Seven Keith Jarrett Solos

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Preface

These solos are taken from a larger collection that I needed to use for a PhD dissertation, so it seemed like an idea to publish them at the same time. The following transcriptions are included:

All The Things You Are Someday My Prince Will Come Grooving High Stella By Starlight Days Of Wine And Roses Autumn Leaves If I Were A Bell

Disclaimer

This is a draft and needs some more work. The notes should be correct (unless I have made a mistake putting the handwritten scores into Sibelius), but I still need to add some header and footer stuff, and fix some of the octaves that phrases are in. I will get around to fixing this soon, but that is all minor stuff so I will do this when I get a chance. There is also some slightly strange formatting, just because I need the MusicXML versions of these files to be formatted a certain way. Again, minor, and I will fix it down the track. Finally, the chord changes are just the generic changes you would find in a real book setting, rather than the definitive chords used in every bar. This just makes it easier to know where you are in the form and the purpose here is to deal with the improvised melodies.

Practicing these solos

I have spent a lot of time with these solos. I don't find much time for gigs these days, but I always try and put aside some time to regularly work on my playing. These transcriptions (and many other Keith Jarrett solos) have been invaluable in developing my technique and my approach to improvisation over jazz standards. Below are some thoughts on getting the most out of these solos.

- You need to memorise them
 - If you are a piano player, start with right hand only and learn to play them by memory. Take a phrase at a time and once its comfortably in your recall, go on to the next one. This can be a little slow at first, but the key is not to be in a rush. It takes as long as it takes to memorise something and playing it by reading the music is not the same. I don't say this as a die hard dogmatist jazz guy, but it comes from lots of experience memorising and not memorising stuff and getting a sense of what works best. Also, just learn one solo at a time. It may take a while learning all of these but eventually, they will become ingrained, and be like a set of etudes to do during practice, and you don't want reading music to be involved at that stage.
- Use the recording

I use a software program called <u>Transcribe</u> to both transcribe some of these solos, and use it as a practice tool. Make sure you know how the phrase should sound on the recording, memorise it with this in mind. Once you have learnt to play the solo from memory, you should also get to the point where you can play it along with the recording.

Don't worry about matching the speed of the recording

I have spent a long time working on these solos by playing them at around 25-35% speed. This probably seems overly slow, but it gives your ears a chance to really soak up the rhythmic subtleties of the recording, and not only of Keith Jarrett's playing but of the other musicians too. I find that so much of my approach to time is influenced by Gary Peacock and this comes from playing these solos along with the recording and locking into the time as much as possible and using slow speeds to do it. I find playing them slow to mid speed also really helps with technique. I will rarely take them up to 100% speed, but if you are going to do it, just concentrate on one at a time. You will no doubt find certain phrases that are really technically challenging at 100% speed, so do not rush the process of building this technique. It will come eventually. Playing along with the recording at 100% speed does have value, especially in getting your technique to be able to do complex things very quickly, but don't get hung up on them needing to be played at 100% speed. After spending a lot of time playing the solos along with the recording at 25%, I find I generally play them now at about 60-70% speed as a general daily practice thing. A neat thing

about the <u>Transcribe</u> program is that is makes it very easy to change speed but keep the pitch the same.

