THE ARTISTRY OF “THE SOUND”: AN ANALYSIS OF STAN GETZ’S SOLOS ON THE ALBUM SWEET RAIN

A Thesis in
Music Theory

by

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Abstract

As one of the premier tenor saxophonists of the twentieth century, Stan Getz contributed significantly to the jazz landscape of the United States, most notably in the early 1960s as his performances of bossa nova resulted in the genre becoming popular across the nation. Although Getz became associated with bossa nova, those who have followed his career understand his importance to swing in the 1940s, bebop in the 1950s, and fusion in the 1970s.

But for an artist that has played such a critical role in the establishment and evolution of jazz over decades of work, little attention has been paid to Getz by scholars. Although widely hailed as one of the most influential jazz saxophonists, little exists in terms of understanding the musical aspects that constitute his playing style, beyond cursory analyses of his tone or investigations into specific periods of his career.

This paper explores the creativity driving one of Getz’s most critically acclaimed albums, Sweet Rain (1967). It will address Getz’s career, along with those of his band members Chick Corea, Ron Carter, and Grady Tate. This paper will also consider the difficulties that arise in jazz analysis and consider aesthetic issues associated with improvisation. By analyzing Getz’s solos with respect to his use of referential collections, motives, and reflective/reactive processes, this thesis uncovers the virtuosic characteristics of his improvisations and builds an argument that supports the idea that he contributed significantly to jazz performance as a whole.
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After spending the past four years of my life in State College, PA, I can without a doubt say that what I have learned at Penn State has shaped who I am today and will continue to influence my beliefs and teaching philosophy, personally and professionally, for the rest of my life.
Chapter 1: Introduction

Stan Getz: ‘The Sound’

By the late 1960s, the influx of Latin and Brazilian music in the United States was in full swing, disrupting a number of genres, particularly jazz. No artist did more to further this movement than tenor saxophonist Stan Getz (1927–1991), in collaboration with the Brazilian guitarist and composer João Gilberto (b. 1931). Although at the time he was primarily associated with bossa nova, Getz was thoroughly schooled in the bebop tradition, and in 1967, he attempted to recapture that tradition by recording the album *Sweet Rain*. In collaboration with pianist Chick Corea, bassist Ron Carter, and drummer Grady Tate, Getz reached new heights with his improvisations, garnering praise from fans and critics alike.¹

Although many scholars have explored what has musically defined popular bebop artists such as John Coltrane or Miles Davis, few have analyzed Getz. For their part, they have only offered glimpses into his improvisatory practice, choosing instead to focus upon his unique sound and voicing. For instance, Marcus Wolfe’s study on Getz explores his improvisatory techniques and harmonic vocabulary but limits its focus to Getz’s work in the early 1950s.² David Baker’s transcription of “Con Alma” includes his commentary on Getz’s improvisatory art, but only highlights melodic sequences, long lyrical lines, and saxophone techniques such as the

¹*Down Beat’s* reviewer called *Sweet Rain* a “remarkable album,” and British critic Richard Palmer claimed that it was “utterly essential”; see Donald L. Maggin, *Stan Getz: A Life in Jazz* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1996), 235.

extension of range and alternative fingerings.\textsuperscript{3} Due to the lack of studies centering on Getz’s improvisatory techniques, analyzing \textit{Sweet Rain} will help cover a span of nearly two decades worth of Getz’s growth and development, exploring not only his attempt to recapture a traditional bebop sound but also his impact on jazz artists of that era and the genre as a whole.

Considering that there have been few scholarly treatments of Getz’s improvisations in relation to other jazz artists, in like manner, there have been few theoretical studies involving the jazz genre as a whole.\textsuperscript{4} Although scholars such as Steven Strunk, Steve Larson, and Keith Waters have devoted much time and energy researching the field, theoretical approaches to jazz carry inherent challenges due to the prominent place of improvisation and nonstandard treatment of consonance and dissonance.\textsuperscript{5} However, applying theoretical techniques to improvised passages is a worthwhile endeavor as it can further the knowledge of both scholars and performers regarding a pivotal aspect of jazz.

In this thesis, I will explore the improvisatory techniques used by Getz in the five pieces that comprise the album \textit{Sweet Rain}: (1) “Litha,” (2) “O Grande Amor,” (3) “Sweet Rain,” (4) “Con Alma,” and (5) “Windows.” I will focus on the melodic character of Getz’s lines by examining their pitch content, motivic development, and interaction with each song’s harmonic support. In keeping with his previous work, Getz develops motives through sequencing and rhythmic displacement in many of his solos on this album. Moreover, his use of motives suggests


\textsuperscript{4}Dmitri Tymoczko highlights this issue through his examination of the search results of many leading journal databases; see \textit{A Geometry of Music: Harmony and Counterpoint in the Extended Common Practice} (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 389–90.

larger referential collections, which can be at odds with a song’s underlying harmonic support.

This thesis will rely on my transcriptions of Getz’s improvisations, which in some ways introduces the notion of personal preference in the notation and interpretation of these passages. Aspects such as note duration, the discrete pitch of blurred or ghosted notes, and whether or not Getz makes a “mistake” can all be interpreted differently depending upon the person transcribing the passage and the speed at which it is played. However, in keeping with the practice of Larson, Strunk, and Waters, I shall depict the solos as accurately and consistently as possible in my notation. In addition, a transcription cannot capture every aspect of any performance, and as such should be considered a supplement, and not a replacement for, a recording of a work.

Objectives and Organization

This thesis focuses upon Getz’s contribution to jazz in the late 1960s as evidenced by his improvisations on the album *Sweet Rain*. There are currently no completed and compiled transcriptions of Getz’s solos on this album, and, as a result, no scholarly treatments of these works. As such, this thesis will provide critical analyses to be used by performers and scholars alike.

This thesis is divided into six chapters, the first of which presents the work’s scope and provides a rationale for the study. Chapter 2 considers Getz’s contribution to jazz, and the impact of his collaborations with Chick Corea in the mid-1960s. Chapter 3 tackles issues that arise in the analysis of jazz improvisations, including aesthetic ones such as composition versus improvisation, and the overall nature of improvisation in music. In particular, it deals with the pedagogy of improvisation, the performer’s intent in the creative process, and the differences and similarities between improvisation in the classical and jazz genres.

Chapter 4 outlines the analytical methodology of the thesis, including a discussion of
what previous scholars have done on this topic and the ways in which my study is indebted to their work. I shall use post-tonal analytical techniques (e.g., pitch-class set theory), reductive techniques derived from Heinrich Schenker (1868–1935), and reactive/reflective approaches to analyzing jazz by Karim Al-Zand. Such a methodology will help me convey the virtuosity inherent in these solos.

Chapter 5 forms the heart of my thesis. Here, I shall examine Getz’s improvisations from the vantage points of referential collections, motivic development, and reflective vs. reactive processes. Choosing to organize this chapter via analytical topic as opposed to each individual work on *Sweet Rain* will help to unite the album and the thesis as a whole. In Chapter 6, I provide my thoughts on Getz’s contribution to jazz as revealed by my research. This chapter concludes with reflections about the application of theoretical techniques to jazz and the state of scholarly research regarding this genre.

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6Reactive processes include spur-of-the moment ideas, whereas reflective moments involve figures that have been developed over many years of performance. I will discuss these processes in further detail in Chapter 4. See Karim Al-Zand, “Improvisation in Cannonball Adderley’s ‘Straight, No Chaser’,” *Journal of Music Theory* 49, no. 2 (2005): 209–39.
Chapter 2: Stan Getz: A Biography

When considering the most preeminent and influential jazz saxophonists of the twentieth century, names such as Coleman Hawkins, Charlie Parker, Lester Young, and John Coltrane rise to the top of the list, but countless others have had significant impacts on the development of jazz as well. One such player was tenor saxophonist Stan Getz, known by performers and critics alike as “The Sound.” This nickname was apropos, as Getz was well known for his work in “cool” jazz and bossa nova that emerged in the 1950s–60s. In both styles of music, Getz incorporated a light, airy tone and a subtle yet articulate approach to playing. But what made Getz so original was his ability to adapt to any genre or style, while maintaining a level of fluidity and cohesion in his improvisations that was rarely matched. In order to understand Getz as a player, we must consider his well-storied past, from his beginnings as a bebop saxophonist performing in the major big bands of the 1940s to his return from Sweden and the explosion of bossa nova in the United States, and finally to his exploration of Third Stream and jazz-fusion concepts with emerging artists like keyboardist Chick Corea.

Getz was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on February 2, 1927. He began playing alto saxophone at the age of twelve, eventually studying tenor saxophone and bassoon under bassoonist Simon Korvar. Getz was almost fifteen when the United States entered World War II, which had the effect of limiting the number of musicians that could be employed by the bands of that era. With a lack of players to fill these roles, young artists such as Getz were brought onto the scene. For Getz, this meant employment at the age of sixteen, performing with Jack
Teagarden’s band. Getz would later find himself playing in numerous bands of that era, such as those headed by Stan Kenton, Jimmy Dorsey, Benny Goodman, and Woody Herman. It was a recording of “Early Autumn” while performing in Herman’s orchestra that brought Getz public attention. This newfound fame allowed Getz to develop a solo career, and explore styles of jazz outside those found in a big-band setting.

During the 1940s Getz crafted the sound that he would later be well known for, especially in sculpting a solo passage or melody. Although taking performance cues from other predominant swing players, Getz also incorporated aspects of bebop into his playing, already displaying a heightened awareness of various styles and adapting them to his own playing approach. In fact, Marcus Wolfe has shown that while Getz’s bebop tendencies were primarily associated with swing, they were heavily at play in the development of his solos and may have influenced other jazz artists of that era. Although bebop stylistic traits are found in Getz’s solos, his light, vibrato-less tone, fluid articulation, and floating melodies define his style, features that also characterized a player of a previous generation, saxophonist Lester Young.

To understand Getz’s playing style, one must look to his greatest influence, Lester Young (1909–59). According to Gunther Schuller, Young was “the most influential artist after [Louis] Armstrong and before [Charlie] Parker.” While Getz crafted a sound that was wholly his own, the influences of Young’s tone and creation of melodies emerge in Getz’s playing. A prominent member of Count Basie’s orchestra, Young (also known as ‘Pres’) demonstrated the ability to

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develop a melodic playing style suitable to the group’s rhythmic swing, as noted by Don Heckman.⁹

Before Young, improvisation was based on exploring the ramifications of chords, as exemplified by jazz saxophonist Coleman Hawkins.¹⁰ Hawkins, a swing tenor saxophonist with the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra between 1923–33, is well known for his full tone, heavy vibrato, and flowing lines. These lines typically explored the harmonic possibilities of a tune’s individual chords in isolation, highlighting pitches that may fall inside or outside those sonorities. Young was one of the first to stray from this approach, electing instead to use the chords as the framework for melodic invention, “propelling himself horizontally across the chords, etching his melody notes boldly against the harmony.”¹¹ According to Young’s brother Lee, Lester would say that “it confines you too much if you know it’s a D flat 7. You start thinking of only the notes that will go in that chord, and that’s not what I hear.”¹²

Young was also one of the first players to skew the sense of pulse between himself and the supporting ensemble. His ability to change the placement of a beat by delaying it or shifting the strong- and weak-beat pulse provided his solos with energy and a newfound freedom. Louis Gottlieb has stated that “Young was the master of metric shifting. There are countless instances in his solos where he obliterates the difference between strong and weak beats, and strong and

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⁹Maggin, 40.
¹⁰Quoted in Maggin, 40.
¹¹Ibid.
weak halves of the beat.” Getz adapted this approach to his own playing, marking it with creative energy that I will further explore in my analysis of *Sweet Rain*.

Although Young did play with the light, airy tone that also characterized the sound of Getz and other “cool” players, it was his ability to make the horn “sing” that most impressed Getz, who stated that “I never tried to play like Pres, but I so loved his conception of music that maybe some of it seeped into me.” While comparisons between the two players are apt, British critic Richard Palmer notes that it would be “silly to try and ‘explain’ Getz’s work *merely* in terms of Young’s influence,” because the “dark or wry suggestions of harshness and hard-won knowledge” evident in the performances of Young are replaced by the “luscious, rhapsodic, fiercely passionate” solos of Getz.

