

AN ANALYSIS OF THE SOLO GUITAR STYLE OF JOE PASS

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The research presented here examines defining characteristics of the solo jazz guitar style of Joe Pass, who left the four *Virtuoso* albums as an innovative legacy. Methods used to facilitate this research include a study of the book, *Joe Pass Guitar Style*,¹ and to analyze transcriptions of his works on the *Virtuoso #1* and *Virtuoso #3*. First, a study of Pass's chord-voicings, the connecting notes between two chords, and parallel harmony is carried out. Second, the characteristics of his reharmonizations and modulations through analysis of “Stella by Starlight” and “Summertime” is examined. Third, his use of a variety of bass-lines is considered: walking lines as accompaniment, supplementing the low range, and providing counterpoint. Finally, those characteristics of his improvisation, such as the call-and-response cadenzas between iterations of the theme, are examined. Additionally, the research presented here also exposes Pass's musical background, as well as his place in history beside other pre-*Virtuoso* solo jazz guitar players. Pass showed that a myriad of techniques—counterpoint, chords, and solo lines— can be used to create a full sound with just a single guitar; unaccompanied guitar is a special disciplinary field and there are few jazz guitarists who have achieved what Pass has. Therefore, encouraging the study of his style is needed to advance this field.

¹ Joe Pass and Bill Thrasher, *Joe Pass Guitar Style* (Englewood, CO: Camelot - GWYN Publishing, 1985).

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I. INTRODUCTION

In playing solo guitar without accompaniment, one performs both the harmony and melody. The guitar is an instrument in which four fingers of the fretting hand play on six strings. In classical guitar, one can overcome this technical difficulty by repeatedly practicing compositions, which do not require improvisation, but jazz requires instant variations and modifications. In these modifications, one weaves together chords and bass notes harmoniously with monophonic solo lines in order to create full and sonorous music— this requires tremendous skill.

Joe Pass was able to accomplish this. C. Michael Bailey points out that “Pass had accomplished, using standard guitar performance techniques, to play lead melody lines, chords, and bass rhythm simultaneously and at tempo, giving the listener the impression that multiple guitars were being played.”² Furthermore, while other jazz guitarists also play and record solo guitar, few have emphasized this format as much as Pass. He left several albums made up entirely of solo performances and toured as a solo musician, and the four albums in the *Virtuoso* series stand as a testament to his great skill as a player. Unaccompanied solo-playing is a special field and requires years of dedicated practice. In particular, it is a challenge to overcome the emptiness in improvised sections without the usual accompaniment of other musicians; Joe Pass was exceptional at performing with only himself as accompanist.

However, solo jazz guitar had been performed since the time of Eddie Lang and Django

² C. Michael Bailey, “Joe Pass: Virtuoso,” *All About Jazz*, accessed October 14, 2017, <https://www.allaboutjazz.com/joe-pass-virtuoso-by-c-michael-bailey.php>.

Reinhardt, and there had been other great soloists, such as George van Eps, before Pass. “Lang was the first well-known solo jazz guitar player and, from the mid-1920s, was widely influential,”³ and Van Eps was already known as a solo player on the seven-string guitar. So, how did Pass enlarge the unaccompanied jazz guitar format in comparison with his predecessors? An examination of those musical characteristics which set him apart is crucial in answering this, and in determining Pass’s place historically. Discussed here are those defining characteristics: 1) elaborate connecting notes between chords to embellish, 2) continuously different chord substitutions used to create variations, 3) extensive use of bass lines to provide counterpoint, and 4) improvising rubato “call-and-response” cadenzas between phrases of the theme. Through the use of these techniques, Pass’s unaccompanied guitar became one of the models of the solo guitar format for future generations of players.

This research will examine characteristics of Pass’s solo guitar style through both a literature review with a musical background and a musical analysis of his works. This research method studies Joe Pass’s guitar styles described in his book, *Joe Pass Guitar Style*,⁴ and analyzes transcriptions of his solo guitar, and related sources. His *Virtuoso* series of albums is also analyzed, along with his other solo guitar albums. First, a general introduction to his musical background and upbringing is given, including information on his musical instruments, influence from Art Tatum, and meeting with Norman Granz. Secondly, an overview of literature on the aesthetics of the unaccompanied jazz, as well as on other solo guitarists before Pass, is given in

³ James Dapogny, "Eddie Lang," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed October 3, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.pitt.idm.oclc.org/subscriber/article/grove/music/15962>.

⁴ Joe Pass and Bill Thrasher, *Joe Pass Guitar Style*.

order to understand the historical context of the solo format and differences in players' approaches. Thirdly, Pass's use of connecting notes on either the top or bottom between voicings and parallel harmony,⁵ are studied. Additionally, greater clarity into Pass's chord-voicing can be had through a study of his use of tension notes⁶ and chord-melody.⁷ Fourthly, characteristics of his reharmonization of chord progressions are examined; Pass used complex progressions to accompany his solo performances, constantly altering the performances through chord substitutions, chromatic progressions, modulations, and variation patterns. Fifthly, his use of bass lines including counterpoint, in which chords and bass were sometimes played simultaneously and at other times separately, is examined; Pass's bass lines serve as accompaniment, as a supplement to the low range, and also provide counterpoint. Finally, his single-line and chordal solos, in which improvised call-and-response figures fill the space between phrases of a theme, are studied.

II. MUSICAL BACKGROUND

Joe Pass (Joseph Anthony Jacobi Passalacqua) was born in New Brunswick, New Jersey, on January 13, 1929, and died in Los Angeles, California, on May 23, 1994.⁸ He was raised in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Pass's first guitar was a \$17 Harmony steel-string flat-top given to him

⁵ A chord voicing moved up or down a minor 3rd in parallel motion. But Joe Pass named it "symmetric chords" in his book, *Joe Pass Guitar Style*, 7.

⁶ Tension notes are chord extensions using the 9th, 11th, and 13th scale degrees.

⁷ Chord-melody refers to melodies played with chord voicings at the same time.

⁸ J. Bradford Robinson and Barry Kernfeld, "Joe Pass," *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*, 2nd ed., *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed August 26, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/J347100>.

at the age of nine;⁹ he took lessons with a local musician and also learned guitar techniques first from Nick Lucas's method book and later from Mateo Carcassi's 19th-century *Classical Guitar Method*.¹⁰ Using this, his strict father demanded six hours of practice each day. At twelve, his father bought him a 00-42 Martin guitar to which Pass attached a DeArmond pickup. He listened to and practiced Django Reinhardt's music, which was his first major jazz influence. By fourteen, he toured with the bandleader Tony Pastor and eventually dropped out of school in order to pursue his professional music career.¹¹ That is to say, Pass learned classical guitar technique and played acoustic guitars in his childhood—this background provided a foundation for his fingerstyle jazz guitar-playing, which features an acoustic sound.

In 1961, using Fender solid-body guitars, Pass recorded an album with other musicians called *Sounds of Synanon*.¹² As a result of this album, Pass first received attention from the major jazz community.¹³ In 1973, Pass met the notable jazz producer Norman Granz and pianist Oscar Peterson, which resulted in his recording on Pablo Records, yielding albums with Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, and *The Trio* with Oscar Peterson and Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen.¹⁴ He also recorded the most important albums of his legacy, the solo guitar *Virtuoso* series. According to James Ferguson,

⁹ James Ferguson, "Requiem for a Jazz Virtuoso: Joe Pass, 1929-1994," *Guitar Player*, October 1994, 52.

¹⁰ Ramon Gallo, Tom Charleton, George Clinton, and Ivor Mairants, "Joe Pass," *Guitar Magazine*, June 1974, 23-24.

¹¹ Ferguson, 52-53.

¹² Wolf Marshall, "Joe Pass," *Jazz Guitar Icons* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2012), 96.

¹³ Robinson and Kernfeld, "Joe Pass."

¹⁴ Ferguson, 56. Ferguson mistakenly wrote *The Trio* was recorded with bassist Ray Brown in this article. Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen was the bassist for this album. Source: "Grammy Awards 1975," accessed August 26, 2017, <http://www.awardsandshows.com/features/grammy-awards-1975-240.html>.

Virtuoso helped secure Pass' position as the foremost mainstream jazz guitarist of his time and brought him new levels of popularity.... [Herb Ellis comments, "Before Joe came along, nobody had ever played the guitar like that. He staggered the parts--you can't do those things at the same time--but it sounded like he was doing them all at once. When Joe made *Virtuoso*, he was selling more albums than Ella Fitzgerald or Oscar Peterson."¹⁵

As Herb Ellis notes, Pass elevated the new field of solo jazz guitar. He released the *Virtuoso* series beginning in 1973, with *Virtuoso #2* (1976), *#3* (1977), and *#4* (1983 but recorded in 1973).¹⁶

From 1964 through 1980, Pass played a Gibson ES-175D, an arch-top hollow-body electric guitar with two humbucking pickups. From the 1970s on, he also began to play a D'Aquisto guitar.¹⁷ Using these two guitars, he recorded the *Virtuoso* series. Although both guitars had pickups, many of the tracks were recorded acoustically with a microphone placed near the strings. Although many guitarists believe that his ES-175D was used in recording *Virtuoso*, there is no reliable information for the gear used on any of these albums found in their liner notes.¹⁸ Judging from the pictures on his LPs, his ES-175D was perhaps used on recording *Virtuoso* and *Virtuoso #2*, and a D'Aquisto was used for *Virtuoso #3* and *Virtuoso #4*. Nonetheless, it cannot be ascertained with any certainty that one guitar was used for all tracks of each album as there is no information found in the liner notes. In the early 1980s, Pass signed a contract with Ibanez,

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ "Joe Pass," *Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, 4th ed., *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed August 26, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.pitt.idm.oclc.org/subscriber/article/epm/21364>.