- Go over them when you are not with the instrument I will play these through in my head when I am on a train, a plane, in a meeting, wherever. You should know them well enough so you can imagine each note of the solo. This really helps your ears develop, and solidifies the sound of different chord progression of the jazz standards. A great jazz guitarist once told me that some of your best practice can take place on the bus, just going through tunes in your head, trying to imagine chord changes.
- If you are a piano player, learn them in right and left hand
 These solos are pretty technically demanding, and they present a great opportunity to get a lot of balance
 between left and right hands. Almost all piano players have a left hand that is much weaker than the
 right, and the left hand just kind of leans on the right and backs it up. But what you really want is for
 your left hand to have the same facility and ability to improvise as the right hand. It is interesting that
 even piano players with enormous technique seem to have this issue. So you can use these solos to
 develop a lot of independence in both hands, and move to the point where either hand can take the lead
 at any time. I actually started out as a guitarist and learnt a bunch of these solos on guitar which
 presents different issues, so just do what works for the challenges of your particular instrument.
- Other ways to practice them
 - There are of course a ton of ways to practice these besides just playing them through. You might learn them in a different key (again, take it slow and memorise). I have also done things like play each note as the bottom note in a chord, so play each note with a major third above it, or major triad, or fourth chord or something. This really builds you ability to play chords. Once you think about it, there are million variations like this you could do. You can also do things like play the notes of the underlying chord in one hand while playing the solos with the other, or improvise in one hand while playing the solo, kind of two part invention style. It does not really matter what you do, as long as you keep finding ways to develop your playing. Generally with practice I always want it to be a deeply musical experience, not an exhausting experience, so keep that in mind when you work with them. Over the years I have approached these solos in all kinds of ways (even singing the solo while playing the chords which is great for your ears) but for my practice schedule these days, I will play all the solos in right hand, then in the left hand, and complement this by always being sure to learn a couple of new jazz standards each week.
- Don't get hung up on the meaning of it all

 It is interesting to think about which notes Keith Jarrett uses and when he uses them but when you try
 and systemise this you tend to find endless patterns and possibilities. It is certainly not possible to try and
 reduce what is going on here into scale choice or something. Note that Keith Jarrett uses all twelve notes
 of the octave over all chord choices at different times. What seems to be going on here is instead a
 deeply sophisticated and intuitive understanding of how voice leading can be embedded into the
 subconscious mind along with an exposure to the audio lineage of jazz music, and give rise to certain
 notes being able to played at certain times, driven by local time-based context. These solos are really a
 testament to the ability of the human mind to process and work with audio information, and reproduce it
 in novel ways. I am not sure how this helps with your daily practice, but remember that the process of
 learning how to improvise is cognitively complicated rather than analytically complicated. While there are
 lots of fascinating analytical and mathematical questions that this information gives rise to, for the
 purpose of learning how to improvise, its is important not just to see these solos as containing a set of
 rules that collectively give a solution to the problem of improvisation.

Anyway, I hope you get a lot of value out of these solos. I have found that, over the years, my study of them has completely transformed my understanding of music, and not only as a jazz improvisor. When I became interested in music, I wanted to learn everything about it. I wanted to know how to orchestrate, how to write counterpoint, how to write a Fugue, how harmony worked. I have found these solos to invaluable in developing my sense of melody, voice leading, what is possible in harmony. Most importantly, developing expertise about music seems to be accompanied by developing that elusive sense of how music seems to work, and being comfortable with the fact that any theory will become subordinate to your developed judgement as a musician. And these solos have really helped for this. These days I have ended up as a software developer and mostly work on how music can be treated as a product of information theory, but again, these solos have been really helpful in how I think about the problems this generates.

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Keith Jarrett piano solo Song: All The Things You Are, composed by Jerome Kern Recording: Keith Jarrett Trio, Standards Volume 1, (1983)

