Analyses and Comparison of Red Garland, Bill Evans, and Wynton Kelly Playing "Bye Bye Blackbird" in the Miles Davis Groups

Chia-Ying Yen
ANALYSES AND COMPARISON OF
RED GARLAND, BILL EVANS, AND WYNTON KELLY
PLAYING "BYE BYE BLACKBIRD"
IN THE MILES DAVIS GROUPS

by

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B.A., National Chengchi University, Taiwan, 1993

Master's Thesis

TMUS 6957

Submitted to the

Faculty of the Graduate School of the

University of Colorado in partial fulfillment

of the requirement for the degree of

Master of Music

College of Music

2010
This thesis for the Master of Music degree by Chia-Ying Yen has been approved for the College of Music by

John Davis

Jeff Jenkins

Doris Lehnert

Date 3/3/10
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

By his sensational appearance in 1955 at the Newport Jazz Festival\(^1\), Miles Davis, the great bandleader and jazz trumpeter, had become a hot commodity. He was a dominant influence on jazz for more than five decades. His strengths included gathering young talent, mentoring them, and providing an atmosphere where he and the members of his band could develop and create collectively.

Red Garland, Bill Evans, and Wynton Kelly were influential pianists not only in the Miles Davis post-bop groups but also throughout the jazz world. Each of them had a unique style and approach to the interpretation of music. The superb alto saxophonist Cannonball Adderley once compared the virtues of these three pianists, each of whom he had worked with in the Miles Davis groups:

Bill is a fine pianist, and his imagination is a little more vivid so that he tries more daring things. But Wynton plays with the soloist all the time...he even anticipates your direction. Red is another excellent accompanist. He fits well with the drummer always and he doesn’t leave you anything to do but go where you want to.\(^2\)

This study focuses on the improvisation and comping of the three pianists,

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\(^1\) George Wein, an organizer of Newport, arranged an all-star jam session including Miles Davis, Gerry Mulligan, Zoot Sims, Thelonious Monk, Percy Heath, and Connie Kay on July 17, 1955. Davis received an ovation from jazz fans and critics after playing the Monk’s standard “Round Midnight.”

directly transcribed from three selected recordings. The albums studied include 'Round about Midnight (Red Garland), Miles Davis at Newport 1958 (Bill Evans), and Miles Davis in Person, Vol. 1 – Friday Night at the Blackhawk (Wynton Kelly). 'Round about Midnight is a studio album; the other two are live albums. In order to reduce variables, the same piece ("Bye Bye Blackbird") was selected for comparative analysis. Although members of each group varied, there was some overlap in personnel. All three of the selections were recorded during the late fifties and early sixties, "a time of reassessment and reorganization for jazz." During this period, Davis was playing an expressive version of the post-bop style in a more subtle manner.

The pianist's improvisations are analyzed in three categories: (1) melodic approach including motivic developments, applied scales, sequences, quotations, and originalities, (2) harmonic approach such as intensities (from single-note lines to block-chord thickened-lines), chord voicings, substitutions, and tensions, and (3) rhythmic approach including rhythmic patterns and variations, articulations, phrase structures, and self-comping. In addition, each of their approaches to comping during the first chorus of Miles Davis' solo are examined.

Research Questions

Specific research questions include:

1. What are the similarities and differences in their non-musical and musical backgrounds that could have influenced their musical paths?

2. What are their stylistic signatures?

3. What are the similarities and differences in their melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic approaches to their improvisations?

4. What are the similarities and differences in their comping for Miles Davis?

Delimitations

Sometimes it is difficult to transcribe piano solos because a collection of notes sound simultaneously and the bass notes generate overtones. Effort has been made to transcribe the voicings illustrated in this study exactly as was played by these pianists. A few of the voicings are guesswork as to the chord quality of the moment.

In the part of examining the comping which they played behind Miles Davis, only the first chorus of Davis' solo is included in this study. Their comping for the heads, the rest of the solos, and the outros are not examined.
Significance of Research

Research studies, biographies, and transcriptions have examined the stylistic characteristics and musical careers of these three pianists. However, few publications contrast their nuances of interpretation and methods of improvising in depth. None compare the similarities and differences of their musical approaches through the examination and analysis of the same piece, played for the same leader, and recorded during the same approximate time (1955-1963)⁴.

The study compares the pianists under conditions that maximize similarities and minimize variables. From this point of view, the study presents how similarly and differently they interpret the music. Each transcription also provides jazz educators and musicians with useful study material for jazz improvisation classes and jazz piano lessons. Furthermore, it will display the stylistic evolution and progression of jazz piano in a small group setting.

Sources

The following three Miles Davis recordings on the Columbia label are the

⁴ 'Round about Midnight was recorded in the Columbia 30th Street Studios in NYC on June 5, 1956, Miles Davis at Newport 1958 was recorded at the Newport Jazz Festival in Rhode Island on July 3, 1958, and Miles Davis in Person, Vol. 1 – Friday Night at the Blackhawk was recorded at The Blackhawk in San Francisco, CA on April 2, 1961.
primary sources used throughout this study:

The Red Garland version was selected from the 1956 album ‘Round about Midnight, which included Miles Davis on trumpet, John Coltrane on tenor, Paul Chambers on bass, and Philly Joe Jones on drums.

The Bill Evans version was selected from the album Miles Davis at Newport 1958, including Miles Davis on trumpet, John Coltrane on tenor, Paul Chambers on bass, and Jimmy Cobb on drums.

The Wynton Kelly version was selected from the 1961 album Miles Davis in Person, Vol. 1 – Friday Night at the Blackhawk, having Miles Davis on trumpet, Hank Mobley on tenor, Paul Chambers on bass, and Jimmy Cobb on drums.

Secondary sources utilized in this study include improvisation transcription books, biographies, jazz history textbooks, and dissertations.

**Method**

From its beginning, aural skills have been a fundamental part of jazz performance and improvisation. Because jazz is a spontaneous art, players often learn the music by listening to and imitating recordings or live performances made by jazz masters. The transcription of improvised solos “is one of the most valuable means of
reaching a deep understanding of the inner logic and aesthetic meaning of a well improvised solo.⁵ In order to present the authentic musical nuances of the three pianists, this study transcribes their works from the recordings made while members of groups led by Miles Davis.

The three pieces selected for analysis met the following criteria:

1. Each selection was chosen from the Miles Davis groups whose personnel overlapped highly, in order to provide correlations across the analyses.

2. Each selection was recorded between 1956 and 1961, which provides a unifying historical background for the analyses.

Each transcription in the appendices includes the pianist’s introduction and solo. Further, the eighth notes should be interpreted as swing eighths⁶.

In order to increase the accuracy of the transcriptions, Transcribe!⁷ software was used to slow down the music without changing any pitches. It also offered the function of labeling markers and textural annotations in the audio waveform, which assisted in the analytical process.

Historical information for each pianist before leaving the Miles Davis group

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⁵ Paula Berardinelli, "Bill Evans: His Contributions as a Jazz Pianist and an Analysis of His Musical Style" (PhD diss., New York University, 1992), 290.
⁶ A swing eighth means the durations of a pair of written eighth notes are not played equally. The first note of each pair is twice as long as the second, implying a triplet feel.
⁷ Transcribe! software is provided by Seventh String Software.
aided in determining how musical education, influences, and experiences may have impacted their unique styles.

**Review of Related Literature**

The review of related literature includes two categories: scholarly works and published transcription books.

**Scholarly works**

Justin Clay Perry’s dissertation, “A Comparative Analysis of Selected Piano Solos by Red Garland, Bill Evans, Wynton Kelley and Herbie Hancock from their Recordings with the Miles Davis Groups, 1955-1968,” provides detailed transcriptions and analyses of the four pianists’ improvisations. Perry chooses two selections from each pianist for analyses in a chronological order. Red Garland’s version of “Bye Bye Blackbird” on Miles Davis’ *'Round about Midnight* is also selected for Perry’s study. It analyzes the voicings and approach of Garland uses throughout the solo. There is no analysis of articulation or dynamics. Perry compares different pieces that included less overlapping personnel, and were recorded in a wider span of time. As a result, his comparison is rather limited.

Stephen Barth Widenhofer’s dissertation, "Bill Evans: An Analytical Study of
His Improvisational Style through Selected Transcriptions," contains a biographical sketch of Bill Evans and a thorough analysis of his improvisations. It is devoted to Evans' performances in a piano trio recorded after he left the Miles Davis group.

Paula Berardinelli’s dissertation, "Bill Evans: His Contributions as a Jazz Pianist and an Analysis of His Musical Style," focuses on the legendary pianist. Berardinelli analyzes only the recordings made by Bill Evans as a bandleader. Those recordings on which Evans worked as a sideman are excluded.

Ian Carr’s Miles Davis: The Definitive Biography provides biographical information on Davis’ musical career. It incorporates abundant interviews with Davis, his sidemen, and other acquaintances. The material provides a credible reference not only on Davis himself, but also on his sidemen.

