

## CURRENT WAYS OF MELODICAL IMPROVISATION, REVOLUTIONARY JAZZ THINKING IN THE XXI ST CENTURY

FLORIN BĂLAN<sup>1</sup> 

**SUMMARY.** The assimilation of different musical practices, idioms or aesthetics is an expression that explains in detail the origins of some of the fusions of the significant creators of the jazz phenomenon, an active pursuit whose purpose is to create new, musically innovative, hybridized styles. It represents the modern view, a term for which researchers will suggest that it is a suitable description for the evolutionary compositional technique of certain artists adept at experimental practices of fusion of elements, the preferential ability to combine the structure of standard themes in a modern, original manner that takes on new forms, contrary to the traditional ways of tonal jazz. Musicians of the contemporary style articulate stylistically through unequal and variable musical combinations, which do not completely replace the previously known genre terms (jazz, rock, funk), but allow the emergence of other creative styles, which evolve, delight and continuously challenge the characteristics of the preceding categories. Modernism emphasizes the instability of all gender designations and highlights the creative fluidity, the structure of musical practices that gender names try to immortalize to give discussions about jazz, music in general a significant new starting point. Issuing the title of a musical genre (modernism) is a way of recognizing its existence and being able to distinguish it from other musical genres or styles. This (name) becomes a point of reference and easily allows the constitution of certain forms of interactive musical communication, control and specialization in the field, elaboration of templates, discussions, essentially a new evolutionary step.

**Keywords:** jazz, improvisational thinking, instrumental technique, stylistic skills, contemporary harmonic structures, elements “inheritance”, resulting elements.

---

<sup>1</sup> Ph.D., Univ. Lecturer, Transilvania University of Braşov, Faculty of Music, Romania, E-mail: [florin.balan@unitbv.ro](mailto:florin.balan@unitbv.ro)



## Introduction

The constantly moving character of the jazz phenomenon results (also) from the multitude of improvisational techniques applied, elaborated. In a previous phase, jazz was dominated by styles such as Dixieland, blues, swing, then bebop, cool and contemporary current, chronologically we are talking about the period of the '20s and the end of the '60s, contemporary the 60s until 2000, current starting from 2000, until 2024.

In its early form, improvisation consists of a form analogous to the theme, in another expression, which often consisted of a brief reinterpretation of the melodic line, as a useful way of instrumental prolongation of the work. The improvisational expression line usually represented the extension of the additional notes constituting the chords (harmonic support), resulting from the performance of the cadences, compared to the note of the melodic line. The weight, the importance of the improvisational moment, was by no means equivalent to that (/a) of today. The moment was previously conceived, as a possibility of respiro, for the conductor/orchestrator, a situation in which the space was reserved for the performance of dancers and animators. Later, the improvised phenomenon becomes a platform conducive to the brief display of skills, creativity, spontaneous artistic originality.

Starting from the middle of the 20th century, after the sure display of bebop, modernism highlights abstract melodic lines, based on modal or scalar thinking, most of the time, melody and harmony representing separate elements. Thus, paradoxically, each chord can be treated as a tonic or constitutive part of the harmonic progression, also the solo unfolding simultaneously with the structure of the harmonic cycle (hronos protos<sup>2</sup>). Everything is new, focused on the transition from the overall complementary attention to the direct, individual attention, the improvisational line or the melodic line of the theme, still remaining a basic element in the expression, the audience, being fully captivated by the virtuosity of the instrumentalists.

Contemporary jazz, delineated in the early 1980s, develops styles such as free, avant-garde, fusion, smooth and more. As a consequence, there is a (re)modeling of the improvisational form, sketched by the tendency towards complex, harmonic-rhythmic abstract forms, unconvergent with the theme. Thus, the performers experiment force the boundaries of the harmonic relations of tonality, this sound evolution, having a large-scale use of the procedure within the instrumentalist.

---

<sup>2</sup> Giuleanu, Victor. *Tratat de teoria muzicii (Treatise on Music Theory)*, Editura Univers, București, 1986, pp. 167.

Trying a comparative systematization of the traditional improvisational stylistics, with the modern one, inevitably, the following questions take shape:

1. What are *the essential elements that characterize a certain style*?
2. What are *the typical elements that differentiate between styles*?
3. What are *the ways of implementing traditional elements in the modern interpretative manner*?

### 1. Comparative characteristic features of *swing* and *bebop* style

Although, the detailed treatment of each individual style, (E.g.1) the importance for the success of a systematization of the multitude of characteristic elements necessary for evolutionary transit, here is a first comparison between blues (swing) and bebop (hardbop) styles, styles, which, moreover, are fundamental, for the stages of transformation over time of jazz.

E.g. 1

STYLE	BLUES/SWING (1930-1945)	BEBOP/HARDBOP (1945-1960)
Relevance	Dancing music, ambient	Concert music, specialist audience, connoisseur
Rhythmical ward	Base drum on time (emphasized), mixing of short and long-lasting values, even predictable, easy to anticipate, constant, linear rhythmical support	Time cymbals (accentuated), rhythms with complex variations, note durations in small subdivision, polyrhythms, hemioles, continuous interaction
Harmony	Typical stride style chords, conventional harmony with natural tensions, standard ii-VI chains	Accompaniment with specific voice distributions (Bud Powell), 5 b, 9 b, altered dominant chords, tritonous substitutions, chromatisms
Guitar part	On strong time chords, rhythmic support	Multiple melodic lines, in the exposition, often the procedure of dubbing the theme in unison (electric guitar)
Bass line	Continuous movement (walking bassline)	Continuous movement (walking bassline)
Band parts, instrumental constitution	Big Band instrumental composition (oriented towards amplitude and sound dynamics)	Small group (oriented towards virtuosity and spontaneous creativity)

