BIRD’S WORDS AND LENNIE’S LESSONS:
USING OR AVOIDING PATTERNS IN BEBOP

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Research on how jazz musicians improvise suggests that learned patterns or “licks” inserted during improvisations are ubiquitous, especially among those playing bebop. Analysis of saxophonist Charlie Parker’s solos reveals his reliance on distinct patterns that he often repeated multiple times in a single solo. Due to Parker's iconic status as a bebop progenitor and his influence on the dissemination of mainstream bebop vocabulary, one can argue that bebop improvisation is dependent on the use of licks and that they are fundamental to bebop syntax and vocabulary. This claim is supported by a myriad of improvisation manuals advocating the practice of licks as integral to the acquisition and development of bebop vocabulary.

Saxophonists Lee Konitz and Warne Marsh were both contemporaries of Parker who matured as improvisers under the direction of teacher Lennie Tristano. Though he and his students revered Parker, Tristano’s pedagogical method rejected the imitation of other bebop improvisers by specifically avoiding the inclusion of licks, thus encouraging more melodic spontaneity. The results of Tristano's method are exemplified by the work of Konitz and Marsh during the late 1940s and early 1950s.

This paper addresses the relative merits of these two approaches to bebop by investigating the stylistic differences between Parker and Tristano’s students Konitz and Marsh. Chapter 1 discusses Parker's approach to improvisation, specifically his use of
licks, and his influence on mainstream jazz pedagogy. Chapter 2 outlines Tristano's pedagogical method and discusses the differences between his approach and the mainstream approach to teaching bebop. Chapter 3 explores the cognitive and neurological necessity of using licks in bebop, and discusses current music cognition literature and fMRI studies conducted on improvisers. Chapter 4 presents an analysis of licks by Parker, Konitz, and Marsh, and their effect on improvisational outcomes. As there is a rhetorical quality to jazz improvisation, linguistic concordance software called AntConc was used to locate patterns in the transcriptions. AntConc analysis reveals a greater volume and frequency of patterns in the playing of Parker than in the playing of Konitz and Marsh.
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INTRODUCTION

Throughout the history of jazz, stylistic developments from one era to another are often pioneered by a small group of individuals, or in some cases a single musician. Louis Armstrong inspired a generation of players when he achieved fame in the 1920s, and the same can be said about Lester Young a decade later. In the lineage of jazz pioneers, alto saxophonist Charlie Parker had perhaps the greatest impact on the post-war generation of jazz players. As trumpeter and Parker protégé Miles Davis once said, “You can tell the history of jazz in four words: Louis Armstrong, Charlie Parker.”¹ By the late 1940s, Parker's improvisational approach had become synonymous with bebop, and many of the musicians of the bop and post-bop eras sought to emulate, or at least assimilate, his sound and style. Historian Chuck Haddix remarked that Parker “changed the course of music” and that everyone in the bop and post bop eras was influenced by him, many being blatant plagiarists.² Parker's style became the basis for many younger musicians, their foundation over which to develop and expand jazz vocabulary.

The issue of copying Parker is perhaps a consequence of his approach to improvisation, specifically his use of formulas or “licks.”³ The term lick describes any short recognizable motif, melodic fragment or phrase used during an improvised solo in a jazz, blues or pop music setting.⁴ Typically, licks are pre-learned through either deliberate

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³ For the purposes of this paper, there is no distinction between the terms “lick,” and “formula.” The term “pattern” will be used to describe a repeated series of pitches that may or may not constitute a lick. To be clear, “pattern” may describe a lick, but also may describe material to general to be considered a lick. The term “melodic fragment” is distinguishable from the other three and describes a lick, pattern or formula derived from melodic material.
or subconscious practice and are inserted at appropriate harmonic junctures during an improvisation. Their use is a conceivably unavoidable aspect of jazz improvisation, particularly in bebop where they are notably present. Paul Berliner defines their role as integral to jazz improvisation, and describes their time honored use among jazz veterans as “things you can do” when you can't think of something to play.5 Parker's use of licks is well documented, most significantly by Thomas Owens who studied and cataloged over 100 of Parker's licks based on an analysis of a large corpus of transcribed Parker solos.6 According to Owens, Parker had a store of short melodic ideas that he inserted over corresponding chord changes in certain situations. These ideas were often reshaped, combined, or phrased in ways that created a sense of spontaneity despite being partially pre-composed.7

As Parker's influence grew in the late 1940s and early 1950s, so too did the number of imitators of his sound. The result was that many of Parker's licks became incorporated into a universal bebop lexicon, and because Parker and other bebop players relied heavily on licks during improvisation, the use of licks naturally became an accepted part of bebop performance practice. Imitation, to some degree, is crucial for students learning to improvise in a jazz context. Performance practice elements like swing, articulation, and phrasing are impossible to glean through notation and must instead be learned through listening to established practitioners. It is therefore appropriate that Charlie Parker's “lick” approach became incorporated into most standard pedagogical

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models for learning bebop. Parker himself used licks, and Parker's sound had become synonymous with bebop, therefore licks must be essential to learning and playing bebop.

There were several pioneers in the field of jazz education, including David Baker, Jamie Aebersold, and Jerry Coker, who were among the first to market a concrete methodology for learning how to improvise in jazz. Many of these texts emphasize bebop as the appropriate foundational language over which to build a vocabulary as a jazz improviser, and strongly advocate the practice of patterns as a means to achieve bebop vocabulary. However, despite their promotion and ubiquitous use, licks maintain a paradoxical status among most jazz musicians and critics. On one hand, students are encouraged by teachers and methodologies to use licks as a foundational tool, while on the other hand it is generally agreed by improvisers and critics that "musicians who 'cheat' by playing the same or similar solos over and over again are looked down upon by colleagues and fans." 8

A similar paradox can be found when looking at licks in relation to their source. It is nearly impossible to conceive of a jazz pedagogical method that does not include the practice of listening to master improvisers as an integral part of the learning process. Transcription is almost universally accepted as a critical tool in teaching jazz, and students are often encouraged to listen to and transcribe recordings of their favorite players in order to learn their licks and dissect their stylistic attributes. However, while the occasional use of licks borrowed from other players is seen as a nod of respect, those who rely too much on borrowed material are treated as thieves or copiers. The result is a contradiction in which students are expected to learn licks from famous players only to

refrain from using them during improvisation so they do not sound too much like their source.

These conflicting ideologies create a myriad of questions relating to Charlie Parker and the bebop language. Parker is hailed as one of the great jazz improvisers of all time, and yet his solos are filled with repetition and licks. If Parker is a prime representative of bebop improvisation, can it be assumed that improvisation in the bebop style is impossible without the use of licks? On the issue of copying, how much of Parker's material is universal and how much is personal? In other words, are Parker's licks simply a constitutive element of bebop vocabulary, or are they personal compositional statements that should not be copied?

The question of the necessity of licks in bebop also brings into focus the need for a more concrete definition of the bebop language itself. Bebop is typically defined through historical and social terms rather than musical ones, or it is defined by referencing the practitioners of the style. For example, bebop is often defined as a modernist musical movement born in New York through the efforts of artists like Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie and which lasted from roughly 1940 to 1955. This definition is accurate, but it offers no insight into the bebop language itself. In addition, musical definitions of bebop are often imprecise and constructed by illustrating bebop's innovations to previous styles rather than overtly outlining specific musical elements. An appropriate example is found in Alyn Shipton's definition of bebop:

Whereas swing had largely been to do with consolidation, unifying approaches to meter, chording, the voicing and arranging of melodies, and ways of building improvised solos, the new movement involved changes not just to those areas of unification, but also, at a more fundamental level, to all the underlying elements of music itself: melody, harmony, and rhythm.  

While a concise definition of the bebop language might be impossible to produce, should the use of licks be included as a definitive element of bebop vocabulary and syntax? Licks are a critical aspect of many existing improvisational styles, one example being the blues. Blues vocabulary includes a collection of melodic and rhythmic patterns and gestures that have been gleaned from practitioners and then made generic over time. These gestures are a part of the blues language, and soloists playing in a blues style are often expected to utilize them during improvisation. Is this concept relevant to bebop and should a practitioner of the bebop style be expected to play “bebop licks” during improvisation, therefore making licks a definitive aspect of bebop?

As Parker and his followers were exploring and expanding bebop vocabulary, pianist Lennie Tristano was attempting to distance himself from Parker's influence. To be clear, Tristano revered Parker and like many others felt that Parker was perhaps the greatest improviser of all time. However, rather than using Parker as a model to imitate, Tristano was attempting to create and develop his own style of bebop that was not reliant on Parker’s licks. In fact, Tristano was indignant and extremely vocal in his criticisms toward the rampant “ripping-off” of Parker by bebop players in the 1940s and 50s.10

In addition to his skill as an improviser, Tristano was also a gifted teacher who created a unique and comprehensive method for teaching jazz, and he and his students came to be dubbed the “Tristano school” of bebop. Tristano's aim was to help his students develop their own improvisational voice by teaching them to transfer their aural conception to their instrument immediately, or in other words, to play what they hear. The

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result was a group of musicians who had distinct voices that were rooted in the principles of the Tristano method. In a period where Parker's style permeated the playing of many bebop musicians, Tristano was attempting to foster a bebop style that did not rely on Parker's licks or anyone else’s. Between 1940 and 1977, Tristano had hundreds of students, some only taking one lesson and others studying with him for more than a decade. Tristano's notable students from the 1940s and 1950s include pianist Sal Mosca, bassist Peter Ind, and saxophonists Lee Konitz and Warne Marsh.

Despite having one of the first documented systematic methods for teaching bebop improvisation, Tristano's curriculum has still yet to find its place in mainstream jazz pedagogy. This is due largely to the fact that he never wrote his method down, but is likely an additional consequence of his reclusive nature and open abhorrence towards nearly all jazz styles after bebop. Most of the specifics of his method have been revealed through interviews with Tristano himself and with his students. It is clear from these interviews and from recorded evidence that Tristano created a viable system for learning bebop that specifically avoided the use of licks, particularly those of Parker, in improvisation.

In order to answer the question of the necessity of licks in bebop pedagogy, I first attempt to determine if it is possible to play in a bebop style while avoiding the use of licks. To do so, I have analyzed and compared solos by Charlie Parker, Lee Konitz and Warne Marsh. The analysis addresses the difference between Parker's style and the style perpetuated by Tristano's students, ultimately showing that the Tristano style was distinctive within the bebop genre while still creating unique players. I focus my comparison on Parker's use of licks and the relative lack of licks in the playing of
Tristano's students.

My intention is not to show that Tristano himself played differently than Parker – there are several examples of individuals in the bebop era who did not imitate Parker, most notably Thelonious Monk – but to show that the style Tristano endorsed and developed through his teaching method was different than Parker's. I have chosen to compare solos by Parker to solos by Konitz and Marsh for two primary reasons. The first is that all three are saxophone players, which allows for a direct comparison of styles without having to account for idiomatic tendencies of different instruments. The second reason is that Konitz and Marsh are considered two of Tristano's most successful students and prime examples of the outcomes of the Tristano methodology. In addition, it is unclear if Tristano actually applied his methods to his own playing, whereas Marsh and Konitz both studied with him for more than a decade.

Although the discussion of licks can be applied to other genres of jazz and jazz pedagogy, I again emphasize that I am limiting my focus to their use in the genre of bebop, that is, the style that spanned from roughly 1940 to 1955 and corresponded to the playing during that period of artists such as Parker, Tristano (and his disciples), Dizzy Gillespie, Bud Powell, Fats Navarro, and many others. Licks are a characteristic of many other genres of jazz, especially in later styles which utilized vocabulary involving pentatonics and upper structure triads. The use of licks in such styles, though relevant to the cognitive and neurological discussion of improvisation, is beyond the scope of this paper.

It should also be noted that Tristano, Konitz and Marsh are often labeled (or mislabeled) as a “cool” jazz artists rather than bebop, although they themselves
disparaged the designation. Tristano and his disciples, like many jazz artists throughout history, were much less concerned with genre tags than the record labels, radio stations and club owners who were pushing their music. The musical vocabulary of Tristano, Konitz and Marsh shares much more in common with Parker than it does with other “cool” artists such as George Shearing, Stan Getz, or Gerry Mulligan, and in many ways Tristano, Konitz and Marsh can be viewed as influences of the “cool” school rather than proponents of the style. There are of course numerous stylistic differences between Parker and Konitz and Marsh, but for the purposes of this paper it will be assumed that such differences lie within the spectrum of bebop and do not demarcate distinct genres. Discussion of the “cool” school designation is beyond the scope of this document, but it is covered at length by several of the authors cited in this paper.\^11

Because the focus of this paper is the use of licks in bebop, I have limited the selected recordings to those made between 1947 and 1956, which roughly corresponds to the later half of the bebop era. Choosing recordings from this era also emphasizes that Konitz and Marsh were contemporaries of Parker rather than descendants. Furthermore, limiting the selected recordings to the bebop era helps minimize the possibility of influence from later jazz innovators. Though Parker died in 1955, Konitz and Marsh had careers long after the bebop era; Marsh continued playing until the year of his death in 1987 and Konitz continues to perform today. And while Marsh and Konitz (though to a lesser degree) continued to play in a style that corresponded to the tenets of the Tristano method throughout their careers, it is impossible to assume that they were not touched in some way by stylistic changes in jazz throughout the decades. Limiting the recordings to the bebop era leads to a more accurate assessment of bebop itself.

\^11 See Meadows, Hamilton, Chamberlain, Ind and Shim.
To best facilitate the comparison, all of the solos I have selected and transcribed are over the chord changes to the popular standard “Back Home Again in Indiana,” composed by Ballard MacDonald and James F. Hanley in 1917. The selection of solos consists of transcriptions of the Miles Davis tune “Donna Lee” and the Tristano tune “Back Home,” as well as two on “Indiana” itself. There are six Parker transcriptions: three takes on “Donna Lee” from the 1947 Savoy recording sessions, a live recording of “Donna Lee” from 1947 (featuring Tristano on piano), a live recording of “Donna Lee” from 1950, and a live recording on “Indiana” (in A-flat) from 1952. There are four transcriptions of Konitz and three of Marsh: a live session on “Back Home” from 1952 which features both saxophonists, a studio recording of “Donna Lee” from 1955 which features both saxophonists, two live recordings of Konitz on “Donna Lee” from 1955 and ’56, and a live recording of Marsh on “Indiana” (in F) from 1949.

This document proceeds in four chapters. In the first chapter, I discuss the overwhelming influence of Parker on a generation of musicians, focusing specifically on how his use of formulas correlates with the drive by his peers to copy him and his impact on early and modern jazz pedagogical texts. I also discuss several jazz pedagogy manuals and their use in higher education, focusing specifically on their emphasis on using licks as a teaching strategy. In chapter two, I outline Tristano's pedagogical method and highlight its key elements, including its emphasis on avoiding licks and copying in

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12 For brevity, “Back Home Again in Indiana” will be referred to herein as “Indiana,” which also corresponds to its common designation among jazz musicians.

13 “Donna Lee” and “Back Home” are contrafacts of “Indiana.” Contrafacts – melodies composed over the chord progression of an existing tune – were common during the bebop era. While “Donna Lee” shares a chord progression with “Indiana,” Davis changed the key of his composition; the original sheet music was published in F major and Davis changed his to A-flat. However, in the 1952 recording of Parker on “Indiana,” the band plays in A-flat major. Similarly, Tristano’s “Back Home” is in A-flat and shares a chord progression with “Donna Lee” and “Indiana” with the exception of a few substituted chord changes in the second A section. Marsh’s solo on “Indiana” is the only one included in the original key of F major.
improvisation. Chapter two also discusses the influence of Tristano's method on the playing of his students and shows how his pedagogical techniques differ from other early bebop teaching methods, namely those of Aebersold, Coker and Baker. In chapter three, I address the cognitive and neurological necessity of using licks in bebop improvisation, and include a review and discussion of current cognitive research relating to improvisation and jazz. In chapter four, I provide an analysis of transcribed solos by Parker, Konitz and Marsh, focusing on the use of licks by each player, the difference in style between Parker and the Tristano school, and ultimately Konitz's and Marsh's foundation in Tristano's method. I also briefly discuss how my analytical findings relate to current jazz pedagogical approaches, specifically in higher education, and how they might be applied.
CHAPTER 1: Parker's licks and Bebop Pedagogy

In dissecting the myriad of current jazz pedagogical methodologies, one can quickly determine that bebop is almost universally accepted as the foundational language of modern jazz. Musician and pedagogue David Baker proclaimed bebop to be the “lingua franca of contemporary jazz improvisation,” a sentiment which is reflected by the widespread use of bebop concepts and patterns in the vast majority of jazz improvisation texts on the market. However, bebop itself did not blossom out of any kind of systematic methodology, but instead developed among a group of individualistic musicians during after-hours in New York City clubs in the 1940s. As a result, jazz improvisation manuals that emphasize bebop are not based on a pedagogical methodology passed down from the bebop era, but rather on the recorded playing of practitioners from the bebop era.

This phenomenon is not unique to bebop; the principles of Western music theory, for example, were derivative of current and previous compositional practices, not the other way around. Furthermore, innovations in the field of music theory were driven by the individual creative output by composers, as was the case with improvisers in bebop. Of these improvisers, no one player embodied bebop more than Charlie Parker. Just as Bach stands as a representative of the Baroque tradition and Mozart of the Classical, the bebop style is perhaps best personified through the work of Parker. Even today, Parker is considered a singular figure in jazz history, an icon cherished by the jazz community and recognized by his nickname, Bird.

It is therefore appropriate to view Parker as perhaps the single most influential

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figure in bebop. While there were many other artists who were hugely influential during the bebop era, specifically Dizzy Gillespie, Parker transcended his era and his style and provided a foundation for many of the improvisers who came after him. In addition, Parker's playing helped in the formulation of many early bebop and jazz pedagogical texts. Both his playing and his belief in jazz as high art helped codify jazz as a legitimate academic music. However, his influence on musicians and teaching methods also helped in solidifying the use of licks in bebop.

Parker's playing, as it relates to patterns in jazz, is both a symptom and creator of the interminable use of licks in bebop, as he emerged out of a tradition of lick based improvisation only to pass that tradition on through a stylistically new vocabulary. Parker did not create lick based improvisation, but he helped in solidifying its use and perceived necessity in bebop improvisation.

**Parker as an Icon**

Parker's singular status in bebop is due to four factors: (1) his rapid ascent to icon status (2) his influence on musicians in the bebop era and beyond, (3) his technical and creative prowess, and (4) his paradoxical nature, illustrated by his inclination toward counter-culture while embracing tradition.

