

“Autumn Leaves”: Intricacies of Style in Keith Jarrett’s Approach to the Jazz Standard

Michael Schachter
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

I. Introduction

KEITH JARRETT IS ONE OF THE GREAT IMPROVISERS of the past half-century. With his exquisite tone, pristine control, and access to an apparently inexhaustible wellspring of melodic creativity, Jarrett casts a dauntingly long shadow across jazz pianism. His reputation as transcendent improviser seemingly flies in the face of much recent scholarship on the role of formula and motive in improvisation, which has done much to demystify jazz practice. My questions in this paper are simple: how can we best account for Jarrett’s improvisatory style? Are our current analytical tools sufficient?

I will explore these questions through close analysis of Jarrett’s approach to the jazz standard, focusing primarily on his recording of “Autumn Leaves” on the 1995 album, *Keith Jarrett at the Blue Note*. Ultimately, I will argue that Jarrett’s characteristic style arises not so much from a consistent set of trademark licks, but rather from the idiosyncratic commingling of his eclectic influences, as well as the unusual degree to which Jarrett *resists* stock patterns compared to most improvisers. Strikingly, Jarrett manages to merge the seemingly opposed poles of formula and motive, poeticizing formulaic gestures through motivic treatment and formulaically applying developmental approaches to line and form. Jarrett’s playing suggests the need for a more flexible conception of improvisation than has yet appeared in jazz scholarship.

II. Formula, Motive, Style

More so than that of many jazz artists, Keith Jarrett’s career has encompassed unusual stylistic diversity. His first break came in 1966, joining Art Blakey’s Jazz Messengers and appearing on the album

Buttercorn Lady playing primarily in a straight-ahead style. However, he quickly made his name at the forefront of the *avant garde*, joining experimental groups led by Charles Lloyd and Miles Davis. In the 1970s, he pioneered fully improvised solo concerts of breathtaking scope and eclectic musical language, ranging from spiky atonality to the mellifluous pan-diatonicism of the Köln Concert (the 1975 recording of which became a multi-platinum crossover hit). At the same time, Jarrett developed a parallel career as a classical musician, recording prolifically as a performer of Bach, Mozart, and others; in his student years, he even had an offer to study composition with Nadia Boulanger, and he continues to compose concert works to this day. In this paper, I primarily concern myself with Jarrett's approach to standard tunes. Jarrett's work with his so-called "Standards Trio" began in 1983, when Manfred Eicher, the founder of ECM Records, suggested that Keith record a straight-ahead album of standards with bassist Gary Peacock and drummer Jack DeJohnette. In the thirty years since, the trio has established itself as one of the most commercially and artistically successful jazz groups in the world. Though all but exclusively devoted to standards and straight-ahead playing, the Standards Trio's output nonetheless reflects the rich panoply of Jarrett's historical, stylistic, and cross-genre influences, often within the very same performance.¹

Jarrett's extraordinary range manifests comprehensively within his improvisational language. In his solo concerts and straight-ahead trio work alike, Jarrett draws upon the full range of his eclectic influences, both within jazz's various streams and without.² This diversity presents a significant challenge to the analyst attempting to make claims about "Jarrett's improvisational style." The notion of personal style implies a certain degree of consistency on the part of the artist. While many jazz

¹The live album *My Foolish Heart* (2007) is especially notable in this regard, with neo-stride renditions of Fats Waller's "Honeysuckle Rose" and "Ain't Misbehavin'" complemented by fast bebop takes of Miles Davis' "Four" and Sonny Rollins' "Oleo," an almost romantically lyrical take of Victor Young's "My Foolish Heart," and an essentially free jazz interpretation of Thelonious Monk's "Straight No Chaser."

²In the liner notes to *Foundations: The Keith Jarrett Anthology* (Rhino Records, 1994), Leonard Feather writes of a 1968 Keith Jarrett performance: "What came out was not much short of a complete history of jazz piano played backwards." For more on Jarrett's diversity of stylistic influences outside of jazz, see Gernot Blume, "Blurred Affinities: Tracing the Influence of North Indian Classical music in Keith Jarrett's Solo Piano Improvisations," *Popular Music* 22, no. 2 (May 2003): 117–142.

players demonstrate maturation or even evolution over the course of their careers, we can contextualize these changes as elements of a coherent narrative; for Charlie Parker or Bill Evans, the early recordings represent snapshots of young artists "putting the pieces together" for later, more mature work that nonetheless maintains a similar conception of approach. For more stylistically eclectic artists like Miles Davis or John Coltrane, we can trace stylistic change (however superficially) to a quasi-teleological narrative (early years of straight-ahead mastery give way to later years of experimentalism and, in Coltrane's case, spiritual discovery). Simplistically, Jarrett's career reverses the Davis/Coltrane archetype—Jarrett's early avant garde-ism gives way to standards playing in his later years—but traces of the former are consistently present in the latter, and vice versa. From the very beginning, Jarrett's playing draws on material from various historical and stylistic contexts, juxtaposing them with ahistorical abandon. To understand Jarrett's "style," then, we must content ourselves less with a bounded, coherent musical language and more with characteristic proclivities.

In addition to Jarrett's eclectic musical language, the analyst must also contend with the peculiar mystique that surrounds Jarrett's performance practice. Since the 1970s, Jarrett has dazzled audiences with his extended, fully-extemporized solo concerts, which developed an air of religious ritual. In addition to the impressiveness of the artistic feat of fully improvising evening-length concerts, Jarrett's performance neuroses—extreme sensitivity to the distractions of noise and light, diva-like requests to switch between grand pianos at the last second, and the notorious grunting, shrieking, and gyrating while playing—earned Jarrett an aura among audiences and reviewers in the 1970s as a transcendent artist in communion with higher powers.³ Jarrett does little to dispel this reputation in interviews and liner notes for his albums, "explain[ing] these massive feats of creativity in terms of an ability to 'channel' or 'surrender to' a source of inspiration, which he ambiguously designates the 'ongoing harmony,' 'the Creative,' and the 'Divine Will.'"⁴ Interestingly, Jarrett's mystique spills over into musical circles as well. His improvisatory prowess inspires awe even among jazz players accustomed to listening to and performing with master improvisers;

³ For more on the reception of Jarrett's performances as mystical acts, see Peter Elsdon, *Keith Jarrett's The Köln Concert* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 40–43.

⁴ Johanna Petsche, "Channelling the Creative: Keith Jarrett's Spiritual Beliefs through a Gurdjieffian Lens," *Literature & Aesthetics* 19, no. 2 (December 2009): 138.

more so than that of most other artists, Jarrett's playing has a reputation of being somehow "untouchable." As Dick Odgren, my own jazz piano teacher in high school and a fixture in the Boston-Worcester jazz scene, used to say, "Some players make you want to work and some make you want to quit. Keith Jarrett makes you want to quit."

Jarrett's eclecticism and mystique mesh uneasily with recent theoretical trends in jazz scholarship, but perhaps are most compatible with the notion of "motivic" improvisation. In 1958, Gunther Schuller published a highly influential article on "thematic improvisation," detailing how Sonny Rollins mobilizes small melodic cells (either original or derived from the tune being improvised on) as the seed material for development.⁵ The conceit of organically building unified, complex structures from humble materials reflects a Romantic approach to improvisation, a clear link not only to masterworks of Western classical music but also to the ideals of genius and self-determination that are so commonplace in descriptions of Jarrett. However, recent research on "formula" in jazz improvisation presents a more direct challenge to mystical conceptions of improvisation in general, and particularly to Jarrett's mystique. While jazz teachers and players have spoken colloquially about patterns and licks as long as jazz has existed,⁶ Henry Martin traces the beginning of formal theoretical study on formula in jazz improvisation to Thomas Owens's landmark 1974 dissertation, "Charlie Parker: Techniques of Improvisation."⁷ In general analytical usage, "formula" refers to, as Martin summarizes, "note patterns prepared in advance by the player for improvisational fluency."⁸ Many

⁵ Gunther Schuller, "Sonny Rollins and the Challenge of Thematic Improvisation," *The Jazz Review* 1, no. 1 (November 1958), 6–11, reprinted in *Musings—The Musical Worlds of Gunther Schuller* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 86–97.

⁶ For just one small example: in his autobiography, Teddy Wilson talks openly and frequently about picking up characteristic licks from Art Tatum, Eubie Banks, Fats Waller, and James P. Johnson, and traces elements of their styles to earlier pioneers such as Jelly Roll Morton and Bix Biederbecke in a manner much less formalized but nonetheless thematically consistent with contemporary analysis. See Teddy Wilson, *Teddy Wilson Talks Jazz*, ed. Humphrey van Loo and Arie Lighthart (New York: Continuum, 2001), passim.

⁷ Henry Martin, "Charlie Parker and *Honeysuckle Rose*: Voice Leading, Formula, and Motive," *Music Theory Online* 18, no. 3 (September 2012), accessed March 28, 2015, <http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.12.18.3/mto.12.18.3.martin.html>. Martin provides an excellent overview of the short history of formulaic analysis in this article.

⁸ *Ibid.*

theorists differentiate between strict formulas, those that appear repeatedly in almost identical form, and "schemata," which, as Stefan Love defines, "are recurring patterns of scale degrees...highly flexible in their details and application."⁹ That is, an improviser might prepare certain voice-leading "paths" through the harmonic progression of a tune (to borrow Steve Larson's evocative term), and apply specific formulas as particular realizations of these possibilities.¹⁰ Martin, Love, and other sensitive analysts have stressed that formula- and schemata-oriented analysis need not necessarily *oppose* motivic analysis;¹¹ the line between formulaic pattern and motivic cell can often be blurred, depending on hermeneutic decisions on how "marked" and "unique" a recurring musical figure might be.

Jazz analysts interested in formula-based approaches have tended to assert that strict formulas are not only commonplace but *necessary* in masterful improvisation, a claim that seems to contradict Jarrett's reputation. The following examples illustrate the scholarly views on this issue:

I now understand improvisation as the real-time yet pre-heard—and even practiced—choice among possible paths that elaborate a pre-existing structure, using familiar patterns and their familiar combinations and embellishments.¹²

Just as people continually reuse various words and phrases in everyday conversation, improvising musicians draw on their own vocabularies of stock devices, commonly called 'formulas,' when playing.¹³

⁹ Stefan C. Love, "Possible Paths': Schemata of Phrasing and Melody in Charlie Parker's Blues," *Music Theory Online* 18, no. 3 (September 2012), accessed March 28, 2015, <http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.12.18.3/mto.12.18.3.love.html>.

