# The Rite of Swing:
# Stravinsky's Influence on the Jazz Idiom

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# Section I: Ideas in Theory:

# Stravinsky's Influence on the Jazz Idiom

In the winter of 1951, Charlie Parker's quintet would perform at Birdland for a rather unusual audience member. After Billy Taylor's opening solo piano set, a group of four men and a young woman would walk into the famous New York City club and take a seat at a table in the front row, marked "Reserved." According to a personal account of the evening by Alfred Appel in his book *Jazz Modernism* (2002), the crowd began to whisper and mutter to themselves at the appearance of one of the men: Igor Stravinsky. Trumpet player Red Rodney, walking on stage with Charlie Parker, leaned over and told Parker about their special guest. Without a glance, Charlie Parker counted in their first number for the evening, a blisteringly fast version of "Koko." Parker acknowledged Stravinsky's presence in the second chorus of his solo -quoting the introduction from *The Firebird*- to Stravinsky's uproarious amusement (Appel, 2002). These two musical geniuses never spoke to one another that night; only through music did Parker tip his hat to his fellow legendary composer. This chance encounter begs the question: Was Charlie Parker influenced by the work of Igor Stravinsky? Was this quote a mere appreciation from one innovator to another, or is there more direct inspiration that merits further investigation? Stravinsky was certainly inspired by jazz and ragtime music, as evidenced through three pieces in the style of ragtime from 1918-1919: *Rag-Time for 11 Instruments, Piano Rag Music*, and one of the three dances in *L'Histoire de Soldat.* Stravinsky gained recognition in the jazz community when he penned *The Ebony Concerto* in 1948 for Woody Herman's orchestra, although it is debatable whether or not this can be considered a jazz piece or a classical piece written for a jazz ensemble. Whether Stravinsky's music has had the same impact on jazz music and musicians as jazz music seems to have on Stravinsky is a

less-explored topic of discussion. Upon investigation, one will find a myriad of clues indicating that jazz musicians have taken note of the legendary composer. There is sufficient evidence of jazz music and musicians appreciating, being inspired by, and being directly influenced by the music and compositional devices of Igor Stravinsky.

The compilation album *Complete Bird at Birdland* (1995) claims to feature every set Charlie Parker performed at the famous club from 1950-1951, but the performance chronicled by Appel is not included. This must mean that the performance was not recorded, or if it was then the recording is unfortunately lost to history. In either case, Appel's is the only account of this chance encounter. Two recorded examples do exist of Parker slipping a Stravinsky melody into his improvisations. Recorded live at Kavakos Grill, Washington DC in 1952, Charlie Parker works in the famous trumpet excerpt -from the moor's room scene in *Patrushka*- into his solo on "Fine & Dandy" (Suzuki, 1999). He can also be heard quoting the famous opening bassoon passage from *The Rite of Spring* into his solo on "Salt Peanuts," recorded at the Salle Pleyel club in Paris, France (Suzuki). Parker was a voracious consumer of every kind of music, from Bach to country blues, and his innovative style of improvisation has been linked to the work of Bach (Bicket & Harris, 2001). Evidence suggests that Parker was influenced by Bach, but whether he was directly influenced by Stravinsky remains to be seen. Parker clearly listened to Stravinsky, although pianist Earl Hines (1983) recounts that Parker had a "photographic mind," saying "when we would rehearse a new arrangement, he would run his part down once and when we were ready to play it a second time, he knew the whole thing from memory" (Dance & Hines, 1983). This suggests that Parker could have listened to recordings of Stravinsky's ballets only once before being able to work them into an improvised solo. Parker may very well have been influenced by Stravinsky, but based on the knowledge available, it seems that Parker was merely showing appreciation for the composer and his works. This appreciation is

further supported upon another chance encounter that Parker had with composer Neal Hefti in the mid-1940s. Hefti was recording his piece “Repetition,” and Parker asked if he could step in and solo over the arrangement (Granz, 1949). In the recording, the strings reference the horn solo from *Augers of Spring*, and Charlie Parker takes this idea to lead into his improvisation (Hefti & Parker, 1957). In Ira Gitler’s *An Oral History of the Transition in Jazz in the 1940s* (1985), Hefti admits to being an avid consumer of Stravinsky’s music; it was also his white lie that he had met Stravinsky that led to his inadvertent commissioning of *The Ebony Concerto* (Gitler, 1985). Hefti’s trumpet solo on Lucky Thompson’s single “Boppin’ the Blues” (1948) shows Hefti’s appreciation for Stravinsky further, slipping the same *Augers* quote into his solo. After Parker and Hefti blazed the trail for Stravinsky references, several artists have nodded to the composer’s works in their improvised solos. The opening phrase of Chick Corea’s “Humpty Dumpty” (1978) is reminiscent of an english horn solo in *Supplications of the Firebird.* Pianist Ethan Iverson admits to lifting a melody from the opening of *Oedipus Rex* in the opening track of the Bad Plus’ album *Give* (Iverson, 2014). Sonny Rollins and Phil Woods join Hefti and Parker in tipping their hats to *Augers of Spring* on *Freedom Suite* (1958) and *The Rights of Swing* (1977). The most recurring Stravinsky quote in jazz seems to be the bassoon introduction in *The Rite of Spring*, referenced earlier by Parker in “Salt Peanuts” (Suzuki, 1999). Jaco Pastorius works the opening melody into his solo on Weather Report’s *Havona* (1977). Both Victor Lewis (1992) and Ornette Coleman (2005) have worked the melody into their compositions. There seems to be some speculation that Stravinsky’s oboe solo from “The Princesses Khorovod” in *The Firebird* has been quoted several times over by countless jazz musicians, although this could be a mere coincidence (Heitlinger, 2011). Many of these quotes are simply showing appreciation to the composer, but appreciation does not necessarily imply influence. Many jazz musicians, including Miles Davis and Dave Brubeck, attended