¹⁷ Tabo Oishi, *Joe Pass Memorial Hall*, accessed August 26, 2017, <http://www.asahi-net.or.jp/~ux5t-oois/photo.html>.

¹⁸ "Joe Pass Virtuoso Guitar Setup," *Jazz Guitar Online*, accessed August 26, 2017, <http://www.jazzguitar.be/forum/players/9732-joe-pass-virtuoso-guitar-setup.html>.

developing the signature model JP-20, and he later received the custom model ES175 from Gibson in 1992.¹⁹ Additionally, he recorded using a gut-string acoustic guitar on his album *I Remember Charlie Parker* (Pablo Records, 1979) including the track “Summertime.”

Mid-century jazz guitar was dominated by three legendary figures: Django Reinhardt, Charlie Christian, and Wes Montgomery. Pass noted the impact of these players as the pantheon of his guitar inspiration:

I listened to him [Django] first, then Charlie Christian. Then I heard all the others - Tal Farlow, and Barney, Jimmy Raney - all those from the 'forties. I think the big influences as far as jazz guitar is concerned are Django, Charlie and Wes. These were the three big influences, players who actually added another dimension to the instrument.²⁰

Pass’s earlier musical style was especially influenced by bebop players such as Charlie Parker; Pass’s album *I Remember Charlie Parker*²¹ was meant as a tribute to Parker’s significance. Noting his stylistic development, Pass said:

I never copied him [Django]. I don't remember that I copied any guitar player note-for-note. But I remember copying Charlie Parker note for note.²²

His influences as a guitarist came principally from horn and piano players.²³ Jude Gold explains, “He delivered angular bop lines like Charlie Parker, and block-chord sorties a la Art Tatum.”²⁴ As Pass matured, he was drawn more to the grandeur and magnificence of the solo piano style of

¹⁹ Oishi, *Joe Pass Memorial Hall*.

²⁰ Gallo et al., 24.

²¹ Joe Pass, *I Remember Charlie Parker*, Pablo Records 2312-109, 1979, LP.

²² Gallo et al., 24.

²³ Wayne Enstice and Paul Rubin, *Jazz Spoken Here: Conversations with Twenty-Two Musicians* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), 230.

²⁴ Jude Gold, “Reviews: Blast from the Pass,” *Guitar Player*, February 2002, 105.

Art Tatum:

At one point I sort of drifted towards listening to pianists, Bud Powell, Al Haig and Art Tatum. I remember when Art Tatum had a trio with Tiny Grimes. I thought Wow! I listened to Tiny, but it was the piano - that was the one.²⁵

Tatum was the greatest of the stride performers, whose virtuosity and speed were unequalled.²⁶ His soloing was complex both harmonically and in its texture, and these aspects of Tatum's playing had a large influence on Joe Pass's solo guitar style. Therefore, "Pass often was referred to as the 'Art Tatum' of the jazz guitar."²⁷ In 1978, Pass told *Downbeat* magazine that his solo guitar direction was more influenced by the ideas and suggestions of Norman Granz than by himself.²⁸ Granz recorded Tatum's piano solo albums in the 1950s— amounting to some 200 solo pieces; these recordings were released as *The Genius of Arts Tatum* in 1955. Granz suggested that Pass's *Virtuoso* albums should be modeled on his collaboration with Tatum. Those recordings proved to be commercial and critical success— Granz thought Pass was as his next Art Tatum.²⁹

Pass's solo style also expressed elements of classical guitar technique from performers such as Andrés Segovia. Granz compared Pass to Segovia in his liner notes of the *Virtuoso #4* album. According to Granz, "From these 1973 sessions came the first of the Solo Virtuoso series,

²⁵ Gallo et al., 24.

²⁶ David Sharp, Randall S, and Jon J. H., *An Outline History of American Jazz* (Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., 1995), 24.

²⁷ David M. Mooney, quoted in "Joe Pass's 'Catch Me!', 'Joy Spring', and 'for Django': Transcription and Analysis" (PhD diss., New York University, 2015), 1.

²⁸ Jim Ohlschmidt, liner notes "The Genius of Joe Pass" (Vestapol 13073 Video, 2001, 1962), 14.

²⁹ Mooney, 1-2.

which are unique in jazz because Pass is the only one, like the great classicist, Segovia, who plays solo on practically all of his public appearances and recordings.”³⁰ James Ferguson, a music journalist and guitarist, similarly described Pass, “At the same time, he often came off as a kind of jazz version of Segovia.”³¹ Pass’s solo guitar sound sometimes resembles that of a classical guitar in his *Virtuoso* series— he likely acquired influence from classical guitar technique such as timbre, fingering, and arrangements for his solo guitar performances. To incorporate a classical and natural feel, he played acoustic jazz guitar with the fingers of his right hand, and implemented jazz grooves and variety within an acoustic jazz sound.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, it is shown that a study of the unaccompanied solo movement and solo guitar players before the release of Pass’s *Virtuoso* album, with an historical approach to available literature, is needed in order to comprehend Pass’s place in history as an innovative soloist.

A. The Unaccompanied Solo Movement in the 1960s and 1970s

1. Aesthetics in the Solo Format

Unaccompanied solo style developed in single-line instruments in the 1960s and 70s. According to Andrew Raffo Dewar, “The rise of the unaccompanied solo format in jazz parallels the shift, by some musicians in the 1960s and 1970s, from playing standards to playing in more

³⁰ Joe Pass, Granz’s liner notes *Virtuoso #4*, Pablo Records 2640-102, 1983, LP.

³¹ Ferguson, 56.

open forms;”³² Pass’s *Virtuoso* albums fit squarely within this time frame. Furthermore, the musicians of the movement had pursued musical freedom through creative and undefined forms.

Bill Dixon says:

A solo could now be the piece of music. There didn’t need to be an excuse for it. It went where the soloist wanted it to go. It could be composed of the elements that were necessary for its being and being done. It could be pulsative and metric, but it could also change ... The sounds that were to be secured from the instrument could change, much as in speaking when one changes the voice for accent or emphasis. All manner of sounds could be used. In effect, almost all systems were go. The aesthetic had broadened, and because of the strength of tradition, because of the work of the past innovators in the music.³³

Dewar explains Dixon’s argument in terms of the expanded musical freedom and aesthetics found in unaccompanied soloing: “If it was the solo that was of great aesthetic importance to the musician, why not make the solo itself the subject of the work?” ... the solo as a primary musical subject might eventually lead to an exploration of the unaccompanied solo.”³⁴

The first full-length unaccompanied solo album performed on a single-line instrument was Anthony Braxton’s 1969 *For Alto*.³⁵ Unaccompanied solos, such as those by Braxton, during this period were known as “post-song form jazz” which “describes a musical object that is not entirely bound to a specific time period or style,”³⁶ and were harmonically experimental in na-

³² Andrew Raffo Dewar, "Searching for the Center of a Sound: Bill Dixon's Webern, the Unaccompanied Solo, and Compositional Ontology in Post-Songform Jazz," *Jazz Perspectives* 4, no. 1, April 2010, 68.

³³ Bill Dixon, *L'Opera, vol. 1* (North Bennington, VT: Metamorphosis Music, 1986), 161.

³⁴ Dewar, 69.

³⁵ "Anthony Braxton," *Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, 4th ed., *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed November 5, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.pitt.idm.oclc.org/subscriber/article/epm/2996>.

³⁶ Dewar. 62.

ture.

However, there had been recordings of unaccompanied single-line instrumentalists, such as Coleman Hawkins and Jimmy Giuffre (“So Low” in 1956) before Braxton, and most of these early soloists recorded their solos with strict adherence to harmonic progressions. Hawkins also preferred this adherence to harmonic structure in his unaccompanied solos.³⁷ Dewar points out:

Other notable unaccompanied solo recordings include two by tenor saxophonist Coleman Hawkins, the 1945 “Hawk’s Variations 1 & 2” (the second of which apocryphally follows the chords to Thelonious Monk’s “Round About Midnight”), and the 1948 “Picasso.”... Hawkins is notable because he continued to record such unaccompanied pieces in the 1950s and 1960s.³⁸

Dixon was critical that Hawkins’s *Picasso* recording “does not explore the unique possibilities of the solo format”³⁹ and, in other words, is simply like soloing without accompaniment. He also criticizes Hawkins’s dependency upon a given harmonic structure.⁴⁰

In Pass’s *Guitar Magazine* interview of 1974, the guitarist said he listened to a lot of horn players such as Coleman Hawkins.⁴¹ There are similarities between Pass and Hawkins’s improvisatory style, such as their use of a vertically harmonic approach (arpeggiation). However, according to Dixon’s criteria, Pass made greater use of diverse textures and variations for the solo format.

³⁷ Ibid., 70.

³⁸ Ibid., 69-70.

³⁹ Ibid., 70.

⁴⁰ Ibid. Additionally, Gary Giddins states, “He [Hawkins] adapted the harmonic framework for ‘Picasso,’...” Gary Giddins, “Coleman Hawkins, Patriarch,” *The Antioch Review* 56, no. 2 (1998): 174.

