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## **Transcribing Jazz Solos Without Pitches**

by Antonio J. García

Each passing year brings more and more technology to aid the modern-day transcriber in ways that the jazz masters never dreamed of. Tunable-pitch, tempo-reduction, key-transposition, tape-looping, and frequency-filtering are all available on computers and stand-alone devices. More and more students of jazz are creating transcriptions with better pitch-accuracy than perhaps ever before.

But where has it gotten us? Many transcriptions do not indicate what, other than pitch, has contributed to the birth of so grand a solo as to merit the attention. Technology is not the sole reason behind this sorry state, but it is a contributing factor. So it is critical to jazz education that we foster in our transcription process the study of the mostly non-pitched elements that led to the masterpieces we seek to explore.

### **The Low-Tech Process**

#### *Context*

In the nascent days of swing, jazz musicians who wanted to study their peers' or predecessors' solo "licks" did not have the benefit of our current technology. If a saxophonist wanted to check out a Sidney Bechet solo on a 78 r.p.m. recording, he had to put up with the cumbersome, weighty tone-arm of the record-player. If he was seeking "Lick B," it was all he could manage to lift and re-place the needle on the same spot of the recording to hear the same musical passage again. Musicians used to mark their 78s with chalk to identify such treasured locales!

Most of the time, aiming for Lick B resulted in also hearing Lick A before it or Lick C after it. The machine simply was not so easily handled as to isolate passages neatly. As a result, the musicians wrestling with the record-player were forced to hear and learn the *context* of Lick B. They were far more likely to observe what prompted the musical idea in question and what followed it than anyone now using hi-tech isolation options would idly discover. That creative context—of what the soloist and the rhythm section were doing before and after the moment sought—can offer great lessons that an aspiring jazz musician might otherwise miss.

#### *Mental Recording*

The other benefit of the low-technology of early jazz study was that most musicians found it impractical, if not impossible, to place the tone-arm where desired, then lift it, attempt to duplicate the passage on their instrument with one hand still on the tone-arm, and then re-place the tone-arm to hear the passage again. (A trombonist or bassist needing two hands on the instrument faced twice the challenge of a trumpeter, who could manage his "axe" with one hand still free.) As a result, the inquiring musician was forced to memorize the recorded passage in his mind's ear while repeating the tone-arm placement alone, only going to his instrument when he was confident that he had captured the material in his "mind's tape recorder." My educated guess is that most of these incipient jazz masters also sang along

with the sounds from the 78's tone-arm before reaching for their instruments. Singing along would confirm that they indeed had memorized the right information before making the move to their instruments.

This aural learning process in real-time offers long-term benefits far superior to those of half-speed, tape-looped isolation; for the musician gets to hear the music as it happens, as on the bandstand. The information absorbed includes much more data about the recorded soloist's tone quality, articulation, dynamics, pace, and direction than if digitally altered; and that information is much more easily conveyed by the musician out of his instrument when learned aurally. After all, what are most of us after, more than anything else, from the study of a great solo? I would bet the answer lies much more in the artist's tone and phrasing than in the mere notes. If you have any doubt, listen to anyone play a transcribed solo without including such musical elements.

And if you're suspicious of the importance of singing along with transcribed jazz solos, consider this: when was the last time you met an accomplished, world-class jazz musician who in rehearsal could not scat-sing what he or she wanted in an ensemble's phrasing? Though few instrumentalists prefer to scat-sing on stage, I cannot think of one jazz master I've met who couldn't scat accurate phrasings in rehearsal. If that is indeed a crucial element of their world-class training, who are the rest of us to suggest that we and our students can grow to fullest potential without also developing that same skill? And then there are the scat-singing vocalists, who daily internalize the jazz language in a way they cannot avoid because of their chosen instrument. The model of Louis Armstrong stands tall as the musician who changed the phrasing of jazz forever: is it an accident that he could play what he sang and could sing what he played?

I am not advocating that we throw our modern-day, digital "trainers" and "slow-downers" out the window. Quite the contrary: they are great tools that can add layers of information to our study of solos. Even more importantly, in my view, they can *after* transcription assist our practice of these solos at varying tempos and in different keys in ways that no other devices can. But this does not absolve us of the requirement that we learn tone and phrasing, nor of the inarguable truth that singing along with the solos before playing or writing them down can reap exponential and long-term rewards.

### **Throwing Out The Pitch**

So often students of jazz are under the impression that beyond playing licks in all keys, there are not a lot of concrete things to practice in such an improvisatory genre as jazz. Nothing could be further from the truth!

Let's explore some of the many avenues available to us to learn from a single recorded solo *without* even writing down pitch. I've chosen a solo currently widely available on CD: trombonist Steve Turre's solo on the tune "Stompin' at the Savoy" from his 2000 CD *TNT* (Telarc CD-83529). It's an inspirational solo well worthy of examination at any level, and we'll tackle a variety of elements of music-making along the way.

*TNT* stands for "trombone and tenor": the CD includes three combos featuring that front line. Along with Turre, one group includes James Carter (sax), Mulgrew Miller (piano), Buster Williams (bass), and Victor Lewis (drums). Another highlights David Sanchez (sax), Stephen Scott (piano), Peter Washington (bass), Lewis Nash (drums), and Giovanni Hidalgo (percussion). The ensemble on "Savoy" includes Dewey Redman (sax) with Scott, Washington, and Nash. So there are plenty of reasons to invest in this CD!

Of course, your first step should be to sing along with the solo repeatedly until you have absorbed it and can sing along with the recording with great accuracy. Without that, the value of each of the exercises below and the speed with which you can accomplish them are both diminished. So sing along with Turre's solo as if it were a popular song: hear it uninterrupted from beginning to end enough times that you've gotten the "big picture" of most of the phrases down before enlisting some stop-and-go to work on some details of the faster phrases.

Your next step should be to review the melody on which the solo is based and thus note the form of the tune and of the solo. In this case, the tune begins without an introduction: only the two pickup notes of the melody lead the rhythm section into this AABA tune. Each of the four sections of the tune is eight bars long:

- Redman plays the melody during the first "A" section (0'00"–0'16"). Turre answers with the muted counterline.
- The second "A" has the same construction (0'16–0'31").
- The "B" (bridge) of the tune shares the melody in octaves between the two horns (0'31"–0'47").
- The last "A" (0'47–1'02") is constructed as the earlier ones. Redman's solo begins in measure 32 (1'00").

Can you compare this presentation to previous, traditional renditions of the tune? It's important not to rely on a pre-existing fake book as the guide for the recording. It's also useful to recognize personalizations in the current arrangement, as they may influence the later solos.

Of particular interest in the *TNT* version is that the material in measures 3 and 4 of each A section (and its phrase's pickups) have been changed, dropping back into the traditional presentation at the pickups to measure 5. Whether or not your experience level allows you to realize the shift is a half-step out of the key, it is still a shift from the original—and one that perhaps was influenced by similar movements in the traditional bridge of this tune.

While you could examine the solo in virtually any order, the following represents a sequence that my students find most practical.

#### *Start, Sustain, and Stop*

Your written assignment begins: using a sheet of regular, lined loose-leaf paper (though you could use staff paper, if you prefer), mark out space for four measures per line, covering the entire form of the solo. Add double-bars at the end of measures 8, 16, 24, and 32—and again at the end of 40, 48, 56, and 64—to indicate the form of the tune. Then mark four slash-marks per bar to represent its four beats.

Listening to the solo—and also pausing periodically to use your memory of it in your "mental recording"—mark Steve Turre's activity and inactivity in his soloing. That is, draw a wavy line at the beat or half-beat at which any phrase starts, lifting your pencil up so as to leave no mark at the beat or half-beat where the phrase ends. Any rest in the phrase breaks the visual line.