¹⁰ Steve Larson, "Composition versus Improvisation?" *Journal of Music Theory* 49, no. 2 (Fall 2005): 272.

¹¹ Martin, "Charlie Parker and *Honeysuckle Rose*" and Love, "Possible Paths"; see also Lawrence Gushee, "Lester Young's *Shoe Shine Boy*," in *A Lester Young Reader*, ed. Lewis Porter (Washington, DC: The Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 224–54; Barry Kernfield, "Two Coltranes," *Annual Review of Jazz Studies* 2 (1983): 7–66; Dariusz Terefenko, *Keith Jarrett's Transformation of Standard Tunes: Theory, Analysis and Pedagogy* (Saarbrücken, Germany: VDM Verlag, 2009); and Austin Gross, "Bill Evans and the Craft of Improvisation" (PhD diss., University of Rochester, Eastman School of Music, 2011).

¹² Larson, "Composition versus Improvisation?," 272.

¹³ Benjamin Givan, *The Music of Django Reinhardt* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010), 75.

As the player becomes fluent in the chosen vocabulary, self-expression becomes spontaneous: the pathways become instinctive. As in speaking or typing, such fluency can only result when the operation's details are taken mostly for granted; hence internalized pathways are necessary for competent improvisational playing. In the real-time world of the improviser, spontaneity and virtuosity at bright tempos require having a lot of notes to play readily *at hand*.¹⁴

Since all fluent improvisers must develop pathways, much jazz improvisation (uptempo, anyway) can be reduced to formula. In this sense, all competent improvisation is "formulaic"—necessarily.¹⁵

Every mature jazz musician develops a repertory of motives and phrases which he uses in the course of his improvisations. His 'spontaneous' performances are actually precomposed to some extent. Yet the master player will seldom, if ever, repeat a solo verbatim; instead he will continually find new ways to reshape, combine, and phrase his well-practiced ideas.¹⁶

Such was the nature of improvisation to Parker, just as it probably has been to every mature improvising artist in any musical tradition around the world. Certainly in Parker's case it could not have been otherwise; the average tempo of his transcribed pieces is about $\text{♩} = 200$. At this tempo, six-and-one-half eighth notes (or thirteen sixteenth notes) occur each second. *No one could create totally new phrases at that speed*. Many of the components of those phrases must be at the fingertips of the player before he begins if he is to play coherent music.¹⁷

All of these statements, in different ways, assert that individual improvisational style arises from the unique (but finite) storehouse of melodic patterns in a player's vocabulary and the idiosyncratic tendencies (in terms of frequency, placement, and pacing) by which the player employs them. If a pattern or phrase appears consistently across a player's output, we can more readily conclude that it is formulaic than if it only appears once or twice. Considering the greater context of genre,

¹⁴Henry Martin, *Charlie Parker and Thematic Improvisation* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 1996), 116.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 117.

¹⁶Thomas Owens, "Charlie Parker: Techniques of Improvisation," (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1974), 17.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 31 (italics mine).

however, brings significant complications to this picture. For example, we might be more likely to identify a particular phrase as formulaic if it conforms closely to the general stylistic vernacular, even if it appears infrequently in a particular performer's output (a frequent problem in analyzing a stylistic omnivore like Jarrett). Conversely, the further a particular pattern strays from genre conventions, the more likely it is to be classified a "motive," unless it figures prominently across much of the performer's output, in which case it once again seems more "formulaic," albeit a formula that contributes more to that performer's identity formation (in a Deleuze-ian sense).¹⁸ Moreover, it means something different for Charlie Parker and Keith Jarrett to play the same note patterns; for Parker, one of bebop's forefathers, a phrase that now seems like a clichéd genre convention might have been originally conceived, whereas for Jarrett it could represent a post-modern reference or even an anachronism.

While formulaic analysis has made very laudable progress in demystifying jazz improvisation, I take slight pause at the degree to which its proponents have argued for its universality and ubiquity. Take Owens's strong statement that "no one could create totally new phrases at that speed [$\text{♩} = 200$]." This seems like a reasonable account of the experience of improvisation for the vast majority of practitioners, but susceptible to falsification—if we find just one improviser who can create new phrases at that speed, then we need to rethink it. But in music analysis, usually for the better, we tend to concern ourselves with outliers, artists that rise above the fray and cast influence. We must be careful to avoid the metonymic fallacy of conflating the work of a single improviser (even as seminal a figure as Charlie Parker) with improvisation in general, or even with improvisation among master improvisers. We have much to gain by meeting each improviser on his or her own terms.

As I will show, Jarrett's playing is not utterly devoid of formulaic or motivic elements, and cataloguing them gives useful information about Jarrett's style. But, at the same time, Jarrett's playing is significantly *less* rife with formulaic patterns, with much more extensive commingling of schematic and motivic techniques, than current ideas

¹⁸Gilles Deleuze argued influentially in *Différence et Répétition* (Paris: Presse Universitaires de France, 1968) that identity arises from a subject's differences to all other subjects and objects, rather than from an accounting of essential attributes. In practical terms, we might readily identify an improviser not necessarily because we can catalogue all of the characteristic components of his or her playing, but because we can differentiate him or her from the way that all other improvisers perform.

on improvisation tend to account for. With the support of my analysis below, I would like to suggest that we should relax the condition of *necessity* surrounding formula in improvisation; rather, formula and motive manifest to a greater and a lesser extent based on the particularities of the performer, and the unique interactions between these and other constraints offer considerable insight into the performer's personal style. With Keith Jarrett, we find a whole host of variables beyond pitch material in melodic improvisation that contribute considerably to his improvisational style. Even within the recognizable genre constraints of straight-ahead jazz, his individualized approach to voicing chords, reharmonizing chord changes, subverting closure, and formal design contribute greatly to the overall "Jarrett sound." Most notably, these domains (as well as the traditionally-analyzed melodic patternings) suggest not necessarily a consistency in *material*, but in *proclivity*. For Jarrett, the standard tune is not simply a meeting place for his disparate influences to rub shoulders as post-modern collage—it is a place for convergence and transformation.

III. Standards and "Autumn Leaves"

Jarrett's approach to the standard is predictably diffuse; there is no single archetypical model, but rather a collection of practices that combine to produce his improvisational style. Few of his characteristic proclivities, if any, could be said to be completely groundbreaking or unique. Jarrett distinguishes himself from his peers primarily through matters of degree and consistency of execution.

The Standards Trio tends to take a number of different formal and rhetorical approaches to jazz standards, lending an unusual degree of variety, pacing, and dramatic control to the group's performances. Various sections of the tune offer opportunities for adjustment; the multitude of variables generates a sizable array of interpretive options (see Figure 1).

Of course, certain variables are often closely associated. For example, a long solo introduction by Jarrett is strongly correlated with a long or extended outro at the end of the tune (for purposes of formal balance), with both often connected motivically and/or texturally. Also, more typical genre conventions such as trading fours tend to be correlated with more conventional treatments of other aspects of the tune, such as a clearly articulated head, truncated or omitted intro/outro sections, and even the degree to which the tune happens to be rendered in straight-ahead bebop vernacular. Nonetheless, even this simplistic

diagram demonstrates the combinatorial possibilities the trio utilizes to achieve variety.

FIGURE 1. Modular Formal Variables in the Standard Trio's Output

Introduction	Head	Solos	Trading Fours	Head	Outro
None	As written	KJ – short	Yes	As written	None
Short (composed)	Paraphrased	KJ – long	No	Paraphrased	Short
Short (KJ improvises)	Developing	Bass solo before	Drum solo instead	Transformed	Long
Long (KJ improvises)	Never made explicit	Bass solo after	Drum solo AND fours	None	Extended (jam session)

Jarrett is quite sensitive to the flow of a performance, and most of his sets exhibit meticulously varied treatments to the standard tunes. Typically, a set will feature between zero and two "extended" tunes, featuring a solo introduction, extended individual solos following the head, perhaps a lengthy drum solo, and (after the return of the head) a long or extended outro; these often last anywhere from twelve to thirty minutes in duration. The bulk of his interpretations are relatively conventional in format and scope, but even within these constraints Jarrett manages to achieve subtle variety. He will only allow himself to take long, highly developmental solos on a subset of these, while taking deliberately shorter solos in other tracks.¹⁹ There may or may not be a bass solo and a drum solo, and the group may or may not trade fours before returning to the head. The interpretation of any given standard is plastic; whether through artistic impulse or the design of a particular concert (or some combination), multiple recordings of the same tune often feature significant differences in length, scope, formal sections, and pitch language.

¹⁹Jarrett often signals his formal intentions clearly in the solo break between head and first chorus of the piano solo. In longer-form interpretations, he frequently fills the space by leisurely toying around with motives, often derived from the preceding phrases of the head, which he will gradually develop and build to a later climax, while in shorter interpretations he will frequently hit the solo break with a furious flurry of notes and then maintain that high intensity level throughout the short solo. In addition, in the longer-form interpretations, he will often work his way to carefully prepared resolution, whereas in the shorter interpretations he often will deliberately break off his solos *in medias res*, a stunning "fall off the cliff" effect.

For purposes of specificity and depth, I will frame my following analysis on Jarrett's approach to the standard "Autumn Leaves."