Performing as front man for nearly his entire career, Getz was in a position to choose the personnel he would perform and record with, and as such knew exactly what types of players would best support his improvisations. While other artists seem to feed off the rhythm section, Getz used it as a backdrop, or as Oscar Peterson noted, a “cushion” for his solos. Getz verifies Peterson’s comment by stating, “I rarely feed off another instrument in my group, because I never hear just a single piece in the rhythm section…. When I improvise, I do it on top of them collectively, not individually.” Although his playing style certainly evolved through the decades, changing to match various genres and characteristics of his groups, Getz maintained his unique qualities as a performer, adapted from Young but entirely his own.

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Getz’s rise in popularity took a toll on his mental and physical health, as an acquired heroin addiction culminated with his incarceration in 1954. After the six-month sentence, Getz was able to contribute to a number of albums featuring either Dizzy Gillespie or Oscar Peterson, but ultimately decided that a change in venue and a rest from the demands of performing were necessary. As such, Getz moved to Denmark where he lived for three years, performing with Europe’s big bands.

But time in Copenhagen left Getz isolated from the developments that occurred in jazz beginning in 1959 with the emergence of artists such as Ornette Coleman, John Coltrane, and Miles Davis. The traditional bebop aesthetic had been played out by the previous generation of jazz artists, and this group of musicians sought to create something entirely new, to expand the chordal boundaries provided by the tune and explore their own creative tendencies. While Coleman’s “free jazz” approach provided the most radical shift from traditional bebop, Coltrane and Davis also made contributions through their use of modes as the basis of their improvisations. It was Coltrane’s recording of the album *My Favorite Things* in October 1960 that led to Getz’s return to the United States, as Coltrane’s rising popularity resulted in his receiving the award for best tenor saxophonist of the year as voted by the readers of *Down Beat* and *Metronome*, a spot held by Getz for ten and eleven years, respectively.

As Maggin’s recounting of Getz’s life appears to indicate, it would be easy to believe that his return was due purely to his competitiveness and jealousy of up-and-coming saxophonists. George Hoeffer, *Down Beat* magazine’s New York editor in 1959, believes that more subtle forces were at play. Noting a phone call he received from Getz in that year after a negative comment about him in the magazine, Hoeffer believes that “Getz was worried and scared about
what was happening on tenor while he was away.” Palmer reinforces this belief, as he recounts that Getz’s wife, Monica, upon the Getz’s return to the United States in 1960, said that “many true jazz aficionados had quit coming, being confused and bored. Only old friends like Miles [Davis] and Dizzy [Gillespie] gave him solace and hope and worried with him about the directions of jazz.”

Getz knew that his playing had matured while in Europe, and one of his first performances after returning to New York encapsulated this newfound creativity and energy. Music critics Bill Coss of *Down Beat* and John Wilson of *The New York Times* took notice, with Wilson commenting that Getz, “is a much more venturesome musician now than when he was last heard in this country,” and Coss noting that Getz used “strong quotations from his past and much stronger assertions of his version of the newest … sound.” But even with this much deserved critical acclaim, Getz drew sparse audiences around the country as Coltrane’s popularity continued to increase. When asked about his thoughts on adapting to the emerging trends in jazz, Getz said “I was not in the mood, nor of a mind, to do what Eric Dolphy was doing. I couldn’t emulate John Coltrane, and I certainly wasn’t about to turn my back on any audience. I just wanted to play the only way I knew. And I still had these ideas of other voicings in my head.” These “other voicings” would soon emerge as one of Getz’s most ambitious projects to date, the Third-Stream album, *Focus.*

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19 DeMichael, 17.
In order to understand *Focus*, we must first consider the Third-Stream movement and its reception in the jazz community. According to Schuller, Third Stream is “a genre of music located about halfway between jazz and classical music.”\(^{23}\) The mixing of these two genres occurs not only with classical composers attempting to integrate jazz into their works but also with jazz composers primarily associated with the cool movement writing fugues, rondos, and extended jazz pieces with classical instrumentation and compositional techniques. According to Donald Megill and Richard Demory, Third-Stream music consists of three major elements: (1) the combining of jazz and classical compositional procedures, (2) the use of orchestral instruments, and (3) the imitation of classical music.\(^{24}\)

Many do not agree with the philosophical underpinnings of Schuller’s term, including renowned trumpeter Wynton Marsalis, who believes that the labeling of such ideas and conscious attempts to create new genres only betrays the composer’s musical heritage.\(^{25}\) In terms of jazz, Charles Fox notes the difficulties in integrating jazz and European music in that the former lacks architectural shape, which proves difficult when attempting to accommodate a classical framework, such as the typical theme and variations. To Fox, jazz mostly exists “as a strip in time, its metaphor the river rather than the cathedral.”\(^{26}\) The American composer Ned Rorem attributes the melding of classical and jazz genres as an attempt to rejuvenate both arts in

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\(^{25}\) Wynton Marsalis, interview by author, State College, PA, March 16, 2012.

the 1960s as the average concertgoer sought the accessibility of popular music over increasingly intellectualized “art music.”

In 1961, as new MGM executives at Verve began worrying about Getz’s ability to reconnect with his audience, Getz recorded and released *Focus*. The album contains seven pieces written by the jazz composer Eddie Sauter for a small string orchestra, over which Getz recorded his improvisations. This melding of preconceived classical structures and improvised jazz allowed the album to address the concerns noted previously by Fox, resulting in the most fully realized Third-Stream record to be produced, and laying the groundwork for other jazz artists seeking to combine these two seemingly disparate genres. According to Palmer, *Focus* is “clearly one of Getz’s greatest achievements,” and remains “the only instance thus far when jazz ‘took on’ classical music on its own ground and achieved something both unique and utterly successful.”

The success surrounding *Focus* was quickly overshadowed when Getz released what is arguably his most famous album, *Jazz Samba* (1962). His playing style melded perfectly with the subtle tenderness that arises in the melodies of bossa nova, and the fusion of jazz with this South-American musical genre created a craze within the United States. Another Latin jazz album created in 1963 with João Gilberto, *Getz/Gilberto*, contained the song Getz may be most well known for, “The Girl from Ipanema.” The album would go on to win a Grammy Award for Best Album of the Year in 1964, and would forever cement Getz’s reputation as a performer of bossa nova and Latin jazz.

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28Palmer, 40.
But Getz, always known for his exploration of new ideas and musical concepts, was not comfortable with settling on one particular genre or musical approach and continued to explore new avenues of musical thought. This led him to collaborate with keyboardist Chick Corea, who was at the time performing in and around New York City as a sideman for other jazz and Latin artists. These collaborations would result in the focus of this thesis, *Sweet Rain*.

Corea (b. 1941) was born in Chelsea, Massachusetts and from an early age began studying bebop, inspired by Bud Powell and Horace Silver. Born into a musical family (his father was a professional musician), he was proficient on piano and drums before the age of ten and began transcribing the works of Horace Silver shortly thereafter. Although Corea began studying music at Juilliard, he dropped out after two months, realizing that he needed training elsewhere. His first steady work came from playing in the Afro-Cuban bands of Mongo Santamaria and Willie Bobo in the early sixties, before working with hard-bop trumpeter Blue Mitchell and flutist Herbie Mann.²⁹

In addition to being an avid performer, Corea was a prolific composer, most well known for the use of unique harmonies and the incorporation of Latin elements into his pieces. First appearing on *Tones for Joan’s Bones* (later retitled *Inner Space*) in 1966, his original compositions added to his reputation as a pianist. These and other Corea originals had a significant impact on Getz, with the saxophonist featuring two Corea songs on *Sweet Rain*, and devoting all of *Captain Marvel* (1972) to the pianist’s works.

As a replacement for Herbie Hancock in Miles Davis’s band, Corea was heavily influenced by avant-garde concepts such as free jazz and the integration of rock-music elements during the early 1970s. The pianist would go on to perform and embrace jazz fusion, integrating

electronic instrumentation and Latin jazz elements in his own band Return to Forever. The primary performers of this band would go on to record with Getz on *Captain Marvel*.

Getz would bring in two other musicians for *Sweet Rain*: bassist Ron Carter and drummer Grady Tate. Classically trained at the Eastman School of Music, Carter cites Charlie Mingus, Paul Chambers, and Percy Heath as bassists whom he admired. Carter recorded frequently throughout the 1960s with the likes of Eric Dolphy, Coleman Hawkins, Wes Montgomery, and Julian “Cannonball” Adderley. As a result of his performing in numerous ensembles, Carter provided solid harmonic support for the songs in *Sweet Rain*. In an open forum involving Carter in 2012, I had the opportunity to ask him about his experiences recording *Sweet Rain*. He did not hold fond memories of the session, recalling that he had difficulty getting paid by Getz, and that it was not an album to which he still listens.\(^3\) And yet, Carter contributed to the album in significant ways, handling the variety of genres and nontraditional changes with aplomb.

Grady Tate (b. 1932) moved to New York in 1963, subsequently becoming the drummer of Quincy Jones’s band. He would later play with the likes of Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Wes Montgomery, Bill Evans, among others. A freelancer from the early 1960s through the 1980s, Tate is known for his forceful, driving approach to playing and his ability to adapt to a wide range of musical styles, the latter being highly evident on *Sweet Rain*.\(^3\)

*Sweet Rain* was recorded on March 30, 1967. Featuring the compositions of Corea (“Windows” and “Litha”), Mike Gibbs (“Sweet Rain”), Dizzy Gillespie (“Con Alma”), and Jobim/DeMoraes (“O Grande Amor”), the album was described as “remarkable” and “utterly

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\(^3\) Ron Carter, interview by author, State College, PA, November 9, 2012.

\(^3\) *New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*, s.v. “Tate, Grady.”
essential” by Palmer.\(^{32}\) According to Maggin, the pairing of Getz and Corea led to improvisations “with an unpredictability reminiscent of [Getz’s] playing on Focus; everything sounds freshly minted as he explores the outer limits of harmony and meter.”\(^{33}\) Each of the tunes from the album, moreover, contains unique characteristics that distinguish them from the others, and yet the album coheres as a whole.

Getz’s personal life would again interfere with his rising popularity, as his turn to alcohol to lessen the effects of his withdrawal from heroin led to alcoholism, resulting in the deterioration of his family life and musical activities. Realizing that his personal problems were again derailing his life, Getz once more relocated to Europe, this time residing in England for two years. With the help of time and treatment through the use of Antabuse, a medication that results in the user feeling sick after drinking alcohol, Getz returned to the US, working once again with Corea in New York. The quartet from *Sweet Rain* had been abandoned, and in its place was a new quintet comprised of Getz, Corea, bassist Stanley Clarke, and drummers Tony Williams and Airto Moreira.

Performing at the Rainbow Grill in Manhattan, the quintet received critical acclaim, with John Wilson of *The New York Times* stating that “the rhythm section … is one of the most fascinating groups of its kind that can be heard anywhere,” and that Getz “is currently blending the warm romanticism of his bossa[-]nova period of the early 1960s with the explosively dynamic attack he developed later in the decade.”\(^{34}\) Featuring Corea’s tunes along with several

\(^{32}\)Palmer, 50–51.

\(^{31}\)Maggin, 235.

bossa-nova songs, the group was a “tonic to the world of jazz,” which was “enduring the full onslaught of the rock revolution and was in the middle of one of its periodic depressions.”

The quintet would go on to record the album Captain Marvel in 1972. The album featured works composed solely by Corea, prominently displaying a fusion of Latin American and jazz elements, reflecting the Spanish heritage of his mother. Taking a page from his own band Return to Forever, Corea plays electric piano exclusively on the album. Captain Marvel is a high-velocity affair that affords the listener little time to relax, with Getz and drummer Tony Williams leading the charge through each piece. While Getz handles the velocity with a newfound energy, it was Williams’s drumming that garnered the most critical praise, taking cues from rock and fusing these with the dynamic tunes. Maggin notes that Williams’s most singular skill is “maintaining a hypnotic pulse while embellishing it with an amazing variety of effects.”

These collaborations with young artists such as Corea and Williams led Getz to take his playing to a new level, furthering his career and public admiration. As noted by Palmer, the use of electronics and introduction of unfamiliar percussion were more heavily associated with avant-garde artists such as Eric Dolphy, not Getz. And yet, “[Getz’s] work is organically of a piece with the 1950s records. The amalgam of grace and power which the opening La Fiesta embodies has been Stan’s hallmark from the very beginning.”

To Maggin, the two Corea albums, Sweet Rain and Captain Marvel, capture “a middle-aged man rising to meet the aesthetic

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35 Maggin, 246.
36 Ibid., 264.
37 Ibid., 265.
38 Palmer, 53.
challenges posed by younger colleagues; he does so with the energy of a youth and the skill of a mature artist.”39

Shortly after recording *Captain Marvel*, Getz’s career shifted, with the performer striking a deal with Columbia Records. This led to an increase in studio recordings for Getz, but the saxophonist found the sessions to be insufferable, inhibiting his creative tendencies that were a natural result of live performance.

