

Concordia University
JHIS 398
The History of Jazz Guitar
Course Outline

Week 1: **The Guitar in America Before 1920**

An introduction to the historical, cultural and technological context of American music in the 19th early 20th centuries. This lecture will examine the guitar's origins in Europe and the American technological advancements (X-bracing, steel strings, larger bodies) that set the stage for the guitar's prominence in the following century. It will also include a discussion of the techniques associated with styles such as early blues, ragtime, parlor music and folk (frailing, fingerpicking, slide, etc.).

Pioneers: Lonnie Johnson & Eddie Lang

An in depth look at two of the earliest pioneers of jazz guitar. This lecture will trace their careers from their early training as violinists, through their adoption of the guitar and seminal recordings with Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington (Johnson), Joe Venuti and Paul Whiteman (Lang) and the duets they recorded together (also significant for being one of the first racially integrated recording sessions). Discussion of the techniques they developed, their similarities and differences and their impact on the future of the instrument.

Week 2: **The Swing Era: Freddie Green & George Van Eps**

A look at the diverging paths of jazz guitar during the swing era: the rhythm guitar in big bands as exemplified by Freddie Green with the Count Basie band and the chord solo style of George Van Eps. Each player's techniques will be discussed as well as the technological factors which enabled or hindered their approaches (acoustic volume, seven string guitars, etc).

Gypsy Jazz: Django Reinhardt

An in depth look at the life and music of Django Reinhardt. Discussion of his technique, which allowed him to overcome a badly burned left hand with only two functional fingers, as well as the stylistic elements of manouche (melodic and harmonic vocabulary, rhythm, repertoire, etc.) and his profound impact on American guitarists. This lecture will also briefly address the cultural and political context of Django's life including discrimination faced by Roma people in Europe.

Week 3: **Electrification: Charlie Christian**

Tracing the impact of the invention of the electric guitar on the development of jazz from George Barnes' first recorded solo to the innovations of Charlie Christian with Benny Goodman's group. This lecture will also include discussion of Christian's involvement at Minton's Playhouse sessions, which were a catalyst for bebop, and examinations of Christian's melodic approach based on chord shapes and his all down-stroke picking technique.

The Piano Trios: Oscar Moore, Tiny Grimes, Herb Ellis & Ray Crawford

A look at the piano/guitar/bass trio format popularized by Nat King Cole and adopted by Art Tatum, Oscar Peterson, Ahmad Jamal and others. This lecture will address stylistic differences between these trios and the approaches of the guitarists involved, as well as arrangements and techniques used to simulate drums on the guitar ("Bongo Beat", muted strumming, Freddie Green comping, etc.)

Week 4: The Road to Bebop: Barney Kessel & Mary Osborne

The death of Charlie Christian in 1942 left a vacuum in the jazz guitar world just as Bebop was taking its first steps. This lecture will cover the players who bridged the gap between Christian and the later bebop guitarists. Two of the most prominent being Barney Kessel and Mary Osborne, both of whom worked with luminaries like Dizzy Gillespie, Coleman Hawkins and Billie Holiday. This lecture will also summarize the evolution of guitar playing up to this point and set the stage for the bebop guitar players who emerged in the early 1950's.

Bebop: Tal Farlow

Tracing how the technical innovations of the self-taught Tal Farlow allowed him to be one of the very first to successfully translate bebop to the guitar. A look at his harmonic approach, compositions, voicings and use of extended techniques like artificial harmonics. This lecture will follow Farlow from his success with Red Norvo through his early retirement and subsequent return to music including a discussion of the ongoing racial tensions of the time, with regards to Norvo's integrated trio with Farlow and Charles Mingus.

Week 5: Bebop, Continued: Jimmy Raney

A further look at bebop guitar, with a focus on Jimmy Raney, particularly his work with Stan Getz, as well as the influence of forgotten guitarist Ronnie Singer with whom Raney briefly associated in Chicago. Raney's unique phrasing, picking and melodic vocabulary will be analyzed and supplemented by footage of a masterclass where he discusses his approach to picking with the intention of mimicking the articulations of Charlie Parker and Bud Powell. Special attention will be paid to Raney's contrapuntal compositions.

Hard Bop: Kenny Burrell

An overview of the prolific recording career of Kenny Burrell, whose command of both the blues and advanced harmonies made him an early proponent of Hard Bop on the guitar. This lecture will also include a discussion of the thriving Detroit scene of which Burrell was a significant member and an introduction to the organ groups which were rising to prominence at the time.

