

**A Method for Learning Jazz Improvisation
Through Transcription and Analysis:
“Like Someone in Love”**



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Abstract

This study describes the techniques and methods used by jazz artists to improvise, and demonstrates a method for both learning and teaching the finer points of jazz improvisation through transcription and analysis. The study involves the selection of three artist's recordings of improvised solos representing differing stylistic trends. All artists were tenor saxophonists. The solos were transcribed and analyzed, then internalized. Transcriptions were compared to each other on a measure-by-measure basis, and general conclusions as to stylistic trends and technique were constructed from the analysis. Following analysis of solos, various methods and teaching strategies were developed for aspiring jazz artists to acquire new skills and improvisation techniques.

A Method for Learning Jazz Improvisation Through Transcription and Analysis: “Like Someone in Love”

Webster’s American Dictionary defines improvisation when related to music as “to compose on the spur of the moment”.¹ In jazz music, improvisation takes on a greater place of emphasis. Depending on the style period of the artist, the use of improvisation can range from a short solo in the development section of a piece to being the basis for the entire work. Often the most daring, interesting, and personal contributions to jazz as an art can be heard when the artist improvises. Barry Kernfeld, author of an article from the well-known *Groves Dictionary of Music* believes improvisation is generally regarded as the principal element of jazz since it offers the possibilities of spontaneity, surprise, experiment, and discovery, without which most jazz would be devoid of interest. Despite the importance of improvisation, analyzing and interpreting the ideas or statements made by the artists can be difficult. Unless recorded, the work of the jazz artist resides in the immediate moment and can never be re-created. Kernfeld goes on to note “to study improvisation, by its nature, poses certain difficulties.”² Stylistic trends and techniques of improvised jazz solos can be documented and analyzed, but what are the benefits of this practice? And, what techniques can an aspiring jazz artist utilize to gain the highest impact from studying the solos of the past and present jazz masters?

Jazz improvisation, like most folk music, is inherently an oral tradition. While many improvisational theories and systems have been developed and codified, the

¹ Webster’s American College Dictionary, 2000

nuances of the art can only be absorbed by a great deal of listening. Trends in improvisational styles can be heard in the recorded solos of prominent jazz musicians. The process of learning jazz improvisation is often compared to that of studying a second language. Dialects of the jazz “language” have been expanded and re-invented through distinct style periods, and can be traced and codified. Whether one is able to study jazz improvisation at a formal university jazz program, through an apprenticeship, or by attending many “jam sessions”, the practice of transcribing solos from recordings is known as perhaps the best way to absorb how to play jazz. As the elder jazz artist Walter Bishop cleverly states, “I was a high school drop-out, but I graduated from Art Blakey College, the Miles Davis Conservatory of Music, and Charlie Parker University.”

³ In other words, Bishop studied the masters through their recordings, and by live performances. Barry Kernfeld emphasizes this point: “The principal medium for the preservation of jazz is the recording, and most of the observations made about jazz improvisation result from repeated listening to recorded performances.” ⁴ Many of the early jazz masters have passed away, as the art form has matured. Recordings are the remaining link aspiring artists have to the masters.

By transcribing and analyzing select works one can acquire an historical perspective and deeper understanding of jazz improvisation. In his book *Thinking In Jazz* Paul Berliner states,

“To complete my immersion in the subject [jazz improvisation], I devoted time throughout the project to studying and transcribing

² Kernfeld, The New Grove Dictionary, Retrieved Online at www.grovemusic.com, 2002

³ Berliner, 1994, p.34

⁴ Kernfeld, New Grove Dictionary Online, 2002

jazz recordings, those precious resources of the oral tradition of improvisation. Although performances embedded in recordings are primarily useful for aural analysis, the painstaking work of transcription provides interpretive pictures of improvisers' thoughts."⁵

The ability to understand these thoughts and processes can enable one to become a more established and highly evolved improviser. Also, Jazz Educators can increase their skills and knowledge base from which to teach. By transcribing and playing along with the master's solos an aspiring artist can readily absorb the time feel of the master being studied, the stylistic nuance of the master, and the masters use of harmonic language. These items in particular can only be incorporated into an aspiring artist's performance by repeated listening and playing along with the recordings.