The remainder of Getz’s career found the artist performing occasionally, in addition to holding seminars at Stanford University. As in the past, this period was also characterized by personal turmoil, including the separation of Getz from his wife Monica, as well as the development of liver cancer that would ultimately result in his death on June 6, 1991.

*Conclusion*

As one of the most popular jazz performers in the US, Stan Getz left a playing legacy reminiscent of Lester Young and other cool artists, but forged his own sound and style that led to his success over five decades of activity. Being voted top jazz saxophonist by readers of *Down Beat* for fifteen of twenty years during the height of his popularity, Getz could only be matched by Sonny Rollins for making such an impact on the culture surrounding jazz over such an extensive period of time.

And in looking back upon Getz’s career, this success is certainly attributable to his willingness to adapt to the ebb and flow of jazz over a period of many years while retaining the sound and style that made him famous during his time with the great swing bands of the 1940s. When you consider that Getz retained his status as one of the great jazz musicians during eras

39 Maggin, 265.
including swing, bebop, cool, bossa nova, Third Stream, and fusion, the achievement is all the more remarkable.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Getz’s ability to surround himself with up-and-coming artists such as Davis, Gilberto, Corea, and others certainly contributed to his success. But it was his ability to adapt and incorporate ideas emanating from these musicians that sustained his career, resulting in a collection of works that touched upon so many styles and genres, tapping an endless source of artistic creativity that has been matched by few others.
Chapter 3: Aesthetic Issues in the Analysis of Improvisation

Introduction

When exploring jazz improvisation, it is quite appropriate to frame it within a larger picture of improvisation involving different musical genres and cultures. This presents numerous challenges to both the researcher and reader. As Derek Bailey states:

Improvisation is both the most widely practiced of all musical activities and the least acknowledged and understood. While it is today present in almost every area of music, there is an almost total absence of information about it. Perhaps this is inevitable, even appropriate. Improvisation is always changing and adjusting, never fixed, too elusive for analysis and precise description; essentially non-academic.40

And yet over the past three decades, the academic landscape has witnessed an increasing amount of focus upon the study of musical improvisation, particularly regarding the solos of the great jazz artists of the 1940s–60s. As with all cases of unfamiliarity surrounding a given topic, many questions arise concerning the legitimacy of such research and the methods applied to the music in question. In this chapter, I will address such questions by exploring: (1) the nature and history of improvisation throughout different cultures and genres, (2) the inherent nature of imitation as a form of pedagogy, and (3) the apparent differences between composed and improvised music. These explorations will provide the reader with a sense of the historical nature of musical improvisation and help to break down the apparent barrier between two seemingly disparate creative processes.

Improvisation: Its Nature and History

While the term improvisation most likely is associated with jazz for Americans, we must not forget that it is also a vital part of other musical cultures and genres, such as Indian music, Baroque-era works, flamenco, and popular music, especially rock. Improvisatory practices span centuries and can be found throughout the world, impacting musical thought and performance along the way. In each instance, the level and nature of improvisation, be it the pitches chosen, the rhythms applied, or even the instruments suited to the task, may change, but the fundamental idea of a performer creating individualized instances of a work in a real-time process remains unchanged.

To get an idea of improvisation as practiced in another culture, let us consider the case of Indian music. Whereas the majority of jazz is based upon a tune, with a precomposed set of chord progressions and rhythmic elements that the improviser uses as a basis for his or her solo, nearly all aspects of Indian music, from the rhythm, structural framework, and pitches chosen, are improvised. Bailey details these elements (raga, sruti, svara, and tala), noting that they are unfixed and malleable in nature.41

The raga denotes the overall framework of a piece, and until its performance remains unformed. It represents all the elements of Indian music from which a performer must interpret and sculpt his improvisation, including pitch, rhythm, and structural considerations. Pitches chosen in Indian music are defined by the sruti and svara. Considered to be the most important single element in Indian music, the sruti is the smallest interval used and is a subdivision of the svara, which represents seven unequal and variable divisions of the octave.42 The flexibility of

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41 Bailey, 2.

the sruti and svara makes their analysis difficult in that the unfixed intervals can be chosen on an individual basis. This selection of pitches is also coupled with other flexible elements, including the tala, a rhythmic cycle of fixed metrical length, and the laya, which conveys the overall tempo and pulse of the performance.

In its purest form, Indian music may represent the most flexible framework for musical creativity in the world, and has been adapted and incorporated into works by composers such as Olivier Messiaen and Philip Glass. It permeates popular music, especially works by the Beatles and progressive rock groups such as Quintessence. Analysis and interpretation of compositions based upon Indian music must consider and address its improvisatory aspects and elements.

Improvisation came to the forefront in rock in the mid-1960s, corresponding with a period of psychedelic music that was heavily associated with progressive groups of that era. Steve Howe, the guitarist of Yes, believes that this was a result of the transition from the single to album sales, and the attempt to expand popular music. According to Howe, “Music did widen out …. Because there was a country influence coming back; jazz affected it, which is one of the most important aspects for me; and there was the Indian music thing…. It was becoming a much warmer thing where people could improvise much more freely.” As such, rock music

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43 Steve Howe, quoted in Bailey, 39.

44 Ibid.
draws upon improvisatory practices from a number of genres and cultures, in the process creating a new sound that defined the period of the 1960s and 70s.

As for Western classical music, although it seems to impose strict guidelines and models on the compositional process, many performance aspects were born from improvisatory practices, most notably in seventeenth-century organ music and Baroque thoroughbass. Improvisation was present in the Baroque period, being integrated into the melodic and harmonic fabric of the music. This was a necessity, as Baroque compositions often provided a performer with a simple framework or skeleton of what was expected while playing. The embellishments and decorations provided by a performer enhanced the music and were expected by all listeners. According to Couperin, “What we write is different from what we play.”

Other classical compositions prominently feature improvised passages. For instance, the da capo aria relies on a singer’s ability to create new ornamentation during the repeat of the first section, adding variety to material previously heard. Cadenzas of concertos similarly ask the performer to engage in a virtuosic display of improvisation, not only serving to address the musical framework provided by the composer but also adding to the emotional climax and complexity of a piece. While some composers began notating cadenzas in the 1800s, namely Beethoven, the majority allowed the performer to improvise, trusting that he or she had enough knowledge of the music to convey appropriate styles and deftly navigate the passage.

In terms of the percentage of a work that is improvised, the Spanish tradition of flamenco does not fall far behind Indian music. Gaining prominence in the late 1800s, flamenco-style pieces involved singing, dancing, and instrumental music—usually guitar—with the possibility

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47 François Couperin, quoted in Bailey, 21.

48 Bailey, 14.
for improvisation shared by all participants. While the compas (rhythmic unit) and accenting pattern is fixed, the overall length of a work can be altered at any time. In addition, the chords and motives (falsetas) performed on the guitar are in many cases directly influenced by the pitch considerations of the vocalist, and whereas in jazz, chord progressions are dependent upon the original composition and fixed in time, flamenco harmonies change when the vocal or instrumental embellishments on that chord are completed.\(^49\) As such, flamenco, in a manner quite similar to Indian music, provides a flexible framework for musical creativity by the performing artists.

It is difficult to discuss improvisation without bringing up jazz. According to Bailey, the content of a jazz improvisation is derived from a harmonic sequence of a set length played in regular time, and that an artist may have only a few different “songs” that undergo a continuous process of renewal in which the old material is reshaped and adjusted, sometimes rejected, and new material introduced.\(^50\) As such, very little material can be adjusted in such a way that entirely new passages spring forth, and the improvisational strategies attributed to specific artists can be adapted through slight alterations in sound and melodic material.

But Bailey’s definition of a harmonic sequence of a set length played in regular time is certainly able to be adapted, especially in the context of more avant-garde jazz performers such as Miles Davis and the emergence of free jazz in the late 1950s. Chris Smith describes an improvisatory section that was captured from a performance of Davis’s second quintet in 1967, during which pianist Herbie Hancock repeatedly played a motivic pattern that outlined the song’s


\(^{50}\)Bailey, 48–49.
opening harmonies. The constant repetition of this figure caused bassist Ron Carter to react, following Hancock, and essentially breaking the tune’s sequential chord progression. Only when Hancock had finished the motive did the group return to the written harmonic patterns. In a way, this spontaneity and suspended harmonic motion mirrors the standard performance practice of flamenco musicians, as discussed previously.

Accordingly, as argued above, improvisation permeates nearly all musical genres across the world and has impacted their development in the recent past. To overlook this form of musical output as academics would create a lacuna in our understanding of musical creation throughout the centuries. The study of improvisation in academia should be a necessity, not a supplement to the theoretical analysis of traditionally composed music.

Jazz Pedagogy

A common fallacy about jazz is that improvisers simply follow a set of patterns learned from their predecessors, finding a way to link them and then creating a solo in the process. Whereas previous studies such as Karim Al-Zand’s analysis of the improvisations of Cannonball Adderley show that the performer used repeated patterns over the course of many choruses, in some cases note for note, slight manipulations of these patterns resulted in a cohesive solo. My own findings show similar improvisational strategies implemented by Getz, and it is my belief that these repetitions serve to engage the listener and add greater unity to a work. Just as classical composers use motivic elements to highlight passages and unify a piece, jazz improvisers use similar strategies.

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52Karim Al-Zand, 228.
The idea that an improvisation is essentially a rote set of patterns translated to different keys areas as necessary perpetuates the public perception of jazz, and is due in large part to the era during which jazz blossomed and the technologies that paralleled its growth. Although it is difficult to trace exactly when this pedagogical approach was realized, Lawrence Gushee believes it arose during the 1920s as pianists and other musicians attempted to play “hot breaks” that emerged as a novelty during the vaudeville era. A similar issue occurs in saxophone playing as past artists’ interpretations of improvisation are somewhat in line with our current ideas of novelty, featuring timbral effects such as slap tongue, flutter tongue, and “laughing.” Slowly, these novelty effects began to be collected in small books featuring lessons instructing readers how to “improvise.” In a passage from *Sure System of Improvising*, the author Samuel T. Daley states that “[i]mprovising is an art that has been credited with being born in a person and therefore, impossible, to a certain extent[,] to teach. In this book I try to convey the idea of improvising in a systematical manner.”

Daley’s statement cuts to the heart of the issue of jazz pedagogy, the seemingly untenable attempt to teach a skill born out of natural talent. Pedagogues, in an attempt to make the topic approachable, have themselves found these patterns in the solos of other improvisers and collected them into sets. Learning these patterns gives the improviser the ability to not only have material prepared for any key area but also a musical model that provides smooth voice leading between chord changes. And for a skill that involves quick thinking and musical creation in the moment, it also provides some assurances that a solo will never stray far from home.

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As is readily apparent to anyone attempting to learn how to improvise, complete transcriptions of improvisations from jazz greats abound, in many cases including the accompaniment so that the student can play along with a backing rhythm section. In a sense, this technique works because this is how many of these performers began their careers, by going to performances or purchasing a record of their idols and transcribing the solos note for note. But this process does have a downfall, taking the form of pure imitation, not only in the selection of pitches but also the overall sound conveyed by the performer.

As described in Chapter 2, the style of nearly all jazz tenors can be traced back to either Hawkins or Young, with Getz following the latter. The pedagogical process of learning through listening, transcription, and imitation leaves most musicians mimicking the styles of their idols and relegating them to play the same motives and sequences that they heard during performance. As such, attributing a motivic fragment or the use of a specific pitch collection to a solitary artist would prove difficult.

In jazz, an improvised passage by an individual artist represents his or her collection of performance knowledge, including facility on the instrument as well as the aural tradition shared through generations of performers. Pedagogues hoping to guide students to a remarkable, or at least musically sound, improvisation are doing so just as they were taught and just as the great artists of the past learned: through listening, analysis (transcription), and imitation. Although this may create a host of saxophonists that sound exactly like Charlie Parker, there will always be those like Getz who are able to shape what they have heard to create exciting new ideas, be it through their sound or selection of pitches.