Week 6: The Incredible Jazz Guitar of Wes Montgomery

A thorough walkthrough of the career and innovations of Wes Montgomery. This lecture will address technical issues like his distinctive thumb-picking technique, fingerings, phrasing and his distinctive use of octaves as well as his often overlooked work as a composer and how his later commercial success laid the groundwork for smooth jazz.

The Blue Note Sound: Grant Green

How Grant Green's deep groove, bright sound and distilled approach made a space for the guitar in the "Blue Note Sound" and made him a major influence on generations of guitar players. A comprehensive look at his vocabulary and an introduction to his important collaborations (Sonny Clark, Elvin Jones and Larry Young, John Patton, Lou Donaldson, Herbie Hancock, etc.) Also, his enduring legacy and impact on Black American Music in general, through the many samples of his catalogue by artists such as Bilal, Cypress Hill, Tribe Called Quest, Kendrick Lamar and more.

Week 7:

Hard Bop & Soul Jazz Wrap Up: George Benson & Pat Martino

How George Benson and Pat Martino developed two highly personal approaches out of the influence of Wes Montgomery. Including a breakdown of their unique picking techniques, as well as wrapping up the subject of Hard Bop and Organ groups, before charting Benson's commercial breakthrough and Martino's fusion experimentations.

A Different Approach: Jim Hall

How Jim Hall charted his own path, developing a unique approach to the instrument that would prove to have a profound and lasting impact. His development will be traced through his work with Chico Hamilton, Jimmy Guiffre, Sonny Rollins, Art Farmer, Bill Evans and his own groups. Discussion of his minimalism and emphasis on improvisation over licks as well as his experimentation with effects and advanced compositions.

Week 8:

The Virtuoso: Joe Pass

Following Joe Pass from his early west coast recordings to his seminal work with Oscar Peterson and Ella Fitzgerald. We will look at his switch from plectrum to fingerstyle and how it led to the development of his revolutionary solo guitar style. Reflections on Pass' influence and the possibilities for guitar as an accompaniment instrument and portable rhythm section with a particular emphasis on duo settings.

Brazilian Jazz

How Bossa Nova and the musicians of Brazil contributed to the development of jazz guitar. Tracing the influence of Jobim, Gilberto, Luiz Bonfá, Baden Powell and others. A look at Brazilian rhythms applied to guitar comping (Nelson Faria's "The Brazilian Guitar Book"), and a brief overview of the

influence of subsequent generations of Brazilian guitarists (Toninho Horta, Guinga and Chico Pinheiro).

Week 9: Fusion: Larry Coryell & John McLaughlin

Introduction to Jazz Fusion following Larry Coryell from his time with Chico Hamilton's group to his own band, *Free Spirits*, and his stint with Gary Burton. Also, John McLaughlin's explosive entry on the scene in 1969 including Miles Davis' *Bitches Brew*, Tony Williams' Lifetime and his own highly successful band Mahavishnu Orchestra. Discussion of the influence of Jimi Hendrix and rock music in general.

Fusion, Continued: Mike Stern & John Abercrombie

The second wave of fusion guitarists and how they brought back more of jazz's harmonic sophistication to fusion. Following Mike Stern through his tenure with Blood, Sweat & Tears, Miles Davis, Brecker Bros. and others. Also a look at the life and career of John Abercrombie, from his time with Dreams and Brecker Bros. to his ECM recordings. Finishing with a discussion of the rising popularity of effects among jazz guitarists (chorus, distortion, phasers, synth guitars etc.)

Week 10: The Modernists: Pat Metheny

The first of a series of three lectures on the pillars of modern jazz guitar. Focusing on the enduring influence and prolific career of Pat Metheny, including a discussion of his compositions, pentatonic vocabulary, unique fingerings and technological innovations (synth guitar, 42 string guitar, Orchestrion, etc.). Including an overview of his most important collaborations and recordings (Gary Burton, Pat Metheny Group, Ornette Coleman, Michael Brecker, Joshua Redman, Brad Mehldau and Unity Band etc.).