By choosing select jazz artists from important historical style development periods in jazz, one can distinguish an historical development of the art of improvising. Stylistic trends and developments can be clearly shown after analyzing and comparing the solos of jazz artists from various important stylistic eras. Most jazz musicians are required to perform jazz from a variety of time and style periods. To study a single master artist and to pattern one's harmonic language and style after a single master does not seem practical. A jazz artist would be ill advised to play in a modern style on a piece that was written in an early style period. An aspiring jazz musician should be versed in a variety of improvisational styles to accommodate a variety of musical styles.

⁵ Berliner, 1994, p.11

After the transcriptions are complete, each should be analyzed to decipher techniques and procedures used within. Kernfeld divides the techniques of creating improvised solos into five parts: ⁶

1. **Paraphrase improvisation:** Paraphrasing the melody with ornamental flourishes, a reworking of the melody.
2. **Use of Motifs and Formulae:** The use of interchangeable ideas, figures, or more commonly called licks by jazz artists. These are fragmentary ideas or motifs that are not meant to stand alone as melodically sustaining material, but are used in combinations to develop solos. The common ii-V7-I chord progression is often used in this manner.
3. **Formulaic Improvisation:** Many diverse formulae intertwine and combine within continuous lines. This may be the most common method of improvisation as it spans all styles of jazz. The jazz artist Charlie Parker was perhaps the greatest formulaic improviser.
4. **Motivic Improvisation:** Uses one or more motifs to form the basis for a section of a tune, or an entire piece. The motif is varied through such processes as ornamentation, augmentation, transposition, rhythmic displacement, diminution, and inversion. An example of motivic development may be heard in Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, in which the motive of three short notes followed by one long is developed throughout the symphony.

⁶ Kernfeld, New Grove Dictionary, Online, 2002

5. ***Interrelated Techniques***: Different procedures of improvisation are combined in various ways, at various times.

From the study of these techniques the aspiring artist can absorb the melodic content and methods of the master. Many aspiring improvisation artists believe that to study the past, one is giving up their chance to be truly creative. This theory seems flawed, in that one's creativity or originality can come from truly understanding the art form or domain that artist is studying. Many examples of jazz artists taking material from early masters are in existence. For example, the great Charlie Parker was known to have thoroughly studied the recorded solos of Lester Young. Parker then interpreted and developed the material of Lester Young to develop his own improvisational style. Berliner states, "There is no objection to musicians borrowing discrete patterns or phrase fragments from other improvisers, however; indeed, it is expected."⁷

To demonstrate the development of improvisation practices over various style periods of jazz, one may compare solos using the same or similar harmonic structure or blueprint. The famous jazz saxophonist Lee Konitz believes, "Jazz tunes are great vehicles. They are forms that can be used and reused. Their implications are infinite."⁸ Jazz artists have long used well-known songs from American culture as vehicles for expressing themselves through improvisation. Berliner states,

"Composed pieces or tunes, consisting of a melody and an accompanying harmonic progression, have provided the structure for improvisations throughout most of the history of jazz. Enjoying favor to varying degrees from one period to the next, spirituals,

⁷ Berliner, 1994, p.101

⁸ Berliner, 1994, p. 63

marches, rags, and popular songs have all contributed to the artists' repertory of established compositions or standards."⁹

As jazz educators, it is important to not only discuss various ways to teach improvisation, but to also be able to demonstrate these methods. It stands to reason that a practical and reliable method of internalizing the techniques of jazz improvisation is needed. Research such as this may then provide the means of meeting two goals. First, the researcher will acquire an increased understanding of the differing styles of the language of jazz improvisation. In other words, the researcher will increase their improvisational skills from this method. Second, methods used in transcribing solos and internalizing the material (as will be explained in the procedures section) can be organized and utilized with students. For example, the jazz educator can use the methods for an assignment in a jazz ensemble setting. Also, modeling the techniques learned from the research may perhaps be the most powerful tool in teaching an aural art form. The teacher/artist can have students play along with the recording of a famous jazz artist to form the basis of discussions and practice in jazz style, development of melodic motifs, and harmonic theory.

Methods

Sample

Choosing an appropriate song that was performed across differing style periods was a consideration for this project. Consideration was given to the chord

⁹ Berliner, 1994, p. 102

structure of the song, it's representation in a variety of style periods, and the recordings available with quality solos.

The popular jazz standard "Like Someone in Love"¹⁰ is a logical choice. This piece provides many harmonic possibilities for an improviser. The chord structure allows the soloist to choose a linear or angular technique, which enables the improviser to use a traditional or modern approach. Careful consideration in selecting jazz solos should be done by an educator when incorporating this method into the classroom. Songs with accessible chord progressions are recommended.