Finally, there is the issue of the transcriptions themselves. Despite thousands of study guides containing the transcribed improvisations of Davis, Coltrane, and others, Bailey states
that it is not possible to transcribe improvisation.\textsuperscript{55} I agree with this statement, but only in the sense that the essence of a solo cannot be fully captured in a transcription. As Bailey points out, notating solos using a system representing pitch and rhythm within certain conventions is difficult, and attempts to show deviations using arrows, dots, commas, and other adjustments only distract from the core of the performance.\textsuperscript{56} This sentiment is echoed in statements by Curt Sachs, who wrote that “We know from bitter experience how unreliable and deadly prejudiced man’s senses are, how easily we project into a totally foreign style of music the tempered melody steps and even stressed rhythms of Western tradition and hence, how small is the documentary value of such unverified impressions.”\textsuperscript{57}

But music theorists are more concerned with the analysis of solos, not in producing an end result that can be performed by aspiring jazz artists that reflects the core of what a soloist was feeling at the moment of creation. Attempts to analyze improvisations may necessitate the use of unfamiliar notational schema, and although these may prove distracting to someone trying to perform a passage in a style that embodies the original, greater insight into the improvisational, and in turn compositional, process may be illuminated.

\textit{Composition, Improvisation, and Analysis}

Although the study of jazz has seen an increase in attention by music theorists and has consequently gained credibility within the field, such studies are still outnumbered by those addressing the classical repertoire. Several factors may be at play here, including the relative newness of jazz, its harmonic practice, and, as Dmitri Tymoczko has speculated, an inherent bias

\textsuperscript{55}Bailey, 15.

\textsuperscript{56}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{57}Curt Sachs, quoted in Bailey, 15.
against the studies of the music of minorities at the academic level. But the largest contributor to this disparity may in fact be the distinction between improvisation and composition, and whether or not the passages shaped by jazz artists can be accurately realized and used for analysis.

Steve Larson clearly describes the traditional viewpoints assigned to these two musical concepts in his article “Composition Versus Improvisation?”:

*Composition* is traditionally regarded as a process in which a composer, with pen and paper, outside of “real time,” uses revision and hard work to eliminate or avoid mistakes; the composition builds on tradition, imposes constraints, and relies on training in a time-consuming process that involves rational reflection and intellectual calculation to create complex, sophisticated relationships. *Improvisation* is traditionally regarded as a process in which performers, with their voices or instruments, in “real time,” use luck or skill to respond to or incorporate mistakes; the improvisation grows out of innovation, exploits freedom, and relies on talent in an instantaneous process that involves emotional invention and intuitive impulse to create simple, direct expressions.59

While I believe that Larson uses terminology such as “luck” and “simple” to make an easy case that jazz musicians intend to create much more complex structures than many realize, I do agree with the generalization presented. But before tackling the issue of improvised passages in jazz, I would first like to present a case that improvised music, being a tradition in both the classical and jazz genres, can be analyzed just as effectively as composed music, and the differences between these two approaches to creating music may not be as significant as they might appear.

The case for analyzing improvised passages in jazz has been made by scholars such as Larson, Strunk, Waters, and Tymoczko. According to Tymoczko, the synthesis of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century music can be found in the improvised music of jazz by players that

58Tymoczko, 309.

“carved an alternative musical tradition out of the materials afforded by popular culture.”\textsuperscript{60} He argues that this synthesis formed a hybrid style incorporating techniques from the entire history of tonality, bridging the gap between the tonality of Claude Debussy and that of John Adams.

Another issue that arises is the application of analytical techniques derived for the study of composed music, often classical, that would hardly seem appropriate to apply to improvisations due to harmonic and other stylistic differences between the genres. The argument that jazz musicians are not aware of such compositional ideas also comes into play. It would be difficult to argue that all jazz soloists have a classical upbringing, and history shows that this is truly not the case. For Ronnie Scott, his ability to improvise “arises from a combination of experience—one learns what one can play and what one can’t play—and that conjunction of sounds which is pleasing to one’s ear.” Scott states, “I don’t have a great harmonic knowledge, by any means.”\textsuperscript{61}

And yet, Larson, in an effort to challenge the notion that jazz artists do not intend to create the associations and dependencies depicted in Schenkerian analyses, refers to an interview between pianist Bill Evans and Marian McPartland. When asked to elaborate on his ideas of musical structure, Evans exclaims that he is talking about “the abstract, architectural thing, like the theoretical thing,” and goes on to explain, as he is performing, his intent to modulate over a series of chord changes using dominant-tonic relationships, and that he is intending to create a plane “out of which the rest of the tune will spring.”\textsuperscript{62}

\textsuperscript{60}Tymoczko, 388.

\textsuperscript{61}Bailey, 51.

\textsuperscript{62}Larson, Analyzing Jazz: A Schenkerian Approach, 10.
It is worth mentioning that Evans was classically trained, and as such would have been familiar with such terminology and compositional processes, and given the culture from which jazz emerged, it is safe to assume that he was one of the few to have undergone such training. But it is worth noting that many of the composers associated with the rise of swing tunes, such as Jerome Kern and George Gershwin, received classical training. As such, their songs, and thus the tunes that improvisations were based upon, featured many of the characteristics that can be found in classical compositions.

Yet, the designation of composition versus improvisation is still not clear, even between those that take part in these traditions. An anecdote shared by Bailey describes a public discussion held in 1987 between seven musicians concerning the relationship between composition and improvisation. “After forty minutes,” writes Bailey, “the predominant view to emerge was that there is no such thing as improvisation, or, if there is, it is indistinguishable from composition.”63 When asked to identify the difference between improvisation and composition within fifteen seconds, Steve Lacy replied that “in composition you have all the time you want to decide what to say in fifteen seconds, while in improvisation you have fifteen seconds.”64 If the only difference is the time it takes to create or perform music, then it could be argued that classical composers who wrote their works without revisions were in some ways taking part in an improvisational process.

In the conclusion of his analysis of Bill Evans’s Conversations with Myself, Larson agrees with these artists: “Some improvisations are best regarded as compositions. Other improvisations are not. Some compositions are best regarded as recorded improvisations. Other

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63Bailey, 140.

64Steve Lacy, quoted in Bailey, 141.
compositions are not.” His finding that composition is the “putting together of musical elements and storing them … in a way that allows, but does not require, revision” summarizes the thoughts of the music tradition as a whole. Musical creation is a fluid process that, whether taking shape over minutes or years, results in works that can and should be analyzed.

Conclusion

As a defining element of numerous musical cultures and genres, improvisation, although perhaps “essentially non-academic” as Bailey has noted, is nonetheless an essential area of study for researchers and pedagogues in the field of music theory. Aspects of improvisation tie into music theory instruction throughout the curriculum, including musical structure, rhythmic elements, harmonic aspects, and modal dependencies. Improvisation should not only be considered from more global perspectives but also placed into historical contexts, as reflected by my discussions of Baroque thoroughbass, da capo arias, and cadenzas for concertos.

Pedagogically, improvisation is often thought of as an essential skill for basic musicianship. Having students complete phrases or develop motives in real time helps to convey a sense of understanding of more basic concepts such as harmonic motion, voice leading, and phrase shaping. And yet we choose to ignore, or in the best cases selectively eliminate, improvisatory concepts of other cultures and genres from our curricula. The use of jazz improvisation in musicianship courses can help reinforce modes, rhythmic elements, form, and many other areas of study, and yet we are often hesitant to venture any further than a basic twelve-bar blues progression when studying such topics.

65Larson, “Composition Versus Improvisation?,” 272.
66Ibid.
The analysis of music that does not adhere to Western music traditions, that takes shape and varies between individual performances, and that cannot accurately be captured by standard notational systems, is certainly a daunting task. But knowledge of improvisations provided by in-depth analyses sheds light on a form of music that is created organically, which results from the musician’s environment, their reaction to other performers, and knowledge of the genre at hand. Whether only certain aspects of the performance are improvised or all are, the resultant work is one that still accurately captures the musical philosophies of a culture or genre, and is ripe with theoretical information that can be used for us to gain insight into these varied and underappreciated works in the music curriculum.
Chapter 4: Analytical Methodology

Introduction

The analysis of a particular jazz artist’s work should take into account a number of factors, including that performer’s improvisatory style, the historical context in which the work takes place, and the structural framework of the tune that is being elaborated upon during the improvisation. In addition, such analyses should consider the role of the performer in the ensemble, and as such should look for characteristics that differentiate the improvisations of single-line instrument players such as Getz, and that of pianists who are able to simultaneously control melodic and harmonic aspects of the improvised section.

All of these factors contribute to my analytical methodology and play a role in highlighting the relationship between an artist and his improvisatory style. Analytical techniques that focus upon the creation of phrases through motivic development, pitch selection, and reflective/reactive procedures capture the melodic and linear nature of Getz’s improvisations.

In my approach, I explore the referential collections that serve as harmonic frameworks above which Getz’s pitches sound, and consider his pitch selections in relation to these harmonic resources. Moreover, I use reductive techniques inspired by Schenkerian analysis in order to examine the development and coherence of melody and harmony over an entire work (in this case, chorus or improvised section), including many, sometimes non-traditional, chord changes. Finally, I employ the reflective and reactive processes as described by Karim Al-Zand in his analysis of the solos of Cannonball Adderley to interpret Getz’s improvisations, especially in
order to understand how a solo is unified by highlighting passages and motives that occurred during the moment of recording and those that were developed over a lifetime of performance.\footnote{Al-Zand, 209–10.}

**Approaches to Analysis**

**Referential Collections**

The basis of jazz improvisation lies with a performer’s choice of pitches, whether inside or outside the harmonic framework of a tune. Because of this, attempts to investigate the fundamental characteristics of a particular artist’s work should take into account how these pitches relate to the harmonic structure of the tune, whether tonal, neotonal, or neither. An analysis using referential collections accomplishes this task, as the motivic and melodic characteristics that emerge from successful solos can be traced back to a particular collection of pitches. In the works on *Sweet Rain*, diatonic, minor-pentatonic, and octatonic collections serve as pitch resources for Getz, whose choices help to shape the dynamic solos presented on this album.

The most frequently used collection on *Sweet Rain* is the diatonic one (see Example 4.1). This collection (7-35 (013568T)) includes major and natural minor scales, along with all of the modes, and as such represents the basic source for the construction and composition of Western classical music, as tonal works most often begin with one diatonic collection, move to others, and return to the original. However, diatonic collections can also be used in neotonal contexts, as evidenced in by works of twentieth-century composers such as Stravinsky and Reich.\footnote{Joseph N. Straus, *Introduction to Post-Tonal Theory*, 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2005), 140–44.}
The diatonic collection contains subsets that are used as pitch structures in jazz. The most frequently used subsets include 3-11, the major or minor triad (037); 3-7 (025); 3-9 (027); 4-11, the diatonic tetrachord (0135); 4-20, the major seventh chord (0158); the major-minor seventh chord (0258); and 4-26, the minor seventh or added-sixth chord (0358) (see Example 4.2). Because the works presented on Sweet Rain are driven primarily by tonal relationships, Getz often emphasizes diatonic subsets in his solos, particularly motives derived from set classes 4-11 and 3-7, the former arising as a result of linear ascents or descents that land upon members of the underlying chord (see Example 4.3).

Example 4.2: Frequently used subsets of the diatonic collection

Example 4.3: Getz uses the (0135) subset of the diatonic collection to emphasize linear motion targeting lower or upper chord members in mm. 1–2 and mm. 5–6 of “Con Alma”
A subset of and complement to the diatonic collection, the minor-pentatonic collection, 5-35 (02479), has served as a frequent pitch basis for jazz and rock solos (see Example 4.4). The collection can be parsed into two (025) pc sets, with the common tone acting as a point of symmetry for the set as a whole (see Example 4.5). Made up of whole steps and minor thirds, the pentatonic collection fits easily into the modal frameworks upon which many jazz tunes are based. Having been emphasized from an early stage in the development of jazz, it is only natural that the pentatonic collection is found in nearly every style of jazz, be it swing, bebop, or bossa nova.

Example 4.4: Minor-pentatonic collection

The octatonic collection is also commonly found as a scalar resource in jazz (though more often referred to as a diminished collection). The octatonic collection, 8-28 (0134679T), consists of alternating half and whole steps, and maps onto itself at four levels of transposition.

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69 References in this thesis to specific minor-pentatonic collections, such as B-minor and E-minor pentatonic, will be abbreviated as Bm-PENT, Em-PENT, etc. The terms pitch classes and pitch-class sets, furthermore, will be abbreviated as pcs for the former and pc sets for the latter.