If the solo phrase crosses over from one line into the next, draw an arrowhead at the end of the former line, confirming that the phrase does not pause. (For full effect, you could instead draw out this exercise on a 64-bar-long scroll of paper without line breaks. But though this offers a better visual metaphor for the music, it's not a practical alternative for most of us.)

Examine the solo repeatedly until you are confident you have noted accurately on paper the beginning, sustaining, and ending of all phrases. When finished you should have in front of you a great tool for

practice resembling the excerpt shown in **Example 1**. Perhaps your version doesn't break for such brief rests as an eighth-rest might offer; but at any level of detail, it will be of value.

**EXAMPLE 1:**

TRANSCRIPTION OF  
ACTIVITY/INACTIVITY

SWING  $\text{♩} = 128$

**STOMPIN' AT THE SAVOY**

Steve Turre's trombone solo from *TNT*  
(Telarc CD-83529, recorded November 2000)

Benny Goodman, Andy Razaf,  
Chick Webb, & Edgar Sampson  
transcribed by Antonio J. García

1 (3'05")

5

9 (3'18")

15

*Stompin' at the Savoy* © 1936 Robbins Music Corp. Renewed 1964 RYTVOC, Inc.  
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Look at your illustration carefully. Does it look like one of your own solos might, if similarly graphed? Does Steve start and stop his phrases markedly differently than you do?

For instance, pick a tune of the same 32-bar form, a tune on which you are extremely comfortable soloing at your own, chosen tempo. Now improvise your own solo over your chosen tune—but using *his* road-map of starting, sustaining, and stopping phrases. Begin and end every phrase you improvise at the corresponding location on the sheet. (If you're too challenged by this, either pick an easier tune or choose a slower tempo.)

I can almost guarantee you that you will improvise with a very different expression than you would on your own without Turre's guidance. You'll probably find yourself with some new ideas, surprising yourself along the way with starting and stopping abruptly in spots.

Aspiring jazz musicians often find themselves playing in "boxed phrases": lines that fall neatly into two or four-bar phrases. Or they might tend to pause and breathe on a bar line or chord change. Yet one of the characteristics of bebop, when it evolved away from swing, was that lines could start and stop

*anywhere*. That influence carried over into most genres of jazz that followed bebop and is essential to developing a conversational soloing style.

Relatively few younger jazz musicians know a concrete way to practice this primary element of improv phrasing, but now you're doing it. You're soloing with the phrase-lengths and placement of none other than Steve Turre. Check out how he contrasts long and short phrases—just as you would with your voice if you were speaking to someone. Try this exercise using phrase-mapping borrowed from any soloist you respect. You'll grow with each one. The importance of this exercise cannot be overestimated for jazz drummers, who can easily learn to steal new phrasing possibilities from phrase-maps drawn from any vocal or instrumental soloist!

### *Shape*

For this step, you can either alter your existing sheet or start a fresh one (with double-bars and slash-marks). Listening to the solo or to your memory, mark the direction within every solo phrase. It doesn't make much difference where on your staff you begin your graphing, so long as you maintain a relative accuracy thereafter. As the musical phrase rises, direct your mark upwards in that part of the measure; as the phrase falls, mark your line downwards. Continue to leave space on the page for all rests and to mark arrowheads for lines continuing across line-breaks.

Again, examine the solo repeatedly until you are confident you have noted accurately on paper the direction of all phrases. When finished you should have in front of you another great tool for practice that resembles the excerpt shown in **Example 2**. Perhaps your version doesn't account for each minor directional change but still captures the overall sweep of his lines: you'll still be able to learn from it. Do these shapes resemble your own solos, if similarly graphed? Does Turre direct his phrases differently than you do? Is there an interesting blend of phrases that ascend, descend, or remain basically stable?

Now use your tune of the same form. At a very comfortable tempo, improvise your solo using *his* road map of phrase-direction—along with retaining the starting, sustaining, and stopping of phrases as you've already accomplished. (If challenged by this, slow the tempo further.) Do you now find yourself soloing differently than you usually do?

This is a very practical exercise to expand your vocabulary of phrase-direction. No one wants to listen to a person talk in a monotone, and yet beginning and intermediate jazz soloists often parallel that in their improvisations. Once again, this exercise especially drives the point home for drummers, who learn to view their instrument as a more vertical, pitch-based form of expression.

### *Peak*

Where is the point of the solo at which its intensity peaks, after which the solo winds down? In most (but of course not all) solos, it's roughly 80%-95% of the way through. This parallels the pace of a great movie or book, in which the most thrilling point usually leads to a chapter or scene that shows us what results from that moment: what happens to the characters in the story after they've discovered the truth? True, some plots do peak at the very end, leaving everyone gasping; but those are the exception.

So examine Steve's solo, and mark its peak of intensity with a "P" on the shape-map you've already created. You might not want to look at **Example 3**'s excerpts until you've made your own educated guess. Determining the peak can be a very subjective decision: I have notated my own opinion of Peak 1 (the overall peak to the solo, at 89% of the way through the solo), Peak 2 (a secondary peak, at 72% of the way through the solo), and Peak 3 (the peak of the first of the two choruses, at 84% of the way through the first chorus).

**EXAMPLE 2: TRANSCRIPTION OF DIRECTION**

SWING  $\text{♩} = 128$

1 3'03"

5

9 3'18"

9

13

**EXAMPLE 3: TRANSCRIPTION OF DIRECTION & PEAK**

25 3'48"

25

41 4'18"

41

45

57 4'48"

57

Once you've picked the peak spot, return to soloing over your chosen tune of the same form. Can you make your solo peak at *his* spot, along with observing his phrase-direction and the starting, sustaining, and stopping of phrases as you've already accomplished?

If not, forget about one or more of the other elements on the sheet and just focus on hitting the peak spot in your solo. Once you've done so a couple of times, start re-introducing the earlier characteristics so that you can experience walking so many miles in Steve's shoes.

The ability to hit a peak in your solos, wherever targeted, and wind down successfully is a specific skill that any jazz musician can practice in this focused manner. And if you've got it down, then increase your tempo—or choose a tune with tougher chord changes.

### *Articulation*

Let's return to your most recently created sheet of direction and peak. Now listen to the recorded solo (and to your memory of it) and observe any deviations in articulation from the default style of legato swing phrasing. Are there any accents, staccatos, glisses, scoops, bends, or other effects that express the personal character of Steve's solo? Mark them on your page above the given line, as close to the correct beat or half-beat as you can. For example, there are certainly locales at which Steve seems to slide into a note, perhaps with a "wah" sound resembling plunger use. We'll focus more on that later; but for now you could mark such effects with the "+o" markings associated with closing and opening the bell with a plunger. Other markings might include short (•), accented (>), short and accented (^), accented and especially full-value (≥), glisses or scoops (/), and falls (\).

Vibrato is a very personal element of an artist's sound and well worth a study on its own. You might examine just two specific examples of Turre's vibrato: the last and sustained notes of measures 10 and 48, as they definitely exude personality!

One aspect of articulation that rarely gets its due examination is the *release* of notes. In the simplest sense, this means notating accurately when a pitch is cut off. But in the context of groove, the release of notes can contribute tremendously to establishing the rhythmic feel of a solo. To borrow a term from the visual art world, the soloist can actively place this "negative space" in a way that can be more meaningful than the simple absence of activity.

A typical tool is employing a "tongue-stop" at the end of chosen notes: rather than letting the note decay naturally, the soloist sustains the note at its peak volume until cutting off the air by raising his tongue. Many instrumentalists of non-wind instruments have found a way to effect the illusion of the technique, and vocalists also use it to great effect. This dramatic, blunt end to the note can be placed in locales to accent the groove of the music; and in a swing tune such as this one, that cutoff typically falls on beats 2 or 4.