STYLE	BLUES/SWING (1930-1945)	BEBOP/HARDBOP (1945-1960)
Solo elements	Dominant trisons, diatonic chains, lyrical touch. Arpeggios	Arpeggios formed by sounds added to the range (extensions), aggressive impostation, devoid of vibrato (sax.), the use of exotic scales, chromatisms, starting phrases at week parts/ times
Melody	Repetitive, lyric melody, supported by usual, symmetrical harmonic solutions. Easy to sing, melody consisting of adjoining steps	Non-repetitive lines, complex, asymmetrical phrases, serpentine form, unpredictable outline, out of tonal frame, difficile to intonate/render
Compositional invoice	Concise orchestral arrangement, ample sound	Individual, complex, extremely, dynamic improvisations
Tempo	Slow or medium movement	Particularly fast movement with multiple accents

### General characteristics, styles comparison

As a general consequence, gospel, ragtime, blues-boogie, ragtime-stride, blues-urban, swing or even prebop styles are based on elements characteristic of the blues style.

Moreover, as eloquent proof of the relevance of the style, the impact of the phenomenon blues, had a special scope, penetrating and shaping essentially, many other styles of matter "music":

*Country-blues,*

*Urban blues,*

*West Coast Sound,*

*Rhythm & Blues (R & B),*

*Folk blues.*

In turn, the bebop/hardbop style, developed after the '60s, influenced the following styles, such as cool, funky, mainstream, modal, free.

## 2. Features comparison elements, atonal and free style

STYLE	ATONAL	FREE JAZZ
Using Modes	All modes	Modes without tonal center (chromatism use)
Improvising features	Based (still) on modes, steps	Free, nonconformist improvisation.
Functionality of harmonic relations	No functional harmony	No functional harmony
Possible implementation in other musical styles	Can not be implemented (in Schönberg's serialism, the improvisational moment becomes difficult due to complex rules).	Can not be implemented
Tonality	Polytonality, towards atonal	Atonal, free
Rhythm	Polyrhythmia	Arrhythmia
Distinct shape/structure	No clear shape	No clear shape
Pianistic cluster implementation, other elements	Cecyl Taylor, cluster: -chromatic: d, e flat, e. -diatonic: c, d, e. -pentatonic: d, e, g, a.	Non-cluster, predominantly harmonic instruments have the role of summary accompaniment, the importance of speech is taken by wind instruments, percussion, emphasis on the melodic-rhythmic aspect
The term "Energy"	Timbral color, rhythm, tempo, meter, dynamics, register, density= sense of style	Interpretation in force, high speeds, acute registers, incisive manner, staccato, excessive melodic cumulation = sense of style
Ignoring previous rules	Mostly	In totality

### General characteristics, details

### **3. Harmonical appearance, generalities**

The harmonic availabilities implemented in modern jazz constitute one of the strong elements of modern creation. The added extensions (9th, 11th, 13th), whole-half steps modes and scales, shrunk, dominant bebop, super Locrian, contribute fully to the realization of modern jazzistic texture. Creative skills, based on the use of interval jumps, arpeggios, chromatic modulations, vertical chord unfolding in the horizontal scale (on) constitute some of the most important elements. (see Lydian Concept/George Russel)

The distribution of voices in traditional jazz stops with the addition of the 7th and 9th degree, in modern jazz the appearance of 11th and 13th degree bringing that "color" defining contemporary harmonic tensions. The improvisational line/idea is correlated with the harmonic structure, respectively the distribution of voices, the chords with the modal structure obliging the need to appeal to the structure of the tonal-functional lows of the modes.

We find arpeggios, interval jumps in both periods, traditional styles such as swing or bebop strengthening the line of the theme through harmonic structures. The structuring of modern improvisation consists in the intense exploitation of the tonal framework (and not only), the harmonic tensions (dissonances), often omitting the solution to a tonal center.

### **4. Rhythmic appearance, generalities**

More than harmony, rhythm differentiates between traditional and modern, additionally, the complex rhythmic elements giving color, consistency and originality to the improvisational moment. Traditionally, the rhythm taken over, once derived from African culture, is transformed through subdivisions and polyrhythms, attributes that render the contemporary natural approach. The traditional way consists of values of eighth, sixteenth notes, implemented in moments of dynamic coloration or compilations of rhythmic variations. The modern way consists of extensive developments, which give a special, unpredictable dynamism, the alternation with moments of static activity generating that stylistic pressure. Freedom, interpretative creativity, however, makes fixing a rhythmical meter/pattern, or a stable tonal center difficult, the attraction of modern manners, the element of surprise being vital.

## 5. Melodic appearance motif, generalities

The reason is perhaps the most important element, which can differentiate between styles, separate the resulting manners throughout evolution. Motivational development can transform a solo into more than a series of sequences or scales, based on a certain chord, moreover, correlated with variational rhythmic elements, it tends to be the element that differentiates between generations or performers. Previously in improvisation, the motif was apparently geared towards memorizing melodic-improvisational lines, reworked and reinterpreted, often mostly in styles such as Dixieland. The motivational musical narrative changes with the passage of time and the emergence of modern jazz, giving up the repetitive elements, the surprise moments of artistic creativity being fundamental. Modern thought consisted of complex rhythms, which do not respect a certain rhythmic pattern, more hastily simultaneously supports the general unfolding, the new musical approaches directly influencing the improvisational manner through the continuous introduction of new melodic ideas. Although the motifs are made up of different variables, the provenance being a methodological one, improvisations regardless of the stylistic period, result in the formation of a cohesive solo.