The song was written by Jimmy Van Heusen, who was born Edward Chester Babcock, and later took his name from the men's shirt company. Van Heusen (1913-1990) held a thirty-year career writing Tin Pan Alley hits, movie and Broadway show tunes. He won Oscars for "Swinging on a Star", "High Hopes", and "Call Me Irresponsible", and an Emmy for "Love and Marriage". Van Heusen often collaborated with lyricists Johnny Burke and Sammy Cahn. Many songs were written for Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra. "Like Someone In Love" was written in 1944 for the Hollywood musical "Belle of the Yukon".¹¹

Three jazz artists that embody the stylistic developments of the periods they are most commonly associated with were chosen for this research project. Being a saxophonist, I have chosen to work with tenor saxophone players. Please refer to appendix H to hear the original recordings used for transcription.

¹⁰ "Like Someone In Love" Lead Sheet, appendix C

¹¹ UCLA, 1994

Dexter Gordon is known as one of the leading post-be bop players. His solos typically included a great deal of linear formulaic and motivic ideas. Lewis Porter states,

“Gordon’s main influence was Lester Young, but he also displayed an extrovert intensity reminiscent of Herschel Evans and Illinois Jacquet. His rich, vibrant sound, harmonic awareness, behind-the-beat phrasing and predilection for humorous quotations combined to create a highly individual style. Gordon’s music strongly affected the two leading tenor saxophonists of the succeeding generation, Sonny Rollins and John Coltrane.”¹²

The selected recording was recorded on an album entitled “Blues Walk”, recorded in 1967.¹³

John Coltrane was known as one of the “most revolutionary and widely imitated saxophonist in jazz.”¹⁴ Prior to joining the Dizzy Gillespie band, Coltrane performed with Jimmy Heath, where his melodic and harmonic experimentation was allowed to flourish. His work with the Miles Davis Quintet beginning in 1957 was considered the time when Coltrane really developed as a player, and began his musical evolution. “Miles gave me plenty of freedom,” Coltrane once was quoted as saying.¹⁵ It was during this time that Coltrane developed his three-on-one chord substitution approach as well as what was later called by jazz critiques his “sheets of sound” approach. The selected recording can be found on Coltrane’s album entitled “Lush Life”, recorded in 1957-8.¹⁶

Jerry Bergonzi is one of today’s leading jazz improvisers. Jazz critic Scott Yanow states about Bergonzi, “A fine high-powered tenor saxophonist with a tone influenced by

¹² Porter, p. 1, 2000

¹³ For more information on Dexter Gordon see appendix “B”

¹⁴ Kernfeld, 2000)

¹⁵ Nisenson, p.128, 1995

¹⁶ see Coltrane, 1957-8

John Coltrane, a mastery of chord changes, and a strong musical imagination.”¹⁷ Yanow asserts that Bergonzi’s influences were Sonny Rollins, Hank Mobley, and John Coltrane. The selected recording can be found on the album “Tritonis” by Dave Brubeck, with whom Bergonzi worked as a sideman in the late 1970’s and early 1980’s.

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Procedures

The sequence of procedures recommended (as used in this project) is as follows:

1. Select style period or periods to be studied.
2. Select master artist or artists.
3. Choose a song with accessible chord structure and style.
4. Transcribe. Jazz Educators: assign a group project? Musical collage?
5. Memorize solo/solos. Focus on style, time feel, melodic/harmonic language.
6. Analyze. Look for patterns? Style tendencies?
7. Internalization. Incorporate solo into performance? Focus on specific patterns?

After the three artists and recordings were selected, each solo was re-recorded from analog vinyl to digital CD format. (see appendix H) These recordings were then used in conjunction with the Superscope PMD-300, a CD burner/player that allows one to manipulate the speed of the recording, without changing the pitch. The Superscope will also allow one to record straight to CD format, and record (or burn) CD copies. Superscope is a subsidiary of the parent company Marantz, the PMD-300 came on the market in May of 2002.

Following the process of changing the format of the recordings to a more modern and manageable system, each solo was transcribed by ear. Solos are also presented

¹⁷ Yanow, 2002

individually in their entirety (appendices D –F). Each solo was then analyzed according to the five techniques of improvisation outlined by Kernfeld. Comparison of the techniques of individual artists can be easily seen using the format of presenting the three solos as well as the melody to the song at the same time, each on an individual line. (Appendix A)

After analyzing the solos, a comparison of trends and techniques was categorized in a table format using Kernfeld's five improvisation practices. In order to begin internalizing the phrasing and techniques used by artists, each solo will be played along with the original recording. By playing along with the transcription a student of jazz can digest the subtle nuance of the artists solo. Ultimately, the solo should be memorized in its entirety, or select melodic phrases and/or techniques should be memorized so that the student may have the use of the material studied for their own.