70 As with pentatonic collections, octatonic collections will be abbreviated as OCT, followed by two subscripted pc integers denoting the collection’s starting pc as well as its succession of alternating half steps and whole steps. Thus, OCT_01 denotes an octatonic collection beginning on C in a half-step/whole-step sequence.
Sets that are capable of mapping onto themselves under transposition are said to be transpositionally symmetrical, and the degree of symmetry for a set is defined by the number of transpositional and inversional levels at which a set class will reproduce itself. The degree of transpositional symmetry possessed by a set class is inversely proportional to its number of distinct forms, which can be determined by dividing the number 12 by a set class’s unique transpositions. As such, three discrete octatonic collections can be found: (1) OCT\(_{0,1}\) [0134679T]; (2) OCT\(_{1,2}\) [124578TE]; and (3) OCT\(_{2,3}\) [235689E0]. Because the octatonic collection is highly symmetrical, subsets can be transposed at T\(_3\), T\(_6\), and T\(_9\) without introducing pitches foreign to the collection (see Example 4.7).

Example 4.6: Octatonic collection

\[<0134679T>\]
8-28 (0134679T)

Example 4.7: Transpositions of the octatonic collection at T\(_0\), T\(_3\), T\(_6\), and T\(_9\) do not introduce pitches foreign to the overall collection

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71Straus, 82–83.

The octatonic collection is especially useful in jazz, as it allows for the construction of tunes that emphasize both traditional II-V progressions and more unfamiliar root motions by minor thirds. This is due to the subsets contained in it, which include 4-26 (0358); 4-27, the dominant or half-diminished seventh chord (0258); and 4-28, the diminished seventh chord (0369) (see Example 4.8). The availability of such chords within the collection allows for quick shifts to more traditional tonal frameworks, with minor and dominant seventh chords being staples of jazz harmonies. The inclusion of major or minor triads, 3-11 (037), also allows a performer to convey tonal pitch fields while bass motions may suggest otherwise.

Example 4.8: Frequently used subsets of the octatonic collection

The focus upon referential collections becomes particularly relevant when analyzing jazz works from the 1950s and beyond, as players such as John Coltrane, Miles Davis, and Herbie Hancock frequently implemented them not only in their improvisations but also in their compositions. As such, many scholars have used referential collections as a vantage point from which to analyze jazz. For example, Keith Waters has examined Hancock’s compositions and Davis’s improvisations from the perspective of referential collections in order to interpret modal harmonies, improvisational strategies, and voice leading.\(^73\) Dmitri Tymoczko’s analysis of Bill Evans’ “Oleo” also emphasizes referential collections as a way of uncovering the small “signatures” that help define a player’s style.\(^74\)

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\(^74\)Tymoczko, 378–83.
In the case of *Sweet Rain*, diatonic and octatonic collections are present as compositional resources that drive each song. Some of the works include a focus on a single collection, whereas others feature a combination of diatonic and octatonic in order to provide harmonic variety. While traditional bebop associations such as nested II-V progressions are utilized, a few of the songs, including “Litha,” “Con Alma,” and “Windows” suggest octatonic collections through chromatic-third relationships formed between the roots or bass notes of each song’s chords (see Example 4.9).

Example 4.9: Octatonic collections as driving compositional forces behind sections of “Litha,” “Windows,” and “Con Alma”

Analyzing Getz’s improvisations by means of referential collections is quite beneficial in determining the scalar basis of his motives. It is Getz’s adherence to or movement away from these collections that highlight the sophistication at play in his improvisations. On the one hand, Getz chooses to emphasize subsets contained within these collections, reinforcing the underlying
motives driving a work. On the other, he uses subsets of the diatonic collection to overlay octatonic material, creating an interesting dynamic between the melodic line and its supporting harmonies. Getz employs these pitch conflicts to heighten tension and delay eventual resolution during the course of a solo.

An example of the unity between an underlying referential collection and Getz’s solo can be found in mm. 31–38 of “Litha.” In this instance, an Em7 chord suggests either E-Aeolian or E-Dorian. Getz chooses to highlight two minor-pentatonic collections that arise from these parent resources, Bm-<E2469> and Em-PENT<479E2>, with the F3 in m. 36 serving as a chromatic upper neighbor to the tonic note of Em-PENT (see Example 4.10).

Example 4.10: Two minor-pentatonic collections that emerge from an E-Aeolian or E-Dorian diatonic collection in mm. 31–38 of Getz’s solo on “Litha”

Reductive Techniques

Single-line solos are highly dependent upon non-chordal tones and figurations, which can often mask underlying motives and voice-leading aspects upon which the solo is built. Accordingly, I use reductive techniques to explain such passages, as well as to point out smaller

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Both C and C# are missing from the underlying harmony and Getz’s solo line, hence the E-Aeolian or E-Dorian designations.

My interpretation is based upon the following reasons: (1) in both instances, four out of five pitches of the Em- and Bm-PENT collections are present, and (2) melodically, the line emphasizes (025), a characteristic pentatonic subset.
phrase interruptions that may be contributing to the flow and melodic coherence of a solo. In addition to reductions of melodic lines, I employ bass-line sketches not only to represent the supporting harmonic framework of improvisatory passages but also to show expanded harmonic relationships as they occur in the works.

In the reductions that I employ in Chapter 5, I use notational principles derived from Schenker, with longer note values indicating more structurally significant pitches. I also use beams to highlight melodic lines that ascend or descend by step, indicating linear progressions over large or small time spans, and dotted lines to indicate the retention of specific pitches. In addition, following Schenkerian convention, I utilize uppercase Roman numerals with alterations shown through sharp, flat, and natural signs before or after the symbol in an attempt to avoid confusion that may result from modal mixture and chord borrowing which occurs frequently in jazz. This approach is the one used by Larson and the Viennese Stufentheorie, as opposed to that of Neumeyer and Tepping, who rely upon a labeling system derived from Weber and Richter, and attributed to Goetschius and Piston.

The separation of harmonic and melodic elements allows for a greater understanding of the underlying framework of a song, which is essential with respect to a soloist’s improvisation. These harmonic patterns are the driving forces behind Getz’s choice of pitches during his solos, and as such can be used to guide analyses of these improvisations. In the field of jazz research,

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78 Neumeyer and Tepping, vii.
Strunk uses bass-line sketches in his analysis of Wayne Shorter’s compositions from 1964–67 to highlight semi-tonal transformations of groups of chords.  

In my analysis of Getz’s improvisations, I use reductions to determine what pitches are centric throughout a work, which are often lower or upper members of a referential (that is, a tonic-suggesting) sonority. Specifically, lower members of such a sonority typically involve the root, third, fifth, or seventh of a tertian-based chord, while upper members the ninth, eleventh, or thirteenth, sometimes altered. For example, D♭ is emphasized throughout “Sweet Rain,” not only through tonicizations of the chord but also through an underlying pedal in the final four measures of each phrase (see Example 4.11). This point may at first seem inconsequential, but when coupled with reductions of Getz’s solo line, the results are quite interesting, as Getz emphasizes the upper part (A♭ and E♭) of a chord built upon D♭ (see Example 4.12). This choice to highlight pitches a fifth and ninth above the root of the harmony also appears in “Windows.”

Example 4.11: Bass-line sketch of “Sweet Rain”

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80My ideas about lower and upper members of a referential sonority are derived from the work of Marcus Wolfe, who describes lower members as “functional” and upper members as “decorative.” See Wolfe, 20.
Specific details of a solo can emerge after reducing melodic and harmonic lines, such as the presence of motivic parallelisms, which involve a given motive occurring at different levels of structure. Schenker believed that motivic parallelisms helped music achieve organic relationships.\(^{81}\) In the case of jazz improvisations, motivic parallelisms can unify a solo, both within a chorus and over the course of a work.

Motivic parallelisms are present in many of Getz’s improvisations on *Sweet Rain*, including “Windows.” In mm. 26–33, Getz emphasizes (025) pc sets as small motivic units on the surface, but (025) also emerges as an underlying motive at a deeper level of structure (see Example 4.13). During this section, the harmony alternates between \(A_b^7\) and \(A^7\), with the former acting as an embellishment to the latter, which initiates a plagal cadence (\(A^7–E_{maj}^7\)) in the next section of the tune. Two separate (025) pc sets, \(G^\#-F^\#-D^\#\) and \(G^\#-C^\#-B\), recur throughout the section, together forming the \(G^\#m\)-PENT. \(G^\#\) begins, is returned to, and ends Getz’s line, while he uses \(C^\#\) and \(B\) as high points in the phrase, and \(F^\#\) and \(D^\#\) as lower embellishments. Although \(B\) is not a member of the underlying harmony, it plays an important role in Getz’s melody, and thus is active at a deeper level of structure. Instances such as these unify improvisatory passages within sections of a chorus, as well as the song as a whole.

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Reactive and Reflective Processes

I explore another consequential aspect of Getz’s solos by considering what Al-Zand refers to as reactive and reflective approaches to improvisation. Reactive passages describe instances in which a soloist will interact with moments that arise during the recording or performance of a work, including the spontaneous development of motives from chorus to chorus, or the alteration of style as a consequence of the performance of another ensemble member. Reflective processes refer to passages that consist of “licks” or “riffs,” and arise as the result of a performer’s accrued skill and facility. According to the author, a successful solo will contain instances of both processes, as the incorporation of newly formed material resulting from in-the-moment performance choices coheres with familiar licks that can decidedly establish key centers and be used over a wide variety of chord changes.

Reflective and reactive processes are found throughout Getz’s improvisations on Sweet Rain. The eclectic nature of the charts and style shifts both within and among the pieces all

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contribute to Getz’s pitch choices and their development. At times, the tempo of a tune or his choice to accentuate a passage with a flurry of eighth or sixteenth notes will result in Getz using formulas or nearly exact motives from chorus to chorus, such as portions of the B sections of “Litha” (see Example 4.14). The same section of “Litha” also displays an example of more thoughtful, in-the-moment choices that guide the development of motives over many choruses, in this instance Getz’s pitch choices from chorus to chorus (see Example 4.15).

Example 4.14: Moments of reflection span four choruses of Getz’s solo on “Litha”

Example 4.15: Reactive moments in Getz’s solo on “Litha”

This focus upon reactive/reflective processes alongside referential collections is due in large part to the nature of Getz’s instrument and role in jazz ensembles. As a saxophonist, Getz
is largely at the mercy of the rhythm section in relation to the rhythmic and harmonic structure of a song, and has little control over whether or not shifts or alterations in a song’s established framework will occur. Although the repetition or arpeggiation of certain pitches can help to suggest variations in the tune, for the most part, these are primarily used to create temporary dissonance within the standard progressions.

**Conclusion**

Though eclectic in nature, this combination of analytical techniques helps us to understand how Getz’s improvisations work, taking into account his position in the ensemble and the compositional influences of that era. As his solos emerge from the fundamental tune being performed, it is only natural to examine how referential collections may determine Getz’s choice of pitches. Reductions of melodic and harmonic lines also create the opportunity to investigate the adherence to or divergence from the underlying tune and its harmonic implications. Finally, my investigation of reactive and reflective processes reveals the melodic coherence and development that is showcased by Getz during his improvised solos on *Sweet Rain*.

**A Note on the Transcriptions**

As discussed in Chapter 3, the practice of transcribing improvised solos was established at the onset of the jazz era. While the primary goal of any transcription is to represent the pitches and rhythms of a solo in order to aid in the reproduction of a particular performance, these aims are primarily pedagogical in nature and serve to establish reference materials for jazz performers. As such, jazz transcriptions found in workbooks and artist collections tend to be fairly flexible in their interpretation of solos, most notably in their treatment of rhythm, as the very nature of improvisation will often find certain rhythmic proportions falling outside the realm of notational
possibilities. This will often result in the transcriber resorting to nonstandard notational practices such as the use of arrows to convey the anticipation or delay of a pitch surrounding a given beat. In addition, these study guides are meant to supplement the source material, and as such the performer will have already absorbed the nuances and intricacies of a solo aurally. As described by Larson, this results in a transcription that is more prescriptive rather than descriptive.  

The transcriptions completed for this thesis attempt to bridge the gap between prescriptive and descriptive depictions of improvised solos. The analytical techniques used to delve into the nature of Getz’s improvisations focus primarily upon pitch and motivic development throughout the solos, and as such alterations in pitch through techniques such as alternative fingerings, as well as the ghosting and bending of pitches, have been accounted for in the notation. In addition, all attempts have been made to distinguish any alterations in the underlying chord progressions from the original compositions, as these are critical to understanding the process by which Getz develops a line through pitch selection and voice leading. 