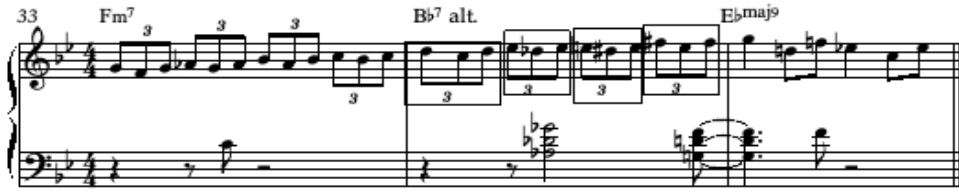
Apart from the reason, phrasing in improvisation is another crucial element, meeting elements, gender-specific features. Like the motif, the choice of phrases, their development is thus not neglected in modal and bebop, the melodic lines and improvisations being often identical.

Herbie Hancock<sup>3</sup> (representative of current generosity although chronologically, essentially transitioning as does Chick Corea between contemporary and current generation), in improvisation beginning with measure 33 of the piece, *Tribute to Someone*, from the year 1963, implements the motifs in success, with restricted upward progressive unfolding (octave ambitus, G'-G"), in chromatic transition (E.g. 3 - measure 34).

---

<sup>3</sup> Hancock, Herbie. *Solo Piano from the Piano*, Tokyo, Chappel & Co. Inc., Print rights for Japan administrated by Yamaha Music Corporation, 1987, p. 17.

**E.g. 3**



**Modern improvisation ideas**

Another new possible current<sup>4</sup> (E.g. 4.) ample motivic unfolding, with an ambitus on the extent scale of 15 steps (F', C'''), a harmonic support through chords with altered added steps/extensions (5b,7,9b), in harmonic progression, on the extent of 7 consecutive steps, downward movement in perfect 5th interval (E, A, D, G, C, F and B flat), previously mentioned jazz procedure (Quint-Fall). (transcription belonging to Alumni, mDeck Music).

**E.g. 4**

**IMPROVISING MOTIVE**



**Soloing ideas**

<sup>4</sup> Alumni @mDeckMusic, Music Books, Courses & Apps, for Musicians by Musicians, created by Berklee College of Music, Alumni, *Improvising using motives*, Coral Springs, Florida, U.S.A., 2021, p. 34.



## Conclusion

Harmony, rhythm, motives are essential elements in the cognitive assimilation of the improvisational moment, the similarity or interaction of traditional and modern elements, representing the next analytical element of the work.

### 1. Harmonic element retrospective, evolution, trends, current expressions

Aspect not to be neglected, in turn it reaches a new evolutionary stage, diversity, harmonic tension taking an accentuated form, an effect due to multiple and complex dissonances.

I list some poses of spontaneity, harmonic fantasy previously encountered, left as “heritage”-challenge, for the next generations of pianists such as:

1. OSCAR PETERSON (within the concert “Oscar Peterson Trio” with trumpeter Terry Clarke, print in Finland 3/23/1965), where he (re)harmonizes the opening chord of the Misty (E.g.5) jazz standard composed by Errol Garner. Later, it was unanimously taken over, as a chord specific to the piece, thanks to the mysterious coloring, suitable as an introductory way of the work.

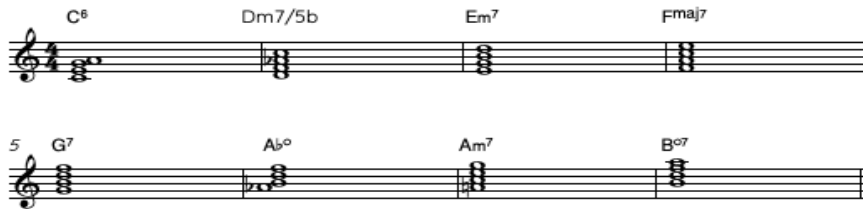
E.g. 5



Reharmonisation, beginning structure

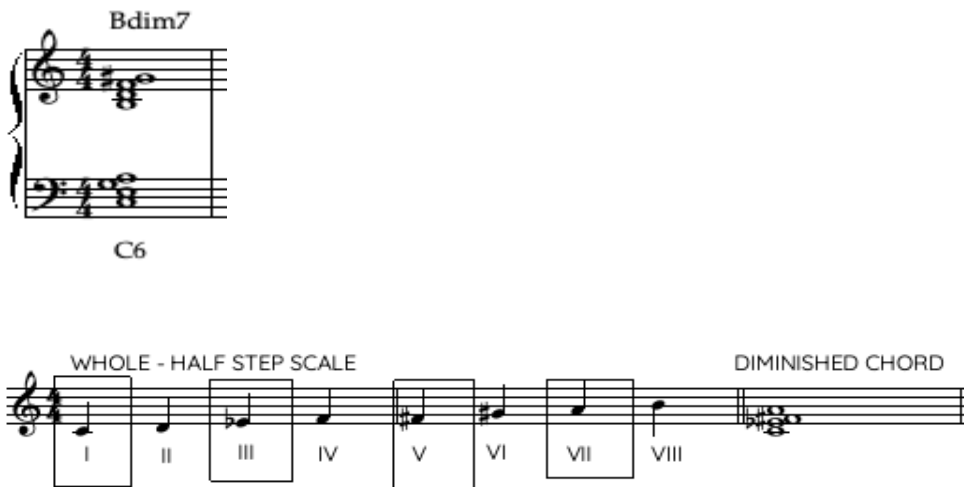
2. BARRY HARRIS, one of the founders of the bebop style, introduces into the harmonic concept (E.g. 6) the chords with added sounds (the VIth degree), considered to be stable, compared to the chords with the large VIIth degree (maj 7), which require an immediate (usually descending) solution, respectively address and finalize the similarity between the reduced chords and the whole-half step scale/ range (E.g. 7).