Parker's rise to prominence in the 1940s was meteoric; in the beginning of the decade he was a sideman in Kansas City playing with Jay McShann and by 1947 he was the king of bebop and a model for the hipster and beatnik generation. Scott DeVeaux echoes this point of view:

> When Leonard Feather assembled a group portrait of the bebop movement for his 1949 book *Inside Be-bop*, the bop revolution had reached its crest. The place of
honor was given to the two “living legends” of bebop, Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker. Crowding the picture were their musical progeny – the even more youthful wave of musicians drawn to the movement by the 1945 recordings. Parker and Gillespie, still at the beginning of potentially long careers (Parker was not yet thirty), had already attained the status of founding fathers.15

Historian Alyn Shipton notes that by 1947, a Parker appearance at the Three Deuces in New York would undoubtedly produce a line of horn players – often including future greats like Phil Woods, Jimmy Heath and Tony Scott – waiting next to the stage for their turn to sit in.16 Musicians were in awe of his talent. According to trumpeter Kenny Dorham “all the bad saxophone players showed him respect and let him have the bandstand. They would sit down and listen.”17 John Coltrane was so transformed after hearing Parker that he changed instruments from alto saxophone to tenor, saying that “I stayed with alto through 1947, and by then I'd come under the influence of Charlie Parker. The first time I heard Bird play, it hit me right between the eyes.”18

Parker's musical command was prolific; he could play tunes in any key, was not put off by extremely fast or slow tempos, demonstrated a sophisticated knowledge of harmony, and had a powerful rhythmic concept and swing feel.19 In describing Parker's creativity and overwhelming impact on his contemporaries, saxophonist Al Cohn stated that [Parker] was such a giant, he was so much better than everybody else. It’s not like there was this guy and that guy. There was everybody else, and then there was Charlie! You could take his solos, if you would put them down on paper and analyze them, they really had substance, creativity, the way he used changes. There wasn't anybody else doing that then. He was a great influence musically.20

Eddie Meadows suggests that part of what made the gap between Parker and other

16 Shipton, Alyn. A New History. 368-370.
musicians so large was that the listening consciousness of his audience was still tuned into the swing era sound, and so they were unprepared for the onslaught of new ideas and sounds contained in a Parker solo.²¹

Parker's influence was also propelled by what George E. Lewis calls “extra-musical” factors which include ideas of race, class and social philosophy.²² Shipton remarks that Parker refused to “adopt the mannerisms of African-American show business... [and] either sidestepped them or satirized them” which in his opinion was in keeping with the “psychological shift in bebop” away from traditional models.²³ Ian Carr agrees with Shipton and says that “Parker was rejecting the idea of the black musician as entertainer; he wanted his music to be taken on its own merits, to speak for itself.”²⁴ Parker personified the idea of the artist as the champion of individual expression and the musician's playing as the sum of their own personal experiences. To Lewis, Parker's music spoke to people because it “brought [a] theme of resistance to international attention,” and “posed both implicit and explicit challenges to Western notions of structure, form, and expression.”²⁵ These were attractive concepts to many in the post-war generation, especially white and African-American youths who identified with Parker's individualism and aversion to social conformity. The concepts that Parker embodied not only strengthened his influence among musicians, but made him an icon among artists, dancers, filmmakers, and even beat poets like Jack Kerouac, who went as far as to emulate Parker's improvisational style in the verse of his poem “Mexico City

²¹ Meadows, Eddie S. *Bebop to Cool*. 177-178.


Despite his mild aversion to mainstream Western culture, Parker's foundation was principally in the jazz, African-American, and Western musical traditions. He possessed a voracious appetite for music and had a nearly encyclopedic knowledge of recordings and artists from all styles, including jazz, blues, classical and popular genres. His inclination toward both the blues and popular music is evidenced by his choice of repertoire which consisted almost exclusively of blues and 32 measure popular songs. This balancing act between resisting Western culture and embracing tradition was in part what helped Parker rise to prominence. His adherence to a popular musical repertoire made him an ideal example of the promotion of jazz as an art form while maintaining a relationship with popular music. This concept is supported by Henry Martin, who claims Parker is the most important musician in the redefinition of jazz as an art form since the 1940s. He goes on to say that Parker's association with both popular and art music “parallels the status of jazz itself in contemporary culture – and strengthens Parker's stature as one of the two or three most influential jazz musicians of all time.”

Licks in Bebop Pedagogy

In addition to his historical influence, Parker was highly influential to his bebop peers; his phrasing, articulation and approach to performance were incorporated by fellow bop musicians like Bud Powell and Fats Navarro. However, in many cases

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26 Haddix. Bird. 2
28 Despite Powell and Navarro borrowing from Parker, scholars and critics (Tristano included) generally believe that both players overcame their dependence on Parker's style and developed strong individual voices in the bebop genre.
musicians were not merely influenced by Parker, but instead imitated or copied him. Barry Ulanov makes note of the dozens of imitators in the bebop scene on every instrument, and how the traits and soloistic “character of the instruments changed as Bird's influence took over.”

Ellington's trumpet player Cootie Williams echoes Ulanov's example of Parker's widespread influence: “Every instrument in the band tried to copy Charlie Parker, and in the history of jazz there had never been one man who influenced all the instruments.”

Lee Konitz, in an interview with Andy Hamilton, stated that during the bebop and post-bop eras “almost everybody played like Charlie Parker. What must he have felt like, this man? Every place he turned was like looking in a mirror.” Konitz goes on to say “Imagine how Charlie Parker felt when they were really playing his notes, and every inflection. Sonny Stitt identified so much that he thought he invented it!”

The issue of copying, particularly of Parker, was significant to Tristano and his students who revered Parker but felt it wrong to “rip him off.” On the issue, Tristano said during a 1951 Down Beat blindfold test, “if Charlie Parker wanted to invoke plagiarism laws he could sue almost everybody who's made a record in the last 10 years. If I were Bird, I'd have all the best boppers in the country thrown in jail!”

Parker's heavy reliance on licks was almost certainly a contributing factor in the widespread copying of his playing during the bebop and post-bop eras. Thomas Owens documented Parker's melodic formulas in detail and concluded that “Parker, like all important improvisers, developed a personal repertory of melodic formulas that he used

in the course of improvising. He found many ways to reshape, combine, and phrase these formulas, so that no two choruses were just alike.”

Owens notes that Parker's licks fall into several broad categories:

Some are only a few notes long and are adaptable to many harmonic contexts. They tend to be the figures he (and his imitators) used most often, for they occur in many different keys and pieces. Others form complete phrases with well-defined harmonic implications, and are correspondingly rare. Most occur on a variety of pitches, but others appear on only one or two pitch levels. A few occur only in a single group of pieces in a single key.

Owens asserts that theses formulas are, in part, essential identifiers of Parker's style. In the early years of bebop, Parker was one of the few musicians who could navigate the novel and extremely challenging language. Those who idolized him, both as a musician and celebrity, would naturally latch onto the repetitive elements of Parker's style as a way to gain a foothold in bebop vocabulary and assimilate Parker's melodic presence. Coupled with his immense fame, Parker's use of licks had the added consequence of implanting their essential nature into the subconscious of his descendants and imitators.

Despite the widespread use of licks in all genres of jazz, they maintain a contradictory and somewhat precarious status among jazz musicians. An improvisation, in a Platonian sense, is essentially a spontaneous composition, with its constituent elements coming into being in real time rather than from a corpus of predetermined material. Frank J. Barrett asserts that the primary aim of jazz musicians is “creating new musical material, surprising themselves and others with spontaneous, unrehearsed ideas,” and engaging in “the exhilarating and perilous nature of...an activity in which the future

34 Owens. Bebop. 30.
is largely unknown, yet one in which one is expected to create something novel and coherent, often in the presence of an audience.”

In reality, improvisers are often unable to avoid the use of licks in an improvisation. The result, as Ted Gioia puts it, is that many players rely on “certain stock phrases which have proven themselves effective in past performance” rather than “[pushing] themselves to create fresh improvisations.” This viewpoint is not exclusive to Gioia, and is shared by most jazz musicians, teachers and critics. Paul Berliner concludes that spontaneity plays a crucial role in the jazz community's evaluations of solos and improvisers. In discussing the issue with bassist Buster Williams, Williams tells Berliner that “if it was all thought out before it was done, there would be no need to do it.” Berliner provides a similar anecdote involving saxophonist and Parker influence Lester Young:

One of his associates describes Lester Young’s response to a trumpeter with Count Basie who “took the same solo on a certain tune every night, and when he'd start, Lester would look at me and say, 'Damn, Lady Kay, there he goes again,' and we'd sing the whole solo note for note right along with the trumpet player.”

These sentiments illustrate that there is some aversion to predetermination in jazz, and yet, despite the fact that a cursory analysis of Parker reveals an abundance of licks, he is largely immune to criticism for it. As if to emphasize this phenomenon, many critics and scholars feel compelled to explain why Parker's use of licks is exceptional rather than platitudinous. Scott DeVeaux, for example, says that “the fact that Parker systematically repeated himself is a basic insight that jazz musicians long ago discovered for

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themselves. It must be emphasized, however, that this repetition is meaningful. Melodic formulas are not evidence of faltering imagination, but reference points for larger, if highly flexible design.” DeVeaux not only sees Parker's use of licks as imaginative and meaningful, he believes the use of licks to be a “basic insight” into improvisation, or in other words, an essential element in how jazz musicians improvise.

Thomas Owens as well sees Parker's use of formulas as a testament to his subconscious understanding of the “rightness of certain choices of notes at certain moments in musical time.” He goes on to say that “Parker's choices turn out to have a logic of their own, a logic that extends beyond simply applying melodic formulas at harmonically appropriate times.” Rather than viewing overly formulaic improvisation as a negative, Owens feels that in Parker's case it highlights the logic and “rightness” of his playing.

Henry Martin echoes this sentiment explaining that redundancy is necessary in oral expression, and that Parker “transcends the mechanical application of formulas.” In Martin's estimation, all soloists use practiced formulas in improvisation, although some are less dependent on licks than others, and that studied phrases inserted into solos will vary widely from player to player. He goes on to say that “it is not the use of practiced phrases that determines the quality of the solo, but their logic and interaction, both internally and externally, with the original thematic material.” The central point of Martin's argument is that Parker keeps his use of licks from sounding mechanical or stale by subtly weaving them into a cohesive structure, a process aided by clear voice-leading.

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41 Ibid. 37.
and thematic reference. The result is a solo that is internally consistent and cohesive, and that will sound different than other solos by Parker on the same tune, even when they share formulas.

Steve Larson takes Martin's point even further, describing the rhetorical quality of Parker's solos, that is, his ability while soloing to make coherent and complete musical statements which possess a sense of "beginningness and endingness." Parker's use of space, melodic emphasis on the underlying harmonic structure, and especially his careful completion of unanswered phrases, creates a musical statement that has the characteristics of a "stirring speech, compelling argument, rousing sermon, or engaging story." This rhetorical quality and sense of coherency in his phrases is often a direct result of his use of licks. In other words, it is precisely the practiced nature of Parker's improvisations that allows for the rhetorical consistency of his phrases. (This concept is illustrated further in the analysis portion in chapter 4).

These assessments of Parker are honest and accurate; it is true that despite his use of licks, Parker's playing maintains a level of excitement and perceived spontaneity scarcely rivaled in the history of jazz. However, the apologists for Parker's use of formulas perhaps unwittingly serve in further illustrating the contradictory nature of utilizing licks in improvisation. The need by scholars to justify Parker's formulaic improvisational style reveals the unconscious bias among the jazz community against predetermination in solos. If there were not a mildly unfavorable feeling about predetermination in improvisation among the jazz community, scholars would not feel obliged to defend Parker's use of licks.

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45 Ibid., 141.
It is somewhat unfair to be overly critical of Parker's apologists. Parker truly does transcend his use of licks through unparalleled creativity, style and musical presence. Though Parker is likely the exception and not the rule, many seminal jazz pedagogical texts emphasize the memorization of licks as a means for achieving both vocabulary and spontaneity. As if to parallel Parker's apologists, Jerry Coker's hugely influential *Patterns for Jazz* from 1970 begins with an explanation of jazz improvisation which not only justifies the use of licks but proclaims them essential in jazz improvisation:

Jazz improvisation is the spontaneous creation of music in the jazz style. Like traditional composition, jazz improvisation is a craft. It is a conditioning of the mind, body and spirit, brought about by the study of musical principles. This conditioning becomes a necessary prelude to the professional practice of the art, despite the implications of the word *spontaneous*. Just as spontaneity is combined with conditioning, so is the existing style of jazz combined with originality of expression. One is lost without the other, and so we seldom hear an improviser's solo that does not contain melodic fragments or patterns: from the melody of the tune used, from a fellow performer's solo, from an influential player of the time, from a different tune altogether, from material previously improvised, or from patterns (original or borrowed) currently studied in individual practice.\(^{46}\)

Coker furthers this argument in his book *How to Practice Jazz*, noting the jazz musician's lifelong quest for pattern acquisition: “also investigate. . . patterns acquired from solo transcriptions, and of course, patterns you invent for yourself. The fully-developed player will partially or completely outgrow some of the elements of this lengthy list of things to practice, but he/she will probably never outgrow the need to acquire still more patterns.”\(^{47}\)

A similar directive is illustrated in the first volume of Jamey Aebersold's *How to Play and Improvise Jazz* from 1967. Aebersold sets up the lick contradiction in his

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opening remarks: “Practice with the scales, chords, patterns, licks and get so you can weave through the harmony of any of the tracks without really thinking about it. But also be spontaneous, creative, surprising, imaginative and take chances over the various chord progressions and keys.”

Aebersold encourages new improvisers to be “spontaneous, creative, surprising, imaginative” but also encourages them to use stock patterns and predetermined licks. He goes on to acknowledge the possible negative outcomes of pattern memorization, but still deems them a necessary step in reaching the ultimate goal of expressive and extemporaneous creativity:

Some players memorize pattern after pattern, lick after lick, and often times sound like a well-oiled machine. The idea is not to become a machine but to reach a level where your musical intuitiveness can express itself on your give instrument. So, keep this in mind: Exercises are merely a means to an end. Practicing exercises, patterns, licks, scales and chords should lead to more expressive creativity.

Jazz education giant David Baker has published numerous books on improvisation, many relating specifically to bebop, which offer students exhaustive lists of stylistically appropriate patterns to be used in common harmonic situations. Baker emphasizes the memorization of what he considers “attractive” patterns, but like Coker and Aebersold, discourages the overuse of predetermined patterns. For example, in the third chapter of How to Play Bebop Volume 2, Baker provides a list of 100 patterns consisting of “musical ideas drawn from the playing of almost every major figure from the bebop era and subsequent periods.” He encourages students “to familiarize [themselves] with all of the patterns, ultimately settling on a select number of particularly

49 Ibid.
50 Ibid., 3. The final two sentences were italicized by Aebersold.
attractive ideas to be committed to memory and then learned in all keys and at all
tempos.” He then follows with a cautionary statement, reminding students “that the use of
these patterns and all other pre-set materials should never become an end in itself; once
internalized, they should simply provide points of departure.”

Even when offering a surfeit of predetermined patterns for students to consume and memorize, Baker implies
that the end goal should be spontaneity.

Statements both encouraging and warning against the reliance on licks are not exclusive to Coker, Aebersold and Baker, and can be found in most mainstream jazz improvisation manuals. And as previously discussed, this same thought process is mirrored in the analysis of Parker. Among pedagogical manuals and scholarly analysis of Parker and bebop, a unifying theme that emerges is that despite the ultimate goal of pure spontaneity, licks are crucial in both learning and performing in the bebop style.

In the modern era, this concept is symptomatic of the desire to codify jazz education in the academy. Ken Prouty discusses this topic at length, noting that traditionally the academic establishment values the European tradition over vernacular traditions and deems compositions to be of higher artistic quality than improvisation. He hypothesizes that this is due in part to the de-emphasis of improvisation in classical music, which once absent, led to the establishment of notation as the preferred medium in musical pedagogy. As a result, scores became “a source of power, both as tangible artifacts of canon and in the formation of the community in the 'conservatory culture.'” Prouty continues by stating that “teachers, as interpreters of these most tangible artifacts of canon, become gatekeepers of power/knowledge, and without them, the authority of

52 Ibid. 24.
teachers and the institution as a whole is questioned.”

In addition to the emphasis on improvisation, it is perhaps the lack of a score that distinguishes most forms of jazz from Western classical music. Jazz was originally and largely still learned through aural means rather than from written music. This not only encompasses improvisational vocabulary but repertoire as well, and many jazz musicians, for example, frown upon learning tunes from a fake book or lead-sheet. This is because, as Berliner puts it, “a jazz piece is not a single model appearing in a fake book or a recording. Rather, it is the precise version of a piece created by musicians at each performance event.” This inherent lack of a score is what has made jazz somewhat incompatible with the academic musical establishment. In fact, it is this distinction that has led to the relative success of jazz orchestras in the academy over chamber jazz groups, despite the fact that the big band genre is comparatively small in the overall history of jazz. Jazz orchestras in academia tend to operate more like wind ensembles or symphonic bands than jazz combos, and more emphasis is typically placed on the composition or arrangement than on improvisation. Furthermore, placing priority on the score means that discrete knowledge of jazz improvisational vocabulary is not necessary for either the director or students in a jazz orchestra, which allows for non jazz musicians to participate.

The lack of a score made the codification of jazz in the academy a daunting task for pioneer jazz educators. Focus on the score is often what propels dialogue between a student and teacher in higher education; the student and teacher have the score as a tangible focal point for discussion of musical interpretation. While the musical rules that

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53 Prouty. *Knowing Jazz.* 70.
54 Berliner. *Thinking in Jazz.* 94.
govern jazz improvisation are well defined, the mental action involved in executing an improvisation is usually abstract and extremely personal, making it difficult for teachers to reveal to students a precise methodology for crafting a solo. Improvisation is often too ephemeral to provide topics for meaningful strategic discourse between student and teacher. Thus, the solo transcription has become the proxy for the score in academic jazz, and licks a constituent element of the transcription.

Prouty outlines the desired outcomes for teaching jazz improvisation through the rote memorization of licks. First, learning licks gives students a supply of appropriate and established vocabulary, providing them with a security net of sorts that they can fall back on. Prouty explains that it also imparts a working model for students to build upon and create their own store of vocabulary, which has the added benefit of connecting them with historical figures in jazz and helping them build vocabulary in a specific style. Licks can also be treated as technical exercises and can be used to build fluency in various situations by practicing them in different keys, tempos, and styles.55

Licks are specific, self-contained musical statements that can be used as tangible, written representations of jazz improvisation. Along with transcriptions, they enable jazz improvisation to be molded into something concrete which can conform to the pedagogical principles of the Western classical academic system. It is in part because of this that the use of licks in modern jazz pedagogy has become not only a teaching tool, but something many would consider essential to improvisation. For David Baker, the goal is for students to acquire “a repository of ideas; if the ideas don't come they always have something that sounds good. That's what we do when we play. Nobody can create at the highest level, and I tell people the great players are the ones who have the highest level of

55 Prouty. Knowing Jazz. 64.
bullshit material, because if their bullshit material is better than everybody else's 'A' material, how can you be a bad player?"^56

It is clear that Parker relied on licks in his improvisations, however, it is unclear how he developed this style. All of the pedagogical methods previously discussed were developed more than a decade after Parker's death and there were very few available resources for teaching jazz during Parker's formative years. Parker himself claimed that in his teen years he “put in at least 11 to 15 hours a day,” practicing scales and the melodies to popular standards in multiple keys.^57 Parker was also an avid transcriber, and though he likely never notated his transcriptions he could reproduce on his horn the solos of many great improvisers. In 1936 while working with George Lee, Parker as part of his practice routine learned every available Lester Young solo, often beginning work as soon as a Count Basie recording was released.^58 DeVeaux relates Gene Ramey's story regarding the outcome of Parker's transcription work saying that at a performance in 1937, “Parker not only played 'Lady Be Good' fluently, but expertly mimicked the intricate Lester Young solo recorded only the year before.”^59

It is perhaps a consequence of Parker's musical background and upbringing that he developed an improvisational style that relied on stock patterns. There is a longstanding tradition of musical imitation in both the African and African-American folk music traditions; mimicry and repetition are both common devices which are typically employed in the form of call-and-response melodic figures. This tradition carried over to various African-American styles including the blues, and over time the licks that were

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56 Prouty. *Knowing Jazz*. 64.
once associated with specific musicians became a part of a universal lexicon. Growing up in Kansas City, Parker was deeply familiar with the blues and early jazz traditions, both of which were thriving in the Midwestern city. In addition, Kansas City during the swing era was renowned for its “riffing” swing bands, particularly those of Bennie Moten and later Count Basie. These bands would often play impromptu arrangements over blues or AABA forms in which the horn section would play repetitive unison or harmonized ensemble figures known as riffs or shout patterns. Many of these non-extemporaneous patterns eventually became material added to improvisational vocabulary of both the blues and jazz. Parker was deeply familiar with this style of jazz as he played off and on with Jay McShann's territory band, a riffing Kansas City swing band, from 1938 to 1942.