Gene Rizzo’s The Fifty Greatest Jazz Piano Players of All Time: Ranking, Analysis & Photos provides photos, brief bios, a limited amount of general stylistic analyses, and recordings most representative of the selected jazz pianists. It provides useful and concise overview of each pianist.

**Published transcription books**

Many published transcriptions include the work of these three pianists. Most provide only the right-hand melodic lines of the solos, and do not involve the
left-hand self-comping or analysis.

Antony Genge’s *The Jazz Piano Solos of Red Garland* includes a transcription of Garland’s introduction and solo on “Bye Bye Blackbird.” Chord symbols and articulations are marked on the transcription. Also illustrated are his voicings during the introduction and the block-chord lines used in the first half of the second chorus.
Chapter 2

ANALYSIS OF BYE BYE BLACKBIRD

"Bye Bye Blackbird" was written by Ray Henderson (1896-1970), a songwriter, arranger, pianist, publisher, and producer. Henderson collaborated with lyricist Mort Dixon from 1923 to 1927. "Bye Bye blackbird" was one of their most popular songs.

The tune was written in F with a 32-bar AABA song form. Each of the four sections has eight measures. The melody is simple and basically follows a stepwise motion with occasional leaps upward. There is an exception in the third bar from the end: a downward leap of a tri-tone (from Bb to E). The melody of the second A section is transposed modally up one whole-step (from F to g) from the first A section. A recapitulation is heard in the last A section, but the melody is adjusted according to the chords in the last four measures.

Harmonically, the piece is based on ii\(^7\)-V\(^7\)-I\(^M7\) or ii\(^7b5\)-V\(^7\)-I\(^7\) chord progressions.

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Chapter 3

RED GARLAND

Brief Biography

William “Red” Garland (May 13, 1923 – April 23, 1984) was born into a non-musical family in Dallas, Texas. Before starting to play piano, he was a clarinetist, an alto saxophonist, and a boxer. Garland studied piano with Lee Barnes, a pianist in the army band, while serving in the army at age 18.

His first gig on piano was playing with the Bill Blocker Quartet in dance halls in Texas in 1945. During those days, Garland listened to and imitated Count Basie and then Nat “King” Cole. He was especially impressed by Cole’s touch, conception, and phrasing. Later he joined trumpeter Hot Lips Page’s band and toured with the band across the country and into New York City. While staying in NYC, Garland studied with Bud Powell and they became friends. He also credited Bud Powell for “the greatest influence on me of any pianist, except for Art Tatum.”

One night at the Luckey’s club, after hearing Garland’s playing, Tatum gave him advice: “You’re forcing. Don’t play the piano. Let the piano play itself.”

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9 Lyons, Great Jazz Pianists, 147.
In 1946, he joined the Billy Eckstine big band featuring many key members of the emerging bebop movement, including Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie. During 1946-1955, he worked steadily in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia playing with Charlie Parker, Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, and Roy Eldridge. In 1955, Garland gained fame for being the pianist of Miles Davis’ first great quintet, which included John Coltrane on tenor, Paul Chambers on bass, and Philly Joe Jones on drums. Garland, Chambers, and Jones were known as the rhythm section of the time. Davis hired Garland, who was introduced by Philly Joe Jones, because Garland had the feeling and touch of Ahmad Jamal\textsuperscript{10}, one of Davis’ favorite pianists and key influences. Davis admired Jamal’s ”concept of space, his lightness of touch, his understatement, and the way he phrased notes and chords and passages.”\textsuperscript{11} Garland stayed with Davis from 1955 to 1958. Some of their famous albums are Workin’, Steamin’, Cookin’, and Relaxin’ on the Prestige label, as well as ‘Round about Midnight and Milestones\textsuperscript{12} on the Columbia label. When Davis formed this new group in 1955, none of the members of the group were well-known musicians. By

\textsuperscript{10} Ahmad Jamal was born in Pennsylvania in 1930 and moved to Chicago in 1950. He typically plays in a trio setting with a bassist and drummer. He is known for his use of space and rhythm, his dramatic change of dynamics, and his ability to create singable melody. He was acclaimed as a key influence by many jazz greats, such as Miles Davis and Keith Jarrett.

\textsuperscript{11} Miles Davis and Quincy Troupe, Miles, The Autobiography (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 178.

\textsuperscript{12} The album Milestones added Cannonball Adderley on alto and was Garland’s last recording with Davis. It is also the album anticipating the new directions which Davis moved toward modal jazz.
1958, each member of this group had become the leading exponent and influential inspiration on his own instrument.

Garland’s drug addictions made him unreliable and caused him to miss some of Davis’ gigs and their relationship deteriorated. The pianist left Davis to form his own trio in 1958.

**Improvisation**

This track is seven minutes and fifty-seven seconds long and is played at a medium swing tempo with an order of (1) intro, (2) head in, (3) solos (with the last solo being one and a half choruses played by Garland), (4) second half of head out, (5) outro. Garland launches the tune with an eight-bar block-chord introduction. The first solo, played by Davis, is lyric, cool, and simple, and this is followed by Coltrane’s fiery and double-time feel solo, and Garland plays the last solo with a joyful and swinging feel for one and a half choruses.

**Melodic approach**

One of the technical devices presented by Garland is motivic development. The introduction starts with a two-bar phrase, which is sequentially transposed up and down a minor third (Example 1). Typically, the melodic lines consist of chord tones
including the 9ths, and use chromatic passing tones (CPT) to connect the transposed sequences.

**Example 1. Garland. Motif 1 (mm. 1-5).**

A similar example is found in mm. 31 and 32 (Example 2). This time the motif is based on chord tones to the 13ths, and is transposed down chromatically (from A♭m7 to Gm7).

**Example 2. Garland. Motif 4 (mm. 31-32).**

Another sequential device can be found in mm. 11-12 and 18-20. Garland creates a forward-driving feel by making use of space and simple two-note ideas which move in thirds upward or downward. He develops motif 2 by transposing
modally up one whole step (from F to g), and varies motif 3 by repeating the last note of each riff (Example 3).

Example 3. Garland. Motif 2 and motif 3 (mm. 11-12 and 18-20).

Garland makes his melodic statement more interesting by augmenting the note durations from sixteenth notes to triplets. Further, he temporally distorts the barline by shifting the figure from the ‘and’ of four to the ‘and’ of three (Example 4).


There is a high degree of chromaticism in his solo lines. Garland incorporates many chromatic passing tones (CPT) and chromatic neighboring tones (CNT) to smoothly connect his melodic statements. The CNT can be found in m. 9 and the CPTs in mm. 10, 14, 17, 22, 24, 27, 36, 43, and 45-57 (Example 5).

Example 5. Garland. Chromaticism (mm. 9-10).
Another chromaticism appears in his half-step descending lines (mm. 21-23, 40-41, and 54-55), which make his melodic lines singable (Example 6).


There is almost no extended scale passage in his solo. In addition to using many chromatics, Garland makes his solo ‘tastier’ by emphasizing the upper and altered extensions on dominant chords, such as the ninths and thirteenths, including sharp and flat ninths, and sharp elevenths and flat thirteenths (Example 7). These color tones sometimes show up in both the melodic line and his self-comping, while sometimes occurring only in his self-comping.


Instead of avoiding the natural eleventh on a dominant seventh chord, Garland uses it in mm. 14, 36, 39, and 44 to create dissonances between the melody and accompaniment.
Other improvised devices include enclosures\textsuperscript{13} (Example 8) and sixteenth-note turns (Example 9). Examples can be found in mm. 12, 15, 21-22, 30, and 38-39, shown below.


![Example 8](image)


![Example 9](image)

There are some inadvertent repetitions in Garland’s solos. He often applies a blues scale on F chords, as in mm. 9, 11, 23, 26, and 41-43. In mm. 41-43, while comping according to the chord changes, he plays an F blues scale for the whole phrase (Example 10).


![Example 10](image)

Another reiteration is the use of leaps from the third to the flat ninth on the D7

\textsuperscript{13} An object tone is approached first from a half step above, and then a half step below.
chord (Example 11). The leaps move either directly (mm. 14, 27, and 36) or indirectly (m. 28), upward (mm. 28 and 36) or downward (mm. 14 and 27).


The melodic notes that Garland uses in the first chorus largely fall in the middle register of the keyboard. The lowest note is G4 (mm. 15-16, 22, 30 and 32) and the highest note is F6 (mm. 9, 25, and 37). In the second chorus, the melodic line consists of many repetitive notes and moves toward the upper register, which ranges from F#5 (m. 48) to C7 (mm. 50 and 54). Like the previous two soloists Davis and Coltrane, Garland paraphrases a melodic fragment of the piece in his solo (Example 12), but he deviates from the melody quickly and ends his solo on the note C. This is the same note as the main note of the melody and connects seamlessly with Davis’ out-head, which begins at the second half, as if it had been prearranged.