E.g. 6



Added step scale

E.g. 7

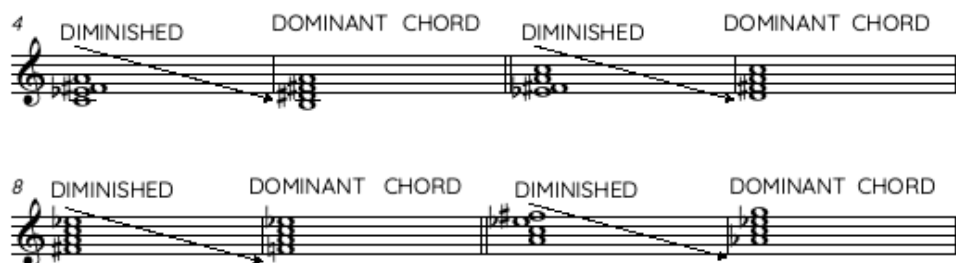


Constitution of diminished chords

The same Barry Harris (E.g. 8), is the promoter of another important step, in the evolution of harmonical thinking, represented by the constitutive closeness, between shrunk chords and dominant chords (minor VII<sup>th</sup> dominant degree). These results by simply lowering the fundamental, (respectively the first sound of the voice distribution) at a low descendant second interval.

An absolutely beneficial method, necessary for the sudden amplification of improvisational spontaneity, which aims to simplify intervallic, (implicitly) harmonic thinking.

**E.g. 8**



### Similarity between diminished and dominant chords

Another creative elaboration (E.g. 9), due to the same Barry Harris, consists of the fusion of the shrunken chords and the pentatonic range (previously remembered as the procedure often implemented in Chick Corea's expression). Thus, a new, agreed procedure results, represented by the application of the pentatonic range, at a large IIIrd interval compared to the agreement, thus avoiding the possible dissonances of the steps, justified as relevance by the multitude of common sounds (e, g, b).

The melodic unfolding, in the form of a spiral movement, starts from the constituent steps of the diminished chord (I, IIIb, Vb, VIIbb).

**E.g. 9**



### Procedure with pentatonic range

Another evolutionary harmonic finding/hypothesis of contemporary jazz reinforces the theory that shrunk tuning can take over as dominant (E.g.10) within the range. Its location, as a stand-alone chord, on the 7th step of the range, (the place of the VIIth degree in the range), can have /has an approach / solving to the tonic (major/minor construction).

E.g. 10



### Double function of the diminished chord

3. MICHEL PETRUCCIANI (within the concert held in Stuttgart, 1993), in turn (re)harmonizes the “B” part of Duke Ellington's piece *In a sentimental Mood* in his own special, complex, creative-stimulating vision (E.g. 11). It represents an important evolutionary step in terms of (re)interpreting/configuring laws, harmonic relationships. (Jeremy Fleury transcription)

E.g. 11



### Remodeling melodic lines with chords

In conclusion, the findings presented can be treated as possible tendential evidence, in a previous phase preceding the expansion, elaboration of unconventional harmonic color, since the year 1963. Certainly, these visions stimulated, later incited harmonic thinking, constituting a challenge continued by contemporary jazz enthusiasts.

A modern systematization<sup>5</sup> of current modern harmonic thinking (E.g. 12) is due to the brilliant, compact and concise realization of Nicolas Slonimsky. From the content, elements such as modern terminology, pandiatony<sup>6</sup>, the current technique of musical creation, the ways of using the diatonic range without limiting

<sup>5</sup> Slonimsky, Nicholas. *Thesaurus of Scales and Melodic Pattern*, Amsco Publications, New York, London, Paris, Sydney, 1975, p. 242-244.

<sup>6</sup> Kennedy, Michael. *Oxford Dictionary of Music*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1980, p. 778. “Pandiatonicism, term coined by American musicologist Slonimsky, to describe the free use in chord-formation of 7 degrees of the diatonic scale, e.g. the added 6<sup>th</sup> in jazz”.

CURRENT WAYS OF MELODICAL IMPROVISATION,  
REVOLUTIONARY JAZZ THINKING IN THE XXI ST CENTURY

the tonal functionality, are all treated from a new, particularly interesting point of view. (In the classical music<sup>7</sup>, eloquent works that reproduce the compositional technique can be listed Stravinsky, Piano Concerto or Serenade 1952, Debussy, Coin des Enfants 1910, a work with which he obtained the title of Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum, or later 1911, again Stravinsky with Petrushka).