⁴¹ Gallo et al., 24

Although many musicians of the unaccompanied solo movement pursued the solo format itself as the subject in order express aesthetic and musical freedom beyond harmonic structure, others followed more conventionally tonal paths. Pass falls into this latter category. Pass says in his book, *Joe Pass Chord Solos*, “The art of improvising chord-style solos is an important part of any musician’s resources. This book has been written to improve that art.”⁴² He also emphasizes the artistic importance of chord-style solos. Ferguson compares Pass’s solo to a kind of jazz version of Segovia,⁴³ recognizing the artistry of Pass’s solo format; as Ferguson’s describes, Pass was familiar with the technical requirements of classical guitar. As will later be described, he learned guitar techniques from Mateo Carcassi’s 19th-century *Classical Guitar Method* when he was young, and his solo playing and arrangements often display elements and styles of a classical guitar piece; this is especially true of *Virtuoso #3*. Pass likely explored the solo jazz guitar format as a result of his knowledge of the classical guitar.

Of unaccompanied soloing, the Bill Dixon stated, “It went where the soloist wanted it to go ... All manner of sounds could be used ... The aesthetic had broadened, and because of the strength of tradition.”⁴⁴ George van Eps also preferred the unaccompanied style, saying, “Mainly it’s because I have complete freedom.”⁴⁵ The musical aesthetics, freedom, and diversity in unaccompanied playing are unadulterated expressions of an individual, and in this regard these remarks capture the spirit of the solo format; in Pass’s solos, he emphasizes the individualistic as-

⁴² Joe Pass, *Joe Pass Chord Solos* (Van Nuys: Alfred, 1987), 2.

⁴³ Ferguson, 56.

⁴⁴ Dixon, 161.

⁴⁵ “George van Eps,” *Jazz Guitarists: Collected Interviews from Guitar Player Magazine* (Saratoga, CA: Guitar Player Productions, 1970), 105.

pect contained in the above statements. Ron Welburn wrote, “The solo performance lets both artist and audience look at the diversity of this form,”⁴⁶ and Pass’s solo style was one which favored a diversity of approaches. Miles Kington describes this: “Sometimes it is by contrasting out of tempo sections with fast-moving interludes, sometimes by switching mood from wistful to lightly swinging, sometimes by alternating single-note lines with chords or simultaneous bass line and melody— the possibilities seem endless.”⁴⁷ Pass’s wide array of techniques for variation proved to be the aesthetic model for the unaccompanied format for generations of players.

B. The Solo Jazz Guitar Players Before the Virtuoso

In distinguishing those aspects of Pass’s style which were innovative historically, a stylistic analysis of his predecessors must be carried out. Brian Priestley points out Pass: “His abilities as a stylistic consolidator, he quietly expanded the instrumental’s flexibility in a jazz context by his frequent work without bass and drums backing; as a result he learned to simulate a bass-line counterpointing his simultaneous chord and melodic lines, and to swing as if he were an entire group.”⁴⁸

1. Eddie Lang & Django Reinhardt

Eddie Lang was the first significant jazz guitarist,⁴⁹ the first known solo jazz guitar play-

⁴⁶ Ron Welburn, "The Unaccompanied Jazz Soloist," *Music Journal*, October 1976, 35.

⁴⁷ Miles Kington, "Joe Pass," *The Times* (London: UK), October 18, 1974, 14.

⁴⁸ Brian Priestley, "Joe Pass," *Jazz: The Essential Companion to Artists and Albums* (London: Rough Guides Ltd, 1995), 496.

⁴⁹ "Eddie Lang," *Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, 4th ed., *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed October 3, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.pitt.idm.oclc.org/subscriber/article/epm/15757>.

er,⁵⁰ and the first to make solo guitar recordings.⁵¹ Richard Sudhalter states that Lang played guitar not only as accompaniment, but as a solo instrument.⁵² Sudhalter also describes: “By voicing chords with the melody note on the top, for example, players could execute passages which were melodically attractive and completely harmonized, making the guitar in effect a miniature orchestra. Lang had opened the way.”⁵³ In other words, solo jazz guitar had been performed since the early jazz period of Eddie Lang. James Sallis describes Lang’s style:

Every signature of Lang’s style is manifest in the solo pieces: the strong attack and fluent, bluesy lines with intriguing use of smears, glissandi, and harplike artificial harmonics; unusual intervals, particularly the pianistic tenth and Bix-like parallel ninth; sequences of augmented chords and whole-tone passages; the relaxed, hornlike phrasing.⁵⁴

The transcriptions⁵⁵ and recordings (Okeh records, 1927)⁵⁶ of Lang’s guitar solos, “A Little Love, A Little Kiss,” and “April Kisses,” provide insight into his style, which consisted of both chord-melody and arpeggios; a bass line separate from the chords; a lack of chord-substitution, tension chords, and improvisation; playing with a plectrum; and elements derived from the classical guitar. In comparison, Pass uses walking bass-line and contrapuntal lines, complicated chord-substitution with tension notes, and freer improvisations. Frank Saladino states of Lang’s familiarity with classical style:

⁵⁰ Dapogny, "Eddie Lang."

⁵¹ Norman Morgan, *The History of the Guitar in Jazz* (New York: Oak Publications, 1983), 29.

⁵² Richard Sudhalter, *Lost Chords: White Musicians and Their Contribution to Jazz, 1915 – 1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 134.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 525.

⁵⁴ James Sallis, *Jazz Guitars: An Anthology* (Quill: New York, 1984), 54.

⁵⁵ Frank Saladino, “An Examination of Eddie Lang's Technique and Textural Treatment in Three Selected Solo Guitar Performances” (D.M.A. diss., Five Towns College, 2013), 26-32.

⁵⁶ Eddie Lang, *A Little Love, A Little Kiss*, Okeh Records 40989, 1927, LP.
April Kisses, Okeh Records 40807, 1927, LP.

The idea that it could be played as a solo instrument was familiar only to those who knew of or could play classical guitar (such as Andre Segovia). Lang's admiration for Segovia helped him to prove otherwise, and helped to create the evolutionary bridge linking classical elements to the style we now call solo jazz guitar.⁵⁷

Thus, both Lang and Pass were influenced in their solo guitar ideas by classical guitar music, and it can be seen that classical guitar elements became sources for their solo jazz guitar approaches.

Django Reinhardt released a few recordings of virtuosic solo guitar, including his *Improvisation* series. He played unaccompanied guitar mostly with a plectrum, except *Naguine*, *Improvisation #2*, and *Tears* which were played finger-style. In his unaccompanied guitar compositions, approximately half of his original works were written in a flamenco or classical guitar style.⁵⁸ Also he was familiar with classical style. He declared:

Ravel's *Valses Nobles et Sentimentales*, which Hubert Rostaing and I heard at a symphony concert a few years back. And then there's Bach's Toccata and Fugue. His music speaks to my heart and brings tears to my eyes. But maybe Debussy comes closer to my musical ideal, for in him I find the sensibility and intelligence that I look for in any kind of music.⁵⁹

As with Lang and Pass, Reinhardt's works—such as his *Improvisation #2 and #4*—contain elements derived from the classical guitar because he was both familiar with and inspired by classical music.

Maurice Summerfield states, "(Django Reinhardt) virtuoso guitar playing carried to a new and high level the standards of solo jazz guitar playing which had been set by Eddie

⁵⁷ Saladino, 13-14.

⁵⁸ "Unaccompanied Django," accessed October 3, 2017, http://www.djangobooks.com/Item/unaccompanied_django.

⁵⁹ Sallis, 128.

Lang.”⁶⁰ The online solo transcription videos of Reinhardt’s *Improvisation* series are a good source that provides a musical score as the video progresses. In *Improvisation #4* (1949),⁶¹ Reinhardt’s chord-voicings and progressions appear to be more complex than Lang’s, and the bass is played together with chord-melody unlike Lang’s at different times. *Improvisation #1* (1937)⁶² and *#3* (1943)⁶³ are played with long single-line melodies— which can rarely be seen in Lang’s solos— and *Improvisation #2* (1938)⁶⁴ shows a classical picking style.

Reinhardt’s *Improvisation* series are played in the styles of a classical guitar like Lang’s or flamenco, but his solo recording, *Nuages* (1950),⁶⁵ shows a modernized attempt at the solo jazz guitar format. Pass also recorded this piece for solo guitar in 1979,⁶⁶ so it is a good sample with which to compare Reinhardt’s solo style. Pass uses bass line counterpoint with chords and melody, longer cadenzas between melodies, changing rhythm and tempo, and complex chord-substitution more than Reinhardt. However, Pass often played with a single-line improvisation, also in his *Virtuoso* series, like Reinhardt’s style, and it seems to come from Reinhardt as he said

⁶⁰ Maurice J. Summerfield, *The Jazz Guitar: Its Evolution, Players and Personalities Since 1900* (United Kingdom: Ashley Mark Publishing Company, 1998), 14.

⁶¹ “Django Reinhardt,” *Improvisation #4*, solo transcription video, accessed November 4, 2017, <https://www.soundslice.com/scores/41565/embed>.

⁶² “Django Reinhardt,” *Improvisation #1*, solo transcription video, accessed November 4, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J_B01zFebzA.

⁶³ “Django Reinhardt,” *Improvisation #3*, solo transcription video, accessed November 4, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jfqfy_FA-SA&index=4&list=RDM6_vMr4jchU.

⁶⁴ “Django Reinhardt,” *Improvisation #2*, solo transcription video, accessed November 4, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6_vMr4jchU&list=RDM6_vMr4jchU&t=23.

⁶⁵ Django Reinhardt, “Nuages,” *Djangologie #18*, EMI Records EMC 2608, 1978, LP.