Harmonic approach

Instead of excerpting from the composition, the chord progression of the introduction begins with a two-bar pattern on the ii7 chord (G-7), then continues with sequences that are transposed up and down a minor third, finally leading to the V7 chord (C7). Garland is often flexible with chord progressions. He incorporates secondary dominants to increase the harmonic color. For example, he inserts a D7 chord before the Gm7, or between the C7 and Gm7 with the result of V7-V7/ii-ii7 (Example 13). He replaces the C7 chord with the D7 in mm. 16 and 48 (Example 14). Moreover, he plays D7(b9) over the Am7(b5)-D7 progression in mm. 27-28 and 35-36.


Sometimes, Garland uses polychords in his solos. In m. 16, he plays D13 in the melodic line, and comps on Gm7 at the same time; other examples are C7 and Gm7 in mm. 32, Gm7 and Db7 in m. 51, and C7 and D7(b9) in m. 52 (Example 15).

Example 15. Garland. Polychords (mm. 16, 32, and 51-52).

His use of tri-tone substitution is presented in various manners; for example,
D7(b9) substitutes for A\textsuperscript{b}dim\textsuperscript{7} in m. 14, A\textsuperscript{b}m7 for D7 in mm. 31 and 55, and D\textsuperscript{b}7 for Gm7 in m. 51. Adding to the harmonic interest, he incorporates turnarounds in both the end of the first chorus (mm. 39-40) and during his solo (mm. 55-56).

Other improvised techniques include changing the modal quality of particular chords from one chorus to the next. Garland plays FM7 rather than F7 in m. 25, and A\textsuperscript{b}m7 rather than A\textsuperscript{b}dim\textsuperscript{7} in m. 47. His mix of major and minor chords results in a chordal ambiguity, such as the blues scale in a major chord, a major third (M3) on a minor seventh chord, and a minor third (m3) on a dominant seventh chord (Example. 16).


Garland’s \textit{sui generis} feature is block-chord voicings, which he often plays as a melody above middle C in octaves with a fifth (above the lower note) added within the octave in the right hand, and supported in exactly rhythmic unison by his left hand comping in the tenor register. Sometimes the fifth in the right hand may sound dissonant or slightly out-of-tune, but this distinctive sound enriches the harmony. The
left hand chords do not change position or inversion until the following chord change occurs. When his solo moves from single-note lines to block-chord thickened lines in the second chorus (mm. 41-56), a brass-like tutti effect is produced which offers listeners a pleasant surprise.

Garland eclectically mixes two types of left-hand voicings in this piece. One is Bud Powell's "shell voicings,"\(^{14}\) which Garland largely uses during the introduction with root position voicings. The other is rootless chord voicings and their various inversions, which are three to four notes consisting mainly of thirds, sevenths, and upper extensions (ninths and thirteenths as well as their altered tones). The latter type of voicing has been commonly adopted by many jazz pianists since.

**Rhythmic approach**

Garland's solo is mostly eighth notes. In spite of using relentless streams of eighth notes, his music sounds relaxed and catchy by interspersing sparse sixteenth-note turns and chordal triplets, leaving space judiciously. The grace notes which he uses with single notes (mm. 9, 11, and 29) and block chords (mm. 50-51)

\(^{14}\) Bud Powell voicings are the left-hand voicings of choice for most of the early bebop pianists. Powell's voicing is just two or three notes in the lower register of the keyboard consisting of roots, thirds or tenths, sixths, and sevenths to result in an open sound.
are played on the beat and then resolved (Example 17).

Example 17. Garland. Grace notes (mm. 11 and 51).

He usually accents the highest melodic note of a phrase or measure, whether it is on the downbeat or upbeat (Example 18). Sometimes he emphasizes a specific note which has no particular rhythmic role but results in a surprising feel.

Example 18. Garland. Accent the highest melodic note (mm. 9-12).

Most of his single-note lines sound crisp and staccato. In general, Garland’s touch in this piece is light, especially when the melodic line moves to the block chords in the second chorus. He uses the sustain pedal during his locked-hand techniques, but even then it is rather occasional.

Most of Garland’s phrases start and end on an upbeat with relatively more downbeat beginning phrases during the second chorus block-chord lines. Further, it seems that Garland has no preference for starting a phrase on a specific beat within the measure, and tends to end phrases on a short note. His length of phrasing is
irregular. It can be as long as nine bars (mm. 9-17), or as short as one bar (m. 31). His self-comping plays steadily on the up beat of two and four, anticipating the following chord by an eighth-note (Example 19). This short and syncopated comping provides a bouncy and swing pulse and becomes one of Garland’s trademarks.


Comping

*Bye Bye Blackbird* is suffused by a blues feeling that is further enhanced by Davis’ tightly muted rendition. When self-comping, Garland sticks to a steady rhythm. During the trumpet solo, he accompanies with more rhythmic variation, but even then he comps with his preferred rhythmic pattern about thirty percent of the
Most of his comping is short, feather-light, and on the upbeat (Example 20).


He uses downbeat rhythms sparingly, which occur only for six measures (mm. 9, 17, 21, 25, 29, and 32 during Davis' first-chorus solo). These downbeat rhythms are on the first beat, and four of them are preceded by a dotted quarter note (Example 21).


Because Davis leaves lots of rests between phrases, Garland complements the space with slightly heavier touches, more aggressive rhythms, and longer notes, such as quarter notes and dotted quarter notes.

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15 Garland's favorite rhythmic pattern of comping or self-comping is eighth notes played on the upbeat of two and four. Sometimes he uses only the first half or second half of the pattern. He comps for Davis' first-chorus solo by using this rhythmic pattern and its fragment for ten measures which are almost third of the whole chorus (32-bar).
Chapter 4

BILL EVANS

Brief Biography

William John Evans (August 16, 1929 – September 15, 1980), known as Bill Evans in the jazz scene, was born into a non-musical family of Russian descent in Plainfield, New Jersey. Supported by his parents, he studied piano at age six, violin at age 7, and flute at age 13, but the piano remained his first love. He played a large amount of sheet music collected by his mother and that resulted in his outstanding ability to sight-read.

Evans had a close relationship with his older brother Harry, who played trumpet and piano. Encouraged by Harry, he played in the high school dance band and gigs outside of school during his high school years. In addition, he formed his own trio with Connie Atkinson on bass and Frank Robell on drums. They played mostly standard tunes and frequently went to the jazz clubs in New York to hear jazz.

He received solidly theoretical training in classical music and two degrees from Southeastern Louisiana University (SLU) in 1950: a Bachelor of Music with an emphasis in piano and a minor in flute performance as well as Bachelor of Music Education. At SLU, he was especially influenced by the post-Romanticists such as
Ravel and Debussy. During that period, he listened to recordings of Bud Powell, Nat “King” Cole, and George Shearing. Among them, he was especially fond of and influenced by Shearing’s voicing, known as the locked hands technique. Cole and Powell were influenced by Earl Hines’ "trumpet style” piano; that is, they applied Louis Armstrong’s melodic ideas to their piano improvisation. He was drafted into the army and stationed in an army camp near Chicago for the next three years. He played flute and piccolo in the army band during the daytime, and played piano in jazz clubs at night. He met George Russell, who introduced him to the modality concept that he applied on the visionary album *Kind of Blue* with the Miles Davis Sextet. After being discharged from the army, he studied composition for three semesters at Mannes College of Music in New York.

In 1956, guitarist Mundell Lowe brought the young pianist to the attention of producer Orrin Keepnews at Riverside Records. Keepnews was so impressed that he offered Evans his first record contract. With the bassist Teddy Kotick and the drummer Paul Motian, Evans recorded his first trio album, *New Jazz Conceptions*, which reflected the influences of bebop and Bud Powell. He established his name by playing solos on George Russell’s “All about Rosie” in 1957. His biggest career move came in 1958, when he replaced Red Garland in the Miles Davis Sextet, which
included Cannonball Adderley on alto saxophone, John Coltrane on tenor saxophone, Philly Joe Jones and Jimmy Cobb on drums, and Paul Chambers on bass. Davis explained why he hired Evans:

I needed a piano player who was into the modal thing, and Bill Evans was. I met Bill Evans through George Russell, whom Bill had studied with. I knew George from the days back at Gil’s house on 55th Street. As I was getting deeper into the modal thing, I asked George if he knew a piano player who could play the kinds of things I wanted, and he recommended Bill. 16

Evans remained with Davis' sextet only eight months (from February to November in 1958). In the same year, at the end of his tenure as the group’s pianist, he was named the *Down Beat* New Star Pianist. Evans valued his stint with Davis: “It did a great deal for my confidence. I thought it was the greatest jazz band I had ever heard.” 17 He brought his own musical approach to the group, which softened Davis’ style. His contributions also won the bandleader’s high applause. Davis once said:

I’ve sure learned a lot from Bill Evans. He played the piano the way it should be played. He plays all kind of scales; can play 5/4 and all kinds of fantastic things. There’s such a difference between him and Red Garland whom I also like a lot. Red carries the rhythm, but Bill underplays, and I like that better.  18