conservatories through the World War Two GI Program (Jarenwattananon, 2013). In his autobiography, Davis (1989) recounts checking out Stravinsky's scores from Juilliard's library, in order to simply "see what was going on" (Davis & Troupe, 1989). As jazz has increasingly become a specialized field in music, its musicians such as Pastorius, Lewis, Coleman, and Corea may not have benefitted from the deep study of classical scores. While there is no doubt that they have listened to *The Firebird* and *The Rite of Spring,* their relationship with Stravinsky seems to stop at simple appreciation for the music.

A notable outlier in the collection of Stravinsky quotes is Ethan Iverson, the piano player for The Bad Plus. Iverson's blog (2014) references several biographies and monographs of Stravinsky, and his writings suggest that he has spent a great deal of time with Stravinsky's collected works (Iverson, 2014). In an interview for Jazztimes, Iverson says that he read everything he could find about Stravinsky in preparation for The Bad Plus' rendition of *The Rite of Spring,* released in 2014 (Rabin, 2011). Iverson's research suggests a deeper relationship to the legendary composer than mere appreciation. Rather, Iverson states that many of his pieces, projects, and improvisations are inspired by Igor Stravinsky (Iverson, 2014). His composition "Unclaimed Freight" for tenor saxophone and piano is said to be inspired by *Symphony of Psalms*, although the connection between the two works is unclear (Richards, 2018). "Unclaimed Freight" doesn't seem to reference any melodies, key centers, or devices used in *Psalms.* The melodic construction and counterpoint between the two instruments may be an inspiration from Stravinsky, but it's difficult to say with any certainty (Iverson & Turner, 2018). George Russell is much more direct in his inspirational sources in the composition "A Bird in Igor's Yard" (1949). The title's intersection of Igor and "Bird" -Charlie Parker's nickname- alludes to this piece's merging of classical techniques with modern bebop language. The orchestration is certainly harking back to Stravinsky's techniques, with rhythmic

displacement and odd accents punctuated by the brass. The harmonies are also odd by jazz music's standards, employing more cluster harmony and tetrachords than traditional 7th chords. Guitarist Larry Coryell follows Russell's example with a composition simply titled "Stravinsky," off the album *The Lion and The Ram* (1976). The solo guitar work seems to contain some complex mixed meter and pandiatonicism, an obvious nod to its namesake. Phil Woods also admits inspiration on his album *The Rights of Swing* (1977). Clever puns aside, the only direct allusion to Stravinsky on this album is in the F horn solo of the last track, where horn player Julius Watkins references a familiar excerpt from *The Augers of Spring* (Woods, 1977). The rest of the album seems to follow the path of a traditional jazz combo setting, with no obvious compositional elements borrowed from Stravinsky's style. Stravinsky's inspiration reaches into free jazz music as well, as evidenced on a collection of duets by Béla Szakcsi Lakatos and Mikos Lukács, titled *Check It Out, Igor* (2005). The album title may be a reference to bringing in Mikos Lukács for the project, as his cimbalom playing is reminiscent of its use in *Renard* and *Rag-Time for 11 Instruments*. It is worth noting that most free improvisations are only given titles after they are performed and recorded, since the musical direction that the piece takes is decided in the moment. However, this album features several devices that can be categorized under Stravinsky, including mixed meter, asymmetric rhythm, and clustered harmonies (Lakatos & Lukás, 2005). Because the title proceeds the performance, this may be an example of Stravinsky's influence rather than inspiration.

Other jazz musicians are more forward with their inspirational sources, opting to perform and record renditions of Stravinsky's work rather than attempt to compose in his style. This is particularly true for *The Rite of Spring*, of which several jazz musicians have recorded renditions, either partially or fully. Several have speculated as to why -above every other work composed by Stravinsky- *The Rite* seems to be the most celebrated amongst jazz musicians.