⁶⁶ “Joe Pass,” *Nuages*, solo transcription video, accessed November 4, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hSshre6IdJI>.

that he listened to Reinhardt's music first.⁶⁷

2. Wes Montgomery and George van Eps

Wes Montgomery often played in a homophonic chord-melody style, and recorded a few solo guitar pieces including *Unidentified Solo Guitar* (1963) and *While We're Young* (1961).⁶⁸ He played with the thumb alone which made a warm and round, hornlike sound. In his interview for *Guitar Player Magazine* in 1973, Montgomery says about his thumb: "I just didn't like the sound [using a pick]. I tried it for about two months. Didn't use the thumb at all. But after two months I still couldn't use the pick, so I said I'd go ahead and use the thumb."⁶⁹ Because of this, his accompaniment style was rarely played with the arpeggiated figures typical of fingerpicking, and contained even fewer walking bass lines or contrapuntal lines. In his *Unidentified Solo Guitar* and *While We're Young*, he mostly played chord-melody style with a thumb and without an improvisation chorus. Furthermore, in his interview, he said that he was not influenced by any classical guitar players like Segovia,⁷⁰ unlike the other solo players discussed here.

George van Eps was, as known "Father of the Seven-String Guitar," was prominent among solo guitarists.⁷¹ According to Sallis, "Van Eps is fond of telling inquisitive guitarist that he plays 'lap piano'; indeed, the key to understanding the van Eps style is to keep in mind that his

⁶⁷ Gallo et al., 24.

⁶⁸ Cielito Lindo, notes in "Wes Montgomery and Michael J.," *Two Unaccompanied Guitar Solos* (Rotenburg, Germany: Advance Music, 1997).

⁶⁹ "Wes Montgomery," *Jazz Guitarists: Collected Interviews from Guitar Player Magazine* (Saratoga, CA: Guitar Player Productions, 1975), 76.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Chad Johnson, *7-String Guitar Chord Book* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2002), 1.

concept is essentially a pianistic or orchestral one.”⁷² Sallis describes, “Van Eps worked out his system without much input from other guitarists. Rather, the influence came from pianists,”⁷³ as it did with Pass. In his 1974 interview with *Guitar Magazine*, Pass states that his playing was influenced more by pianists than by other guitarists.⁷⁴ Looking at Van Eps’s solos, *The Very Thought Of You* (1967) and *Scott’s Lullaby* (1966) and several other transcriptions⁷⁵ which include pieces after the *Virtuoso*, Van Eps played mostly chord-melodies in a manner similar to jazz piano, but there is a lack of the familiar Pass’s techniques like single-line improvisation, changing tempo and rhythm, cadenza between the phrases in rubato, or diverse textures with counterpoint.

Of Van Eps’s classical guitar background and fingering styles, Sallis says:

Van Eps is heard playing the seven-string both fingerstyle and with the pick in an advanced version of his ‘banjo styles.’ After eight years spent studying the classic guitar repertoire, Van Eps came to favor fingerstyle for the added control it offers in bringing out a particular moving line in a chordal passage.⁷⁶

Pass, along with Van Eps, mostly played finger-style because of its better sound. Michael Dilido comments on this technique: “Fingerstyle offers more control with arpeggios and a variety of articulations not possible with a pick. Since arpeggios and intervallic leaps are more natural to fingerstyle than to a pick, the jazz musician would intuitively make greater use of these ele-

⁷² Sallis, 174-175.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 175.

⁷⁴ Gallo et al., 24.

⁷⁵ Jordi Farrés, “Nice Work If You Can Get It,” “For You,” “Man I Love,” “I Wrote It for You,” “Tangerine,” “I Hadn’t Anymore ‘Till You,” “Fourty-eight,” “Cheek to Cheek,” “Why Was I Born,” “Ain’t Misbehavin’,” and “I Could Write a Book,” in *George van Eps transcriptions*, accessed November 4, 2017, http://www.jordifarresmusic.com/?page_id=153.

⁷⁶ Sallis, 180.

ments.”⁷⁷ Furthermore, as Pass explained to *Downbeat* in 1978: “Three years ago it was about fifty [percent of his style]. Now, except for maybe a real fast tune, I play almost all with my fingers. With fingers, you get different qualities, different voicings.”⁷⁸

Ferguson describes Pass: “While other guitarists had specialized in chord-melody playing, the spontaneous way in which Joe integrated a wide variety of elements was unprecedented.”⁷⁹ Pass incorporated the styles of former solo guitarists, and added his particular technique to the solo guitar style.

IV. MUSICAL ANALYSIS

A. Joe Pass’s Chord Voicings

Pass introduced various applications of his chord voicings in his book, *Joe Pass Guitar Style*. The book shows a variety of voicings: from concise two-note to six-note voicings, using tension notes to connect chord progressions, parallel harmony in minor thirds, and approach chords.⁸⁰ These chord voicings, with the use of tension notes and chord-melody to understand the concept of Pass’s specific voicings, are analyzed below.

Pass sometimes plays six-note voicings as shown in Figure 1, whereas other jazz guitar players usually play only four or five note voicings. Six-note voicings (encircled below) allow for a more rich and powerful sound. However, it may sound cluttered when playing with a band,

⁷⁷ Michael DiLiddo, “Classic Guitar Performance Techniques for the Jazz Guitarist Including Applications to the Jazz Style” (D.M.A. diss., University of Miami, 1993), 9.

⁷⁸ Ohlschmidt, 14.

⁷⁹ Ferguson, 56.

⁸⁰ Chords moved in parallel motion in whole or half steps.

since the use of the lower strings can conflict with the range of the bass. Nonetheless, it is appropriate with the solo guitar style. Figure 2 shows a transcribed excerpt from “Trinidad,” on the *Virtuoso #3* album; here, Pass plays full, six-note voicings of triads, which create a more powerful and sustained sound (mm. 288-289), and concludes his arrangement with a characteristic Fsus4 chord (m. 302), both for the mood of “a quasi-calypso number using triads...”⁸¹

In addition, Pass also uses two-note voicings which incorporate tension notes to connect two chords. In the second bar in Figure 1-A, dyad of wide intervals is used to connect chords, and in Figure 1-B, dyad of smaller intervals is used. Although other guitarists generally use a single-note connecting line as in the first bar of Figure 1-A, this method of using two-note connecting lines shows Pass’s ability to communicate complicated harmonic concepts. Figure 3 shows a transcription of his two-note voicings from “Blues for Alican,” on the *Virtuoso* album. Pass plays chromatic melody lines with two-note voicings, using parallel intervals. That is, parallel 6ths are used in the first bar, parallel diminished 5ths are used in the Eb7 to D7 chord progression in the second bar, and parallel 3rds, over the G pedal tone, are used in the third and fourth bars.

⁸¹ Steve Raegele, “Joe Pass’ Top-5 Solo Albums,” *Jazz Guitar Lessons*, accessed November 29, 2017, <https://www.jazzguitarlessons.net/joe-pass-top-5-solo-albums>.

Figure 1.⁸²

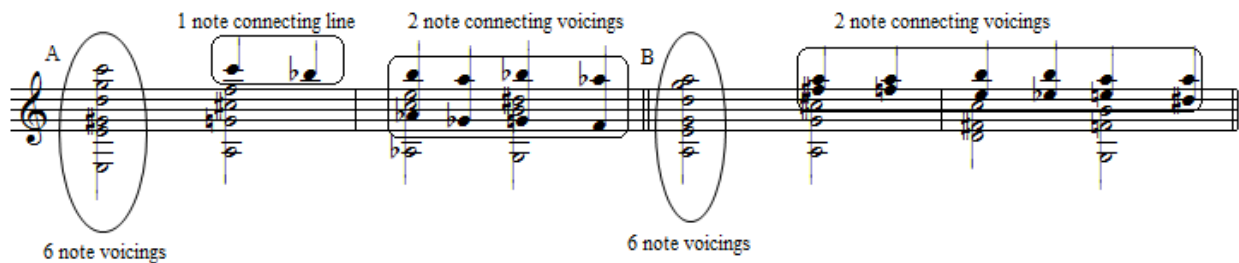


Figure 2.⁸³

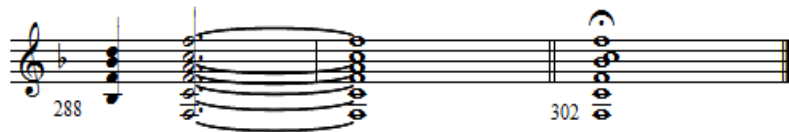
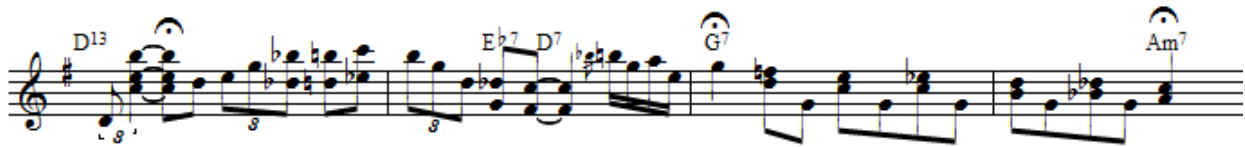


Figure 3.⁸⁴ (measures 15-18)



In Figure 4, Pass uses parallel harmony in minor third over time to embellish a single chord with different tension notes. For instance, when parallel harmony is played moving up and down on the fingerboard, the tension notes also change. That is, if the root is C in Figure 4-A, the chords with tension notes are C9 (beat 1) – C7b9sus4 (beat 2) – C7b9b13 (beat 3) – Cmaj7b9

⁸² Pass and Thrasher, 4.

⁸³ Alan de Mause, "Trinidad," *Joe Pass Virtuoso #3* (Pacific, MO: Mel Bay Publications, 1985), 51.

⁸⁴ Ronald Leone, "Blues for Alican," *Joe Pass Plays the Blues* (Pacific, MO: Mel Bay Publications, 1987), 35-36.