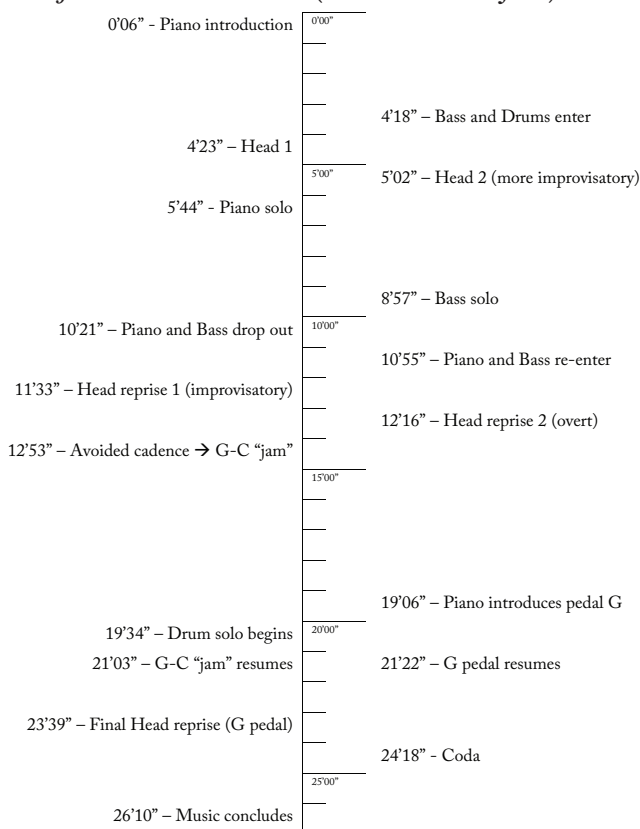
Jarrett has recorded "Autumn Leaves" five times: with the Charles Lloyd Quartet on the album *Dream Weaver* (1966), and with the Standards Trio on the albums *Still Live* (1985), *Keith Jarrett at the Blue Note* (1995), *Tokyo '96* (1996), and *Up For It* (2002). All five of the recordings are in G minor, though they vary considerably in terms of musical texture and affect.

"Autumn Leaves," as recorded on the 1995 live album *Keith Jarrett at the Blue Note*, represents one of the trio's most expansive standard tune interpretations, clocking in at over twenty-six minutes in length.²⁰ While these expansive interpretations are far from the most common entries in the Standards Trio's recorded output, and therefore they should not be considered a representative archetype, they are nonetheless marked, epic events, and represent (in my opinion) the emotional and expressive center of their performances. Moreover, exploring "Autumn Leaves" not only allows me to discuss a wide variety of techniques characteristic of Jarrett's style, but also to place special emphasis on those features of the Standard Trio's output that are least genre-representative and most individuated.

Example 1 below shows a formal diagram of Jarrett's recording of "Autumn Leaves." The track begins with an extended improvised solo piano introduction over four minutes in length, inhabiting a densely contrapuntal sound world Jarrett often invokes in his fully improvised solo concerts. After the introduction, the bass and drums join the piano to articulate the tune's head, seemingly ushering in a traditional "head-solos-head" standard form. Bass and drum solos each follow the brilliant, lengthy piano solo. Already at the compendious length of twelve minutes, the head returns, signifying the impending close of the track, but upon reaching what would be the very final chord of the head, Jarrett avoids the cadence, sliding to a C dominant seventh chord at 12'53" instead of the expected perfect authentic cadence in G minor. This deception ushers in a lengthy jam session on a static harmonic oscillation between $Gm^7 - C^7$. At the 19-minute mark, Jarrett introduces a G pedal point, which pervades the texture through the end of the jam and extends through an unexpected third iteration of the head. Finally, after a two-minute coda in which Jarrett echoes phrase fragments from the head, the track finally comes to the long-awaited close.

²⁰ Of the trio's other "Autumn Leaves" recordings, only that on *Up For It* (2002) features a similarly expansive treatment.

EXAMPLE 1. Formal diagram – Keith Jarrett, “Autumn Leaves”
From *Keith Jarrett at the Blue Note* (ECM B000024JEX)



The song “Autumn Leaves,” reproduced in Example 2 below, has been a staple of the jazz standard repertoire since its composition in 1945. A collaboration between composer Joseph Kosma and lyricist Jacques Prévert, the song achieved huge popularity in France after being featured in the 1946 film *Les Portes de la Nuit* and Edith Piaf performed it on radio’s “Big Show” in 1950.²¹ Johnny Mercer penned English lyrics in 1947, and the song quickly found mainstream success in the United States as well. The film *Autumn Leaves* (with the title track performed by Nat King Cole) came out in 1956, and Roger Williams’s recording of the song even reached No.1 on the Billboard chart (as an instrumental)

²¹ A recording of the original broadcast is available at “The Big Show Single Episodes,” [online] at http://archive.org/details/OTRR_The_Big_Show_Singles, accessed July 14, 2013.

in 1955.²² Bill Evans famously recorded the song in G minor on his landmark album *Portrait in Jazz* (1959), the same key Jarrett uses on *Keith Jarrett at the Blue Note*.²³

Jarrett's interpretation of "Autumn Leaves" contends thoughtfully with the unique opportunities and challenges provided by the tune itself. The [A] section (mm.1–16) consists of two complete circle-of-fifth progressions, starting on the iv chord and progressing to authentic cadences on G minor in m. 7 and m. 15. The [B] section begins with another ii-V-i in G minor, only to be followed by yet another complete circle of fifths from mm. 21–28. The tune concludes with yet another ii-V-i in G minor. Almost exclusively consisting of fifth-progressions, "Autumn Leaves" offers the improviser comfortable changes to navigate and ample opportunity for substitutions and reharmonizations.²⁴ At the same time, one of the principal challenges for the soloist is maintaining melodic and harmonic freshness across multiple improvised choruses; while most jazz standards are harmonically closed, "Autumn Leaves" features no less than five full cadences on G minor in its short thirty-two bars.

IV. Jarrett's "Autumn Leaves": Solo Introduction

In Jarrett's solo introduction, Jarrett hints cleverly at the tune to come (the live audience would not have had a set list to consult) by building a musical texture out of small motivic cells derived from the head of "Autumn Leaves." The primary motive featured in the melodic foreground of Jarrett's improvisation is a falling third motive stemming from mm. 25–26 of the head (on the lyrics "miss you most of all"). With its plaintive, descending ambitus and off-tonic harmonic context (first appearing over a half-diminished ii chord leading to V), the fragment is

²² Fred Bronson, *The Billboard Book of Number One Hits*, 5th ed. (New York: Billboard Books, 2003), 4.

²³ Bill Evans's trio work appears to be the most palpable influence for Jarrett's standards playing; in addition to continuing Evans's legacy of formal fluidity and "simultaneous improvisation," the Standard Trio draws extensively from Evans's particular song choices in its own repertoire.

²⁴ Because ii-V-I progressions (known as "turnarounds") are so central to the harmonic vocabulary of standard tunes, jazz players are quite prepared to navigate these changes with fluidity and fluency. While many tunes distinguish themselves from one another by virtue of the particular wrenches inserted into the predominantly fifth-based harmonic material, "Autumn Leaves" goes the other way, distinguishing itself with its *entirely* fifth-based harmony.

EXAMPLE 2. "Autumn Leaves" by Kosma/Prevert/Mercer

Autumn Leaves

Jacques Prevert
Johnny Mercer

Joseph Kosma

A

Cm⁷ F⁷ B^bmaj⁷ E^bmaj⁷ Am⁷(b⁵)

The fal-ling leaves drift by my win - dow, the au-tumn leaves

6 D⁷ Gm⁷ Cm⁷ F⁷ B^bmaj⁷

of red and gold. I see your lips, the sum-mer kis - ses,

12 E^bmaj⁷ Am⁷(b⁵) D⁷ Gm⁷

B the sun-burned hands I used to hold. Since you

17 Am⁷(b⁵) D⁷ Gm⁷ Cm⁷ F⁷

went a - way, the days grow long and soon I'll hear old win-ter's

23 B^bmaj⁷ E^bmaj⁷ Am⁷(b⁵) D⁷ Gm⁷

song. But I miss you most of all, my dar - ling,

28 Am⁷(b⁵) D⁷ Gm⁷ (*fine*)

— when au - tumn leaves start to fall. The fal - ling

English Lyric by Johnny Mercer

French lyric by Jacques Prevert

Music by Joseph Kosma

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wistful and tantalizing, coyly foreshadowing the tune. As the improvisation proceeds, Jarrett employs additional motivic cells from the head, most notably the four-note fragments in mm. 14–15 (“I used to hold”) and mm. 18–19 (“the days grow long”), but consistently returns to the initial descending third motive as structural signpost.

Also crucial to the introduction is a three-note chromatic cell, employed either ascending or descending, which permeates the inner-voice movement and harmonic motion especially. Of course, chromatic lines are essential to the fabric of common-practice jazz harmony; in the ubiquitous fifth-based harmonic sequences, the so-called guide tones (the third and seventh) lead into one another chromatically (see Example 3).

EXAMPLE 3. Descending chromatic guide tones in typical jazz progressions

In Jarrett’s hands, the three-note chromatic progression separates itself from this schematic voice-leading context by means of the variety and markedness of the contexts in which it appears. Guide tones in typical jazz progressions exclusively demonstrate chromatic descent, whereas Jarrett frequently finds ways to make his chromatic motive ascend in the inner voices of his harmonies. Moreover, he frequently finds ways to thread the three chromatic notes through both guide tone and tension (9th, 11th, or 13th) alike, even linking together chords related by interval other than fifth. The most striking manifestation of this three-note chromatic cell appears at the beginning of both m. 6 and m. 10 of my transcription. In both examples, we hear the descending arpeggio motive in the upper voice of the right hand at the original pitch level, leading to the final “A” of the motive accompanied by a D dominant sonority; in m. 6, the arpeggio is harmonized with a three-note chromatic ascent in the bass, and in m. 10 it is harmonized with a mirror-image three-note chromatic descent (like a large-scale encircling of the D chord). To my ears, already primed for motivic hearing by Jarrett’s use of the arpeggio, this three-note chromatic cell can be traced

to the lone chromatic moment in the "Autumn Leaves" head (excluding the E \flat and F \sharp of G melodic minor): C \sharp -D-E \flat in mm. 24–25 ("but I miss"), the very same pitch-classes encircled by Jarrett's harmonization in m. 6 and m. 10 of his introduction.

