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# The Role of the Jazz Guitarist in Adapting to the Jazz Trio, the Jazz Quartet, and the Jazz Quintet

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UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

THE ROLE OF THE JAZZ GUITARIST IN ADAPTING TO THE JAZZ TRIO, THE  
JAZZ QUARTET, AND THE JAZZ QUINTET

By

Tim Jago

A DOCTORAL ESSAY

Submitted to the Faculty  
of the University of Miami  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

Coral Gables, Florida

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UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

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THE ROLE OF THE JAZZ GUITARIST IN ADAPTING TO THE JAZZ TRIO, THE  
JAZZ QUARTET, AND THE JAZZ QUINTET

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The Role of the Jazz Guitarist in Adapting to  
the Jazz Trio, the Jazz Quartet, and the Jazz  
Quintet

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The electric guitar is a relatively new instrument in jazz. As a result, there is a lack of documentation regarding the varying roles that the electric guitar can assume. It is a remarkably versatile instrument, with the inbuilt potential to express a wide range of timbres, textures and dynamics that are unique to the guitar. For guitarists who are looking to pursue or continue their development in performance, it is important to be aware of the adjustments that are necessary from one particular musical setting to the next. In highly improvised settings, one's approach to sound, density of texture and dynamic sensitivity will need to be considered according to the surrounding instruments as well as stylistic elements appropriate to the music. An exploration of such considerations will be applied to ensemble settings, including the Jazz Trio, Jazz Quartet, and Jazz Quintet. Articles, interviews with prominent guitarists, as well as analysis of sound recordings will be used to demonstrate the specific strategies that can be employed in adapting to various instrumental combinations.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

The guitar is a highly versatile instrument in jazz that has the potential to display a wide range of textures, timbres and dynamics. The purpose of this study is to investigate specific skills, technical demands, and musical considerations that are requisites if the guitarist is to contribute to cohesive ensemble performances. This endeavor requires that the guitarist be capable of displaying competency in the fundamentals of jazz guitar, as a pre-requisite, including technical proficiency, rhythmic feel, and chord vocabulary. Using various approaches, this study aims to provide useful methods for use by the jazz guitarist in order to function within small jazz group settings, specifically the jazz trio, the jazz quartet, and the jazz quintet.

It is important to address the guitar within jazz ensemble settings in order to educate aspiring jazz guitarists as to the role they should assume that best serves the music. An article that deals with the issue of the directionless guitarist in a jazz band, written by Brian Zimmerman,<sup>1</sup> is a fine example of the demonstration of practical tools to aid in the jazz guitarists' plight. Another article attempting to define a role for the jazz guitarist is written by Eric Hofbauer,<sup>2</sup> of the University of Rhode Island and Emerson College. This article, again, offers precise tools and exercises designed to ultimately further the guitarists' awareness of the sonic space they occupy within a jazz ensemble.

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<sup>1</sup> Brian Zimmerman, "Focus on Jazz: The Role of The Guitar in Jazz Ensembles," *Canadian Winds: The Journal of the Canadian Band Association* 4, no. 1 (2005): 31-35.

<sup>2</sup> Eric Hofbauer, "Fitting In: Defining a Role for the Guitarist in the Developing School Jazz Ensemble." *Massachusetts Music News* 61, no. 4 (Summer 2013): 33-35.

Jazz guitarists who are looking to pursue or continue their development in performance need to be aware of the adjustments that are necessary from one particular musical setting to the next. Frequently, guitarists experience difficulties when having to consider the subtle changes between different ensemble settings such as the jazz trio, the jazz quartet, and the jazz quintet. These differing ensemble configurations constitute musical settings that require guitarists to develop strategies in adapting to the various ensemble formations and ensemble members. Such adaptations enable guitarists to appropriately accommodate each ensemble situation thus creating overall cohesion within the specific ensemble setting. The techniques that will be addressed to achieve this objective include the elements of Timbre, Dynamics, Texture, Communication and Interaction. As it stands, most of the learning and application of such devices is an experiential endeavor for jazz guitarists, which can take some time to learn and internalize. The aim is to organize the thought process in a definitive way to help the progression of like-minded individuals who will hopefully benefit from such a study and hasten the learning process.

### **Relevance of the Study**

The intention behind the study is to enhance the thought process of the jazz guitarist in quickly incorporating the appropriate adjustments within a particular musical situation. This study can serve as a valuable resource, currently lacking for jazz guitarists, as it gathers relevant information into a collection of concrete ideas and techniques within a practical framework for ensemble playing. This study will be of interest to bandleaders, educators and musicians of any instrument who are seeking to understand the thought processes of jazz guitarists in their goal of performing appropriately and “fitting in”

within a jazz ensemble. Ultimately, the objective for each member of the ensemble is a cohesive presentation with clear direction for all involved in the music being created, while striving for a high level of musicianship.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions addressed to form the basis of this study include:

What is the relevance, to jazz guitarists, of fundamental technique as a requisite to successful ensemble performance?

What are the demands and expectations on the guitarist in adapting to the jazz trio?

What are the demands and expectations on the guitarist in adapting to the jazz quartet?

What are the demands and expectations on the guitarist in adapting to the jazz quintet?

Answering these questions has revealed the need to categorize a set of elements that will be addressed for each of the ensemble settings. The elements that will be addressed include Timbre, Dynamics, Texture, Communication and Interaction. These elements will be explored in each of the ensemble settings in order to provide a clear and accessible structure in a concise manner.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

It is important to establish the types of sources that are necessary in order to illustrate the importance of the jazz guitarist's awareness in adjusting to differing small group combo settings. Each type of source will serve a purpose in outlining relevant points throughout the body of this research.

Guitar method books are mentioned and referenced as sources that are necessary for guitarists to acquire certain skill sets. The fundamentals are required before considering such concepts to successfully adjust to suit specific musical settings. Instructional method books, in addition to teacher guidance in lessons, are recommended in order to gain the initial technical skills that are desirable to the jazz guitarist. William Leavitt<sup>3</sup> wrote a series of books that have certainly gained a reputation for convincingly guiding the guitarist who is inclined to pursue interest in jazz and other modern styles of music. Leavitt's *A Modern Method for Guitar* books, which began being published in the 1960's, were specifically aimed at developing sight-reading skills as well as informing guitarists in regard to aspects of modern guitar technique.

Ted Greene's<sup>4</sup> instructional book, originally published in 1971, is another example of a systematic learning tool for fundamentals. Much is addressed in this book including guitar technique, scales and ear training but most of the focus is given to

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<sup>3</sup> William Leavitt, *A Modern Method for Guitar: Volumes 1, 2, 3 Complete* (Boston, MA: Berklee Press, 1999).

<sup>4</sup> Ted Greene, *Chord Chemistry* (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Music Publishing, 1971).

harmony. Chord forms are presented in a thorough way and, furthermore, the multiple functions of these chords are addressed as well.

In addition to the importance of learning the fundamentals, an insightful Masters Thesis written by Harold James Odegard<sup>5</sup> is being referenced. This study is specific to the undergraduate jazz guitarist attending music college and poses many of the problems that they face in obtaining the fundamental skill sets at a university level. Most impressive though, is Odegard's presentation of a proposed learning process designed for the student to implement for effective and active self learning. The steps of awareness, planning, scheduling, practicing, and evaluating are thoroughly explained and would certainly aid in grounding the jazz guitarist in the fundamentals.

To the author's knowledge there are currently no books that discuss, in-depth, the role of the guitarist in jazz ensembles. However, reference to selected articles that briefly address the issue of the guitar in jazz bands provide significant source material in outlining the interest that has arisen regarding this topic in recent years. The articles by Hofbauer<sup>6</sup> and Zimmerman<sup>7</sup> certainly contribute to this discussion. Hofbauer's article, though brief, includes specific figures that demonstrate appropriately idiomatic rhythmic patterns to be considered, as well as distinct three and four note chord voicings that are likely to blend within a jazz combo. Zimmerman's article has a "hands-on" feel but is quite in-depth. It delves into topics including big-band guitar's function, the importance

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<sup>5</sup> Harold James Odegard, "The Plight of Jazz Guitar Students and Proposed Solutions" (master's thesis, University of Texas, 2004).

<sup>6</sup> Eric Hofbauer, "Fitting In: Defining a Role for the Guitarist in the Developing School Jazz Ensemble." *Massachusetts Music News* 61, no. 4 (Summer 2013): 33-35.

<sup>7</sup> Brian Zimmerman, "Focus on Jazz: The Role of The Guitar in Jazz Ensembles," *Canadian Winds: The Journal of the Canadian Band Association* 4, no. 1 (2005): 31-35.

for the guitarist to address the rhythmic feel of the music, appropriate chord vocabulary, sonically blending within an ensemble, and even equipment considerations. In addition, an article by Dean Sorenson<sup>8</sup> is equally as informative towards the same issues dealt with in the previous articles. In Sorenson's article there is an overall sense that he is certainly attempting to raise awareness, not only to the jazz guitar student but also to the high school and college band directors, in actively paying attention to the role of the guitar within a jazz ensemble.

A portion of source material used throughout the study is drawn from that of articles that feature interviews with select jazz guitarists. I will be substantiating points of view regarding successful tactics in preparing to adjust to different combo settings by referencing articles on noteworthy jazz guitarists who are the masters in this area.

In terms of the fundamentals of technique as a necessity for jazz guitarists, quotes from Pat Metheny, in a *Down Beat*<sup>9</sup> interview, and John Scofield, in *Guitar Player*,<sup>10</sup> offer logical and practical insights that address this issue. Other interviews with Pat Metheny, for *Guitar Player*<sup>11</sup> and *Jazziz*,<sup>12</sup> contain focus on his experience specifically within the jazz trio configuration. With additional regards to the alternate organ trio configuration guitarist, John Abercrombie, in an interview for *Down Beat*<sup>13</sup> offers

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<sup>8</sup> Dean Sorenson, "The Guitar - All the Right Grooves," 2003, accessed October 2, 2013, [http://www.kjos.com/band/band\\_news/band\\_news\\_guitar.html](http://www.kjos.com/band/band_news/band_news_guitar.html).

<sup>9</sup> Jim Roberts, "Pat Metheny: The Interview From Home," *Down Beat* 56, no. 8 (August 1989): 16-19.

<sup>10</sup> Jim Ferguson, "John Scofield: Bebop Expressionist," *Guitar Player* 17, no.2 (February 1983): 30-39.

<sup>11</sup> Adam Levy, "Pat Answers," *Guitar Player* 35, no. 3 (March 2001): 104-111.

<sup>12</sup> Michael Fagien, "The Pat Metheny Interview," *Jazziz* 19, no. 3 (March 2002): 34-41.

<sup>13</sup> Frank-John Hadley, "This Ain't No Chicken Shack: John Abercrombie," *Down Beat* 61, no. 11 (November 1994): 30-33.

perspective on the sympathetic nature of the guitar and organ, as successfully blending instruments.

A current perspective is offered through rising jazz guitarist Lionel Loueke, in a *Berklee Today*<sup>14</sup> interview regarding the guitar/piano relationship, for which the guitarist must deal with in quartet and quintet configurations. Loueke had been part of one of jazz giant Herbie Hancock's more recent quartet groups. In the article he discusses certain musical choices he makes in playing with Hancock in order for this instrumental matching to operate successfully. John Abercrombie, for *Guitar Player*,<sup>15</sup> is asked about the success of jazz master Jim Hall's approach to playing within the quartet configuration that contains guitar, saxophone, bass, and drums.

Discographies provide a large portion of reference material throughout, when supporting statements regarding the success of the shifting role that the guitar plays in jazz. Particular audio examples of guitarists in the jazz trio, jazz quartet and jazz quintet need to be referenced directly from the recordings of notable albums that demonstrate the achievement of such approaches from the masters, themselves. This is in keeping with the notion that jazz is an aural tradition and therefore the finest lessons can be taught through audible demonstration.

Focus upon the trio configuration consisting of guitar, bass, and drums will be addressed based on the successful performances of prominent artists from three distinct periods of development. From a bebop perspective, Barney Kessel,<sup>16</sup> Kenny Burrell,<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Mark Small, "Out of Africa," *Berklee Today* 20, no. 3 (Winter 2009): 10-13.

<sup>15</sup> Adam Levy, "John Abercrombie." *Guitar Player*, 10, 2012. 48, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1266692360?accountid=14585>.

<sup>16</sup> Ray Brown / Barney Kessel/ Shelly Manne, *The Poll Winners*, Fantasy 1562, 1957 (1993), CD.

and Grant Green<sup>18</sup> demonstrate ideal approaches to the guitar trio. Jim Hall<sup>19</sup> introduced further development into a pianistic approach to guitar trio playing in 1975, whereby he drew tremendous influence from the Bill Evans trio.<sup>20</sup> This approach catapulted the guitar trio into new sonic areas that have continued to be explored today. Further exploration within the trio context can be heard from the approaches of, for example, Pat Metheny<sup>21</sup> and Bill Frisell.<sup>22</sup> John Scofield<sup>23</sup> successfully displays an eclectic, modern approach to the guitar trio in one of his early trio endeavors. On this recording one can hear the accumulation of historical reference as well as forward thinking inclusions of the musical influences of the day.

Reference is also made to another iconic trio configuration consisting of guitar, organ and drums. The overall stylistic and textural implications inherent in this instrumental blend have ensured a great historical significance in jazz. Noted is an important, early presentation of the style by revered organist, Jimmy Smith<sup>24</sup> that featured Kenny Burrell on guitar. This style has continued with prominence, as demonstrated by guitarists, Peter Bernstein<sup>25</sup> and John Abercrombie.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Kenny Burrell / Kenny Burrell Trio, *A Night at the Vanguard*, Chess 9316, 1959 (1990), CD.