(beat 4) / C9 (measure 2 beat 1) – Cmaj7b9 (beat 2) – C7b9b13 (beat 3) – C7b9sus4 (beat 4). In Figure 4-B, the same approach is used between each of the voicings as in Figure 4-A; the result is a more interesting and creative way of performing a standard progression.

Figure 4.⁸⁵

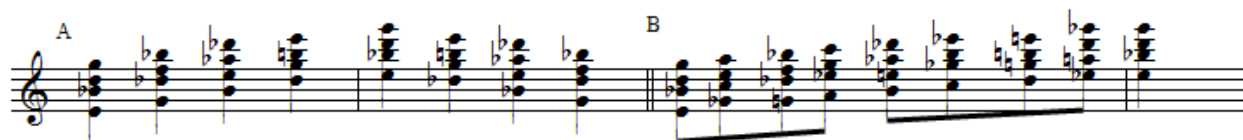


Figure 5 is a transcription of a few bars of “Ninths,” on the *Virtuoso #3* album. The first bar shows a sample of an F7 embellished with parallel-approach chords (encircled below), and the second bar shows descending parallel harmony moved in minor thirds. Parallel sequences are more effective with dominant 7th chords moved up or down a minor 3rd, since more tension notes are brought out. According to Pass, “A diminished 7th chord moves up or down the fingerboard in minor third intervals. The same is true any [dominant 7th] chord which has a “diminished” character (7-9, 7-5, 13-9, 7+5-9, etc.).”⁸⁶

Figure 5.⁸⁷ (measures 10-11)



⁸⁵ Pass and Thrasher, 7.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 8.

⁸⁷ Mause, “Ninths,” *Joe Pass Virtuoso #3*, 6.

Chords can be moved with the bass in minor thirds as shown in Figure 6-A, or they can be moved to higher voicings without bass notes over the same root note, as shown in Figure 6-B. Figure 7 is a transcription of sample bars for “Sweet Lorraine” on the *Virtuoso* album, in which Pass prolongs a G13 harmony by moving through parallel chord shapes spaced a minor 3rd apart. Chromatic connecting notes can be added to this sort of diminished progression to create a more active texture, as shown in Figure 8, which shows a descending line below an F7-Bb and B7-E progression; the chord in the second bar is a F7#5#9 or B13. Figure 8-B presents a sample of descending notes of the diminished scale in conjunct motion,⁸⁸ with a chord progression of Dm7b5 -G7-Cmaj7. Pass plays the same pattern in “Pasta Blues,” on the *Virtuoso #3* album as shown in Figure 9.

Similar to Figure 1, these connecting notes between chords provide a musical method to create melodies with chord accompaniment for solo guitar. As described so far, Pass’s chords continually move to new voicings with new tension notes even during multiple bars of the same chord. In addition, he blends connecting melodies of one or two notes to create more variations of sound with counterpoint lines. These methods help him create his remarkable unaccompanied solos and create a denser and richer sound.

⁸⁸ Diminished scale of the half-step-first (H-W-H-W-H-W-H-W): G, Ab, A#, B, C#, D, E, F, G.

Figure 6.⁸⁹

Figure 6 consists of two systems of musical notation, labeled A and B. System A shows a sequence of five chords: F¹³, A^{b13}, B¹³, D¹³, and F¹³. System B shows a sequence of five chords: F¹³, F7(+9), F7(+9), F7(+5,+9), and F¹³. The notation includes treble clefs and chord symbols above the notes.

Figure 7.⁹⁰ (measure 38)

Figure 7 shows a single system of musical notation. The top part is a treble clef with a melodic line consisting of eighth and quarter notes. Below the staff, the chord symbols G¹³, B^{b13}, D^{b13}, E¹³, and G¹³ are aligned with the notes.

Figure 8.⁹¹

Figure 8 consists of two systems of musical notation, labeled A and B. System A shows a sequence of five chords: Dm⁷⁽⁺⁵⁾, G7(+5,+9), and Cmaj⁹. System B shows a sequence of five chords: Dm⁷⁽⁺⁵⁾, G7(+5,+9), and Cmaj⁹. The notation includes treble clefs and chord symbols above the notes.

⁸⁹ Pass and Thrasher, 9.

⁹⁰ Roland Leone, "Sweet Lorraine," *Joe Pass Virtuoso Standards* (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing, 1998), 75.

⁹¹ Pass and Thrasher, 9.

Figure 9.⁹² (measures 45-46)



B. Joe Pass's Reharmonization

In order to create varied variations and minimize the risk of monotony inherent in unaccompanied playing, Pass uses chord substitutions, chromatic progressions, and modulations. These characteristics are best exemplified in analyses of “Stella by Starlight,”⁹³ on the *Virtuoso* album, and “Summertime,” on the *I Remember Charlie Parker* album (Pablo Records, 1979). In “Stella by Starlight,” for example, Pass makes use of a different set of reharmonizations for each chorus.

Figure 10 shows the first chorus of the theme of “Stella by Starlight.” Pass’s reharmonization appears on the second staff, while the lead sheet’s chord progression appears on the first staff. The main key of this tune is Bb major, but Pass transposes it to C major in order to use more open strings. The open fourth (D), fifth (A), and sixth (E) strings are particularly significant in this key because they provide bass notes for a solo guitar arrangement.

In this analysis of Pass’s version, the first measure shows a temporary modulation to G major, via a IIm7 (Am6/9) - bII7 (Ab7) - I (G) progression; the Am6/9 chord is an inversion of

⁹² Mause, “Pasta Blues,” *Joe Pass Virtuoso #3*, 25.

⁹³ “Stella by Starlight,” transcribed in *Joe Pass Virtuoso* (Charlestown, MA: Rocky Press, 1979). See appendix.

the original's F#m7b5. Unlike the example provided in the transcription, *Joe Pass Virtuoso*,⁹⁴ this measure can also be analyzed as an Am6/9 - D7 progression. In this case, the D7 is the V7 of G13 in measure 3, and the Ab7 in m.2 serves as a tritone substitution for a dominant-7th— this tritone substitution is used often in this chorus, such as the Db7 (mm. 5, 8, and 30) and Bb7 (m. 16).

In m.11, an Fmaj7 is inserted as a passing chord to Em7, which sets up a II (Em7b5) - V7 (A9) - I (D6/9) progression. Pass then uses a continuous sequence of IIm7 - V7 patterns in mm. 13-14 (Em7 - A7; Am7 - D7; Bm7 - E7). In mm. 15-16, a V7 of V7 pattern is used: C7 - F7 - Bb7; this Bb7 chord is a tritone substitute for the original's E7, which resolves to A7. The home key of C is approached via another temporary IIm7 (Dm7) - bII7 (A7) of Ab7 - VIm7 (Am7) - bII7 (Ab7) of G7 - V7 (G7) progression in mm. 19-20, in which Pass modifies the IIm-V progression in C. In m. 22, the G7 chord serves as a V7 of Cmaj7. In the first chorus, Pass is not bound to the song's chord progression and freely reharmonizes the theme.

⁹⁴ Ibid.,1.

Figure 10. “Stella by Starlight,” 1st chorus.⁹⁵

Lead Sheet

Pass's reharmonization

Chord progression (Lead Sheet):

Measures 1-4: F#m7(b5) | B7(b9) | Dm7 | G7

Chord progression (Pass's reharmonization):

Measures 1-4: Am6/9 | Ab7+5 | Gmaj7 | G13

Measures 5-8: Gm7 | C7 | Fmaj7 | Bb7

Measures 9-12: Cmaj7 | F#m7(b5) | B7(b9) | Em7 | Cm7 | F7

Measures 13-16: Gmaj7 | F#m7(b5) | B7 | Bm7(b5) | E7(b5)

Measures 17-20: Bb7 | G7 | Cmaj7 | Cmaj7

Measures 21-24: F#m7(b5) | B7 | Em7(b5) | A7(b5)

Measures 25-28: Dm7(b5) | G7(b9) | Cmaj7 | Cmaj7

⁹⁵ Ibid., 1-4. The chord progression on the second staff of “Stella by Starlight” was re-analyzed by Young-Soo Kim and modified slightly from the notes in the appendix.

Figure 11 is Pass's solo improvisation section during the second chorus of "Stella by Starlight." He plays freely and uses rubato, which can account for the indistinct tempo, and he often improvises by blending short snippets of the theme melody. That is why his reharmonization in the solo section also fits with the theme even while its chords remain distinct from those of the first chorus. In other words, the melody is essential for his reharmonization and improvisation. The Bb13 chord (m.36) is a bII7 of A7; this is followed by an A7b9 moving smoothly to a C7b9, which is same harmony except for the root note. Measure 39's F7 is a bII7 of the following E13, which is in turn a tritone substitute-dominant for the original's Bb7 in m. 40. In addition, the E13 chord is prolonged via a Bm9 - E13 progression. In mm. 41-42, an Ebdim7 chord ascends a minor 3rd to F#m7b5, which is a kind of diminished arpeggiation, since both chords share many of the same notes (F#, A, C). Pass uses an Fmaj7 in m. 44 instead of the IIm (Cm7) - V (F7) progression in the lead sheet, which chromatically approaches the F#7-5 in m. 45. A V7 of V7 progression (E7b9 - A7#5) makes up measure 48; the Bb13 in m. 47 is a bII7 of m.48's A7#5.