Perhaps because the piece shares some common traits with jazz as a genre, according to Patrick Jarenwattananon (2013). Both jazz and *The Rite* were introduced around the same time period; both were initially rejected by the general population; both have gone on to be profoundly influential in music (Jarenwattananon, 2013). Perhaps this is why Leonard Bernstein calls *The Rite of Spring* "prehistoric jazz" (as cited in The Guardian, 2013). David Bruce (2018) expands on Jarenwattananon's use of the word "cousins" to describe the relationship, arguing that *The Rite* has elements that a jazz musician would find familiar (such as pulse, diatonic melodies, and complex harmonies), but is also different enough that it would expand a jazz musician's musical palette (Bruce, 2018). Iverson (2014) cites Stravinsky's "red-blooded folklore rhythm" as the source of the attraction. When referring back to the two most often quoted Stravinsky melodies amongst jazz musicians, it's notable that they are both Lithuanian folk melodies (Morrison, 2013). Perhaps the simple melodies set in complex harmonic settings is what attracts the ears of jazz musicians. In *The Rest is Noise*, Alex Ross (2007) says that The Rite of Spring foretold a new type of popular art; a combination of "style and muscle intertwined." This idea was arguably never realized in 20th century art music, but it was realized in jazz (Ross, 2007). Jazz musicians see much of the style they've curated over the last century in this classical piece, as evidenced further by Wynton Marsalis in his article *Jazz Criticism and the Effect on the Art Form* (as cited in Iverson, 2014). He supports Bruce and Jarenwattananon, saying that jazz and *The Rite* both stem from a century where percussion and polyrhythm are fundamental to the identity of the music. "Stravinsky turned European music over with a backbeat," Wynton says; "what they thought was weird and primitive was just a… beat on the bass drum" (Iverson, 2014). This idea of rhythm being at the heart of a composition is echoed by Stravinsky himself, when he said "there is music wherever there is rhythm, as there is life wherever there beats a pulse" (Stravinsky & Craft, 1959). These scholars

shed light on why jazz musicians seem so captivated by this work, and why it has been covered, arranged, and manipulated by several jazz artists. The first jazz musician to cover sections of *The Rite* was Takeshi Inomata in 1970. Inomata is a fusion drummer from Japan, who's band played themes from the ballet on a album titled *Jazz Rock in Stravinsky* (Inomata, 1970). These renditions have the funk, disco, and electronic flair that characterizes much of the music in the 1970s. One year later, pianist Don Sebesky arranged a short medley of *The Rite* for Hubert Laws, who's free flute improvisations soar over several themes. Laws seems attracted to the opening bassoon introduction, much like many of the jazz musicians who quote the same melody into their improvisations. The medley goes into *Augers* and *Sacrificial Dance* as well (Sebesky et al., 1971). Alice Coltrane's version only touches on *Spring Rounds*, featured on the album *Eternity* (1975). This version sounds remarkably similar to the original composition, but eventually dissolves into a raucous free improvisation. Alice's son Ravi Coltrane recounts listening to Stravinsky when he was a child, particularly *The Rite of Spring* and *The Firebird* (Coltrane, 2012). Alice Coltrane must have heard that "red-blooded folkloric rhythm" too, and so felt that it belonged on this 1975 release. Don Sebesky would arrange another medley of *The Rite of Spring* almost 30 years after his first arrangement (Sebesky, 1999). Rather than Laws' interpolation of the introductory material of the ballet, Sebesky -like Coltrane- seems attracted to the *Spring Rounds* movement. After the unmistakable opening notes of the bassoon, Sebesky immediately begins a piano improvisation based on the themes of *Spring Rounds*. The medley -similar to his 1971 rendition- ends on *Sacrificial Dance* (Sebesky, 1999). A Swedish jazz trio led by pianist Esbjörn Svensson feature *Spring Rounds* as a hidden track at the end of their album *Good Morning Susie Soho* (2000). Seven minutes into "Reminiscence of the Soul," Svensson establishes a piano ostinato that quickly bursts into a loud, bombastic, distorted rendition of the movement (Svensson, Berland, & Öström, 2000).

*Spring Rounds* seems to appear quite often in these partial jazz arrangements, perhaps because as opposed to the mixed meter and asymmetric rhythm that make up the majority of the ballet, the bass ostinato in this movement establishes an unmistakable 4/4 pulse. Guitarist Larry Coryell is the first jazz artist to record *The Rite* in its entirety in 1983, seven years after his composition written in tribute to the composer. For several years, this was the only jazz rendition of *The Rite* in its entirety, however the 100-year anniversary of the ballet seems to have renewed interest amongst jazz artists. Several ensembles, such as Quartetski, The Mobtown Modern Big Band, The Butchershop Quartet, and The Bad Plus have all recorded *The Rite* within five years of its centennial. Canadian third-stream ensemble Quartetski has approached several classical composers with a jazz sensibility, including Prokofiev, Bartok, and Stravinsky (Martel, Falaise, Lauzier, Head, & Ceccarelli, 2013). One would be hard-pressed to find a version of *Le Sacre du Printemps* with a more unusual instrumentation; the band is comprised of violin, viola da gamba, drum set, guitar, and bass clarinet. Their take on *La Sacre* stays fairly true to the original, with some of the sections repeated in order to accommodate improvised solos (Martel et al., 2013). Darryl Brenzel takes this idea to the extreme in his arrangement of the ballet for The Mobtown Modern Big Band. Appropriately titled *The (Re)Write of Spring* (2012), each theme is presented with modern big band orchestration, a wide variety of drum grooves, and an improvised solo. This album is certainly the largest departure from the source material, although the themes are still very much present through Brenzel's clever manipulations (Brenzel et al., 2012). The Butchershop Quartet tows the line between jazz, heavy metal, and hip hop in their rendition of *The Rite*, presenting each theme with distorted electric guitars and heavy drum grooves (Braddock, Sullivan, Sullivan, & Sylvester, 2013). While the themes seem mostly intact, the presentation and instrumentation on this 2013 release make it an exciting departure. In that same year, The Bad Plus recorded their