After the master's solo is transcribed, analysis of the artists work seems logical. Solo analysis can be found in appendix A. Results are located in the appendix as music notation software program is not compatible with word processing program. The aspiring artist should look for various methods and approaches to improvising, including identification of melodic content that is common for jazz artists of the style period being studied, as well as common patterns shared between the artists that cross style periods. If studying multiple artists, such as in this research study, it is recommended that subjects write out all solos in a similar format as used in this study. (see appendix A)

¹⁸ Brubeck, 1980

The ability to compare and contrast trends in different solos is very interesting and productive. Laying out each solo concurrently enables the researcher to distinguish differing approaches to improvisation as exhibited by each master.

After completing the analysis of the solo or solos, the researcher begins the process of internalizing the master's solo or solos using the following steps:

1. Play along with recording.
2. Memorize the entire solo or selected sections of the solo, focus on style, time feel, articulations, harmonic material, chord substitutions, and other common tendencies.
3. Identify preferred chord tones. See examples located in appendix A.
4. Isolate ii-V-I patterns, play/internalize in other keys.
5. Isolate patterns used across style periods.
6. Identify a method being used?
7. Play original material mixed with transcription.
8. Allow ones own "ear" to determine what is kept.

Results

Positive outcomes as a result of implementing the transcription study were:

- Able to use this method for any level of pre-existing ability, from novice to professional.
- Transcription process accelerates development of ear training.
- Internalization of transcriptions develops a variety of skills concurrently: jazz style, harmonic and melodic language, time feel.
- Historical/cultural element included in artist research. (For example, see appendix B)

Negative outcomes include:

- This method needs to be supplemented with traditional music training in reading music, technique development, and other physical requirements of performing music. The method is not as effective if it stands alone in the aspiring artist's development.
- Patience required. Transcribing and internalizing process requires time and commitment.

If the analogy of comparing the process of learning jazz improvisation to being similar to that of learning a second language can be extended, then memorizing a master's solo may be like traveling to the country or location where the second language is spoken as the native tongue. Learning a dialect of language is often quicker and more thorough when a student lives in a place where the language is spoken. Aspiring jazz students can have a similar experience when internalizing the masters' work.

How to start the process of internalizing the master's work is often a daunting task. The researcher (subject) will perform one or more solos that have been committed to memory. This process can take a large amount of time and dedication but has many rewards. In this researcher's own experience on this project, knowledge of the chord changes of the song being used was crucial to remembering the melodic content of the master's solo. Master's solos, especially jazz artists from the early jazz style "Be-bop" or "post-bop" periods, would often follow the chord changes quite literally, and knowledge of the changes is helpful when internalizing melodic content.

Playing along with the recording is also recommended to demonstrate internalization of the master's practices. Aspiring artists should compare themselves to the masters from concept of sound, equipment used, note fingerings, articulations, effects, and chord substitutions. The ability to play along with the master will develop the subject's ability to blend and perform jazz music when playing in a section, a desirable side-effect.

Time feel, the rhythmic placement of phrases, is an important characteristic of the personal style of the master's. Time feel is often only superficially discussed in most jazz method books, by emulating the time feel of a master a student can compare tendencies of their own and ultimately be more expressive. Often aspiring artists neglect the placement and expression of the melodic content of a solo only to focus on the underlying harmonic devices being used by the soloist. Each master studied in the research for this project displayed their own sense of "swing" and time feel. Many Jazz Educators are in search of ways to develop time feel with students. By playing along with recordings aspiring artists can develop skills in placing phrases with a more acute sense of "time".

The researcher (subject) should also engage in exercises to aid in internalizing the master's material. One method could be to alternate the memorized solo with the artists own material. For example, the first phrase or two from the master's solo could be performed, followed by the subject's own material. The subject should try to play phrases in the style of the master, or try to 'stay in character' while improvising. Ultimately, the student will after time be able to emulate the masters tendencies at will, and hopefully assimilate the masters material in a way that is entirely their own.