A dramatic drop in the bass register occurs with the Fmaj7 in m.51 instead of the Dm7 in the lead sheet, which helps create bright sound and provides the low bass for the next single-line solo. In measure 58, Pass uses a IIm (Am7) - V7 (D13), which has a similar voicing to the B7 chord of the original. Measure 62 is a chromatic sequence of substitute-dominants, which precedes a circle-of-fifths progression in mm. 63-64. In this solo section, Pass uses chords which are identical in pitch content except for their bass note: while D13 and F#m7b5 in m. 46 share F#, A, C, and E. In the second chorus, Pass's reharmonization here is even more advanced than that found in the first chorus; a change of mood is brought about by his use of chord-substitutions.

Additionally, his solo style is filled throughout with changes of tempo and a free use of rubato for the solo format with variations.

Figure 11. “Stella by Starlight,” 2nd chorus, solo section.⁹⁶

Solo Section

Lead Sheet F#m7(b5) B7(b9) Dm7 G7

Pass's reharmonization

37 Gm7 C7 Fmaj7 Bb7

41 Cmaj7 F#m7(b5) B7(b9) Em7 Cm7 F7

45 Gmaj7 F#m7(b5) B7 Bm7(b5) E7(b5)

49 A7 Dm7

53 F#m7(b5) B7 Em7(b5) A7(b5)

57 Dm7(b5) G7(b9) Cmaj7

61

⁹⁶ Ibid., 4-6.

In Figure 12, Pass modulates to G major, changing the atmosphere of the last chorus. Even more than C major, this new key allows him to use more of the open strings. He uses less reharmonization in this chorus than in previous ones, but he plays more freely and uses more variation in the bass line. The A13 chord (m. 65) is a V7 of D7b9 (m. 68), and both the Ab7+5 chord (m. 69) and the F13 chord (m. 80) serve as bII7 substitute-dominants. He uses the Fmaj7 chord (m. 72) instead of the F7 of the original, which creates a distinct sequence of three major-7 chords in mm. 71-73.

In measure 77, Pass uses a IIm (Bm7) - V7 (E7) pattern and plays descending parallel harmony in a minor 3rd interval in measure 88; the progression is F#7+9 to Eb7+9 to C7+9, descending in minor 3rd, but the last C7+9 chord substitutes the Gb13 chord as a substitute dominant 7th chord of C7+9. The progression of measure 95 is IIm (Gm7) - V7 (C7) - bII7 (F7) - bII7 (E7) - IM (Ebmaj7). Pass plays rubato style improvisation on the Ebmaj7 chord. He often uses the major 7th chord for a long phrase of improvisation in this tune.

Measures 96 through 98 show continuous V7 of V7 progressions and the Gb7 chord is bII7 of F13 (measure 99). Measures 97 through 104 are the coda bars of the piece. In this last chorus, the modulation to G major and substitute chords for the ending section provide musical diversity. The reharmonization of each chorus of “Stella by Starlight” shows different progressions including temporary modulations, and a full modulation for the last chorus. Diverseness and modification for variations are required for the solo format. As the unaccompanied style is heavily dependent upon a player’s innovations to sustain interest from one chorus to the next, Pass changes the mood each time through; the first chorus uses chord substitutions; the second, as a solo section, utilizes an even more complex reharmonization; and the third chorus modulates

from a tonal center of C to that of G.

Figure 12. “Stella by Starlight,” 3rd chorus and Coda.⁹⁷

3rd Chorus

Lead Sheet

Pass's reharmonization

The image displays a musical score for the 3rd chorus and coda of "Stella by Starlight". It is divided into two main sections: "Lead Sheet" and "Pass's reharmonization". The score is written in 4/4 time and G major. The lead sheet consists of a single melodic line with lyrics. The reharmonization section provides a piano accompaniment with various chord voicings and substitutions. The score is divided into systems, with measure numbers 69, 73, 77, 81, 85, and 89 marked at the beginning of their respective systems. The reharmonization includes complex chords such as C#m7(b5), F#7(b9), Am7, D7, Dm7, G7, Cmaj7, F7, Gmaj7, Bm7, Gm7, C7, Dmaj7, F#7, Bm7, E7, C#7+, F#7, F#m7(b5), B7(b5), E7, Am7, F7, D13, D7(b9), Gmaj7, F#7(b9), Eb7(b9), Gb13, C#m7(b5), F#7, Bm7(b5), E7(b5), Am7(b5), D7(b9), Ab13, Gm7, C7, F7, E7, Ebmaj7, D13, G0, C13, and F0.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 6-8.

Figure 12 (cont.)

Pass often uses modulation to create variations in his solo work. His “Summertime,” on the *I Remember Charlie Parker* album, is representative. He plays each chorus in a new key, mixing the theme melodies with improvisation. The changes of modulation are as follows:

Intro - 1st chorus (Am key) - 2nd (Dm key) - 3rd (Gm and Cm key) - 4th (Am key) - 5th (Am key) - Coda (Dm and Am key).

Pass modulates the choruses using the cycle of 5ths and modulates two times in the 3rd chorus (Gm and Cm). In the 4th and 5th choruses, the main key (Am) is repeated and then the tune finishes on the Am key after the Dm key in the coda. With these modulations, he constantly creates a new sound to avoid sameness by the repetition of the theme.

Regarding the reharmonization characteristics of Pass, he constantly uses different chord substitutions to create variations. In addition, he often uses temporary modulations and full modulations to vary the choruses. Also, his reharmonization is harmonious with the theme melody, even in the solo section, since the melody is essential for his solo guitar style.

C. Use of the Bass Line

A key element of Pass's solo guitar playing is found in his use of bass lines. His most distinctive use of bass is found in his walking bass lines, homophonic textures, use of pedal bass notes, and counterpoint lines. When he plays a walking bass line along with chordal accompaniment, the line is played either together with the chord, or at different times. Figure 13 is excerpted from the ending part of "Stella by Starlight" on the *Virtuoso* album; Figure 13-A shows the chromatic bass line separated from the chords, providing counterpoint; Figure 13-B shows the walking bass line, which uses a half-step and diminished-fifth as a motif within a circle-of-fifths progression. Pass sometimes plays bass lines together with chords without a melody. Figure 14 shows a sequence of bII7 of V7, which is excerpted from "Pasta Blues," on the *Virtuoso #3* album. He inserts the chord-voicings between the walking bass line. These methods represent a few of the ways in which Pass applies bass lines separated from chords.

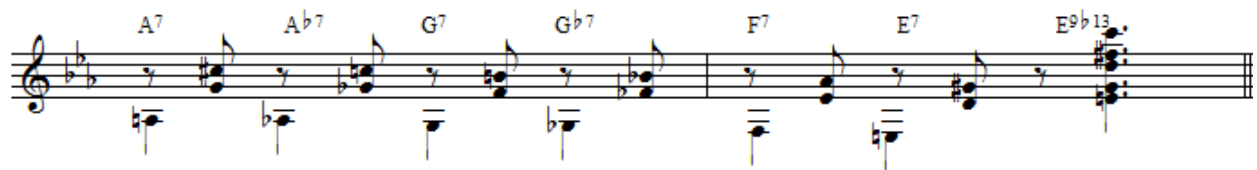
Figure 13.⁹⁸



⁹⁸ Ibid., 8.



Figure 14.⁹⁹ (measures 131-132)



Pass often uses the bass to create a homophonic texture together with melody and harmony. Figure 15 is a transcription of bars from “Ninths,” on the *Virtuoso #3* album: Figure 15-A shows a chromatic bass lines played with two-note voicings; 15-B is an example of a bass line with melody. In Figure 16, Pass plays a chord-melody together with the bass in “Have You Met Miss Jones,” on the *Virtuoso* album. These methods show bass lines playing with chords simultaneously, unlike the methods in Figure 13 and 14, which show chords and bass separated.

Figure 15.¹⁰⁰ (measures, A: 34-37, B: 208-209)



⁹⁹ Mause, “Pasta Blues,” *Joe Pass Virtuoso #3*, 28.

¹⁰⁰ A: *Ibid.*, “Ninths,” *Joe Pass Virtuoso #3*, 7.

B: *Ibid.*, 13.

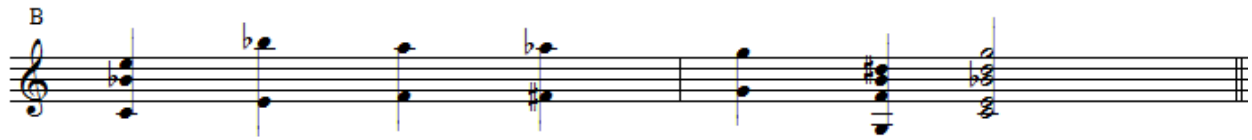
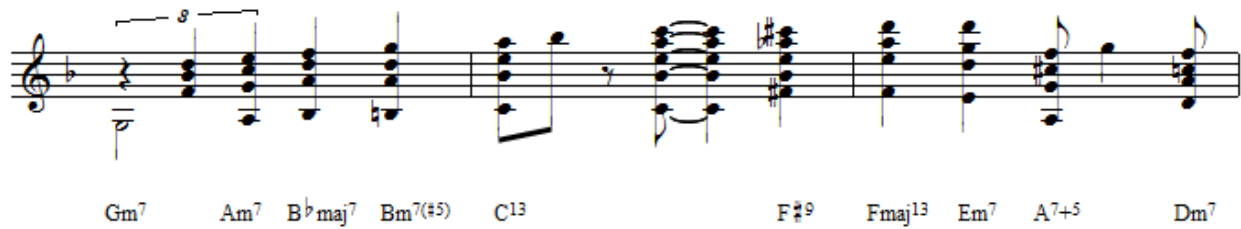


Figure 16.¹⁰¹ (measures 11-13)



Pass often plays melody lines with a single bass note as a pedal accompaniment. Figure 17 shows measures from “Offbeat,” on the *Virtuoso #3* album, in which Pass plays the melody with a single bass note on the open bass strings of the guitar. Figure 18 is excerpted from the first part of “Round Midnight” on the *Virtuoso* album, in which he plays the ascending melody line with a descending chromatic bass line which provides counterpoint in contrary motion. This technique is found reversed in Figure 19, excerpted from “Pasta Blues” on the *Virtuoso #3* album, in which the melody descends while the bass ascends playing at different times.

