Analysis of Bass Lines Played by Ray Brown and Charlie Haden over the Blues Form

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ANALYSIS OF BASS LINES PLAYED BY RAY BROWN AND CHARLIE HADEN OVER THE BLUES FORM

A SENIOR CAPSTONE PROJECT BY KYLER REBICH
BACHELOR OF ARTS – INSTRUMENTAL JAZZ STUDIES
WHAT IS THIS PROJECT AND WHY DID I CHOOSE TO STUDY BASS LINES ON A BLUES?
RESEARCH METHODS

- Listening
- Transcription
- Analysis through:
  - Melodic (or “horizontal”) analysis
  - Harmonic (or “vertical”) analysis
  - Recurring motifs (licks)
  - Motifs and their variations (ideas)
  - Chord tone analysis
RAY BROWN (1926-2002)

- Grew up in Pittsburgh
- Piano lessons from age 8 but switched to bass after beginning high school

- Played with…
  - Oscar Peterson (O.P) (p.)
  - Ella Fitzgerald (vocals)
  - Charlie Parker (sax.), Dizzy Gillespie (tpt.), Ed Thigpen (dr.), Gene Harris (p.)
  - Studio bassist after O.P. trio
WHERE DID I TRANSCRIBE FROM?

- Blues for Sylvia – *Bass Hit!* (1956) – four choruses
- Night Train – *Night Train* (1962) – one and a half choruses
- Blues for Smedley – *Oscar Peterson Trio + One* (1964) – two choruses
- Billie’s Bounce – *Encore at the Blue Note* (1990) – five choruses
- Freddie Freeloader – *Live at Scullers* (1997) – three choruses
WHAT DID I LEARN FROM RAY BROWN?
RAY BROWN’S FEEL

- Strong-footed
- Functionality and tonal resonance
- Utilized the entire range of the bass
- Bass in his bass
- Dance
FUNCTIONALITY

- Ray Brown lives in tonal resonance
  - Chord tones
  - Scales

Blues for Sylvia

Billie's Bounce
FUNCTIONALITY - EXCEPTIONS

- Chromatic Lines

Dew & Mud

89

F7

Bb7

CT

F7

Bb7

CT

CT

CT

CT

CT

93

F7

A-7b5

D7

CT

CT

CT

CT

CT

97

G-7

C7

F7

G-7

C7
SO. MANY. LEADING TONES (AND ENCLOSURES)

- Leading Tones (LT’s)
  - Between chord tones or as part of an enclosure
  - LICK – Using LT’s going to the 5th

Red = “licks”
Blue = Explanations
SO. MANY. LEADING TONES (AND ENCLOSURES)

Billie's Bounce

Blues for Smedley

Db7
SO. MANY. LEADING TONES (AND ENCLOSURES)

Night Train

Blues for Sylvia
HOW DID RAY BROWN PLAY OVER A 2-FEEL?

- Regarding note choice…
  - A bunch of roots, 5ths, and 3rds, UNLESS he’s using LT’s or he’s in the ii-V
  - Triplet rhythms usually consist of chordal arpeggiation or steps/LT’s to his target pitch
Red = “licks”
Blue = Explanations
HOW DID RAY BROWN PLAY OVER A 2-FEEL?

- Regarding rhythmic choice...
  - Increased rhythmic activity happened in the last bar of 4-bar phrases
  - Fond of triplets with first note tied to the previous beat
- Billie’s Bounce – Mostly half notes with the occasional dotted-quarter-eighth rhythm
  - Bobby Durham (dr.) uses brushes with 2 and 4 on the hi hat
- Blues for Smedley – Mostly dotted-quarter-eighths with the occasional half note
  - Ed Thigpen (dr.) uses sticks with a swing pattern on the hi hat
RAY BROWN IS EXTREMELY RHYTHMICALLY AWARE

- During a 2-feel, rhythmic embellishments and increased rhythmic activity never feel like they imply an upcoming 4-feel
- Eighth notes never feel overbearing or in the wrong place
- Communicates with the people he plays with
RAY BROWN IS EXTREMELY RHYTHMICALLY AWARE