**E.g. 12**

The image displays nine musical examples of different chord structures, each shown in a piano-style notation with treble and bass staves. The examples are labeled as follows:

- BITONAL MAJOR CHORD:** Shows two triads, one in G major and one in D major, played simultaneously.
- BITONAL MINOR CHORD:** Shows two triads, one in G minor and one in D minor, played simultaneously.
- WHOLE TONE CHORD:** Shows a triad of whole tones, specifically F, G, and A.
- FOURTH CHORD:** Shows a triad of perfect fourths, specifically B, E, and A.
- CHROMATICAL CHORD:** Shows a cluster of seven notes: B, C, D, E, F, G, and A.
- PANDIATONIC CHORD:** Shows a cluster of seven notes: B, C, D, E, F, G, and A.
- CLUSTER PANDIATONIC:** Shows a cluster of seven notes: B, C, D, E, F, G, and A.
- CLUSTER PENTATONIC:** Shows a cluster of five notes: B, C, D, E, and F.
- PIRAMIDAL CHORD:** Shows a cluster of seven notes: B, C, D, E, F, G, and A.

**Different chord structures**

<sup>7</sup> Apel, Willi. *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1974, Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A., p. 637.

## 2. Harmonic aspect, parallel current generation

Making the transition, (parallel) to/with the generation of the 21st century, we find a multitude of these new constellations, complex harmonic distributions of the constituent voices, in the expression of many current jazz performers such as:

1. RUSLAN BOLATOV, representative of the current Ukrainian jazz school (Kiev), with a (re)interpretation/harmonization (2017) of the *Blue in Green*<sup>8</sup> (E.g.13) jazz standard, Miles Davies' (*Kind of Blue*) cool style composition from 1959, makes use, of such complex, extensive casts. (Transcription represents the beginning of the piece, minute 0.00-0.10.)

E.g. 13

BLUE IN GREEN

Miles Davies  
Ruslan Bolatov

**A**  
Ad libitum

### Introduction of Blue in Green

Analyzing briefly, at first glance, the wide distributive ambitus of the voices is immediately observed over the extent of 4 octaves in upward motion, compared to the previous way of the 20th century, where everything boils down, in this case, to positions with tight distributions, (left hand & right hand voicings), compact, plated/block chords<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> Bolatov, Ruslan. *Blue in Green*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BM61ZTdMUsw>

<sup>9</sup> Levine, Mark. *Jazz Piano Book*, Sher Music Co., Petaluma, California, U.S.A., 1989, p. 133.

Analyzing, measure 1 (E.g. 14), it renders an ongoing tritonus substitution in the form of arpeggio, based on the note B-flat on bottom (bass) on the left hand (for tonal consolidation the sequence of the 2 ascending quints still appears), followed by an intervallic figuration (perfect 4ths and 5ths in progressive upward movement) of the right hand, structure of the E minor range, elliptic of Vth and VIth degree (note b and note c). Starting from the fundamental, we discover the structure of the B-flat (mode) lidian (note E natural), with the VIIth degree (note A) in the bottom, as range point of view.

**E.g. 14**



### Harmonical voicing's structure

In measure 2 (E.g.15), we note the same arpeggio substitutional procedure, supported by the note a in the base line (tritonus procedure), followed by the intervallic figuration of the E-flat major range, with the minor IIth degree (note f) and the large VIIth degree (d natural) added to the right hand. Starting from the tonic, the steps of the range to the frigic (mode), elliptical of IIIth degree and with a lowered Vth degree (note E flat) stand out.

**E.g. 15**



### Voices, distributions

Measures 3-4 (E.g.16), harmonically stabilize, outlining a tonal center of the piece, through an upward-downward constructive expression of the pentatonic F range, with added major VIIth step (note E) to the right hand,

supported by the D minor 7 sus 4 chord to the left hand, a reordering of the steps, representing the natural, elliptical D minor range of the sext (note B).

**E.g. 16**



**Modal chord voicing**

2. JACOB COLLIER, another representative of the young British generation (real name Jacob Moriaty), born on 02.08.1994, in London, England. Here's a personal way to use (vocal) re-monition (E.g.17), in the introduction to the Moon River jazz standard (1961 Grammy Award-winning *Breakfast at Tiffany's* soundtrack in 1962). (transcription by June Lee<sup>10</sup> 2020, starting min. 3.37).

Modern procedures, chords with (multiple) added sounds, as follows:

**E.g. 17**

### MOON RIVER

**Voicings distribution's harmonic structure**

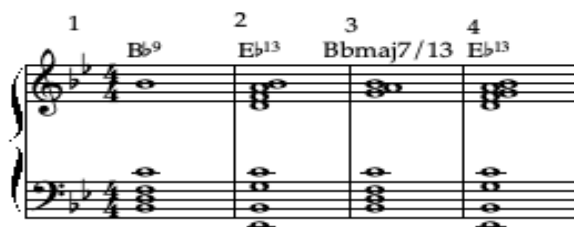
<sup>10</sup> Collier, Jacob. *Moon River* (Transcription), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KhyyjRcm84>



# CURRENT WAYS OF MELODICAL IMPROVISATION, REVOLUTIONARY JAZZ THINKING IN THE XXI ST CENTURY

To deepen, the structural clarification of the steps used (E.g.18), the application of the procedure of harmonic reduction of the distribution of voices, in the melodic unfolding of the first 4 measures, render the following constructive constellation:

**E.g. 18**



## Harmonic reduction

Another used procedure, often found in the expression of the current harmonic context, is the involvement of false cadences, a way to think in advance, the realization of the desired harmonic tensions. Structure, color, the resulting new chains, expansion, the freedom of movement of the improvisational framework is necessary for the sound realization of the new evolutionary step. Although, in essence, the mentioned procedure does not constitute a new element, previously Schumann, Brahms, or Chopin (all), apply this method in the romantic period, the use representing an additional bridge, of the overall vision of contemporary/current jazz (complex).