Evans left Davis because of his father’s illness and his outsider situation in that group (he was the only white musician in the group and was often teased by Davis

17 Kahn, *Kind of Blue*, 86.
Two years after 'Round about Midnight, Miles Davis and his quintet performed Bye Bye Blackbird at the Newport Jazz Festival (1958). The personnel of this quintet are as with the previous quintet, the group includes Davis, Coltrane, and Chambers, however, the pianist is replaced by Bill Evans and the drummer is replaced by Jimmy Cobb. This track lasts for nine minutes and eleven seconds and includes (1) intro, (2) head in, (3) solos (with the last solo being Chambers playing a half chorus), (4) second half of head out, (5) outro. Compared to the performance of 'Round about Midnight, the tempo is increased and the expressiveness intensified. Evans starts the tune with a highly chromatic and rhythmic eight-bar introduction on his own. Davis still uses a muted trumpet but plays with a brighter tone and a more passionate feel. He improvises for two choruses and an extra four-bar phrase, and is followed by Coltrane soloing for four choruses. As usual, the saxophonist incorporates the use of rapid notes with irregular and unusual phrasing, the style known as sheets of sound.\(^{19}\) Evans is the third soloist, and improvises for only one chorus. Before Davis plays the

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\(^{19}\) The term is coined by jazz critic Ira Gitler in 1958 to describe Coltrane’s unique improvisational style.
head-out from the bridge, bassist Chambers begins a solo with a four-bar paraphrase
of the melody and then deviates from the melody for the remaining twelve measures.

**Melodic approach**

Evans deliberately presents his material in a logical manner. He develops his
ideas by maintaining the melodic contour (Example 22). Incorporating different
rhythms, he uses the tonic (F) as a target note, and ornaments it with surrounding
scale notes (Example 23). In addition, the lengths of the motif and note durations
within the motif are augmented or diminished.

Example 22. Evans. Motif 1 (mm. 13-16).


Evans makes use of chromaticism in various manners. His melodic lines consist
of many chord tones. Instead of playing those notes directly, he approaches them
from their upper or lower chromatic notes (mm. 11, 13-14, 16-17, 32, 35, and 37)
(Example 24).
Many of his upward and downward linear motions comprise chromaticism (mm. 1-8, 15, 30-31, and 32-33). The most obvious example is during the introduction, where he uses only five chromatic notes: ascending from A on top to C# and then descending back to Bb (Example 25). This gives listeners a reasonable aural expectation that the next note should be A, which is the first note of the melody. Though the notes are simple, Evans leisurely displaces them on different beats and varies their rhythms to create a vivid opening for this tune.

His half-step lines also appear in his left-hand counter-melody (Example 26). This inner-voice movement is one of the important characteristics of Evans' sound.
Melodic invention is one of Evans’ crafts. He has the ability to spontaneously create melodies that are original and representative of his ideas. He usually embellishes his melodies by playing around the target notes. The use of enclosure technique is found numerous times; for example, on the third of the F chord in mm. 11 and 32-33 (Example 27). Additionally, enclosures can be found in mm. 22-23, 34-35, and 38 which approach the target note with not only a half step above but also two half steps below (Example 28).
Bebop scales are applied during his improvisation. For instance, he uses an F bebop major scale in m. 11, G bebop minor scales in mm. 18 and 29, and an F bebop dominant scale in m. 35 (Example 29).

Example 29. Evans. Bebop scales (mm. 11, 18, and 35).

In addition to bebop scales, Evans also applies upper extensions to enrich his lines (Example 30). He embellishes the third of FM7 with an A-7 in mm. 12-13, the fifth of G-(M7) with a Bb(b5b7) and the third of G-7 with a D7 in m. 29, and the fifth of G-7 with a D- in mm. 17 and 37. These ornamental triads and seventh chords are played in broken chords with rhythmic subtleties.

Example 30. Evans. Upper extensions as embellishments (mm. 12-13, 17-18, 29, and 37).

Evans greatly uses upper extensions such as ninths and thirteenths on major and dominant chords, as well as ninths, elevenths, and thirteenths on minor chords. There
are some elevenths on C7 (mm. 20, 22, 26, and 40), F7 (m. 13), D7 (m. 14), and F (mm. 39 and 41). All of those elevenths are played as quick triplets or sixteenth-notes, so the passages do not sound dissonant at all. Evans also uses altered tones in some spots to make his lines more colorful (Example 31).

Example 31. Evans. Upper extensions and altered notes (mm. 21-23 and 34).

There are some apparently nonfunctional repetitions in Evans’ improvisation. He prefers connecting the third to the fifth on G-7 (Example 32), either upwards (mm. 17, 21, and 29) or downwards (mm. 10, 17-18, and 37).

Example 32. Evans. Connection from the third to the fifth on G-7 (mm. 10, 17-18, and 37).

Many of his lines consist of a broken scale pattern in thirds, especially minor thirds. As a result, there are many arpeggiated lines in his solo (Example 33). Some interesting intervals also can be found, such as perfect fourths in m. 22 and octaves in
m. 29 (Example 34). One of the most common improvised techniques, a third moving to a flat ninth, happens only once, on a C7 in m. 22.

Example 33. Evans. Broken scale patterns in thirds (mm. 20-21).

Example 34. Evans. Intervallic lines (mm. 22 and 29).

Evans develops his melodic lines in the middle register of the keyboard. His lowest note is F3 (m. 30) and the highest note is Bb5 (m. 34). Relatively, in the bridge (mm. 25-32) he uses the lower register and simpler melodic notes than elsewhere. Unlike the other three soloists of this piece, who either quote or paraphrase the melody in their solos, Evans shows originality throughout.

**Harmonic approach**

Deeply influenced by the French impressionists, Evans brings Debussian chord voicings to support his flexible and flowing melodic lines. He begins this tune with a
Debussy harmony, which he plays as a melody in perfect fourths adding a minor second above the lower note over a C pedal (example 35). He uses the thirteenth, seventh, and ninth of a dominant seventh chord, and keeps the harmonic grip in the right hand moving up and down chromatically. Because of the half-step intervals within the harmony, the introduction sounds dissonant. Interestingly, Davis plays the melody up one whole step for the first four measures, then returns to the actual key.

Example 35. Evans. Introduction (mm. 1-8).

Most of his pitch collections are related to the chord of the moment, except that in mm. 16 and 40 the harmony is anticipated one beat ahead (Example 36).

Profoundly influenced by George Russell’s harmonic approach, Evans uses some unresolved dissonances to create tensions (Example 37): the Db on G-7 and the Ab on F.
Example 36. Evans. Anticipated harmonies (mm. 16 and 40).

Example 37. Evans. Unresolved dissonances (mm. 30-31 and 33).

The harmonic drama is enhanced when he reharmonizes the original chord progression. Rather than playing a ii-V (G-7-C7) pattern, Evans inserts (mm. 15 and 27) or even replaces it with (mm. 14 and 34) a secondary dominant chord (D7) to weaken the original key (F). He usually alters the D7 chords to further weaken the key center and give these chords more power (Example 38).

Example 38. Evans. Altered secondary dominants (mm. 14 and 34).

Sometimes his solo reflects an ambiguity of chord quality (Example 39). He plays a major third on G-7 in m. 16, a major seventh and a dominant seventh at the same time on G- in mm. 18 and 29, and a minor third on F in m. 33.
Example 39. Evans. Chord ambiguity (m. 18).

With the exception of m. 33, Evans presents his solo with single-note lines. Unlike later in his career, his solo lines are not harmonized.

He usually reduces the self-comping to two-note rootless voicings with essential notes of the chord (Example 40), such as a tri-tone which consists of thirds and sevenths on dominant seventh chords (mm. 14, 20, and 27), and a perfect fifth on a minor seventh chord (mm. 17, 20, 24, and 29).

Example 40. Evans. Two-note self-comping voicings (m. 20).

Because Evans never limits his left hand to the role of accompaniment, there are interactions between both hands in m. 26 (Example 41). When his right hand develops the motif with simpler ideas, his left hand becomes more elaborate. Instead of the root of G-7, he plays its upper and lower chromatic notes at the same time to result in a major second dissonance. Afterward, he uses two parallel tri-tones chromatically down to connect to another tri-tone in m. 27. Another dialogue
between both hands can be seen in m. 36.

Example 41. Evans. Active self-comping (mm. 25-27).

Rhythmic approach

Evans’ melodic line shows the predominance of sixteenth notes. Owing to his proficient keyboard skill and intensive theoretical training, he expresses musical discourses fluently and expertly. He also uses various groupings of three, five, and six notes and sometimes plays across the barline. This rhythmic elasticity creates an extraordinarily floating feel but never loses the time.

Evans starts his phrases mostly on the beat; sometimes he plays the beginning note a little bit behind the beat to produce a laid-back fashion. Contrastingly, he usually ends his phrases off the beat. He often structures his phrase lengths to two to three measures. The longest phrasing is four measures long, where he develops motif 1 with several descending chromatic passages (mm. 12-16). He is apt at manipulating space, often leaving space between phrases (Example 42). These rhythmic silences can be as short as slightly longer than one beat (m. 21), and as long as over a measure
(mm. 19-20, 28-29, and 35-36).