Example 4 below is my transcription of the Jarrett's solo piano introduction to "Autumn Leaves." The introduction is played with significant *tempo rubato* in an unmeasured style; all notated rhythms are approximations of relative durations, and "measures" are marked with dashed lines purely for visual clarity. Due to the kaleidoscopic tonal language, I elected not to employ a key signature until the onset of the head; accidentals extend for the duration of each "measure," unless repeated for clarity. I restricted analytical overlay to the following markings:

1. Descending arpeggiation motive marked with downward-facing solid bracket;
2. Three-note chromatic motive marked with dashed slur;
3. "I used to hold" motive marked with downward-facing dashed bracket;
4. Extended melodic sequences marked with solid slurs;
5. Chromatic chains of unrequited ii-V progressions marked with upward-facing dotted bracket;
6. Miscellanea specified in score (ex. "V.E." for voice exchange).

EXAMPLE 4. Keith Jarrett's solo piano introduction to "Autumn Leaves" (0:00–4:20)

From *Keith Jarrett at the Blue Note* (ECM B000024JEX)

"Autumn Leaves," mm. 24-25

Molto rubato

But I miss you most of all

4 extended melodic reference

echoes harmony of "Autumn Leaves" head (mm. 1-5)
(chromatic cell as motivic echo)

7 tritone substitution of ii-V unit
(reborn. strategy for "Autumn Leaves" head)

"Autumn Leaves," m. 14

10 I used to hold

(overlapping motives)

13

17

21

extended chromatic line

25

(out of order)

28

V.E.

D. Bass

chromatic pairs

32

melodic sequence of motivic fragment

36

melodic sequence of motivic fragment

39

melodic sequence of motivic fragment

EXAMPLE 4, continued

42

long chromatic ascent...

dolciss.

45

*condensed melodic sequence
(cell summarizes 'AL' head, mm. 1-8)*

49

52

55

4-note chromatic sequence

58

"Autumn Leaves," m.18

the days grow long

61

rall.

a tempo

Harmonic material of "Autumn Leaves"
([B] section, mm. 17-32)

"Autumn Leaves" harmonic material
with each chord approached by applied
tritone substitution

"wrong" chord breaks pattern

chromatic descent from G to C forebodes extended outro jam

Up-tempo Swing (♩ = c. 192-200)

measured time begins

strong emphasis on dominant mitigates tonic arrival

This introduction is rich enough to support an article all on its own, but I will try to point out only particularly salient details. Jarrett’s improvisational vocabulary is formidably developed, as evidenced by the introduction’s remarkable formal clarity, harmonic richness, motivic rigor, and contrapuntal integrity. We have every reason to believe that this introduction was completely extemporized. None of the other recorded versions of “Autumn Leaves” feature an extended introduction, but two of the others (those on *Tokyo ’96* and *Up For It*) feature similar introductory material, sharing the measured lead-in to the head starting at m. 78 in my transcription. From this evidence, it appears that the material at m. 78 was the only pre-composed portion of the introduction. Further corroborating this notion is the notable symmetry between the beginning of the introduction and the lead-in at m. 78. The overall architecture of the introduction can be understood as a lengthy elaboration of the descending arpeggiation figure of $E\flat-C-A$ over the dominant (or $ii-V$). Consider the voice-leading reduction in Example 5 below:

EXAMPLE 5. Voice-leading reduction of Jarrett’s solo introduction to “Autumn Leaves”

From *Keith Jarrett at the Blue Note* (ECM B000024JEX)

In my reading, the entire introduction is heard as a prolongation of the opening $E\flat$ -over-dominant sonority. The listener does not feel the full weight of this effect until Jarrett finally launches into the head; the preceding material becomes recontextualized as something like a giant, four-minute harmonic anacrusis to the inevitable G minor that palpably grounds the head’s structure. In addition, the introduction’s structure loosely (but convincingly) resembles the structure of the head of “Autumn Leaves”: an [A] section featuring two linear descents from a high $E\flat$, followed by a longer [B] section featuring development of the earlier materials (see Example 6 below).

EXAMPLE 6. Melodic reduction of "Autumn Leaves" head (after Waters 2002–3)

Melodically, Jarrett approaches the introduction with an explicitly motivic bent. As the annotations throughout the transcription in Example 4 demonstrate, Jarrett utilizes explicit references to the head of "Autumn Leaves," both in isolated instances marking important structural arrivals and in elaborate *Fortspinnung*, often employing these motives in antecedent-consequent pairs (as in mm. 1–2 of the transcription) or even in lengthy sequences (as in mm. 17–20). In addition, material with no obvious connection to the "Autumn Leaves" head receives comparably "motivic" treatment; for example, the lyrical phrase in m.3 is answered by an expanded (developed) parallel phrase in bar 4, a technique that surfaces again most notably in mm. 21–23 and 57–58. Even the most innocuous two-note fragments are consistently strung together, creating a remarkable consistency of figuration throughout the introduction (ex. the chain of half-steps in the rising figure in mm. 23–24, the chain of whole steps in m. 31, or the long sequence in mm. 45–48).

The harmonic language of Jarrett's introduction blurs the strict distinction between formulaic and motivic approach. On the schematic side, Jarrett relies heavily on three basic categories of harmonic motion: (1) motion by falling fifth (including ii–V–I and full circle-of-fifths progressions), (2) chromatic motion (either ascending or descending), and (3) motion by tritone. These categories closely intertwine. Jarrett often uses the tritone to throw a wrench into a fifths-progression, as in mm. 32–34, when the circle-of-fifths in mm. 32–33 concludes with a surprising motion from B \flat m⁷ to E⁷ leading into m. 34. Ascending motion by tritone is often followed by chromatic descent (as in the G–D \flat –C progression in mm. 11–12, or the F–B–B \flat in m. 40), recontextualizing the first two chords as tritone-substitutes taking part in a fifth-progression (in mm. 11–12, the G and D \flat chords, sharing the guide tones of F and B \flat /C \flat , both function as dominant to C). In some cases, fifth-related two-chord pairs (implied ii–Vs, usually) are sequenced by chromatic descent (as in mm. 25–26 or mm. 38–39), creating a harmonic sequence of alternating fifth- and tritone-relations. This harmonic language, steeped as it is in characteristic elements of jazz harmony, suggests a schematic approach on Jarrett's part; in accompanying such

tightly manipulated motivic materials in the melody, Jarrett can rely on his fluency in rich, varied, and idiomatic harmonic structures to fill out his sonic world.

Despite these observations, it would be too facile to describe the harmonic language of the introduction as *purely* schematic. As I discussed earlier in this paper, the supposed poles of “motive” and “formula” are less diametrically opposed than they might seem at first blush. Crucially, both depend heavily on repetition as primary indicator: motive arises from the repetition and potential transformation/development of small individualized cells, while formula and schema arise from the repetition of characteristic patterns through particular harmonic contexts. The relationship between an individual performance, the output of an individual performer, and the broader style in general figures heavily in how we interpret repetitive material; for example, the melodic material of Jarrett’s introduction (an individual performance) seems transparently “motivic” in part because the material is so plainly derived from the “Autumn Leaves” head, but also in part because the material does *not* resemble Jarrett’s melodic material in his renditions of any other songs (across the individual performer’s output) or in vernacular jazz language (broader style in general). On the surface, the harmonic materials in Jarrett’s introduction do indeed resemble the characteristic harmonic patterns in jazz, and they overlap noticeably with some of Jarrett’s other solo introductions to standards.²⁵ That being said, the *specific* way that Jarrett uses these harmonic materials is unique to this particular solo introduction. Jarrett does not merely meander through any old circle-of-fifths patterns, but usually makes reference (however disguised) to the particular changes of the “Autumn Leaves” head (see mm. 1–12 and 62–70 in Example 4 for the most extended examples). The tritone relationship, rather than simply being grafted into the introduction out of *zuhause* familiarity,²⁶ stems from the tritone kink between $E\flat M^7$ and $A m^{7(b5)}$ in mm. 4–5 (and elsewhere)

²⁵ Similar harmonic materials are readily apparent in Jarrett’s solo introduction to the standard “Stella by Starlight,” for which Dariusz Terefenko provides a transcription and lengthy discussion in his “Keith Jarrett’s Art of Solo Introduction: *Stella by Starlight*—A Case Study,” *Intégral* 24 (2010): 81–114.

²⁶ The term “*zuhause*” (“readiness to hand”) comes from Heidegger. Brian Hyer notably invokes the term on p. 79 of his review of Thomas Christensen’s *Rameau and Musical Thought in the Enlightenment*, “Before Rameau and After,” *Music Analysis* 15, no. 1 (March 1996): 75–100.

of the "Autumn Leaves" head.²⁷ And as mentioned earlier, Jarrett often employs chromaticism in the bass-line in explicit three-note cells, tying it to the motivic melodic material of the introduction (which in turn can be traced to the single chromatic moment in the "Autumn Leaves" head).


Further obscuring the impression of schematic approach is Jarrett's palette of unique chord voicings, the density of which obscures the audibility of the traditional fifth-relations in the introduction. Jarrett's chordal vocabulary within this particular introduction range from the occasional traditional jazz voicing (with 7^{ths} and tensions of the 9th and 13th) to highly dissonant stacks that seem to defy tonal context. Jarrett builds his rich texture through combining heterogeneous *zu-handen* elements across his two hands. His left hand generally exhibits (1) the typical jazz-voicing building block of sevenths and/or tenths (ex. second chord of m. 11); (2) a stack of two fourths (ex. fourth chord of m. 11); (3) a stack of two fifths (ex. first chord of m. 11); or (4) plain triadic material (ex. third chord of m. 11). In his right hand, Jarrett employs a much wider range of shapes, but returns frequently to triads that superpose over the left hand to create rich, tension-laden voicings. These building blocks alone already give testament to Jarrett's wide range of influences. The plain triads invoke the early-twentieth century jazz of Harlem and New Orleans, gospel music, and Western tonal music; the seventh-and-tenth chord pushes forward to stride and bebop; the stacked-fourths recall the post-bop sound of McCoy Tyner and his followers in the 1960's; and the stacked-fifths recall the modernist sounds of Bartók and Stravinsky (as well as Tyner).