Turre employs tongue-stops well, cutting off quarter or half notes on beats 2 or 4 in measures 9, 18, 20, 45, 48, 55, 56, 57, and 59. A sampling of these, along with his other articulations, are marked within the excerpt in **Example 4**. A soloist can also use articulation to contribute to such a groove by carving out rests on beats 2 or 4 amid eighth-note phrasings: Turre does this in bars 14, 15, 17, 40, 53, and 64. By using these negative spaces to define more clearly beats 2 and 4, Steve adds more depth to the swinging groove of his lines.

**EXAMPLE 4: TRANSCRIPTION OF PEAK & ARTICULATION**

57 <sup>4'48"</sup> <sup>P1</sup> +0 = "WAH" EFFECTED VIA SLIDE &/OR DYNAMICS (NOT PLUNGER?)

57

61

5'08"

An extreme variation on tongue-stop occurs on the downbeat of measure 57, where his release of the preceding beat's note is so pressured as to vent pent-up air audibly on the downbeat. Though subtle, this adds extra impact to his forthcoming attack on beat two of the measure.

You guessed it: next up is for you to improvise your own solo on your chosen tune adding articulation to the mix. That will probably constitute information overload; so focus only on the articulation challenges for a while—maybe even just working on the tongue-stop effect. Gradually you can add in the other musical elements.

Articulation is one of the most ignored elements of transcription study and of improvisation practice and performance. When I see a written transcription without such markings, it seems devoid of much personality. What better way to directly practice this aspect than to steal the approach from a jazz artist such as Steve Turre? Pick your own jazz master, and steal his or her tools of articulation!

Again, drummers benefit so richly from this exercise. They, too, should be able to exploit accents, staccatos, glisses, scoops, bends, and other effects that will bring their expression more vividly to life.

*Dynamics*

Few people speak at the same volume level for long, even within a given sentence, much less a paragraph or a complete conversation. Improvised solos mimic the human voice and should also include dynamics (unless they are a very rare, successful exception).

Examine Turre's solo; and mark every dynamic you possibly can: abrupt changes as well as gradual moments within a given line. Leave no room for doubt, with markings such as found in **Example 5**. Feel free to simplify matters by marking dynamics alone, or dynamics with activity/inactivity but without direction and/or articulation. And then add dynamics to your imitative goals when practicing your chosen tune with this solo-map.

You may find that expressing a fluid range of dynamics within your soloing is perhaps your greatest challenge so far. But it is such an essential element of any speech that you cannot overlook it and still be richly expressive. Take your tempo slower as you incorporate practice of this critical element. You may even want to solo over just one chord of your choice for a while as you address the measures of this diagram, rather than address an entire tune of chord changes.



**EXAMPLE 5: TRANSCRIPTION OF DIRECTION, ARTICULATION, & DYNAMICS**

33 4:03

37

mp mf

mf mp

*Rhythmic Density*

You've already marked the emotional peak of the solo with a "P." Now it's time to examine the points of the solo with the most-dense rhythmic activity and the least-dense. Here we'll define rhythmic activity as simply the numbers of notes. So passages of sixteenth notes are likely to be the densest, areas with rests and whole notes the least.

One way to mark these two contrasting areas might be to place a thick horizontal line over the passage of most intensity and a thin line over the least intense. That might resemble **Example 6**. If you like, you can continue this exercise throughout the whole solo, drawing a virtual topographical map of the contour or thickness of the solo—or you can just stick to the most and least busy.

**EXAMPLE 6: TRANSCRIPTION OF DIRECTION, PEAK, ARTICULATION, DYNAMICS, & DENSITY**

25 3:48

29

33 4:03

mp mf

mf mp

mp mf

mp mf

In this solo, Turre's least rhythmically intense passage (almost a complete measure of rest) closely follows his most intense. Is this sense of improvised balance an accident—or the result of years of experience?

What an interesting realm to practice concretely with your map! Sometimes we all need the discipline of someone *else* telling us when to try something. How does it feel to mirror the contrasting densities of Turre's solo in *your* solo? Again, drummers can be first in line on learning this aspect.

### Melodic Tension and Release

Now mark the locale of the greatest dissonant tension of the solo line against the harmonies beneath it—and then of the greatest consonant release, where the solo line seems in total harmony with the accompaniment. You might choose a “D” for dissonant and “C” for consonant, perhaps adding a bracket above the passage for easy recognition of the boundaries of this element, as in **Example 7**. Do these areas have any relationship to the locales of the other marked areas of musical interest, or are they seemingly independent?

**EXAMPLE 7: TRANSCRIPTION OF DIRECTION, ARTICULATION, DYNAMICS, & MELODIC TENSION/RELEASE**

The image shows three staves of musical notation. The top staff is labeled '9' and '3:18' in a circle. It features a wavy line representing a melodic line with annotations: '-4', 'vib. ---', and a bracket above the line. The middle staff is labeled 'C' in a diamond and shows a similar wavy line with annotations: 'p', 'm', 'v', and a bracket above the line. The bottom staff is labeled '49' and '4:33' in a circle, and 'D' in a diamond. It features a wavy line with annotations: '13', 'm', and a bracket above the line. The notation includes various symbols for dynamics (p, m, v), articulation (accents, slurs), and melodic tension/release (brackets, diamonds).

Playing “outside” the expected harmonies of a tune can sometimes be frustrating. Why not follow an acclaimed artist’s model for a while and go outside when he does, returning “home” when he does. How you choose your dissonance is up to you: offering pitches simply a half-step away from the consonant notes can be more than sufficient. Doing this using the maps of various solos of jazz masters can really add confidence to your own dissonant expressions.

Turre’s solo is actually quite consonant, and especially so in bars 13-16 as I’ve identified. The spot I’ve subjectively chosen as most dissonant, bars 50-51, is still pretty “inside.” Since we’re not transcribing pitches at the moment, the reasons for the dissonance might not be readily apparent.

All the elements we’ve explored so far are ones that even younger musicians can observe, note, and mimic. The level of detail will vary according to age, school, or academic class; but young students are very capable of noting shifts in activity, shape, articulation, dynamics, and rhythmic density, plus identifying the peak of a solo. Let them try!

### Tone

Discerning tone quality might be more of a challenge for youngsters but remains a critically expressive point for improvisers. Are there points in the recorded solo where Steve Turre changes his tone in some

significant way? Perhaps he “growls” or whispers in a “subtone.” Mark a descriptive word above the appropriate locales, along with a bracket as needed to show its duration, as shown in **Example 8**.

**EXAMPLE 8: TRANSCRIPTION OF DIRECTION, PEAK, ARTICULATION, DYNAMICS, & TONE**

4'48" (CUP) +0 = "WAH" EFFECTED VIA SLIDE &/OR DYNAMICS (NOT PLUNGER)

57

57

61

PINCH TONE! --- 0

5'08"

mf > p < mf

To me, the most striking element of Steve’s tone in this solo is his use of a mute. It has a cup-mute quality, and yet he performs striking “wah” effects that are evocative of a plunger. Is he combining them? Or perhaps he’s using a solotone mute? To get the definitive answer, I asked Steve, who replied: “a stone-lined cup mute, plain and simple.... I am using the slide and dynamics to nuance some of the notes.”

His answer truly highlights the importance of studying articulation and dynamics when transcribing solos. Playing his solo simply in a cup mute—with no additional dynamics or articulation on the “nuanced” notes—yields very little expression. But Turre has utilized these tools to capture the attractive characteristics of *both* a cup and a plunger, while only playing in the cup mute. And if you think that’s easily done, try it yourself. I’m betting you’ll find this is a technique to practice—particularly if you play a wind instrument without a trombone slide.

Another locale where the tone is striking is the last two and a half measures (62-64). Here Steve chooses to pinch the tone of his horn—along with a pair of glissandos and a matching pair of dynamics—to cap the pitch he’s been repeating for the previous couple of measures. Later we’ll examine his potential reasons for doing this.