<sup>18</sup> Grant Green, *Standards*, Blue Note 8212842, 1961 (1998), CD.

<sup>19</sup> Jim Hall, *Jim Hall Live!*, Verve 0654282, 1975 (2003), CD.

<sup>20</sup> Bill Evans / Bill Evans Trio, *Portrait In Jazz*, Fantasy 0882, 1959 (1990), CD.

<sup>21</sup> Pat Metheny, *Bright Sided Life*, ECM 827133-2, 1976 (1991), CD.

<sup>22</sup> Bill Frisell, *East / West*, Nonesuch 7559798632, 2005, CD.

<sup>23</sup> John Scofield, *Shinola*, Enja R2-79656, 1981 (1991), CD.

<sup>24</sup> Jimmy Smith, *Organ Grinder Swing*, Verve 5438312, 1965 (1991), CD.

<sup>25</sup> Peter Bernstein, *Earth Tones*, Criss Cross Criss 1151CD, 1998, CD.

<sup>26</sup> John Abercrombie, *While We're Young*, ECM 517352, 1992, CD.

The quartet consisting of guitar, piano, bass and drums is a noteworthy ensemble setting. Much of the focus is paid to the interaction of the guitar and piano in this setting, as they inherently share a similar role in the fact that they are both accompanying instruments in jazz. We can hear examples of this combination operating successfully on recordings by Wes Montgomery<sup>27</sup> and Joe Pass.<sup>28</sup> These groups display a clear delineation of the roles in a conventional, bebop setting. An interesting and modern approach to the guitar's inclusion in a jazz quartet is displayed on pianist, Aaron Parks'<sup>29</sup> debut recording of 2008. Here the role of the guitar has expanded to producing textures that are essential to the compositions, as well as performing the conventional duties of a lead voice within a small group combo.

The alternate quartet configuration consisting of guitar, saxophone, bass and drums is a popular combination, especially in recent times, and there are specific albums of note that convey the sonic workings of this ensemble setting. An iconic album by tenor saxophonist, Sonny Rollins<sup>30</sup> that featured Jim Hall on guitar is a primary example of the validity that the guitar demonstrates within this setting. Further along and carrying the legacy of this renowned group into new territory are recordings by John Scofield<sup>31</sup> and Kurt Rosenwinkel.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Wes Montgomery, *The Incredible Jazz Guitar of Wes Montgomery*, Riverside Records 1866362, 1960 (1991), CD.

<sup>28</sup> Joe Pass, *Joy Spring*, Blue Note 8352222, 1964 (1996), CD.

<sup>29</sup> Aaron Parks, *Invisible Cinema*, Blue Note / Angel Records 5090112, 2008, CD.

<sup>30</sup> Sonny Rollins, *The Bridge*, RCA Victor 96252, 1962 (2000), CD.

<sup>31</sup> The John Scofield Quartet, *Meant to Be*, Blue Note CDP 795 419 2, 1990 (1991), CD.

<sup>32</sup> Kurt Rosenwinkel, *The Next Step*, Verve / Polygram E5491622, 2001, CD.

The quintet formation that is discussed consists of guitar, saxophone, piano, bass and drums. The role of the guitar in this combination is less clearly defined as with the previous ensemble settings. The guitar has the ability to switch between a lead voice and an accompanying instrument at the appropriate times. Fine examples of this aspect are employed tastefully and can be heard on albums by John Scofield,<sup>33</sup> Chris Cheek<sup>34</sup> and Kurt Rosenwinkel.<sup>35</sup> Not to discount the early incarnations of this combo setting where the roles are clearly defined, albums by Kenny Burrell and John Coltrane,<sup>36</sup> as well as Wes Montgomery<sup>37</sup> establish the jazz quintet, with the inclusion of guitar, as an effective combination and blend of instruments.

The varied reference material presented here are intended to provide balanced reinforcement of the points to be made throughout the study. All is aimed at informing the reader of the tactics that are necessary to accomplish the adjustment process within jazz ensembles. A large portion of this research material is gathered in order to gain insight from the jazz masters of past and present.

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<sup>33</sup> John Scofield, *Hand Jive*, Blue Note CDP 8273272, 1993 (1994), CD.

<sup>34</sup> Chris Cheek, *Vine*, Fresh Sound New Talent 86, 2000, CD.

<sup>35</sup> Kurt Rosenwinkel, *Deep Song*, Universal Distribution UCCV-1067, 2005, CD.

<sup>36</sup> John Coltrane/Kenny Burrell, *John Coltrane & Kenny Burrell*, OJC OJCCD-300-2, 1963 (1992), CD.

<sup>37</sup> Wes Montgomery, *Full House*, Riverside Records VICJ-60028, 1962 (2007), CD.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The main body of work for this study begins at chapter 4, which addresses the need for the jazz guitarist to display fundamental technique. This is a requirement before successfully incorporating methods to address higher-level concepts regarding ensemble interaction. A jazz musician must have a certain degree of technique mastered before the focus can shift from the immediate, personal musical issues to the collective of the ensemble. While this paper is not intended to be a method book that presents exercises for the guitarist's growth in this area, select method books are referenced as a guide to accomplishing the gradual mastery of techniques that will aid the jazz guitarist to be well equipped for the forthcoming tactics. Furthermore, the importance of guidance from teachers and jazz legends of the past, as well as the importance of self-teaching, have great significance in this area and are addressed throughout the body of this study.

The ensemble configurations (the jazz trio, the jazz quartet, and the jazz quintet) contain the consistent common thread of involving acoustic bass and drums at the core of the rhythm section in this study. This limits the scope, thus allowing for a more focused, uniform discussion. The changing configurations are addressed using a consistent set of elements that serve to differentiate the demands and expectations on the guitarist to contribute appropriately to successful ensemble performances. The elements and definitions are as follows:

TIMBRE - the character or quality of a musical sound or voice as distinct from its pitch and intensity.

DYNAMICS – the varying levels of volume of sound in different parts of a musical performance.

TEXTURE – the tactile quality of the surface of a work of art: density. In terms of music, chord density may be considered (“light” or “heavy” density resulting from the layers of sound.)

COMMUNICATION – the imparting of information AND INTERACTION – reciprocal action or influence by both parties.

Although there are many crossover aspects to these elements in relation to jazz performance, this study aims to highlight key, significant points in order to address considerations at the forefront of utmost importance to the guitarist. Yet another consistent thread that helps to limit the scope is that this study relates specifically to the electric guitar. This is important to note, as it sets limitations to the adjustments necessary in relation to the elements of Timbre, Dynamics, Texture, Communication and Interaction. Also important to note is that this study deals with the guitarist’s function, in the appropriate ensemble configurations, within musical circumstances that are highly improvised. For example, a performance situation where there is not a great deal of predetermination as to specific parts for the ensemble members to play. Developing skills to quickly adjust to the moment in these situations requires a great deal of awareness and focus. Therefore, successful approaches and tactics are offered that apply to these particular circumstances.

Chapter 5 deals solely with the jazz trio format and the elements are addressed primarily with regard to the particular configuration of guitar, bass and drums. Examples from three distinct approaches are utilized in order to narrow the focus of these elements,

thus substantiating the success obtained in applying the tactics that are discussed throughout the chapter. Kenny Burrell's<sup>38</sup> approach represents a conventional, bebop oriented style, whereas Jim Hall<sup>39</sup> introduces a piano trio influence that offers a fresh palette to work from. John Scofield<sup>40</sup> represents a modern approach that incorporates many of the historical influences of the guitar trio format, as well as that of other popular styles of music, such as blues and rock. In addition, the trio configuration consisting of guitar, organ, and drums is also addressed. This formation has proven to be a common trio setting throughout jazz history that should be discussed. Sources such as album recordings are referenced to demonstrate points of view regarding the success of particular approaches, as well as articles of interviews with artists who make mention of the jazz trio.<sup>41</sup>

Chapter 6 applies the elements to the jazz quartet format consisting of guitar, piano and drums, with mention to that of the configuration that supplements the piano for the saxophone. Again, recordings are used to reinforce specific tactics that are applied to the elements and the ranges of approaches are presented, from conventional to progressive styles. Chapter 7 does the same for the jazz quintet consisting of guitar, saxophone, piano, bass and drums. Each of these chapters employs the use of sound recordings of the relevant artists as well as articles.

Conforming to IRB protocol, the use of the Informed Consent Form (ICF) is used to gain knowledge from the viewpoints of a select group of notable jazz guitarists that, in

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<sup>38</sup> Kenny Burrell, *A Night at the Village Vanguard*, Rovi Music MW0000203946, 1959, CD.

<sup>39</sup> Jim Hall, *Jim Hall Live!*, Rovi Music MW0000865518, 1975, CD.

<sup>40</sup> John Scofield, *Shinola*, Rovi Music MW0000649721, 1981, CD.

<sup>41</sup> Adam Levy, "Pat Answers," *Guitar Player* 35, no. 3 (March 2001): 104-111.

the author's opinion, have consistently demonstrated the performing abilities inherent in this research. The contributing interviewees are guitarists, Steve Cardenas, Dave Stryker, and John Hart. The questionnaire template utilized for all of the interviewees is as follows:

1. What is the relevance, to the jazz guitarist, of fundamental technique as a requisite to successful ensemble performance?
2. What are the demands and expectations on the guitarist in adapting to the Jazz Trio (Guitar, Bass, Drums as well as Guitar, Organ, Drums) and furthermore, what is unique in this setting as opposed to the guitarist's role in other ensemble configurations?
3. What are the demands and expectations on the guitarist in adapting to the Jazz Quartet (Guitar, Piano, Bass, Drums as well as Guitar, Saxophone/Trumpet, Bass, Drums) and furthermore, what is unique in this setting as opposed to the guitarist's role in other ensemble configurations?
4. What are the demands and expectations on the guitarist in adapting to the Jazz Quintet (Guitar, Saxophone, Piano, Bass, Drums) and furthermore, what is unique in this setting as opposed to the guitarist's role in other ensemble configurations?
5. Additionally, is there anything you would like to add to this survey that you consider of importance?

The interviews are provided in their entirety in an appendix after the main body of work. Chapter 8 is a discussion of the results from the interviews.

Chapter 9 is designated for my conclusions in relation to the findings. Personal thoughts, in regards to the necessity for jazz guitarists to be mindful of such concepts when approaching the shifting musical settings, are explored throughout. My experiences in jazz performance, and consequently all of the musical combinations discussed, are referred to in order to further signify the validity in considering these concepts.

## CHAPTER 4

### FUNDAMENTAL GUITAR TECHNIQUES ESSENTIAL TO SUCCESSFUL ENSEMBLE PERFORMANCE

Jazz is the perfect union of simplicity and complexity. It communicates emotions effortlessly but it can also be quite introspective. It is disciplined yet in its nature there is an inherent freedom. Jazz is selfish, selfless.

Thus, the demands of this art form require a great deal of diligence from the player to balance the many concepts and techniques available. Improvisation is a key element in Jazz and in order to improvise one must draw upon an array of tools that will facilitate the most pure self-expression possible for any individual. This is why it is important for jazz musicians to continually hone their craft through the practice of rudimentary skill sets that will aid in the mastery of their respective instruments.

The main essential elements of music, being rhythm, melody, and harmony, are all at play in jazz and focus on these areas will equip the jazz musician in preparation for dealing with other complex areas of jazz performance. With particular regard to rhythm, which is arguably the most important element in jazz, Pat Metheny shares some important insight that illuminates the importance of playing with a solid rhythm foundation as a fundamental necessity for jazz musicians, “If you play with really strong rhythmic confidence, you can play almost anything. You can play almost any note or chord, as long as you can make it sit with the rhythm section.”<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Jim Roberts, “Pat Metheny: The Interview From Home,” *Down Beat* 56, no. 8 (August 1989): 18.

“Guitarists tend to come to jazz via rock or blues.”<sup>43</sup> It is often the case that guitar players begin learning the instrument primarily in a practical manner; frequently based off of visual and aural learning. Initially, there is little attention paid to reading music notation or understanding the theory behind many of the practical things that they may actually be able to execute quite comfortably. For this reason, many guitarists are forced to play “catch-up” later in their development in order to strengthen their foundations and build upon a universal knowledge of music and how it relates to the guitar.

Instructional books are a great resource for any student of music, as they commonly present technical and theoretical concepts in a methodical way. There are many guitar method books available that are aimed towards the advancing jazz guitarist. One of the most utilized series of method books is William Leavitt’s *A Modern Method for Guitar*.<sup>44</sup> These books are considered to be amongst the most thorough and comprehensive guitar method books available and although they began publication as long ago as the 1960’s, they are still a “go-to” resource for students and teachers alike. The series is logically structured so that the exercises and concepts become progressively more difficult throughout. Some of the many helpful topics that are covered in this resource include; music theory, picking and strumming techniques, scales, arpeggios, position playing, triads and chord forms, reading notation and sight reading. There are also many other areas addressed that present the guitarist with the opportunity to form an extensive foundational base.

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<sup>43</sup> Eric Hofbauer, "Fitting In: Defining a Role for the Guitarist in the Developing School Jazz Ensemble." *Massachusetts Music News* 61, no. 4 (Summer 2013): 33.

<sup>44</sup> William Leavitt, *A Modern Method for Guitar: Volumes 1, 2, 3 Complete* (Boston, MA: Berklee Press, 1999).