famous arrangement of *The Rite of Spring,* released as an album of the same name in 2014. It was first performed on March 26th, 2011 as part of a commission for Duke University and The Lincoln Center, curiously two years before the original ballet's centennial celebration (Anderson, Iverson, & King, 2011). This rendition is arguably the most well-known out of every jazz arrangement of the ballet, although one could argue it has very little to do with jazz music. In fact, this version is remarkable because it does not depart from the original source material; unusual for The Bad Plus, who were known by that point to take classic rock songs and completely dissect them, taking several liberties harmonically and rhythmically. In an NPR interview (Anderson et al., 2011), Ethan Iverson says that when they approached *The Rite*, they decided to stay as true as possible to the original. "We're just looking at the 2-piano score... It's not really an obligation to the audience, it's an obligation to Stravinsky" (Anderson et al., 2011). He and bassist Reid Anderson do not stray far at all from the source material, although the way they share the melodic load is notable. The main differences between Stravinsky's ballet and The Bad Plus' take are the electronic sound effects added in the introduction, and drummer Dave King. Although King is relegated to rhythmic punctuation throughout the majority of the album, there are some moments of familiar drum grooves (Anderson, Iverson, & King, 2014). In the NPR interview (Anderson et al., 2011), King says that "we had major discussions about, where is the Bad Plus in this thing?" And indeed, King is that intangible ingredient that breathes new life into this 100-year old ballet. One notable example of King's influence on the overall feel of the piece is during the undeniable groove of *Spring Rounds* (Anderson et al., 2014). It has been noted already that jazz musicians seem to latch onto this pulse, but The Bad Plus is notable for approaching this section with a swung eighth note. This completely upends the character of this movement, giving it a loose, dark texture rather than the rigid ostinato to which listeners may be accustomed (Anderson et al., 2014). The Bad Plus

must have set the bar rather high, as no jazz artist has -in King's words- "tackled the monster" since this 2014 release (Anderson et al., 2011).

Iversen says in the same interview, "Listen to any detective film from the present going back to 1935. You're going to hear the *Rite of Spring* in there. It's really been one of the seminal works of art" (Anderson et al., 2011). Stravinsky has indeed had a pervasive influence in many facets of music composition. From a harmonic standpoint, jazz is deeply rooted in the great composers of the early 20th century, particularly Igor Stravinsky. Reflecting on compositional devices found in *The Rite* further exemplifies the familial relationship between jazz and Stravinsky. The ballet uses a mixture of diatonic and chromatic melody (Stravinsky, 1947); it is standard practice for improvisors to play increasingly chromatic during a dominant functioning chord, and resolve the tension created by playing diatonically over the proceeding tonic functioning chord. Stravinsky also employs folk songs in his work, as jazz improvisers and composers often emulate. Jazz is rooted in blues music, and harking back to that folk music is an important element to the characteristic sound of jazz. All of Stravinsky's Russian period works heavily employ the octotonic scale (Stravinsky, 1947), as well as harmonies stemming from this scale. This scale, according to Barry Harris, is fundamental to understanding the function of a dominant 7 chord (Bicket & Harris, 2001). Rhythmically, refer back to the writings of Ross and Marsalis (as cited in Iverson, 2014): *The Rite of Spring* shocked its audience with a relentless driving pulse, it's jagged and asymmetric rhythms, use of ostinati, and use of polyrhythms. Ross (2007) argues that this use of rhythm foretold a new wave of art music that never came fully to fruition, but jazz has been utilizing these devices for decades. Neal Hefti was one of the first arrangers to use the brass section as a punctuating device, attacking short notes to accent a melodic line happening somewhere else in the ensemble. As Hefti was a devout Stravinsky fan, it makes sense that he borrowed this device

directly from “Augers of Spring.” Stravinsky’s approach to harmony began being emulated in the late 1940s in large ensemble writing. Gil Evans’ harmonies on *Birth of the Cool* (1949) utilize pandiatonicism and clustered harmonic voicings, both of which were devices pioneered by Stravinsky (Davis & Evans, 1949). This technique is taken to the extreme in the opening of Ornette Coleman’s *Skies of America* (1972). Coleman also uses a polyrhythm to juxtapose the orchestra and jazz quartet that both reside on stage. This style of large ensemble writing can also be heard on the Duane Tatro record *Jazz for Moderns* (1956). Tatro is certainly within the lineage of Gil Evans from a harmonic standpoint, and his orchestration of interweaving melodies being passed through the ensemble is reminiscent of *The Rite* (Tatro, 1956). In a blog written by pianist Bob Gluck (2014), he compares *The Rite* to another classic jazz record: Miles Davis’ *Bitches Brew*.