Tempo: 264 bpm

















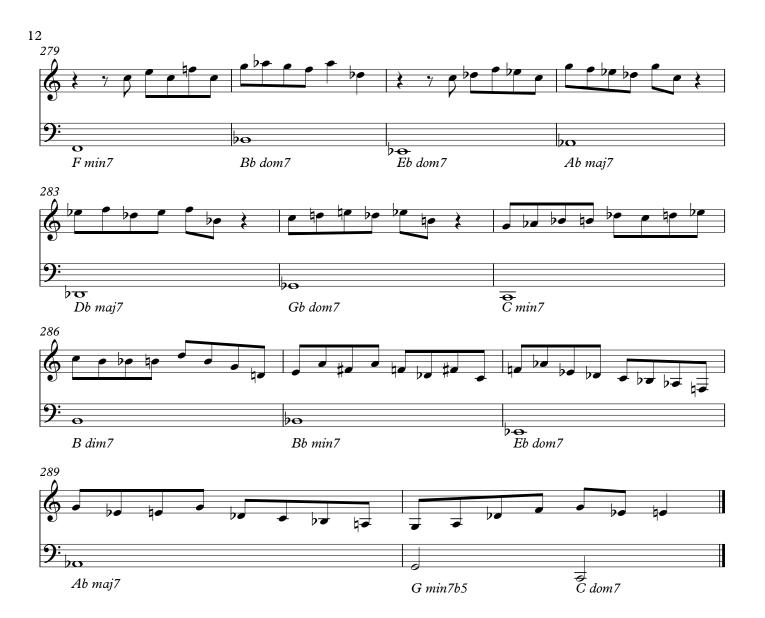












Keith Jarrett piano solo

Song: Someday My Prince Will Come, composed by Frank Churchill Recording: Keith Jarrett Trio, Up For It, (2002)
Tempo: 146 bpm



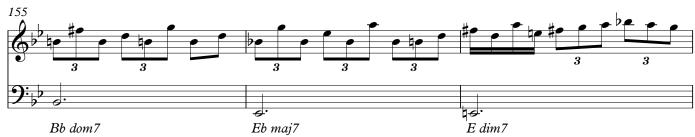














D min7

[']C# dim7

F dom7













Keith Jarrett piano solo Song: *Groovin High*, composed by Dizzy Gillespie Recording: <u>Keith Jarrett Trio, Whisper Not</u>, (1999) Tempo: 282 bpm































Keith Jarrett piano solo

Song: Stella By Starlight, composed by Victor Young Recording: Keith Jarrett Trio, Standards Live, (1985) Tempo: 151 bpm

















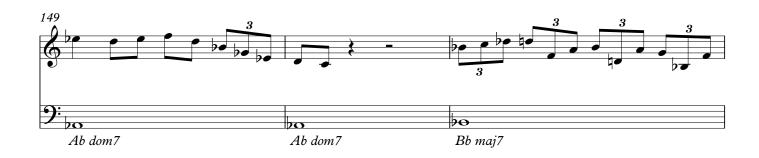


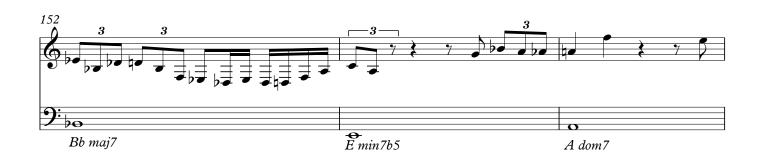




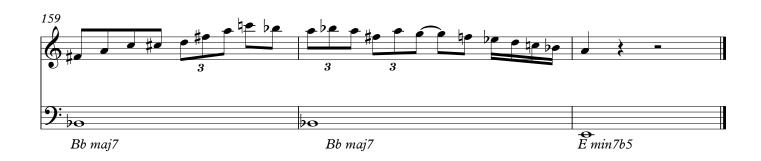












Keith Jarrett piano solo Song: Days of Wine and Roses, composed by Henry Mancini Recording: Keith Jarrett Trio, Keith Jarrett at the Blue Note, (1994)

Tempo: 168 bpm



















Keith Jarrett piano solo Song: *Autumn Leaves*, composed by Joseph Kosma Recording: <u>Keith Jarrett Trio Tokyo 96</u>, (1996)

Tempo: 214 bpm

















Keith Jarrett piano solo

Song: If I Were A Bell, composed by Frank Loesser Recording: Keith Jarrett Trio, Up For It, (2002) Tempo: 154 bpm

























D dim7

Db maj7

G dom7

Ab maj7