A systematization (E.g.19) of some current possibilities of substitution, modern (often unpredictable) contouring of the v-I relationship, (at third-party intervals), applied in multiple situations of timbral expansion of the harmonic coloring of the contemporary/current generation, looks like this:

**E.g. 19**

A minor-D7	F# minor7- B7	3m descendant
A minor-D7	F minor7- Bb7	3M descendant
A minor-D7	Bb minor7- Eb7	2m ascendant
A minor-D7	B minor7- E7	2M ascendant
A minor-D7	C minor7- F7	3m ascendant
A minor-D7	C# minor7- F#7	3M ascendant

## V-I Extended substitutions, modern solutions

### 3. Melodic elements retrospective, evolution, current trends

If previously, we were fascinated by pianists such as:

- Oscar Peterson (thanks to his great interpretative technique, based on concert style, in the blues manner),
- Michel Petrucciani (by further implementing in addition to that of elements characteristic of blues style, bebop elements in interpretative classical expression),
- Chick Corea (through the additional, creative approach to Latino style<sup>11</sup>),
- Bill Evans (through the creative spontaneity of the big harmonic tensioned picture<sup>12</sup>),
- Herbie Hancock (through the inventiveness of developing the complex of mentioned procedures, in a double way, harmonic and melodic application), finally, we move on to a new segment of performers, made up of instrumentalists of the current period dated after 2000.

After a brief review of the “inheritance” of the melodic concept, for establishing new, derived elements, implicitly the resulting context, an analysis of the current generation is inevitable.

- Returning to the (old) same BARRY HARRIS (E.g.20), he once again makes his personal contribution to the elaboration of the melodic-improvisational lines of the bebop style, realizing by introducing the chromatic concept into the new improvisational thinking.

Thus, in personal elaboration<sup>13</sup>, between steps III-IV and VII-VIII, an upward jump is performed to the next note in the range, thus continuing the procedure, in the direction of intended movement.

---

<sup>11</sup> Fernandez, Raul. *Latin Jazz la Combination Perfécta*, Press and Society for Ethnomusicology, Vol.48, No.3, 2004, University of Illinois, Chicago, pp. 469-473.

<sup>12</sup> Reilly, Jack. *The Harmony of Bill Evans*, Unichrom Ltd., 1992, Brooklyn, New York, U.S.A., p. 4-31

<sup>13</sup> Rees, Howard. *The Barry Harris Workshop*, Jazz Workshop Productions, 2004, New York, N.Y.U., Artists House Foundation, p. 3.

E.g. 20

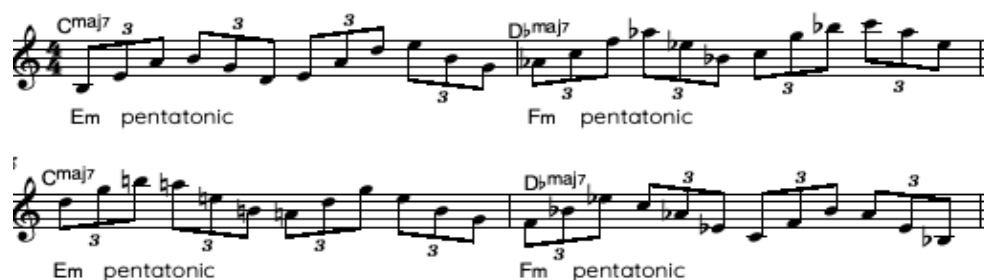


**Added chromatic notes ascending/ descendant motion**

Deepening the previous harmonic procedure of false cadence, in the next step, an absolutely new interval-melodic thinking is outlined (Ex.21a/b), by compiling and transposing (at the same IIIrd and IVth interval construction) the unfolding of pentatonic structures, starting from their different steps.

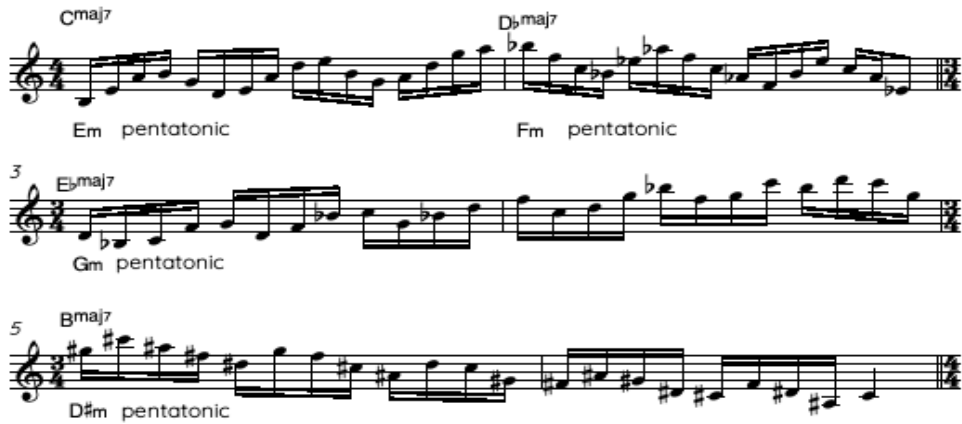
**Pentatonic variations, multiple forms of unfolding**

E.g. 21a



**Pentatonic structures**

E.g. 21b



Extended pentatonic structures

#### 4. Constructive melodic principles of modern improvisational topics

The modern topic of improvisational organization is an active characteristic of the creative phenomenon. One of the current, conclusive concepts, founder of a broad systematization of the construction of improvisational lines (in classical, jazz) is realized, analyzed by Nicolas Slonimsky.