*Chord Chemistry*,<sup>45</sup> by Ted Greene, is widely regarded as the resource for an extensive range of harmonic possibilities specific to the guitar. This is particularly relevant to the advancing jazz guitarist because there is an inherent need to be sufficiently grounded with an understanding of harmony in order to operate successfully. The beauty of this book is that Greene has placed importance on educating the guitarist with regards to the functionality of harmonic progressions and chord voicings. In doing so, he has contributed far more substantially than simply listing myriads of chord charts with no mention of context. As Greene states in the introduction of the book, “It is far better to know only a few nice chords and *know how to use them* than to know thousands of chords without knowing where to put them or how they relate to each other.”<sup>46</sup>

Aside from the use of method books to learn the fundamentals, guitarists will do well to look towards the plethora of landmark jazz recordings over the years. Since Jazz is an aural tradition and essentially a language it makes perfect sense for students of the music to transcribe, or copy, what they hear. Listening to the greats, who we are fortunate enough to hear captured on these recordings, “can really excite musicians and ignite their desire to work on the music.”<sup>47</sup> This is also a great way for jazz students to develop their ear, which is an essential step in order to operate successfully within this idiom. Jazz guitarists will gain much from listening to and copying melodies, solos, passages, and comping from the lineage of the masters of jazz guitar. Furthermore, transcribing non-guitarists can be just as rewarding. Saxophone, trumpet, piano players, and vocalists, for

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<sup>45</sup> Ted Greene, *Chord Chemistry* (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Music Publishing, 1971).

<sup>46</sup> Greene, 1.

<sup>47</sup> Brian Zimmerman, “Focus on Jazz: The Role of The Guitar in Jazz Ensembles,” *Canadian Winds: The Journal of the Canadian Band Association* 4, no. 1 (2005): 31-35.

example, can offer different musical perspectives to guitarists that the instrument would not naturally offer. Technical facility and musical concepts can improve quite radically, oftentimes with very little over-analysis, through the simple process of copying the titans of jazz.

One of the most important ways for a student to become fully equipped on their instrument is through the guidance of an instructor, or mentor. This mentorship process can have great effects on the development of a student of jazz and in particular the technical demands that arise. Being in the physical presence of a teacher allows for many aspects of learning that could potentially be missed if the student is purely self-dependent. The close proximity nature in this method of learning allows for focused attention from the teacher to all aspects of the student's playing. Evaluations can then be made more accurately on the necessary steps for improvement in many areas of the student's technique and foundational basis. There is nothing quite like furnishing immediate feedback for a student in order to shake them into taking active steps for self-improvement.

Jazz guitarists especially have a unique opportunity with one on one instruction in that oftentimes the student and the teacher are able to play cohesive renditions of pieces of music together as a duo unit, due to the multi-faceted nature of the instrument. They have the potential to be a lead voice but also accompany one another. The instructor can then draw conclusions from this approach, based upon observations from a practical performance perspective as opposed to the hypothetical performance situation, which can tend to be the case with other instrument lessons. These practical perspectives are unique

to the guitar because they can be translated directly into ensemble performing situations for the guitarist.

Along with the importance of clear instruction from a mentor is the need for jazz guitarists to take absolute responsibility for their learning. Essentially, they need to become self-teachers. Everybody processes information differently so it is imperative that students actively seek out the best method of learning that is suited to them. It is not necessarily an easy thing for every student to adopt this mind-set of self-reliance. However, they must realize that it is essential for on-going musical development and preparing for longevity in a career as a musician.

In his Masters Thesis, Harold James Odegard<sup>48</sup> wrote a study that deals specifically with plights of the college jazz guitarists' learning process. He addresses importance of the aforementioned self-teaching philosophy, "Jazz guitar students, however, must deal with problems that affect them uniquely in realizing and establishing their learning methods," Furthermore, Odegard writes, "Solutions proposed in this study aim to enable these students to control and account for their actions and progress."<sup>49</sup> Although not tied directly to specific fundamental guitar techniques, Odegard's paper deals with the necessary means for undergraduate jazz guitar students, who are most likely at the stage of learning and tackling the fundamentals, to develop sound habits that will aid in the most efficient practice for the individual. Logical steps of awareness, planning, scheduling, practicing, and evaluating are focused upon which help the guitarist take control over these organizational tactics.

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<sup>48</sup> Harold James Odegard, "The Plight of Jazz Guitar Students and Proposed Solutions" (master's thesis, University of Texas, 2004).

<sup>49</sup> Odegard, v.

John Scofield offered great insight through his outlook on the importance of technique, when asked by Jim Ferguson for Guitar Player magazine, “In general, how important is technique?” he responded,

You can look at it so many different ways. If it’s getting your musical thoughts to come out on the instrument, then it’s very important. A lot of people practice things that aren’t actually their musical thoughts – purely musical exercises – and that has no meaning at all for me as far as creating music is concerned. Merely how fast somebody can play – that’s not important at all. The thing is to pull off the musical effects you want when you’re improvising. That’s the greater idea of technique.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE DEMANDS AND EXPECTATION ON THE GUITARIST IN ADAPTING TO THE JAZZ TRIO

When Pat Metheny was asked what it is about playing in a trio that appeals to him, he answered, “One things that’s cool about a guitar trio is it’s a blank slate. There aren’t a lot of archetypes to say, “Okay, this is how you do it.”... It was open territory.”<sup>50</sup> The guitar trio configuration is the launching pad for the basis of this study. The limited number of players in this setting allows a tremendous amount of freedom for the guitarist and offers many avenues to explore. There are many fine examples of successfully functioning guitar trios that have been captured on recordings, past and present. Jazz guitarists can use these sources as wonderful points of reference from which to build their own conception.

From a foundational standpoint one of the foremost demands on the guitarist requires that they are able to assume a lead position in the ensemble. This does not necessarily mean being the “leader” of the group. Rather, being able to musically initiate action for the other members to follow because the guitar is essentially the lead voice. This is achieved musically by clear presentation of melodies, also being comfortable with the rhythmic implications and possibilities of a given piece of music, as well as demonstrating competency on the harmonic structures of the music when it comes time to soloing. The guitarist’s creative choices with regard to Timbre, Dynamics, Texture,

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<sup>50</sup> Adam Levy, “Pat Answers,” *Guitar Player* 35, no. 3 (March 2001): 107.

Communication and Interaction will greatly impact the individual “sound” and identity of the ensemble.

### **Timbre**

This can be defined as, the character or quality of a musical sound or voice as distinct from its pitch and intensity. Thus, in discussing qualities of timbre related to the guitar, considerations such as range of pitch are essential, and must be considered from its lowest registers all the way into the upper register. The consideration of tone quality is also relevant. For example, sonorities that are warm versus cool, dark versus bright, or round versus sharp, or gradations in between are all at our disposal.

It is important that guitarists pay particular attention to the range in which they play. For instance, the octave chosen by a guitarist to convey a melody has a drastic effect to the overall timbre of the ensemble. A low to mid-range area will most likely mean that the relationship to the range of notes produced by the bass player will be close together. The overall effect of this is a warm sound, perhaps somewhat “mellow.” Conversely, if the guitarist chooses to play the same passage but transpose up an octave, in the high register, the range relationship to the bass is spread further apart. This can produce a bright and perhaps slightly “thin” sound, especially with the cymbals of the drums occupying a similar sonic space to the guitar. Both effects are desirable, although it is important that the guitarist be aware of the distinction between the two. Guitarists should always remain cognizant of this aspect of their playing in order to ultimately serve the music as best as possible, thus displaying intent in their choices.

Equally important in the realm of timbre is the palate of tone qualities with which the guitarist can explore and develop. The sonic result is a complex mixture of many

factors that ultimately produce the tone of the guitar. For instance, the guitar itself as an instrument, such as its shape, the quality of the wood, string gauge, and tone settings when electrified, impact strongly the ensemble's overall individual "sound." In addition, the amplifier, whether solid-state or tube, large or small, and EQ settings, also factors into the overall sound. Various amplifiers and effects pedals can have a tremendous influence on the tone produced by the guitar.

Perhaps the most important factor, however, is the guitarists' touch on the instrument. Where the "picking" hand strikes the notes will determine much of the tone. Picking the notes towards the middle to neck area produces a warm tone whereas picking towards the bridge results in a harsh, "nasal" tone. The "picking" hand in conjunction with the "fretting" hand determine a great deal about the tone being produced. Through the use of "hammer-ons" and "pull-offs," with fingers in the "fretting" hand, the guitarist can achieve a legato sound, which emulates the timbre of a saxophone.

That being stated, it is important that guitarists remain aware of their individual tone as it relates to the overall trio sound. Many fine examples of the use of a variety of tone qualities as well as a wide spectrum of timbres of tone operating successfully within a trio setting can be found. Barney Kessel<sup>51</sup> and Kenny Burrell,<sup>52</sup> for instance, produce warm, "woody" tones from their guitars that are quite dry sounding due to the minimalistic approach. Their set-up simply consists of a guitar plugged into an amplifier with a natural, unaffected sound. Jim Hall<sup>53</sup> and Pat Metheny<sup>54</sup> are coming from the same

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<sup>51</sup> Ray Brown / Barney Kessel/ Shelly Manne, *The Poll Winners*, Fantasy 1562, 1957 (1993), CD.

<sup>52</sup> Kenny Burrell / Kenny Burrell Trio, *A Night at the Vanguard*, Chess 9316, 1959 (1990), CD.

<sup>53</sup> Jim Hall, *Jim Hall Live!*, Verve 0654282, 1975 (2003), CD.

<sup>54</sup> Pat Metheny, *Question and Answer*, Geffen E4242932, 1989 (1990), CD.

tradition yet their tone is slightly darker, whilst still remaining warm and “woody.” John Scofield<sup>55</sup> and Bill Frisell<sup>56</sup> favor a sharper, “punchier” tone to the previous names mentioned. Frisell also utilizes effects such as reverb and delay to convey a wet, lush aesthetic. All approaches have proven to be successful and it is up to each guitarist to decide how their tone fits best with the sound of the trio.

Fortunately, in a trio setting, there is less instrumentation to compete with or that potentially clashes with the guitar. As a result, the guitarist enjoys the highest degree of freedom to explore their range of pitch and tone within the trio setting. However, an awareness of the effect their choices have on the collective in these areas will allow for quick adjustments to best suit the situation at hand.

### **Dynamics**

Dynamics is defined as the varying levels of volume and range of sound in different parts of a musical performance. Volume can be controlled on the guitar via the electrified signal. This encompasses the guitar itself with its volume setting, as well as the amplifier volume setting, which the guitar is plugged into, and also perhaps an expression pedal control, which is being seen more and more from guitarists in jazz combo settings. The other method of controlling volume on the guitar is acoustically, through the attack of the “picking” hand.

Jazz guitarists with less performance experience often find it difficult to gauge the appropriate volume level required in a trio situation. A good tactic to overcome this obstacle is to ask oneself, “can I hear everything the other musicians are playing as well

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<sup>55</sup> John Scofield, *Shinola*, Enja R2-79656, 1981 (1991), CD.

<sup>56</sup> Bill Frisell, *East / West*, Nonesuch 7559798632, 2005, CD.

as I can hear myself?” This tactic can do more for the guitarist than simply balancing out the entire volume of the ensemble. It can allow them to think outside of their own playing, which will result in better musical decisions. The trio presents a great opportunity for the guitarist to focus on what the bass player is offering rhythmically and harmonically in their role, as there are no other instrument frequencies competing for sonic space.

Jazz guitarists should work on being aware of the electrified output of their signal and furthermore, practice adjusting or “riding” their volume levels in real time.

Developing techniques to quickly adjust the volume knob on the guitar, or from the volume expression pedal via their feet, can add much to the overall presentation of musical ideas from the ensemble. This will result in breaking away from the monotony of a one-dimensional dynamic level and help shape the music to be more effective.

Equally as important is the guitarist’s ability to adjust the touch on the instrument. This has a lot to do with the “picking” hand. Whether the guitarist uses a pick or fingers, or even both, awareness on the effect that their picking has on the dynamics of the music will allow them to control their ideas to maximum effect. Guitarists should experiment with the dynamic range of their picking, from very soft to as hard as possible, to decide what may be most appropriate for the given moment in a performance situation.

Changing the dynamics of their picking, even throughout one musical phrase, can have a profound effect on the presentation of a musical idea and can influence how the rest of the ensemble reacts dynamically. These subtle details are more exposed in a trio setting and focusing on them will give the guitarist a solid foundation that will translate when dealing with other larger ensemble configurations.

## Texture

In this context texture is defined as the tactile quality of the surface of a work of art: density. In terms of music, we can refer to this “surface” as being the notes produced by the musicians that create layers of sound and ultimately amalgamate in an overall texture. The ways in which the guitarist can affect texture in music is by choosing to play monophonically (one note at a time) or polyphonically (more than one note at a time, for instance a chord). Not playing at all or considering the use of space within musical phrases are also choices that contributes to texture.

Within a trio, the guitarist has a great amount of responsibility to the overall textural quality of the band. Firstly, let us consider texture in a vertical sense, meaning the layers of musical voices. The guitarist can create a sparse sound through the use of single note lines. Seeing as though typically the role of the bass calls for linear movement only, here is a situation where there are only two melodic lines present. Of course the drums contribute to the texture too but it would seem that there is quite an amount of harmonic space in the music, which can be a desirable effect. The beauty of the guitar, however, is that there is the potential to play two or more notes at once also. This gives the guitarist a lot of freedom to explore a wide range of textures that can really shape the overall sound of the trio. A fine example of this can be heard beautifully on a trio recording by Jim Hall, particularly on the song “I Hear a Rhapsody.”<sup>57</sup> Hall effortlessly goes between single-note line ideas and dense chord voicings in his solo. He demonstrates the great effect that the two different approaches have when contrasted. For instance the chordal approach tends to add a great building quality of intensity in the

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<sup>57</sup> Jim Hall, “I Hear a Rhapsody” from *Jim Hall Live!*, Verve 0654282, 1975 (2003), CD.

music, yet he blends them so seamlessly. Grant Green utilizes the single-note line approach exclusively throughout his trio recording, *Standards*,<sup>58</sup> only playing chords when comping for bass solos. This does not detract from the music, however, as his playing is filled with such clarity of melodic ideas, a strong rhythmic sense, and good feeling. Guitarists would benefit from considering the impact that they have in choosing between these two approaches and how they can subsequently affect the vertical texture produced by the collective.