As this thesis does not emphasize the role of rhythm in these improvisations, more traditional transcription practices were implemented, and as such no alternative notational practices or symbols were used to convey slight variations as to where a pitch falls relative to the beat. This more prescriptive approach aids in the avoidance of confusing, self-created notations that can cloud the primary goal of the transcription. 

That being said, performers attempting to play these solos on tenor saxophone will find that a few adjustments have been made that will make reading the transcriptions difficult. First of all, the original solos sounding on the Bb tenor have been transposed to the key of C in order to aid facility in reading the solos on concert-pitched instruments such as the piano. Due to the 

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83 Larson, Analyzing Jazz: A Schenkerian Approach, 1.
fact that the tenor saxophone sounds a major ninth below its written pitch, I avoided renotating
the solo as it sounds due to concerns with legibility, and as such chose to write the solo down a
major second as opposed to a ninth to keep the majority of the solo on the treble clef staff.

Other treatments of the transcriptions are worth noting, including my labeling of chords
as compared to the style found in most collections. To aid in the understanding of the implied
chords by the majority of audiences, I have chosen to label chords following conventional
popular music practices. Major seventh chords are thus labeled “Maj7” as opposed to “Δ,”
dominant seventh chords contain no additional information (e.g., F7), and minor chords are
labeled with “Min” versus “–.” Figures also indicate any alterations that the performers may
have included (♭9, #11, etc.), parenthesized next to the primary chord (e.g., A7(♭9)).
Chapter 5: Analysis of the Transcriptions

Introduction

_Sweet Rain_ captures Getz’s growth as a musician throughout the 1950s and 60s, during a time in which the jazz landscape shifted considerably. Free jazz, modal experimentation, and the influx of bossa nova in the United States are just a few of the trends to emerge during this time period. Getz’s performances on _Sweet Rain_ are among his finest, as his solos display a newfound edge that could stand up against the up-and-coming artists of the 1960s, while at the same time retaining the warmth and melodic phrasing that defined his entire career.

This chapter considers the sophistication at play in Getz’s solos throughout _Sweet Rain_ by examining the musical forces that drive his improvisatory procedures. Specifically, they include how referential collections shape melodic lines, how motives foster structural coherence, and how spontaneous musical figurations, in conjunction with preconceived riffs, generate more dynamic solos.

I begin by showing how referential collections influence Getz’s pitch selections. Getz typically uses pentatonic and other diatonic subsets as a logical consequence of the diatonic collections that govern a tune’s underlying harmonic structure. Some of these subsets, such as (025) from the pentatonic collection, serve as motives that unify the music at different structural levels. To conclude the chapter, I explore Getz’s incorporation of reactive and reflective processes in his improvisations, highlighting his attempt to create a coherent line that skillfully
mixes extemporaneous ideas inspired at the moment of recording with those learned over the passage of time.

Referential Collections

Getz’s solos on *Sweet Rain* exhibit improvisational strategies that allow him to navigate chord changes while still creating memorable, well-shaped melodic lines. One such strategy is the use of pitches contained within larger referential collections suggested by the harmonies of a tune. The identification of these referential collections, however, can be ambiguous due to the fact that the rhythm section may omit certain pitches. For instance, a minor-seventh chord can easily suggest Dorian, Aeolian, or Phrygian collections. This modal ambiguity results in a wide array of pitches available to a performer, who can then alter the content from chorus to chorus in order to provide variation and development throughout a solo.

Since jazz soloists are in many ways influenced by the past performances of others, they often accentuate or avoid certain pitches within a given passage or over a certain chord in order to keep a sense of stylistic continuity while simultaneously exploring new creative territory. Typically, notes that are upper or lower members of jazz harmonies are emphasized, as opposed to “avoid notes,” which as the labeling suggests, are notes that are considered especially dissonant relative to the underlying harmony.\(^{84}\) Using different referential collections as a harmonic backdrop, a performer can quickly shift between emphasized pitches such as the fifth or ninth of a chord while maintaining overall melodic continuity, either through altering strategic pitches in a phrase or by repeating them. Furthermore, the reliance upon II-V progressions and the involvement of sevenths in both underlying harmonies and solos make the use of diatonic

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\(^{84}\)Instances of “avoid notes” include the fourth scale degree of a major tonality, and the sixth scale degree of a minor key.
collections not only acceptable but preferred throughout a passage, with Dorian, Mixolydian, and Phrygian modes being preferred.

Let us now consider an instance in which harmonic ambiguity allows Getz to be flexible in his selection of pitches, thus providing opportunities for melodic development of a solo over many choruses. The second section of “Litha” begins with eight measures of an Em7 chord. This sonority allows improvisational freedom, as it suggests Dorian, Phrygian, and Aeolian collections, as well as minor-pentatonic collections. In each chorus, Getz varies his pitch selections, thereby evoking different collections, namely Em-PENT, Bm-PENT, and B-Aeolian (see Example 5.1). While non-collectional pitches do arise, this is not atypical for jazz solos as artists attempt to add color to a solo through the use of dissonance.

Example 5.1: Collectional variation between choruses in “Litha.” An asterisk above a pitch denotes that it is non-collectional.

In the first chorus, Getz uses both Bm- and Em-PENT collections, each compatible with the underlying Em7 chord. In the second chorus, Getz emphasizes E at the beginning and end of the phrase, and also omits the F♯ that would otherwise suggest Bm-PENT. With the non-
collectional notes $B^b$ and $E^b$ providing color, the pitches otherwise suggest the use of an Em-PENT collection throughout these eight measures.

The third chorus swings back to collections emphasizing B, in this case Bm-PENT and B-Aeolian. While Getz omits the pitches necessary to complete a diatonic collection in the first four measures of the chorus, he expands the initial pentatonic collection through a scalar descent, completing the phrase. Finally, Getz radically alters the rhythmic character in the fourth chorus, but his pitch selections remain, although the Em-PENT found in previous sections is pared to the point that pentatonic implications would be difficult to argue.

Getz also varies his usage of collections to anticipate and prepare emphasized melodic ideas. An example of this can be found in “Con Alma” (see Example 5.2). Throughout this solo, Getz emphasizes a rising three-note motive over a tonicized Cmaj7 chord. In fact, the pitches used in each instance indicate Getz’s adherence to C-Ionian, save for m. 72 in which Getz uses F# as part of an “enclosure” to emphasize G. In the closing part of his solo (mm. 94–96), Getz juxtaposes $D^b$-Ionian with C-Ionian. The pairing provides a high amount of contrast, as the two collections have just two notes in common (C and F). Though contrasting in terms of pitch content, Getz is able to weave together the passage through the repeating of the three-note figure that will eventually conclude the line, but in this instance while highlighting pitches found in $D^b$-Ionian. In this way, Getz quickly shifts between referential collections while maintaining the overall line.

85 An “enclosure” typically occurs when a pitch is approached by a note a half or whole step below, followed by a note a half or whole step above the target note. In this sense, it is very much the jazz adaptation of the double-neighbor figure found in classical music.
Getz’s solo on “Windows” contains instances in which he skillfully implements Phrygian, Aeolian, and Mixolydian modes over static and changing harmonies at various junctures during the solo. “Windows” features a prolonged Emaj7(#11) chord at the end of the first section, lasting eight measures. In Getz’s second chorus, he emphasizes A# (#11) by sounding a Locrian tetrachord beginning on that note (A#-B#-C#-D#) (see Example 5.3). Getz extends this pattern a full octave in m. 68, completing the scale. His choice of the Locrian mode works well in this instance, as it not only highlights the #11 in the surrounding harmony but also fits the scalar collection suggested by Emaj7(#11), which is E-Lydian. Getz completes the section in mm. 71–74 by retaining the same pitches but completing the descent to G#, thus suggesting G#-Aeolian while also setting up a resolution on the A♭7 chord in m. 74 (see Example 5.4). Melodic continuity arises as a result of the fact that each of these instances are rotations of the same diatonic collection.

Example 5.3: Use of A♯-Locrian over an Emaj7(#11) chord in “Windows,” mm. 66–68
While Getz’s treatment of the prolonged Emaj7(#11) chord in mm. 66–74 showcases his ability to use complementary collections over sustained harmonies, mm. 238–41 of his solo on the same tune displays his ability to choose pitch collections that complement changing harmonies (see Example 5.5). The section comes to a close in the last four bars through a quasi-chromatic descent in the bass (E-D♯-C♯-C). An inventory of the pitches contained in all of these chords reveals commonalities that can be exploited by the performer. In this instance, Getz ends his solo with a descent landing on F♯, complementing the C7(#11) chord that concludes the passage. At the beginning of this four-bar phrase, Getz begins on an A♯ and descends through a collection of pitches that suggests F♯-Mixolydian. Besides emphasizing F♯ as the final pitch of the solo, Getz also sustains the note in mm. 238–39, where it functions as the third of the underlying D♯m7 chord. In fact, the only chord that the collection conflicts with is the final C7(#11), but Getz’s ending of the phrase on the altered part of the chord ensures that the two sonorities align.

Example 5.4: Use of G♯-Aeolian over an Emaj7(#11) chord in “Windows,” mm. 72–74

Example 5.5: Use of F♯-Mixolydian over a descending bass line in “Windows,” mm. 238–41
This four-bar descent focusing upon F♯-Mixolydian seems quite intentional, as a more developed version of this descent occurs at the beginning of Getz’s solo, from mm. 34–49 (see Example 5.6). Here, Getz once again emphasizes pitches found in F♯-Mixolydian through their use as points of initiation or arrival, and highlights a descending line that spans D♯ to F♯. Occurring over no less than sixteen chord changes or changes in the bass pitch, it is rather remarkable that Getz can weave a single collection so effortlessly with an ever-changing bass line.

Example 5.6: Circed pitches indicate a descending F♯-Mixolydian line over mm. 34–49 in “Windows”

These instances in “Windows” highlight Getz’s attempts to emphasize larger collections that are suggested by underlying chords and also reveal his tendency to retain certain pitches over large sections of a solo, altering the suggested collection through contextual pitch emphasis. In other instances on Sweet Rain, Getz focuses upon subsets of the diatonic collection to highlight contrasting sections of a tune, and in these instances heavily relies upon the minor-pentatonic collection.

Getz uses minor pentatonic collections within larger diatonic pitch fields suggested by the tune’s harmonies, most notably in “Litha.” When the shift to 4/4 takes place in “Litha,” Getz chooses to contrast each chord change not only by varying the number of notes in his solo (with
the line accompanying Fm and B♭m receiving the most notes, Em7 and Am the fewest) but also by shifting pitch collections, alternating minor pentatonic and diatonic collections (see Example 5.7). In the first chorus of the solo, Getz chooses to switch from Bm-PENT to Em-PENT, each being subsets of either E-Aeolian or E-Dorian. These collections are similar, sharing four out of five pcs. Getz’s use of these collections not only provides variation in the melodic line but also ensures that it coheres with the fundamental harmonic support of the tune.

Example 5.7: Getz’s approach to the second section of “Litha” involves the alternation of styles between chords in addition to the shift from minor-pentatonic to diatonic collections

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86 Although drawn from similar musical examples, note that Example 5.7 differs from Example 5.1 in that the latter draws connections of Getz’s usage of collections from chorus to chorus, while the former focuses upon variation within one section/chorus.
It should be noted that not all of the pcs in the suggested referential collection are present in Getz’s solo. However, enough of the pitches are present to suggest a parent collection. Rosemary Walker has previously explored this idea of inclusion in her analysis of modes and pc sets in the music of Olivier Messiaen. In her study, Walker argues that certain modes of limited transposition can be suggested despite one or two extra or missing pitches. Likewise, Getz often omits notes of a larger collection to attain motivic unity, or adds pitches outside of the collection to embellish a phrase. In this particular instance, it can also be argued that the underlying Em7 in the bass supplies the missing E from the Bm-PENT collection outlined by Getz, just as this chord supplies the missing G from the ensuing Em-PENT collection.

While his use of minor-pentatonic collections over larger diatonic sonorities highlights instances in which his solo line aligns with the harmony, Getz will often maintain diatonically driven lines while the bass figuration may suggest other collections. Getz’s solo on “Con Alma” illustrates this improvisational technique.

Example 5.8 shows a bass-line sketch of the first eight-bar phrase of “Con Alma,” and demonstrates the relationship between the smaller two-bar phrases within, with mm. 5–6 being a T9 transposition of mm. 1–2. The bass motion of this tune composed by Dizzy Gillespie suggests the octatonic scale, namely through motion by minor thirds, which is also present in Chick Corea’s compositions, “Litha” and “Windows.” Note that before the tonicization of C major at the conclusion of the phrase, six out of the eight pitches contained within an OCT\textsubscript{1,2} collection [124578te] are supplied by the bass.