It is possible that there is some correlation between Parker's lick based improvisational style and his musical upbringing in Kansas City. The Kansas City sound in the 1930s was distinct, due in large part to the identifiable riffs of the big band horn sections, but also because of the many talented soloists who maintained a vibrant jam session scene. A spirit of extemporaneous imitation, mimicry, quotation, and musical riposte existed in Kansas City in both the big band and jam session scenes, in which musicians were expected to be able to quickly join in and reproduce riffs of fellow band members or counter an impressive display of licks by a rival horn player at a jam session. Though only speculation, it is possible that this upbringing implanted an improvisational model in which spontaneity was not paramount to Parker, but instead the creation of a more polished and coherent product consisting of recognizable patterns and predetermined virtuosic expositions.

Regardless, it is clear that Parker embraces predetermination in improvisation as
do the majority of the scholars analyzing his work. It has plainly been accepted and incorporated into many jazz pedagogical models as well, particularly those using licks as a teaching tool. This is by no means unusual; when teaching bebop it makes sense to follow the example of Parker who was both its co-creator and greatest master. Based on scholarly analysis of Parker and influential bebop teaching methods, the argument could be made that licks are a compulsory element of bebop vocabulary. However, there still exists an undeniable distaste or disinclination on a fundamental level toward predetermination in improvisation, even among those who feel it obligatory. Furthermore, what is often failed to be addressed is the question of whether or not an improviser can play in the bebop style while specifically avoiding licks.
CHAPTER 2: The Tristano School

When assessing the necessity of licks in bebop, it is important to look not only at the work of mainstream musicians but also those who, for various reasons, existed as outliers. While it is perhaps an over-generalization to label mainstream bebop as the “Parker school,” it is true that Parker was the de facto archetype for most musicians in the bebop era, and lines of stylistic descendants can be traced from Parker into later eras. However, there existed an approach to bebop that evolved in parallel with the work of Parker and mainstream bebop, one that both embraced the bebop style as a whole but rejected many of the tendencies of its mainstream practitioners. While the “Parker school” may be an inappropriate label, the “Tristano school” is more than apt as it describes both Lennie Tristano himself and the studio of students who adhered to his methodology. In the 1940s and 50s, Tristano fostered one of the only styles of bebop that was comparable to Parker’s without imitating or copying him.

Among Tristano’s contributions to jazz, his work as a teacher is arguably the most important and he is cited by many to be one of the first players to devise a concrete method for teaching jazz improvisation. Teaching would become his primary source of income as he shunned the public spotlight, especially in his later years, and devoted a huge amount of effort to working with students. He stated in 1962, “I feel as seriously about teaching as I do about playing: it must be done with everything you have.”

Most musicians in the bebop era learned their craft through informal methods including listening to recordings, picking up tips from skilled players, playing at jam sessions or through trial and error both on and off the bandstand. Tristano's students learned through structured regular private lessons in which there were specific and well

60 Shim. *Tristano*. 123.
defined outcomes. Each facet of his method was deliberate and addressed specific aspects of improvisation. The primary goal of Tristano's method was for students to develop complete mastery in musical fundamentals and musicianship, so that the internalized concepts could be accessed intuitively during improvisation. Tristano's emphasis was on developing spontaneity in his students' improvisations and for them to play with feeling, and to mean every note they played. With spontaneity as its core objective, Tristano naturally rejected improvisational dependency on licks and instead trained students to catalog and avoid their personal predetermined tendencies.

The specifics of Tristano's method are still not widely known or accepted among mainstream jazz pedagogy. Much of his pedagogical anonymity has to do with Tristano's lack of creating any documentation relating to his method. Furthermore, his overt denunciation of most mainstream jazz as well as later seclusion and lack of self-promotion also play a role in the relative obscurity of his method. Though he remained relatively unknown, his method helped foster a unique style of bebop, exemplified by the work of Lee Konitz and Warne Marsh in the 1950s, which deserves to be discussed for its potential applications in modern jazz pedagogy.

**Lennie Tristano**

Tristano was born in Chicago in 1919, the son of an Italian immigrant father and a first generation Italian-American mother. Tristano was born with extremely weak eyesight, due likely to his mother contracting the Spanish flu during pregnancy, and was completely blind by the age of ten. Tristano was academically gifted and during his high school years he played piano and cello, played in the orchestra, tuned pianos, and studied
harmony and classical music history. It was also during this period that Tristano began listening to jazz and attending black clubs in Chicago, recalling that he “was sitting in clubs listening to people all night when I was 15.”\textsuperscript{61} It was while attending these clubs that Tristano was first introduced to the playing of Charlie Parker by one of the club’s patrons, and Tristano claims that he was listening to Parker on Jay McShann records as early as 1940.\textsuperscript{62}

Unlike many of his bebop peers, Tristano had formal classical music training. He attended the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago from 1938 to 1943, where he earned a bachelor's degree in performance. He also completed all of the coursework and requirements for a master's degree, but was unwilling to pay the $500 fee needed to take his comprehensive examinations.\textsuperscript{63} In addition to his studies, it was at this time that Tristano began performing regularly with various jazz groups. This included solo piano performances as well as gigs with a big band on tenor saxophone and with a Dixieland band on clarinet.

His formal training had a huge impact on his future teaching. In a broad sense, it provided him with a model for how to create a structured musical curriculum for his students. He was exposed to regular private lessons and classes which required consistency and dedication through the completion of assignments and practice routines. Additionally, during his education he gained a deep knowledge and understanding of Western music theory which he applied vigorously to his teaching method. It not only served as the basis for his harmonic concept, but also provided him the skills necessary for analysis, which he used to break down the playing of his students and glean

\textsuperscript{63} Chamberlain. \textit{Unsung.} 49.
procedural information from master improvisers.

Through his training, he developed a deep interest in classical music, and he intimated to his students the importance of listening to classical composers, placing particular emphasis on J.S. Bach. Tristano’s love of Bach translated directly to his explorations into improvised jazz counterpoint which was one of his unique contributions to bebop. Bach informed his opinions on the importance of producing a lean and uncluttered melodic line, a concept he would stress to students when giving them solo writing exercises. Tristano also viewed Bach and other classical composers as kindred spirits of sorts, and he often used Bach as a way to underline the artistic merits of jazz at a time when jazz was considered by most to be low brow vernacular music. Tristano was certainly aware of Bach’s reputation as a master improviser, and he felt that being a jazz musician gave him a deeper understanding of Bach’s music, indicated by his comment that “Bach's inventions need jazz musicians to execute them properly.”

Tristano’s teaching career began in the early 1940s when he started working at the Axel Christensen School of Popular Music in Chicago. According to Tristano, no one at the school “was trying to teach anything special besides reading and embouchure building,” and so students began approaching him to take improvisation lessons. It was during this time that Tristano began teaching Lee Konitz.

Konitz was born in Chicago in 1927, the son of Austrian and Russian Jewish immigrants. Konitz met Tristano for the first time at the age of sixteen in 1943. The 24-year-old Tristano was playing with what Konitz called a “Mexican band” at a pub across the street from a dance hall where Konitz was working. Konitz had gone over to see a

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friend play only to stay and sit in with the band in which Tristano was playing. The two were mutually impressed with one another and Tristano subsequently convinced Konitz to take lessons with him. Konitz would study off and on with Tristano for the next thirteen years and even followed Tristano to New York in 1946 when the guru relocated there.  

Warne Marsh began his studies with Tristano a few years after Konitz. Marsh was born in 1927 (less than two weeks after Konitz) in Los Angeles to a wealthy and prominent Hollywood show business family. His father, Oliver T. Marsh, was a well respected camera man and cinematographer who worked on more than eighty films with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer between 1926 and his sudden death in 1941. Oliver T. Marsh’s sisters, Marguerite Marsh and Mae Marsh, were both well known early Hollywood stars, with Mae playing Flora in the controversial *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) and appearing in thirty-six John Ford films. Warne Marsh first heard of Tristano in 1946 while in army training at Camp Lee in Virginia. After his training, Marsh was able to secure an army posting at Fort Monmouth in New Jersey, and began taking regular bus trips to New York City to study with Tristano and immerse himself in the blossoming bebop scene. After completing his army obligation, Marsh moved to New York to study with Tristano full time.  

After moving to New York in 1946, Tristano made a name for himself when he formed the Lennie Tristano Trio which featured Arnold Fishkin on bass and Billy Bauer on guitar. The group was conceptually progressive, experimenting with group

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68 Ibid. 15-16.
improvisation, sparse comping, harmonic superimposition and beginning tunes with
improvisation without first stating the melody. Bauer explained Tristano's unorthodox
approach to running the ensemble: “We walked in and I didn't know what to expect... so
Now, I'm not supposed to play the melody, I'm not supposed to play rhythm. So he says,
'Just play anything.'” Tristano's instructions to Bauer were that he “either had to play
counter harmonies, counter melodies, or what today they call 'compin,'” the later being
uncommon at the time, especially in a trio setting.  

As his private teaching studio grew, Tristano opened a music school at 317 East
32nd Street in New York in 1951. The school became the central hub for all of Tristano's
musical activities; in addition to housing his private lessons, the site served as a
performance space, recording studio and a jam session venue. Teaching became Tristano's
primary musical concern and he played scarce public performances outside of his school
between 1951 and 1955. Jack McKinney notes that the opening of Tristano's school
“marked a break in his career; from this time forward he was a teacher first and a
performer secondly.”

Konitz and Marsh were both heavily involved in the school in nearly every
conceivable way, and even helped with renovations to the building. Along with fellow
Tristano students Ted Brown, Peter Ind and Sal Mosca, Konitz and Marsh taught private
lessons at the studio in addition to their own studies with Tristano. They helped run the
two weekly jam sessions at the studio, which occurred every Wednesday and Saturday
evening. The Wednesday sessions were for less advanced players and consisted mostly of

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students from the studio. The Saturday session, which typically lasted into the early hours the next day, was open to anyone and was geared toward more advanced players.

Regarding these Saturday sessions, bassist and Tristano student Peter Ind recalls that “in contrast to other loft sessions, where people would come by whether invited or not, Lennie always made it clear that his were invitation-only. This had the advantage of avoiding situations where someone (usually a not very talented player) hogged the music and accordingly spoiled the vibe.”

In addition to Tristano and his advanced students (Konitz, Marsh, Mosca, Brown, Ind and others), the Saturday sessions’ frequent visitors included many of the “uptown” players like Charles Mingus, Roy Haynes, Kenny Clarke, Max Roach and Charlie Parker. Other “cool” players often attended as well, particularly pianist Paul Bley and tenor saxophonist Stan Getz. Another occasional visitor was composer and conductor Leonard Bernstein who was a great admirer of Tristano and enjoyed coming to the sessions to listen. In a 1953 article for Down Beat, Bernstein said of Tristano and his school:

I've heard a lot of his work, heard him fiddling around with motives and with rhythms, with ways of reaching something fresh. This is wonderful, and I hope he will continue to experiment. Eventually he may come up with something marvelous. Tristano is an enormous talent, but I don't think he's the last word, or that he's arrived yet.

There was a darker side to the Tristano school that began to manifest itself around the time the studio at 317 East 32nd Street was opened. Tristano was an enthusiast and amateur student of psychology, and read nearly all the works of Sigmund Freud and Wilhelm Reich. He began applying his self acquired knowledge of psychoanalysis to his students on both a musical and personal level. Through psychoanalysis, Tristano

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cemented the devotion of many of his students but also propelled his school to the border of cult status.

Psychology informed many of Tristano's opinions about improvisation, particularly the difference between “emotion” and “feeling.” Tristano equated “emotion” in jazz to an expression of the ego whereas “feeling” was an expression of the id. Tristano would use this terminology often in later years, especially when describing the playing of artists like John Coltrane and Sonny Rollins, who he felt were “all emotion, no feeling.” To Tristano, “their stuff is an expression of the ego. I want jazz to flow out of the id. Putting it another way, real jazz is what you can play before you're all screwed up; the other is what happens after you're screwed up.”

Tristano was also keen on psychoanalyzing his students, supposedly as a way to help them through any psychological issues in order to unlock the “feeling” in their playing. He recommended to nearly all of his students to read Freud and Reich and convinced many to seek therapy from doctors trained in the Reichian method. While Tristano maintained that he did this to help his students, many of his former students claimed that he used his knowledge of psychology as a means of control, implanting himself in the role of father figure and idol. This led to the creation of a cult-like atmosphere in the Tristano school, which some students found enticing and others found repellent. Stafford Chamberlain summarizes the testimony of Hal Grant, a drummer who studied with Tristano for six months in the early 1950s:

He described Tristano as a magnetic personality, extremely intelligent, who loved to surround himself with students who needed a father figure. Many such students, for their part, would walk around with their eyes closed, to feel what it was like to be blind like Tristano, and would adopt Tristano's whispery style of

talking, his preference for black coffee, his way of holding his coffee cup, even his way of sitting.\textsuperscript{75}

The controlling and dominating aspect of Tristano's personality was not felt by all of his students, and accounts of former students' experiences with Tristano are largely positive. Sal Mosca refutes those who claimed Tristano was deliberately creating acolytes and a cult-like atmosphere: “Lennie has never opposed [sic] his will on anybody. I know a lot of people come away from him saying that. . . .Unless what they mean by that is that they adopt his will. Because to him it's strong and has got a lot of conviction to it, and they adopt it for their own.”\textsuperscript{76} Those who studied with Tristano for long periods of time typically cast Tristano as a life changing mentor, as seen by Marsh's statement in 1983: “What I owe to Lennie. . . I can't put it in so many words, I'm afraid. I can only say it inadequately.”\textsuperscript{77} Peter Ind asserts that it was the power of Tristano's philosophy that drew people to him, but that also led to many of the misconceptions about his motives:

[His] main endeavors lay in developing his ability for jazz improvisation, and this was also his focus as a teacher. And his respect for the great jazz innovators. . . was grounded in their improvisational abilities. In this he showed that he was not fixated in any one idiom, but in the principle of improvisation itself. It was that insight, plus his dedication to the spirit of the music, that more than anything fascinated those of us who studied with him and helped to inculcate in us the value of staying pure to the music, not to a particular style, but to the spirit of improvisation. We were no disciples under the influence of a guru. This idea of disciples implies that we had no voice of our own, that we were merely jazz clones. Personally, I have found myself being regarded as though in all those years in New York the circle of musicians associated with Lennie were the only people I ever played with. The reality is somewhat different.\textsuperscript{78}

In 1952, the careers of Konitz and Marsh began to take different paths. Marsh

\textsuperscript{75} Chamberlain. \textit{Unsung.} 55.
\textsuperscript{76} Shim. \textit{Lennie Tristano.} 161.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid. 161.
\textsuperscript{78} Ind. \textit{Jazz Visions.} 146.
became deeply invested in his studies with Tristano, making few recordings or public appearances between 1953 and 1956. Both Marsh and Tristano became isolationists in a sense, shunning the public spotlight and particularly that of the press. Konitz, in contrast, welcomed attention and was extremely visible as a performer. He had made a name for himself playing on the seminal Miles Davis and Gil Evans collaboration *Birth of the Cool* in 1949 and 1950 and released nine studio albums under his own name between 1950 and 1956.\(^79\)

In 1952, Konitz left the studio to go on tour as a soloist with the Stan Kenton Orchestra, a move Tristano strongly disapproved. Kenton and Tristano had a loose association with each other due to their mutual relationship with the “cool” jazz designation and through Tristano's former student Bill Russo, who went on to be one of Kenton's most prominent arrangers. Tristano publicly criticized Kenton's music for being dull and devoid of swing, and Kenton criticized Tristano's music for being cold and unfeeling.\(^80\)

Tristano's disapproval of Konitz's personal choices put a strain on their relationship. Konitz played off and on with Tristano in the late 1950s and even lived with him in the early 1960s, but they eventually broke ties permanently in 1964. Tristano was critical of modern jazz, while Konitz was interested in broadening his musical experiences. In an interview with Andy Hamilton, Konitz spoke about his falling out with Tristano:

There was enough of the cult thing that seems inevitable with a strong leader, and I couldn't identify with it. In the early sixties I left New York... and went to California for a couple of years, with the intention of getting out of that environment, and seeing what was left after those years of being influenced by his

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\(^79\) Chamberlain. *Unsung.* 84.

very strong points of view. That's when I started to feel the friction, that I was a traitor in some way. The encouragement that a student should have was not there at all. I heard that someone called Tristano once to get my number and he said, “We don't mention that name here.”

Marsh's relationship with Tristano was less tumultuous, but he eventually left the studio as well. He made frequent moves back and forth from New York to his mother's house in Los Angeles, living in almost total obscurity for most of the 1960s, playing very little in public and cleaning swimming pools to supplement income. His career was revitalized in the 1970s, largely due to his involvement in the group Supersax, and he continued to play and teach until his death in 1987. Unlike Konitz, Marsh maintained a relationship with Tristano until Tristano's death in 1978.

Both Konitz and Marsh were adamant that Tristano was a critical musical influence who informed not only their playing but also their teaching. They both maintained their own teaching studios much in the vein of Tristano himself, which for Marsh included performing and recording with his best students. Chamberlain speculates that Marsh's tendency to hire his students was “a part of his legacy from Tristano, whose recordings and performances after 1948, when not solo, were almost entirely with his own best students.”

The Fundamentals of the Tristano Method

Tristano’s method is a comprehensive and structured approach to improvisation in the bebop style, aimed specifically at developing a student’s internal melodic line and enabling him or her to realize that line instantaneously on their instrument during improvisation. Other concepts such as playing with “feeling” and spontaneity were also

81 Hamilton. Lee Konitz 33-34.
82 Chamberlain. Unsung. 208.
important outcomes of the method. Tristano demanded dedication from students, both in a practical and artistic sense; he expected consistent and concentrated effort from students both in lessons and practice routines, but he also demanded they be dedicated to themselves and their own unique artistic voice. Dedication to one’s self was perhaps the most important aspect of his method, the idea that the improviser's line is a musical reflection of their own personality and spiritual essence. Tristano once told a student: “what this whole thing is about is to make you sound like you, no matter what it is. It is to make you do what you do better and easier.” On a fundamental level, this concept explains Tristano's strict emphasis on the avoidance of licks, particularly those taken from outside sources, as they interfere with the purity of one’s inner melodic line.