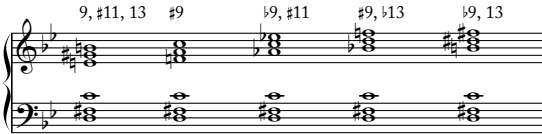
Jarrett is not content to merely juxtapose these disparate voicings side-by-side, but deliberately intermingles and transforms them. In traditional jazz practice, pianists are generally familiar with a small set of "available" combinations for triadic superpositions over dominant seventh chords, bounded by the guideline to avoid the major 7th and perfect 11th over the bass (since these "interfere" with the directionality

²⁷This tritone "kink" is necessary to close the fifths loop in any diatonic collection; in "Autumn Leaves," it appears in mm. 1-8 as C-F-B \flat -E \flat -A-D-G. The [B] section of "Autumn Leaves" actually starts with the six consecutive perfect-fifths possible in the collection, "hiding" the tritone between the outer members: A-D-G-C-F-B \flat -E \flat . Jarrett's introduction to "Stella by Starlight," by contrasting example, features extended chromatic descents but no tritone progressions, echoing the harmonic particularities of the "Stella" head (see the transcription in Terefenko, "Keith Jarrett's Art of Solo Introduction").

of the guide tones). See Example 7 below for traditionally “available” combinations:

EXAMPLE 7. (a) D^7 chord (root, third, seventh) and its “avoid” tones
(b) Typical options for triadic superposition over a D^7 chord

(a) 


(b) 

Jarrett tends to employ right-hand triads more than most pianists, often melodizing them for striking effect. Take the beginning of his solo introduction to “My Foolish Heart” (from the trio’s eponymous 2007 release). Jarrett’s left hand exclusively employs plain triads and seventh-tenth shapes while the right hand features planed triads, creating a rich composite texture. On the onset of the A^7 chord, Jarrett plays a “forbidden” G^\sharp major triad in the right hand (the G^\sharp of which “interferes” with the $A-G$ of the left hand), which then moves down by step to the “allowed” F^\sharp major triad, recontextualizing the “forbidden” chord as an accented *appoggiatura*. See my transcription in Example 8 below:

EXAMPLE 8. Keith Jarrett solo introduction to “My Foolish Heart” (0:00–0:11)

From *My Foolish Heart* (ECM B000TLPW3A)

triadic superpositions



In “Autumn Leaves,” Jarrett frequently heightens the tension by employing triadic superpositions with “forbidden” dissonances (creating verticalizations of the motivic chromatic cell) and multiple half-step relations (see the especially dense passagework between mm. 17–27).

Jarrett’s solo introduction features an unusually high saturation of one of his most distinctive chord voicing patterns, a transformation of the quartal stack. In post-bop, the quartal stack is usually employed as a coloristic device and planed side-to-side by step as a block, but Jarrett recontextualizes it as a dominant seventh chord with a fourth that has

yet to resolve to the third. Across his recordings of standards, Jarrett often uses this voicing to render ii–V–I progressions more subtly and evocatively (see Example 9 below). At the onset of the implied ii chord, the bass note of the quartal stack anticipates the root of the impending V chord, while the upper two voices serve as the 7th and 10th of the ii chord, respectively; to move to V, the middle voice of the stack moves down by half-step to the major third over the bass. Jarrett often superposes fourths over the ii chord, which in turn move by half-step to create a rich triadic superposition over the ensuing V chord.

EXAMPLE 9: Tonal recontextualization of quartal stack.

(a): Typical ii–V–I voicing pattern (b): Jarrett's ii–V–I voicing pattern

Part (a) shows a typical ii–V–I voicing pattern for Cm7, F7, and Bbmaj7. The bass line consists of quarter notes: C2, F2, Bb2. The treble line consists of quarter notes: G4, Bb4, D5 for Cm7; C4, E4, G4 for F7; and F4, Ab4, Bb4 for Bbmaj7.

Part (b) shows Jarrett's ii–V–I voicing pattern. The bass line is the same as in (a). The treble line for Cm7 is G4, Bb4, D5. For F7, the notes are C4, E4, G4, with a box around them and the text "nested major triads" below. For Bbmaj7, the notes are F4, Ab4, Bb4.

In merging disparate but familiar influences to create a distinctive sound, this voicing strategy serves as both marker and microcosm of Jarrett's approach to standards.

V. Jarrett's "Autumn Leaves": the Head

Jarrett employs a number of approaches even to rendering the heads of standard tunes, ranging from performing the written material with little change to dancing so obliquely around the melody as to render the tune unrecognizable, save for the chord changes. As discussed earlier, one of the improviser's chief problems in performing "Autumn Leaves" is finding ways to maintain variety and interest across a formal structure that features dangerously repetitive harmonic closure. Jarrett begins tackling this concern in his treatment of the head itself, utilizing three basic strategies: (1) blurring the boundary between head and solo by increasingly transforming the tune through improvisation as it progresses; (2) injecting increased harmonic variety through imaginative reharmonization; and (3) frequently mitigating, obscuring, or avoiding tonic resolution, even at key structural points. The latter two strategies persist throughout his solo over the changes as well.

My transcription of Jarrett's rendering of the head of "Autumn Leaves" appears in Example 10 below. The four staves are apportioned as follows:

1. "Autumn Leaves" head, as written
2. Keith Jarrett, Piano
3. Keith Jarrett, Piano
4. Gary Peacock, Bass²⁸

Measure numbers pick up where the solo introduction left off; the pickup to the head is represented by m. 85, and the head properly starts at m. 86. Out of respect for the expansive length of the introduction preceding it and the extended solos and outro to follow, Jarrett plays the head for two choruses instead of one, which is unusual for full 32-bar song forms. The second chorus, demarcated from the first chorus by a double-barline, begins at m. 118.

Seeing the original tune side-by-side with Jarrett's rendering of the head makes clear the imaginative degree to which Jarrett departs from the tune. For jazz players and audience members familiar with "Autumn Leaves," Jarrett's extemporizing creates an atmospheric tension against the iconic, highly sequential melody of the head. In addition, seeing Jarrett's close interplay with Peacock shows the degree to which Jarrett plays off his bandmates. With my annotations in the transcription, I point out particular manifestations of the three strategies enumerated above, as well as notable areas where Jarrett and Peacock bounce improvisatory material (often motivic) off one another.

²⁸I did not include Jack DeJohnette's drum playing in my transcription because my arguments focus on Jarrett's playing in particular. While my arguments rarely discuss Peacock's bass playing, I thought it would be useful to include in the transcription because of his close interplay with Jarrett, as well as his contributions to locally subverting tonic resolution and the overall formal design. Both Peacock and DeJohnette contribute immensely to the Standard Trio's inimitable sound, and I hope to explore the trio's complete soundscape and improvisational interactivity in future work.

EXAMPLE 10. The head of "Autumn Leaves" (4:21–5:40)
From *Keith Jarrett at the Blue Note* (ECM B000024JEX)

86 Original tune: A C-7 F7 BbM7 EbM7 A#7

The fal-ling leaves drift by my win - dow, the au - tumn leaves

Piano (K. Jarrett)

Bass (G. Peacock)

close imitation

92 D7 G-7 C-7 F7

of red and gold. I see your lips, the sum - mer

octave transfer

flattened 13th calls augmented inflection in bead

8va

97 BbM7 EbM7 A#7 D7 G-7

kis - ses, the sun - burned hands I used to hold.

etc.

102 B A#7 D7 G-7

Since you went a - way, the days grow long and soon I'll

Bass begins . pattern

EXAMPLE 10, continued.

107 C-7 F7 BbM7 EbM7 A#7

hear old win - ter's song. But I miss you most of

B-7 E7

112 D7 G-7 A#7 D7

all, my dar - ling, when au - - tumn leaves start to

D#7

8^{va}

* pattern is broken

117 G-7 C-7 F7 BbM7

fall.

C#7

122 EbM7 A#7 D7 G-7 C-7

coloristic effect

128 F⁷ BbM⁷ EbM⁷ A^{ø7} D⁷ G-⁷

A⁷alt

sw-----loco

134 A^{ø7} D⁷ G-⁷ C⁷

modal pentatonic...

C⁷

140 F⁷ BbM⁷ EbM⁷ A^{ø7} D⁷

F⁷ Bb⁷ Eb⁷

145 G-⁷ A^{ø7} D⁷ G-⁷

lead-in into solo

G⁷ F⁷

emphasis on dominant mitigates tonic arrival

In each chorus, Jarrett begins the [A] section essentially as written, transforming the material incrementally into improvised paraphrase and, in some places, fully improvisatory material. Jarrett’s highly lyrical phrasing disguises the degree to which his improvised lines conform to the guide tones of the head (Example 11 below). For example, in mm. 90–92, Jarrett’s line decorates the C–B \flat step (from “leaves” to “gold”), subtly leading up to the B \flat with a paraphrase of the D–E–F \sharp ascent. Even more clever is the striking chordal passage in mm. 125–127, perhaps a reference to the parallel 7th chords in Bill Evans’s rendition of the “Autumn Leaves” head from his iconic recording on *Portrait in Jazz* (1960). The first three chords of Jarrett’s passage support the G–A–B \flat pickup from the tune, and make their way to the expected E \flat by the third beat of m. 126. The contour of Jarrett’s chords rises up (as if sequencing the stepwise pickup motivically) all the way to A \flat , implying an altered F7 chord, before returning down to finish the line on D, the expected melodic guide tone at the B \flat chord.