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It is within these two-bar phrases that we can see Getz’s tendency to maintain the use of pitches supported by diatonic collections even while root motion in the bass may suggest other collections. During the first two measures, Getz descends through four pitches contained within E-Ionian (G♯-F♯-E-D♯), adhering to the initial sounding Emaj7 in the rhythm section (see Example 5.9). The pc set being outlined, (0135), is a subset of the diatonic collection, and works well in this instance, for the resolution pitch, D♯, is also a functional member of the Ab-minor chord sounding below.

Perhaps sensing that this pattern will work in his favor, Getz shifts the melody down a minor third, creating a T9 transformation of the initial melodic line in mm. 5–6. Not only does this ensure that his melodic figuration will cohere with the pitches suggested by the underlying harmonic support, but it also adds to the direct relationship between Getz’s line and the moving bass, with both shaped by T9 transpositions. As a further way of unifying his solo and the bass motion, note that Getz uses A♭ (written in the solo as a G♯) and F to embellish his overall
melodic descent, thereby anticipating the chord changes that occur on beat three in mm. 1, 2, 5, and 6.

Although Getz primarily chooses to highlight pitches and suggests chords that cohere with the tune’s harmonies, his melodies will often sidestep the harmonic support, suggesting its own pattern. A clear use of such contrast intended to heighten the solo line can be found in “Con Alma.” Upon listening to the recording of this tune, one of the first moments of Getz’s solo that grabs the listener’s attention occurs in m. 12. Besides the quick changes in register, it is clear that the chords outlined by Getz somehow conflict with the harmonic support centered in D♭.

While chords suggesting that key descend chromatically (E♭-D-D♭), Getz outlines sonorities related by whole-steps (G-F-D♯), allowing for a momentary sidestep before syncing up with the D♭maj7 (the passage’s tonic chord) on the downbeat of m. 13, with Getz pivoting back to the fifth of the chord (see Example 5.10).

Example 5.10: A moment of separation between the harmonies implied by Getz and those of the tune, mm. 12–13 of “Con Alma”

In this case, the pattern works for many reasons. First of all, if Getz were to continue his whole-step descent, he would land on C♯/D♭, thereby utilizing a C♯-Lydian tetrachord in order to target the D♭maj7 in the next measure. However, Getz has a tendency to use upper members of a
referential (that is, tonic) sonority, and as such quickly moves to the G♯/Ab, itself being the fifth of the underlying D♭maj7 chord. Because of his focus on Ab, it is more likely that Getz is using pitches contained in Ab-Mixolydian, a rotation of D♭-Ionian, suggested by the underlying bass. The descent could also be considered a fleeting use of the whole-tone scale, thereby establishing maximum contrast between the line and the chromatic bass motion. Although lasting only one measure, this passage clearly demonstrates Getz’s willingness to move his solo away from the underlying harmonic support in order to create more dynamic phrases.

In addition to sidestepping the harmony to provide contrast, Getz will sometimes use the octatonic collection to add variety to a solo. This technique is used on the title track “Sweet Rain,” a slow, brooding piece that allows Getz to explore dissonances that time does not allow for in faster-paced numbers on Sweet Rain. In mm. 24–27, Getz implements a rising octatonic line (Oct1,2 [124578te]) over a typical II-V progression in the harmony, and increases this tension through a shift to an even more chromatic line in the following two measures (see Example 5.11). While this is an infrequent occurrence, it shows the versatility that Getz has in adapting his style to the wide-ranging genres found in the album.

Example 5.11: Use of a complete octatonic collection in “Sweet Rain,” mm. 24–27
Referential collections play a critical role in Getz’s improvisatory procedures. Much of the fluidity and control evidenced in his solos can be attributed to his adherence to pitches contained in collections directly related to a tune’s underlying harmonic support. Brief passages that contradict the harmony add variety and color to the solo, and when coupled with Getz’s emphasis of pitches during an improvisation, create a cohesive whole.

Motives

Just as referential collections shape the overall flow of a solo, so do motives from chorus to chorus, but from a more concentrated pitch perspective. Motives serve as aural markers for musicians and listeners alike, and play a direct role in promoting cohesion between many choruses. While Getz develops various kinds of motives throughout Sweet Rain, I will be focusing on the way in which he uses trichords derived from set classes (025) and (013) not only on the musical surface but also at deeper levels of structure in the form of motivic parallelisms.

As Getz focuses upon certain pitches from different referential collections while improvising, it is only natural for him to find ways to emphasize them. Improvised sections that emphasize (025) pc sets from minor-pentatonic collections allow for this, as three of the five pcs of the collection can act as a common tone between two overlapping instances of (025) (see Example 5.12). As such, these pitches can serve as registral points of symmetry for a line, either functioning as a pitch to return to or a pitch from which to expand outward, in either case emphasizing movement of a fourth above and below the pitch. Getz implements this technique in three of the works on Sweet Rain, “O Grande Amor,” “Litha,” and “Windows.”
Getz employs (025) motives to highlight specific pitches in his solo in “O Grande Amor” (see Example 5.13). The tune is in A minor, and Getz begins his solo by using notes suggesting Am-PENT as the basis for his line. As Am-PENT is a subset of A-Aeolian, Getz’s choice of pitches aligns with the song’s harmonic framework. In this instance, the dominant scale degree, E, acts as a point of registral symmetry for the line as a whole, with Getz first extending the line upwards by a perfect fourth to the tonic pitch in mm. 1–2, and then downwards by a perfect fourth to B, which aligns itself with the predominant functioning Bø7 in m. 5. While the B in mm. 4–5 is not contained in Am-PENT, it helps to propel the line forward through this alignment.

Example 5.13: Use of the Am-PENT collection in mm. 1–5 of “O Grande Amor” for phrase development

While the phrases resulting from (025) pivots in “O Grande Amor” last several measures, Getz uses this technique in two other works from Sweet Rain to highlight smaller motives that aid in unifying many choruses of his solo. In one instance, a short motive in “Litha” occurs both
in mm. 47–51 and later in mm. 110–15. As in “O Grande Amor,” this passage is supported by an Am chord, but this time Getz chooses to use pitches contained in Em-PENT, again using E as a registral point of symmetry (see Example 5.14). While this pitch was used as a point of departure in “O Grande Amor,” in this instance it is used as a point of return for Getz, as the line moves a fourth above and below the central pitch before returning.88

Example 5.14: Use of the Em-PENT collection in mm. 47–51 of “Litha”

While slightly varied, a nearly exact (025)-focused motive appears in “Windows” at mm. 10–13 (see Example 5.15). Once again, Getz chooses to emphasize a minor-pentatonic collection (F#) that occurs as a subset of the underlying harmony, in this case an F#m7 chord (suggesting either F#-Dorian, F#-Aeolian, or F#-Phrygian). As with “Litha,” Getz uses the F# to create a registral point of symmetry from which pitches expand a perfect fourth above and below, emphasizing the tonic pitch F# in the process.

In addition to using surface-level motives to emphasize specific pitches, Getz also will link together trichords to create longer melodic lines. One example of this occurs in “Litha” during the 6/8 section of the fourth chorus (see Example 5.16). Here Getz emphasizes (013), (024), and (014) pc sets to create an ascending line outlining a C-major scale. This is an

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88 While it can be argued that Getz is once again using pitches from Am-PENT, note that he uses a similar technique of emphasizing a collection whose supporting harmony is built on a note a perfect fourth higher than the collection’s tonic pitch, as in “Litha,” mm. 155–61 where Bm-PENT is used over an Em7 chord.
interesting take on the phrase, as the harmonic support in this section of “Litha” is driven by octatonic relationships (in this instance, root motion by minor thirds). But Getz’s use of (013) pc sets is clearly driven by diatonic tendencies, as he chooses to emphasize members of a C-Ionian scale; however, (013) is an octatonic subset, and thus is shared between the two emphasized collections. In this manner, Getz’s use of overlapping trichords allows for coherence between his solo and the underlying harmonic support.

Pitch-class sets such as (025) and (013) are not only active on the musical surface of Getz’s improvisations but also at deeper structural levels, and serve to unify Getz’s improvised line. Motivic parallelisms based on (025) are present in “Windows” and “Litha.” In Chapter 4 (see p. 43), I discussed occurrences of such motivic parallelisms, specifically in mm. 26–33 (see Example 5.17). In this instance, Getz repeatedly highlights (025) pc sets focused upon G♯ in
each measure. When reduced it can be seen that this same set supports the entire eight-bar phrase and serves to unify a section of the work that is fairly static in terms of harmonic motion.

Motivic parallelisms involving (025) are also present in “Litha,” mm. 93–100 (see Example 5.18). In this instance, E and B act as points of initiation and arrival, with a D acting as a passing tone between them. Although chromatically altered tones are used to color the phrase, small (025) pc sets derived from Em-PENT act as source material, and can be found at both surface and deeper levels of structure.

Example 5.18: (025) motivic parallelism present in “Litha,” mm. 93–100
Just as (025) motivic parallelisms emerge in “Windows” and “Litha,” playing a role in fostering motivic unity at various structural levels, (013) pc sets play similar roles in “Con Alma.” Focusing on mm. 13–16 of Getz’s solo, we find that (013) emerges throughout the overall line and figuration, present in the triplet and sixteenth-note figures that form Getz’s solo (see Example 5.19). The primary pitches of the large span, G♯, F, and G, are each significant in that they either start or end a phrase, and also are functional members of the underlying D♭maj7, B♭m, and Cmaj7 chords.

Example 5.19: Motivic parallelisms in “Con Alma”

Motivic parallelisms involving (013) also appear in “Con Alma” at an earlier point in Getz’s solo, from mm. 10–11 (see Example 5.20). In this instance, [235] is emphasized over the two measures, while the concluding D is approached by a series of overlapping (013) pc sets. The E♭ starting the phrase is a functional member of the underlying A♭m chord, and descends to the F, which is significant not only because it denotes the line’s lowest pitch but is also a functional member of the sounding B♭7 chord. This figure extends an earlier descending-line
motive stated by Getz in the opening two measures of the solo, which remained on E♭ afterwards.

“Litha” also contains an instance in which (013) plays a role at both surface and deeper levels of structure in Getz’s improvisation. From mm. 69–76, Getz emphasizes small ascending three-note motives, each landing upon an upper-sounding member (in this case, the ninth) of the underlying harmony (see Example 5.21). Over the course of this passage, [457] is emphasized, with the smaller three-note pairings also comprising (013) pc sets. The sheer repetition of G and E make these pitches significant, and the conclusion of the phrase on F makes it noteworthy as well. Also note that these pitches align with the root motion of the bass, itself forming an (013) pc set.

Example 5.21: Motivic parallelisms emphasizing (013) in “Litha,” mm. 69–76
Reactive vs. Reflective Processes

Despite the notion that all improvisation occurs at the spur of the moment, a soloist will often mix stock riffs with real-time variations, resulting from the interplay between members of the ensemble or alterations of a figure from chorus to chorus. This ability is especially important for Getz on *Sweet Rain*. As the featured performer and group leader, Getz has the most extensive improvised passages and is called upon to navigate a fairly eclectic mix of source materials. A well-developed solo should contain both reactive (spur-of-the-moment) and reflective (stock) materials (see Chapter 4, p. 44 for a discussion of these terms). Although it may at times be difficult to ascertain whether a passage is the former or latter, we can review past performances of the artist as well as standard licks of the era to guide our analysis.

Let us first consider reflective patterns that emerge in one song Getz had previously recorded on *Getz/Gilberto*; “O Grande Amor.” His solo on this bossa-nova tune features two figurations that recall this past recording. The first is a stepwise descent in mm. 45–51 that is a near-exact copy of his line from 4:51–4:55 of the *Getz/Gilberto* recording, though in the iteration of the figure on *Sweet Rain*, it is compressed to fit within two measures (see Example 5.22). Also repeated from the *Getz/Gilberto* recording is the highlighting of a quick descent from C to A (mm. 57–59 on *Sweet Rain*, 7:08–7:20 on *Getz/Gilberto*).

Example 5.22: A descending line landing upon C in two separate recordings of “O Grande Amor” displays reflective processes in Getz’s playing.
In fact, this incessant repeating and highlighting of two pitches seems to be a trademark of Getz’s improvisations, with similar figurations arising in nearly all of the works on *Sweet Rain* (an exception being “Litha”). Although the example in “O Grande Amor” outlines the minor third from C to A, Getz seems to prefer outlining pitches a perfect fourth or fifth apart (see Example 5.23), frequently highlighting the upper chordal members (9th, 11th, 13th) of the extended tertian harmonies of the accompaniment.