The dedication, consistency and concentration that he required of students was upheld by Tristano himself. He was known to be extremely focused in lessons, even when listening to simple exercises such as scales and etudes. He aimed for specificity in his critical assessments and was extremely direct in his statements about students' playing. Peter Ind described Tristano in lessons as “always disarmingly direct. . . . He was always so gentle, so charming and so quietly spoken that his directness could be unnerving.” In addition, Ind notes that Tristano's adherence to directness and specificity is in part what made him one of “the first to comprehend what was needed to convey how to play jazz.”

Tristano was also extremely gifted at inspiring and motivating his students. Shim concludes that this had to do with his ability to demystify jazz improvisation. In her interview with Tristano student Lennie Azzarello, he said of his first lesson with Tristano:

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84 Ind. Jazz Visions. 101.
85 Ibid. 103.
After he started telling me about the way you practice technique, the way you develop your left hand, the voicings in the left hand, the way you learn to sing, the way you learn how to improvise by learning the language of the greats, Lester Young, Charlie Parker, Bud Powell, Fats Navarro, Charlie Christian, it made so much sense to me... I really felt at that point that it was something you could actually touch.\(^8^6\)

In an interview with another Tristano student Jon Easton, Easton recalls that Tristano “made it clear he was only interested in working with me, if I was interested in really aiming in that direction that he was charging out... finding your own creativity and self-expression and cultivation of it. ... It was a very intense experience. ... I was very deep into it.”\(^8^7\) Singer Sheila Jordan noted that “Lennie taught with a lot of love... giving you a lot of encouragement and inspiration.”\(^8^8\)

Tristano was very careful to make the distinction with students between influence and imitation. Students were expected to learn from listening to master improvisers but never copy or imitate them overtly. All students were led through the same general curriculum, but the specific exercises were pliable and could be adapted to fit the needs of each individual student. Each facet of the method was meticulously vetted by Tristano to ensure its usefulness in achieving the end goal.

Tristano began by interviewing potential students, which involved an assessment of their current abilities and in which he would outline the nature of lessons and practice, emphasizing the dedication necessary to achieve success. Marian Jago notes that lessons required a long-term commitment by both teacher and student, in order “to slowly lead them through a process of absorption and artistic development.”\(^8^9\) Jago goes on to say

\(^8^6\) Shim. *Lennie Tristano*. 127
\(^8^7\) Shim. *Lennie Tristano*. 128.
\(^8^8\) Ibid. 165.
\(^8^9\) Jago, Marian. “Musical Koryu – Lineal Traditions in Jazz: Lennie Tristano/Lee Konitz.” *MUSICultures*
that this concept was rare for the time period, and even in jazz education today where college programs rely on “set term lengths, standardized degree periods, and the common practice of having students study under a different instructor for theory, master class, ear training, and ensemble.”

The Tristano method consisted of several universal concepts applied to all instruments: ear training, scales, harmony, rhythm, repertoire, singing with records, visualization, and composition. Other aspects were instrument specific and included chord voicings for pianists, limb independence for drummers, and breath control and tonguing for saxophonists. All of the concepts except composition were presented at the first lesson and were addressed each week. New material (scales, exercises, tunes, recordings, etc.) was not introduced until Tristano was satisfied with a student's progress on a current assignment. Sal Mosca said “if he gave you some scales to work on. . . he wouldn't do anything until you learned them. Or if he gave you chords to work on. . . he would hear them in all the keys, and he wouldn't move until you played them.”

The emphasis in the first several lessons was on ear training and scales. Ear training consisted of singing and identifying intervals, triads and inversions, and ultimately seventh chords with upper partials in all inversions. Scales were often the focal point of lessons and Tristano had students play major, harmonic and ascending melodic minor scales in all 12 keys at slow tempos and with “feeling.” Students progressed through scales by way of the circle of fifths, but with an emphasis on aural perception of each shift in tonal center. For example, Tristano would have students play

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38 (2011): 205-221. 210
90 Ibid. 210
91 Shim. Lennie Tristano. 125.
92 Ibid. 120.
an ascending and descending major scale in its entirety at an extremely slow tempo, then repeat the ascending scale, pausing on the third. While on the third, students were to visualize the next pitch, the fourth of the original key, and mentally establish it as the new tonic. They would then repeat the exercise in the new key. The purpose of practicing scales in this manner was to implant a subconscious ordering of tonal centers and harmonic flow.\textsuperscript{93}

Eunmi Shim interviewed dozens of Tristano students who discussed many of the other ways in which scales were utilized in Tristano's method. One method revealed was what Tristano called “group exercises,” which involved playing rapid ascending and descending scales in groups of two to seven notes with pauses in between each group. For example, in a two-group exercise students would play consecutive pitches in the scale in groups of two, playing each group as quickly and accurately as possible. A pause would be inserted in between each group, during which students were to mentally hear the next group in the sequence before playing it. This exercise promoted two outcomes: first, it helped develop accuracy in sound and articulation at fast tempos, and second, it helped in cultivating a student’s ability to hear pitches before playing them.\textsuperscript{94}

Scales were often played at extremely slow tempos, and Tristano emphasized that each note of the scale be played with “feeling.” In an interview with Shim, Jon Easton explained that in assessing students playing scales, Tristano was trying “to hear how deeply you were getting all your feelings into each note of the scale. Even when playing a simple scale, he was listening for how much of your feeling you could get into it. 'How

\textsuperscript{93} Ind. \textit{Jazz Visions}. 130.
\textsuperscript{94} Shim. \textit{Lennie Tristano}. 130.
into,' that was the phrase he used: 'How into it' were you.”95 Scales were often played in long tones, and Tristano stressed that students hear the next pitch in the sequence before playing. As saxophonist Jimmy Halperin describes it, “You play the first lowest note. . . really lay into it, really lots of gusto and hold it. . . And then I would hit the next note. . . and hold it as long as I can. And each time before I hit the note I have to hear it in my head.”96

Scales, along with every other aspect of the method, were always taught by ear and never through the use of notation. The goal was for students to really hear the notes they were playing in the scale and not just create muscle memory patterns. In this sense, Tristano’s approach to scales was fundamentally different from the approaches found in later jazz improvisation methods. In Coker and Aebersold, for example, the desired outcome of scale practice is to develop technical proficiency by ingraining scales into muscle memory. In Aebersold’s manual, progressing through scales is related directly to tempo, and he insinuates that practicing scales with long note values is only useful as a starting point: “A beginner may want to start with whole notes. Someone who has been playing for six months may begin with half notes or even quarter notes. People who have been playing jazz and have several years on their instrument may be able to begin with eighth notes or even sixteenth notes.”97 The implication is that proficiency is a product of tempo and therefore a result of digital mastery. This concept is echoed by Coker who feels scales should be learned through “conditioning” which ultimately “won't permit you to play a wrong note,” and that “you know you know the scale, [when] it is ingrained into

95  Ibid. 130.
96  Ibid. 131.
97  Aebersold. How To Play Jazz. 7.
the fingers."\textsuperscript{98}

In contrast, by pushing students to play scales at extremely slow tempos while underlining the importance of hearing the next pitch, Tristano's method places importance on the aural perception of the scale over the digital perception. The “group exercises” have a similar affect, helping students achieve faster tempos while still maintaining an emphasis on aural perception. Tristano’s method for scale practice differs from Coker's and Aebersold's methods on an ideological level; rather than cultivating digital mastery and then applying it to an aural concept, the aural concept is principal and digital mastery a byproduct. In addressing Tristano's treatment of scales, scholar and former Konitz student Marian Jago writes that the “idea always was to use one's imagination and aural conception to create a musical landscape that was both personal and intuitively constructed, and even basic exercises were intended to function not simply as material to build technique, but as development of both the ear and the musical imagination.”\textsuperscript{99}

Similar exercises were used to teach harmony. Lee Konitz recalls “playing arpeggios of all chords, plus inversions, through the major and minor scales.”\textsuperscript{100}

Harmonic patterns were encouraged by Tristano, but there was implicit instruction to not use them during improvisation. For example, a student might be asked to invent a pattern that cycled sequentially through a series of dominant ninth chords. Rather than starting by playing the pattern on his or her instrument, the student would have to first sing the pattern accurately in several different keys before trying on their instrument. Usually, these patterns were purely harmonic in nature, with uniform rhythm (typically eighth

\textsuperscript{98} Coker. \textit{How To Practice Jazz}. 20.
\textsuperscript{100} Hamilton. \textit{Lee Konitz}. 14.
notes) and minimal melodic content. As Jago puts it “patterns for students of Tristano were not intended to function as elements of a reliable and pre-rehearsed vocabulary, but as tools to help the student navigate and become familiar with the harmonic landscape. . . .

. Once a pattern could be sung and then transferred to the instrument in all keys, it was not to be rehearsed, inserted or otherwise treated as a 'lick.'”

Tristano devote time in each lesson to rhythmic exercises, an aspect of improvisation that is rarely addressed in jazz improvisation manuals. Rhythm, particularly the “swinging” eighth note and the use of syncopation, is perhaps what most distinguishes jazz from other forms of music. Despite unique rhythmic elements in jazz, most jazz improvisation methods devote a disproportionately small amount of attention to rhythm, instead focusing almost exclusively on melodic and harmonic concerns. Baker's *How to Play Bebop* series makes almost no reference to rhythm at all, and the same can be said of the works of Coker. Aebersold spends some time discussing rhythm, but it is limited to instructions on how to swing eighth notes.

Tristano made all of his students practice rhythm away from their instrument. Beginning rhythmic exercises might be as simple as tapping a beat with the metronome, and would be followed by tapping different meters at the same time, one in each hand. Ultimately, students would use both hands and both feet to tap four simultaneous rhythms. For example, the right foot taps quarter notes, the left foot taps quarter note triplets, the right hand taps eighth notes and the left hand taps eighth note triplets.

Rhythms would then be applied to scales, both as cross rhythms and as polyrhythms. What Tristano called a cross rhythm was a superimposition of an odd

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103 Jago. “Jedi Mind Tricks.” 199
rhythmic organization over common time. The most basic manifestation of this is three against two, represented by quarter note triplets against regular quarter notes, but also included more complicated superimpositions using quintuplets and septuplets. Students would play these various cross rhythms in scales with the metronome. Advanced pianists were required to play scales in both hands with a different cross rhythm in each.\textsuperscript{104}

Polyrhythms involved superimposing eighth notes in an asymmetrical meter over common time. This was achieved through sequencing an asymmetrical phrase, or by placing accents in an eighth note line. For example, Tristano would have students play ascending and descending scales in eighth notes, placing an accent on every fifth note. The result is 5/8 pattern on top of 4/4. This could also be achieved by taking a five eighth note phrase and sequencing it.\textsuperscript{105} For example, transposing and sequencing the first five pitches of a major scale in eighth notes creates a 5/8 pattern over 4/4.

Tristano’s intention was for students to be comfortable hearing and feeling complex rhythms, but not to use them mechanically. Tapping was the main form of rhythmic practice and polyrhythms and cross rhythms were only applied to pitches when students could tap them with ease. The aim was for these complex rhythms to be felt intuitively, giving students a larger vocabulary of rhythm to draw from during improvisation.

Once students began internalizing the basic musical elements, the focus of the lessons shifted to learning melodies and solos. Eunmi Shim notes that Tristano stressed to his students the importance of internalizing the melodies to standards. Repertoire was limited exclusively to songs from the Great American Songbook, and to a lesser extent,

\textsuperscript{104} Shim. \textit{Lennie Tristano}. 139.
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid. 140.
common bebop contrafacts, though usually only for advanced students. Students were required to play and sing melodies slowly with a metronome and without harmonic accompaniment and with no melodic inflection or improvisation.\textsuperscript{106} As with other elements, the learning of melodies was done at a slow pace, and students were not allowed to move on to a new tune until they could convincingly play an unaltered melody with “feeling.” Tunes were typically learned by ear, either from a recording or from Tristano himself, and were usually sung first. Tristano recommended Frank Sinatra and Ella Fitzgerald among others as recorded sources in learning tunes. Lead sheets were uncommon at this time and fake books were essentially nonexistent, but Konitz mentioned the occasional use of original piano sheet music as a reference: “That was the exact information – you wouldn't get precisely that from Frank Sinatra or Ella Fitzgerald. They were the closest to it, probably, singing the given melody, but they usually added embellishments.”\textsuperscript{107}

The retention of repertoire is one of the most challenging aspects of jazz for most students, but it is paramount to success as an improviser. Educator and Baker disciple JB Dyas notes that there are many aspects of learning jazz that educators disagree on but that nearly all universally “advocate that in order to learn how to play this music you must listen to it copiously, and memorize a whole lot of tunes – at least a couple hundred.”\textsuperscript{108} Coker and Aebersold give similar instructions for learning tunes, both suggesting to learn the melody and chords, play the melody with the recording, and improvise over the chord changes. In addition, Coker outlines a trial and error approach to learning tunes:

\textsuperscript{106} Shim, \textit{Lennie Tristano}. 144-145.
\textsuperscript{107} Hamilton, \textit{Lee Konitz}. 200.
Look for special ways to interpret the tune, in the way you express the melody and progression, and look for ways to alter and/or enlarge the chord-types. Try some chord substitutions against the given progressions, evaluating (with the ear) whether or not they worked well enough to warrant repeating and adopting as one of many options.109

Aebersold’s method is more detailed and he outlines a thirteen-step process for learning tunes. The first six steps address listening to the tune and memorizing the melody and chord progression. Steps seven through ten address strategies for improvising over the tune, including melodic embellishment and creating original melodies. The last three steps are more general suggestions advocating additional listening, learning the lyrics and learning to love the tune.110 Aebersold also sets his method apart from Coker and Baker by insisting that students be able to sing the melody, which is also a tenet of Tristano's method.

Baker’s method is more systematic than Aebersold’s and Coker’s, and focuses on the learning and organization of a high volume of tunes. In his tune learning class at Indiana University, Baker required students to attempt to learn one tune everyday or approximately 100 tunes in a semester. Retention was achieved by organizing tunes based on melodic and harmonic similarities. For example, tunes that begin with the same interval are placed in a category, or tunes with a similar chord progression. Baker also stressed learning tunes by ear and only using lead sheets as a reference.111

The two important distinctions between Tristano's tune learning method and these mainstream methods is the playing of the melody unaccompanied and the strict lack of improvisation in the early stages of learning. The intention was for a tune’s melody to

110 Aebersold. *How to Play Jazz.* 56.
111 Dyas. “Defining Jazz Education.” 78-80
become a part of the intuitive internal line of the student and for the melody, not the
harmony, to be implanted as the framework for the tune and primary source for
improvisation. In contrast, mainstream methods often encourage a loose treatment of the
melody. Aebersold encourages melodic embellishment at an early stage, reminding
students that “the jazz musician has always taken liberties with the melodies to songs.
They personalize the actual melody and alter the rhythms as they follow the dictates of
their mind.”112 Although this statement is true, advocating that students take melodic
liberties while still in the learning stages of a tune devalues the melody to some degree,
and not only affects a student’s impression of a tune but may also affect their ability to
remember the melody, that is, if they play the melody differently each time when learning
the tune. By not allowing students to improvise on the melody, Tristano was attempting to
cement in the minds of his students a permanent image of the melody in its purest form.
Only after this process was complete were students encouraged to embellish.

In emphasizing harmony and improvisation early on, Baker, Coker and Aebersold
all imply that the primary role of a tune is as a vessel for improvisation, creating the
additional implication that the melody is subordinate to the harmony, as it is the harmony
that one improvises over. As in his method for learning scales, which created a hierarchy
of aural perception over digital perception, Tristano’s instruction to play the melody
unaccompanied emphasizes the supremacy of the melody over the harmony. Further
evidence of Tristano’s emphasis on melody over harmony is highlighted through the
exclusion of improvisation in early stages or learning a tune.

In addition, the melody was also the primary means of tune retention; the melody
creates a more accessible memory than the harmony because of its linear and singable

112 Aebersold. How to Play Jazz. 24
nature. Sheila Jordan learned from Tristano “that as long as I keep the melody of the tune in my head subconsciously, I never get lost." The harmony of a tune was then taught through the lens of the melody, which by then was embedded in the student's memory. Students were taught that the melody ultimately informs the whole tune, as intimated by Marsh who said that students had to first “be able to present a melody in a convincing manner. The next step is learning to improvise on that melody, and it becomes necessary to get into the other notes – the harmony – but it all proceeds from a melody.”

The aspect of Tristano's method most critical to the avoidance of licks was his approach to transcription. The singing and playing of improvised solos formed the basis of a student's foundation within the bebop style, but not necessarily the foundation of their vocabulary. In mainstream pedagogy, the goal of transcription is both to create a tangible score for analysis and for the student to reproduce the transcription on their instrument. The way in which the transcription is produced or learned is often secondary.

Coker heavily advocates transcription in his manuals but separates the process of transcribing from the learning of solos on an instrument. He highlights the “playing of transcribed solos” as one of the primary tenets of his recommended practice routine, but suggests the use of published collections for learning the solos. Once the solo is learned from the score, he suggests that students “listen carefully to the recorded soloist, as you play with him/her, absorbing the manner of phrasing, tone quality, articulation, time-feeling, etc. Try to meld with the soloist in every way, until you sound as one with the player.” Coker treats transcription itself as an activity to be done away from the instrument, and although he does not outline a specific method for transcription, he

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implies that it is a process of notating a recorded solo and couples transcription with theoretical analysis.  

Like Coker, Aebersold also suggests using published collections of transcriptions as a way to learn solos. He also advocates analyzing notated solos: “Look at other transcribed solos by various players to see how they utilize this important rule in playing jazz. Take a pencil and mark the chord tones that fall on beats 1 and 3 (or, on all four beats!).”  

Aebersold does recommend playing along with recorded solos without notation, but not as a means of learning the complete solo. Rather, it is an exercise in ear training in which students try and pick out bits and pieces of the solo in real time:

I also suggest playing along with a regular jazz recording. You don't have to know the key or the scales or anything. Just try to match the notes as you hear them being played. I usually try to retain a few notes and frantically look for them on my horn while the recording plays away. After I find them, or as I sometimes do, forget them, I listen and pick out several more notes to try to match.

Transcription was a benchmark of David Baker's improvisation course at Indiana University, were students were assigned one or more transcription projects each semester. Students were required to transcribe and notate a portion (at least three choruses) or the entirety of an approved recorded solo, and then practice it with the recording in order to pick up articulation and other nuance. Transcriptions were performed and graded at the end of the semester. While Baker did require students to create their own transcriptions, he ultimately concurred with Aebersold and Coker in that the solo is learned from a notated score. Furthermore, memorization was encouraged but not mandatory in the performance of the transcription.