¹⁰¹ Leone, “Have You Met Miss Jones,” *Joe Pass Virtuoso Standards*, 4.

Figure 17.¹⁰² (measures 56-57)



Figure 18.¹⁰³ (measure 2)

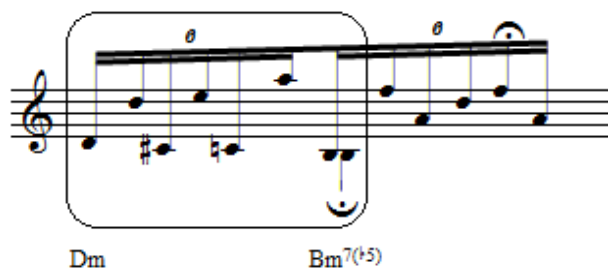


Figure 19.¹⁰⁴ (measures 155-156)



Figure 20 is a transcription of measures from “Offbeat,” on the *Virtuoso #3* album. Pass plays a pedal bass upon the open “A” string with a melody in sixths above. According to Pass, “I

¹⁰² Mause, “Offbeat,” *Joe Pass Virtuoso #3*, 72.

¹⁰³ Leone, “Round Midnight,” *Joe Pass Virtuoso Standards*, 65.

¹⁰⁴ Mause, “Pasta Blues,” *Joe Pass Virtuoso #3*, 29.

wrote it [Offbeat] for my daughter, who likes the pedal A.”¹⁰⁵ Figure 21 is excerpted from his “Paco De Lucia,” on the *Virtuoso #3* album, which shows an example of a bass line used to accompany a syncopated bossa nova rhythm.

Figure 20.¹⁰⁶ (measures 3-5)



Figure 21.¹⁰⁷ (measures 11-14)



A key element of solo guitar performance is the balance of bass, harmony, and melody. Since the solo guitar needs to play these three roles in order to sound like three instruments performed by one player, it requires both bass and chordal accompaniment for the melody. Pass shows how to use bass lines as if a bassist and a guitarist were playing together. Pass uses an independent walking bass, which plays either with or against the rhythm of the accompanying

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., “Offbeat,” 70.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Mause, “Paco De Lucia,” *Joe Pass Virtuoso #3*, 30.

harmonies, in order to create more contrapuntal interest; earlier solo guitarists tended to treat their bass lines as part of a homophonic texture.

D. Improvisation Characteristics

As opposed to most jazz performers, who improvise solos only after performing the “head,” or theme, Pass preferred to mix the theme with monophonic improvised lines. Moreover, he often has fully-improvised sections which use exclusively single-note lines to imply harmony. Also analyzed here are Pass’s homophonic “chordal solos,” as well as the arpeggiated, classical-style figures which sometimes accompany his solos.

Figure 22 shows the first measure of “Stella by Starlight,” on the *Virtuoso* album. After the first phrase of the theme, Pass freely improvises a cadenza. In measure 1, Pass plays descending Ab altered-dominant-7th scale¹⁰⁸ over an Ab7+5 chord; if the harmonic progression is instead analyzed as Am6/9 to D7, then the same scale becomes an A melodic minor scale. Over the G13 in measure 3, a D minor pentatonic scale is played with the added 9th degree (D, E, F, G, A and C), instead of the IIm (Dm7) in the lead sheet. Except for the added C#, this creates the overall effect of a G13sus4 sound. In the descending line which follows, an A major scale with chromatic approach notes (E to Eb to D to C#) is used.

¹⁰⁸ Altered-dominant-7th scale: 1, b2, #2, 3, #4, b6, b7.

Figure 22.¹⁰⁹ (measures 1-4)



Figure 23 shows Pass’s cadenza, in a rubato style, in the solo phrases in “Stella by Starlight.” This phrase (first box), which is similar to the one played over a G13 in measure 3, is repeatedly used here over an Fmaj7 instead of the Dm7 in the lead sheet; here it serves to set up a sequence using Bb Mixolydian (second box). The third box shows Pass’s use of chromatic approach tones to imply the Bb7 harmony. A different method of explicating the C major harmony via neighbor tones in a sequence is used (fourth box).

Figure 23.¹¹⁰



¹⁰⁹ “Stella by Starlight,” *Joe Pass Virtuoso*, 1.

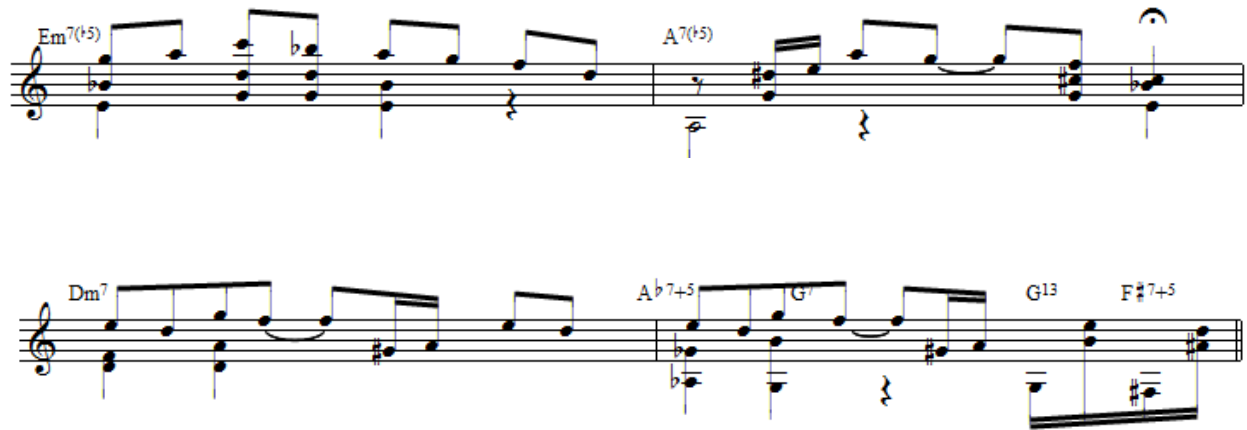
¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 5-6.



In Pass's improvisation which occurs between phrases of the theme, he mainly plays scales over the chords using tension notes, chromatic approach notes, and sequences. The main reason for using traditional scales here is to more clearly illustrate the implied harmony; the single-line solos have a harmonic character. As previously mentioned, Pass's single-line solos are influenced by both Coleman Hawkins's vertical arpeggiated style and Django Reinhardt's single-line virtuosity. These lines are usually played in gradual ascents and descents.

Figure 24 is another transcription of "Stella by Starlight." Pass improvises using a chord-melody solo—in measures 3 and 4, the same phrase is repeated but with different harmonies. This sample is representative of Pass's balancing of chords, bass, and melody.

Figure 24.¹¹¹



Pass's soloing was not limited to single-line playing; he often created homophonic solos referred to as "chordal solos." Figure 25 is excerpted from the solo section for "All the Things You Are" on the *Virtuoso* album. Pass plays a chordal solo which uses a chromatic approach chord in the first measure. Figure 26 shows an example from the conclusion of "Stella by Starlight." Here, he plays arpeggiated solos between phrases of the theme like a classical style. Additionally, Pass sometimes plays improvisational solos mixing with the main melodies as shown in Figure 27. The main phrases of the melody re-appear as essential motives during his solos.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 6.

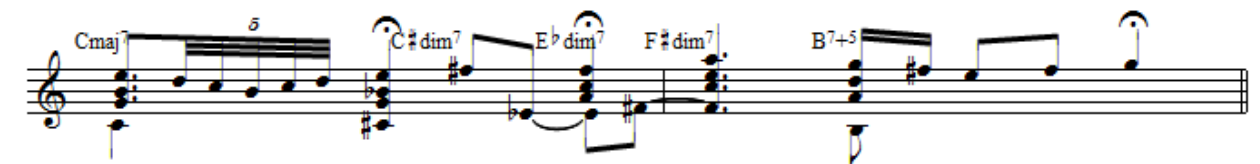
Figure 25.¹¹²



Figure 26.¹¹³



Figure 27.¹¹⁴



Pass's improvisation uses a variety of techniques for solo guitar. The characteristic "call-and-response" cadenzas inserted between phrases of the theme were his unique musical calling card, unexplored by previous guitarists; he also would improvise chorale-style solos and use classical-style accompaniment to create a complete musical statement.

¹¹² "All The Things You Are," *Joe Pass Virtuoso*, 6.

¹¹³ "Stella by Starlight," *Joe Pass Virtuoso*, 8.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

V. CONCLUSION

The various elements which constitute Joe Pass's solo guitar style are concerned with creating a variety of sounds to maintain interest: his exploration of counterpoint via the use of connecting notes between chords led to a richer texture than found in the style of previous guitarists; his innovate chord-substitutions cast familiar melodies in an unfamiliar light; and his use of a diverse and independent bass-line with counterpoint created elaborate textures new to the solo guitar medium. Additionally, his exploration of chord-solos, single-line solos, and improvised cadenzas between the theme melodies ultimately contributed to an endlessly varied and multifaceted style, the considerable impact of which is felt in modern-day performers as one of the models for the solo guitar format.

