

DLA doctoral thesis

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**Melody Building and Edition in Jazz Music
From Pentatonic-scales to Polations.**

Liszt Ferenc University of Music

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I. The antecedents of research

My thesis is entitled as Melody Building and Edition in Jazz Music from Pentatonic-scales to Polatons. The material is incredibly rich and of great variety. Concerning my activities so far this writing might have extended up to about 400 pages. Exercising strict selection I was trying to sum up the essential and most characterising features of this subject matter and go through all those unavoidable principles and methods of edition which are typical about melody building and improvisation in jazz music. Jazz music analyses extremely rapidly and because of this synthesizes, uses and builds into its system of composition all those composing techniques and editing principles having existed and crystalized so far. When as a young child I was beating round the piano and later getting acquainted with those keys, I found out that tones could be made sound one by one in succession or simultaneously together. Back then I hadn't yet realized that I was about to enter into the stage of basic musical thinking and this discovery should later determine my life. Tuning in the vertical harmonic and horizontal melodic surfaces showed up instinctly when as a beginner playing intervals, common chords in the left hand, I was trying to build melodies or scales in the right hand.. In the beginning these scales had just been simple trichord, tetrachord or pentachord scales that is series of tones fitting my five fingers. I remember what a revelation it was while improvising on a minor pentatonic scale, my first fourth-chord was born without realizing I was improvising with elementary natural structures according to recent expertise. Once I found scales or melodies on the chords or the other way around exciting chords came up for the scales and melodies. Later getting deeper and deeper into the secrets of theory and composing techniques, I figured the vertical and the horizontal cooperates in symbiosis in music from the tiniest improvisation unit to grand compositions. They act in organic cooperation affecting one another back and forth.

Later when I started to teach, I got in continual encounter with the weight and extraordinary importance of the subject in my classes of jazz theory, piano and composition as improvisation, interpretation and composition work in inseparable unity in this kind of music. In our book about the marriage of chords and scales cowritten with my former disciple Pozsár Máté, we gave a closer look into the tumult of 2048 scales and the chords belonging to them. The horizontal approach, way of thinking characterises the whole of jazz history. Everywhere in the chapters of this dissertation you may meet the horizontal way of thinking which in our European music practically means melodies built on 2048 scales and of course chords and their use when played simultaneously. So it starts out of intervals through common chords up to twelve tone chords likewise out of intervals through scales of three tones up to twelve tone scales. The system can be augmented as these are perfect scales ending up on the octave. However, providing intervals beyond the octave may come up in the system, supposing we may use multioctave scales, then there could be countless variations. However, we shouldn't forget we haven't taken the most important feature of music into consideration, it is the time, the rhythm. If we only take one octave using all the twelve tones, then the number of variations of tone order, that is the number of melody building possibilities, combinations can't be fewer than 479.001.600! So many orders of tones can be set up from twelve tones. Nevertheless, if we provide the time factor, the phenomenon of infinity should come in. There can also occur infinite number of variations in the case of multioctave scales or the 479.001.600. reihe as well. Continuing this consideration including all the possible variations I once calculated that in the course of improvising on a 4 measure II-V-I-VI harmony sequence if we only take quarter notes, then in the case of harmonic figuration – that is chord tone variations, common chord tone combinations – 24/measure or 96/chorus variations can be made.

Taken four-tone-chords there can be 96/measure or 384/period ones including all the 4 measures in a 4-measure-period, taken the same type of combination into consideration. Nevertheless, it is only about moving along in four without rests.

During my tutorials I was always trying to study all the available and obtainable sources on the matter and continually getting to the possible consequences. A good number of studies, writings, sheet music and book publications of mine mark my permanent working on the subject matter of research and let me mention the active participation in working out nearly all the accreditation material about our art form.

Brief list of institutions and subjects of my tutorials:

1980-88	Erkel Ferenc Music School (teacher of jazz piano, jazz history, jazz theory)
1988-90	Bartók Béla Secondary School of Music – Jazz department (jazz piano teacher)
1990-	Liszt Ferenc Music College – Jazz department (tutor of jazz piano, composition)
2000-	Liszt Ferenc University of Music - Teacher Training College -JazzDepartment (acting deacon of dep., teacher of jazz piano, composition, arrangement, theory)
2003-	Liszt Ferenc University of Music – Jazz Department (Deacon, tutor of jazz piano, composition, arrangement, theory)

II. Sources

Apagyi Mária: Zongorálom - kreatív zongoratanulás

/Martyn Ferenc Művészeti Szabadiskola, Pécs 2008/

Binder Károly-Pozsár Máté: Scales and Chords /BMM 2012/

Delamont Gordon: Modern Melodic Technique /Kendor Music. Delavan. New York 1976/

Keuler Jenő: Hangrendszer - Elmélet /A Debreceni Kodály Zoltán Zeneművészeti Szakközépiskola kiadványa 1997/