116 Ibid. 37.
117 Aebersold. How to Play Jazz. 27.
118 Aebersold. How to Play Jazz. 29.
119 Dyas. “Defining Jazz Education.” 75
Tristano's approach to transcription was in keeping with the other aspects of his method, and students were strictly instructed not to notate their transcriptions. Tristano would assign recorded solos for students to learn, selected from a small pool of improvisers that he deemed truly original players. The two main figures in this pool were Lester Young and Charlie Parker, but Tristano would also assign solos by Charlie Christian, Billie Holiday, Frank Sinatra, Roy Eldridge, Bud Powell, Fats Navarro and later Konitz and Marsh.120

Students were urged to learn the solos organically; the process began by simply listening to the solo multiple times in an aurally engaged manner. As the solo became more familiar, the student would begin to sing along until they could sing the entire solo with the recording. This was considered the first step toward the completion of the transcription process and was subject to the approval of Tristano. Students were instructed to sing solos at pitch in falsetto and vocally copy all of the articulation, inflection, and nuance in the solo. Because solos were not notated, the key was less relevant and so Tristano allowed the recording to be slowed on an adjustable speed turntable. Tristano's demand of perfection was finite, and Chamberlain notes that “if the student were learning a solo by Charlie Parker, he had to sing it so well with the record that [Tristano] could no longer hear Parker but only the rhythm section.”121

Once Tristano approved of a student's ability to sing the solo with the recording, they would then practice singing the solo unaccompanied. The final step was to play the solo on an instrument, though this was considered the least critical step. In fact, the first

120 Though she never took a solo in an instrumental sense, Holiday was nonetheless treated by Tristano and his students as a master improviser due to her adventurous interpretations of melodies.
121 Chamberlain. Unsung. 59.
step was the only required step in the transcription process. For example, pianist Dave Frank only sang solos and never played a single transcription on the piano in his five years of study with Tristano.

The amount of time it took to complete this process varied from student to student, but it often took several months per solo. Sal Mosca claimed it took him close to a year and a half to sing his first unaccompanied Charlie Parker solo, and only after was he allowed to play it on piano. Tristano encouraged students to engross themselves in their assigned solo and not to be concerned with how long it took to learn them. Tristano student Victor Lesser recalled a two-year stint working night shifts as a maintenance person while learning several Warne Marsh solos: “I was working midnight to eight, which was rough, but I was so consumed with this work I was doing [with Tristano]. I just remember doing the job and just spending those eight hours living a Warne Marsh solo.”

The primary purpose of learning solos this way was to instill the “improvising feeling” of a master jazz solo, that is, the intangible elements which cannot be adequately expressed in written music, while avoiding mechanical imitation caused by rote practice on an instrument. The intent was to focus on feeling while avoiding copying, or as Shim states, to keep students from “mechanically duplicating the music without understanding or feeling its essence.” Tristano did not advocate learning solos by written transcription because he felt it did not instill the essence of the solo but only its mechanical aspects. Therefore, as explained by student Ted Brown, “once your fingers forgot those notes, you

123 Ibid. 283.
have no recollections of what it was about.”

Regarding transcription, both Tristano's method and the methods of Baker, Coker and Aebersold create a certain hierarchy as it relates to general aspects of the transcription learning process. In Coker's and Aebersold's methods, a mechanical understanding of the solo is at the apex, followed by an intellectual understanding and then an aural understanding. By learning a solo from a published transcription, a student connects with a solo mechanically through repeatedly practicing the written transcription. Both Coker and Aebersold then emphasize the importance of studying various harmonic and melodic aspects of the notated solo, which produces an intellectual impression. The mechanical and intellectual knowledge are then applied to the aural perception of the solo when students play the practice solo along with the recording. Baker's process is similar, but because he required students to create their own transcriptions, the intellectual understanding becomes the initial mental imprint of the solo. While there is an initial aural application when students transcribe in this way, they are not actually learning the solo through this process, rather, they are listening in a fragmented manner in order to create a notated representation of what they are hearing. Ultimately, the learning of the solo is still achieved visually, not aurally.

When learning and memorizing from a score, musicians rely on notation as an aid in recalling specific cues within the music. According to Lehmann, Sloboda, and Woody, in order to accommodate long-term storage, music must be memorized both mechanically through repetitive practice and conceptually by creating a clear mental image of the piece that is independent of motor memory. During performance, the mental image serves as a reinforcement of mechanical memory, acting as a safety net of sorts as it exists discretely.

127 Ibid. 138.
A non mechanical mental image can be created in various ways, including score study, structural analysis and creating a strong aural image through singing.\textsuperscript{128} In the standard transcription method, the mechanical image of a solo takes precedence over the aural image, and so in order to create a lasting applicable memory of the transcription, students have to do additional work to cement a mental image of the solo.

In Tristano's method, memorization of a solo is more natural and intuitive as it is done through singing. Unlike the other methods, creating a mechanical memory of the solo was the least important aspect of the process and in some cases it was skipped all together. In this sense, even when the solo is learned mechanically, the primary means of memorization is through singing and the creation of a mental image. Thus, in Tristano's method, the mental or aural image takes precedence over the mechanical image. As a result of this style of learning, many of Tristano's students claimed they never forgot the solos they learned, even years later. In addition, students also felt that the eventual transferring of the solo to their instrument was simply a by-product of the intense manner in which the solo was learned, many claiming that after passing the first two steps they found they could play the solo on their instrument on the first or second attempt.\textsuperscript{129}

This process also shifted the focus of learning solos from technical concerns to more intangible musical elements, which helped in steering students away from using transcription as a means of building a store of licks. When learning from a notated transcription, students will likely fixate on pitches and rhythms as they constitute the primary information contained within the score. When learning by ear, the pitches and rhythms are more ephemeral and knowing the precise sonority of each pitch or the exact

\textsuperscript{129} Shim. \textit{Lennie Tristano}. 138.
label for a specific rhythm is inconsequential to singing the solo. For example, it is not necessary for a student to know that they are singing the pitches of an arpeggiated major chord in eighth notes in order to sing it. They can simply vocally reproduce what they hear without conceptualizing it on a theoretical level. More attention can then be shifted to other elements of the solo, particularly articulation, dynamics, character, and “feeling.” As Tristano himself said on the subject: “The intangibles of feeling, which have a high degree of importance in re-creating any jazz performance, unfortunately cannot be written into the music. Thus, a perfectly correct performance as far as duplication of the notes is concerned, might have little emotional meaning in terms of the original conceptions of the jazz musician-writer.\(^\text{130}\)

This method for transcription was in part what allowed Tristano and his students to learn, analyze and absorb the music of Charlie Parker without imitating or copying him. Lee Konitz learned numerous Parker solos through this method, but never sounded like Parker. Speaking of Konitz’s connection and distance from Parker’s playing, Andy Hamilton writes “despite this intimate acquaintance with Parker’s music, and at a time when almost all his contemporaries were imitating the altoist in tone and melodic and rhythmic conception, Konitz developed his own individual and highly intuitive approach.”\(^\text{131}\) Again, the purpose of transcription was not to build muscle patterns, but to absorb the essence and “feeling” of a master improviser, to understand them on an intuitive level. Tristano student Joe Muranyi adequately summarized the concept when he said “we were not to use this as a part of a trick and rattle it off on the horn or to copy, but


\(^{131}\) Hamilton, *Lee Konitz*, 22.
to get an idea of the playing and what it's about."\cite{132}

Another unorthodox technique was Tristano's emphasis on practicing away from the instrument. Tristano believed strongly in the importance of the senses on musical creativity and he was always looking for methods that would help students experience music or their instrument more holistically. He encouraged students to practice improvisation by visualizing themselves soloing on their instrument, or by silently fingering scales or solos on their instruments while trying to hear every note in their head. As Shim notes the purpose of this approach was that it "conveyed the view that the integration and synchronicity of the senses would enhance the perception of music, thus cultivating intuition and spontaneity, aspects essential to the creative process of improvisation."\cite{133} By encouraging visualization practices, Tristano was aiming to insure that difficult intellectual musical processes were well established in the student's mind before playing it on his or her instrument. It also allowed students to practice and cultivate the concentration and attention required to play a jazz solo with the technical and physical concerns removed.

For the 1940s and 50s, this concept was decades ahead of its time, as shown by 1995 study published in the *Journal of Neurophysiology*. This study analyzed the brain plasticity of two groups of pianists who were given previously unpracticed keyboard exercises. Both groups were allowed to practice the exercises in two hour increments, but only one group was permitted to use a keyboard. The other group was instead instructed to visualize their practice away from the keyboard and without moving their fingers. Despite a lack of physical practice, after five days the visualization group showed motor

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133 Shim. *Lennie Tristano*. 157
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skills equal to three days of physical practice. Furthermore, after the allowance of one day of physical practice, the visualization group was able to match the performance of the physical group. The conclusion of the study was that visualization practicing may actually accelerate the acquisition of new motor skills because it helps in creating a cognitive model of the necessary motor function before it is physically attempted.\textsuperscript{134}

The fact that Tristano implemented this approach as a primary aspect of his method is interesting; practicing improvisation away from one's instrument is not commonly found in mainstream jazz pedagogy. And again, as with the other tenets of Tristano’s method, by removing students from their instruments, the focus remains on their aural perception of the music, not their physical and mechanical perception. As Marian Jago puts it: “In what is a rather radical departure from the current pedagogical practices of many college-based jazz education programmes, Tristano considered the learning of solos, development of fluidity in all keys, exploration of harmony, and the act of improvising to be aural projects rather than problems to be solve intellectually.”\textsuperscript{135}

Tristano typically did not advocate for students to begin trying to improvise until they were well into their studies. However, because the focus of the training was on building an intuitive aural conception of a jazz solo, most students found that when they did begin improvising, they did so with ease and progressed rapidly. Eunmi Shim relates an anecdote from Tristano student Woody Mann who had been studying with Tristano for a year before being allowed to improvise: “I said, 'Lennie, when am I going to start improvising?' He said, 'Some day,' so he really kept putting it off. . . . [Later] he said,\


\textsuperscript{135} Jago. “Jedi Mind Tricks.” 193
'Okay, now improvise,' I said 'How?' 'Just improvise.' It wasn't about connecting scales and modes. . . so I started improvising. It was great. I had played. . . and sung along, I knew Bird solos, I had ideas in my head.'

Composition was used with more advanced students who were already cultivating an improvisational style. Tristano had a compositional background from his days at the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago and had reportedly composed a string quartet, a symphonic work and several works for solo piano. However, composition with his students was an advanced exercise in improvisation. Tristano would ask his students to compose what he called “lines,” which was their ideal improvisation over the chord changes to a standard. This not only allowed them to exercise their creative process, but also gave them a chance to implement harmonic and rhythmic concepts that they were working on, such as chord superimpositions, cross rhythmic figures and polyrhythmic figures. According to Ted Brown, such exercises were designed to “filter out a lot of junk,” and helped students sharpen their aural conception. Brown described the process in detail, mentioning that as he progressed, he could ultimately write a line away from his horn:

Lennie would say “OK, write a chorus on whatever tune you like, and bring it in next week.” The following week you'd play it with him, and then he'd make you memorize it. I did that every week for a couple of years. He was trying to get you to really hear what you were playing and edit out the garbage. When you're improvising, it all goes by so fast that you barely have time to get out what you're really intending. Writing forces you to go through it in slow motion, and you'll eventually hear where each phrase will logically lead to. In the beginning I'd have the horn in my hand as a reference point, and I'd improvise on the tune for ten or fifteen minutes. If I came across a phrase that was a good starting point, I'd jot it down. Eventually I didn't need the horn, and it came out better, because I wasn't

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136 Shim. _Lennie Tristano_. 145.
138 Chamberlain. _Unsung_. 60.
using what was under my fingers, but what was in my head.\textsuperscript{139}

This aspect of the method is one of the few that overlaps with mainstream methods. Aebersold, Baker and Coker all recommend this practice and the procedure they outline for students generally resembles Tristano's method.

In keeping with standard practice in the bebop style, many of these “lines” or contrafacts became common repertoire in both the Tristano school and in bebop in general. Some examples include Tristano’s “317 East 32\textsuperscript{nd} Street” (“Out of Nowhere”), Marsh’s “Marshmallow” (“Cherokee”) and “Background Music” (“All of Me”), Konitz’s “Subconscious-Lee” (“What is This Thing Called Love”) and Brown's “Featherbed” (“You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To”).

The result of Tristano's holistic method of teaching was to produce improvisers that attempted to be as creatively spontaneous as possible and who avoided the use of pre-composed material in solos. Every facet of the method was geared toward building students’ aural conception of their own inner melodic line. Patience and diligence was required from both student and teacher, but particularly from the student, who was made aware that the process was slow but that if they stayed committed, they would eventually meet their goals. The slow pace of learning starkly contrasts the mainstream model, in which students begin improvising right away with little or no frame of reference. Jago explains that Tristano's primary concern “was in helping his students to find their own musical way, and that extended into ensuring that each student was treated individually, with care taken to address variances in background, experience, interest and temperament.”\textsuperscript{140} Through Tristano’s method, Konitz learned “to use the insight that he

\textsuperscript{139} Hamilton. \textit{Lee Konitz}. 36
\textsuperscript{140} Jago. “Lineal Traditions.” 211.
gave me to tap a more substantial place in myself, to find out what I was really hearing
and not just doing things that I thought were the thing to do.”141

141 Hamilton. *Lee Konitz*, 32.
CHAPTER 3: The Cognitive and Neurological Necessity of Licks in Improvisation

One of Tristano's primary concerns as a teacher was to produce students who were not reliant on material copied from others and who instead focused on spontaneous and original improvisation. Tristano and his students revered Charlie Parker, but they were extremely aware of his use of licks and of the widespread imitation of his playing. What Tristano considered to be thievery of Parker's unique voice was in part what informed many of his opinions on the use of licks in improvisation. It was Tristano's intention to avoid an overreliance on Parker’s licks, both in his own playing and in the playing of his students.

Almost all of his most prominent students were encouraged to learn Parker solos at some point in their studies, but Tristano was careful to steer them away from reliance on Parker's licks and instead direct their focus towards the “feeling” of Parker's playing. Tristano said that he was “not interested in teaching parts, only the whole. The whole is greater than the parts. . . Bird was certainly greater than all his licks. That's why the imitators are not great. They're only doing the parts.”¹⁴² Konitz believes that improvisers’ reliance on licks, especially the licks of other musicians, comes from their desire to create a finished product and to always have things to play, but is “not the work of a true adventurous chance-taking spirit.”¹⁴³ Tristano thought Parker to be a true musical genius but on the issue of Parker and jazz vocabulary he said:

The jazz musician's function is to feel. Unfortunately, Bird put notes into people's mouths. This vocabulary is accepted as jazz, and everyone does it. But jazz is improvising. It is the personal, emotional impact of a great improviser. It provides the listener with an experience he can have no other way. . . But, as today, when the vocabulary is the same, you have lost that experience. How intense can you be

¹⁴³ Hamilton. Lee Konitz. 110.
with someone else’s words?\textsuperscript{144}

While this sentiment is certainly lofty, the pure omission of licks is only possible as an ideal and is essentially impossible in reality. Tristano and his students were certainly aware of this truth, but they felt it against the spirit of improvisation to wholeheartedly embrace licks. As with the opinions of the scholars addressed in chapter 1, Tristano was also an apologist for Parker’s use of licks, despite the fact that he was so vehemently opposed to them in his own playing and the playing of his students. However, unlike the Parker scholars, Tristano rejected the idea that playing licks was simply the way that all jazz musicians improvise. For Tristano, Parker was given a pass for using licks because of what Tristano considered to be his singular nature in the history of improvised music. He essentially gave Parker free reign due to his originality and because Tristano felt that Parker “invented bop.”\textsuperscript{145} What emerges when looking at the Tristano school and the “Parker school” (or mainstream bebop) is two distinct styles of improvisation. Both unquestioningly use learned patterns, but one relies on them outright while the other avoids them but accepts them as inevitable.

Konitz adds a third category of improvisational style in addition to mainstream and Tristano styles. In his opinion, the first category of improvisers are those who play “professional performances.” These are improvisers who have a rehearsed routine that is guaranteed to please the audience; Konitz identifies Oscar Peterson and James Moody as practitioners of this style. The second style is that of Parker, which Konitz calls a “compositional” approach, and in which the improviser creates a spontaneous composition that is pieced together through a combination of licks and general

\textsuperscript{144} Coss. “Lennie Tristano.” 21.
\textsuperscript{145} Coss. “Lennie Tristano.” 21.
vocabulary. The third style, or the “intuitive” style, is the one in keeping with the tenets of the Tristano method and is the style that Konitz himself practices.\textsuperscript{146}

The primary difference between the “intuitive” style and the others is the outcome of improvisation. Typically, improvisers in the “professional” style take few risks, instead presenting a failsafe, polished routine. More risk-taking is involved in the “compositional” style, but it still relies on predetermination. The inherent benefit of both styles is that they produce consistent results that can be duplicated; by using predetermined models, improvisers in these styles can always play a great solo. The use of licks to produce consistently positive outcomes suggests that the primary objective of improvisation in the “professional” and “compositional” models is to create a coherent finished product. In the “intuitive” style, the focus is not the creation but the process; the finished product is important but it is subordinate to the process of creation. There is inherently more risk in this model, but there is also a greater chance of creating something truly spontaneous and novel. Konitz summarizes his use of the “intuitive” model:

As soon as I hear myself playing a familiar melody I take the mouthpiece out of my mouth. I let some measures go by. Improvisation means coming in with a completely clean slate from the first note. The process is what I’m interested in. You can turn the most familiar standard into something totally fresh. The most important thing is to get away from fixed functions.\textsuperscript{147}

In an interview with Andy Hamilton, Konitz talks at length on the subject of licks in improvisation and confirms his awareness that they are unavoidable. He is clear on his belief that there are different levels of preparedness in relation to predetermination in

\textsuperscript{146} Hamilton, Lee Konitz. 102
improvisation. Konitz draws a distinction between licks and what he calls filler, noting that the primary difference between the two is related to specificity. For Konitz, a lick is something that is both rhythmically and melodically specific, and often reserved for a certain chord progression in a certain key, as seen with much of the material that Parker plays. Filler is less specific and is “used as part of the development of a line.” Filler material might include a basic rhythm, as in four consecutive eighth notes, or a general melodic pattern, such as an arpeggiated chord or a portion of a scale. Filler, as Konitz puts it, is used as a way of “connecting one substantial idea with another. In terms of playing a continuous long line, it's not just one major idea, you're going through litter patterns that could be called filler material.”

When and where is the distinction drawn between a lick and general vocabulary of bebop (filler, in Konitz's words)? Though Tristano was trying to strengthen the aural conception of his students and deemphasize mechanical conception, the process of improvisation on an instrument requires the use of motor skills. Even the most basic building blocks of the bebop language (scales, arpeggios, etc.) are patterns on a fundamental level, and they all require mechanical mastery for proficient performance. How much of what Konitz and Marsh play is intuitive and how much is subject to subconscious mechanical preference? Finally, is the cognitive process involved in playing a lick the same process involved in playing general bebop vocabulary?

**Cognitive and Neurological Research on Improvisation**

Significant scientific research, much of it in regards to Parker, has been conducted on the subject of the use of formulas in jazz improvisation. Improvisation, particularly

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jazz improvisation, is frequently used as a model in artificial intelligence programming, organizational theory, and the study of communication because it is a process of extemporaneous, real-time creation within a complex system of governing rules. Most research falls into two general categories: investigating the process of learning to improvise, and investigating the perceived rules of improvisation, and both categories are relevant to the discussion of licks in bebop. The first addresses what kind of input is necessary in learning to improvise, that is, whether or not is it necessary to rehearse licks in order to create the mental schemata required for playing bebop. This same line of thinking can be applied to the second category, that is, whether or not licks are required when executing a bebop improvisation.\footnote{Hsieh, Su-Ching. “Cognition and Musical Improvisation in Individual and Group Contexts.” In \textit{Musical Creativity: Insights from Music Education Research}. Edited by Oscar Odena. (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2012), 149.}

When conducting research on programming artificial intelligence computers to improvise, and using jazz improvisers as a model, Jeff Pressing theorized that learned groupings of notes, which he calls “events,” are employed in improvisation when creatively triggered. This triggering results in the output of a mental schema which consists of a cognitive mental image of the sound of the “event” as well as “the movement patterns appropriate to affect intended musical actions.”\footnote{Pressing, Jeff. “Improvisation: Methods and Model.” In \textit{Generative Processes in Music: The Psychology of Performance, Improvisation, and Composition}. Ed. John A. Sloboda. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 149.} Once the “event” is executed, the improviser assesses the success of the event in real-time and may subconsciously choose to continue with an event or interrupt it with something unrelated.

