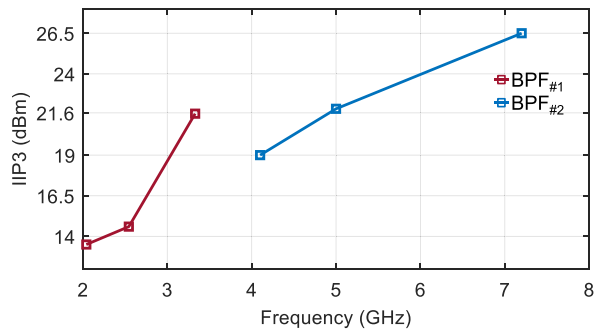
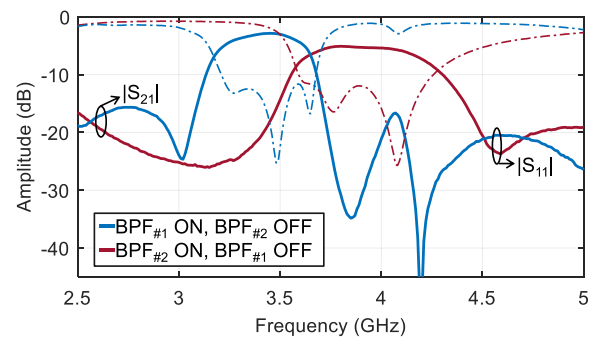


FIGURE 9. RF-measured S-parameters: (a) Continuous BW tuning of BPF#1 at $f_{cen} = 2.2$ and 3 GHz, when BPF#2 is OFF; (b) Continuous BW tuning of BPF#2 at $f_{cen} = 4.9$ and 6.2 GHz, when BPF#1 is OFF; (c) Dual-band responses when BPF#1 and BPF#2 are ON; (d) All-reject response: BPF#1 and BPF#2 are OFF.

is switched OFF) at: i) $f_{cen} = 2.2$ GHz, where its BW tunes between 0.135–0.59 GHz (i.e., a TR: 4.37:1) with a minimum IL of 2.44–4.6 dB; and at: ii) $f_{cen} = 3$ GHz, where its BW tunes between 0.24–0.725 GHz (i.e., a TR: 3:1) with a minimum IL between 2.3–3.6 dB. Fig. 9(b) illustrates the BW

TABLE 2 Comparison with State-of-the-Art Tunable Manifolds

Ref.	Integration	#filters	f_{cen} tuning (GHz), [TR]	FBW, TR	IL (dB)	Q_{eff}	#AE	Isolation	Operation modes
This work	LPF/HPF diplexer	2	1.89-7.28, [3.85:1]	6- 42%, TR: 3- 4.7:1	2.3-5.7	12-34	12	20 dB up to $6x f_{cen}$	Single / Dual band/ All-reject
[9]	PIN diodes	3	0.54-2.4, [4.44]	3.4- 15%, No tuning	1.8-5.4	4.5-18.5	24	20 dB up to $5x f_{cen}$	Single band
[11]	PIN diodes	2	1.1-2.1, [1.9:1]	1.9- 3.6%, No tuning	4.4-6.1	35-60	9	20 dB up to $2.3x f_{cen}$	Single band
[12]	RF switch	2	1.8-3.85, [2.14]	5- 36%, TR: 2.5-3:1	2-9	11-24	14	20 dB up to $2x f_{cen}$	Single band/ All-reject


FIGURE 10. RF-measured IIP3 for various tuning states.

FIGURE 11. RF-measured S-parameters showing the: i) maximum f_{cen} of BPF#1 when BPF#2 is OFF and ii) minimum f_{cen} of BPF#2 when BPF#1 is OFF.

tuning capabilities of BPF#2 (with BPF#1 switched OFF) at: i) $f_{cen}=4.9$ GHz, where its BW tunes between 0.52–1.88 GHz (i.e., a TR: 3.6:1) with a minimum IL of 3.6–5.7 dB; and ii) $f_{cen}=6.2$ GHz, where its BW tunes between 0.695–2.625 GHz (i.e., a TR: 3.77:1) with a minimum IL between 3.6–5.1 dB. The RF summary of manifold BW tuning performance is listed in Table 1.

Furthermore, Fig. 9(c) demonstrates the manifold’s dual-band capabilities when both BPF#1 and BPF#2 are switched ON, alongside independent f_{cen} and BW control for both of its bands. Lastly, Fig. 9(d) illustrates the measured response of the all-reject mode of operation with an isolation > 15 dB between DC and 18 GHz, achieved by intrinsically-switching OFF both BPF#1 and BPF#2.

The measured third order input intercept point (IIP3) performance of the manifold when either BPF#1 and BPF#2 are switched ON is illustrated in Fig. 10. Specifically, when BPF#1 is ON, an IIP3 between 13.5–21.6 dBm is obtained when f_{cen} tunes between 2–3.4 GHz. Likewise, when BPF#2 is ON the IIP3 values range between 19 and 26.5 dBm when f_{cen} tunes between 4.1–7.2 GHz.

To illustrate the BPF manifold performance around the cross-over region of the diplexer, Fig. 11 provides the RF-measured response of: i) the maximum f_{cen} state of BPF#1 when BPF#2 is switched OFF and ii) the minimum f_{cen} state of BPF#2 when BPF#1 is switched OFF. The upper 3-dB frequency of BPF#1 is 3.64 GHz (blue trace), while the lower 3-dB frequency of BPF#2 is 3.59 GHz (red trace). Therefore, the BPF manifold allows complete frequency coverage between 1.89–7.28 GHz.

To demonstrate the potential of the proposed switchless BPF manifold for ultra-wide and tune-all RF tuning in FR1, a comparison with state-of-the-art tunable manifolds is presented in Table 2. As shown, the proposed configuration is the only RF-switchless manifold to date covering the highest operational frequency, while exhibiting ultra-wide f_{cen} tuning and BW tuning and supporting the largest number of modes of operation namely single, dual-band, and all-reject modes of operation. Furthermore, it exhibits the lowest IL and the widest out-of-band suppression with > 20 dB of isolation for up to $6x f_{cen}$. The concepts in [9], [11] are only tunable in terms of f_{cen} and the manifold in [12], doesn’t facilitate a dual-mode of operation, it has significantly higher IL up to 9 dB and can only operate up to 3.85 GHz.

VII. CONCLUSION

A novel switchless tune-all two-BPF manifold design is presented. It is based on two LPF/HPF diplexer junctions and two tune-all, intrinsically-switchable BPFs. The manifold exhibits ultra-wide and highly-versatile transfer function characteristics with three modes of operation, namely: i) a single-band BPF with 3.85:1 f_{cen} tuning, up to 4.4:1 BW tuning, and > 20 dB out-of-band isolation; ii) a dual-band BPF with two independently tuned bands; and iii) an all-reject mode with > 15 dB isolation between DC and 18 GHz.

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