- Something to note about his use of triplets...
  - Over a 2-feel – first note tied to the previous beat
  - Over a 4-feel – the entire triplet is articulated
LICKS

- LT’s to the 5th

- 1-3-6-5

- 1-b7-5-1 over the ii chord
CHARLIE HADEN (1937-2014)

- Born in Iowa to an exceptionally musical family that played on the local radio as the Haden Family – Country and American Folk
  - First professional debut as part of the Haden Family at just 2 years old
  - Age 15 contracts polio that affects his throat and facial muscles
  - After recovery, dived into the bass with inspiration and influence from hearing Charlie Parker and Stan Kenton in concert and from Johann Sebastian Bach

- Played with…
  - Ornette Coleman
  - Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra
  - Pat Metheny
  - His own Liberation Music Orchestra
WHERE DID I TRANSCRIBE FROM?

- Blues for Pat – *Rejoicing* (1983) – two choruses
- Visa – *Silence* (1987) – four choruses
- Blues in Motion – *Etudes* (1987) – four choruses
- Blues in Motion – *The Montréal Tapes* (1989) – six choruses
- Blues Connotation – *Peace / Pace / Paix* (1991) – two choruses
WHAT DID I LEARN FROM CHARLIE HADEN?
CHARLIE HADEN’S FEEL

- Very warm, mellow
- Played more toward the middle of the beat
- Sang through his instrument
- Although capable of playing in the higher register, he usually played in the lower for his walking lines
REPEATING PITCHES IS COOL!

- Haden-ism

- Can be used to instigate different harmonies, but with more freedom on what that harmony can be
Sets up m. 69-78 with repeated pitches in m. 65-66

m. 70-72 implies three bars of ii-V's that ultimately lead to Bb7

m. 76-78 tritone subs
This section is a little more functional in the harmonies implied

Combines repeated pitches with ideas/variations (transposing while hitting major chord tones)
IDEAS AND VARIATIONS

- State an idea, then state that idea again with some variation to it
  - Simple Transposition
  - Transposition while also hitting major chord tones
  - Transposition but intervals are lax while shape is intact
  - Reversing direction
  - Reversing direction while keeping intervals the same

- Makes for good storytelling
IDEAS AND VARIATIONS – TRANSPOSITION W/CHORD TONES
– Shapes

Blues in Motian (The Montréal Tapes) – Transposition w/chord tones

Visa - Shapes

Blues in Motian (Montréal Tapes) - Shapes

Blues in Motion (Etudes) - Shapes

Red = different intervals
Blue = Original Intervals & Explanations
Highlights = “ideas”
Blues in Motion (Montréal Tapes) – Reversing direction

Blues in Motion (Etudes) – Reversing direction w/same intervals
Charlie used his ear heavily while also keeping the form and a rough harmonic outline

- He had licks, but his lines and music were ever-evolving stories that involved the people he played with
Charlie used his ear heavily while also keeping the form and a rough harmonic outline. He had licks, but his lines and music were ever-evolving stories that involved the people he played with.

Blues Connotation – Playing off and with André Jaume
EXPLORE & DISCOVER

Blues in Motion (The Montréal Tapes)

198 F7
Bb7
This big idea/idea communicated by Geri Allen

202 Bb7
Bdim?
Minic Geri's recent upbeat hits

206 C7
Gb7
F7
Gb7
G-7
Gb7
In tandem w/Geri

210 F7
Bb7
F7
Charlie used his ear heavily while also keeping the form and a rough harmonic outline.

- Not all his lines had to be “functionally sound”
We are allowed to explore & discover new ideas, new shapes, new colors, etc. with the people we are playing with!
OVER A 2-FEEL

- Blues for Pat
  - *Rejoicing* – Pat Metheny & Billy Higgins
  - *Wish* – Pat Metheny, Billy Higgins, Joshua Redman