The Modernists: Bill Frisell

The second of a series of three lectures on the pillars of modern jazz guitar. Bill Frisell's minimalism and synthesis of jazz with folk, avant garde and country/western influences have made him an important and influential voice in the jazz guitar lineage. This lecture will discuss the influence of several of Frisell's mentors: Dale Bruning, Johnny Smith and Jim Hall. Particular attention will be paid to his long tenure with Paul Motian and Joe Lovano, with an eye to understanding how Frisell's guitar functions in the bass-less ensemble.

Week 11: The Modernists: John Scofield

The last of the series of three lectures on the pillars of modern jazz guitar. John Scofield emerged from the fusion era, but throughout his career has defied categorization. This lecture will show how his expressive style, slightly distorted tone and hybridization of a rock, blues and bop vocabulary have made him a major influence on subsequent generations of jazz guitarists.

Included will be a look at some of his most important associations (Miles Davis, Medeski, Martin & Wood, Joe Lovano, Steve Swallow, Joe Henderson, etc.)

The Shredders: Allan Holdsworth & Frank Gambale

How technical breakthroughs usually associated with the heavy metal guitarists of the 1980's were developed by players like Allan Holdsworth and Frank Gambale. This lecture will break down techniques like speed-picking, sweep-picking etc, and address how they moved from being fringe pyrotechnics to standard fare for subsequent generations of jazz guitarists across stylistic boundaries.

Week 12:

Mainstream Revival: Emily Remler, Russell Malone & Peter Bernstein

The guitarists of the "Young Lions" generation and the mainstream revival. Players like Emily Remler, Russell Malone and later, Peter Bernstein, broke away from the rock influences of the previous generation and returned to the styles of Wes Montgomery, Grant Green etc. This lecture will address the larger context of jazz in the late 80s and 90s, Wynton Marsalis, and how each of these players found ways to move forward in a more traditional direction.

The Avant Garde: Bailey, Ulmer, Sharrock, Ribot & Halvorson

The parallel development of free jazz, seen through the lense of guitar. This lecture will follow the developments of the style, highlighting the early example of Billy Bauer and the significant contributions of Derek Bailey, James Blood Ulmer, Sonny Sharrock and Marc Ribot, as well as contemporary guitarist Mary Halvorson, whose approach can be understood within this lineage, but has managed to achieve a level of recognition her predecessors did not (including winning the Downbeat critics poll and the 2019 MacArthur Genius Grant). This lecture will also address the timbral explorations, extended techniques and technologies employed by these players.

Week 13:

New Directions: Kurt Rosenwinkel & Ben Monder

How Kurt Rosenwinkel and Ben Monder have updated, expanded and codified the sound of modern jazz guitar. Examination of their use of effects, techniques, voicings, vocabularies and compositions. This lecture will situate them as the new "elder statesmen" among an emerging generation of jazz guitarists who are currently building on their innovations.

The Next Generation: Hekselman, Lund, Moreno & Lage

An introduction to four of the leading voices of the next generation of jazz guitarists, drawing attention to their similarities and differences, with an aim to arrive at an understanding of the current state of jazz guitar. Analysis of their styles will also draw links between each of them and the tradition as presented over the course of the preceding lectures.

Assessment:

Listening Quizzes: 45% Week 4, 9 & 13 (15% each)

Participation: 10% Participation in class discussions

Listening Journal: 15% Students must keep a journal of their reactions to the assigned recordings throughout the course. Journals will be collected at each listening quiz. (approx. 150 words a week)

Paper: 30% About a player not covered in class, includes biography, context for their career, analysis of their playing and compositions (if applicable), transcriptions and discography. (approx. 2500 words, not including transcriptions and discography)

Suggested Players for Paper:

John Pisano	Billy Bauer
Chuck Wayne	Billy Bean
Rene Thomas	Peter Leitch
Sheryl Bailey	Ray Crawford
Barry Galbraith	Paul Bollenback
Ernest Ranglin	Lorne Lofsky
Ed Bickert	Louis Stewart
Sonny Greenwich	Jack Wilkins
Ed Cherry	Anthony Wilson
Mimi Fox	Mark Whitfield
Bobby Broom	Camila Meza
Lenny Breau	Dida Pelled
Chris Flory	Johnny Smith
Al Casey	Mick Goodrick

Recommended Reading:

Yanow, Scott. The Great Jazz Guitarists, Backbeat Books, Milwaukee, 2013.

Alexander, Charles. Masters of Jazz Guitar: The Story of the Players and Their Music, Backbeat Books, Milwaukee, 2002.