Legányné Hegyi Erzsébet: Stílus ismeret Kodály pedagógiai művei alapján

/Zeneműkiadó 1982/

Molnár Antal: Gyakorlati zeneesztétika / Zeneműkiadó 1971 /

Pozsár Máté: Jazz elmélet/BMM 2016/

Ricker Ramon: Pentatonic Scales For Jazz Improvisation /Studio P/R Lebanon, Indiana U.S.A 1976/

Ricker Ramon: Technique Development in Fourths For Jazz Improvisation /Studio P/R Lebanon, Indiana U.S.A 1976/

Slonimsky Nicolas: Thesaurus of scales and melodic patterns

/Charles Scribner. New York 1947/

Szabó Sándor: Tanulmányok /kézirat/

Szabolcsi Bence: A melódia története /Zeneműkiadó 1957/

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III. Methods

In the chapters of my dissertation I introduce the essential characterising phenomena, system building principles, chord signs and features of harmony of the art form dealt with. I lecture this material within the frame of jazz theory at the at the Jazz Department of Liszt Ferenc University of Music. Of course, I have exercised strict selection in this dissertation. This is why, for instance, George Russel's Lydian Chromatic Concept (first published in 1953) is not included. This system is such a very special natural horizontal structure which employs the Lydian mode as its basic scale and motivated by this aspect does it build those very exciting scales and horizontal system. There is a book dealing with it: George Russel Lydian Chromatic Concept of Tonal Organisation. I also excluded The Modal Jazz chapter which is dealt with in Ron Miller's two-volume-book².

However, in order to see the whole I introduce the principles of edition reflecting the horizontal thinking like penta-scale edition working on models of fourth or harmonies on thirds, the system building principles of figuration and polation, the melody building techniques and methods characterising jazz music (conjunct-disjunct, inside-outside), furthermore the possibilities for motivic transformation. Although the various uses of melody or ways of thinking in composition are given as belonging to styles or eras, they exist combined in recent improvised jazz music. In my opinion, the introduction of the variety of melody building techniques and considerations enforce and supplement them and may create unity especially when a musician improvising on a harmony sequence should reflect on all kinds of system to be able to create and make music.

The frequent use of chromatic changing-notes or almost all the alterations of harmonies of dominant function, the chromatic leading figures or the acoustic upper structure of the chord set are all present and typical in modern melody building.

Composers and interpreters active in contemporary jazz music regularly use the means of modern techniques of composition and improvisation. Working in the axial system, different kinds of harmonic and melodic substitutions employing various musical symmetries, polating techniques, serial thinking, out playing can all be found in jazz music of the time being.

Find the chapter titles in this dissertation below:

Thanks

Introduction

Improvisation and composition

Silence and music

The rhythm – the rhythming of jazz

Chord signs and features of jazz harmony

Horizontation – scales – chords

Figuration

Melody building

Pentatonic-scales and models of fourth depending on harmonies on thirds – altered penta-scales

Conjunct-disjunct, inside-outside

Axial system and improvisation

Polations

Closing remarks

IV. Resulting publications

Binder Károly: 17 Töredék /zongora/EMB/
Binder Károly: 7 kis gyermek darab /EMB/
Apagyi Mária: Zongorálom /I.II.III./ 25 piano pieces
Binder Károly: New Sounds
Binder Károly - Pozsár Máté: Scales and Chords / EMB /

V. Documenting activities belonging to the subject of dissertation

During my activities in pedagogy the following music sheets and books touching the subject of dissertation have been published:

Binder Károly: 17 Töredék /zongora/EMB/
Binder Károly: 7 kis gyermek darab /EMB/
Apagyi Mária: Zongorálom /I.II.III./ 25 piano pieces
Binder Károly: New Sounds
Binder Károly - Pozsár Máté: Scales and Chords / EMB /

I have given countless concerts, lectures, master classes both home and abroad which all touch improvisation, composition, harmonization, melody building. I only mention some of the most important ones:

Boswil / CH /
Freiburg: Musichochschule
Pécs: Művészeti Szabadegyetem
London: Royal Academy of Music
Debrecen: Zeneművészeti Főiskola
Budapest: International Piano Master Class
Helsinki: Sibelius Akadémia
Miskolc: Zeneművészeti Főiskola
Szombathely: Lamantin Jazz Improvizációs tábor Szombathely
Bayreuth: Liszt Ferenc és a Jazz / Liszt Fesztivál /
München: Ludwig Maximilian Egyetem
Stuttgart: Musichochschule
Darmstadt: Tonkunst Akademie
Kőszeg: Pannon Egyetem
Budapest: Liszt Ferenc Zeneművészeti Egyetem
Kecskemét: Kodály Intézet