- Regarding note choice…
  - Pretty similar to Ray Brown

- Regarding rhythmic choice…
OVER A 2-FEEL – RHYTHMIC CHOICE

Blues for Pat - Rejoicing (1983) (2-feel under melody)

Trascrition of Charlie Haden on Blues for Pat w/Joshua Redman

Transcribed by Thomas Sciple
LICKS

- 1-2-3-1 to 3 on the IV chord
- 3rds idea, usually over the IV chord
  - Yes, from the scale exercise
- 1-6-5-1, usually on the I chord
- Tritone subs during ii-V
NOTE ON A COMMON BASS LICK

- Found at the end of the melody to Take The A Train by Duke Ellington
OTHER COMMONALITIES

- Over a 2-feel
  - Greater rhythmic activity (quarter notes, more than 2 eighth notes in succession, etc.) was common in the last bar of 4-bar phrases and sometimes during the ii-V-I
    - Marking the form

- Targeting the 5th on I chords through use of LT’s, enclosures, or both
  - Note: This was usually over I chords that were NOT the first I chord of the form
MY OWN LINES, BUT IN THE STYLE OF RAY BROWN AND CHARLIE HADEN
LINES WRITTEN IN EACH ARTIST’S RESPECTIVE STYLE

- For both artists…
  - 2 choruses in a 2-feel (for comparison purposes)

- For Ray Brown specifically (focusing on -isms and licks)…
  - 2 more choruses medium-up
  - 4 more choruses medium

- For Charlie Haden specifically (focusing on -isms and licks)…
  - 4 more choruses uptempo (because this was the style I learned most from him)
  - 2 more choruses medium
A NOTE BEFORE I DIVE IN…
WHAT WERE MY BIG TAKEAWAYS?

Ray Brown
- “Root-y” functionality can be hip
- Rhythmic embellishment

Charlie Haden
- Ideas and variations of ideas
- Melody within a walking line
Be open-minded and open-eared; you can explore, even in the blues form.
Ray Brown Blues Transcriptions

Blues For Sylvia (1956) (1:55-3:56)

Transcribed by Kyler Rebich
Dew & Mud (1965) (0:42-1:50) - Walking behind Milt's solo
Blues for Smedley (1964) (2-feel under melody)

Chord Progression:

- G7
- C7
- F7
- Bb7
- F7
- A-7b5
- D7
- G7
- C7
- F7
- G7
- C7
- F7
- Ab7
- Db7
- C-7b5
- F7b9
- Bb7
- Eb7
- C-7b5
- F7b9
- Bb7
- Eb7
- Ab7
- Db7
- Ab7
- C-7b5
- F7b9
- Bb7
- Eb7
- Ab7
- Db7
- Ab7
- C-7
- F7
- Bb7
- Eb7

- Charlie does something similar on Blues for Pat

*Common Walking bass lick*

*Short rhythms in 4th bar of phrase*
Freddie Freeloader (re. 1997) (1:17-2:16)

129
Bb7

133
Eb7

F7

141
Bb7

145
Eb7

F7

153
Bb7

157
Eb7

161
F7

165
Bb7

169
Charlie Haden Blues Transcriptions

Blues for Pat - Rejoicing (1983) (2-feel under melody)

Visa - Silence (1987) (0:37-1:50)

86  Bb7 | Bb7  | Eb7 | Bb7
90  Eb7 | N.C. | G7
94  C-7 | F7 | Bb7 | F7
98  Bb7 | Eb7 | Bb7
102  Eb7 | Bb7
106  C-7 | F7 | Bb7 | F7
110  Bb7 | Eb7
114  | | | |

Blues in Motion - Etudes (1987) (1:02-2:00)

118  F7 | G7 | C7 | F7
122  Bb7
126  G-7 | (Ab7) | Db7 | Gb7b9
lots of functionality despite Gies's soloing

QQA utilizing asc. vs. desc. motion

Repeating a pitch on 2 and 3 ~ lick
Bass Lines In the Style of Charlie Haden

Kyler Rebich

Swing  \( \frac{4}{4} \)  Bb7  Eb7  Bb7  (F-7  Bb7)