Example 5.23: A trademark of Getz’s solos is the exchange between pitches a perfect fourth or fifth apart

Getz’s reliance upon formulas is also more prominent in up-tempo sections of “Litha,” specifically the 4/4 sections where he chooses to complement the underlying Fm and B♭m chords with a flurry of eighth notes in all four choruses. At such a tempo, it is only natural that Getz would let his years of performance shape his line, as there is little room or time for thoughtful melodic development. Near-exact repetitions of figures within his line can be found throughout
the choruses, such as the triplet figure highlighting a chromatic ascent from C to Eb in mm. 45, 59, and 245 (see Example 5.24).

Example 5.24: Repetitive triplet figures in “Litha” point toward reflective processes in Getz’s improvisations

Standard reflective bebop techniques that were present in Getz’s recordings during his early career also come into play on Sweet Rain, particularly his use of enclosures. While these figures are not as prominent on this album when compared to Getz’s earlier work studied by Wolfe, instances do arise. For example, enclosures are present in both “Sweet Rain” and “Windows,” with Getz using them to emphasize particular pitches that conclude his solo lines (see Example 5.25). In addition to these singular instances of enclosures, Getz also employs a technique studied by Wolfe in which he uses a chain of enclosures to create a melodic line, an example of which can be seen earlier in this chapter (see Example 5.16) when looking at Getz’s use of trichords.

Example 5.25: Use of the enclosure bebop technique in “Sweet Rain,” mm. 39–40 and “Windows,” mm. 169–70
This is not to say that Getz relies solely on stock figurations in the development of his solos. As was shown earlier in this chapter, the emphasis on specific motives from chorus to chorus highlights reactive processes in Getz’s improvisations, as slight alterations in these figures provide variation throughout a solo, while their common occurrence aids in unifying the solo as a whole. An example of this can be found during the 6/8 sections of “Litha,” on the first, third, and fourth choruses taken by Getz. In each instance, he arpeggiates G-major, G-minor, and first-inversion D-major chords supported by Cmaj7, Fm9, and B7(♯9) sonorities, respectively (see Example 5.26). This passage not only displays rhythmic variation between sections but also contains similar uses of pitches, allowing for continuity and development from chorus to chorus.

Example 5.26: Reactive processes are highlighted in “Litha,” as Getz maintains pitch material in mm. 20–27, 143–51, and 206–16, but transforms the rhythmic character of each occurrence

A small motive that also appears to have been developed during recording is a three-note rising motive in “Con Alma.” Previously discussed in relation to the juxtaposition of referential collections, this motive also serves to unify the entire solo and provides slight variation throughout (see Example 5.27). While most occurrences target G through a scalar ascent (E-F-
Example 5.27: Reactive processes as evidenced through a rising three-note motive targeting G in “Con Alma.” Circled figures indicate the primary motive, while rectangles indicate the motive beginning on C.

G), that note is also targeted through an enclosure in m. 72, and the motive twice begins on C instead, targeting E.

Another reactive technique evident on *Sweet Rain* is Getz’s use of rising chromatic lines to drive motion toward the apex of his solos. While certainly not a revolutionary technique, the frequency in which this occurs in both “Sweet Rain” (see Example 5.28) and “Con Alma” (see Example 5.29) suggests that this line was exploited during the recording sessions. Note that on each song, this rising figure culminates with an E\textsubscript{b}/D\textsuperscript{#} in each instance, which could be the reason why Getz uses this technique in each situation.
Example 5.28: Chromatic ascents to E♭/D♯ in mm. 14–15 and mm. 24–27 of “Sweet Rain”

Example 5.29: Chromatic ascents to E♭ in “Con Alma,” mm. 37–39 and mm. 81–83

**Conclusion**

On such an eclectic album as *Sweet Rain* featuring some of the most prominent artists in the field, Getz needed to produce solos of the highest caliber, and the reaction by critics and fans alike indicated that he achieved this goal. Analyses of his solos reveal the complexity underlying each melodic line and the strides Getz had made during his career to bring his improvisational skills to a whole new level. The juxtaposition of material related to varying referential collections drives development in these solos, and his ability to use small subsets of these collections plays an important role in the shaping of Getz’s melodies, as motives appear at both
surface and deeper levels of structure. Additionally, he is able to weave together a cohesive whole by mixing reflective and reactive processes, using spur-of-the-moment motivic and melodic material to augment figures that had been learned throughout decades of performance.
Chapter 6: Conclusion

Stan Getz emerged as a prominent figure in jazz during the 1940s, and continued to contribute to the genre over the next four decades. A master of many styles, it was Getz’s ability to adapt to any situation, performance, or ensemble that made him stand out as a player. Moreover, his ability to craft a melody that could adapt to the smoothness attributed to cool jazz and bossa nova or the hard edges of bebop and hard bop, led to his recognition as one of the most prominent and popular jazz saxophonists of the latter half of the twentieth century.

But when most jazz performers and pedagogues are asked to name the most influential jazz saxophonists, names such as Young, Adderley, Parker, Coltrane, and Coleman rise to the top of the list, and rightfully so. These artists contributed to the field in such a way that their sound, style, and approach to jazz not only influenced other saxophonists but the genre as a whole. The work of these musicians is decidedly different and more recognized than Getz’s, thus explaining why most scholarly studies involving jazz saxophonists focus on these artists rather than Getz.

I believe that short, radical shifts in philosophies garner the most attention in studies, as opposed to the steady growth and development of musicians and their ideas. As such, artists such as Getz, whose contributions to a genre span many decades, can often go unnoticed in the field. Nonetheless, Getz and those like him play just as important a role in the growth, perception, and development of jazz. In the case of Getz, his legacy involves the continuation of bebop to the 1950s, the explosion in popularity of bossa nova in the US during the 1960s, and the exploration of Third-Stream ideas and embrace of electronic advances that resulted in the rise of
fusion in the 1970s.

My research shows that Getz did not stagnate as an artist during the 1960s, but continued to push the boundaries of jazz through collaborations with emerging artists such as Corea, Carter, and Tate. The works of *Sweet Rain* represent the culmination of Getz’s experiences in the industry up to 1967, and display his ability to create dynamic improvisations featuring the shifting between different referential collections to guide his line, motivic development, and the sophisticated interplay between reflective and reactive materials. The eclectic nature of the album highlights Getz’s multifaceted career and showcases his ability to adapt to any style while maintaining his core sound.

I believe that the choice to perform with up-and-coming artists of that time was a deliberate attempt by Getz to show the world that he still had the energy, charisma, and playing style that defined him as a saxophonist throughout his career, a style that could hold up to the playing of his peers at that time. This album was Getz’s attempt to regain his prominent status in American jazz of the 1960s after spending time in Europe, but wound up being much more than that. Widely regarded as essential listening not only in the Getz canon but all of jazz, *Sweet Rain* led to further collaborations with Corea and reestablished Getz as a defining figure.

Since Gunther Schuller and other scholars began analyzing jazz in the 1950s, it has slowly gained a prominent place within the field of music theory. A jazz interest group now exists within the Society for Music Theory, and conferences and panels focused upon the analysis of jazz are not uncommon. Academic programs are also beginning to take notice, as jazz and its analysis gain a foothold in both lecture settings and more traditional aural skills and written theory curricula.

And yet there are still potential issues that need to be carefully addressed and realized.
when embarking on such studies. The concreteness of composed music that we rely on in the majority of our analyses simply does not exist in the jazz realm, as even the chords and melodies of composed tunes can be adapted and changed within the moment of performance. Indeed, it is the ephemeral nature of jazz that makes its analysis both rewarding and challenging, as in-the-moment decisions by the artist can make for decidedly different takes on the same tune from performance to performance.

Although audio recordings have allowed us to capture these performances, providing the opportunity for transcription and analysis, we must still be careful when relying upon source material that may vary depending upon the listener and his or her reading of a passage. Many interpretations of a solo may exist, as the listener’s ear becomes critically involved in the interpretation of pitches and the underlying harmonic accompaniment. Indeed, even our notational system is not well suited to capturing such performances, as the slight shifts in rhythm and pitch can only be shown through the use of specialized symbols.

That being said, scholars have just begun to scratch the surface of the jazz repertoire, and as such jazz performances and recordings are ripe for future analyses. Individual styles of composers and performers allow for research that can focus on the compositional process, or a specific artist’s take on standard material, as is the case in this study. Furthermore, the rapid rise of jazz and the various styles that became associated with it means that a few short decades of time saw an explosion of new styles and techniques emerging, as individual artists put their own stamp on the established genre. This means that researchers can invoke a variety of techniques and explore a vast array of tunes that vary significantly but were created just years apart. While this can be attributed to the culture and time period in which jazz flourished, it nonetheless created an unprecedented era of musical creation and exploration that rivals those of other, more
well-established and studied musical genres.

The remarkable collaborative efforts between musicians that result in the famous recordings and performances being analyzed today also provide a wide array of features and characteristics that can be explored. The creation and development of melody, the interaction between ensemble members, the adherence to or divergence from a given tune’s harmonic structure, and the exploration of rhythmic characteristics and displacement of pulse are all topics that have been explored, and are just a few of the possibilities one can take when analyzing single works, whole albums, or individual artists.

I hope that scholars continue this trend toward jazz analysis, whether or not the improvisations of Getz play a role in these studies. While it appears to be slowly fading, a wall still seems to exist in the minds of some scholars separating jazz from more traditional musical works and genres, deeming the former a divergence from the standards that we instead focus upon in academic environments. But as Tymoczko has shown, jazz is in many ways a continuation of harmonic traditions, albeit wrapped in a slightly different package. Further studies involving jazz will help to bridge this divide, and show that jazz plays as important a role in music theory and pedagogy as any other genre.
Bibliography


Appendix: The Complete Transcriptions

Stan Getz’s Solos on *Sweet Rain*

Verve Records V6-8693

1. “Litha”
2. “O Grande Amor”
3. “Sweet Rain”
4. “Con Alma”
5. “Windows”
1. "Litha"

_Sweet Rain, Verve Records V6-8693_
2. "O Grande Amor"
Sweet Rain, Verve Records V6-8693

Am | A7(b9) | Gm7 | C7 | Bø7
6  | E7(b9) | Am  | A7(b9) | Dm7 | G7

Cmaj7 | Fmaj7 | Bb maj7 | Bø7 | E7(b9)
11 | Cmaj7 | Fmaj7 | Bb maj7 | Bø7 | E7(b9)

Am | A7(b9) | Gm7 | C7 | Bø7
17 | Cmaj7 | Fmaj7 | Bb maj7 | Bø7 | E7(b9) | Am

E7(b9) | Eø7 | A7(b9) | Dm7 | Eø7
22 | E7(b9) | Eø7 | A7(b9) | Dm7 | Eø7

C/E | Fmaj7 | Bb maj7 | Bø7 | E7(b9) | Am
27 | C/E | Fmaj7 | Bb maj7 | Bø7 | E7(b9) | Am

E7(b9) | Am | A7(b9) | Gm7 | C7
32 | E7(b9) | Am | A7(b9) | Gm7 | C7

Bø7 | E7(b9) | Am | A7(b9) | Dm7 | G7
37 | Bø7 | E7(b9) | Am | A7(b9) | Dm7 | G7

Cmaj7 | Fmaj7 | Bb maj7 | Bø7 | E7(b9)
43 | Cmaj7 | Fmaj7 | Bb maj7 | Bø7 | E7(b9)

Am | A7(b9) | Gm7 | C7
49 | Am | A7(b9) | Gm7 | C7

3  3  3

88
3. "Sweet Rain"

*Sweet Rain*, Verve Records V6-8693
lay back
5. "Windows"

*Sweet Rain, Verve Records V6-8693*
A7 A¨7 A7 A¨7 growl Ab7

A7 Ab7 A7 Ab7 A7 Emaj7 Emaj7/D

C#m7 C#m7/B Bbø7 Bbø7/Ab Eb7/G Eb7

Abm7 Abm7/Gb Dø7/F Db7 Emaj7 Døm7

C#m7 C(#11) Bm7 G#ø7

C#7 rush slightly F#m7

Dø7(sus4)

lay back lay back

Emaj7(#11)

Ab7 A7 Ab7 A7

Ab7 A7 Ab7 A7

Emaj7 Emaj7/D