EXAMPLE 11: “Autumn Leaves” – voice-leading guide tones (mm. 1–8)

Jarrett’s motivic-oriented sensibility figures strongly into his rendition of the head. When diverging from the melodic guide tones, he spins formula-resistant lines that feature internal sequencing, such as is found in mm. 99–100. Perhaps the most interesting passage in this regard starts in m. 132. Gary Peacock subverts the expected tonic resolution (more on this below) by alighting on a series of repeated quarter-note Cs.²⁹ Jarrett immediately picks up on this in m. 134, ignoring the [B] section’s melody altogether in favor of a melodic line spinning out from six repeated Ds. Peacock and Jarrett pass this repeated-note figure

²⁹It is possible that this repeated-note figure is a reference to a similar figure that features prominently in Jarrett’s first recording of “Autumn Leaves” as a member of the Charles Lloyd Quartet (“Autumn Sequence,” *Dream Weaver*, 1966).

back and forth through m. 140. Jarrett's bluesy figures starting at m. 141 continue this quarter-note in truncated form, with two repeated quarter-notes on beats 2 and 3 of each bar from mm. 141–147. In addition, Jarrett continues his play with the three-note chromatic cell from the solo introduction, making the connection to the $C\sharp-D-E\flat$ of the "Autumn Leaves" head more explicit. In the first [B] section, Jarrett initially ignores the contours of the "Autumn Leaves" head, spinning a rising line that chromatically encircles D with $E\flat$ and $C\sharp$ in mm. 103–104, anticipating the first appearance of that particular chromaticism that should appear in mm. 109–110. At m. 140, Jarrett returns to this cell, reversing it with a dramatic descent from $E\flat$ to D to $D\flat$, which Jarrett plays with through m. 146. The $D\flat$ reharmonizes the expected $E\flat M^7$ chord in m. 141 as a bluesy $E\flat^7$ chord, creating much more tension leading towards the D^7 and the eventual expected resolution to G minor.

Harmonically, Jarrett very deliberately works to undermine the redundancy of the repeated tonic arrivals in "Autumn Leaves." After tracing the early cadences of the first chorus faithfully, Jarrett sidesteps the final cadence in mm. 115–116, instead sneaking from the $A m^{7(9)}$ into a standard rootless voicing of a $D\flat^7$ chord, which, rather than providing closure, creates drive towards the first bar of the next chorus by way of tritone substitution. Jarrett uses the trick of interpolating a G^7 chord (or $D\flat^7$, its tritone substitute) to push towards C minor throughout his recorded versions of "Autumn Leaves" (see Example 12 below).³⁰

EXAMPLE 12. (a) Connection from end of "Autumn Leaves" head to start of next chorus (b) Interpolated dominant motion back to $C m^7$ (c) Interpolated dominant motion (tritone substitution) back to $C m^7$

(a) $G m^7$ $C m^7$

(b) $G m^7$ G^7 $C m^7$

(c) $A b m^7$ $D b^7$ $C m^7$

After this initial sleight of hand, Jarrett (and Peacock) find increasingly creative means of subverting tonic arrivals. The expected cadence

³⁰The trick appears to come from Bill Evans, who also famously recorded the song in G minor on *Portrait in Jazz*. See Austin Gross' transcriptions of several of Bill Evans' "Autumn Leaves" solos in "Bill Evans and the Craft of Improvisation," Vol. II, 11–40.

at the beginning of the second chorus' [A] section (mm. 123–124) is mitigated by Jarrett's colorful dominant substitute at the downbeat of m. 123, the D^b of which confuses the harmonic motion to G minor. Jarrett does away altogether with a resolution of any kind in mm. 131–132, accenting an altered D^7 voicing on the fourth beat of m. 131 and following it with stark silence, under which Peacock plays the repetitive series of Cs. Peacock extends the D of the D^7 chord in m. 135 well into m. 136 where G minor should appear; meanwhile, Jarrett's D-minor pentatonic right-hand melody and left-hand planed major-chord and quartal voicings also diminish the sense of tonal arrival. Peacock undermines the final cadence of the head, instead creating a pedal point on the dominant that extends through what should be two bars of strong resolution in G minor in mm. 148–149.

First introduced in the head and extending throughout Jarrett's solo choruses, clever recurring reharmonizations lend considerable harmonic lift to the diatonic landscape of "Autumn Leaves" and improvisational fodder for Jarrett's imagination. Jarrett quite frequently substitutes B^b7 (or Fm^7-B^b7 , a full $ii-V$) for the B^bM^7 , which creates more intensified forward momentum through the cycles of harmonic fifths (see Example 13 below). Coupled with Jarrett's frequent subversion of the final D^7-G minor cadence, the resulting effect is a texture constantly pushing forward toward an out-of-reach resolution, a far cry from the constantly resolving diatonicism of the original tune.

EXAMPLE 13. Voice-leading reduction of "Autumn Leaves," mm. 1–8 (with substitution)

Continuing his exploration of the tritone established in the introduction, Jarrett systematically introduces expanded tritone substitutions into the form, interpolating $ii-V$ s a half-step above expected resolution points. While this harmonic gambit is not foreign to the harmonic language of the jazz standard repertory, Jarrett's use of the technique differentiates itself in two important ways: (1) Jarrett wields

these interpolated chords as reharmonizations of existing melodic material, a very subtle feat given the half-step interval; and (2) Jarrett is sufficiently comfortable with this move to insert it freely into the fabric of his improvisations.³¹ Both in the head and in his solo choruses, Jarrett takes the coloristic side-slip effect of post-bop style and charges it with functional tonal context, yet another melding of his diverse influences. In Example 14 below, we can see one of the most recurring manifestations of the move. The high E \flat of the first full bar of the head becomes recontextualized as the 9th of the interpolated C \sharp m7 chord (and 13th of the ensuing F \sharp 7 chord). Example 15 shows the entire head of "Autumn Leaves" with Jarrett's three most common interpolations present.

EXAMPLE 14. Typical ii-V compared with Jarrett's reharmonized ii-V

Example 14 shows two musical staves. The left staff illustrates a standard ii-V progression in B-flat major: a C \flat m7 chord (labeled Cm7) followed by an F7 chord. The right staff shows Jarrett's reharmonized version, where the C \flat m7 chord is replaced by a C \sharp m7 chord (labeled C#m7) with a 9th extension. This C \sharp m7 chord is followed by an F \sharp 7 chord (labeled F#7), which then resolves to a C \flat m7 chord (labeled Cm7) with a 10th extension, followed by an F7 chord. A dashed line in the bass clef of the right staff indicates the recontextualization of the high E \flat from the first bar as the 9th of the C \sharp m7 chord.

EXAMPLE 15. "Autumn Leaves" (mm. 1–9) realized with Jarrett's common interpolations

Example 15 shows the first nine measures of "Autumn Leaves" with Jarrett's reharmonizations. The notation includes the following chords and extensions: C \sharp m7 (9), F \sharp 7, C \flat m7 (10), F7, B \flat m7 (10), E7, E \flat maj7 (7), B \flat m7 (9), E \flat 7, A \flat m7(b9), D7, and G \flat m7. A dashed line in the bass clef indicates the recontextualization of the high E \flat from the first bar as the 9th of the C \sharp m7 chord.

VI. Keith Jarrett's "Autumn Leaves": Solo Choruses

As the preceding sections have shown, Jarrett's playing complicates an easy distinction between motive and formula in jazz improvisation. With his formidable improvisational vocabulary, spanning influences ranging across the entire history of jazz (as well as classical music and other styles), Jarrett's playing has a referential quality to it; in Jarrett's hands, a bebop lick might sound more like quotation than vernacular, which in turn (through transformation and development)

³¹ Charlie Parker was especially fond of this harmonic move, which appears in compositions such as "Blues for Alice." After Parker, it can be heard in tunes by Sonny Rollins ("Airegin"), Wes Montgomery ("Four on Six"), Thelonious Monk ("Ask Me Now"), among many others.

may be subjected to more characteristically motivic treatment. Thus, Jarrett appears to *merge* motivic and formulaic concerns. If and when he utilizes recognizable formulas, Jarrett consistently manages to impose a poetic twist. Looking at Example 16 below, in a solo on Cole Porter's "I Love You," Jarrett employs a common Charlie Parker motive, chromatically descending minor-7th chord arpeggios; moreover, the phrase exhibits a common "descent" schema from the high G down to the low A.³² But Jarrett cannot help but disguise it through spur-of-the-moment transformation: the phrase begins over an FM⁷ chord, with the Am⁷ representing $\hat{3}$, $\hat{5}$, $\hat{7}$, and $\hat{9}$, and in the bar before the onset of a new chorus, no less; the direction of each arpeggio changes, creating a melodic line with fluid, less obviously segmented ambitus; the A \flat m⁷ and Gm⁷ chords are each preceded by an encircling neighbor note a half-step below (marked with an asterisk below); and the Gm⁷ is marvelously syncopated, after the first two chords appear on the beat.

EXAMPLE 16. Keith Jarrett solo on "I Love You" – 1st into 2nd chorus (0:55–1:00)

From *The Out-of-Towners* (ECM B0002JP41O)

The following excerpt from the "I Love You" solo represents Jarrett's challenge in microcosm (Example 17). Certain *zuhause* elements are identifiable amidst the long line, such as the multiple chromatic encirclings of the B \flat , the syncopated sequence of three-note cells with comfortable 1–2–4 fingering on the piano, and the brief octatonic runs. But these cells are strung together with such inventiveness, such fluidity, and such variety (even at blistering tempo), the resulting phrase is simultaneously "Jarrett-esque" and something quite unique and fresh. Just as we saw with Jarrett's meticulous construction of harmonic density in the solo introduction to "Autumn Leaves," his remarkably sensitive ear often guides his phrases towards larger goals; in the first two bars of the second system in Example 17, Jarrett outlines the total chromatic between the first G \sharp and high G of the line. After the charged chromatic density of the ascent, the descent is blissfully diatonic, save for a chromatic inflection surrounding the B \flat , and the phrase ends with

³²For more on descent schemata in Charlie Parker's approach to the blues, see Love, "Possible Paths."

quick precision on a rising sixth that recalls the upward leap at the beginning of the excerpt.

EXAMPLE 17. Keith Jarrett solo on "I Love You" – B section, 4th chorus (2:06–2:14)

The image shows two staves of musical notation for a solo on "I Love You". The first staff contains the following chords: Gm7, C7, Fmaj7, and Am7(b9). The second staff contains: D7(b9), G7, C7, Gm7(b9), and C7(b9). Annotations include "Lyric" under the first staff, "Classical" under the second staff, and "syncopated sequence" under the third staff. The second staff has several annotations: "octatonic" under the first measure, "circling B \flat " under the second measure, "new octatonic set" under the third measure, "chr." under the fourth measure, "members of last octatonic set" under the fifth measure, "diatonic" under the sixth measure, "circling B \flat " under the seventh measure, and "diatonic" under the eighth measure. A dotted slur connects the "new octatonic set" and "members of last octatonic set" annotations.