Example 42. Evans. Rhythmic silences (mm. 17-21).

His playing is predominantly legato and he rarely uses the sustain pedal in this tune. The dynamics are not extreme nor do they change frequently. Most of his sound is of medium volume. Evans punctuates some essential notes (Example 43), such as the starting note of a descending passage (mm. 11, 13-14, 32, 34, 36, and 39-40) and/or the highest melodic note of a passage, and the first note of an arpeggiated chord (mm. 10 and 29).

Example 43. Evans. Accented notes (mm. 10-11).

He sparsely comps for himself in this piece. Even when his right hand is not playing, he leaves the space silence (Example 44). Most of his self-comping is played softly and percussively. The left-hand volume is increased only when both hands are doing interactive dialogues (mm. 26 and 36).
Comping

Davis’ first-chorus solo shows a restrained and contemplative feel. His improvised statement includes lots of space and sustained repeating short phrases as long as four bars. Overall, Evans comps much less for Davis; sometimes he even lays out for an entire measure (mm. 7, 13, 15, 27, 31 and 32 of Davis’ solo). The busiest comping appears during the last bar of the bridge, where the trumpeter takes a whole bar break (Example 45).

Example 45. Evans. The busiest rhythm in the comping.

His comping is dominated by short and light notes, played on either downbeats or upbeats. The longer notes usually occur while Davis rests or plays sustained notes.

Evans comps with a good balance of downbeats and upbeats. He tends to comp on
the off-beat on beats two or four, or both of them, but also for contrast on the beat on one or three (Example 46).

Example 46. Evans. Balanced comping rhythms (the first four bars of Davis’ first-chorus solo).

A pair of eighth notes is used many times on various beats other than the first one, and most of the time the latter note is played shortly. When he comps with this rhythmic pattern, usually, the highest notes of the pairing are chromatically connected.

Comparisons to Red Garland

From the melodic viewpoint, both pianists present their music logically but in different ways. Garland uses many transposed sequences which move in thirds or half steps. He also maintains the melodic shape to develop his short and simple motifs. On the other hand, Evans utilizes this same technique to develop longer and more complicated lines. Another commonly improvised device, rhythmic displacement, can be found in the two pianists’ solos. Garland expands the note duration of the original motif and Evans varies the repeated notes on different beats.
of a measure.

The improvisations of both pianists display a high degree of chromaticism. They usually approach or embellish the target notes from an adjacent chromatic note. They incorporate enclosures in their lines, but only Evans encloses the essential note with its lowered two half steps. There are chromatic lines in both pianists' melodies. Garland prefers constructing lines in which each chromatic line is embellished through the use of interwoven adjacent notes. Inversely, Evans plays upward and downward chromatic scales both in the right-hand melodies and the left-hand countermelodies.

Garland applies blues scales in his bouncy improvisation, which correspond to the vein of the original composition. Evans uses bebop scales and their embellished devices to make his music sound more nervous and exciting. Both of them make great use of upper extensions and altered tones to colorize their solos. Interestingly, they do not avoid the natural elevenths on dominant chords.

One of Garland’s habitual techniques to play leaps from the third to the flat ninth on a dominant seventh chord, but this is found in Evans’ improvisation only once. Evans’ solo consists largely of broken scale patterns and he usually connects the third to the fifth on G-7, whereas these two devices are missing in Garland’s solo.
Garland quotes and paraphrases the melody in his solo, but Evans improvises from his original creations.

Red Garland uses a much higher register (G4-F6) than Bill Evans (F3-Bb5). Especially when his melodic lines become block-chord lines, he uses the extreme range of the keyboard.

From the harmonic viewpoint, unlike most of Evans' music, his improvisation of this piece consists of single-note lines except during the introduction. His Debussian harmony, which uses the fixed grip moving up and down chromatically, sounds unusual to the ear. Conversely, Garland plays more harmonies in his improvisation. He voices much of the right hand in chords during the introduction. He also harmonizes chromatic lines without changing the interval structure from one note to the next. Vertically, when he is featuring block-chord passages, a lush sound and a slightly dissonant effect results. Horizontally, the melody is very concordant because the melodic notes consist of chord or scale tones which are interspersed with chromatic notes.

Both pianists enrich the harmony by inserting a secondary dominant chord of ii7. When playing this chord, they usually alter it to further intensify the tension.

Another altered chord happens on the V7 and the most frequently altered note is the
flat ninth. Occasionally, they change the chord quality on a specific chord or play two
decisive notes simultaneously (such as M3 and m3, or M7 or m7) to obscure the
modality. Their exquisite manipulations of harmony make their music recognizable
and beautiful. That's why Miles Davis once praised his two pianists: “Another reason
I like Red Garland and Bill Evans is that when they play a chord, they play a sound
more than a chord.”

Comparatively, Garland’s harmonic approach is more complex. He tastefully
uses the tri-tone substitution to make the music more interesting. He sounds more
modern by utilizing polychords over a particular chord.

Evans’ left-hand voicings while self-comping comprise the most two important
notes of a chord: the third and seventh. His left hand is not limited to the role of
accompaniment; instead, it creates the inner voices and interacts with the right hand.
Garland’s voicings are much thicker, often in four notes. His self-comping functions
only as accompaniment and always anticipates the chord a half beat.

From the rhythmic viewpoint, Garland’s solo is predominantly eighth-note
oriented, occasionally using longer note values such as quarter notes, dotted quarter
notes, and a half note. He also plays short rests between successive phrases. These

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20 Carr, Miles Davis: The Definitive Biography, 134.
longer notes and brief space provide listeners some aural breaths and produce a relaxing feel. Evans’ music sounds more agitated because it consists mainly of sixteenth notes and is interspersed with triplets and sextuplets. His virtuosity in using various note groupings and rhythmic flexibility further increase the excitement. The relentlessly fast and somewhat dissonant passages tightly draw the listener’s emotion and prevent them from relaxing until the long rest between phrases arrives.

Garland’s length of phrase is highly irregular, ranging from one to nine bars. He tends to start and end the phrase on the offbeat. Evans’ phrases are shorter, mostly lasting for two to three measures. He usually begins a phrase on the beat but ends it more randomly.

Both of the two pianists emphasize the highest melodic note of a phrase. Garland also occasionally stresses some particular notes and this results in a surprise aurally. Although Evans’ solo seldom uses the sustain pedal in this piece, his solo is predominantly legato and has little dynamic change. Relatively, Garland’s has more dynamic variations. He plays the single-note lines crisply and staccato, and plays the block-chord lines lightly with a little pedal.

Although Evans comps for himself sparsely and lightly, the rhythm of his self-comping is diverse and presents a good balance of upbeats and offbeats. Garland
sticks to the staccato eighth notes on the end of two and four in the single-note lines, and switches to rhythmic unison with the melody in the block-chord lines.

From the viewpoint of comping, both pianists play behind Davis with a light touch. Evans comps much less than Garland and his comping is dominated by short notes. Most of his comping creates chromatic counter lines and provides an interactive complement for the trumpeter’s rhythmic silences. Garland’s comping is much more aggressive and rhythmic. He comps for Davis almost every measure balancing short and long notes, varying the rhythmic displacement, and anticipating the harmony. Garland’s bouncy comping not only gives the soloist great support but also generates a driving feel for the collective creation.

One of the main differences between Evans and Garland is that Evans’ comping seems to retard the tempos somewhat. But this is best for Davis and Coltrane, both of whom are adventurous harmonic explorers. Evans brings his sophisticated harmonic concept to the group and keeps the pace with them to search for new harmonic possibilities.
Chapter 5

WYNTON KELLY

Brief Biography

Wynton Kelly (December 2, 1931 - April 12, 1971) was born in Jamaica. He moved to Brooklyn, New York at age 4 and developed his career in the United States. He studied bass and theory at Music and Art High School and Metropolitan Vocational. He started his professional career while a teenager, and his earliest performance experiences were as part of the Rhythm and Blues scene. Kelly played his first important gig with tenor saxophonist Ray Abrams in 1947. He also worked with bands led by Hot Lips Page, Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson, and Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis. In 1949, he accompanied for vocalist Babs Gonzales in a band that included J.J. Johnson, Roy Haynes, and Sonny Rollins.

Kelly's first big break came in 1951, when he was singer Dinah Washington's pianist. Later that year, he made his debut album as a leader for Blue Note Records. After serving in the army (1952-1954), he worked with Dinah Washington (1955-1957), Charles Mingus (1956-1957), and the Dizzy Gillespie big band (1957). He also recorded with J.J. Johnson, Sonny Rollins, Johnny Griffin, and Hank Mobley.
His biggest breakthrough in his career was the stint with Miles Davis (1959-1963). Davis’ alto player Adderley recalled:

We went into Birdland and Red [Garland] was the kind of cat who was notoriously late. We all knew we were going to start playing without a piano. One night before we were in Birdland we went down to Brooklyn to see Dizzy’s band...He had Sam Jones, Wynton Kelly, Candido and Sonny Stitt. Miles just spent all evening listening to Wynton. So we went into Birdland and we had been there about a week and Red was always late. One night Wynton was there when we started and Miles asked him to sit in. When Red came, Wynton was playing. Miles told Red, “Wynton’s got the gig.”