Pressing’s “event” concept can be applied to all three of Konitz’s improvisational models. The term “event” is not necessarily lick, but a mental image of the intended
musical idea. This might be a lick, but it might also be a musical idea conceived extemporaneously. The mental schema is essentially the framework necessary to execute the “event,” which includes the aural perception of the event, the understanding of the event through the rules of music theory, and the motor skill needed to perform the event.

Johnson-Laird argues a different method for improvisers in which long-term memory, subconscious procedures, working memory and rule-based systems are used to generate the necessary algorithms to improvise a melodic line. Within long-term memory are stored devices like scales, rhythms, chord functionality etc., while working memory allows musicians to process events in real-time, such as where they are in the tune or what fellow ensemble members are playing. The long-term memory contains the “rules” for improvising, or the melodic and rhythmic content needed to create a jazz solo, the use of which is governed by the subconscious and working memory.

In Johnson-Laird’s estimation, the improviser does not rely on a list of motifs or melodic and rhythmic fragments, but instead uses “a set of unconscious principles that control melodic improvisation” and that “this procedural knowledge is acquired at the cost of considerable work.”151 The difference between a beginner and master improviser is intimated by Johnson-Laird in three stages of development. Once a sufficient amount of motor programs have been created in the brain, the first level of improvisation involves the activation of these basic programs in the memory. An example would be a beginning improviser creating a rudimentary improvisation using notes from a single major scale. There is often little or no editing done at this stage, as the improviser is still building the mental schemata necessary to create improvisations. At the next level, improvisers have built up enough long-term data that they can accesses it subconsciously,

allowing them to begin to making feedback decisions in real-time. This is the stage in the development of an improviser where they begin to make deeper decisions relating elements besides pitch and rhythm. They begin to develop motives, sequence ideas, play with deliberate articulation, and shape the overall structure of the solo. At the final stage, these more complex actions also become automated, allowing an even greater awareness for detail and minutia.\textsuperscript{152}

This model, like Pressing's, does not reveal any conclusive data relating to the necessity of licks in improvisation, and can be applied to all three styles of improvisation. It seems that the aural and motor programs stored in long-term memory which are accessed during improvisation include all of bebop syntax, including licks. However, based on Johnson-Laird's model, it can be argued that Parker is not consciously using licks during improvisation. Parker undoubtedly falls in Johnson-Laird's third category of master improvisers who execute complex action through the subconscious. To be clear, Parker certainly knew that his style of improvisation relied on licks. However, when engaged in the process of improvisation, it is possible that the accessing of licks was a completely subconscious action.

Among the most recent scientific analysis conducted on the subject of patterns in improvisation is the work of Martin Norgaard. Norgaard utilized a mathematical pattern recognition program called MATLAB (short for matrix laboratory), and created an algorithm designed to find patterns in a large corpus of Parker solos. The algorithm recognized patterns regardless of the underlying chord structure and was only able to recognize exact occurrences of a pattern, not similar patterns with slight variation. The result, Norgaard discovered, was that 86.2\% of the notes in the Parker corpus were part of

\textsuperscript{152} Ibid. 439.
a four to five note pattern, and that 61% of the phrases containing more than fifteen pitches appeared verbatim in more than one solo.\textsuperscript{153} The notes which were not part of a pattern were typically found either right before or at the end of long gaps. Norgaard theorizes that advanced improvisers likely develop procedures for linking stored patterns in real time during improvisation. He suggests that this concatenation of patterns might be based on the long-term memory process that Johnson-Laird discussed, but that it might also be based on a “movement grammar” that is developed “through extensive practice that is linked to syntactical musical rules,” or in other words, muscle memory.\textsuperscript{154}

Ultimately, Norgaard agrees with Pressing’s assessment of improvisation, in that patterns learned through deliberate practice or incidentally are essential to the process of improvising jazz, and that this concept is especially true when looking at the solos of Parker.

Ultimately, the models of Pressing, Johnson-Laird and Norgaard all support the practice of each of the three styles of improvisation. Pressing and Norgaard, however, are more firm in their declaration that their data supports the necessity of licks in improvisation. While this might be true, it is still unclear whether or not licks access the same cognitive process as general vocabulary.

The most conclusive way to determine cognitive and neural differences in improvisational styles is through the use of a functional magnetic resonance imaging machine (fMRI). There have been several fMRI studies related to music, but they are usually limited to how humans hear music, not how they play music. This is largely a technical issue, due in part to the powerful magnets within the fMRI machine which


\textsuperscript{154} Ibid. 283.
make it impossible for any metal to be inside. Because most common jazz instruments contain metal parts, it is impossible, for example, to scan an improviser playing the saxophone.

There have been a few fMRI studies in recent years that address improvisation. Perhaps most pertinent to this discussion was the 2008 study conducted by Charles J. Limb and Allan R. Braun from Johns-Hopkins University and the Peabody Institute. The study involved imaging the brains of six pianists who were tasked with performing four exercises. In order to accommodate the fMRI magnet, Limb and Braun developed a special electronic keyboard containing no metal parts, which triggered high quality piano samples generated outside of the scanner and heard by the participant through headphones.

Each participant performed two rehearsed exercises and two improvised exercises. The first exercise consisted of a C major scale performed consecutively three times in quarter notes. This was compared to an improvisation in which participants were asked to only use pitches from the C major scale with quarter note durations. The third exercise was a rehearsed written solo over a blues chord progression, which was then compared to the fourth exercise, an improvisation over a blues chord progression.

Limb and Braun found drastic differences in brain activity between the rehearsed and improvised exercises. Specifically, imaging showed that the lateral orbitofrontal cortex (LOFC) and the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (DLOFC) – both located in the front of the brain – were deactivated during improvisation. This portion of the brain is considered to be responsible for providing “a cognitive framework within which goal-
directed behaviors are consciously monitored, evaluated and corrected.”155 Both of these regions are highly active in social settings and help in regulating behavior, particularly in speech. The LOFC is active, for example, when assessing whether or not a certain behavior conforms to social demands. The DLPFC is active during periods of planned behavior sequences that require working memory retention of preceding steps in the sequence. Used in tandem, LOFC and DLPFC allow for the editing and censoring of thoughts, and are often utilized during intense or awkward social interactions, such as a debate or job interview. The DLPFC is particularly critical in mentally planning what to say in an upcoming conversation or interaction. On an emotional level, the LOFC and DLPFC are responsible for inhibition.156

Limb and Braun theorize that the deactivation of the prefrontal cortex during improvisation is an indication of a more free-form and intuitive thought process that is less inhibited and self-monitoring. This lack of inhibition is what allows for creative improvisation:

creative intuition may operate when an attenuated DLPFC no longer regulates the contents of consciousness, allowing unfiltered, unconscious, or random thoughts and sensations to emerge. Therefore, rather than operating in accordance with conscious strategies and expectations, musical improvisation may be associated with behaviors that conform to the rules implemented. . . outside of conscious awareness. . . In short, musical creativity vis-à-vis improvisation may be a result of the combination of intentional, internally generated self-expression with suspension of self-monitoring and related processes that typically regulate conscious control of goal-directed, predictable or planned actions.157

Based on this research, it seems that Tristano’s method of cultivating spontaneous
and intuitive improvisation is in keeping with the neurological process of improvisation. There is much, however, that is not revealed in this study. Further fMRI sessions would need to be conducted to confirm prefrontal cortex activity during various styles on the improvisation spectrum. Further fMRI studies might reveal, for example, if the prefrontal cortex is more active in the “professional” improvisation model than in the “intuitive” model. This is perhaps the only way to shed light on whether or not improvising with licks uses the same neurological and cognitive processes as using general vocabulary.

When looking at the three improvisation models outlined by Konitz ("professional,” “compositional,” and “intuitive”), it is clear that the Tristano school falls into the “intuitive” category and Parker falls into the “compositional” category. These are both completely valid styles of improvisation, though with a distinctly different emphasis. The idea of pure spontaneity in improvisation raises an interesting question: what is more important to an improviser, being spontaneous or sounding spontaneous?

For Tristano, the answer was clearly being spontaneous. However, this starkly contrasts many of the criticisms of the music of Tristano and his students, which typically label them as cold, cerebral, and lacking in emotional content. These adjectives seem wholly unrelated to “spontaneous,” which has a more exciting and fiery connotation. In contrast, Parker, who plays more contrived material than the Tristano school, sounds more spontaneous and often more exciting. These contradictions touch at the core of the question of what spontaneity in jazz really means.

**Parker and Tristano**

Despite the dissimilar ideological treatment of improvisation between the two
schools, Parker and Tristano had a very positive personal relationship. By 1947, Tristano was beginning to appear in published critical polls as one of the top pianists in bebop. That same year, Tristano met Charlie Parker and had the opportunity to perform with him several times. While Tristano was intimately familiar with Parker's music at this point, it is unclear if Parker knew of Tristano before their meeting. Tristano's recollection of his first encounter with Parker, playing in a group opposite Parker's quintet at the Three Deuces in New York, is recounted in Eunmi Shim's biography of Tristano:

Bird was sitting on the side listening. So he very casually walked up to the piano. . . . He told me how much he enjoyed my music and while he's doing that, he kind of puts his arm around me, and we're walking off the stand together. So he's doing both things. He's telling me how much he enjoyed my music, but he's making sure I'm not gonna break my neck, either. And he was so hip in doing it . . . if I hadn't been around a long time, I would not have known what he was up to, which to me is completely beautiful. Because, in my experience, musicians rarely show that much compassion. That's my experience. 158

Parker and Tristano would end up playing together several more times, and Parker was well acquainted with both Konitz and Marsh. Aside from the sessions that Parker would occasionally attend at 317 East 32nd Street, Konitz and Parker had played several dates together while on tour with Stan Kenton in 1952 and 1953. Parker evidently had high praise for Marsh's playing, based on an account from Tristano: “The only person I felt Bird was sincere about in his praise was Warne Marsh. . . . We were playing in one of those dives when Bird tapped me on the shoulder and asked, 'Who's that kid?' I told him it was Warne, one of my students. Bird said, 'You watch that kid: he's got it.'” 159

Parker was known to be somewhat annoyed with others copying him, and he mentioned on several occasions his appreciation for Tristano and his students for not

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imitating him. Of Tristano, Parker said: “As for Tristano, I'd like to go on record as saying I endorse his work in every particular. They say he's cold. They're wrong. He has a big heart and it's in his music. Obviously, he also has a tremendous technical ability and you know, he can play anywhere with anybody. He's a tremendous musician. I call him the great acclimatizor.”

Konitz notes that the largest difference between the Parker style and Tristano school was that Parker himself never taught lessons formally, and that because his ideas were so musically strong, it was difficult to vary them. In contrast, Konitz explains how Tristano insured that students did not copy him and others by emphasizing the need for individuality in improvisation. To Konitz, “Bird’s ideas were taken literally, and Tristano’s were more suggestions that could be developed in different ways.”

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CHAPTER 4: Analysis

In order to best illustrate the differences between the style of Parker and the style of Konitz and Marsh, the primary focus of the analysis will be on the use of licks in Parker's playing and their relative absence in the playing of Konitz and Marsh. In addition, I will show that when Konitz and Marsh do use licks, they are not licks derived from Parker's playing. I will also briefly discuss some of the characteristics of Parker's playing that are absent in the playing of Konitz and Marsh. For ease of reading, I will refer to each solo according to an abbreviated title:

Table 1. Abbreviated Transcription Titles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parker Solo</th>
<th>Abb.</th>
<th>Konitz Solo</th>
<th>Abb.</th>
<th>Marsh Solo</th>
<th>Abb.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>P1</td>
<td>Live 1952</td>
<td>K1</td>
<td>Live 1949</td>
<td>M1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take 2 1947</td>
<td>P2</td>
<td>Studio 1955</td>
<td>K2</td>
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<td>Live 1955</td>
<td>K3</td>
<td>Studio 1955</td>
<td>M3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live 1947</td>
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<td>Live 1955</td>
<td>K3</td>
<td>Studio 1955</td>
<td>M3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live 1950</td>
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<tr>
<td>Live 1952</td>
<td>P6</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Though the sample size for Parker is larger than Konitz and Marsh, the average amount played per chorus and per measure is similar between the three saxophonists. After a note count of the six Parker solos, he plays an average of 5.7 notes per measure and averages 182 notes per chorus. Konitz and Marsh both averaged (somewhat amazingly) 5.4 notes per measure and 172 notes per chorus. While this is less than Parker, it is not significantly so. Because eighth notes account for the majority of the rhythmic durations in a bebop solo, a difference in 10 notes per chorus between Parker and Konitz and Marsh would
only manifest as approximately 1.5 measures of rests per chorus. From each soloist, there is also a relatively proportionate sample of both live and studio recordings. Finally, the solos span roughly the same amount of time in the careers of each of the three musicians; 5 years for Parker (1947-1952), 6 for Marsh (1949-1955) and 4 for Konitz (1952-1956).

“Donna Lee”

“Donna Lee” (in all its forms) was chosen as the tune for analysis for several specific reasons. First, it is one of the few tunes that widely recorded by all three subjects. Choice of repertoire is an often overlooked aspect of defining musical cliques throughout jazz history. From standards and contrafacts to novel original compositions, subgroups within genres can often be distinguished from one another by the tunes they play. In general, the Tristano school can be further distinguished from mainstream bebop by the repertoire that they commonly performed. For example, more than half of Parker's repertoire throughout his career consisted of tunes based either on a blues chord progression or a rhythm changes chord progression. The Tristano school, by contrast, rarely played the blues and only included a few rhythm changes tunes in their general repertoire. Furthermore, both Parker and the Tristano school composed numerous contrafacts, and though there was some overlap, each party generally performed their own. The largely unexplored topic of subgroup repertoire in jazz is extensive, but is beyond the scope of this document.

The second reason for the selection of “Donna Lee” is related to its harmonic progression. The tune begins with a | I | V/II | V/V | V/V | progression, represented in the key of A-flat as: | Ab | F7 | Bb7 | Bb7 |. While this progression is not wholly uncommon
in jazz, its occurrence three times within one chorus is unique to “Donna Lee.” The form of the tune is ABA'C, and two instances of the | I | V/II | V/V | V/V | progression occur at the beginning of each A section. The other instance begins in m.11 or the third measure of the B section, which is significant because the progression is placed so that it overlaps the normal four measure organizational grouping of chord changes. Because the progression occurs in this unusual manner, it may potentially be approached differently than the occurrences at the beginning of the A sections, which could shed light on the phrase structuring of the soloist.

The final reason is that “Donna Lee” employs an extremely diverse collection of harmonic devices. In addition to those previously mentioned, the tune contains several | II | V | I | progressions (a staple of jazz harmony), a tonicization of IV, a “backdoor” | II | V | I | (Db, Dbmi, Ab), and extensive section in the relative minor.

**AntConc**

In addition to identifying patterns manually, they were also identified through the use of a linguistic concordance program called AntConc. Designed for finding patterns in journalistic writing, AntConc is able to recognize and sort patterns according to specific parameters. In order to utilize AntConc, the pitches of each solo were converted into letters in a .txt file. For example, the sonority C, which includes all octaves, was typed as “c” in the .txt file. All accidentals were spelled enharmonically as flats, producing 7 natural pitches (c, d, e, f, g, a, b) and 5 accidentals (db, eb, gb, ab, bb). Each solo was converted into its own separate .txt file and then uploaded into AntConc. General parameters were set to identify patterns of at least 5 pitches with a maximum of 30
pitches. AntConc sorts the patterns, identifies the total occurrences of specific patterns, ranks them by frequency, shows their location in the line, and reveals the range of the pattern, that is, which solos contain the pattern.

There are several limitations to using AntConc, the most obvious being the inability to factor in rhythm. It also will not account for slight variation in a pattern, instead only revealing identical patterns. While not comprehensive, AntConc provides statistical data that would otherwise be too laborious to acquire manually. All AntConc results were corroborated with the notated transcription.

**AntConc Data**

AntConc analysis of the six Charlie Parker solos confirms the prior assumption that Charlie Parker's improvisation is largely based on heavily repeated and predetermined vocabulary. When searching for patterns of at least five pitches, AntConc revealed a total of 44 patterns played at least once in all six solos. Some of these patterns overlap; for example a 5 note pattern (i.e. Bb, Ab, G, F, E) contained within a larger pattern (i.e. Bb, Ab, G, F, E, G) would be sorted in both the five note and six note groups, essentially being counted twice. And to be clear, these are not necessarily licks but simply reoccurring groups of pitches. However, even after taking this into account, it is still a sizable amount of repetition. In contrast, when looking at the full range of Konitz and Marsh, AntConc revealed 9 patterns of at least five pitches from Konitz and only 1 from Marsh. Table 2 shows the AntConc pattern count of 5 or more pitches for each of the three players organized by range. In AntConc, range refers to the number of corpus files in which a specific pattern appears.
Table 2. # of Repeated Patterns by Range

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range</th>
<th># of Repeated Patterns</th>
<th>Parker</th>
<th>Konitz</th>
<th>Marsh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:</td>
<td>527</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:</td>
<td>2497</td>
<td>643</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:</td>
<td>1304</td>
<td>531</td>
<td>158</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again, Parker's numbers are slightly inflated due to the larger transcription sample size. After adjusting for measure count, the projected number of repeated patterns at full range is 14 for Konitz and 3 for Marsh. This data demonstrates that even when accounting for general vocabulary alone, and not specifically for licks, Parker is still much more repetitive than Konitz and Marsh.

A larger amount of patterns at full range implies that Parker's repetition was not limited to a single solo or session. Parker was known to implement specific and planned actions when recording in a studio, but most scholars agree that the way he played in studio sessions was essentially how he played in live performance. What this data reveals is that the way he played in 1947 was essentially how he played in 1952. It shows that Parker had a specific structure in mind when soloing over “Donna Lee,” and that he adhered to that structure throughout his career.

Further evidence of Parker's repetitiveness is revealed through the frequency count for each pattern, which represents the total occurrences of a specific pattern within

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162 The total measure count of the transcribes samples for each of the three players is as follows: 799 for Parker, 523 for Konitz and 261 for Marsh.
163 Parker's sample is 1.528 times larger than Konitz's sample and 3.061 times larger than Marsh's sample. Adjusted totals were calculated by multiplying the respective numbers by the number of repeated patterns found at full range.
the corpus. Range and frequency are not necessarily related, although higher frequency patterns typically have a larger range. Table 3 illustrates Parker's top ten highest frequency patterns.

**Table 3. Parker's High Frequency Patterns**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Pattern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Eb, Db, C, Bb, A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Db, C, Bb, A, C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>C, Bb, A, C, Eb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>F, E, G, Bb, Db</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>G, F, E, G, Bb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ab, G, F, E, G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Bb, Ab, G, F, E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>G, F, Eb, Db, C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ab, G, F, Eb, Db</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>F, Eb, Db, C, Bb</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some of these patterns overlap or are a part of a larger pattern. For example, patterns 1 and 2 are typically used as part of a larger pattern that occurs on the | I | V/II | V/V | V/V | progression, and patterns 4, 5, and 6 are used during modulation to the relative minor.