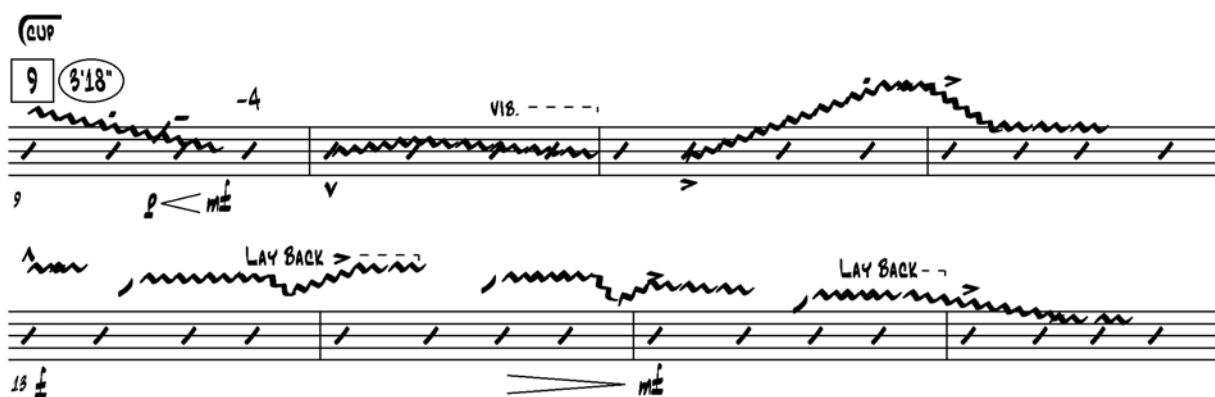
There are plenty of ways to be expressive with your tone quality. Most of the jazz masters are almost instantly recognizable by the uniqueness of their tone and how they choose to alter it. Tone shapes our identity as strongly as any other musical element; some would say more than any other element. So take this opportunity to follow Steve’s lead and intentionally practice varying your tone quality.

*Swing vs. Straight vs. Laying Back*

How soloists place their notes in the timeline is a very personal thing. In a swing feel such as this, there are infinite variations, not many of which can be written explicitly in notated music without resembling the visual difficulty of a score of a contemporary-classical composition. The improviser can actually stretch and compress the tempo of his ideas over the ground beat. So transcribers mark such passages with descriptors such as “swing,” “straight (eighths),” “lay back (behind the beat),” and “rush (ahead of the beat).” This preserves the visual look of the phrases as stemming from swing style rather than landing a thirty-second note off the beat, for example.

Examine Steve's solo for areas at which he strays from the default swing phrasing; and mark them with such terms and surrounding brackets, such as in **Example 9**. And when you've done so, read on here to find some notable details.

**EXAMPLE 9: TRANSCRIPTION OF DIRECTION, ARTICULATION, DYNAMICS, TONE, & TIME**



Turre's solo doesn't actually include any areas of straight eighth-notes, though it does have one measure in which his placement is such accentuated swing that it suggests the loping feel of a "shuffle" swing tune. In measure 60 (4'52") he strongly accents the upbeat of each beat, placing the front and back eighths in each beat in as precisely a 66%-33% ratio as one might ever encounter. This style capitalizes on the preceding beats two-and-four backbeat feel launched in measures 57-58 (4'49"-4'52"), very suggestive of a shuffle groove.

Steve does "lay back" various phrases within his own solo, however, particularly at measures 6-7 (3'13"-3'14"), 13-14 (3'26"-3'29"), 15-16 (3'30"-3'31"), 26-27, (3'52"-3'53") and 46-47 (4'28"-4'30"). Is there a message in that all but one of these occurrences fall within the first of his two choruses? Perhaps: one might indeed expect the earlier chorus to be more relaxed than the later one.

Often phrasings that are initially thought to be laying back over a swing groove are actually simply straight eighths. To hear great examples, you need go no further than to listen to the solo preceding Turre's by the great Dewey Redman. We can all benefit from checking out Redman in his first-chorus solo measures 6 (1'12"-1'14") and 15-16 (1'29"-1'32"), plus his second-chorus pickups to bar 11 through 12 (2'21"-2'25"), 14-15 (2'27"-2'33"), and 26-27 (2'50"-2'53"). This is in addition to his own laying back, as he does so much in measures 7-8 (1'14"-1'16") and 13-14 (1'26"-1'29") of his first chorus.

Once you've mapped out such techniques on your solo graph, work on applying them in those locales when you solo over your chosen tune. When you do, you'll likely discover that stretching out of swing style is the easy part: it's snapping *back* into swing style and instantly regaining control of the pulse so as to continue soloing well that initially confounds most of us.

A soloist who can expand and contract this "rubber band of time" effectively can be more expressive than one who is bound to the rigidity of the beat. Practice with Steve and with maps you generate from other jazz masters so as to get a feel for how this expressiveness can work for you. Drummers will be particularly intrigued by this challenge. Everyone can clock their work with a metronome to check the accuracy of their return to the groove.

### *Thematic Development*

We've examined a lot of aspects of this solo but have yet to really dive into its development. On what musical ideas does Turre anchor this solo? How does he re-use them so as to promote unity in his expression? Is he still thinking about his initial ideas by the time he creates the end of his solo?

It takes a mature musician—or music-listener—to identify all the layers of thematic presence and development in most jazz solos. While many students of the music can spot an occurrence or two, there are usually far more occasions of thematic unity within a given solo that initially go undetected. Months, even years later, we can return to examine a solo and discover layers we'd never dreamed of at first. Thematic variations could be longer or shorter than the original, or higher or lower, or faster or slower, or any number of other possibilities.

At this point, we need to simplify our visual analysis before moving forward. Let's go back to our map of the solo showing only activity and phrase-directions in the solo: **Example 2**. Even if you had never heard a note of this solo, would the contours of this map suggest any instances of theme-and-variation? Certainly measures 2, 3, and 4 contain repetitive shapes. How about measure 13's influence on measure 14's shape—and then on 15's?

If we examine the whole solo, we'll see a parallel between bars 21 and 22, and then 23 with 24. Contours as simple as found within bars 25-26 suggest unity. Measures 41, 43, and 45 are visual relatives. What about bars 46-47...and 47 and 48? By the time the solo hits its last 16 measures, the unity takes on its most intense focus: virtually every shape seems to have a twin or a mirror-imaged response.

I have found that few methods are more striking to the aspiring student of improvisation than such a directional map when employed to show the relationships within the solo of a great improviser. It becomes so obvious that the goal of a master soloist is not to fill up the space with random notes, nor to impress with technique, but instead to communicate and reinforce ideas: themes that are ripe for the soloist's commentary during the improvisation.

We could dive deeply for weeks into the minutiae of this solo's thematic development. But for now, let's just seek answers to the following "big-picture" questions:

- What idea does Steve begin with?
- Where did this musical motive, or "germ," come from?
- Is any content related to the original tune of the melody?
- Is anything related to the preceding soloist?

If you have ideas as to the locale of the initial theme of Turre's solo, mark it with a bracketed "T," marking related phrases the same way as they appear later within the solo.

The larger challenge for most transcribers comes from identifying a second theme, if there is one, and perhaps more after that. The more you've sung the solo in question, the more likely you are to recognize the foundational elements on which it is built: if you only write it out without singing it, you'll have far less emotional connection to the music. If you succeed in identifying a second theme later in the solo, mark the first theme "T1" and the next "T2."

#### *—Theme 1*

The first motive in Steve's solo is taken directly from the last motive of the preceding improvisation by saxophonist Dewey Redman, who repeatedly plays one note to end his solo. Turre proceeds to play that same pitch eight times within measures 2-4 of his own solo, making it clear that he had taken notice of Dewey's closing statement. Can you hear that reiterated pitch on the recording?