“... various instruments are layered, each playing its own line, interweaving or simply juxtaposed with the others. The texture is transparent, so that each individual instrument can be heard with clarity, yet what matters most is the overall sound of the ensemble. And isn’t this exactly a defining feature of ‘Pharaoh’s Dance,’ most notably its multi-layered electric pianos, but also the two basses, and multiple percussion? All together, they create a distinct but ever-changing overall sound” (Gluck, 2014).

Gluck also cites the use of bass clarinet in both of these innovative works, particularly as a transitive device in the orchestration (Gluck, 2014). In the introduction *Rite of Spring,* bass clarinet seems to signify a movement to another melody. Bennie Maupin does the same thing in “Pharaoh’s Dance,” seemingly cueing the other instruments with his ethereal bass clarinet tone (Gluck, 2014). John Hollenbeck combines several of these Stravinsky elements in his

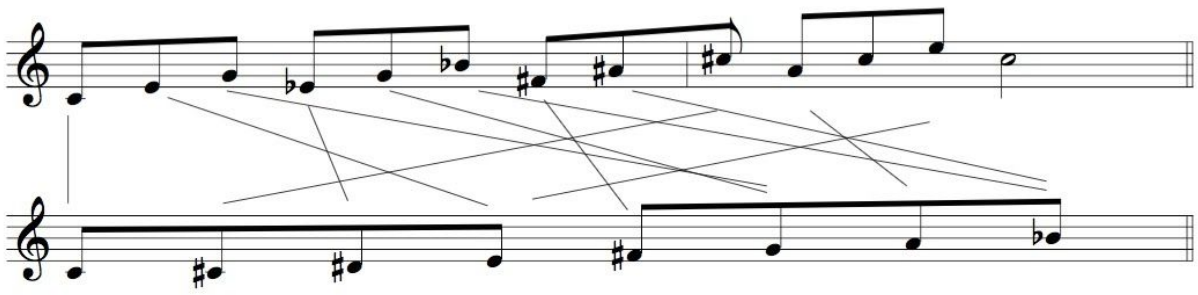
extended piece for jazz ensemble, “Eternal Interlude,” the title track of his 2009 release. Hollenbeck presents short, interval-based motifs in a constantly-shifting harmonic and rhythmic landscape (Hollenbeck, Sanford et al., 2009). His masterful use of elision to variate each idea as it is represented is similar to Stravinsky’s use of elision in *The Firebird* (Hollenbeck et al., 2009). Considering the evolution of big band writing from Gil Evans in 1949 to Hollenbeck in 2009, it is interesting that large ensemble jazz writing has developed to the point where it may be ready to approach an ambitious piece such as *The Ebony Concerto* into the common jazz repertoire. One wonders if *Ebony* may have been written ahead of its time; the jazz bands in the early 40s were commercial music bands, and were not mentally prepared for a piece of such magnitude. Is it merely a coincidence or direct influence that Gil Evans began experimenting with Stravinsky’s compositional elements in *Birth of the Cool*, released one year after *Ebony* premiered? Now that jazz has moved away from dance halls and into more academic settings, Stravinsky may yet receive deserved recognition as a primary influencer of jazz composition.

Stravinsky has captured the imagination of jazz improvisers, has been the inspiration behind several recording ventures, and has had a direct influence on how jazz composers approach their idiom. Charlie Parker, Neal Hefti, Miles Davis, Ethan Iverson, and several other giants of jazz history can be counted among Stravinsky’s accolades, and evidence of his compositional devices being utilized in jazz improvisation and arranging is easy to discern. Particularly with *The Rite of Spring,* jazz musicians have extracted ideas, devices, and techniques from Stravinsky’s masterworks. The chance encounter in the winter of 1951 of Igor Stravinsky and Charlie Parker, two of the greatest minds of their genres, is one of several pieces of evidence that construct a larger line of influence between Igor Stravinsky and the jazz idiom.