These complications are especially evident in Jarrett's solos over the form of "Autumn Leaves." On the one hand, Keith Jarrett, for all his remarkable stylistic range, nonetheless has a recognizable *sound* to his solos over standard tunes, and while this might be due in part to his particular physical approach to the instrument (with corresponding peculiarities of timing, touch, swing feel, and the like), it also suggests that he relies on certain melodic patterns in navigating chord changes. My transcription of his solo on "Autumn Leaves" makes clear that Jarrett (despite his mystique) does indeed rely on certain characteristic patterns in his improvisations, often associated with particular places in the form or particular hand-friendly shapes on the keyboard. Moreover, if we allow ourselves an expanded notion of formula and schema, embracing elements of Jarrett's playing beyond melodic pitch patterns, we can include his consistent employment of particular harmonic substitutions, left-hand technique, and particular tendencies of rhythm and phrasing. My transcription of Jarrett's "Autumn Leaves" solo is reproduced in Example 18 below. Measure numbers in the transcription begin at 150, continuing immediately from where the head left off. Notable chord substitutions are labeled with dotted slurs.

My annotations in the solo point out the most readily apparent recurring formulae in Jarrett's solo on "Autumn Leaves." These can be briefly summarized as follows:

- "5-3-2-1" – scale degrees used in outlining a triad. Appears almost exclusively at G-E \flat -D-C.
- "5-3-2-1-4-3" – same as above, followed by F-E \flat .
- "circ." – chromatic encircling involving two upper chromatic neighbors and lower chromatic neighbor of target tone. Appears in many locations, but most notably surrounding B \flat .

- “chrom.” – three-note chromatic cell, marked with dashed slur in transcription. Appears in many locations, but most notably as D–C♯–C.
- “aug.” – playing augmented triad over dominant chord. Appears almost exclusively as D–F♯–B♭ over a D⁷ chord; the flattened 13th (B♭) anticipates the minor third of the ensuing G minor resolution.
- “aug.*” – same as above, except usually descending, with the B♭–F♯–D motion filled in with passing F–E♭ between the F♯ and D. Appears most notably in D⁷, but also appears in other dominants (F⁷ leading to B♭M⁷, G⁷ leading to Cm⁷).
- “Blues/pentatonic” – phrases concluding on G minor resolutions tend to use blues/pentatonic scales; rhythm often articulates on-beat quarter-notes.

EXAMPLE 18. Keith Jarrett solo on “Autumn Leaves” (5:41–8:57)
From *Keith Jarrett at the Blue Note* (ECM B000024JEX)

The musical score for Example 18 is written in G minor, 4/4 time, and consists of ten staves of music. The key signature has two flats (B♭ and E♭). The score includes various annotations and chord markings:

- Staff 1:** Measures 156-162. Chords: C⁷, F⁷, B♭M⁷, E♭M⁷, A^{♭7}, D⁷. A rhythmic pattern $\underline{\underline{5-3-2-1-4-3}}$ is indicated below the staff.
- Staff 2:** Measures 163-166. Chords: G⁷, C⁷, F⁷ (with "chrom. motive" annotation), B♭M⁷, E♭M⁷.
- Staff 3:** Measures 167-172. Chords: A^{♭7}, D⁷, G⁷, A^{♭7}. Annotations include "aug." and "fully blossomed chromatic motive".
- Staff 4:** Measures 173-176. Chords: E♭M⁷, A^{♭7}, D⁷, G⁷, A^{♭7}. Annotations include "aug." and triplets.
- Staff 5:** Measures 177-183. Chords: D⁷, G⁷, C⁷, F⁷, A^{♭7}. Annotations include triplets and "circ." (circulation).
- Staff 6:** Measures 184-188. Chords: B♭M⁷, E♭M⁷, A^{♭7}, D⁷, G⁷. Annotations include "aug." and "circ.".
- Staff 7:** Measures 189-192. Chords: C⁷, F⁷, B♭M⁷. Annotations include "circ.".
- Staff 8:** Measures 193-196. Chords: E♭M⁷, A^{♭7}, D⁷, G⁷.

197 A^{97} D^7 G^7
 $A^7(b13)$ *circ.* D^7

201 C^7 F^7 $B^{\flat}M^7$ $E^{\flat}M^7$ A^{97}
 G^7

207 D^7 G^7 A^{97}
*aug.*⁶ G^7 $F^{\sharp 7}$ $F^{\flat 7}$ B^7 $E^{\flat}M^7$

211 D^7 G^7 C^7 F^7
 A^{97} D^7

216 $B^{\flat}M^7$ $E^{\flat}M^7$ A^{97} D^7 *aug.*
 $\xi-3-2-1-4-3$

220 G^7 C^7 F^7 $B^{\flat}M^7$
 $C^{\sharp 7}$ $F^{\sharp 7}$ B^7 E^7

225 $E^{\flat}M^7$ *circ.* A^{97} D^7 G^7
 $B^{\flat 7}$ B^{\flat} A^{\flat} D^{\flat}

230 A^{97} D^7 G^7 C^7
 3

235 F^7 $B^{\flat}M^7$ $E^{\flat}M^7$ A^{97} *circ.* D^7
octatonic

240 G^7 A^{97} D^7 G^7
 3

246 C^7 F^7 $B^{\flat}M^7$ $E^{\flat}M^7$ A^{97}
 $\xi-3-2-1$

251 D^7 G^7 C^7 F^7
 3 3 3 *chrom.*

EXAMPLE 18, continued.

256 $BbM7$ $EbM7$ $A\sharp7$ $D7$
circ. *aug.*

260 $G-7$ $A\sharp7$ $D7$ $G-7$ $C-7$

267 $F7$ $BbM7$ $EbM7$ $A\sharp7$ $D7$ $G-7$

273 $A\sharp7$ $D7$ $G-7$

278 $C-7$ $F7$ $BbM7$ $EbM7$

282 $A\sharp7$ $D7$ $G-7$ $C-7$

287 $F7$ $BbM7$ $EbM7$ $A\sharp7$

291 $D7$ $G-7$ $A\sharp7$

295 $D7$ $G-7$

298 $C-7$ $F7$ $BbM7$

301 $BbM7$ $A\sharp7$ $D7$ *octatonic*

304 $G-7$ $A\sharp7$ $D7$ $G-7$

delay

Looking at Jarrett's solo, we can see that Jarrett is significantly less beholden to patterns than we would expect from a characteristically "formulaic" approach to improvisation (at a brisk tempo, no less; the tempo hovers around 190 beats per minute). These cells I have identified come few and far between, interspersed with highly developmental motivic content, balanced lyrical phrases, and strikingly inventive runs at blistering speeds (curiously, Jarrett is often least predictable and formulaic during his most virtuosic moments). Moreover, Jarrett's "formulas" appear much more infrequently than typical jazz theory tends to recognize. The "5̣-3̣-2̣-1̣-4̣-3̣" formula, for example, only appears twice in this solo, with the first time (in mm. 153-154) being somewhat disguised amidst an otherwise lyrical and formula-free melodic line; I identified it as formulaic in large part because it features more prominently in Jarrett's "Autumn Leaves" solo from the album *Tokyo '96*.

Comparing the solos from the two albums is highly illustrative of Jarrett's flexibility of approach. On *Keith Jarrett at the Blue Note*, the "Autumn Leaves" solo is relatively sparsely populated by formulaic patterns and bebop vernacular, instead continuing more motivic and developmental concerns established in the solo piano introduction and continued in the head. In fact, one of the most characteristically bebop-sounding passages is a quotation of Bill Evans on *Portrait in Jazz*.

EXAMPLE 19. "Autumn Leaves" solos: Jarrett quoting Bill Evans³³

Bill Evans
Portrait in Jazz
"AL" Take 1
[2:35]
A^{#7}

Keith Jarrett
KJ at the Blue Note
[5:56] (mm. 13-14 in transcription)
A^{#7} 3 D⁷

By contrast, the *Tokyo '96* solo (transcription reproduced in Example 20 below) is significantly more awash in both the Jarrett-specific formulae I identified above, as well as in bebop vernacular in general. Though it starts with clever motivic manipulation of a short cell from the "Autumn Leaves" head, these processes are significantly less present throughout than in *Keith Jarrett at the Blue Note*; fittingly, the *Tokyo '96* track is less than eight minutes in length, and features no

³³ I am indebted to Austin Gross for kindly granting me permission to use this excerpt of his Bill Evans transcription. Gross, "Bill Evans and the Craft of Improvisation," Vol. II, 12.

Schachter, "Autumn Leaves"

45 EbM7 A7 D7 G7

51 A7 D7 G7

55 C-7 F7 BbM7 EbM7 A7

60 D7 G7 A7 D7

65 G-7 C-7 F7 circ. BbM7

70 EbM7 A7 D7 G-7

75 C-7 F7 BbM7 EbM7

79 A7 D7 G-7

83 A7 D7 G-7

87 C-7 F7 BbM7 EbM7

91 A7 D7 G-7 A7

96 D7 D7 C-7 F7

EXAMPLE 20, continued.

101 BbM^7 EbM^7 $A^{#7}$ D^7

105 G^{-7} C^{-7}

108 F^7 BbM^7

110 EbM^7 $A^{#7}$ D^7 G^{-7}

114 $A^{#7}$ D^7 G^{-7}

119 C^{-7} F^7 BbM^7 EbM^7 $A^{#7}$

124 D^7 G^{-7} $A^{#7}$ D^7

129 G^{-7} C^{-7} F^7

133 BbM^7 EbM^7 $A^{#7}$ D^7 G^{-7}

138 C^{-7} F^7 BbM^7 EbM^7

143 $A^{#7}$ D^7 G^{-7} $A^{#7}$ D^7

149 G^{-7} C^{-7} F^7

153 BbM^7 EbM^7 $A^{\#7}$ D^7

157 G^{-7} $A^{\#7}$ D^7 G^{-7}

162 C^{-7}

164 F^7 BbM^7 EbM^7 $A^{\#7}$

168 D^7 G^{-7} C^{-7}

172 (8) F^7 BbM^7 EbM^7 $A^{\#7}$ D^7

177 G^{-7} $A^{\#7}$ D^7

181 G^{-7} C^{-7} F^7

185 BbM^7 EbM^7 $A^{\#7}$ D^7 G^{-7}

190 $A^{\#7}$ D^7

193 G^{-7} C^{-7}

In even the most straight-ahead of his solos, Jarrett demonstrates a remarkably eclectic improvisational vocabulary. As I hinted at in my annotations in Example 17, his apparently cohesive musical language often contains identifiable pockets of diverse influences. Of course, Jarrett is not alone in building different scales or modes of expression into a single solo; like in other domains, he distinguishes himself by degree and range.