General trends can be distinguished among the master improvisers. By categorizing the techniques of each artist, researchers can often discover essential differences between solos. This will enable the researcher to see the "bigger picture". It is recommended that jazz educators discuss these methods with aspiring jazz students in class. It seems important that beginning improvisers become aware of the multiple

methods the masters' use. By categorizing the general improvisation methods of the master an aspiring jazz artist can get an understanding of the how the masters' solo fits in with other possible improvisatory methods. The following is a table that categorizes the main improvisation methods used by each artist using the five types as outlined by *Kernfeld*.

Table of Improvisation Methods:

	<i>Dexter Gordon</i>	<i>John Coltrane</i>	<i>Jerry Bergonzi</i>
<i>Paraphrase</i>	<i>Gordon's lines would often move as the melody did, but not close enough to be called paraphrased.</i>	<i>Coltrane's solo paraphrases the melody throughout Typically Coltrane solos are more abstract. It is interesting to note this example of a melody-based solo.</i>	<i>Not present, material was not directly based on the melody. Bergonzi may have resolved some melodic material to the same notes as the melody, but was not paraphrasing.</i>
<i>Motifs and Formulae</i>	<i>Gordon uses many combinations of motifs such as ii-V7 progression licks, quotes, and other linear motifs.</i>	<i>Coltrane occasionally used common jazz motifs, but was in favor of using his own motifs, based on the chord progression.</i>	<i>Bergonzi's approach similar to Coltrane's- trying to avoid common jazz licks in favor of original material.</i>
<i>Formulaic</i>	<i>Gordon's playing may be considered formulaic in the sense that he uses pre-conceived licks and patterns. Yet the way in which he assembles them is fresh each time he solos.</i>	<i>Coltrane, again, is basing his solo from the melody with great embellishment. Use of formulaic material present.</i>	<i>Bergonzi seems to be a formulaic improviser. Use of 4-note patterns and modern scales used frequently. Purposefully missing are common jazz patterns, "public domain" riffs. Also: Chord substitutions used routinely and well executed.</i>

Motivic	<i>Not present</i>	<i>Not present. Coltrane's use of this technique may be heard in his recording "A Love Supreme", in which he uses a simple motif and develops it in various keys.</i>	<i>Not present</i>
Interrelated Techniques	<i>Some interrelated techniques present, but, on a whole, Gordon's solo uses popular jazz motifs and formulae.</i>	<i>Some formulaic material present, but mainly in this solo Coltrane is embellishing the melody.</i>	<i>Bergonzi focuses on a linear approach, using a variety of techniques including chromaticism and chord substitutions to resolve to various chord tones.</i>

Jazz Educators should utilize transcriptions in the classroom as well. Lessons can be formed that introduce techniques in using transcription for groups from a jazz combo to a full sized big band. Appropriate level material can be found for any skill-level group. For example, students could be instructed to transcribe a full solo, or selected sections of a solo by a famous master jazz artist. The sections of the solo could then be pasted together to form the whole solo, which could be analyzed as a group. Students could be asked to memorize the section of the masters' solo they transcribed. The song selected could be played in the form of a "head chart". Head charts were widely used by big bands in the 1940's in which the band would assimilate a series of "riffs" or short melodic phrases as the basis of the main song. This was then called the "Head", which was followed by a variety of solos. The big-band leader Count Basie utilized this style of "composition" widely. His famous song "One O'Clock Jump" is a well-known example of a head chart. To begin this exercise, the student group is first taught the melody by ear. The melody would often be played twice at the beginning and end of the song. Solos

would follow and some sort of ending or tag could be added. Assessment of students progress could be observed by asking students to use parts of the masters' solo in their own solo work for a concert. Choosing artists and solos that are appropriate for the level being taught is crucial in the success of this method. Harmonic complexity, rhythmic complexity, and style of the solo are the main factors when selecting a solo to work with. Blues solos would be a logical place to start for beginning jazz students. With more advanced groups, Blues solos that include harmonic substitutions would be a logical choice. Certainly songs based on "I Got Rhythm" chord changes as well as songs that are considered jazz standards would be good choices as well. An example of a lesson devised using transcription in the classroom can be seen in appendix "G".