Something as simple as one repeated note can be a powerful theme, and this pitch happens to be the tonic (most consonant note) of the key of the tune. Turre emphasizes it using one of three octaves within eight different phrases in his solo (aside from many passing references to the pitch). Am I making too much of this one pitch's importance to Steve? I don't think so. Note how he ends his solo: playing that one pitch *seven* times in his final four bars. Thus he ends his solo recalling not only how he began his improvisation sixty bars ago but also how Dewey had closed his own solo before that. This sort of message is hard to ignore: unity is strength in a solo.

—*Theme 2*

The old jazz adage, “Steal from the melody,” is usually visible in solos. Check out the first eight bars of the actual tune again as played by the sax (0'0"–0'15"). Even without transcribing pitches, you can become aware that the opening theme of this tune is based on a pair of notes headed up, closing the first A section with a pair that head down.

While it would be overkill to assume that every pair of notes headed up or down is thus theme-based, some allusions are too strong to dismiss, especially in bars 42 and 44. Steve seems to favor the descending pair, such as in measures 6, 9, 13-14, 16, 35, 41, 43, 45, and 57-59 (the latter bars completely overlapping with Theme 1). And the ascending idea appears more subtly in measures 25-26, descending in 19, 47, and 48, and in mixed directions in bars 39-40.

—*Theme 3*

Similarly, stealing from the countermelody is a great idea. Heard in measures 1-2 of the tune as played by the trombone, Steve first alludes to this shape and/or collection of pitches in measures 1 and 2 of his solo, yielding variations that cover two more bars. Measures 42 and 44 are clear references, as is the fragment ending bar 56. Measures 6-7 outline a reverse direction of the countermelody (less one pitch). More subtle references to the reverse direction would include measures 14-16.

—*Theme 4*

Just as a single pitch can be a driving theme, so can a single rhythm. For example, the most striking rhythmic use in Turre's solo is his use of eighth triplets. While barely present in the A sections of his solo, they frequent the bridge sections of both choruses: measures 21-24 (3'41"–3'47") and 49-53 (4'33"–4'43").

Beyond the primary themes, there are other, smaller motives. And remember the parallel in directional shapes we'd noted earlier between bars 21 and 22, and then 23 with 24? Depending on where your ear-development currently is, you may recognize that these and some other contours in the two bridges of Turre's solo (measures 17-24 and 49-56) illustrate his willingness to sequence ideas in half-steps along with the corresponding “Savoy” bridge melody and chord progressions. Does that repetitive movement then count as a theme? Regardless, you can examine an overview of Turre's use of his four primary themes in the analysis appearing in **Example 10** (less the most subtle references mentioned above).

Just as we speak in words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and essays to express our ideas, jazz musicians improvise in themes, variations, extensions, allusions, and related ideas. The more you can converse in their language, the more it will become part of your own. So now take your solo map; and at the noted locales, apply some thematic development. Can you state an idea and re-use it in various ways to unify your solo? Drummers need this at their fingertips more than anyone else. What a critically expressive tool to have at your command!

**EXAMPLE 10:**  
**TRANSCRIPTION OF**  
**DIRECTION & THEMES**

# STOMPIN' AT THE SAVOY

Steve Turre's trombone solo from *TNT*  
 (Telarc CD-83529, recorded November 2000)

Benny Goodman, Andy Razaf,  
 Chick Webb, & Edgar Sampson  
 transcribed by Antonio J. García

**SWING** ♩ = 128

The score consists of ten staves of music, each representing a measure. The notation includes stems with flags and various wavy lines representing pitch contours. Annotations include:

- Staff 1:** Measure 1 (circled '1', 3:03"). Above the staff, a bracket labeled 'T1' spans from 3:05" to 3:09" with the text 'D-flat emphasis 3:05"-3:09"'. Below the staff, a bracket labeled 'T3' spans from 3:04" to 3:07" with the text 'countermelody 3:04"-3:07"'. A triangle labeled 'T2' is positioned above the staff with the text 'melody 3:13"'. The time signature is 4/4.
- Staff 2:** Measure 5 (circled '5'). A bracket labeled 'T3' spans from 3:13" to 3:15".
- Staff 3:** Measure 9 (circled '9', 3:18"). A triangle labeled 'T2' is positioned above the staff with the text '3:18"'. A bracket labeled 'T1' spans from 3:21" to 3:21" (likely a typo for 3:21"-3:22").
- Staff 4:** Measure 9 (circled '9'). A triangle labeled 'T2' is positioned above the staff with the text '3:26"-3:29"'. A triangle labeled 'T2' is positioned above the staff with the text '3:31"-3:32"'. A dashed line indicates a melodic line across the staff.
- Staff 5:** Measure 15 (circled '15').
- Staff 6:** Measure 17 (circled '17', 3:33").
- Staff 7:** Measure 17 (circled '17'). A circle labeled 'T4' is positioned above the staff with the text 'eighth triplets 3:41"-3:47"'. A dashed line indicates a melodic line across the staff.
- Staff 8:** Measure 21 (circled '21').
- Staff 9:** Measure 25 (circled '25', 3:48"). A bracket labeled 'T1' spans from 3:51" to 3:51" (likely a typo for 3:51"-3:52"). A bracket labeled 'T1' spans from 3:53" to 3:53" (likely a typo for 3:53"-3:54").
- Staff 10:** Measure 25 (circled '25'). A bracket labeled 'T1' spans from 4:01" to 4:01" (likely a typo for 4:01"-4:02").
- Staff 11:** Measure 29 (circled '29').

EXAMPLE 10 (CONT'D)

Handwritten musical score for "STOMPIN' AT THE SAVOY". The score is written on a grand staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The tempo is marked "4/08". The score is divided into systems, with measure numbers 33, 37, 41, 45, 49, 53, 57, and 61 indicated. The score includes various time signature changes and annotations:

- Measure 33:  $4'08''$  (circled)
- Measure 37:  $4'07''-4'09''$  (triangle T2)
- Measure 41:  $4'18''$  (circled),  $4'19''$  (hexagon T1),  $4'20''-4'22''$  (diamond T3),  $4'21''$  (triangle T2),  $4'22''-4'23''$  (triangle T2),  $4'23''$  (hexagon T1),  $4'25''$  (triangle T2)
- Measure 45:  $4'18''-4'19''$  (triangle T2),  $4'28''-4'33''$  (hexagon T1),  $4'24''-4'25''$  (diamond T3)
- Measure 49:  $4'26''-4'27''$  (triangle T2),  $4'33''-4'43''$  (circle T4),  $4'47''-4'48''$  (diamond T3)
- Measure 53:  $4'48''$  (circled),  $4'49''-4'53''$  (hexagon T1)
- Measure 57:  $4'48''-4'53''$  (triangle T2),  $4'57''-5'03''$  (hexagon T1),  $5'08''$  (circled)

The score features a complex rhythmic pattern with many eighth and sixteenth notes, and several rests. The time signature changes are indicated by dashed lines and arrows. The annotations include triangles (T1, T2, T3, T4), hexagons, diamonds, and circles, each containing a number and a time signature.

STOMPIN' AT THE SAVOY



### *Quotes*

Musical quotes are ideas borrowed from other sources and inserted by the soloist into the improvisation. Typically these ideas are snippets of actual melodies from the current tune or from other tunes, usually applied in the same tonality and at the same beat of the measure as it was in the original source. But some soloists are adept at quoting material while changing the beat at which it might fall or even the key in which it is stated. Perhaps the foremost quote-master in jazz history was tenor saxophonist Dexter Gordon, who seemed effortless in his ability to present them in fresh locales within a solo.