Even when taking pattern overlap into account, Konitz's and Marsh's frequency numbers are significantly lower than Parker's and are often represented by less than the full range, as seen in Tables 4 and 5.
Table 4. Konitz's High Frequency Patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Pattern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>F, Eb, C, Db, D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ab, G, F, E, Eb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ab, Bb, Ab, G, Ab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Eb, Bb, Ab, G, Ab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>A, Ab, G, F, E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>C, Bb, Ab, Bb, Ab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ab, G, Ab, C, Eb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bb, A, Ab, G, F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Db, C, Bb, B, C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>F, Ab, Bb, Ab, F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Marsh's High Frequency Patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Pattern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>E, F, G, F, E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>F, G, F, E, F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Eb, F, Eb, D, Eb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>F, E, Eb, Db, D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>E, Eb, Db, D, G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>A, D, A, F, D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ab, F, Db, Bb, G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ab, F, E, Eb, Db</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bb, A, Ab, G, Gb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>C, Db, D, F, G</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When attempting to identify a lick in AntConc, it is necessary to set higher parameters for pitch count in order to remove shorter overlapping patterns. This action further confirms Parker's reliance on patterns and their relative absence from the playing of Konitz and Marsh. When setting the parameters to a minimum of 9 pitches and a
maximum of 30, AntConc counts a total of 2660 patterns from Parker, 223 from Konitz and 39 from Marsh. Again, the numbers are inflated due to overlap patterns, but even taking that into account the data reveals an enormous gap between Parker and Konitz and Marsh. Changing the minimum pitch count to 13 (the largest repeated pattern by Marsh) reveals 1 repeated pattern by Marsh, 30 by Konitz, and 1031 from Parker. Setting parameters to Konitz's largest pattern at 17 pitches reveals 1 pattern from Konitz and 317 from Parker. Parker's numbers ultimately drop as the minimum pitch count is raised. However, his pattern count does not drop below 100 until the minimum is set at 21 pitches, and even at 25 pitches there are 4 patterns each with a frequency and range of 2.

| I | V/II | V/V | V/V | Progression |

Parker's tendency is to play formulas that correspond to specific chords or progressions, and he often reserves these formulas for specific keys and does not transpose them. In order to illustrate this in a succinct manner, an analysis of Parker's approach to the | I | V/II | V/V | V/V | progression can serve as a microcosm of his overall lick specificity. The best example of this is illustrated when Parker ends a phrase on this progression, represented by figure 1. In total, 26 choruses of Parker were transcribed which translates to 78 occurrences of the | I | V/II | V/V | V/V | progression. Of those 78 occurrences, Parker plays the lick from figure 1 or a variation of it on 33 occurrences. In other words, this lick is incorporated into Parker’s approach to the Bb7 chord 42% of the time it appears in the progression, and he uses it in all six of the transcribed solos. In addition, this lick is almost always used to end a phrase, which it does 24 of the 32 times Parker plays it.

165 This pattern and its variations are highlighted in red in the score.
Parker's use of this lick as a phrase ending fragment brings attention to the displaced occurrence of the progression in m.11-14. Parker uses this lick a total of 7 times in those measures, but only uses it as a phrase ender 3 of those 7 times. The other 3 instances of the lick are woven into a moving eighth note line. This information supports Konitz's assessment of Parker as a “compositional” improviser, in that he is generally conforming to the structure of the tune. From a compositional standpoint, ending a phrase in m.13 conflicts to some degree with the natural flow of the chord progression. Parker's use of this lick as a phrase ender shows that he is thinking of the improvisation in a compositionally. He is falling back on a secure closing remark at a natural juncture in the progression. In this way he is able to craft an improvisation rhetorically, by carefully placing predetermined statements. It is also significant that this lick only appears over F7 | Bb7, and Parker does not play a transposition of any recognizable material from the formula over other dominant chords in the form.

As with the lick from figure 1, Parker approaches the F7 chord (V/II) with a similarly predetermined method. The lick he uses most often is illustrated in figure 2, and has the highest frequency of all of Parker's licks in the six transcriptions. An AntConc search reveals that this lick occurs 61 times throughout the six solos, and when variations are factored in the count jumps to 75. Unlike the lick from figure 1, Parker uses this lick

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166 P4, m.79-80; P5, m.143; P6, m.43.
167 P3, m.47; P4, m.13; P6, m. 79-80, m. 139.
more liberally and often applies it to the turnaround in measure 29 of the form. When looking specifically at his application of the lick to the | I | V/II | V/V | V/V | progression, Parker uses it verbatim or in variation 55 times out of 78, or approximately 71% of the time.

This pattern is perhaps too general to be considered a lick, but it is given that designation here for several reasons. First, the pattern is taken directly from the melody (see figure 4), and is therefore more than a simple diatonic passage, but a grouping of pitches with a specific function that corresponds to a specific place within the form. Its specificity is further emphasized by the final pitch of the lick, A natural, which shows that the lick is being used to indicate the arrival of F7 or the tonicization of II. Finally, the pattern is used far too frequently and in essentially the same location for it to be a coincidental or general element of vocabulary. Its frequent use in the same or similar position suggests that Parker is treating it as a lick to be inserted as a self contained unit of vocabulary.

Figure 2. Parker’s F7 lick in most common form

What is interesting about this lick is how Parker weaves it into his overall phrase. Rather than playing it in a contrived manner, Parker fluidly varies where he places the lick. Typically, it either begins on the downbeat of F7 as in m.14 of P1, or it ends on the downbeat of F7 as in m.20 of P1. However, there are several instances where he places the lick on the following Bb7 chord, as in m.79 of P6 and m.38 of P4. This further
confirms the “compositional” approach to Parker's improvisation. By employing this strategy, Parker builds a sense of compositional spontaneity; the listener develops a conscious or subconscious familiarity of the phrase structure through repetition, but will still perceive the phrase as spontaneous due to the careful displacement of the familiar elements.

Perhaps the most revealing element in Parker's “compositional” approach is his use of specific licks over various chord changes. The lick that best represents this concept is displayed in figure 3. While the range of this lick is not as high as others, it occurs 28 times throughout five of the six solos, all except P2. Parker uses this lick in a multifunctional capacity, applying it in three specific areas of the tune. The first is on the Ab chord (I) during the | I | V/II | V/V | V/V | progression, as in m.3 on P3. The second is over the turnarounds in m.29-30 and m.31-32, typically over the Ab chord, but often displaced. In two instances (P4 and P6), he begins his solo with this lick in the bars leading up to the top of the form. The third place he uses the lick is over Fm during the modulation to the relative minor in the B section, as in m.27 of P6.

Figure 3. Parker’s Ab lick in most common form

The use of the lick in this manner has a subtle affect; as with the lick in figure 2, the repetition of the lick from figure 3 throughout various parts of the progression helps in creating a sense of structural cohesion. The lick becomes familiar to the ear, but is used
in such a heterogeneous manner that it still feels spontaneous. Moreover, the placement of the lick over diverse chord changes allows it to be heard and perceived in several different contexts, making its arrival both novel and familiar. This feeling is furthered when Parker couples this lick with the lick from figure 2. The listener begins to expect figure 2 when they hear figure 3, adding an element of surprise when Parker goes in a different direction or varies the lick.

Additionally, Parker's solos on “Donna Lee” support Martin's hypothesis that Parker balances his repeated motives by interjecting statements of the melody. Figure 2 for example is a fragment of the melody of “Donna Lee.” Including the occurrences of figure 2, Parker plays a melodic fragment on 82% of the instances of the | I | V/II | V/V | V/V | progression. However, Parker's usage of the melody always comes with variation, which usually consists of one or more altered pitches (P5 m.3), altered rhythms (P2 m.53), or displacement (P2 m.35-37).

**Figure 4. First 4 Bars of “Donna Lee”**

It should also be noted that more than 50% Parker's material on the | I | V/II | V/V | V/V | progression is not related to the melody or other Parker formulas. Based on Norgaard's description of the use of patterns by advanced improvisers, it seems that Parker is using melodic fragments and formulas, and linking them with spontaneously improvised material. The varied nature of both the formulas and melodic fragments, especially in the way the melody is so freely displaced, suggest a level of spontaneity in
Parker's playing that seems overlooked in many formula based analyses of his improvisations.

It is clear that Parker does rely heavily on motor patterns during improvisation, and pulls material from a pool of vocabulary stored in long-term memory, which is concatenated and interspersed with spontaneous material devised through a rule-based system. What is not clear is whether this process is happening consciously or subconsciously. However, a completely conscious use of formulas would likely convey a level of contrivance, a characteristic that is largely absent from an aural assessment of Parker's playing. Parker's playing feels spontaneous, even when he uses formulas, which suggests, though not definitively, that his use of formulas is more subconscious than conscious.

**Konitz and Marsh**

As revealed by the AntConc analysis, in general the solos of both Konitz and Marsh are much less pattern based than Parker's. The most striking difference is in the range of patterns. Unlike Parker who played the same licks through multiple solos spanning several years, Konitz, when he does use patterns, tends to use them on solos recorded close to one another. For instance, K1 (recorded in 1952) does not share any patterns greater than 6 notes with any of his other three solos, which were all recorded within the space of a year (1955-56). K1 does contain patterns, but they are self-contained within that solo and do not appear in the other three, which suggests that Konitz did not build a core vocabulary licks for “Donna Lee” as Parker did, or that perhaps his core vocabulary of licks in 1952 was not the same in 1955. When looking at
patterns that appear between K2, K3, and K4, there are a total of 13 patterns that appear in all three solos.

Marsh's playing contains even less patterns. In fact, Marsh has no patterns greater than five pitches that appear in all three solos. In addition, there are patterns in common between M1 and M2, and there are patterns in common between M2 and M3, but there are no common patterns between M1 and M3, which were recorded six years apart.

Mash's sample is also the only one of the three that includes a solo in the key of F, which allows for the analysis of two aspects of Marsh's playing: whether or not he uses vocabulary from Ab major and transposes it to fit corresponding chords in F major, and whether or not he uses similar vocabulary on common chords between the two keys. In order to test this hypothesis, I have included in Marsh's sample a version of M1 transposed to the key of Ab.

| I | V/II | V/V | V/V |

When looking at the | I | V/II | V/V | V/V | progression, Konitz again proves to be less formulaic than Parker, but still uses some patterns. The most common pattern he uses is shown in figure 5, and it occurs a total of four times, three on K3 and once on K4. The beginning and ending of the pattern varies, but each of the four occurrences contain a core of 9 pitches: C, B-flat, A, C, F, E-flat, C, D-flat, D. The three occurrences in K3 all begin with the pitches Db, which is not used to begin the core lick in K4. Three instances, 2 in K3 and 1 in K4, include the pitch F after the final pitch in the 9-pitch core. Unlike the licks of Parker, each of the four occurrences of this lick are without variation. In K3, all three occurrences of the core group of 9 pitches begin on beat 2 of F7 (V/II). In K4,
the core lick begins one beat earlier (beat 1 of F7). Furthermore, this lick only occurs at
this juncture in the form and is not used over any other chords in the progression.

Figure 4. Konitz lick in most common form

Another 9-note lick occurs three times between two solos (K2, K3) over the Bb7
(V/V) chord. The first appearance of this lick in K2 is in m.20 beginning on the second
half of beat 2 and proceeds as B-flat, C, B-flat, A, B-flat, D, F, G, F. This lick appears in
the same location of the | I | V/II | V/V | V/V | progression in m.36 of K3. The third
occurrence of the lick is also in K2, still over the Bb7 chord but displaced by one beat,
beginning on the second half of beat 3 in m.78. As with the F7 lick, all three
performances of this lick occur with no variation, except for the displacement in K2. This
lick and the previous F7 lick can also be seen as complementary; in K3 m.36, the 9-pitch
Bb7 lick occurs directly following the 9-note F7 lick. Furthermore, both occurrences of
the Bb7 lick in K2 happen following a fragment of the F7 lick, specifically the last three
pitches of the 9 note core lick (C, D-flat, D), though separated by two additional eighth
(B-flat, C) notes in the second instance in K2. A third 9-note lick occurs three times
between two solos (two in K2 and one in K4), with the core notes D-flat, C, B-flat, B, C,
B-flat, G, E-flat, F. As with the other two licks, this lick also proceeds with little variation
in each of the three occurrences, appearing in each instance over the Ab (I) chord.
The lack of repetition of these licks has many implications as to how Konitz is thinking. Where Parker is specifically inserting familiar licks in a compositional manner, Konitz seems to be using “filler” material. Both Parker’s and Konitz’s actions are likely subconscious, however, their strategic process is different. The way in which Parker varies licks suggests that he is using them subconsciously as pliable and movable units of vocabulary. With Konitz, the lack of variation of the lick, its placement in a similar position in the progression, and its small range suggests that Konitz is not using it as vocabulary like Parker, but is subconsciously activating a familiar motor pattern as way to “fill” or continue the line. It is possible that Konitz is using this reliance on a familiar motor pattern to give himself time to assess his situation. He is letting his hands take over, which allows him to plan for upcoming events or address concerns not related to pitches.

AntConc analysis of Marsh's playing over the | I | V/II | V/V | V/V | progression reveals 5 five pitch patterns and 1 seven pitch pattern, each with a range of two and none occurring more than 3 times. The low number of patterns over this four-bar progression as well as their low pitch count distinguishes Marsh from both Konitz and Parker, and points to his avoidance of licks. The longest pattern over the | I | V/II | V/V | V/V | progression appears 3 times, twice in M2 and once in M3, and proceeds with the pitches Eb, C, Db, D, F, G. The two appearances of this six pitch lick in M2 are over the Bb7 chord and begin on second half of beat four. While there is no variation, the lick is
technically displaced by one measure with the first appearance beginning on the third measure of the | I | V/II | V/V | V/V | progression and the second appearance beginning on the second measure.

The appearance of the six pitch pattern in M3, recorded three years later, seems to be more coincidental. First, it does not appear over the Bb7 as in M2, but instead between Ab and F7. The rhythm is slightly varied with the starting pitch (E-flat) occurring as part of a sixteenth note turn, and the lick is displaced by one beat. Most importantly, the lick is built into a continuous line in which he is deliberately emphasizing the tonicization of V on the down beat of each measure. The line begins two measures before the | I | V/II | V/V | V/V | progression in m.48 and continues until the line ends in m.54. M.48-50 all have the pitch Db on the down beat, with Marsh changing to D on the down beat of m.51 and to C# on m.51-52. The C# attacks are both followed by a D. When tonicizing V, the scale degree in the tonic key that must be altered is the subdominant, which is raised to become the leading tone of V. In the key of Ab, the pitch Db must be raised to D to become the leading tone in the tonicization of Eb. Marsh is emphasizing this phenomenon by first placing Db on the down beat and then transforming it into C#, the chromatic lower neighbor of D. Further evidence of the coincidental nature of this pattern is seen in the placement of its final pitches, F and G, which are placed on beat 2 of m.51-53. Along with the underlined tonicization, this suggests that the occurrence of the lick in M3 is not as a unit of vocabulary, but as a part of a slightly varied continuum which subtly stresses tonicization.
Minor Key

As with the other sections of the tune, Parker proves to be no less formulaic over the 7 measure tonicization of F minor in the form. When setting AntConc to detect patterns in the minor section of the tune of at least nine pitches that occur in a range of at least four of the six solos, it reveals a total of 93 patterns 64 of which occur in at least five solos. Many of these patterns are a part of a large, 21 pitch pattern that Parker breaks into fragments to use in various places (Figure 7). For example, the 9-pitch lick C, B-flat, A-flat, G, F, E, G, B-flat, D-flat, appears 14 times throughout the six solos and corresponds to pitches 12-20 of the lick in figure 7. Like his other licks, Parker plays this pattern with some variation in nearly every occurrence.

This 21-pitch pattern is the most obvious lick in all of Parker’s playing on “Donna Lee.” It is clear that it is a memorized grouping of notes that he inserts in roughly the same place every time. It always begins on the | II | V | of F minor which appears in m.21 and 22 of the form. The first 16 pitches contain one of Parker’s most famous licks that he almost always plays over G minor. It is never transposed and always appears with those precise pitches. That Parker chooses to play this lick over a half diminished chord (Gm7b5) shows that he is thinking formulaically as he plays a natural fifth (D) rather than a flatted fifth (Db) in every occurrence. This lick seems to be Parker’s favorite for shows of virtuosity; he usually plays it double time in sixteenth notes.
Figure 7. Parker’s minor lick

AntConc analysis of Konitz over the minor section reveals three patterns occurring between two solos, all with a total of six pitches. This includes one of the few six pitch patterns found in common between K1 and the later solos, appearing in m.26-27 of K1 and m.187-188 of K4. This pattern however, is almost certainly not a practiced lick. First, the pattern seems to be broken up between two melodic statements in K1, the first statement resolving on E natural and the last pitch of the pattern (G) acting as a pickup to the next phrase, which contrasts heavily with the K4 appearance, in which the pattern is contained within a continuous line. Second, the rhythm is heavily varied between the two patterns. As seen in previous examples of Konitz’s licks, when he does play them they are played with very little variation. Finally, the lack of similarity between K1 and the other three solos shows that Konitz likely did not keep a store of licks over that period of time, and it is therefore unlikely that this pattern is anything more than a coincidence.

Figure 8. Six pitch minor pattern on K1 (m.26-27) and K4 (m.187-188)
Marsh’s playing over the minor section follows the same trend as in other sections. AntConc analysis reveals no repeated patterns of five pitches or more from Marsh over the minor section. However, there is one lick that appears in the minor section of the transposed version of M1 that Marsh plays elsewhere in the form on the concert pitch version of M1 and on M2. This seven pitch pattern occurs in m.26-27 in M1 and proceeds as C-sharp, D, E, D, C-sharp, D, F. When transposed to the key of Ab, the lick appears in the concert version of M1 in m.92, and twice in a row in m.5-6 of M2. Unlike Parker’s licks, this lick appears in three very different locations in the form. In the transposed M1, it is used over the minor I chord, whereas in the concert pitch M1 it is used over the vii07/V preceding the return to the tonic key. In M2, Marsh uses this pattern in yet another new location, over a Bb7 and Bb minor chord. The appearances in the transposed and concert M1 solos are without any rhythmic variation, though they are displaced by one beat. The appearances in M2 occur with rhythmic variation in a repetitive sequence that is part of a line which lasts for the next three measures.

Figure 9. Marsh’s lick: transposed M1, concert M1 and M2
The repetition of this grouping of pitches suggests that it is a lick, however it differs from the licks of Parker in several key ways. Parker tends to reserve his licks for very specific locations, matching a lick with a specific chord. There are exceptions to this as with the lick from figure 3, but even in that case, the lick is only used over Ab and F minor which both lend themselves to a similar diatonic vocabulary as they are relative chords. Marsh plays his lick over three functionally unrelated chords; a minor tonic chord, a seven diminished seventh chord, a dominant seventh chord and a minor seventh chord. The appearance of the lick in the transposed M1 also shows that Marsh transposes this idea, something rarely done Parker. This suggests a deeper point, relating to the aural and motor learning methods. It is possible that Marsh is not triggering this lick through motor function, but through aural means. Parker’s playing suggests that he is activating motor patterns and varying them in real time. In contrast, the transposition specifically, but also the variation and utilization over unrelated chords suggests the possibility that Marsh is activating the lick aurally rather than digitally. While mostly speculation, it is clear that Marsh is not utilizing licks in the same manner as Parker.