Jazz guitarists can also influence the texture within a trio through the use of space within their musical phrasing. This is more a form of horizontal texture as opposed to the vertical texture previously discussed. Horizontal texture can be gauged by activity level, meaning how many notes are played within a given amount of space. This has a great effect on the density of the ensemble's sound. Pat Metheny, in his musical phrasing, displays a very dense textural environment on "All The Things You Are"<sup>59</sup> from his trio album, *Question and Answer*. Streams of eighth-note lines and repetitive rhythmic linear motives played by Metheny results in a highly active sound, thus contributing to a thick overall texture created by the trio. However, on the earlier landmark trio record, *Bright Sized Life*,<sup>60</sup> Metheny himself reflects on a less dense aesthetic during this period, "Early on, it was always as much about space and silence and the spaces in between the notes as

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<sup>58</sup> Grant Green, *Standards*, Blue Note 8212842, 1961 (1998), CD.

<sup>59</sup> Pat Metheny, "All The Things You Are" from *Question and Answer*, Geffen E4242932, 1989 (1990), CD.

<sup>60</sup> Pat Metheny, *Bright Sized Life*, ECM 827133-2, 1976 (1991), CD.

the notes themselves. But as time went on, I really wanted to try for a sound where there wouldn't even be one speck of white left on the canvas."<sup>61</sup>

Bill Frisell also demonstrates a less dense approach through his spacious musical phrasing on a trio rendition of "The Days of Wine and Roses"<sup>62</sup> from the album, *East/West*. In controlling the amount of space the guitarist occupies in the music, the trio can actually sound larger with less activity. Each instrument finds its own particular spot in the frequency range and the result is a big and focused group dynamic.

It is important that the guitarist be aware of the effect that their activity level has on the overall texture of the music. When they are able to control this aspect of their playing, it will demonstrate maturity and result in a developed sense of musicianship by the guitarist.

### **Communication and Interaction**

Communication, in this study, relates to the jazz guitarist's ability to musically convey ideas to the other band members. This ties in closely with the concept of interaction, as the musical ideas conveyed often have a reciprocal effect in jazz. Much of the appeal of jazz is the freedom allowed to "bounce" ideas off of one another, within a set musical structure, in order to establish a common outlook. Guitarists should be aware of the focus required to achieve this at a high level in order to progress in their development.

Within a trio setting the guitarist is expected to initiate much of the communication and interaction. Seeing as though the guitar is the lead voice, there is no

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<sup>61</sup> Michael Fagien, "The Pat Metheny Interview," *Jazziz* 19, no. 3 (March 2002): 36.

<sup>62</sup> Bill Frisell, "The Days of Wine and Roses" from *East / West*, Nonesuch 7559798632, 2005, CD.

call to react to information from another melodic instrument. This is aside from perhaps when the bass player takes a solo, in which case harmonic content played whilst comping should reflect the direction of the solo. Therefore, as a starting point, focus can begin on a rhythmic level of interaction, particularly with the drums. Use of syncopation as well as chordal interjections can add a lot in establishing the territory to explore the limits of interaction within the group.

Early incarnations of the guitar trio tradition, for example from Barney Kessell in *The Poll Winners*,<sup>63</sup> display interaction occurring within fairly strict confines of the instruments' defined rolls. Consequently, Kessell communicates his ideas clearly as the main voice, with minimal interaction from the bass and drums aside from subtle rhythmic hints. His chordal interjections quite often act as punctuated answers to his linear, melodic statements. The nature of the trio, in that there is a void with no additional comping instrument present, makes it possible in this instance for guitarists to interact with themselves as if there was an imaginary accompanist reacting to their melodic ideas.

Jim Hall expanded on this tradition by encouraging a more interactive role from the bass player and drummer. At times it seems that the guitar and the bass both assume the roll of the lead voice in tandem, as heard on "Scrapple From the Apple."<sup>64</sup> This approach was inspired by the concept of interaction on display in Bill Evans' trio in the late 1950's/ early 1960's. Examples include the albums, *Portrait in Jazz*,<sup>65</sup> *Explorations*,<sup>66</sup> *Sunday at the Village Vanguard*,<sup>67</sup> and *Waltz for Debby*.<sup>68</sup> This high

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<sup>63</sup> Ray Brown / Barney Kessel/ Shelly Manne, *The Poll Winners*, Fantasy 1562, 1957 (1993), CD.

<sup>64</sup> Jim Hall, "Scrapple From the Apple" from *Jim Hall Live!*, Verve 0654282, 1975 (2003), CD.

<sup>65</sup> Bill Evans / Bill Evans Trio, *Portrait In Jazz*, Fantasy 0882, 1959 (1990), CD.

<sup>66</sup> Bill Evans / Bill Evans Trio, *Explorations*, Fantasy 0372, 1961 (1990), CD.

degree of interaction has subsequently set a benchmark for guitar trio possibilities. Jazz guitarists should therefore be mindful of the clarity with which they communicate their musical ideas in order to appropriately react to the reciprocal actions of the bass player and drummer. The trio setting offers a great opportunity to establish a solid musical connection with the bass and drums, which will form the basis and preparation necessary for ensemble augmentation into quartets and quintets.

### **Additional Considerations – The Organ Trio**

The classic organ trio configuration must be mentioned as it is such an iconic “sound” that has greatly contributed to the lineage of jazz guitar groups. The instrumentation here consisting of guitar, organ, and drums, the organ trio offers many similarities to that of the classic guitar trio, yet with a major difference. The organ player assumes the role of the bass player and the piano player. The harmonic connection between the bass and comping role is more inclined to be in synch, which results in a suitably unified foundation and thick texture from the accompaniment.

Due to the fact that an accompanying instrument is now present, the role of the guitar is clearly defined, with some liberties attached. The guitarist can switch between the lead melodic voice and comping instrument. When playing melodies or solos it will sound more cohesive within the ensemble to play in a linear fashion, perhaps with some use of double stops, as the organ will cover the majority of the harmonic territory. However, when the organ plays melody or solos, space in the middle register opens up

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<sup>67</sup> Bill Evans Trio, *Sunday at the Village Vanguard*, Fantasy 1402, 1061 (1990), CD.

<sup>68</sup> Bill Evans / Bill Evans Trio, *Waltz For Debby*, Fantasy OJC20 2102, 1961 (1998), CD.

giving the guitarist room to assume the accompanying role. Therefore a thick texture can be achieved at all times within this trio configuration.

Organist, Jimmy Smith popularized this trio configuration, beginning with recordings in 1956. A fine example is from 1965<sup>69</sup> that features guitarist, Kenny Burrell.

Dan Skea writes in his journal article,

Smith's early Blue Note records, combining his innovative playing style with Van Gelder's improved recording methods, made a significant impact in the jazz world, spawning a generation of Smith disciples and making the organ trio one of the most popular instrumental configurations in jazz for the next fifteen years.

In fact, this configuration's popularity has continued beyond the next fifteen years, for example through Peter Bernstein,<sup>70</sup> John Abercrombie<sup>71</sup> and many others.

Abercrombie, in an interview, gives insight into the reason behind the longevity of this popular configuration. "[There's] something about the sonority of the electric guitar and the Hammond organ. It seems like whoever invented the guitar was an organ player or vice versa as the instruments sound so well together."<sup>72</sup> Indeed the sound of the guitar and organ compliment each other very well. The guitarist is then responsible to make suitable decisions in order to get the most out of the sonic possibilities inherent to an organ trio.

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<sup>69</sup> Jimmy Smith, *Organ Grinder Swing*, Verve 5438312, 1965 (1991), CD.

<sup>70</sup> Peter Bernstein, *Earth Tones*, Criss Cross Criss 1151CD, 1998, CD.

<sup>71</sup> John Abercrombie, *While We're Young*, ECM 517352, 1992, CD.

<sup>72</sup> Frank-John Hadley, "This Ain't No Chicken Shack: John Abercrombie," *Down Beat* 61, no. 11 (November 1994): 30.

## CHAPTER 6

### THE DEMANDS AND EXPECTATIONS ON THE GUITARIST IN ADAPTING TO THE JAZZ QUARTET

Establishing a rapport with the bass player and drummer in the trio configuration will lay the foundation for guitarists when the addition of other instruments occurs. The addition of a piano player, to form a jazz quartet, changes the sonic capabilities and group dynamic. Commonly, the guitarist becomes the sole frontline instrument, leading like a horn player traditionally would. Whereas, in the trio, the guitarist has ultimate freedom to explore rhythmic, melodic and harmonic terrain with no hindrance, the quartet has certain restrictions. The guitarist need now be mindful of the musical information being provided by the piano player in order to have a cohesive group dynamic.

Historically, when jazz guitar players began gaining more attention for their ability on the instrument, they would often be heard in configurations consisting of piano, bass, and drums. This showcased them as serious contenders in jazz and highlighted, particularly, soloistic prowess that called for harmonic support and accompaniment by a pianist.

The jazz quartet, of guitar, piano, bass, and drums, is essentially what forms the foundation of a big band “rhythm section,” as seen throughout the history of jazz. This is important to realize, as knowledge in operating successfully in the role of the rhythm section will prepare the guitarist for the more focused, small group quartet approach. The big band rhythm section’s main focus is to be an accompanying unit to the rest of the large ensemble. In learning to “lock-in” rhythmically and harmonically with the other members of the rhythm section in their unified support role, guitarists gains a deeper

understanding of where they fit in sonically. The guitar style in the big band rhythm section of the Count Basie Orchestra<sup>73</sup> is an example of a traditional approach, in which the guitar is primarily a percussion instrument and its role is to support and “fatten up” the collective sound of the bass and drums. There is more freedom allowed in modern big bands and the guitarist should take advantage of being in close proximity to a piano player. Guitarists can pay attention to the role that the pianist assumes, being the dominant accompanying harmonic support, and find ways to adjust around that accordingly.

It is necessary that the guitarist becomes aware of the implications inherent, much more in the presence of a piano player, in the small group configuration of a quartet. Adjustments are necessary and are relatable to the aforementioned elements such as Timbre, Dynamics, Texture, Communication and Interaction.

### **Timbre**

With regards to the jazz quartet, the most amount of consideration in timbre must be given to the guitar and piano’s sonic blend and subsequent, unified quality of sound that is produced. Tone quality and intonation are areas to be considered by the guitarist in finding the most suitable blend with the piano. Thought must also be given to the fact that the guitar and piano are both percussive instruments. Therefore, the potential for timbral clashes could occur. Awareness of this will help the guitarist make desirable musical decisions that have an effect on the overall timbre of the quartet.

Brian Zimmerman, in his article focusing on the role of guitarists in jazz ensembles, makes a very astute observation,

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<sup>73</sup> Count Basie, *Live at the Sands (Before Frank)*, Reprise / Warner Bros. 45946, 1966 (1998), CD.

Jazz guitar players often play chords by plucking the strings with the right hand, either using a pick and three fingers or the thumb and three fingers. This technique produces a timbre that is quite similar to the piano. If the guitar player strums the chords, using a pick, however, then the timbre is different enough that you will hear the guitar more distinctly.

In producing a timbre that is similar to the piano, guitarists may choose to apply the technique of plucking individual strings with multiple fingers to create a subtle presence within the group. Whereas playing chords with a pick would be used for moments where the guitarist needs to be more present and out front. Guitarists would be encouraged to gain proficiency in both these methods of producing chords, in order to suit the given moment throughout a performance.

Wes Montgomery, in his unique method of picking the strings with the use of his thumb alone, produced such a “round” yet “punchy” tone without a pointed, “pick-like” attack. This perhaps contributed to the success of his tonal blend with the piano and why he recorded the majority of his body of work with the presence of a pianist in his groups. However, many guitarists have proven to be successful with tonal blending in the quartet through the use of a pick. Heard on his live record, *Joy Spring*,<sup>74</sup> Joe Pass blends quite comfortably with the piano, through his warm tone setting and un-abrasive picking attack. This warm sound also makes it possible for Pass to comp throughout the piano solos, which he does throughout the entire recording.

A modern formation of the jazz quartet can be heard on pianist Aaron Parks’ album, *Invisible Cinema*.<sup>75</sup> Here, guitarist Mike Moreno is the sideman and employs noteworthy choices in tone to suit the music and blend with the piano. The guitar’s

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<sup>74</sup> Joe Pass, *Joy Spring*, Blue Note 8352222, 1964 (1996), CD.

<sup>75</sup> Aaron Parks, *Invisible Cinema*, Blue Note / Angel Records 5090112, 2008, CD.

midrange tone quality sounds very similar to that of Parks' piano, contributing to a suitable blend. Also, Moreno's legato approach and soft picking make his melodies and single-note ideas sympathetic with unison lines and lush harmony produced by the piano. Moreno also applies the use of delay and tremolo-like effects, particularly heard on "Peaceful Warrior,"<sup>76</sup> to serve the progressive nature of the music by creating a sense of ambience that supports the piano when in principal focus.

An important consideration must be given to matters of intonation that affect the overall timbral blend, particularly between the guitar and the piano, within the quartet. The guitarist should pay specific attention to playing in tune with the piano to avoid frequency disruption, as it is more noticeable in relation to the piano as opposed to keyboard instruments such as the B3 Organ, Fender Rhodes, or Wurlitzer, for example. The guitar, an electrified instrument in this case, and the piano, an acoustic instrument, means that being out of tune with the piano creates an out-of phase, "chorus-like" effect that diminishes the purity of the individual instruments and thus the overall timbre of the ensemble. Guitarists should certainly be sure they accurately tune their guitar, but also be cognizant of their technique in relation to intonation. Vibrato techniques as well as the amount of pressure applied to strings, via the fingers on the "fretting" hand, all affect matters of intonation.