The simple truth about transcribing solos is that unless you know a lot of tunes' melodies, you'll never recognize when a soloist is throwing a quote at you. So this is one small, additional incentive to learn lots of tunes! If your knowledge of repertoire is strong enough to spot any quotes within this solo, bracket them off with a "Q." Here are three I spotted, all in the second chorus of Steve's work.

#### —*Boneology*

In measures 33-40, he quotes "Boneology," a composition by trombone legend J.J. Johnson. The liner notes to *TNT* allude to this placement as "Turre's only direct reference to J.J. Johnson" on the CD—without revealing that the reference is a musical quote or what the tune may be. Nor do the liners state whether Steve planned this quote in advance or if it spontaneously emerged during his solo.

Regardless, the use of "Boneology" is ideal for more than sentimental reasons. The long, upbeat eighths of its opening statement (bar 33 of Steve's solo) are uniquely contrasting to all else in the solo. And remember when we noted the personalization of this arrangement in taking the third and fourth measures of the A sections' melody up a half-step? The melody of "Boneology" fits this movement perfectly (bars 35-36 of his solo). And, as noted when we examined thematic development, the signature descending pair of notes in measure 35 bear resemblance to the beginning or ending of the opening eight measures of the "Stompin'" melody.

#### —*Star Eyes*

Turre immediately follows that with a literal quote of "Star Eyes" (by Raye and DePaul) in measures 41-42 that he then sequences in the new key of bars 43-44, landing on yet a third pitch-level in measure 45.

As with "Boneology," this is a particularly fitting quote. The opening rhythm of these three phrases is identical to that of the pickup notes to "Stompin'"—though placed in a different part of the bar. And as noted when we explored thematic development, measures 42 and 44 each end with a pair of notes whose pitch-interval matches the opening of the melody.

#### —*The Blues Walk*

Clifford Brown's "The Blues Walk" is a riff-based melody often quoted, as Turre does in bars 46-47, immediately echoing down an octave in measures 47-48. Rhythmically, the material is placed as it would be in Brown's tune (but without any pickup note). The phrase bears strong resemblance to measures 6-7 of Steve's solo, though not an exact pitch-match. Interestingly, both appearances fall in the sixth and seventh measures of an A section of his solo.

So as to remind us, Turre closes his solo in measures 62-64 with another reference to "The Blues Walk" that begins and ends its own phrase on the tonic pitch of "Stompin'," thus tying into the opening theme of Steve's solo. As noted earlier, he prolongs the opening pitch of this quote, inserting a bend down a half-step—and pinching the tone and lowering the dynamic—that then rebounds back upward for added emphasis. This added color emphasizes his stated importance of this pitch.

Do note that “The Blues Walk” is not to be confused with saxophonist Lou Donaldson’s “Blues Walk”—a very different melody.

—*Too Close for Comfort*

It may be impossible to pin down the exact origin of this riff, as it likely arose in the very early history of blues. But the most well-known uses include the jazz standard “Too Close for Comfort” (by Bock, Holofcener, and Weiss). You may even know it from The Beach Boys’ “Help Me, Rhonda” or from material by Ray Charles and many others. But regardless of the exact source, this blues riff appears unmistakably in measures 57-59 of Turre’s solo.

Each of these quotes is notated in **Example 11**. With 22 of his last 32 measures referencing quotes of other tunes in some way, I’d say Steve is giving Dexter Gordon a run for his money in the quotation department. Use this “quote map” when playing your own chosen tune: work on inserting your own quotes of choice where Steve does on “Stompin’.”

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**EXAMPLE 11:**

# STOMPIN' AT THE SAVOY

TRANSCRIPTION OF DIRECTION & QUOTES

Steve Turre's trombone solo from *TNT*  
(Telarc CD-83529, recorded November 2000)

Benny Goodman, Andy Razaf,  
Chick Webb, & Edgar Sampson

transcribed by Antonio J. García

(TURRE'S SECONO CHORUS)

The score consists of six systems of musical staves. Each system includes a pitch contour line above the staff, which is a jagged line representing the pitch of the soloist's playing. Annotations include:

- System 1:** Measure 33. Quote Q1: "Boneology" 4'03"-4'17". Direction: 4'03".
- System 2:** Measure 37. Quote Q2: "Star Eyes" 4'18"-4'27". Direction: 4'18".
- System 3:** Measure 41. Quote Q3: "The Blues Walk" 4'28"-4'33". Direction: 4'28".
- System 4:** Measure 49. Direction: 4'33".
- System 5:** Measure 57. Quote Q4: "Too Close for Comfort" 4'48"-4'53". Direction: 4'48".
- System 6:** Measure 61. Quote Q5: 4'59"-5'02". Direction: 5'03".

*Rhythm-Section Influence*

When you sing along with a solo rather than just write it out, you're far more likely to notice how the accompanying rhythm section seems to respond to "you" (actually the recorded soloist) and vice-versa. Can you hear, perhaps during some of Turre's rests, where one or more members of the rhythm section musically comments in some way? Can you hear any spots where Steve in turn borrows an idea from the rhythm section? If so, you can mark such locales on your map with a bracketed "R," such as in **Example 12** (based off of the previous **Example 9**, showing phrase direction and timing). You can even go as far as writing a few words describing the details of the exchange.

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## EXAMPLE 12:

TRANSCRIPTION OF DIRECTION,  
TIME, & RHYTHM INFLUENCE

## STOMPIN' AT THE SAVOY

Steve Turre's trombone solo from *TNT*  
(Telarc CD-83529, recorded November 2000)

Benny Goodman, Andy Razaf,  
Chick Webb, & Edgar Sampson  
transcribed by Antonio J. García

SWING  $\text{♩} = 128$

1 3'03"

3'13" (12/8 Afro-Cuban triplet delay)

LAY BACK

5

9 3'18"

3'25"-3'27" (Drummer plays snare triplets.)

LAY BACK

13

17 3'33"

3'38" (12/8 Afro-Cuban triplet delay)

LAY BACK

21

25 3'48"


3'51" (12/8 Afro-Cuban triplet delay)

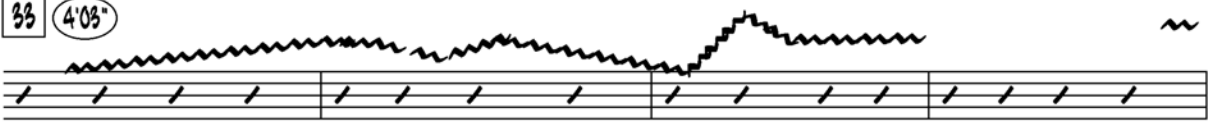
LAY BACK

25 3'48"-3'49" (Piano kicks two and four vs. trombone accents on one and three.)

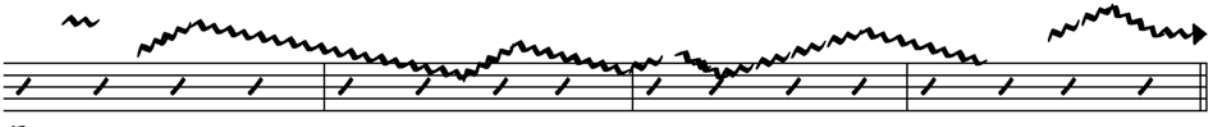
29

EXAMPLE 12 (CONT'D)

33 4'03"  4'03-4'08" (Bass plays eighths for beginning of "Boneology" quote.)



35



37

41 4'18"  4'23" (Drum kicks upbeat of two for "Star Eyes" quote.)