With Davis, they recorded such monumental albums as Kind of Blue (on which Kelly played only “Freddie Freeloader”), At the Blackhawk, and Someday My Prince Will Come. Kelly’s superb swing feel, refined harmony sense, and subtle comping earned him high praise from Davis: “a combination of Red Garland and Bill Evans, so we could go any way we wanted to.” In addition, with bassist Paul Chambers and drummer Jimmy Cobb, they established a formidable rapport in the rhythm section.

Improvisation

In 1961, Miles Davis and his quintet had a booking at the Blackhawk in San

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21 Ashley Kahn, Kind of Blue, 85.  
22 Miles Davis and Quincy Troupe, Miles, The Autobiography, 241.
Francisco, and two of these nights were recorded for a live album. The Blackhawk "was a small and shabby jazz club...but it had good acoustics, and was renowned for the quality of the music to be heard there." 23 Unlike *Newport 1958* and his other earlier live recordings, *Blackhawk* is the first album where the trumpeter and his group members were aware that their live performances would later be released by Columbia.

This version of *Bye Bye Blackbird* lasts almost ten minutes, and has the most cheerful and energetic feel and the fastest tempo among the three selections. The personnel of this quintet include some replacements for those of the previous one: the tenor saxophonist is replaced by Hank Mobley and the pianist by Wynton Kelly. Like the other two versions, this one is performed with an order of (1) intro, (2) head in, (3) solos (with the last solo of two and a half choruses being played by Kelly), (4) second half of head out, (5) outro. The performance is launched by Kelly's joyful motivic eight-bar introduction, where he displays a sparkling sense of swing. Davis plays a solo that lasts two choruses plus four bars incorporating his signatures at that time: melodic and spacious phrasing, and the use of a harmon mute. Although he still leaves space between phrases, he plays long phrases consisting of shorter note values

23 Carr, *Miles Davis: The Definitive Biography*, 175.
and busier note movements. Mobley, the second soloist, blows a five-chorus improvisation. His tone is not as aggressive as Coltrane’s; contrastingly, his style is lyric, subtle, and a little laid-back.

**Melodic approach**

Kelly’s improvisation is largely built upon motivic development. The first evidence is his use of two-bar motifs (Example 47) to start this piece. The motif consists of chord tones that are interspersed with pinches of chromatics. The motif is developed with a similar melodic shape, but each time the motif is changed a little bit by altering the intervals between adjacent notes. Another similar instance (motif 6) can be seen in mm. 80-81.

Example 47. Kelly. Motif 1 (mm. 1-6).

Kelly also begins his solo with motivic statements. The first half of the first chorus comprises two statements and their variations which are manipulated in various manners. The first motif (motif 2) is stated twice and extended with new
ideas (Example 48). The second motif (motif 3) retains its beginning and ending parts and new material is interjected between them at first, and then the motif is extended into a long melodic statement by using its fragments (Example 49).


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\begin{music}\text{Motif 2}\end{music}
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The second chorus is also begun with motif developments. This time Kelly picks up partial melodic elements of the motif (motif 4) and transforms them into two riffs, which are voiced in the same way and played in a similar rhythm (Example 50).


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\begin{music}\text{Motif 4}\end{music}
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Another instance appears in mm. 60-64. The motif (motif 5) is condensed into a
short sentence that is followed by a transposed sequence with a longer development (Example 51).

Example 51. Kelly. Motif 5 (mm. 60-64).

\[ \begin{align*}
&\text{Motif 5} \\
&\text{Condensed phrase} \quad \text{Transposed sequence}
\end{align*} \]

The climax of his solo is achieved by developing the motif (motif 7), gradually increasing volume, and delving into a different harmonic texture (Example 52). Kelly starts the phrases with one-bar triadic arpeggios (mm. 82 and 84) and ends them with variations.

Example 52. Kelly. Motif 7 (mm. 82-85).

\[ \begin{align*}
&\text{Motif 7} \\
&\text{Condensed phrase} \quad \text{Transposed sequence}
\end{align*} \]

Kelly is apt at using brief sequences, which often appear within one measure, to make his improvisation more understandable and predictable (Example 53). For example, he interjects sixteenth-note turns to enrich the melodic color of eighth-note passages (mm. 38 and 74). The sequential manipulations happen as briefly as a half
beat (mm. 27 and 51) or as long as a beat (mm. 23, 61, 82 and 84). In addition, the
triplet triadic arpeggiation is stretched into a longer duration (m. 58).


Like his two predecessors, Kelly ingeniously uses chromaticism to connect his
melodic statement smoothly and add a tinge of dissonance. Most of the chromatics
are played briefly, either passing tones or neighbor tones, and resolved immediately,
so the passages do not sound harsh at all (Example 54). Kelly’s melodic lines heavily
rely on bebop devices, such as enclosures and sixteenth-note turns. Seven of eight
closures in this solo are on an A (mm. 11, 13-14, 39, 59, 76, 85, and 88). Mostly
the note A is the third of the F chords, but it is the ninth of G-7 and the thirteenth of
C7 as well (Example 55). Advanced enclosures, which approach the target note from
its upper half step and then two lower half steps, also appear many times (mm. 25,
Example 54. Kelly. Chromatic passing and neighbor tones (mm. 18 and 21).

Example 55. Kelly. Enclosures (mm. 11, 76, and 85, as well as 25, 75, and 78).

Furthermore, the chromaticism shows in his successive half-step lines (Example 56). Kelly usually plays chromatic passages no longer than three beats. Most of the time the passages start and end on chord tones.


Kelly’s pitch collection is based mostly on scale tones. He possesses an
exceptional ability to construct appealing melodies by randomly selecting notes from specific scales. He seldom spells out every note of an applied scale in sequence, except that in mm. 49 and 50 he successively plays the D half-whole diminished scale and the G Dorian scale note by note (Example 57).

Example 57. Kelly. Scale-note spellings (mm. 49-50).

Because of the rhythm and blues and bebop backgrounds, Kelly sometimes alternatively incorporates bebop devices and blues figures to create divergent flavors (Example 58). For example, he plays from the third chromatically down to the root of the C7 (m. 53), one of the common bebop devices, and then he immediately shifts to an F blues scale in the following two measures.

Example 58. Kelly. Alternation between bebop and blues scales (mm. 53-55).

The melodic line occasionally includes chord spellings, either triads or seventh chords (Example 59). The initial note of a broken chord is not confined to the chord
tones of the moment, but all of the spelled notes are compatible with their corresponding chords of the moment. For instance, he uses the thirteenth (D) of the FM7 to spell out a D-7 in m. 44; the root (Db) of the Db7 to spell out an Eb-7 chord backwards in m. 64; the ninth (D) and the flat ninth (Db) of the C7alt to spell out a G- chord and a Gb chord respectively in m. 81.

Example 59. Kelly. Chord spellings (mm. 44, 64, and 81).

Kelly makes his solo more interesting by frequently using chordal extensions and altered notes (Example 60). He does not avoid playing an eleventh on a dominant chord; he uses many elevenths on C7. But those notes are usually played quickly and do not draw aural attention.

Example 60. Kelly. Chordal extensions and altered tones (mm. 27, 58, and 60).

Kelly uses a wide range of the keyboard. Before the block-chord passages, his melodic notes frequently range between F#3 (m. 48) and Bb6 (mm. 50-51). When the melody becomes block-chord lines (mm. 82-87), the register becomes much higher,
between D5 and C7. From the viewpoint of register, he tends to phrase melodies with an arch form. That is, the phrase starts with a relatively low note and in the middle of the phrase, begins to build tension by moving to a higher register before returning to the lower register.

**Harmonic approach**

The harmony of the introduction comprises the tonic and its dominant chord. Before the climax in mm. 82-87, Kelly’s solo consists mostly of single-note lines that are sometimes voiced harmonized in various ways (Example 61), such as a major second (m. 29), a perfect fourth (m. 56), a tri-tone (m. 64), and a minor sixth and an octave (m. 89). He often voices the melody in thirds (mm. 1-6, 40, 55, and 70), especially in the introduction. The sound is further enriched by using the thirds and doubling the melody down an octave at the same time (mm. 43-48). When the melody becomes block-chord lines, Kelly always doubles the melody and adds a note within the octave. The added notes consist of different intervals, such as sixths and perfect fifths. These three-note harmonies combined with his three to four-note self-comping generate a lush sound and an ample excitement.
Kelly usually improvises over the specific chord change, but occasionally he creates a harmonic surprise by anticipating the chord by a half beat, and the anticipated note is usually tied to the next bar (Example 62).