### **Dynamics**

Volume is a consideration for jazz guitarists, in balancing appropriately with the other instruments in a jazz quartet. The same approach to control dynamics, as discussed in regards to the trio, should be considered for the quartet. The difference now is that the

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<sup>76</sup> Aaron Parks, "Peaceful Warrior" from *Invisible Cinema*, Blue Note / Angel Records 5090112, 2008, CD.

guitarist be mindful of the piano's presence in the group. As the guitar is an electrified instrument, guitarists should be aware of where their sound sits in the live mix of this configuration, which is primarily made up of acoustic instruments.

When leading, in the front line position of the quartet, the guitarist will want to set their volume so that it sits slightly above that of the accompanying instruments. If the guitarist chooses to comp throughout a piano solo, they should immediately adjust their volume or picking attack, or both, to be slightly under the volume of the soloist. Joe Pass' volume level during his comping of piano solos throughout *Joy Spring*<sup>77</sup> is a fine example of this approach.

In conjunction with the timbre aspects of Moreno's playing on *Invisible Cinema*,<sup>78</sup> his sense of dynamics has a lot to do with the success of the ambient contributions to the music. His playing is often felt, not heard, and this is attributed to the fact that his dynamic level is below the others. Another contributing factor to the ambience created is the use of volume swells that he produces. This adjustment of the dynamic level of notes with long duration adds a lot to the overall sound of the quartet. Seeing as though the guitar is the only instrument that can produce this effect within this configuration, the contrast in sounds creates an interesting group dynamic.

### **Texture**

The inclusion of a pianist in the jazz quartet means that there is now a wide range of textures available. The aforementioned considerations such as horizontal and vertical texture can be applied to this configuration, and furthermore, the guitarist has a

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<sup>77</sup> Joe Pass, *Joy Spring*, Blue Note 8352222, 1964 (1996), CD.

<sup>78</sup> Aaron Parks, *Invisible Cinema*, Blue Note / Angel Records 5090112, 2008, CD.

responsibility to make conscious decisions in regards to controlling the overall texture of the group. This will contribute to a unified group sound as a result.

As a starting point, the guitarist should be capable of playing purely in a linear manner, that being one note at a time with no chordal information. This will provide the best clarity in defining the roles of the other individuals, thus resulting in a clear texture that includes rhythm, bass, harmony, and melody. The guitarist, in this case, assumes the role of a front line instrument and so they should “lead” accordingly. Wes Montgomery was a master at this as well as taking the potential for a variety of textures to greater heights. Wes developed a signature “three level” structure in his soloing approach whereby he would begin with single note lines. He would then play lines in octaves, which served to thicken the texture of the single note lines. Finally, he would harmonize his lines, playing block-chords. This approach is clearly demonstrated on a rendition of the standard, “Gone With the Wind.”<sup>79</sup> All the while, the pianist Tommy Flanagan accompanies without any semblance of clashing, as the texture becomes progressively dense throughout.

Guitarists must initially be careful when deciding to play chords when a pianist is covering that role. When the guitarist chooses to do this, it commonly serves the purpose of being a rhythmic gesture. Therefore, their presence can be acknowledged to greater effect with few notes in their voicings as opposed to dense voicings with lots of upper extensions that will potentially clash with piano voicings. Any voicing comprised of purely guide tones, for example thirds, sixths, and sevenths, are safe options to begin with.

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<sup>79</sup> Wes Montgomery, “Gone With the Wind” from *The Incredible Jazz Guitar of Wes Montgomery*, Riverside Records 1866362, 1960 (1991), CD.

Obviously, once the guitarist feels more comfortable and familiar with the other musicians' playing, a greater amount of freedom is enjoyed.

The controlled use of space by the guitarist has a large impact on the overall texture of the quartet. If the guitarist is consistently present, the full effect of the quartet is being demonstrated. If the guitarist "lays out" for a period of time, for instance in another member's solo, immediately the group has been reduced to a piano trio configuration for that duration of time.

Guitarist Lionel Loueke was able to experience a less strictly defined, more spontaneous aspect of the use of space when he played in a quartet led by legendary pianist, Herbie Hancock. Loueke describes his approach in this group,

I try to hear what I can do and where I can fit in. It's always a decision I make in the moment, not before or after. Once I feel it, I have to play it. When I don't feel it, I just leave space. It's a challenge. Herbie knows how hard it is for both piano and guitar to play harmony at the same time. I love doing that with him because he gives me room, some space to grab.

This is particularly relevant for situations where the guitarist is not the leader of the group, but it also highlights the awareness level required for a guitarist to be active within the quartet, yet demonstrate restraint in order to serve the music as best as possible.

### **Communication and Interaction**

Tying in with the textural effect of the guitarist's activity level within the quartet, this can also be addressed in terms of musical communication and interaction. Lionel Loueke elaborates further, in the discussion of his role within Herbie Hancock's quartet, "If I feel like I'm getting in somebody's way or there's no need for me to play, I'll

stop.”<sup>80</sup> In “laying out,” the guitarist allows a moment for their ears to adjust and be ready to play when the moment calls for it.

When playing melodies and solos, guitarists may initiate much of the interaction, leading through their musical phrases and clear indication of rhythm and harmony within their melodic lines. On the other hand, if a guitar player is playing a secondary role to the piano within a quartet, they may still consider being musically present as opposed to “laying out” completely. Wes Montgomery demonstrates this to great effect, as he comps for pianist Wynton Kelly’s presentation of the melody on the standard, “If You Could See Me Now,”<sup>81</sup> from the album, *Smokin’ at the Half Note*. Kelly supports his right hand melody with his left hand comping, creating all of the melodic and harmonic information necessary, yet Wes is able to tastefully play underneath, with chord interjections and brief fills in the phrase gaps. On the track “No Blues,”<sup>82</sup> Wes is able to interact again throughout the piano solo by playing rhythmic octave figures, reminiscent of “background figures” in a big band chart. These gestures are so clear that the rest of the band members immediately respond, creating an exciting level of interaction.

An important aspect regarding interaction within the quartet is rhythm. The guitarist should pay close attention to “locking in” rhythmically with the other members, in all aspects of their playing. As there are now four individuals in the group, hence a larger margin of area for rhythmic discrepancies, effort should be made to find common

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<sup>80</sup> Mark Small, “Out of Africa,” *Berklee Today* 20, no. 3 (Winter 2009): 12.

<sup>81</sup> Wynton Kelly Trio / Wes Montgomery, “If You Could See Me Now” from *Smokin’ at the Half Note*, Verve AA8295782, 1965 (1995), CD.

<sup>82</sup> Wynton Kelly Trio / Wes Montgomery, “No Blues” from *Smokin’ at the Half Note*, Verve AA8295782, 1965 (1995), CD.

ground in the interpretation of the time and available subdivisions appropriate to a given piece of music.

### **Additional Considerations – Alternate Quartet Configuration**

Another noteworthy quartet configuration is that which comprises of guitar, horn (for example, the saxophone), bass, and drums. This is certainly one of the more popular configurations, as seen through many successful groups, past and present. Guitarists often prefer this configuration to others because of the freedom allowed. Essentially, the guitarist is the sole accompanying instrument, which allows them to explore a pianistic approach in their comping and thus contributing to the support role. When it comes time to solo, all of the aspects that have been discussed in regards to the jazz trio become apparent again.

Jim Hall was one of the great contributors to this particular configuration. There are many fine examples of his approach to playing in the quartet that guitarists would gain a lot from listening to. An historic recording of tenor saxophone titan, Sonny Rollins', *The Bridge*,<sup>83</sup> showcases the guitar's validity within a jazz quartet through Hall's sensitivity in his use of all the elements of Timbre, Dynamics, Texture, Communication and Interaction. Heard on the title track, "The Bridge,"<sup>84</sup> Hall is dynamically right up front with Rollins in the unison and counter melody lines, playing with a warm tone and legato articulation that suitably blends with the leader, Rollins. When his role shifts to accompaniment, he immediately adjusts to sit dynamically under the saxophone, playing unobtrusive yet "swinging" comping patterns with a combination

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<sup>83</sup> Sonny Rollins, *The Bridge*, RCA Victor 96252, 1962 (2000), CD.

<sup>84</sup> Sonny Rollins, "The Bridge" from *The Bridge*, RCA Victor 96252, 1962 (2000), CD.

of textures to his chord voicings, from double stops to dense block-chords. He would even play single note melodic lines, as opposed to fully voiced chords, and this approach has been utilized ever since.

Guitarist John Abercrombie, when in an interview was asked about Jim Hall's influence on his playing with regard to accompanying a horn player, responded,

You don't really practice it-you just sort of do it. I find that most horn players like it, unless you get too busy behind them and start actually playing another solo. I always try to be discreet and use contrapuntal ideas in spaces where they aren't playing. When there's no piano or other harmonic instrument in that space, it gives me the freedom to do that. That's what Jim took advantage of in the quartet with Sonny. He utilized guide-tone lines, contrasting melodies, and chord voicings to create a whole palette within the band and underneath the soloist.

The comfortable musical environment that Jim Hall was able to create in his comping within Sonny Rollins' quartet proved successful. As a result, he was chosen as a sideman of other quartets led by, for example alto saxophonist, Paul Desmond,<sup>85</sup> as well as trumpet player, Art Farmer.<sup>86</sup> Recordings by these groups serve as great resources for guitarists looking for creative yet functional approaches to accompanying horn players within a quartet.

John Scofield certainly demonstrates a creative approach in his quartet with tenor saxophonist, Joe Lovano. Firstly, Scofield's "sharp" and "hard-edged" tone provides just enough of a contrast with Lovano's tenor saxophone that the blend is sonically pleasing. Therefore, Scofield often plays unison melody lines, as well as single note harmony lines, to take full advantage of the sonic blend, which ultimately creates a sparse harmonic texture in the group sound. This approach can be heard throughout the entirety of the

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<sup>85</sup> Paul Desmond, *Take Ten*, Sony Music Distribution / Sony BMG 748612, 1963, CD.

<sup>86</sup> Art Farmer, *Interaction*, Warner Bros. / Warner Music 7411571 1963 (2012), CD.

album *Meant To Be*.<sup>87</sup> When he comps during the saxophone solos, Scofield often uses the Jim Hall approach of small chord voicings consisting of few notes that sit below the horn in volume level, whilst always providing rhythmic support. He also occasionally applies the use of volume swells with dissonant chords, for example on the track, “Big Fan,”<sup>88</sup> that adds an interesting effect to the overall texture and group dynamic.

Continuing with the guitar’s role in the quartet, guitarist Kurt Rosenwinkel displays all of the traits previously discussed throughout his quartet album, *The Next Step*.<sup>89</sup> However, on the track, “Filters,”<sup>90</sup> instead of either comping or “laying out” in the saxophone solo, he plays single note lines too, which eventuates in a dual solo. This creates an open harmonic musical environment that is reminiscent of a quartet configuration with two horns in the frontline and the absence of an accompanying instrument, for instance on alto saxophonist, Lee Konitz’s recording, *Live at the Half Note*.<sup>91</sup> Here, pianist Bill Evans lays out for most of the record, with the exception of his solos and some occasional accompanying gestures throughout.

With the evidence of examples noted here, the guitarist enjoys a great deal of freedom to explore the various approaches, even in spite of the apparent restrictions due to the augmented instrumentation, in this particular quartet configuration. If guitarists are aware of the effect they have with their decision making in regards to the elements of Timbre, Dynamics, Texture, Communication and Interaction, a clear direction can be

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<sup>87</sup> The John Scofield Quartet, *Meant to Be*, Blue Note CDP 795 419 2, 1990 (1991), CD.

<sup>88</sup> The John Scofield Quartet, “Big Fan” from *Meant to Be*, Blue Note CDP 795 419 2, 1990 (1991), CD.

<sup>89</sup> Kurt Rosenwinkel, *The Next Step*, Verve / Polygram E5491622, 2001, CD.

<sup>90</sup> Kurt Rosenwinkel, “Filters” from *The Next Step*, Verve / Polygram E5491622, 2001, CD.

<sup>91</sup> Lee Konitz, *Live at the Half Note*, Verve 5216592 1959 (1994), CD.

conveyed in the music. This will effect the presentation of the given quartet's overall group sound.

## CHAPTER 7

### THE DEMANDS AND EXPECTATIONS ON THE GUITARIST IN ADAPTING TO THE JAZZ QUINTET

The jazz quintet, consisting of guitar, saxophone, piano, bass, and drums, has secured its place in the lineage of important ensemble configurations throughout jazz history. An early example of the classic quintet is Charlie Parker's quintet, as heard on *Jazz At Massey Hall*.<sup>92</sup> It appears that in recent years the guitarist seems to have replaced the trumpet in the classic jazz quintet configuration. Due to the prominence of more and more jazz guitarists representing strong musical voices in jazz, they were often selected to be a counterpart to the saxophonist in the front-line. An added advantage is the fact that they can be utilized within the rhythm section role as well.

The guitarist's inclusion within a jazz quintet indicates that the role has, again, shifted slightly from the previously discussed quartet configuration, and introduces inherent restrictions. In the quintet, it is recommended that guitarists immediately assume the role of the second front-line instrument, as if they were another horn. There are liberties however, in that there is also the potential to play as a rhythm section instrument. Both options will require care, on the guitarist's part, in decision making so as to avoid clashes.

In highly improvised circumstances, that is, situations where not a lot of specific parts have been designated amongst the group, the guitarist would do well to assume a less assertive role at the start. This tactic will allow the guitarist to listen closely to the

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<sup>92</sup> Dizzy Gillespie / Charles Mingus / Charlie Parker / Bud Powell / The Quintet / Max Roach, *Jazz At Massey Hall*, Fantasy 0442, 1953 (1990), CD.

other members of the ensemble, thus increasing the chance to find the most appropriate moment to contribute tastefully to the music.