Marsh

Of the three improvisers, Marsh seems to be the most spontaneous or the one most
engaged in avoiding licks. There are virtually no licks in his playing and certainly none with more than 8 pitches repeated between solos. However, there is an unusual anomaly that appears in M3, which manifests as a 14 pitch lick displayed in figure 10. Marsh plays this lick twice within the space of 11 measures. The first appearance of the lick begins in m.35 on A natural and ends in m.37 on E natural on the second half of beat 2, and the second occurrence begins on the down beat of m.46. As there are no other licks of this nature in Marsh’s playing, there are two possible ways in which to explain this unexpectedly long lick. The first is that this lick is something that Marsh has practiced and inserted either intentionally or unintentionally into his solo, much in the way that Parker does. M3 is the only solo included in the sample from Marsh that was recorded in studio recording session, which might have had an affect on how Marsh approached the solo, and it would be interesting to look at alternate takes if any were available. The second possibility, though more unlikely, is that Marsh created the lick extemporaneously during his solo and is repeating it. While impossible to make this claim definitively, it is possible to argue this idea as the two occurrences are so close in proximity and Marsh plays no other licks of this nature in any of his other solos.

Figure 10. Marsh 14 pitch lick

The abundance of licks in Parker’s playing and the lack of licks in Konitz’s and Marsh’s playing reveals two very different styles of improvisation. Perhaps the most
telling difference between the two styles is how formulas are implemented during improvement. As previously discussed, Parker seems to use formulas and melodic fragments as sources for vocabulary, which creates fluidity in his execution of predetermined patterns. Parker is using formulas constantly, but he varies and displaces them spontaneously. By contrast, Konitz and Marsh use formulas much less frequently, but when they do, the formulas often occur as exact statements with little or no variation. This is more evident in the playing of Konitz, but also generally applies to Marsh as well.

**Parkerisms and Tristanoisms**

The primary purpose of this analysis is to show that Konitz and Marsh play a style of bebop based on Tristano's teachings and not based on Parker or his formulas. There are many additional differences and similarities between the two styles, many of which are beyond the scope of this analysis to address. However, I will briefly discuss a few additional differences between Parker's style and the Tristano school based on the transcribed solos on “Donna Lee.”

Aside from the use of licks by Parker and their relative absence in the playing of Konitz and Marsh, what sets the two styles apart is the lack of “Parkerisms” in Konitz's and Marsh's playing. I define “Parkerisms” as melodic or rhythmic ideas that are too general or generic to be considered licks, but are essential to Parker's sound and style. In addition, Parker's formulas are often key specific, whereas his “Parkerisms” are shorter ideas that he transposes to any key.
Figure 11. Arpeggio Parkerism

Figure 11 shows variations of a particularly common “Parkerism” that is found throughout his solos on “Donna Lee.” The figure is an ascending arpeggio, usually of a minor chord, that often proceeds via eighth-note triplets. The idea usually occurs over a minor or half diminished chord, and Parker typically begins it on a chromatic lower neighbor. However, Parker occasionally begins on a chord tone (Fig. 11 m.2) or plays the idea over a major chord (Fig. 11 m.4). Parker tends to play this idea after periods of rest as a way to begin a phrase. For example, of the roughly 20 phrases in P1, more than half begin with this idea, and he uses this same “Parkerism” to begin 30% of his phrases in P2 and 25% in P5.

In contrast, Konitz and Marsh rarely play ascending arpeggios at all. Between the four solos, Konitz only begins a total of 10 phrases with an ascending arpeggio, and only three of those contain triplets, the other three being comprised of eighth notes. Marsh, somewhat amazingly, only begins a single phrase with an ascending arpeggio in m.39 of M2, and it is not played in triplets. While there is no evidence to support the idea that Tristano might have discouraged his students from using these and other specific “Parkerisms,” it seems clear that they are not part of Konitz's or Marsh's regular vocabulary. However, whether they actively avoided such “Parkerisms” in their playing

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168 This triplet Parkerism is used to start the lick in figure 3. However, I would still consider figure 3 a lick as it contains more than just the triplet figure but an additional series of eighth notes following it.
is, unfortunately, impossible to know for sure.

Despite their lack of “Parkerisms,” the members of the Tristano school studied Parker, and were intimately familiar with his style. Konitz was known to have learned many of Parker's solos, and although he avoided copying Parker, he paid homage to Parker in his own way. Parker died two months before Konitz and Marsh recorded the studio version of “Donna Lee,” and Figure 12 indicates what seems to be Konitz giving a subtle nod of respect to Parker, showing his knowledge of Parker's playing without copying him. The master takes from Parker's 1947-48 Savoy recording sessions were widely released and almost certainly would have been heard by Konitz, especially by the time he played his solos on “Donna Lee” in 1955.

The riff based idea presented by Parker in Fig. 12 comes at the end of the first chorus of his master take on “Donna Lee” (P1 m.31-35). The riff has a distinct Kansas City blues quality, with a syncopated emphasis on the tonic (Ab) and movement between the tonic and the sixth (Ab and F). As the static melodic idea continues, it builds tension naturally with the changing harmony, which resolves at the beginning of the second chorus in m.35. Konitz's riff contains the same syncopated emphasis on the tonic as well as the interplay between the tonic and sixth. Both riffs also shift metrically, each new occurrence beginning on a different beat than it did previously. Finally, Konitz's riff appears in the precise location of the form that Parker's riff occurs, which is during the last 4 measures of the first chorus. However, Parker's riff begins with a characteristic “Parkerism,” an ascending minor triad in triplets, and Konitz's riff does not. It seems possible that Konitz is paying homage to Parker with this riff, but if he is, he does so in his own voice and without the use of “Parkerisms.” This six measure comparison of the
two soloists is perhaps the best example of the outcome of Tristano’s transcription method. Konitz clearly understands Parker’s famous solo on an intimate and intuitive level but creates his own phrase which embodies the “feeling” of the original while not overtly copying it.

Figure 12. Parker and Konitz Riffs Over the Last Four Bars of “Donna Lee”

In order to determine whether or not Konitz and Marsh were copying or imitating Parker, all 13 solos (plus M1 transposed) were analyzed in AntConc, with parameters set to reveal patterns of at least five notes. The results of the analysis largely confirm many of the previous conclusions. The data shows that there are some patterns in common between Parker and Konitz and Marsh, but that they are low in both frequency and range. In addition, Konitz’s playing generally contains more material from Parker than Marsh’s, which is not surprising as Marsh plays the least amount of overall licks between the three.

Interestingly, one of the only recognizable licks occurring in the playing of all
three improvisers is Parker’s lick from figure 2. It appears twice in K1 (m.44 and 87),
twice in K3 (m.51 and 67), once in M2 (m.44) and once in M3 (m.8-9). All six
occurrences between Konitz and Marsh are during the F7 chord, exactly where Parker
typically places the lick. However, Marsh does not seem to be using the five pitch pattern
as a lick; in both instances it is woven into a continuous line with no recognizable
patterns before or after. As previously discussed, this pattern is very general and is only
given the designation of lick in Parker’s playing because of its relationship to the melody
and Parker’s frequent use of it over F7. Konitz, however, is almost certainly using it as a
lick. In K3, both instances happen on the down beat F7 and are followed by the lick in
figure 4. The first appearance of the pattern in K1 is also most likely a lick. Although it
does not carry on with a recognizable pattern, it begins on the down beat of F7 as in the
other two instances. K1 m.87 does not occur over F7 and is part of a continuous diatonic
line, making it unlikely that Konitz was utilizing it as a lick.

It could be suggested that Konitz’s use of the lick from figure 2 shows that he was
a Parker imitator to some degree. However, generally speaking, there is a lack of both
Parker licks and “Parkerisms” in the playing of Konitz and Marsh, which indicates that
they were not attempting, consciously or subconsciously, to imitate Parker in their
playing. In addition, the fact that they both learned numerous solos by Parker and still
play relatively few Parker ideas is a testament to Tristano’s method of transcription and
solo singing. Furthermore, none of the appearances of the lick from figure 2 in are overt
in Konitz’s solos, and they seem to go by unnoticed without any resemblance to Parker,
which illustrates that Konitz has incorporated aspects of Parker’s playing without
blatantly imitating or copying him.
Conclusion

Research and analysis supports the claim that Konitz and Marsh improvise in a less formulaic way than Parker, and that they are not imitators of Parker's style. While Parker did improvise in a formulaic manner, the analysis of “Donna Lee” reveals spontaneity in the way he varies formulas and melodic fragments in his solos. Although they play less licks overall, when they do play licks Konitz and Marsh tend to play them with little variation and in the same location.

A conclusion that could be drawn from this data is that Konitz and Marsh tend to play more spontaneous material than Parker, but Parker plays formulaic material more spontaneously than Konitz and Marsh. This again plays into the debate presented previously as to what takes precedence in improvisation, the process or the finished product. Parker sounds more spontaneous but is less spontaneous in reality, which clearly indicates that his model of improvisation places the finished product above the extemporaneous creation of novel musical statements. Somewhat ironically, the use of licks is in part what allows Parker to sound more spontaneous. The energy, drive and style in his presentation of a solo is what makes his music seem so spontaneous. By deemphasizing the extemporaneous creation of melodic content, Parker is able to focus on other issues, such as tone, style, articulation and coherence which aids in boosting the excitement and perceived spontaneity in his playing.

Konitz and Marsh seem to only play licks because they, like all improvisers, are unable to disassociate themselves from them, though they clearly try. Avoiding licks comes with a cost: Parker is perceived by critics, peers and fans to be an extremely exciting and spontaneous sounding player. It is in part what propelled him to an iconic
status in the jazz world. Konitz and Marsh, for all their purely spontaneous efforts are often criticized for lacking emotion, and sounding cold and cerebral. However, the analysis of “Donna Lee” also reveals the growth and expansion of Konitz’s and Marsh’s playing over time. All of the solo samples are unique, which is a natural byproduct of striving for pure spontaneity. In contrast, Parker shows little growth as an improviser and aside from length, his six solos are all largely similar.

It seems clear, based on analysis, that Konitz and Marsh prove that bebop improvisation is possible when avoiding licks and that they may not be a necessary part of the learning process. Where mainstream methods stress memorization of licks, patterns and scales, Tristano emphasized developing the ear and the feeling of a jazz solo, which also reveals more about what defines the bebop language. Though a definition is perhaps not possible, what is clear is that licks, and specifically the licks of Parker, are not an essential aspect the bebop language.

It is not the purpose of this document to speculate how elements of Tristano’s method might be applied in higher education, and because his method was based on a one-on-one student teacher model, many aspects might be difficult to implement. However, one aspect that seems to be lacking in mainstream models is a discussion with the student regarding the purpose of improvisation, which is perhaps one the most powerful aspect of Tristano’s method; in the first lesson, students discuss with Tristano exactly what they are attempting to achieve through study.

There are many criticisms of mainstream pedagogy in this document, particularly of Baker, Coker and Aebersold, but comments here are in no way meant to be disparaging. All three educators, and many who were not discussed here, played an
important and challenged role in codifying jazz education at a time when it was viewed as lesser than Western classical music. Furthermore, this is not meant to be a criticism of lick based improvisation or of the outcomes of mainstream methods. Thousands of musicians have utilized these manuals and techniques, many of whom are leading artists in the jazz scene today. However, a discussion and acknowledgement of differing approaches and intentions in improvisation would be pertinent to any serious student trying to expand their improvisational prowess. This analysis shows that Tristano needs further visitation by academia as he presents a pedagogical system that is ideologically different from most mainstream models.

Konitz and Marsh continued to grow as improvisers and had careers that long outlived the bebop era. Parker unfortunately did not. On several occasions, Parker made comments about wanting to do something more as an improviser. But as his fame and volume of recordings increased and his formulas became more recognizable and more synonymous with the bebop language itself, Parker only continued to rely on a familiar vocabulary. Tristano himself argues that it was not Parker's use of formulas that conventionalized his style, but their excessive use by others. Tristano's reverence for Parker, and his loathing of those who copied him, likely had a large affect on his musical opinions and impacted his pedagogical method, and may be in part why he stressed that his students avoid the use of licks. In 1962, Tristano gave his own definition of bebop and discussed Parker's disillusionment with imitation and reliance on formulas:

There is quite a sizeable gap between bop and previous phases of jazz. The most complex aspect of bop lies in the ingenuity with which the melodic line was originated. It was creative. The context of the line breaks up into a large number of precisely thought-out phrases, each of which is an idea in its own right and may also be used in conjunction with any of the other phrases, and on any tune whose chord structure is chromatic or diatonic. This may be compared with a jig-saw
puzzle which can be put together in hundreds of ways, each time showing a
definite picture which in its general character differs from all the other possible
pictures. In 1949, however, Bird told me that he had said as much as he could in
this particular idiom. He wanted to develop something else in the way of playing
or another style. He was tired of playing the same ideas. I imagine it was brought
to his attention strongly by the repetitious copying of his style by everybody he
met. His music had become stylized.169

BIBLIOGRAPHY


415-442.


DISCOGRAPHY


Lee Konitz on "Donna Lee"

From The Complete Atlantic Records of Lennie Tristano, Lee Konitz and Warne Marsh

Recorded live in Toronto 1952

Written at Pitch

\[Ab\, 7\] F7 Bb7

5 Bbm7 Eb7 Abmaj7 Ebm7 Ab7

9Dbm7 Abm Ab F7

13Bb7 Bbm7 Eb7

17Abmaj7 F7 Bb7

21Gbm7 C7 Bbm7 Emaj7 Abmaj7 Dmaj7

25Fm6 C7 Fm6 Bb7

29Cm7 F7 Bbm7 Eb7 Abmaj7 Bbm7 Eb7

33Abmaj7 F7 Bb7

37Bbm7 Eb7 Abmaj7 Ebm7 Ab7

41Dbm7 Abm F7
45  Bb7  Bbm7  Eb7
49  Abm7  F7  Bb7
53  Gm7(b5)  C7  Bm7
57  Fm6  C7  Fm6  B07
61  Cm7  F7  Bbm7  Eb7  Abm7  Bbm7  Eb7
65  Abm7  F7  Bb7
69  Bbm7  Eb7  Abm7  Ebm7  Ab7
73  Dbm7  Dbm7  Abm7  F7
77  Bb7  Bbm7  Eb7
81  Abm7  F7  Bb7
85  Gm7(b5)  C7  Bm7
89  Fm6  C7  Fm6  B07
Red pitches = Figure 8
Blue pitches = figure 5
Purple pitches = figure 12
First Chorus

Lee Konitz on "Donna Lee"
Recorded Live in 1955

1997. Mosaic Records, MD6-174

From The Complete Atlantic Recordings of Lennie Tristano, Lee Konitz and Warne Marsh
WARNE MARSH ON "INDIANA" 1949
From Lennie Tristano Quintet: Live at Birdland.
1949. Jazz Records, JR1-CD
Purple pitches = Figure 9
Warne Marsh on "Back Home"
From The Complete Atlantic Recordings of Lennie Tristano, Lee Konitz and Warne Marsh
Recorded Live in Toronto, 1952.

Pitches sound an octave lower than written.
Blue Pitches = Figure 6
Red Pitches = Figure 9
Warne Marsh on "Donna Lee"
From Lee Konitz's Lee Konitz with Warne Marsh
1955. Atlantic, 1217

Tenor Saxophone

Pitches sound an octave lower than written

Abma7 F7 Bb7

Abma7 Eb7 Abma7 Ebmi7

Dbma7 Dbmi7 Abma7 F7

Bb7 Bbmi7 Eb7 Abma7

Gmi7b5 C7 Fmi C7 Fmi

C7 Fmi7 B7 A bma7 F7

Bbmi7 E b7 A bma7 Bbmi7 E b7
Parker on "Donna Lee" Take 5 (Master take)
From The Complete Savoy and Dial Studio Recordings 1944-1948
2000. Atlantic, 92911-2

Red pitches = Figure 1
Blue pitches = Figure 2
Purple pitches = Figure 11
Yellow pitches = Figure 12

First Chorus

Eb7  Ab6  F7  Bb7

Bbmi7  Eb7  Ab6  Ebmi7  Ab7

Dbma7  Gb7  Ab6  F7

Bb7  Bbmi7  Eb7

Gmi7b5  C7  Fmi6  C7

Fmi6  C7  Fmi6  Bº7

Ab6  F7  Bbmi7  Eb7  Ab6  (Eb pedal)  Ab6  Eb7
A

Second Chorus

B

C
A  
**FIRST CHORUS**

```plaintext
[Music notation diagram]
```

B

```plaintext
[Music notation diagram]
```

[Music notation diagram]

AA

```plaintext
[Music notation diagram]
```

C

```plaintext
[Music notation diagram]
```
PARKER ON "DONNA Lee" TAKE 3


RECORDED IN 1947.

RED PITCHES = FIGURE 1
BLUE PITCHES = FIGURE 2
PURPLE PITCHES = FIGURE 3
GREEN PITCHES = FIGURE 7
PARKER METRONOME ALL STARS
FROM CHARLIE PARKER WITH LENNIE TRISTANO: COMPLETE RECORDINGS
2006. DEFINITIVE RECORDS, DRCD 11289
RECORDED IN 1947 AS BARRY ULANOV'S METRONOME ALLSTARS

Ab \( 3 \) | Bbm7 | E7 \( 3 \) | Ab | F7 | Bb7
---|---|---|---|---|---
Ab | Bbm7 | E7 \( 3 \) | Ab | F7 | Bb7

D♭ \( 3 \) | D♭mi | Ab | F7 | Bb7
---|---|---|---|---
D♭ | D♭mi | Ab | F7 | Bb7

Bb7 | Bbm7 | E7
---|---|---
Bb7 | Bbm7 | E7

Ab \( 3 \) | F7 | Bb7
---|---|---
Ab | F7 | Bb7

Gmi7b5 | C7 | Fmi | C7
---|---|---|---
Gmi7b5 | C7 | Fmi | C7

Ab | F7 | Bb7 | Ab | Bb7 | E7
---|---|---|---|---|---
Ab | F7 | Bb7 | Ab | Bb7 | E7

Ab | F7 | Bb7 | Ab | Bb7 | E7
---|---|---|---|---|---
Ab | F7 | Bb7 | Ab | Bb7 | E7

E♭7 | Ab | F7 | Bb7
---|---|---|---
E♭7 | Ab | F7 | Bb7

D♭ | D♭mi | Ab | F7 | Bb7
---|---|---|---|---
D♭ | D♭mi | Ab | F7 | Bb7
139 D⁷ F⁷
143 Bb⁷ Bb₇ Eb⁷
147 A⁷ F⁷ Bb⁷
151 Gm7 Fmi C⁷
155 Fmi C7 Fmi B⁰⁷
159 A⁷ F⁷ Bb₇ Eb⁷ A⁷ Bb₇ Eb⁷
163 A⁷
First Solo Ends and recording cuts out. Parker's solo returns midway through a new chorus.
165 Fmi C⁷
167 Fmi C⁷ Fmi B⁰⁷
171 A⁷ F⁷ Bb₇ Eb⁷ A⁷ Bb₇ Eb⁷
175 A⁷ F⁷ Bb⁷
179 Bb₇ Eb⁷ A⁷ A⁷