Another technique is his use of blues notes to increase the harmonic interest. In some passages, the pianist plays the minor third as a light grace note, resolving to the major third immediately (Example 63), which results in a bended note. Most of the dissonances in this solo are resolved quickly, except that in m. 26 Kelly leaves an unresolved Db on an F chord.
Kelly’s mastery of reharmonization shows in many ways. He uses lots of secondary dominants on the ii7 (G-7) chords to enhance the harmonic color (mm. 36, 37, and 61). The secondary dominant chord (D7) is given more power by altering notes, such as the sharp ninth and eleventh, as well as the flat ninth and thirteenth (mm. 19, 29, 49, 51, 69, and 83); adding a half-diminished chord before the chord, resulting in a minor ii-V-i progression (m. 17); and using a tri-tone substitution (m. 79).

Harmonic tension is achieved by incorporating chromatic chord progressions (Example 64). In the bridge of the second chorus, Kelly plays a F7-E7-Eb7 progression chromatically approaching the D7 in m. 61. In addition, a G-7 chord is occasionally preceded by a dominant seventh chord, with their roots a tri-tone apart. And the dominant seventh chord is preceded by its ii7 chord each time (mm. 32 and 63-64).
Example 64. Kelly. Chromatic chord progressions (mm. 58-61 and 31-33).

Kelly’s left hand not only accompanies for the melody but also provides short countermelodies during melodic rests (Example 65). The self-comping is dominated by rootless voicings that consist of various note groupings, ranging from one to four notes. The voicings consist of different combinations of intervals, such as tri-tones, minor seconds, fourths, sixths, and sevenths, as well as incorporate contrary and parallel motions within the self-comping, as well as repeating chords. Usually, the most essential notes of a chord (thirds and sevenths) are included in the voicing. However, Kelly sometimes uses other color notes to create an interesting countermelody, often achieved by interpreting and/or anticipating chord changes.

Rhythmic approach

Kelly’s solo is dominated by eighth-note lines, which usually start and end on offbeats, and is interspersed with double-time phrases to propel the momentum. He also produces a tension-release effect by alternating agitated triplet passages and relaxing longer-note lines (mm. 82-87).

Each phrase is finished with energy, often with an accent on the final notes. Punctuations also appear in many spots, such as the lowest and/or the highest melodic note of a phrase, an initial note of a phrase, or a random note that has no particular characteristic. He uses little space between phrases, often shorter than four beats. Kelly articulates his statements with a bouncing touch. In other words, his
melody sounds non-legato except during the short-note fast passages. He incorporates more dynamic changes in his improvisation, partially because of his use of harmonic voicings. When he plays the melodies with harmonies, he also increases the volume. There is minimal use of the sustain pedal during his solo.

His self-comping presents splendid variation of note duration, dynamics, articulation, and rhythmic displacement. He is not afraid to leave space in the left hand when the melody continues. He occasionally lays out for more than one measure. The first measure of comping happens during the fifth measure of his solo.

According to the harmonic analysis in the previous paragraph; Kelly's self-comping functions as accompaniment and interactive dialogues alternatively. When he accompanies for the melody, he usually plays briefly, lightly, and percussively on the offbeats of two and four. But sometimes he hits on the downbeats; alters these short punches with long notes, mostly on upbeats; and rhythmically doubles a specific melodic note to enhance it (Example 66). Kelly even incorporates rhythmic unison during his block-chord climax (mm. 82-87).
When the left hand interacts with the melody, Kelly often pairs two eighth notes, with the first one shorter and the second one longer and accented (Example 67). He also makes the interactive lines more interesting by manipulating the articulation and rhythm (Example 68).
Example 68. Kelly. Self-comping: countermelodies II (mm. 35, 43-46, 47 and 68, 59-60, and 73-74).

Comping

The *Blackhawk* is remarkable for the extraordinarily propelled playing of the rhythm section and their interplay with the trumpet and saxophone. During Davis’ solo, Kelly incessantly responds to and dialogues with the trumpeter’s phrases, and never lays out for a measure. He usually fills out the space that Davis leaves and provides melodic responses and rhythmic momentum (Example 69).

Example 69. Kelly. Interactive comping (mm. 9-12 and 29-32 of Davis’ solo).

Kelly’s comping is aggressive and diverse, and has few static patterns. He
frequently changes the highest notes over a single chord, alternates note durations, diversifies rhythmic displacements, shifts between the medium and medium high registers, and incorporates extreme dynamic changes. He comps more on downbeats than upbeats, approximately at a rate of 2:1.

Sporadically, an unexpectedly punch on the keyboard achieves an aural surprise, either a sustained note or a staccato note, and the punch is the only event happening within the measure. An unusual comping technique Kelly comps is with a sustained broken-chord on the first beat (mm. 23-24 of Davis' solo).

Comparisons to Red Garland

From a melodic viewpoint, both Garland and Kelly use a lot of motivic development, but Kelly applies this technique using more divergent methods. They develop motifs with a similar melodic shape. Garland's phrases are relatively shorter, typically around two beats. Kelly uses a longer contour that usually lasts for two bars. Transposed sequences appear in Garland's solo many times, but happen only once in Kelly's solo. Kelly does not develop a motif by changing its note durations where Garland does; however, he picks up melodic fragments by either extending with new material or condensing into a short phrase. Kelly plays many brief sequences within a
passage, but these rarely appear in Garland's statements.

There is a high degree of chromaticism in both pianists' improvisations. It is achieved by incorporating chromatic passing and neighbor tones, altered notes, turns, and enclosures. There are chromatic lines in their solos. Unlike Garland's indirect (interspersed with ornamental notes) and long descending-lines, Kelly's are much shorter (not longer than three beats) and successive half-step lines, either ascending or descending. Kelly's chromaticism also appears in left-hand interactive countermelodies.

Garland arouses listeners' familiarization by paraphrasing the original melody, but Kelly improvises with originality. Both pianists use many upper extensions in their melodies and construct their melodies by interweaving linear motions and chord-spelling passages. Garland usually presents a blues flavor. Kelly applies more variety of scales, such as blues scales, bebop scales, and a half-whole diminished scale, and includes more chord-spelling phrases, such as arpeggiated triads and seventh chords. He also plays some scalar spelling passages that are absent in Garland's solo. Garland plays many common leaps, connecting the third to the flat ninth on dominant chords, but this rarely happens in Kelly's lines.

Kelly uses a wider range of the keyboard (F#3-Bb6) and more frequently varies
registers than Garland (G4-F6). Both of them reach the extreme register when their lines shift to block chords, and use these block-chord passages to build climaxes and conclude improvised statements.

From the harmonic viewpoint, both pianists launch *Bye Bye Blackbird* with a harmonized introduction. Garland starts from the ii7 chord, then transposes up and down a minor third, and ends on the V7 chord. The melody consists almost entirely of three-note harmonies, which are voiced with chord tones, and the self-comping is predominantly shell voicings, which are played in the same rhythm as the melodic lines. Kelly’s introduction comprises tonic and dominant chords, and starts and ends on the same chord, C7. The melodic lines are predominantly two-note harmonies in thirds, and include a linear passage in the last two measures. There are spare bass motions connected by roots.

Before reaching the climax, Garland’s improvisation comprises only single-note melodies; Kelly’s is dominated by single-note lines, supplemented with harmonies at various intervals. He sometimes anticipates the following chord a half beat ahead. Both pianists use block-chord passages, which are supported by left-hand self-comping in rhythmic unison, to achieve the height of the solo. Garland’s block chords consist exclusively of an octave and a fifth (from the lower note) within the
octave, and the passages are alternatively supported by four-note root position chords and rootless voicings. Kelly’s right-hand melody consists of an octave with a fifth or sixth (from the lower note) within the octave, and the self-comping is predominantly fewer-note rootless voicings. In the last two bars of his solo, the tension is released by returning to a single-note blues figure.

Horizontally, both pianists leave little unresolved dissonance in their lines. But vertically, they create dissonance through reharmonization to enrich the harmonic color. They frequently use secondary dominants on G-7s and alter many dominant chords. Garland occasionally uses polychords and tri-tone substitutions, and he often changes the quality of the substituted chords. Kelly uses fewer tri-tone substitutions, but he creates chromatic chord progressions.

In general, Garland’s self-comping is relatively thicker, often in four notes, and functions only as accompaniment. In contrast, Kelly’s self-comping plays a more active role, frequently dialoguing with melodies, and uses various numbers of notes.

From the rhythmic viewpoint, both pianists’ solos are predominantly eighth notes, which usually start and end on offbeats, and include short rests between phrases. Kelly sometimes interjects double-time phrases into his lines. Unlike Kelly’s even-bar phrases, Garland’s are very irregular.
There are many similarities in their articulations. Both of them sparsely use the sustain pedal, accent the highest melodic note of a phrase, bring surprise by randomly stressing a particular note, and play single-note lines percussively. But Kelly incorporates more dynamic changes in his solo and has a heavier touch during block-chord lines.