The cursory topical analysis in Example 21 below demonstrates the richness of influence in the “Autumn Leaves” solo from *Keith Jarrett at the Blue Note*.³⁴ Though many other Jarrett improvisations feature still further possible topics, just this one recording still yields a striking variety. I do not mean for my analysis to be considered authoritative and final; some of the following topical categories overlap due to similarities in musical language (Ex. pentatonic vs. blues, diatonic vs. “classical” style, etc.), and I imagine a number of equally viable alternative interpretations might be possible.

In the “Autumn Leaves” solo, Jarrett invokes the following topics:

- “*Learned*” style – diatonic language, compound melody and/or implied polyphony, slow on-beat rhythms (like a fugal exposition)
- “*Lyrical*” style – primarily diatonic language, singing line
- “*Classical*” style – diatonic language, characteristic figuration patterns of Western tonal music, including on-beat rhythmic placement, sequential melodic cells, arpeggiation of plain triads, elongated scale patterns, etc.
- *Diatonic* – diatonic language without conforming obviously to any of the above categories
- *Chromatic* – chromatic scales or patterns

³⁴Robert Hatten, Kofi Agawu, and Wye J. Allanbrook have demonstrated convincingly that the musical language of Classical-period sonatas, rather than consisting entirely of organically developing material, often contained a patchwork of various expressive languages with contrasting affects: “singing style,” “learned style,” “minuet,” “horn fifths,” “*Sturm und Drang*,” and so forth. For more on topics and topical analysis, see Hatten’s *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes: Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), Agawu’s *Playing with Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classic Music* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991) and Allanbrook’s “Two Threads through the Labyrinth: Topic and Process in the First Movements of K. 332 and K. 333,” in *Convention in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Music: Essays in Honor of Leonard G. Ratner*, ed. Wye J. Allanbrook, Janet M. Levy, and William P. Mahrt (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1992): 125–171.

- *Pentatonic* – pentatonic scales or patterns
- *Blues* – blues scales and/or characteristic licks
- *Bebop* – firmly within bebop vernacular, including chromatic encirclings, characteristic figuration and ornamentation patterns, arpeggiation of seventh chords (with and without tensions), etc.

Other common topics appearing across Jarrett's output (but not appearing directly in this particular solo) include *post-bop* (*quartal*), *Indian*/*"World"*, *Gospel*, *Free Jazz*, *Octatonicism*, and many more.

EXAMPLE 21. Topical analysis of Keith Jarrett's solo on "Autumn Leaves"

From *Keith Jarrett at the Blue Note* (ECM B000024JEX)

MEASURES	TOPIC
150–155	"Learned" style
156–157	Pentatonic
158–160	"Learned" style
161	Blues
162–165	Bebop (Bill Evans reference)
166–169	Chromatic→Diatonic
170–172	"Lyrical" style
173	Pentatonic (or Blues)
174–175	Diatonic
176–181	Blues
182–188	Bebop
189–196	"Classical" style
197–203	Bebop
204–206	"Lyrical" style
207–212	Bebop
213–215	"Classical" style
216–219	Bebop
220–222	Diatonic
223–228	Bebop
229–233	Pentatonic
234–236	"Classical" style
237–238	Bebop
239–240	"Learned" style
241–244	Diatonic/Pentatonic
245–248	Bebop

249	Pentatonic
250–253	Blues
254–260	Bebop
261–268	“Lyrical” style
269–270	Bebop
271–272	Diatonic
273–275	Bebop
276–277	“Classical” style
278–281	Diatonic
282–284	“Classical” style
285–289	“Lyrical” style
290–292	Bebop (virtuosic)
293–299	“Classical” style (virtuosic)
300–302	Bebop (virtuosic)
303–304	Bebop
305–309	Blues

VII: Endings, Form, Conclusion

After Jarrett’s solo over the choruses of “Autumn Leaves,” the Standards Trio continues the performance with conventional formal elements. Gary Peacock takes a bass solo, Jack DeJohnette takes a drum solo, and Keith Jarrett returns to the head, albeit in such a way that conveys the unusual length and richness of the preceding material. Jarrett again plays two choruses instead of the expected single chorus, with the first chorus largely improvisatory (as if slowly ushering the group back towards the written material), and the second chorus largely as written. At the 12’53” mark of the track, Jarrett and Peacock subvert the expected final G minor resolution, instead landing on an emphatic C⁷ chord, which ushers in an extended jam section that consists entirely of the two chords C⁷ and G minor. Melodically, Jarrett plays virtually nothing other than G minor pentatonic (occasionally with the addition of E natural, borrowed from the C⁷ chord) for the entirety of the jam, which as a result has a quite cathartic effect after the tonic had been subverted for so much of the traditional form.

As the jam starts to wind to a close, Jarrett introduces a pedal point on G₃ in his left hand at the 19’06” mark. After a brief break for another DeJohnette solo section, the pedal resumes, with Jarrett’s incessantly repetitive rhythms bordering on a manic effect. The group reduces volume and falls into the G drone all the way until the 23’39” mark, invok-

ing a more contemplative (even Indian-sounding) expressive space. As Jarrett ushers in an unexpected third iteration of the head, the G pedal remains in lieu of the typical harmonies; the head has been infected by—*transformed* by—the arduous journey leading up to it (see Example 22 below). In one of the performance's most subtle and powerful details, Peacock accompanies the final head iteration and coda not with a clear reinforcement of tonic, but by continuing the oscillation between C and G. This mitigates the strength of our feeling of resolution; even though the G has been well-established as tonic earlier in the piece, and the C could be contextualized as a repeated plagal inflection, my hearing is sufficiently conditioned to hear a repeated C–G ostinato as more strongly emphasizing C than G, an ambiguity only strengthened by Peacock placing C on the downbeat of each bar. The oscillation not only connects to the extended modal jam that preceded it but also recalls the harmonic murkiness of the solo piano introduction, in which Jarrett prolongs the subdominant-inflected dominant and skirts peripherally around the tonic.

As jarring as this subversion should feel in the moment, it feels surprisingly welcome, in no small part due to the trio's careful foreshadowing from earlier in the performance. In the transition section between the solo introduction and the head (see Example 4), Jarrett follows the G minor chord in m. 80 with by interpolating a densely altered C⁷ chord in m. 81 (asterisked in the example), foreshadowing the Gm–C⁷ oscillation of the jam section. In the second chorus of the head (Example 10), Jarrett and Peacock avoid the expected G minor resolution of m. 132, instead landing on a surprise pedal point on repeated quarter-note Cs. It is unlikely that the trio would have spontaneously launched into the extended C–G jam without at least some foreplanning—a similar jam appears at the end of the "Autumn Leaves" recording on 2002's *Up For It*—but it is nonetheless noteworthy that the seeds for the jam's appearance had been planted so carefully in advance of its arrival. This "epic narrative" formal procedure (solo piano introduction, long solos over the form, extended cathartic outro jam) appears across The Standards Trio's recorded output, including *Keith Jarrett at the Blue Note* ("Green Dolphin Street" and "You Don't Know What Love Is") and on several other albums ("God Bless the Child" on *Standards, Vol. 1*, "Autumn Leaves" again on *Up For It*, "The Out-of-Towners" on *The Out-of-Towners*, "Somewhere" on *Somewhere*, and more).

EXAMPLE 22. "Autumn Leaves" – final head iteration and start of coda
(23:38–24:28)

From *Keith Jarrett at the Blue Note* (ECM B000024JEX)

Original tune: C-7 F7 BbM7 EbM7

Piano (K. Jarrett)

Bass (G. Peacock)

A#7 D7 G-7 C-7

161 F7 BbM7 EbM7 A#7 D7

166 G-7 A#7 D7 G-7

delay

171 C-7 F7 BbM7 EbM7

176 A#7 D7 G-7 A#7

slow pitch bend

181 D7 G-7

etc.

To return to the questions posed in this paper's introduction: what do these observations mean for our conception of jazz improvisation? On the one hand, the form of "Autumn Leaves" constitutes a lengthy organic development, with idiosyncratic, performance-specific improvisatory features, and taken by itself it seems as far from the "formulaic" approach to jazz improvisation as we might expect in a straight-ahead style. On the other hand, in the context of the trio's output as a whole, this expansive form proves to be a relatively standard procedure, a deliberately structured architecture applied to many tunes. For Jarrett, we might conceivably describe the motivic/organic impetus itself as a grand formula of design. This extremely flexible sense of formula might be used in turn to embrace the whole panoply of traits that comprise Jarrett's improvisatory style; while he may not employ stock melodic patterns in the strict formulaic sense, Jarrett consistently engages similar processes and draws on the same body of diverse influences in constructing his improvisations. In a sense, then, the extent to which Jarrett might be described as formulaic is less about the licks he plays and more the consistency of his process and approach. In this light, we can see how a player's output can simultaneously be consistent enough to constitute a coherent, recognizable style but diffuse enough to reflect such unusual diversity.

In conclusion, I believe that Jarrett's unique approach to improvisation forces us to reconsider our notion of improvisation, especially as it relates to strict conceptions of formula and motive. We would be better served by a more flexible understanding of improvisation that allows for the possibility of more free and idiosyncratic interplay between motive, formula, and other concerns such as intertextual reference. Too much overreach in asserting the necessity of formula encourages us to overlook or undervalue the unique accomplishments of improvisatory outliers such as Keith Jarrett. Herein lies the danger of universalizing the pragmatic—we risk missing out on the possible.

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