41

LAY BACK - - - -

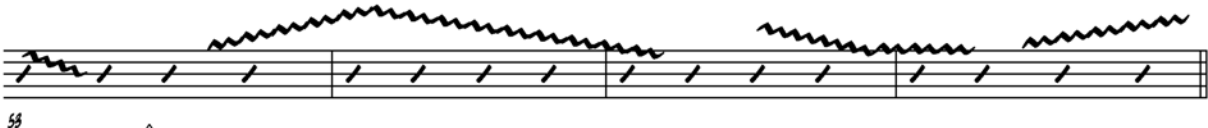


45


49 4'33"  4'34" (12/8 Afro-Cuban triplet delay)

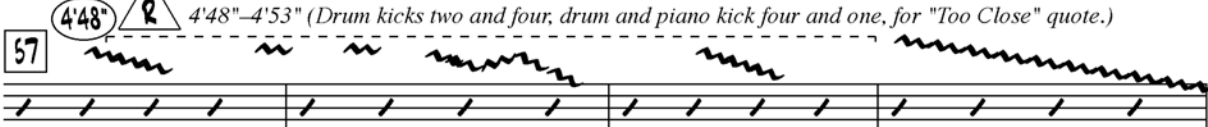


49




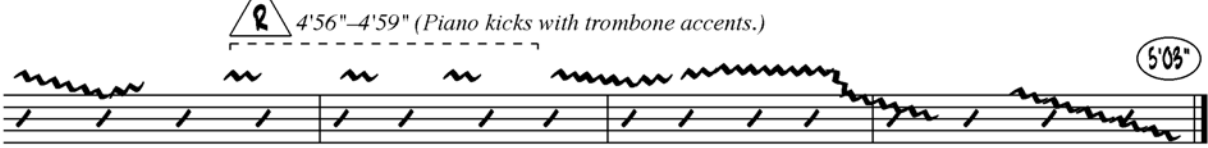
53

57 4'48"  4'48"-4'53" (Drum kicks two and four, drum and piano kick four and one, for "Too Close" quote.)



57

 4'56"-4'59" (Piano kicks with trombone accents.)



61 5'03"

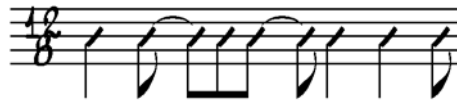
STOMPIN' AT THE SAVOY

When Turre hits the downbeats of 1 and 3 in bar 25, pianist Stephen Scott lays accents into beats 2 and 4 as a complement to that. As Steve begins his “Star Eyes” quote at measure 41, drummer Louis Nash recognizes it and responds by kicking the upbeat of beat 2 in the matching phrase of bar 43. When Turre starts his “Too Close for Comfort” quote at bar 57, Nash recognizes that as well and quickly responds with a strong backbeat on 2 and 4, adding the related kicks with pianist Scott leading into bar 59 that are associated with the quoted tune. And when Scott hears Steve repeatedly accenting the tonic note in bars 61-62, he decides to match those accents for added impact.

A second kind of influence—one only mature jazz musicians might spot—is when the soloist borrows the rhythmic underpinning for his ideas from some other groove. A relatively common example of this is when a swinging soloist inserts a phrase compatible with the rhythm of a 12/8 Afro-Cuban bell-pattern (**Example 13**). This beat (often notated across two measures of 6/8) is a foundational element of the swing groove and thus easy to borrow while in swing.

**EXAMPLE 13:**

**12/8 AFRO-CUBAN BELL PATTERN**



Turre’s most explicit use of 12/8 Afro-Cuban is in measures 49-52, signaled by his delay of the downbeat of measure 50 by an eighth-note triplet (4’35”). While some might view this as simply “laying back,” the exact triplet delay and surrounding triplet patterns fit perfectly into what would be a 12/8 Afro-Cuban groove. The triplet phrasings that we explored from mm. 21-24 and 49-53 support a context in which one can make a strong case that measures 6, 19, and 26 (all beat 3) also represent this rhythmic cross-pollination, even though their triplet placement is a bit more relaxed than in bar 50.

What inspired this kind of triplet feel? One could suggest that it is a direct result of drummer Lewis Nash’s snare triplets from measure 12, beat 4 throughout measure 13 (3’25”-3’27”). Or did Nash pick up the suggestion from Turre’s slighter rhythmic inference in bar 6 (3’12”)?

With or without that snare-suggestion, Steve is intimately familiar with Afro-Cuban grooves via his own work with Tito Puente, Fort Apache, Hugh Masekela, and others. It is common for musicians knowing this tradition to employ it within swing, whether culturally expected from Danilo Perez or Gonzalo Rubalcaba or culturally unexpected from pianist Bill Evans, for example, whose use of staggered triplets was exceptionally lyrical.

And when bassist Peter Washington marks the beginning of Turre’s second chorus with a specifically different bass line (4’03”), does that influence the length of Steve’s upbeat eighth notes in the same measure? Or perhaps the bassist was aware in advance of a planned quote by Steve and decided to complement it with this pattern of eighth notes?

Hearing Steve and the rhythm section interact—whether in the above ways or simply complementing each other throughout the 64 measures—should be a reminder to all of us that soloing is not really a solo art: it is a conversation with the musicians around us.

### *Rhythms*

Now it's time to break out a fresh sheet of paper, mark it for four bars per line, and transcribe the rhythms of the solo phrases. (You still don't need staff paper for this exercise: loose-leaf paper would do.) Again, if you've sung along with this solo a lot, many of the rhythms and rests will seem very clear to you by this point of your transcription study. And by having the material clearly in your mind's tape recorder, you can easily repeat and slow down the more challenging phrases until you can better identify the rhythm in question—often while conducting or tapping out the downbeats by hand so as to bring out the pulse of the music. And you also have the benefit of your preceding solo maps on which to build your perception of the exact rhythms.

At this point, all you're writing are stems, beams, flags, and slash-heads for any music a quarter note or shorter. For half-notes or greater, draw diamond-shaped note-heads (with dots as needed) to indicate duration without specific pitch. You can choose to write all of these rhythms at the same height-placement within the line, thus not reflecting any relative pitch whatsoever (such as in **Example 14**). Or you can contour the lines up and down to reflect their directions, such as you have already outlined in your preceding solo maps. Along the way, you might find yourself refining some of the notions you had about what these directions and rhythms are.

Even though you're not transcribing pitches yet, this process still takes some musical maturity. Persons who haven't done a lot of this will return to their transcriptions years later and find rhythmic errors to correct. A good barometer of your likely success is your ability to sight-read music.

Sight-reading and transcribing music (even just the rhythms) are parallel skills. In sight-reading, you see written music, process the intended sound in your brain, and create the sound through your instrument. In transcribing, you hear the musical sound of an instrument, process the notated symbols in your brain, and create the written music. Each skill is the reverse of the other—which is why the better you can transcribe, the better sight-reader you will become!

Because the written swing eighth-notes are considered the loose approximation of triplets, it is not typical to notate swing passages in triplets. However, on the occasions where the pairing of an upbeat swing eighth-note followed by a downbeat triplet-eighth rest strongly sets up a 12/8 Afro-Cuban feel. I have chosen to split certain swing beats into triplets. This illustrates how the 12/8 groove is prepared by swing (measure 6 beat 2, 19 beat 2, 26 beat 2, 49 beat 4, and 50 beat 4).

I've mentioned how you can notate certain phrases as "lay back" and "rush" so as to preserve the visual look of the phrases as being based in swing style rather than landing a thirty-second note off the beat, for example. But I should emphasize here that a tremendously informative exercise after doing that for a solo that flexes the beat is to take the same solo and transcribe its rhythms as literally to the beat and bar-line as possible. Doing this for, say, a Dexter Gordon ballad solo will teach you priceless information about just how far he actually *does* flex the beat, building your confidence as to how you can explore this expression in your own solo improvisations.

And can you incorporate Turre's solo's rhythms on your own chosen tune? Perhaps, if you slow down the tempo greatly. More likely, an initial application for you might be to play the entire solo of rhythms over just one chord—say, a C major chord—and attain some fluidity reproducing his rhythms over just that one chord. Then go back to your chosen tune at a slow tempo.