Conclusions

The aspiring jazz artist should combine the techniques of the masters and to build from their ideas, in order to develop a sound and style of improvisation that is unique. (Jazz musicians often call this "getting their own sound.") The aspiring jazz artist has much to gain from using the methods outlined in this research in striving to form their own personal jazz style and assimilation of the jazz language. Jazz is an aural art form, and needs to be studied in an aural manner. Too often in today's academic world theory is presented as the primary means to developing the aspiring artists skills, when the foremost "teachers" are often the solos of the masters that forged the art from its beginnings. Internalizing a language or the ability to think in a second language requires

a great deal of effort and commitment. The methods involved in this study suggest an approach that includes more details, nuance, and allows the dedicated student a means of learning the language of jazz in much the same way the masters learned the jazz language themselves.

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Discography:

Coltrane, John. "Like Someone In Love," from the Album Lush Life. Recorded in 1957-8. Prestige 7581.

Dave Brubeck Quartet, featuring Jerry Bergonzi. "Like Someone In Love", from the album Tritonis, recorded in 1980. Concord CJ-129.

Gordon, Dexter. "Like Someone In Love". From the album Blues Walk! Recorded in Copenhagen, July 20th, 1967. Black Lion Records. BL-309.

Appendix “B”: Artist Bios



Dexter Gordon

b. Los Angeles, 27 Feb 1923; d. 25 April 1990.

Dexter Gordon joined the Lionel Hampton Band in 1940 at the age of 17. He toured with the bands of Fletcher Henderson in 1943-1944, Louis Armstrong in 1944, and Billy Eckstine in 1945. He moved to New York as a freelance soloist, working with Charlie Parker and others in 1945 and making regular recordings under his own name. In the fall of 1962 Gordon moved to Copenhagen with only brief visits back to the United States. He returned in 1976 and enjoyed several years of successful playing. In 1986 Gordon starred as the lead role of a US Jazz Musician in the Bertrand Tavernier film *Round Midnight*. Gordon performed very little as his years of ill-health caught up with him. (Porter, 2000)

Other Well-Known Recordings:

Dexter Rides Again (1945-47; Savoy) with sidemen Bud Powell and Max Roach
Go! (1962; Blue Note) a resurgent Gordon with Sonny Clark and Billy Higgins.

Our Man In Paris (1963; Blue Note) A reunion with Bud Powell and Kenny Clarke from early in his European stay.



John Coltrane

b. Hamlet, North Carolina, 23 Sept 1926; d17 July 1967

After graduating from High School, Coltrane moved to Philadelphia, and began gigging on alto saxophone. He then spent part of his military service in a navy band, then toured with Eddie Vinson in 1947. He moved back to Philadelphia in 1948 and rehearsed with the Jimmy Heath Big Band, which later joined with Dizzy Gillespie. In 1950 Coltrane permanently switched to tenor. He became a member of the Miles Davis quintet in 1955-57 and began to record prolifically with Davis, Paul Chambers, and others. It was at this time he earned the nickname “Trane”. In 1957 Coltrane broke his addiction to alcohol and drugs and experienced a spiritual awakening which can be heard in his music. After various stints with Miles Davis and Thelonius Monk, Coltrane formed his own what was to become historic quartet with McCoy Tyner, Elvin Jones, and Jimmy Garrison. This group stayed together until Coltrane's experiments with free jazz beginning in 1965. Shortly after forming this group Coltrane was a victim of liver cancer. (Nisenson, 1995)

Other Well-Known Recordings:

Blue Train (1957; Blue Note) A hard-bop sextet that features the beginning of his new harmonic interests.

Giant Steps (1959-60; Atlantic) First recording to consist of original material.

My Favorite Things (1960; Atlantic) The debut recording of the famous quartet. Introduced the soprano saxophone as a new voice for Coltrane.

A Love Supreme (1964; Impulse) The apotheosis of the famous quartet, as well as Coltrane's religious beliefs.



Jerry Bergonzi

b. Boston, Massachusetts, 1947.

Bergonzi studied the clarinet and alto from the age of 8, then took up the tenor at the age of 12, studying with instructors from the Berklee College of music while in high school. He moved to New York in 1972 and began to work with Tom Harrell, Harvie Swartz, and others. In 1979-81 he joined the Dave Brubeck Quartet. Returning to Boston in 1981 he formed a group called "Con Brio" and the trio "Gonz". Bergonzi's influences of Coltrane, Sonny Rollins, Wayne Shorter, and Joe Henderson can be easily heard in his work. (Carr, 1995)

Other Well-Known Recordings:

Standard Gonz (1990; Blue Note) Contains 4 originals and several creative re-harmonized standards. Sidemen include Joey Calderazzo and Adam Nussbaum.