In addition to playing rhythmic unison in the block-chord passages, both pianists usually anticipate the following chord when they comp for themselves on offbeats. Garland’s self-comping has a light and bouncing touch, and always appears on the ‘and’ of two and four. Kelly’s shows various dimensions. He frequently alters short and long notes as well as upbeats and downbeats; uses more frequent dynamic contrasts; responds to melodies with a brief rhythmic figure; and occasionally lays out for one to four measures.

From the viewpoint of comping, Garland uses the same rhythmic pattern (upbeats of two and four) a lot, but incorporates more variations in rhythms and dynamics than in the self-comping. Even then he comps sparsely on downbeats, which are usually on the first beat of the measure.

Kelly’s comping shows much more aggression than either his self-comping or Garland’s comping. In addition to comping in every measure, he keeps and propels
momentum by harmonically and rhythmically interacting with the soloist, varying
note durations, rhythmic displacements, dynamics and register, and suddenly
punching on the keyboard.

Comparisons to Bill Evans

From the melodic viewpoint, there are many resemblances between Evans and
Kelly. They develop their ideas with a similar melodic contour, slightly changing the
intervals between adjacent notes and expanding with new ideas. Unlike Evans’
chromatic fast-note short passages, Kelly’s show simplicity in both melody and
rhythm, and follows a longer contour. He also uses motivic fragments to construct
statements by extending or inserting new material, and varies partial rhythms for the
fragments. Evans tends to repeat a single note using different rhythms and ornament
the note with its neighboring notes.

Both pianists’ chromaticism appears in both hands and is achieved by similar
approaches, such as incorporating CPTs and CNTs, enclosures and
two-half-step-below enclosures, and successive chromatic lines. Their solos include
various bebop scales and embellished techniques, and many upper extensions and
altered notes. But only Kelly applies blues scales, and he often alternates bebop
devices and blues figures in his improvisation.

There are different repetitions in Kelly’s and Evans’ solos. Kelly prefers including arpeggiated triads and seventh chords in his line. But Evans frequently plays scales in thirds, especially minor thirds.

Both pianists’ lowest notes are a half step apart (Kelly’s is F#3 and Evans’ is F3). But Kelly reaches a much higher register, especially when he moves to block-chord lines.

From the harmonic viewpoint, Kelly’s harmonies in the introduction are typically less lush and dense than those of Evans. Both pianists build their harmonized melodies upon simple bass lines. Whereas Kelly uses roots to compose bass lines, Evans plays C pedals rhythmically throughout to support dissonant Debussian chords. The chords comprise three notes, in which the upper two notes are a minor second and a perfect fourth away from the lowest note, and move chromatically, ranging from FM7 to AM7. Kelly’s introduction sounds much more consonant, consisting of two-note harmonies in thirds and a single-note scalar passage.

Contrastingly, Evans plays single-note lines throughout his solo, and harmonies appear only in his sparse self-comping. Kelly’s tendency of using predominantly
single-note lines and achieving the climax with block-chord passages makes his playing sound more colorful.

Horizontally, both pianists leave little unresolved dissonance in their melodic lines. They often reharmonize chord progressions, through the incorporation of chord anticipations, secondary dominants, and altered dominant chords, in order to increase the dissonant tinge. But Evans does not use a tri-tone substitution or create chromatic chord changes during this piece as Kelly does.

Their self-comping functions as accompaniment and countermelodies. Unlike Evans’ predominantly two-note voicings, Kelly’s have more combinations of note numbers, ranging from one to four notes.

From a rhythmic viewpoint, Evans’ solo generally shows rhythmic elasticity. His lines are dominated by sixteenth notes and are occasionally interspersed with different note groupings. Kelly’s phrases sound more relaxed because he employs mostly eighth notes interspersed with triplets and sixteenth notes. He also makes his statements more fervent by interjecting double-time phrases.

Evans uses fewer rests within a phrase to produce a more passionate feel. But he releases the tension by allowing long rests between phrases. Sometimes he lays out both hands to create complete silence, and this provokes the listener’s
expectations for the following discourse. Kelly's solo sounds more incessant, with a slightly longer rest within a phrase and shorter space between phrases. He seldom uses complete silence in this piece, except during the beginning of his solo.

Both pianists tend to play even-bar phrasing and begin phrases on upbeats. Whereas Evans prefers relatively short phrases (mostly ranging from two to three measures) and finishes phrases on downbeats, Kelly uses longer phrasing; generally two to four measures with the longest one lasting for six measures, and ends phrases mostly on offbeats.

Unlike Kelly's percussive touch and wider dynamic change, Evans' articulation is basically legato and he rarely uses the sustain pedal in this piece. He maintains the volume in a medium range with accents on the highest melodic note of a passage.

Both pianists use diverse rhythms when comping and interacting with their right-hand lines. But unlike Evans' spare and soft self-comping, Kelly's is much more aggressive.

From the viewpoint of comping, both pianists fill in the trumpeter's melodic blanks both melodically and rhythmically, and comp with various rhythmic displacements. Evans comps much less for Davis and occasionally even lays out for an entire measure. His comping is comprised predominantly of short notes and
presents a good balance of downbeats and upbeats, but he tends to play
downbeat-compings on one and three, and upbeat-compings on the ‘ands’ of two and
four. His comping is rather soft and falls mostly in the middle range of the keyboard.
Kelly comps aggressively and frequently interacts with Davis, and he never lays out
for a complete measure. He also includes a wide dynamic change and sporadically
produces surprise abrupt punches on the keyboard. He regularly alternates short and
long notes as well as medium and medium high registers. Although he often changes
downbeat and upbeat rhythms, he plays twice as many downbeat compings as upbeat.
Chapter 6

Conclusions

Jazz vocabulary was vastly enriched by the music of Miles Davis' groups. Their most prominent contribution probably was constantly introducing new elements into jazz. Davis was involved in many recording sessions and live concerts, and played steady engagements at clubs as well. The groups were celebrated for their dialogues between the rhythm section and horn players, and collective creations of dramatic tension and release. As a leader of small groups, Davis knew what kind of sidemen he was searching for, but he rarely gave his group members specific directions. The musicians had the liberty and opportunity to develop their own “voices” through abundant performances. Hence, “playing in Miles’s band has often led good players to become great.” Reciprocally, because of them, the group could experiment with and delve into different territories, and pioneered cutting edge musical styles.

None of the three pianists studied were born into a musical family, but they learned any kind of instruments from their early ages. Whereas Evans and Kelly studied piano since the childhood and began to perform professionally as teenagers, Garland was a late starter but a quick developer. Never receiving any academic

training, he learned jazz on the job and through studying the recordings of Count Basie and Nat Cole, and receiving instructions from Art Tatum and Bud Powell.

Evans received formal educations in classical theory, performance, and composition, and was influenced by the French Impressionist music and George Russell’s harmonic approaches. Kelly studied bass and theory at high school.

Kelly’s early performances mostly related to the rhythm and blues, and he established his fame by accompanying for vocalist Dinah Washington at age 20.

Evans made his place for playing Russell’s composition, “All about Rosie,” at age 28.

Garland was relatively unknown until joined Davis’ band at age 32.

Before working with Davis, each pianist had accumulated much professional performance experience. Each of them carried his own stylistic signature into Davis’ group and grew from there. Garland brought his strong background in blues and bebop, Jamal-like touch, and superb swing feel to the quintet. Evans contributed his rich theoretic and harmonic knowledge as well as lyrical beauty to the group. And Kelly combined Garland’s swing, Evans’ lyricism, and his substantial background in R&B, blues, and bebop. Each of them provided the group with satisfying support and outstanding improvisations.

A jazz pianist has many options for the development of his/her individual style.
There are many available records which make it possible to hear how pianists treat their artistic statements. Analyzing and comparing performances are the best way to learn about the many possibilities to making good music. However, because every jazz pianist strives for exploring something new or conveying different thoughts for each occasion, he/she may change the approach from time to time, even though playing the same piece or working with the same people. Here are some suggestions for further studies.

Since this study examines the three pianists’ compings only for Davis’ first-chorus solo, an extended research could analyze their compings for the heads, the rest of Davis’ solo, other group members’ solos, and the outros. Although jazz is a spontaneous art, arrangements do exit at the same time. The arrangement usually includes the intro, head, interlude, and outro. A close look at the whole piece will assist in realizing how differently these pianists treat a pre-set and a spontaneous work. Furthermore, jazz musicians always express their improvised statements by their own approaches and usually build their solos chorus-by-chorus. Reviewing the complete solos of Davis and other group members in a wider scope will help understand how each pianist interacts with different soloists and how he propels and releases tension. Finally, comparing different versions of the same piece played by
the same pianist will aid in figuring out how his style evolved.
APPENDIX A

Ray Henderson, "Bye Bye Blackbird"
APPENDIX B

Transcription, Red Garland, piano
APPENDIX C

Transcription, Bill Evans, piano
APPENDIX D

Transcription, Wynton Kelly, piano
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