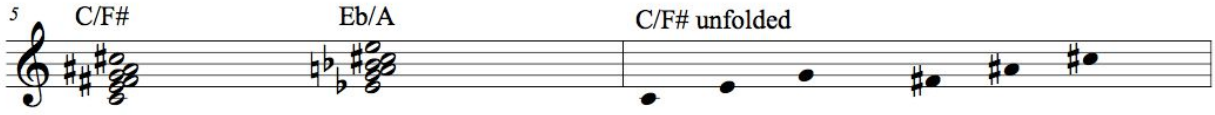
# Section II: Ideas in Practice:

## Extracting Melodic Content from the Petrushka Chord

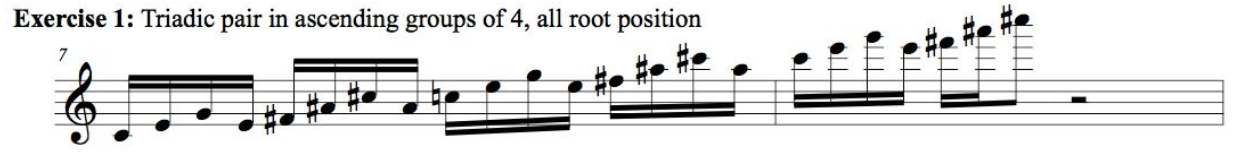
Knowing that Stravinsky's compositional techniques have inspired jazz improvisation for decades, I decided to take one device found in Stravinsky's *Petrushka* and attempt to extract as much melodic material as possible in the style of another unsung hero of jazz improvisation: Nicolas Slonimsky (1947). The "Petrushka chord" refers to a polychord of two major triads a tritone apart, used prevalently throughout the ballet. This tritone relation is already an aspect of jazz theory in two significant ways. The altered upper extensions of a dominant 7 chord (b9, #9, #11, b13) become diatonic extensions when the bass moves by tritone. For example, altered extensions Db, Eb, F#, and Ab over a C7 chord become the 5, 6, 1, and 9 when the bass moves to F#. The 3rd and 7th scale degrees of C7 also invert to become the 7th and 3rd scale degrees of F#7. For this reason, a 7 chord can be substituted for a 7 chord a tritone apart at any given time throughout a jazz piece. This is a common device when reharmonizing a given melody, and improvisors will often imply the "tritone substitution" over a dominant chord in the moment. Playing melodies based off of these two major triads exploits the tritone relations of dominant 7 chords. Pairing triads in improvisation is a fairly modern jazz improvisational device, saxophonist George Garzone being a significant master of the approach (Garzone, 2009). This particular triad pair also stems from the octotonic scale, a common compositional device of Stravinsky's. A jazz musician may balk at the term "octotonic," but will gladly play a "diminished half-whole" on request, which is the exact same thing. The half-whole diminished scale consists of four major triads, each a minor 3rd apart:

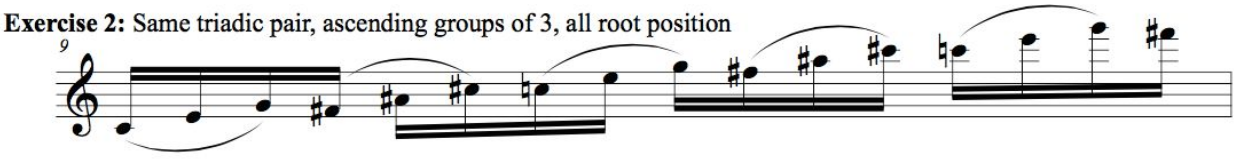


Pairing two chords a tritone apart gives the characteristic harmonic sound found in *Petrushka:*

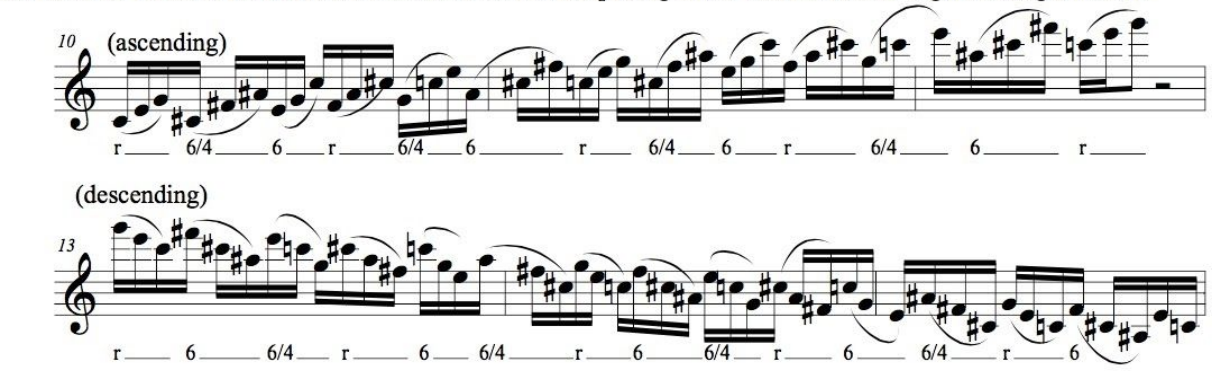



Exercise 1 alternates between these two major triads in groupings of four eighth notes. None of the triads are inverted. In exercise 2, the fourth eighth note is omitted, creating a 4/3 hemiola over the dominant chord. The exercise is articulated to outline the hemiola.:



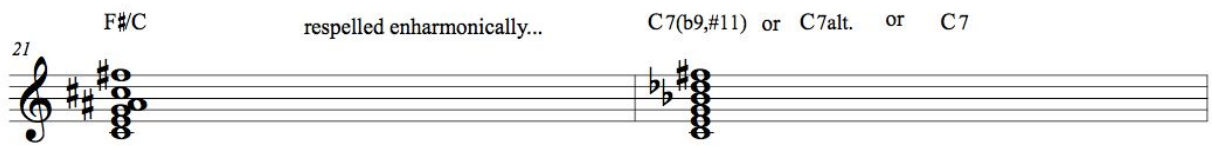



**Exercise 3:** Travel to the next available chord tone of the pairing rather than the root to begin rotating intervals.

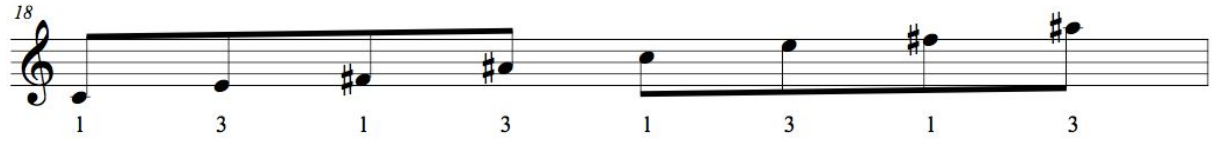



Exercise 3 experiments with inverting the triads. Instead of travelling to the next root position triad, the improvisor would leap to the note closest to the starting note of the previous triad. This motion creates an intervallic rotation, cycling from a triad in root position to a triad in second inversion to a triad in first inversion, before repeating the motion beginning on the other triad. This exercise exploits the 4/3 hemiola rhythmically and harmonically, not only grouping the notes in three, but also grouping the interval sets in three. When descending, this exercise will cycle through root position, first inversion, and second inversion before repeating on the other major triad.

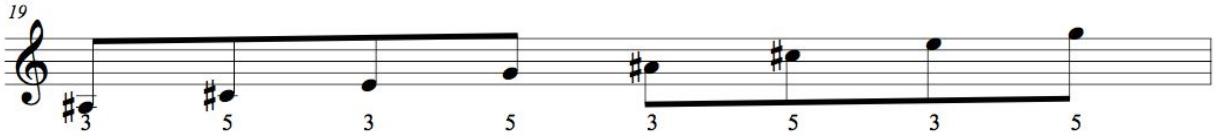
Untransposed, these exercises can be used over both C7 and F#7, due to their tritone relationship. Note that the Petrushka chord can be enharmonically respelled to a C7 chord with two altered extensions, b9 (previously C# in the F# major triad) and #11 (previously F# in the F# major triad). This chord will be written as C7(b9,#11) or C7alt., meaning altered. Improvisors will often superimpose altered extensions onto a normal 7 chord as well, so these extensions are not always specified in a jazz arrangement.



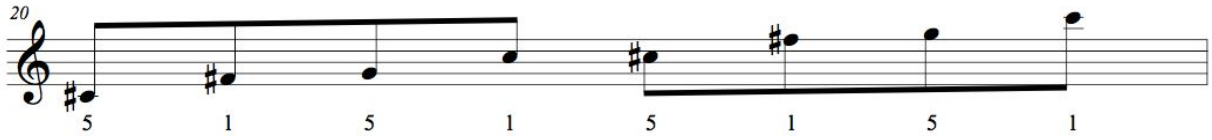
Upon experimenting with these tritonic pairs in my improvisation, I found it quite interesting to apply the extracted melodic content over a common II-V-I progression. However, this became difficult when the progression only spanned the space of one measure. The bridge to “Jordu” is a cycle of sequential dominants, which makes fitting these ideas in quite challenging.  I began extracting two notes from each triad, grouping them into four eighth-notes to be played over a 2-beat dominant chord. When playing an ascending line beginning on scale degree 1, I would play two notes from the C triad  (C, E) and then ascend to the next available note from the corresponding triad (F#, A#). Repeating this motion happens to unfold a french augmented 6th chord. In reverse, this line will descend beginning on scale degree 3.




When ascending beginning on scale degree 3, the line travels to scale degree 3 of the corresponding triad. This motion creates a diminished 7 arpeggio. In reverse, this line will descend beginning on scale degree 5.