The great orchestrator and composer himself, Quincy Jones<sup>14</sup>, said in a February 2018 interview that „I can imagine that all the material used by saxophonist John Coltrane, in improvisational expression, is found here, with ease”.

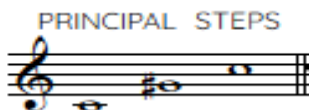
As an initiation procedure (E.g.22), it applies to the classical diatonic structure, a division into:

<sup>14</sup> Marchese, David. *In Conversation: Quincy Jones*, Vulture, 7 February 2018  
**Yeah, he was famously obsessed with the *Thesaurus of Scales and Melodic Patterns*. That's the one you're talking about, right?**  
 „That's right. You're bringing up all the good subjects now! Everything that Coltrane ever played was in that thesaurus. In fact, right near the front of that book, there's a 12-tone example — it's "Giant Steps." Everyone thinks Coltrane wrote that, he didn't. It's Slonimsky. That book started all the jazz guys improvising in 12-tone. Coltrane carried that book around till the pages fell off. “

CURRENT WAYS OF MELODICAL IMPROVISATION,  
REVOLUTIONARY JAZZ THINKING IN THE XXI ST CENTURY

- 2 equal parts as follows:

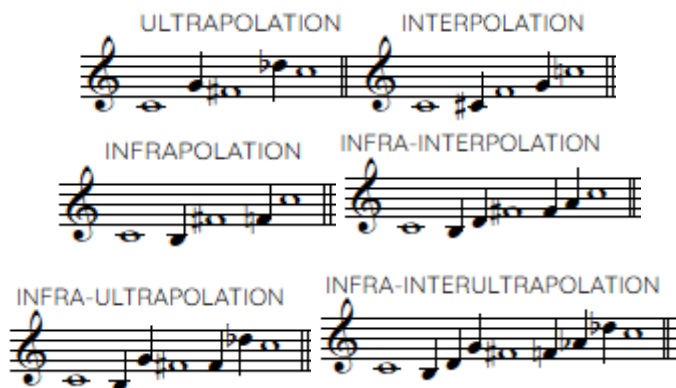
E.g. 22



**Principal steps division**

Particularly ingenious methods (E.g.23), relating to the drafting and constructive systematization of the main steps (according to the pattern of said division), are applied by the procedures of ultra, inter, infra, infra-inter-polar, as follows:

E.g. 23



**Main division with variations**

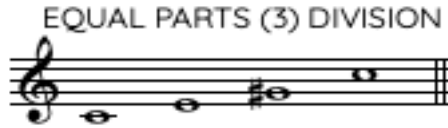
By applying the stated procedure, the following (possible) solutions for expression, 161 intervallic construction of melodic-improvisational lines, previously applied, first especially in the field of classical music, result.

Melodic examples (E.g.24a/b) resulting from the use of the method:

E.g. 24a



**Melodical line**



- Additional possibility of dividing the range into 3 equal segments (major third, G# - C, enharmonic evaluation).

E.g. 24b



### Melodic intervallic line

Following this new division, the following possibilities (E.g.25) for the elaboration of the melodic line result:

E.g. 25



### New division possibility

- Additional way of dividing into 4 equal segments (minor 3rds, enharmonic statement) of the diatonic tonal frame.

E.g. 26



### Division, new visions

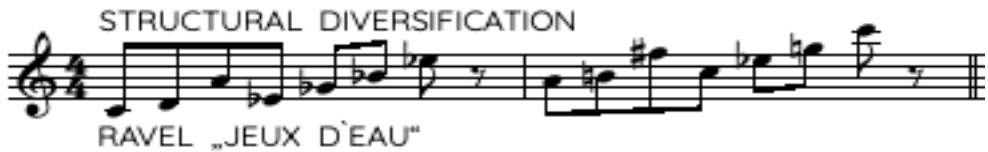
The next examples, E.g. 27a/b, previously applied in classical creation after the new structuring:

E.g. 27a



**Melodic Line**

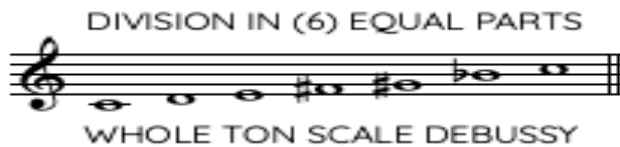
E.g. 27b



**Principal Melodic Line**

- Additional 6-part division (E.g.28) variant of the diatonic tonal frame (major ascending lls, in enharmonic treatment)

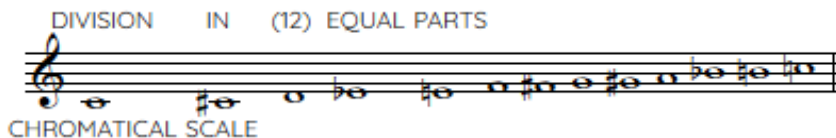
E.g. 28



**New division possibilities**

The additional variant (E.g.29) of splitting into 12 equal parts (minor lls, upward chromatic movement)

E.g. 29



**Division structure**

Creative possibilities (E.g.30), resulting from the new succession, divisions:

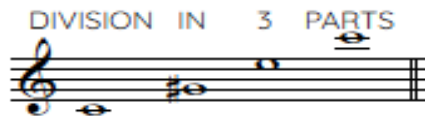
E.g. 30



### Imitations

- Structured division (E.g.31) on a broad tonal scroll (minor VIth, in enharmonic expression) on the ambitus of two octaves.