**EXAMPLE 14: TRANSCRIPTION OF ARTICULATION, DYNAMICS, TONE, TIME, & RHYTHM**

(CUP)

+0 = "WAH" EFFECTED VIA SLIDE &/OR DYNAMICS (NOT PLUNGER)

49 (4'33")

53

57 (4'48")

61 (5'03")

PINCH TONE!

The musical notation consists of three systems of staves. The first system starts at measure 49 and ends at measure 53, with a circled time signature of 4'33". The second system starts at measure 53 and ends at measure 57, with a circled time signature of 4'48". The third system starts at measure 57 and ends at measure 61, with a circled time signature of 5'03". Annotations include slurs, accents (^), dynamics (s, mf, m2, p, mf), and time signatures (+0, -2, -4). A specific annotation 'PINCH TONE!' is placed above a note in the third system.

### Ready for the Opening Pitch

It's really quite striking how much can be learned from a solo *without* transcribing the actual pitches themselves—and how much you can *immediately* apply that information to your own, concrete solo practice as a means to improve your expressive technique. We haven't even examined a single pitch-name, chord symbol, or harmonic function. Yet you could easily spend weeks or months practicing just the elements covered in Turre's solo so far, working to apply those same principles within your own improvisations.

Once you do begin focusing on the pitches and the chords beneath them, you'll have the opportunity to improve your knowledge of harmonic and melodic theory. But because of all the work you've already invested in singing the solo and then in the non-pitched transcription process, you'll be able to bring that theory to life in ways you'd never achieve if you'd simply written the pitches down with a half-speed digital player.

Having pointed out that so much non-pitched, non-harmonic information is available for study within this solo, it's appropriate for me to remind us all that "paralysis by analysis" is not our goal. Jazz is still a spontaneous music, as is the process of improvisation. But with the benefit of learning and singing this solo in real time, you're far better equipped to emphasize the interesting starts and stops, shapes, articulations, dynamics, rhythmic density, melodic tension and release, tone, areas of swing versus straight eighths, thematic development, quotes, rhythm-section influence, rhythms themselves, and the emotional peak of *your own* solo.

You can phrase Turre's solo—and then your own solo—better than any piece of paper can truly describe. And isn't that exactly what you were after in the first place?

----- sidebar one-----

### **Additional Resources**

To see full, 64-measure transcriptions of this solo without pitch in most of the above categories (rather than excerpts), please visit <[www.garciamusic.com/articles](http://www.garciamusic.com/articles)>. Many of the following articles by the author can be found there as well, listed here because of their direct pertinence to elements of jazz improvisation:

- “Bill Watrous: ‘Zip City,’” *Jazz Educators Journal*, International Association of Jazz Educators, Vol. 19, No. 4, April/May 1987.\*
- “Bob Brookmeyer’s Valve Trombone: ‘Sometime Ago’ and ‘Step Right Up,’” *Down Beat*, Vol. 64, No. 1, January 1997.
- “Clear Chord Symbols,” *Down Beat*, Vol. 66, No. 10, October 1999.
- “Frank Rosolino and Carl Fontana: Together on ‘Rock Bottom,’” *International Trombone Association Journal*, Vol. 32, No. 3, July 2004.
- “Improve Your Groove, Part 1,” *School Band and Orchestra*, Vol. 2, No. 8, October 1999.
- “Improve Your Groove, Part 2,” *School Band and Orchestra*, Vol. 2, No. 9, November 1999.
- “Improve Your Improv—Not Just What You Say, But How You Say It,” *Down Beat*, Vol. 61, No. 9, September 1994.
- “Learning Swing Feel **or** *How to Sculpt an Elephant*,” *ITA Journal*, International Trombone Association, Vol. 34, No. 2, April 2006.
- “Thematic Dissonance: No Wrong Notes,” *Jazz Educators Journal*, International Association of Jazz Educators, Vol. 23, No. 3, Spring 1991.\*
- “Wycliffe Gordon: A Voice for the Trombone,” *ITA Journal*, International Trombone Association, Vol. 34, No. 3, July 2006.

(\* = originally published with errors not attributed to the author. Contact the author for corrected reprints.)

-----end sidebar one-----

----- sidebar two-----

### **Copyright and Transcribed Solos**

Matters of copyright have long been of interest to me, even before I began teaching Music Industry courses and before my service as Editor of the *IAJE Journal* and Associate Jazz Editor of the *ITA Journal*. I have participated in many efforts to assist the publication of transcribed solos for educational purposes while fully observing copyright law.

In creating the musical examples for this article, my manner of notation seemed fairly original: I have not found other jazz transcriptions detailed in quite this way. My intent was to omit aspects of harmony and especially pitch that would require copyright permissions for publication. Such permissions under U.S. law typically come from the owner of the tune and/or the recording company (particularly if the recording session was a work made for hire). Sadly, in my opinion, the soloing artist has no rights to an improvised solo, as under U.S. law it is currently viewed as a derivative work of the original tune on which it is performed. However, my notations acknowledge full credit to the soloist, recording, composers, and tune-owner, as well as highlighting the influence of the other performing musicians on the solo of the featured artist.

Having sought transcription-publication permissions on behalf of educational periodicals for over a decade, I wished to utilize a transcription technique that would serve my educational mission without infringing on the rights of the copyright owner(s). Thus I might eliminate the red-tape of often multiple presumed owners arguing over typically small fees, often with frustrating results that prevented any publication of an article that might actually serve an educational need. I also wanted to create a transcription/analysis that I could post on my own web sites from this moment on as a tool for any interested person to download and study without my having to be concerned about violating the rights of a copyright owner.

For advice as to the legality of my approach, I sought an opinion from an established attorney, who in turn consulted with two other attorneys who are not only prominent intellectual-property litigators but also active jazz musicians. As one of these attorneys then replied:

There isn't enough copying even to count as an infringement (either of "Stompin'" or of the solo); so you don't even have to reach "fair use." But if you did have to reach the fair-use issue, this would easily qualify.

It seems to me that this isn't "the solo" but only a graphic representation of certain facts about the solo that would not allow anyone to reconstruct or perform the solo.... There's no substantial similarity between the graphic and the composition/performance it was describing. If you call this infringement, you'd also have to say that a *verbal* description of these same facts (as in a review) would also infringe.

The fact that this is presented (unnecessarily?) on five-line staff paper shouldn't matter. [You could put] it on a one-line staff, like un-pitched percussion parts.

Thus I own the copyright of my analysis of this solo, which I encourage anyone to share freely with colleagues and students as an educational tool so long as they acknowledge me as the author and this periodical as the source. Of course, to benefit from this study, one must also purchase the *TNT* CD (or, if available legally, download the "Stompin'" track).

I am grateful for the advice of the several attorneys in this regard. Given their views, I also encourage other educators and students to explore transcriptions/analyses in the manner in which I have notated and studied this solo. Doing so will certainly provide more balance in reflecting on the importance of aspects in a solo other than exact pitch and harmony—and it should avoid the legal entanglements of copyright law altogether.

- For a two-page overview of copyright law and how it can affect musicians/music educators, please visit <[www.garciamusic.com/articles](http://www.garciamusic.com/articles)> and read: "Understanding Copyright Law," *Band and Orchestra Product News*, Vol. 2, No. 9, November 1999.
- For direct comments about the legal issues raised by this transcription/analysis, please read: Bergman, Alan S. "Annual Survey of Law for the IAJE Community," *Jazz Education Journal*, International Association for Jazz Education, Vol. 39, No. 4, February 2007.
- For an overview of how copyright law affects the study of jazz, particularly in the U.S. and Canada, please read: Bergman, Alan S. "Copyright in the International Classroom and Marketplace," *Jazz Education Journal*, International Association for Jazz Education, Vol. 36, No. 1, July 2003.

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