In his article, “Fitting In,”<sup>93</sup> Eric Hofbauer listed some “Key Points” for jazz guitar students, as tactics to avoid clashing with the other instruments, in particular the rhythm section, in a jazz ensemble. For example,

- *Change comping patterns to fit each section. Make sure the comping patterns work with what is happening with the bass and piano.*
- *Consider laying out for certain sections as a textural contrast, or trade off comping with piano, especially in solo sections.*
- *Use smaller (A string and D string) 4-note voicings to blend with the ensemble.*
- *Avoid using the low E string, staying out of the range of the bass line.*
- *Use 3-note (3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>) or octave (2-note) voicings for the blues, up-tempo pieces, or dense ensemble sections (shout choruses, sax soli etc).*

These tactics are intended for guitarists functioning in large jazz ensembles, for example, the big band. However, the advice given can be translated appropriately into the larger small group configuration of the jazz quintet. In continuing to consider the elements of Timbre, Dynamics, Texture, Communication and Interaction, guitarists can quickly find their place within the more restrictive confines of the quintet.

### **Timbre**

Regarding timbre, the guitarist must now place most of the importance towards blending with the saxophone, which is the front-line counterpart, as well as the piano, the primary accompanying instrument. Choosing a suitable tone, as well as being aware of intonation, will serve to aid in blending with the overall sound of the given quintet. These

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<sup>93</sup> Eric Hofbauer, "Fitting In: Defining a Role for the Guitarist in the Developing School Jazz Ensemble." *Massachusetts Music News* 61, no. 4 (Summer 2013): 35.

areas are highly exposed due to the augmentation of instrumentation in forming the jazz quintet.

Early formations of the jazz quintet display guitarists producing classic, “warm,” “woody” tones that prove to be a desirable blend with the saxophone and piano alike. Unobtrusive, yet present, this sort of tone can be heard by Kenny Burrell, on the album, *Kenny Burrell & John Coltrane*,<sup>94</sup> Wes Montgomery, on the live album, *Full House*,<sup>95</sup> and by Jim Hall, on Bill Evans’, *The “Interplay” Sessions*.<sup>96</sup>

In more recent quintet formations we can hear more of a “mid-range” tone quality presented by guitarists, for example, John Scofield on his album, *Hand Jive*,<sup>97</sup> and Kurt Rosenwinkel on saxophonist Chris Cheek’s album, *Vine*,<sup>98</sup> as well as his own album, *Deep Song*.<sup>99</sup> Here the guitarists also produce slightly affected tones, through the use of effects pedals and processing. These are advances on the classic sound of the jazz guitar and have proven to blend suitably with the other instruments in the quintet whilst also individualizing the sound of the guitar amongst the group. Thus, the contrasting tone produced by the guitar results in more presence within the ensemble, which serves to enhance individuality in an overall group sound.

Intonation becomes very important within the jazz quintet. Guitarists need be aware that they must play with an ear towards the tendencies of the other instruments in

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<sup>94</sup> Kenny Burrell / John Coltrane, *Kenny Burrell & John Coltrane*, OJC OJCCD-300-2, 1963 (1992), CD.

<sup>95</sup> Wes Montgomery, *Full House*, Riverside Records VICJ-60028, 1962 (2007), CD.

<sup>96</sup> Bill Evans, *The “Interplay” Sessions*, Fantasy / Milestone Records 7247066, 1962 (2007), CD.

<sup>97</sup> John Scofield, *Hand Jive*, Blue Note CDP 8273272, 1993 (1994), CD.

<sup>98</sup> Chris Cheek, *Vine*, Fresh Sound New Talent 86, 2000, CD.

<sup>99</sup> Kurt Rosenwinkel, *Deep Song*, Universal Distribution UCCV-1067, 2005, CD.

the group, particularly the saxophone and piano, as the range of notes produced by the guitar will often be in a similar register to these instruments. As the piano's intonation will be fixed with set pitches, the guitarist should first look to be as in tune as possible with it. Flexibility, however, is required as the saxophone is as malleable in terms of intonation as the guitar. The guitarist should be able to shift their focus between the two instruments in adjusting their intonation, in the moment, to best contribute to the overall timbre of the ensemble.

### **Dynamics**

An added level of attention to dynamics is called upon for the guitarist in order to operate successfully within the jazz quintet. The addition of saxophone to the previously discussed quartet configuration means that the guitarist will need to more frequently adjust their volume levels in order to balance appropriately, thus serving the music to full effect. Due to the fact that there are more musicians present, smaller increments in the range of volume levels can have a drastic effect on the overall balance of the group.

When playing melody passages in the front-line, the guitarist will want to be of a relatively equal volume level to the saxophone. When playing within the rhythm section, be it chords, rhythmic single-note parts, or bass figures, the guitarist will need to gauge how present they must be to best serve the music. Previously discussed tactics such as "riding" the volume levels will be especially crucial so as to avoid imbalance of volume levels in the live mix.

### **Texture**

Inherent are a large array of textural possibilities within the jazz quintet. At its sparsest, certain players can lay out, temporarily reducing the size of the group. At its

most dense, all five members can be playing at once, perhaps with guitar and piano both covering a rich harmonic territory in their chordal playing. Being aware of the various options available will assist the guitarist in making effective decisions that contribute to the overall texture of the group.

Throughout the album, *Kenny Burrell & John Coltrane*,<sup>100</sup> Burrell assumes the role of the second front-line instrument almost exclusively, which means laying out a lot of the time. He plays melodies and solos in a single-note fashion and, aside from occasional “background” figures, leaves the comping to pianist, Tommy Flanagan. Wes Montgomery also demonstrates this approach throughout his quintet album, *Full House*.<sup>101</sup> He occasionally supplies repetitive rhythmic comping figures, using small chord forms, throughout the saxophone and piano solos. This can be heard on the title track, for example. Wes, like Burrell, chooses to “lay out” for the most part, when the other band members take solos. This approach contributes to a clear definition in the overall texture of the group, free of clutter. John Scofield employs this approach too, however he is a little more present in his repetitive, rhythmic comping patterns with the piano throughout the saxophone solos, as can be heard on the tracks, “I’ll Take Les”<sup>102</sup> and “Whip The Mule.”<sup>103</sup> This contributes to texture in that Scofield is actively adding another rhythmic layer, which has a binding effect to the “groove” of the music.

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<sup>100</sup> Kenny Burrell / John Coltrane, *Kenny Burrell & John Coltrane*, OJC OJCCD-300-2, 1963 (1992), CD.

<sup>101</sup> Wes Montgomery, *Full House*, Riverside Records VICJ-60028, 1962 (2007), CD.

<sup>102</sup> John Scofield, “I’ll Take Les” from *Hand Jive*, Blue Note CDP 8273272, 1993 (1994), CD.

<sup>103</sup> John Scofield, “Whip The Mule” from *Hand Jive*, Blue Note CDP 8273272, 1993 (1994), CD.

Less conventional textures can be explored within the quintet. Jim Hall is heard harmonizing the bass line, in the low register of the guitar, throughout the melody of “Loose Bloose,”<sup>104</sup> from Bill Evans’, *The “Interplay” Sessions*, whilst the piano assumes the front-line position with the saxophone. This example of pre-planned switching of roles can inform guitarists as to other interesting avenues of texture to explore even in highly improvised circumstances.

Further exploration of texture can be heard in recent quintet groups, an example being Chris Cheek’s group, on the album, *Vine*.<sup>105</sup> Here is an example where the guitarist is quite present throughout the entirety. Kurt Rosenwinkel consistently shifts from the front-line, with Cheek’s saxophone, to a secondary accompanying instrument, along with the pianist, Brad Mehldau. Here is an example where the lines are blurred more so, in terms of the role that the guitarist should assume, and an excellent example of a pleasing overall group sound being created even with a lot of activity and dense textures.

### **Communication and Interaction**

Seeing as though there are now four other members in the group to consider, the guitarist must be mindful of their place within the quintet at all times. A raised level of focus is required in order to be ready, in the given moment, for musical cues that suggest such things as where and when to play. Keeping things simple is a safe approach to begin with. This could include playing clear, simple phrases during melodic passages, as well as playing even, symmetrical rhythmic patterns when comping. Such an approach will

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<sup>104</sup> Bill Evans, “Loose Bloose” from *The “Interplay” Sessions*, Fantasy / Milestone Records 7247066, 1962 (2007), CD.

<sup>105</sup> Chris Cheek, *Vine*, Fresh Sound New Talent 86, 2000, CD.

contribute to a unified group dynamic. Furthermore, this approach will allow the guitarist some time to gauge the group dynamic and offer insight into what primary roll to assume.

As a starting point, assuming the role of another horn player will help in avoiding undesired clashes between the guitar and piano. This entails leading in tandem with the saxophone player. After establishing a clear role, the guitarist can then remain alert as to possible shifts between the front-line and rhythm section roles.

As noted within the textural elements, we see the range from sparse, which offers clarity, to dense, which showcases the full power of the quintet. These factors can be viewed in terms of interaction. As long as guitarists are able to communicate their musical intent clearly, they can potentially play as little or as much as they see fit. An example of a high degree of interaction that involves all members of the quintet can be heard on, “The Cross,”<sup>106</sup> a track from Kurt Rosenwinkel’s album, *Deep Song*. There are moments where the rhythm section, of piano, bass, and drums, provides the accompanying support, while the guitar and saxophone play linear solo passages together. Although the quintet configuration can seem quite a restrictive environment initially, this example proves that there are avenues to explore for the guitarist that offer more possibilities of interaction. With an open mind and a desire to decipher the other players’ musical tendencies and characteristics, guitarists can quickly gain a deeper understanding of where they fit within the quintet and contribute accordingly. The result, in a universal sense, will be that each member has an equal part in the music and will elevate the sense of group unity, thus creating a strong overall ensemble statement.

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<sup>106</sup> Kurt Rosenwinkel, “The Cross” from *Deep Song*, Universal Distribution UCCV-1067, 2005, CD.

## CHAPTER 8

### DISCUSSION OF INTERVIEWS

A short five-question survey was devised in order to gain insight from professional jazz guitarists who are successful, working career musicians and have been for many years. It is valuable for musicians of any level to learn from the perspectives of highly experienced and talented musicians.

The aim was to create a set of questions that relate directly to content in the body of work of this study. The questions were designed so that the interviewees had the option of answering as broadly, short form, or narrowly, long form, as they liked. I was interested to see if the questions would result in answers that demonstrated a vast range of musical perspectives, or if there were more commonalities across the board.

I was able to secure willing participants via email contact, with guitarists Steve Cardenas and Dave Stryker, and personally, with guitarist John Hart. These participants are inspiring contributors to the development of jazz guitar and ensemble playing, as well as being highly regarded educators. Therefore the validity in their responses was greatly welcomed in order to substantiate the overall study of this paper.

In this chapter I will address each survey question separately, citing particular responses as well as highlighting common perspectives shared by the interviewees. The complete survey responses can be found in Appendix C. The questions that were presented to the interviewees are as follows:

1. What is the relevance, to the jazz guitarist, of fundamental technique as a requisite to successful ensemble performance?

2. What are the demands and expectations on the guitarist in adapting to the Jazz Trio (Guitar, Bass, Drums as well as Guitar, Organ, Drums) and furthermore, what is unique in this setting as opposed to the guitarist's role in other ensemble configurations?
3. What are the demands and expectations on the guitarist in adapting to the Jazz Quartet (Guitar, Piano, Bass, Drums as well as Guitar, Saxophone/Trumpet, Bass, Drums) and furthermore, what is unique in this setting as opposed to the guitarist's role in other ensemble configurations?
4. What are the demands and expectations on the guitarist in adapting to the Jazz Quintet (Guitar, Saxophone, Piano, Bass, Drums) and furthermore, what is unique in this setting as opposed to the guitarist's role in other ensemble configurations?
5. Additionally, is there anything you would like to add to this survey that you consider of importance?

In regards to the first question that deals with the importance of fundamental technique in order to operate successfully within ensemble settings, Steve Cardenas clarifies this further with his response,

For me there's no one formula that works for everyone. So answering this question brings up the question "What is fundamental technique?" If it's knowing key signatures, scales, chords, where things are on your instrument and the ability to play them... then yes it's important.

He also makes the distinction between “schooled” musicians, that being musicians who have attended music school, and musicians who have purely learned “on the job,” through experiential endeavors. He highlights the fact that there is no one path that musicians have to take in order to obtain fundamental technique. This point alludes

to the notion that jazz guitarists, and musicians alike, would benefit in searching for a path that best suits the individual. Dave Stryker, in his response, states, “I feel technique is necessary to get your ideas across which will help you to be a better part of a group.” This response emphasizes the fact that technique should be used to serve the musical ideas of the individual. This is a greater view of technique and encourages the concept that the musical idea should come first, and then the appropriate technique will follow accordingly.

Regarding the trio configuration, the interviewees addressed the fact that the guitar has the primary role and should demonstrate leadership qualities. John Hart responds, “Playing in a trio you're the guitarist, the horn player, the pianist, the singer, the accompanist. Even if it's not your group by default you're usually the band leader.” Stryker outlines how challenging this configuration can be, saying, “With no chordal backing and no horn to bounce off of you are left very exposed, but it can be very rewarding.”

The interviewees share a common outlook on the care needed when a pianist is introduced to the group, to form a quartet. Cardenas and Stryker offer practical tactics in their approach, which is to play as a horn player, with single-note lines and less chords. Hart describes further tactics, when deciding to play chords along with the piano player, “It requires a great deal of listening between the two parties. I will often just play the 3rd and 7th of a chord until I hear a space to fill in the rest.”