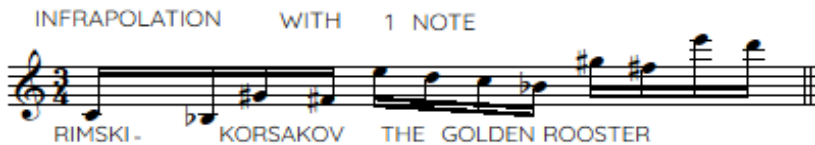
E.g. 31



### Equal divisions

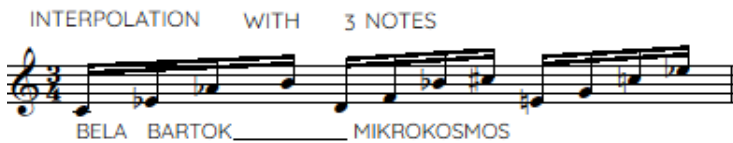
Different melodic expressions (E.g.32) resulting from the contemporary classical creational field:

E.g. 32a



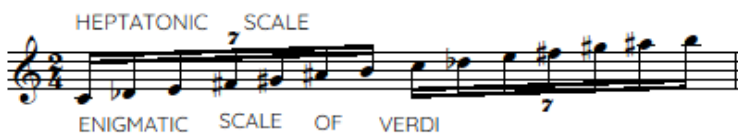
### Melodic line

E.g. 32b



### New melodic line

E.g. 32c



### Compositional ideas



CURRENT WAYS OF MELODICAL IMPROVISATION,  
REVOLUTIONARY JAZZ THINKING IN THE XXI ST CENTURY

E.g. 32d



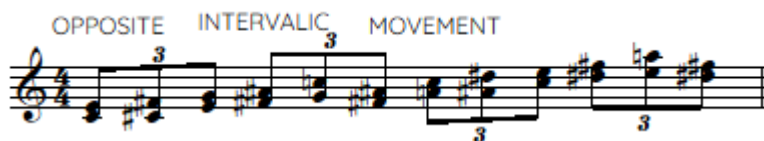
Arpeggios structure

E.g. 32e



Dodecaphony structures

E.g. 32f



Voicings movement

E.g. 32g



Modern progressions

### Final conclusions

An enumeration of new elements, specific to the current generation, are represented by:

- emergence of motives in the form of progressions on different steps,
- broadening, premeditated extension of improvisational tonal framework,

- the emergence of exotic stairs or ranges, as an improvisational constructive way
- broad harmonic unfolding, spanning 5/6 octaves (of the piano)
- implementation of transient harmonies (passing chords, modal interchange),
- precipitation of melodic-harmonic cumulation,
- precipitation of rhythmic cumulation.

The long history of pianistic jazz that starts with the ragtime style, knows different intermediate stages and now reaches, (21st century), a difficult phase of development.

Through their pioneering work, a lot of pianists contribute to the crystallization of different interpretive styles, the keyboard instrument thus becoming a basic component of expression in the contemporary evolution of jazz.

However, comparing its beginnings, where several established performers could stand out for each style, we now reach the stage where there are only a multitude of variations and not directly indisputably represented of a style, current, or a new direction of creativity!

Contemporary pianists present, through their own interpretive manner, a particularly high level, regarding the technical, harmonic, inventive-interpretive, expressive aspect, etc., *but none of them can be listed as a promoter of a new style, namely, of a new era in the history of jazz!*

- It would certainly be a mistake to list a single performer, as superior to his other peers, decisive for the tie-breaker, in this case, it is certainly the degree of popularity, due to record sales, live or multimedia appearances, essentially this aspect having absolutely nothing in common with the value, musical, artistic substance, of the act issued (on stage)!

- Jazz is a timely, unexpected infusion of musical material. Jazz has discovered in music a particular expressive sphere, foreign to the multi-secular European experience.

- Jazz provides spontaneous access to living and involvement, often without even possessing the basic academic knowledge of the subject, supporting the idea of improvisational flow, as a basic compositional method.

- Jazz represents the logical continuation, at another level of propagation, of the fusion of the genres of the music of the popular masses, implicitly of a popular culture, fitting perfectly into the democratic status, both United States and in Europe, as an expression of freedom and social unrestrained.

## REFERENCES

- Alumni@mDeckMusic. Music Books, Courses & Apps, for Musicians by Musicians, created by Berklee College of Music, Alumni, *Improvising using motives*, Coral Springs, Florida, U.S.A., 2021.
- Apel, Willi. *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1974, Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A.
- Fernandez, Raul. *Latin Jazz Combination Perfécta*, Press and Society for Ethnomusicology, Vol.48, No.3, University of Illinois, Chicago, 2004.
- Giuleanu, Victor. *Tratat de teoria muzicii (Treatise on Music Theory)*, Editura Univers, București, 1986.
- Hancock, Herbie. *Solo Piano from the Piano*, Tokyo, Chappel & Co. Inc., Print rights for Japan administrated by Yamaha Music Corporation, 1987.
- Kennedy, Michael. *Oxford Dictionary of Music*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1980.
- Levine, Mark. *Jazz Piano Book*, Sher Music Co., Petaluma, Caifornia, U.S.A., 1989.
- Rees, Howard. *The Barry Harris Workshop*, Jazz Workshop Productions, N.Y.U., Artists House Foundation, New York, 2004.
- Reilly, Jack. *The Harmony of Bill Evans*, Unichrom Ltd., Brooklyn, New York, U.S.A., 1992.
- Slonimsky, Nicholas. *Thesaurus of Scales and Melodic Pattern*, Amsco Publications, New York, London, Paris, Sydney, 1975.