\( \text{implying I\textsuperscript{i} to the III} \)

Charlie\'s affinity for half-step motion

\( \text{more activity in bars before next phrase} \)

Melodically asc. motion in contrast to previous chorus

\( \text{Charlie lands on B}_b^\text{b} \text{ in blues for Pat. I took it and modified it for the III chord} \)

Same pitch content as previous chorus

\( 1/8 \text{ th notes and off-beats} \) (rather than triplets)

Voice leading to non-roots, "Licks"/stolen ideas.
Ideas & Variations, “licks,” repeated pitches,

\[ \frac{\text{Bb7}}{2} \quad \frac{\text{Eb7}}{ \text{“lick”} } \quad \frac{\text{Bb7}}{2} \]

\[ \frac{\text{Eb7}}{ \text{playing off of his idea} } \quad \frac{\text{Bb7}}{ \text{but reversed} } \quad \frac{\text{D-7b5}}{2} \quad \frac{\text{G7b9}}{2} \]

\[ \frac{\text{C-7}}{2} \quad \frac{\text{F7}}{2} \quad \frac{\text{D-7}}{2} \quad \frac{\text{Db7}}{2} \quad \frac{\text{C-7}}{2} \quad \frac{\text{B7}}{2} \]

\[ \frac{\text{Bb7}}{2} \quad \frac{\text{Eb7}}{ \text{idea} } \quad \frac{\text{Bb7}}{ \text{same idea but reversed, add G at end to lead to F} } \quad \frac{\text{D-7b5}}{2} \quad \frac{\text{G7b9}}{2} \]

\[ \frac{\text{C-7}}/2 \quad \frac{\text{F7}}{2} \quad \frac{\text{D7b9}}{2} \quad \frac{\text{G7}}{2} \quad \frac{\text{C-7}}{2} \quad \frac{\text{F7}}{2} \]

\[ \frac{\text{Bb7}}{2} \]

big root notes (and leading tone) to exit the previous idea & ground the form
Ideas & Variations, enclosures, tailgating 3 & 5, "licks."

- F7

- Bb7

- F7

- G-7

- C7

- F7

- (C7)

- F7

- Bb7

- F7

- G-7

- C7

- F7

- G-7

- C7

- F7
Bass Lines In the Style of Ray Brown

Swing  \( \frac{4}{4} = 125 \)  F7  Bb7  LT to \( \frac{5}{4} \) block  F7  LT to \( \frac{3}{2} \) of C-7  F7  

5  Bb7  

9  G-7  Stolen from C7 Blues for Speakey  A-7b5  D7b9  A-7b5  D7  G-7  C7  

13  F7  LT's to \( \frac{3}{2} \)  

17  Bb7  Slur into \( \frac{3}{2} \) LT's  

21  G-7  C7  A-7b5  D7  G-7  C7  

(see Speakey, Billie's Bounce)  Transitioning to \( \frac{4}{4} \)-feel  

25  F7
Trying to insert more \( \frac{3}{4} \) rhythms
Without being overbearing

\( \frac{3}{4} \) = 140

Bb7  Eb7  Bb7  

Taking the same idea
up an octave

CT’s in
big leaps

C-7  L.T.’s  F7  Bb7  F7

(F-7  Bb7)

L.T.’s to \( \frac{5}{8} \)

L.T.’s to \( \frac{5}{8} \)

\( \frac{3}{4} \)

Consistency

C-7  F7  Bb7  \( \text{Encl.} \)  Bb7  \( \text{The VicK} \)  F7  

L.T.’s
Transcription of Charlie Haden on Blues for Pat w/Joshua Redman

Transcribed by Thomas Sciple

\[ \text{Joshua played solo for 4 bars at the top} \]

\[ \text{Charlie will use this lick a lot} \]

\[ \text{Lays into the b7} \]

\[ \text{Same lick on visa m. 74-75} \]

\[ \text{b5's on turnaround chords -> Ray B. does this too} \]