It seems that the quartet configuration, of guitar, horn, bass, and drums is a preferred combination by the interviewees. This is due to the fact that the guitarist has freedom to switch between the role of a second horn and assuming the primary

accompanying role. Stryker says, “I like how I can act as a 2nd horn player, or lay out and have it open, or comp and control the harmony and mood of the band.” Hart responds in his enjoyment of this configuration with regard to the element of Timbre, saying, “There are a lot of interesting timbres to explore on the guitar in terms of blending with the sax, matching single notes, big chords, 2 note chords up high on the neck to blend with the high register on the horn.”

The interviewees all mention how much more inherently restrictive the quintet configuration is. The need to be more sensitive to the situation is apparent. Stryker offers his initial tactics in order to operate successfully,

I take the role of a horn player and give the comping to the pianist usually, or work out figures we can play together. The guitar can play harmony with the horn as well. There is usually less harmonic space in this setting...

This aspect of clearly defining the specific role the guitarist should assume ahead of time, to avoid cluttering the overall sound of the quintet, is common to Hart’s view. He states, “Often the guitar's role is more clearly defined in the orchestration of a piece, for instance the guitar may be used doubling a bass line or piano figure, or conversely, moving to the front line and doubling or harmonizing a melody.”

I asked the participants for additional considerations they may wish to offer. Interestingly, everyone shared the same initial thought. The universal concept of “listening” in order to musically act appropriately at any given time was addressed. Heightened awareness in “listening” when performing will likely allow the musician to bypass thoughts to the varying restrictions inherent from one ensemble configuration to the next. This encompasses paying close attention not only to the configuration restrictions, yet also, as Hart states, “the musicians with whom you are playing and the

style and/or direction of the music.” Cardenas offers a poetic and true statement regarding the high level of listening required,

... no matter what kind of music, no matter what the configuration, setting, environment, etc... "Listening" is the key to making music happen. If a musician is aware of what is going on in the music and responds, interacts, is present, in the moment... listening... everything else usually falls into place.

## CHAPTER 9

### RECAPITULATION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study is intended to shine light on various complex areas of music that every jazz musician would do well to consider. In isolating the guitarist's role within the particular small group configurations discussed, one becomes aware of the very subtle adjustments that have a great impact on the collective ensemble. With attention given to the elements of Timbre, Dynamics, Texture, Communication and Interaction, the guitarist shares an ability to elevate the music on equal terms to the surrounding musicians.

Strengthening a foundation in the fundamentals of music is an ongoing process for many jazz musicians. This encompasses continued working on “time,” melodic and harmonic sensibilities, musical exercises, and learning new repertoire through reading and memorization. When the individual continually develops these aspects of their playing, it becomes easier to think outward when performing with other individuals. Therefore, focus on approaches to tone quality, the use of dynamics, the density of textures, all while maintaining communication and interaction, will shift to the forefront and serve in raising the music to higher levels.

As jazz musicians, we are continually faced with practical challenges of the music, such as developing the language, developing individual approaches, rehearsal techniques, and dealing with technical problems during performance. However, when the focus is shifted to playing a role, one must come to terms with the notion that they are a part of something that is greater than the sum of its parts. This is the viewpoint of a “band” mentality, whereby the individuals' actions are pointed toward a unified goal. Elements

of trust and support are then quickly realized and this can do much to alleviate nerves and stress during performance.

Jazz musicians must realize that how capable they are in executing their musical ideas is just as important as being sensitive to the musical situation at hand and what the music calls for. Experience, through trial and error, is paramount. Also, continued research into successful demonstrations, for example, through study of the great audio resources that are available, as well as physically seeing and experiencing live performances, are of great value. The referenced examples and tactics presented in the body of this study should be taken as merely guidelines in successful ensemble playing, aimed at preparing the guitarist for the myriad of potential musical scenarios they may face.

Below is a table, which combines all of the relevant ensemble configurations that are discussed in this study. The aim is so that it can be utilized as a tactical chart for certain approaches when facing these particular combo settings. Contained within are shorthand explanations of the discussed tactics, which the guitarist can put to use in order to operate successfully within these small group configurations.

Table 1 Practical use of the elements as tactics for jazz guitarists in contributing to successful ensemble performance

	<b>Trio: guitar, bass, drums</b>	<b>Trio: guitar, organ, drums</b>	<b>Quartet: guitar, piano, bass, drums</b>	<b>Quartet: guitar, saxophone, bass, drums</b>	<b>Quintet: guitar, saxophone, piano, bass, drums</b>
<b>Timbre</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broad spectrum of tone allowed: dark to bright, round to sharp</li> <li>• Wide pitch range allowed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Freedom of tone choice: sympathetic tone quality to Organ</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited by frequency of the piano</li> <li>• Attention to match intonation with the piano</li> <li>• Guide tones when playing chords</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blending with the horn.</li> <li>• Range is important</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blending with the horn, avoid clashes with the piano.</li> <li>• Special attention to match intonation with the horn &amp; piano</li> </ul>
<b>Dynamics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wide dynamic range allowed: soft to loud</li> <li>• Via electrified signal</li> <li>• Via “touch” on instrument</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited dynamic range freedom: attention to Organ (louder when leading, softer when comping)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited dynamic range freedom: attention to piano (louder when leading, softer when comping)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited dynamic range freedom: match horn when unison/harmony.</li> <li>• Wide dynamic range allowed: when horn lays out</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most limited dynamic range</li> <li>• Small adjustments make a big overall impact</li> </ul>
<b>Texture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broad spectrum in vertical texture allowed: single note to dense chord voicings</li> <li>• Broad spectrum in horizontal texture allowed: “spacious” to “busy” phrasing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Predominantly single-note lines</li> <li>• Freedom of harmonic space to comp for organ solos</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primarily single note line role</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unison and harmony lines with the horn</li> <li>• Sparse and dense chords in comping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primarily function as a 2<sup>nd</sup> horn.</li> <li>• Initially play sparse or no chords</li> </ul>
<b>Communication/ Interaction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead: initiate musical cues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead</li> <li>• “Follow”: when comping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead</li> <li>• Lay out when not soloing, as a starting point</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primarily “follow”: accompaniment role</li> <li>• When soloing, assume trio position.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-lead in frontline position</li> <li>• “Follow”: careful not to create unwanted clashes (harmonically or with single notes)</li> </ul>

It should be especially noted that these tactics are intended as initial considerations. More freedom in any case is usually allowed when there is a musical rapport between the musicians, which can include having performed regularly with others, sharing similar musical tastes, and listening intently to the other surrounding musicians, in the moment. There is no substitute for the feeling of a unified group dynamic.

On a personal note, I have had many fortunate opportunities thus far of performing extensively within these particular small group contexts. There have been times where the situations are highly impromptu, with little discussion before the first note is played. The aforementioned tactics are largely derived from the desire to act musically in a logical way that is in accordance with the particular situation at hand. The more spontaneously creative situations have certainly informed me in my approach when having the opportunity to be involved in more structured and controlled situations, where

there is time to rehearse and play specifically designated parts. Musical intuition plays a large part, in selecting from an array of previous experience, in order to choose what is most suitable for the moment. In my experience this has often led to the obtaining of desired results quickly.

Personally, the ways in which I have acquired most of my thoughts, on successful contributions to these small group configurations, has been a time-consuming experiential, although no less rewarding and enjoyable endeavor. My hope is that in providing a compiled resource such as this, future guitarists, and musicians in general, can ultimately access a faster track to the successful approaches of past and present.

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## APPENDIX A

### INITIAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is the relevance, to the jazz guitarist, of fundamental technique as a requisite to successful ensemble performance?
2. What are the demands and expectations on the guitarist in adapting to the Jazz Trio (Guitar, Bass, Drums as well as Guitar, Organ, Drums) and furthermore, what is unique in this setting as opposed to the guitarist's role in other ensemble configurations?
3. What are the demands and expectations on the guitarist in adapting to the Jazz Quartet (Guitar, Piano, Bass, Drums as well as Guitar, Saxophone/Trumpet, Bass, Drums) and furthermore, what is unique in this setting as opposed to the guitarist's role in other ensemble configurations?
4. What are the demands and expectations on the guitarist in adapting to the Jazz Quintet (Guitar, Saxophone, Piano, Bass, Drums) and furthermore, what is unique in this setting as opposed to the guitarist's role in other ensemble configurations?
5. Additionally, is there anything you would like to add to this survey that you consider of importance?

## **APPENDIX B**

### **INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

**THE ROLE OF THE JAZZ GUITARIST IN ADAPTING TO THE JAZZ TRIO,  
THE JAZZ QUARTET, AND THE JAZZ QUINTET**

### **INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

#### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this research is to describe the essential adjustments in adapting to guitar performance within the Jazz Trio, the Jazz Quartet, and the Jazz Quintet.

The questionnaire is intended to gather information from professional guitarists who have demonstrated success in performing within a variety of Jazz combo and ensemble settings

#### **PROCEDURE:**

The informed consent form and questionnaire will be sent in an email (recruitment letter) to the participants. All participants are asked to voluntarily answer the questionnaire regarding the adaptation process of jazz guitarists within different ensemble settings.

The participants will be asked to include in their email response whether they consent to their names being published or not. Each participant acknowledges through his/her email response that he/she has read and understood the informed consent form and further agrees to its terms. The responses will be used for research and will be included in the co-investigator's doctoral essay. Through responding to the questionnaire and editing it as the participant wishes it to appear in the document, each participant also agrees that his/her responses will be published in the essay.

#### **RISKS:**

No foreseeable risks or discomfort are anticipated for you by participating. Because this research is being conducted through email, security of your correspondence cannot be guaranteed.

#### **BENEFITS:**

Although no benefits can be promised to you by participating in this study, the information gathered and distributed later is intended to help improve the development of jazz guitarists in the subtle adjustments necessary to contribute to music at a high level.

#### **ALTERNATIVES:**

You have the alternative to not participate in this study. You may stop participating any time or you can skip any question you do not want to answer. There is no penalty incurred should you choose to halt participation.

**COSTS:**

No costs are anticipated for you to participate in this study.

**PAYMENT TO PARTICIPATE:**

No monetary payment will be awarded sue to participation in this study.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:**

The participants' names and responses will be made public in my dissertation, which will be submitted to the faculty of the University of Miami this Spring 2015 and will be available for educational purposes unless he/she indicates to the principle investigator that they would like their information to be kept confidential. Please state your preference in your email response on whether you want your name to be published or not.

**RIGHT TO WITHDRAW:**

Your participation is voluntary you have the right to withdraw from the study.

**OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION:**

The researcher will answer any questions you may have regarding the study and will give you a copy of the consent form after you have signed it. If you have any questions about the study please contact Tim Jago, at 786-273-8032 or [timjago@hotmail.com](mailto:timjago@hotmail.com), or Professor Rachel Lebon, at 305-284-5813 or [RLLebon@aol.com](mailto:RLLebon@aol.com). If you have any questions about you rights as a research participant, please contact the Human Subjects Research Office (HSRO) at 305-243-3195.

Please print a copy of this consent documentation for your records.

## APPENDIX C

### PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE TRANSCRIPTS

STEVE CARDENAS – INTERVIEW

Via email – February 9, 2015

**6. What is the relevance, to the jazz guitarist, of fundamental technique as a requisite to successful ensemble performance?**

It's a difficult question to answer in a definitive way as, over the decades, jazz guitarists as well as other jazz instrumentalists, often have had different paths they've followed as individuals compared to a general structured approach. There have been great musicians that have only come up through learning "on the job" with no university training, and of course many musicians that have attended music school and went onto professional careers. For me there's no one formula that works for everyone. So answering this question brings up the question "What is fundamental technique?" If it's knowing key signatures, scales, chords, where things are on your instrument and the ability to play them... then yes it's important. I just think an important point should be added in that there are and have been many great "unschooled" musicians capable in these areas but sometimes with their own terminology, their own language, and with no less ability than a musician that has learned these areas through a music school.

**7. What are the demands and expectations on the guitarist in adapting to the Jazz Trio (Guitar, Bass, Drums as well as Guitar, Organ, Drums) and furthermore, what is unique in this setting as opposed to the guitarist's role in other ensemble configurations?**

**8. What are the demands and expectations on the guitarist in adapting to the Jazz Quartet (Guitar, Piano, Bass, Drums as well as Guitar, Saxophone/Trumpet, Bass, Drums) and furthermore, what is unique in this setting as opposed to the guitarist's role in other ensemble configurations?**

**9. What are the demands and expectations on the guitarist in adapting to the Jazz Quintet (Guitar, Saxophone, Piano, Bass, Drums) and furthermore, what is unique in this setting as opposed to the guitarist's role in other ensemble configurations?**

If it's alright, I'd like to answer questions 2, 3 and 4 at the same time as the answers relate to each other and might make more sense discussed together. The general demands and expectations of a guitarist playing in any configuration start with "listening." No matter what the setting, without listening to what is happening in the music and responding accordingly, a musician will most likely

just be going through the motions, auto-pilot as it were, and that's not a very interesting way to approach music that has a great deal of improvisation. As to trio vs quartet vs quintet, it boils down to what are the different responsibilities and awarenesses required to participate effectively in each group configuration. In trio playing, the guitar is most often the melody and harmony instrument, playing a primary role in the sound of the group, perhaps to a lesser degree when organ is involved, nevertheless prominent. Quartet playing, in general terms, the guitar is more often a comping instrument in a quartet setting with a horn, but not always. And with piano, often the melody instrument, sometimes taking on the role of a horn without a lot of chord melody since the piano is covering much of the harmony. With quintet, it becomes a mixture of all these things, but with the added role of knowing more so when to lay out and/or comp with piano, essentially a bit more sensitive role.