Summerfield stated that "Pass innovated the concept of a complete concert of solo jazz guitar playing,"¹¹⁵ Pass, as a stylistic consolidator, explored to extend the possibilities of the unaccompanied format. His primacy was wrapped up in his ability to continuously vary familiar songs through a historically-grounded improvisational technique, as well as through his exploration of techniques found outside the jazz guitar world or of his own creation. According to Anthony Lamont Garcia,

Most musical genres that foster improvisatory practices incorporate strategies and techniques for variation. Variation can manifest at the level of content and form and can be broadly understood, "as a process in which one or more segments of a composition [or improvisation] are

¹¹⁵ Maurice J. Summerfield, *The Jazz Guitar: Its Evolution, Its Players and Personalities Since 1900* (Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom: Ashley Publishing Co., 1993), 227.

modifications of the initial section of the piece.”¹¹⁶

Pass’s incorporating the styles of former solo guitar players, and his dedication to enlarging specific techniques for variation and modification, were enough to make the unaccompanied guitar format a viable jazz genre. Additionally, the legacy of his several full-length solo guitar albums and tours as a solo musician is one which contributed a great deal to the study of several generations of musicians, one whose reverberations are felt to this day. Adam Levy comments on Pass: “His incredible ability to seamlessly weave together walking bass lines, melodies, and chords was a revelation when the first *Virtuoso* record was released, and remains the standard by which solo jazz guitarists are judged today.”¹¹⁷

Despite the enrichments made by Pass in the unaccompanied style, pedagogical research has yet to fully embody these advances. Unlike performance in ensemble settings, the unaccompanied guitar is a special disciplinary field, which requires a unique variety of practice and instruction; the research presented here is an attempt to codify these methods for the benefit of instructors and performers alike, in an effort to continue the development of the unaccompanied style and, in effect, further Pass’s legacy.

¹¹⁶ Anthony Lamont Garcia, quoted in “Solo Guitar Improvisation: Process, Methodology and Practice” (PhD diss., University of Tasmania, 2014), 35.

¹¹⁷ Adam Levy, “Guitar Virtuoso,” *Guitar Player*, April 1998, 118.

VI. APPENDIX

“Stella by Starlight,” transcribed in *Joe Pass Virtuoso* (Charlestown, MA: Rocky Press, 1979)

STELLA BY STARLIGHT

Young-Washington

This image shows a handwritten guitar transcription of the piece "Stella by Starlight" by Joe Pass. The transcription is organized into six systems, each consisting of a staff with musical notation and a staff with guitar-specific notation (fingerings, bends, and chords).
- **System 1:** Labeled "original tune" and "Joe Pass version". It shows a melodic line with a trill on the first measure and a long phrase starting with a $F\sharp m 7$ chord (marked with a circled 2) and ending with a $B 7$ chord (marked with a circled 69).
- **System 2:** Continues the melodic line with chords $A m 6/9$, $A b 7 (\sharp 5)$, $G D 7$, and $A b 7$ (marked with a circled 69).
- **System 3:** Features a $D m 7$ chord and a $G 7$ chord. The notation includes a circled 4-4 and circled 2s.
- **System 4:** Shows a $G m 7$ chord and a $F D 7$ chord. The notation includes a circled 3 and a circled 4.
- **System 5:** Includes chords $C 13$, $D b 7 (\sharp 5)$, $C 13 9 (\sharp 5) (b 9)$, and F/G .
- **System 6:** Features a $B b 7$ chord and a $D b 7$ chord (marked with a circled 69).
The transcription includes various musical notations such as trills, slurs, and circled numbers indicating specific techniques or fingerings.

Handwritten musical score with guitar chords and notation. The score is organized into systems of staves.

System 1:

- Staff 1: Chords $C\Delta 7$, $F\#m7^{(b5)}$, $B7^{(b9)}$.
- Staff 2: Melodic line with circled 1, 3, 4, 3, 1, 0, 3, 3, 3, $F\#m7^{(b5)}$, $B7^{(b9)}$.
- Staff 3: Chord $\downarrow Em^9$.

System 2:

- Staff 1: Chords $\downarrow F\Delta 7$, Em^7 .
- Staff 2: Melodic line with circled 6.
- Staff 3: Chord $\downarrow Cm^7$.

System 3:

- Staff 1: Chords Cm^7 , Fm , $Gm^{(b9)}$, $G\Delta 7$.
- Staff 2: Chords $G\Delta 7$, $F\#m^7$, $B7$.

System 4:

- Staff 1: Chords $F\#m^7$, Em^7 , $A13^{(b5)}$, $A\Delta 7$, $D13$, Bm^7 , $E7^{(b9)}$.
- Staff 2: Chords $Bm^7^{(b5)}$, $E7^{(b9)}$.

System 5:

- Staff 1: Chords $C13$, $F13$, $Bb7$.
- Staff 2: Chords bT , bT .

Handwritten musical score for guitar, consisting of five systems of staves. The notation includes chords and melodic lines with various annotations:

- System 1:** Chords $B_7^{(b9)}$ and $E_m^{(b5)}$. Includes rhythmic markings like $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$.
- System 2:** Chords $B_7^{(b9)}$ and $E_m^{(b5)}$. Melodic lines with slurs and ties.
- System 3:** Chords $A_7^{(b9)}$, $D_m^{(b5)}$, and $G_7^{(b9)}$. Includes a $b\bar{7}$ marking.
- System 4:** Chords $A_7\#9$, $D_7\#9$, $G_7^{(b9)}$, and $B_7^{(b9)}$. Includes a -9 marking and a $+5$ interval marking.
- System 5:** Chord C_07 . Includes circled numbers 3, 2, 1 and a $\frac{1}{2}$ marking.

STARTING CHORUS. (VARIATIONS ON THE TUNE).

Handwritten musical score for guitar, consisting of three systems of staves. The notation includes chords and melodic lines with various annotations:

- System 1:** Chords $F\#m^{(b5)}$ and $B_7^{(b5)}$. Includes a $\wedge 3$ marking.
- System 2:** Chords Bb^{13} , Bb_07 , $A_7^{(b5)}$, and F/G . Includes a $b9$ marking and a $\frac{1}{2}$ marking.
- System 3:** Empty staff.

Handwritten musical notation on two staves. The top staff contains a melodic line with a circled '1' above the first measure and a circled '2' above the second measure. The bottom staff contains a bass line with circled numbers '3', '4', '3', '2', '1', '2', '1', '3', '2', '1', '4', '2', '1', '4', and '1' written below it.

Handwritten musical notation on a single staff, starting with a circled '3' above the first measure.

Handwritten musical notation on two staves. The top staff has a circled '2' above the second measure. The bottom staff includes the instruction *rit. slower* and contains chord symbols: $C\#0$, $E\flat$, $F\#m7$, and $B7$.

Handwritten musical notation on a single staff. It includes the instruction *molto rubato* and contains chord symbols: $E\#7$, $F\#7$, $E7$, $E\flat7$, and $E\flat7$.

Handwritten musical notation on a single staff. It contains chord symbols: $D13$, $F\#m7$, $F7$, $F6$, $B\flat13$, $E7$, $A7$, and F .

Handwritten musical notation on a single staff. It contains chord symbols: $C\#0$, $C\#7$, and $C13$.

Handwritten musical notation on a single staff. It contains chord symbols: $F\#7$ and circled numbers '4' and '2' above the first two measures.

Handwritten musical notation on a single staff. It contains circled numbers '3', '4', and '3' above the first three measures.

accelerando - - - -

This is a handwritten musical score for guitar, consisting of two systems of three staves each. The notation includes melodic lines with various ornaments and slurs, and chord diagrams with fingering numbers (1-4) and circled numbers (1-3). The chords are written in a shorthand notation, such as B13, B9, Bm7, A7, D13, A7(b9), A7(#9), Dm7, A7(#9), G7, G13, F#7, F7(aet), Bb7, Eb7, Ab7, D7, A7, Dm7, Ab7(#9), G13, Cb7, A13, G13, Cb7, and F#7. The score is written in a style typical of a working draft or a personal notebook.

(b5)
C#m7 F#7 (A7) Blue

H.T.S.

MM=100 A TEMPO

F13

Rubato ... F#7(#9) Eb7(#9) Gb13

Detailed description: This is a handwritten musical score for guitar, consisting of several systems of staves. The notation includes standard musical notation with treble clef, notes, rests, and slurs. Chord diagrams are written above the staff lines, with some labeled with chord names like C#m7, F#7, (A7), Blue, F13, F#7(#9), Eb7(#9), and Gb13. Fingering numbers (1-4) are placed below notes. Performance instructions such as 'Rubato ...' and 'A TEMPO' are written in the score. A circled signature 'H.T.S.' is present. The page is numbered '7.' in the top right corner.

Handwritten musical score for guitar, featuring a series of chords and melodic lines across multiple staves. The notation includes various chord symbols, fingering numbers, and articulation marks.

Chord Progression:

- Staff 1: $C\#m7$, $F\#7$, $F\#7^{(b9)}$, $Bm4^{(b5)}$
- Staff 2: $Gm7$, $C7$, $F7$, $E7$, $E\flat7$
- Staff 3: $D13$, $G9$, $C13$, $F9$, $B\flat13$, $E\flat9$, $D\flat13$, $\flat9$
- Staff 4: $G\flat7^{(\#9)}$, $F13$, $G7$
- Staff 5: $Bm7$, $E7$, $F7$

Fingering and Articulation:

- Staff 1: Fingering 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.
- Staff 2: Fingering 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.
- Staff 3: Fingering 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.
- Staff 4: Fingering 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.
- Staff 5: Fingering 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.

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