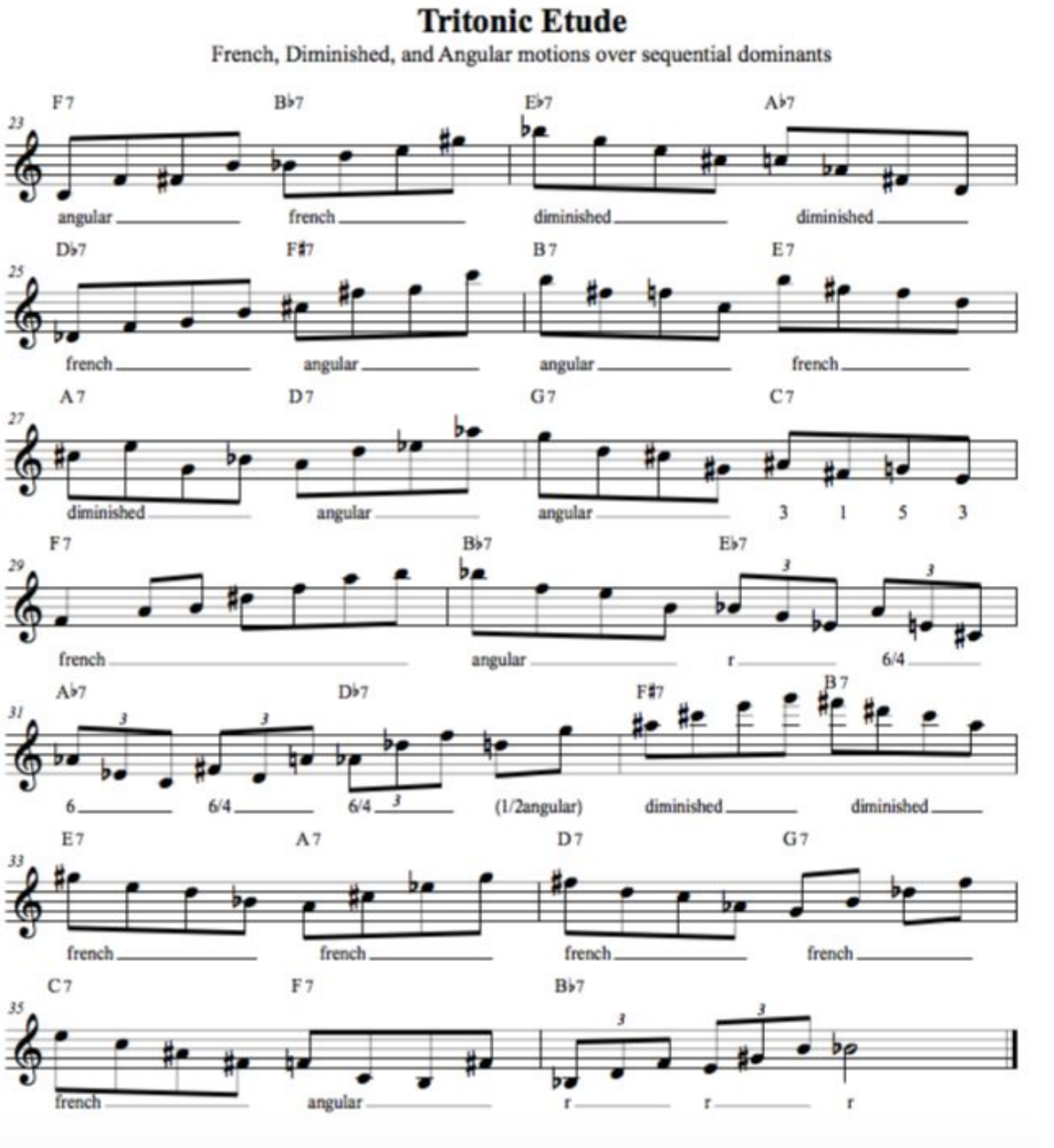



When ascending beginning on scale degree 5, the melodic lines leaps in perfect 4ths, conjoined by a half step between the two triads. I refer to this as the ‘angular’ line. In reverse, the line will descend in the angular motion beginning on scale degree 1.




This melodic extraction is put into action in a tritonic etude that I composed, using the french, diminished, and angular motions over 2-beat sequential dominants (see appendix). I stress that this method of melodic extraction is a practice technique, and should not be confused with a performance technique. Learning ideas mechanically in practice can lead to a musician sounding mechanical in performance. To combat this, an improviser should employ common motivic development techniques to provide space in the melodies and increase musical interest. Expansion, fragmentation, and variation can all be used to expand on these ideas and apply them to the situation at hand (Crook, 2015). Above all, it is vital that an improviser not force these ideas out during performance, but rather let them manifest organically if the performance situation calls for such devices. While Stravinsky has had a pervasive and profound influence on jazz improvisation, as evidenced through several jazz artists and the extrapolation of this polychord, a jazz musician must remember to always serve the music first. If one plays jazz idiomatically, Stravinsky's devices and techniques will find their way into a player's stream of consciousness.

# Appendix


Tritonic Etude
French, Diminished, and Angular motions over sequential dominants
F7 B♭7 E♭7 A♭7
23
angular
french
diminished
diminished
D♭7 F♯7 B7 E7
25
french
angular
angular
french
A7 D7 G7 C7
27
diminished
angular
angular
3 1 5 3
F7 B♭7 E♭7
29
french
angular
r
6/4
A♭7 D♭7 F♯7 B7
31
6
6/4
6/4
(1/2angular)
diminished
diminished
E7 A7 D7 G7
33
french
french
french
french
C7 F7 B♭7
35
french
angular
r
r
r

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