**10. Additionally, is there anything you would like to add to this survey that you consider of importance?**

The only thing I would add that I mentioned before, no matter what kind of music, no matter what the configuration, setting, environment, etc... "Listening" is the key to making music happen. If a musician is aware of what is going on in the music and responds, interacts, is present, in the moment... listening... everything else usually falls into place.

## DAVE STRYKER – INTERVIEW

Via email – February 10, 2015

**1. What is the relevance, to the jazz guitarist, of fundamental technique as a requisite to successful ensemble performance?**

I feel technique is necessary to get your ideas across which will help you to be a better part of a group.

**2. What are the demands and expectations on the guitarist in adapting to the Jazz Trio (Guitar, Bass, Drums as well as Guitar, Organ, Drums) and furthermore, what is unique in this setting as opposed to the guitarist's role in other ensemble configurations?**

Guitar, Bass, Drum trio I find both challenging and rewarding. The demands and expectations are what you make on yourself to get your music across. With no chordal backing and no horn to bounce off of you are left very exposed, but it can be very rewarding.

Guitar, Organ, drums is another thing altogether. With organ accompaniment you have the chords, and bass to support you. It is an entirely different feeling and sound with a good organist, and one I enjoy.

**3. What are the demands and expectations on the guitarist in adapting to the Jazz Quartet (Guitar, Piano, Bass, Drums as well as Guitar, Saxophone/Trumpet, Bass, Drums) and furthermore, what is unique in this setting as opposed to the guitarist's role in other ensemble configurations?**

I also enjoy both these configurations. I have had a quartet with saxophonist Steve Slagle for many years. I like how I can act as a 2nd horn player, or lay out and have it open, or comp and control the harmony and mood of the band.

With piano quartet, I take the role of a saxophonist and play more single lines and less chords, and once again the support of the pianist can be very inspiring.

**4. What are the demands and expectations on the guitarist in adapting to the Jazz Quintet (Guitar, Saxophone, Piano, Bass, Drums) and furthermore, what is unique in this setting as opposed to the guitarist's role in other ensemble configurations?**

I take the role of a horn player and give the comping to the pianist usually, or work out figures we can play together. The guitar can play harmony with the horn as well. There is usually less harmonic space in this setting, which makes 2 and 3 more fun and musically and artistically satisfying for myself sometimes.

**5. Additionally, is there anything you would like to add to this survey that you consider of importance?**

Best advice is to listen and react, and create with your fellow musicians. Leave space and play music.

JOHN HART – INTERVIEW

Via email – February 27, 2015

**1. What is the relevance, to the jazz guitarist, of fundamental technique as a requisite to successful ensemble performance?**

**2. What are the demands and expectations on the guitarist in adapting to the Jazz Trio (Guitar, Bass, Drums as well as Guitar, Organ, Drums) and furthermore, what is unique in this setting as opposed to the guitarist's role in other ensemble configurations?**

Playing in a trio you're the guitarist, the horn player, the pianist, the singer, the accompanist. Even if it's not your group by default you're usually the band leader. The smaller the group, the greater the ability to interact and communicate. Obviously the trio affords the guitarist the greatest ability to affect the entire group dynamic. Play a lot of chords and you're Bill Evans at the Vanguard. Play no chords and you're Sonny Rollins at the Vanguard. Add some distortion and pedals and you're the Band of Gypsies.

**3. What are the demands and expectations on the guitarist in adapting to the Jazz Quartet (Guitar, Piano, Bass, Drums as well as Guitar, Saxophone/Trumpet, Bass, Drums) and furthermore, what is unique in this setting as opposed to the guitarist's role in other ensemble configurations?**

Add another instrument and the group dynamic changes immediately. If it's a horn player you probably will not be playing the melody and that can dictate the direction that the music will go stylistically. If you follow a busy sax solo it may be hard to play a sparse solo. There have been many great sax guitar pairings, Stan Getz and Jimmy Raney, Sonny Rollins and Jim Hall, John Scofield or Bill Frisell with Joe Lovano. There are a lot of interesting timbres to explore on the guitar in terms of blending with the sax, matching single notes, big chords, 2 note chords up high on the neck to blend with the high register on the horn.

Guitar and piano are an interesting pair. What can be dreadful with just a few slight adjustments can be beautiful. It requires a great deal of listening between the two parties. I will often just play the 3rd and 7th of a chord until I hear a space to fill in the rest. All the same considerations of dynamics, density, timbre apply here as well. I remember seeing Chick Corea speak years ago and remember him talking about how long it took him and Gary Burton to realize that they could both play big chords together.

**4. What are the demands and expectations on the guitarist in adapting to the Jazz Quintet (Guitar, Saxophone, Piano, Bass, Drums) and**

**furthermore, what is unique in this setting as opposed to the guitarist's role in other ensemble configurations?**

When the guitar is involved in a quintet with sax and piano the duality of the instrument as a front line and/or rhythm section member becomes more apparent. Often the guitar's role is more clearly defined in the orchestration of a piece, for instance the guitar may be used doubling a bass line or piano figure, or conversely, moving to the front line and doubling or harmonizing a melody. The added dynamic of comping together with the piano player is something that you won't find either in the trio or quartet configuration.

**5. Additionally, is there anything you would like to add to this survey that you consider of importance?**

The constant through all these different configurations are the universal musical concepts of listening, blending, and finding your space in the frequency range. They are all applied but can vary greatly depending not only on ensemble size but also the musicians with whom you are playing and the style and/or direction of the music.

## **APPENDIX D**

### **QUESTIONNAIRE BIOS**

#### **STEVE CARDENAS**

Guitarist Steve Cardenas began his musical career in Kansas City and has been an integral part of the New York City jazz community since 1995.

Steve has performed and recorded with many well-known and highly esteemed musicians. Notably, he was a longstanding member of the Paul Motion Electric Bebop Band (which later became the Paul Motian Octet), the Charlie Haden Liberation Music Orchestra, as well as Joey Baron's band, Killer Joey. Steve is currently a member of the Steve Swallow Quintet, Ben Allison Band and Jon Cowherd's Mercy Project. He has toured extensively throughout Europe, North and South America and Asia, performing at countless international music festivals, theaters, opera houses and clubs. Steve also leads his own trio and has released four recordings as a leader. His most recent album, *Melody in a Dream*, was released on Sunnyside Records last year.

Steve is also a well-respected educator. He is on faculty at The New School For Jazz and Contemporary Music in New York City where he directs the Thelonious Monk Ensemble and the Guitar Duos class, as well as offering individual lessons. He has also been on faculty at the California Institute of the Arts, Siena Summer Jazz Workshop, Brubeck Summer Jazz Colony, Stanford Jazz Workshop and Banff International Workshop in Jazz and Creative Music. Additionally, Steve is co-author, along with editor Don Sickler, of the *Thelonious Monk Fakebook*, Hal Leonard Publishing. The *Thelonious Monk Fakebook* marks the first time all of Monk's compositions have appeared in one volume, many of them appearing for the first time.

#### **DAVE STRYKER**

Whether you've heard guitarist Dave Stryker fronting his own group (with 25 CD's as a leader to date), or as a featured sideman with Stanley Turrentine, Jack McDuff, and many others, you know why Gary Giddins in the *Village Voice* calls him "one of the most distinctive guitarists to come along in recent years." He was recently voted once again one of the Top Guitarists in the 2014 *Downbeat* Critics and Readers polls for the 7th time. His most recent CD "Eight Track" was also picked as one of the Top Albums of 2014 in the *Downbeat* Readers Poll.

Dave Stryker grew up in Omaha, Nebraska and moved to New York City in 1980. After establishing himself in the local music scene, he joined organist Jack McDuff's group for two years 1984-85. When McDuff wasn't on the road (literally traveling by van all over the country) they worked a steady four-night a

week gig at Dude's Lounge in Harlem. His first break, this turned out to be an invaluable experience, paying his dues night after night with the soulful jazz organist. It was at Dude's Lounge that Stryker met tenor saxophonist Stanley Turrentine, who would occasionally sit in. After leaving McDuff, Turrentine asked Stryker to join his quintet. From 1986-1995 he played with the legendary saxophonist at all the major festivals, concert halls, and clubs throughout the world. He is featured on two Turrentine CD's (Stanley recorded Stryker's tune "Sidesteppin"). With Turrentine, Stryker was able to play with such jazz greats as Dizzy Gillespie and Freddie Hubbard. The ten years playing alongside the tenor legend helped Stryker realize the importance of having his own sound. Dave continued to work with Stanley and was with him during his final week at the Blue Note in NYC, when he passed in Sept. 2000.

Early on Stryker realized that as much as he loved playing standards and the jazz repertoire he had to have something of his own to give to the music. He feels that his writing combined with his playing is what shapes his musical expression. He has recorded and published over 130 of his own compositions. Eighteen of those compositions (from the first five SteepleChase CD's) are compiled in the book : The Music of Dave Stryker (SteepleChase Music) which can be ordered on this website. Some of the other artists who have recorded his music are: Stanley Turrentine, Kevin Mahogany, Victor Lewis, and Steve Slagle. Dave continues to perform with The Dave Stryker Organ Trio, his Blue to the Bone Band, and The Stryker / Slagle Band. Recent gigs for The Stryker / Slagle Band have included a recent week at Dizzy's Club Coca Cola at Jazz at Lincoln Center, the Monterey Jazz Festival, The Blue Note in Las Vegas, The Jazz Bakery in LA, and a 2003 tour of Japan.

Sideman work has included vocalist Kevin Mahogany's group, with Dave writing and arranging music for Kevin's Telarc release *Pride and Joy and Another Time, Another Place* on Warner Bros and tours of Europe, Japan, Brazil, Poland and Carnegie Hall. He also has worked with Blue Note saxophonist Javon Jackson and pianist Eliane Elias. He has appeared on over 50 CD's as a sideman. As a producer, Stryker compiled the CD *The Guitar Artistry of Billy Rogers* which is the only existing record of the brilliant jazz playing of the late underground legend who was his friend, former teacher and member of the Crusaders. He has also produced "A Tribute to Grant Green" on Evidence Music.

Dave is the Adjunct Professor of Jazz guitar at Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University, and at the John J. Cali School of Music at Montclair State University. He is passing along his experience by teaching both privately The Aebersold Summer Jazz Workshop, The Litchfield Jazz Camp, and the Jazzhouse Kids Workshop in Montclair NJ. His book *Dave Stryker's Jazz Guitar Improvisation Method* (Mel Bay Publishing) is available here on his website at [www.davestryker.com](http://www.davestryker.com).

## JOHN HART

Jazz guitarist John Hart is a lecturer at the University of Miami Frost School of Music. A New York fixture for 29 years, he is one of the most prolific and versatile guitarists on the jazz scene today. He released eight CDs as bandleader on such prestigious labels as Blue Note and Concord and has appeared on over 100 CDs as a sideman, including a 16-year stint with organist Jack McDuff. JazzTimes wrote, "An alum of the Brother Jack McDuff University of Jazz Guitar, John Hart can burn his way through blues changes on a level that's right up there with fellow graduates George Benson and Pat Martino." John Hart has also worked with Jimmy Smith, James Moody, Jon Hendricks, Brian Blade, Chris Potter, Larry Goldings, Bob Belden, Javon Jackson and vocalists Lizz Wright and Hilary Kole. He has played with the Maria Schneider Orchestra for the last 20 years.

John Hart has headlined at the Montreux Jazz Festival, Edinburgh Jazz Festival, Vancouver Jazz Festival, Nairn Jazz Festival, Victoria Jazz Festival and many of the premier jazz clubs in the USA. He is featured on soundtracks including HBO's Sex in the City and appeared on the Garrison Keillor Show with the popular band Pink Martini. In 1992 he formed the John Hart Quartet featuring young star Chris Potter. The band toured extensively for seven years, was featured on NPR's Jazzset and recorded one album for Concord Records. In 2001 he formed the John Hart Trio and recorded three CDs for Hep Records. Recent recordings include a jazz organ trio CD on the Index Jazz label.

## VITA

Australian guitarist/composer/educator Tim Jago (b. Perth, 1984) began performing in jazz ensembles at the age of 21. He completed a Bachelor of Music in Jazz Performance at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts and was awarded the Melville Toyota Scholarship for the most outstanding final year jazz student (2006). The following year he became an adjunct guitar instructor at the same institution. In 2007, Tim was selected as a finalist in the National Jazz Awards to perform at the Wangaratta Jazz Festival. In 2010 he was a selected candidate for the Freedman Fellowship in Australia.

Tim relocated to the United States in August 2010 to undertake the Master of Music program in Studio Music and Jazz with a major in jazz guitar performance at The University of Miami Frost School of Music. There he held a Teaching Assistant (T.A.) position for the duration of his Masters and graduated in 2012. Tim continued in the T.A. position, returning to The University of Miami to undertake the Doctor of Musical Arts degree.

Throughout his musical career, Tim has performed and recorded extensively across Australia and the United States. He has led and co-led groups at jazz festivals including the York Jazz and Soul Festival in Western Australia (2008, 2009), the Perth International Jazz Festival (2013, 2014), and the Melbourne International Jazz Festival (2010, 2011, 2013, 2014 and 2015). He has performed and recorded with a host of world-class musicians including Patti Austin, Terence Blanchard, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Chick Corea, Dave Douglas, Gloria Estefan, Wycliffe Gordon, Dave Liebman, Bobby

McFerrin, Vince Mendoza, Steve Miller, James Morrison, Danillo Perez, Chris Potter, and Arturo Sandoval, to name a few.

Tim has recorded as a member of many bands, including Troy Robert's Nu-Jive, *Nu-Jive 5* (2013). He has released two albums, *The Grid* (2010) and *Wear More Headbands* (2013) with his trio, The Grid. Currently, Tim is composing and arranging material for a third release with this trio to be released in 2015.