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Introduction

Body and Soul is the most important ballad in the jazz tenor saxophone repertoire. It is nearly as vital a tool for tenor players as the blues or "I Got Rhythm" changes, serving as a measuring stick for one's ability to play a jazz ballad.

The music was written in 1929 by Johnny Green, with lyrics by Frank Eyton, Edward Heyman and Robert Sour. It was composed in New York, but specifically for British singer Gertrude Lawrence and was first performed publicly in London.

Body and Soul had already been recorded 22 times and was a hit in England before it was ever performed for an American audience. The first jazz version was recorded by Louis Armstrong on October 9, 1930. This recording featured a full chorus of Armstrong playing trumpet, followed by a chorus of his vocals and was closed out by another half chorus of trumpet.

Body and Soul premiered in the United States on October 15, 1930, sung by Libby Holman as part of the Broadway musical revue, *Three's A Crowd*. The producer of this show was Max Gordon, who would later go on to open the iconic Village Vanguard jazz club.

Shortly after the opening of *Three's A Crowd*, new recordings of *Body and Soul* slowed almost to a halt, due mostly to the fact that the Great Depression had taken significant hold and record sales were plummeting. But thanks to influential recordings by Art Tatum, Red Allen, Django Reinhardt and others in the mid-to-late 1930's, *Body and Soul* started to become popular among jazz musicians as a performance vehicle.¹

Then came Coleman Hawkins' monumental recording of October 11, 1939. His version of *Body and Soul* was the first pure jazz recording to become a commercial hit and remained popular on jukeboxes for a number of years. It was even more of an artistic triumph, as it was among the genre's first major solo statements, firmly established the prominence of the tenor saxophone and is widely considered one of the most important recordings in the history of jazz.

This book features transcriptions and analysis of solos by many of the most influential tenor saxophonists in the lineage of jazz: Hawkins, Lester Young, Stan Getz, Sonny Rollins, John Coltrane, Dexter Gordon, Michael Brecker and Chris Potter. Two different solos by Gordon are included and offer an excellent opportunity to compare how one great artist performed in two contrasting settings.

The purpose of the analysis that follows each transcription is to make the process of jazz improvisation more understandable by examining a number of elements that went into these wonderful performances. But, at its very core, improvisation is a creative endeavor and each of these solos is much more than a collection of academic elements to be dissected. Many intangibles went into creating the magic of these performances: intuition, warmth, intensity, spontaneity, sensitivity and the ability to interact with/respond to the rhythm section, to name just some. But a great deal can be learned by studying what is on these pages, alongside the original recordings.

Written transcriptions can be useful tools for quickly identifying and learning new vocabulary. Hopefully, the way the material in this book is presented will encourage players to explore the concepts of phrasing, structure, continuity, contrast and development, as well.

I hope you enjoy the time you spend with these amazing solos.

-Eric Allen

¹ Cunniffe, T. (n.d.) *The Earliest Recordings of "Body and Soul."* Retrieved from http://www.jazzhistoryonline.com/Body_and_Soul.html

Foreword

I can't remember when I first heard and learned *Body and Soul*. At this point, it's buried deep in my consciousness like tying my shoes or riding a bike, and I'd venture to guess it's the same with my jazz contemporaries, as well. I might forget where I'm supposed to be tomorrow or something that happened a month ago, but *Body and Soul* is always with me. Why have some of the thousands of Broadway show tunes become standards in the jazz repertoire while most others have faded away? One factor is who has chosen to record them. When Coleman Hawkins used *Body and Soul* as a vehicle for his arpeggiated harmonic approach and rich, dark-toned tenor sound, he permanently changed the way people approach the horn and improvisation. Nobody had done anything like that in 1939, fairly early in the story of jazz and the tenor saxophone's prominent role in it. Any serious student of the tenor had to check that recording out, even if they chose to reject some of its premises, as Lester Young did in a way, and playing the tune at a high level has become a rite of passage ever since.

But one recording, however great, can't explain all of the tune's popularity; why it has been used as a jazz vehicle for so long with no sign of going away a majority of a century later. Something about that melody and those changes still gives us something useful to work with and, most importantly, it is still fun to play. Certainly, it has an unusual start for a standard, beginning on the ii minor chord and hovering around there for a couple bars before finally letting us know its real tonality. The bridge suddenly goes up a half step and then has to make its way back down somehow at the end, which also gives us something nice to chew on harmonically. Its changes are fairly complex, as standards go, so there's a certain enjoyable challenge in just rendering its many chord changes coherently. On the other hand, like most standards, it's also a love song, and who among us isn't a sucker for a good love song? There's even something appealing about its title to me, implying complete devotion and a certain metaphysical attitude. (though I remember being taken aback when I first learned how corny the lyrics are. I mean, "my life a wreck you're making"? Just my opinion!)

In any case, *Body and Soul* is now one of those basic structures that a jazz musician, especially a tenor player, uses to prove his or her mettle, analogous to writing a sonnet for an Elizabethan poet or painting a Madonna and Child for a Renaissance painter. That's what makes this such an interesting idea for a book. By studying how players from different eras have interpreted the same basic structure (and I'm extremely honored and more than a little awed and humbled to be in this company), it gives us a sense of how the jazz language has changed over the years. But even more importantly, how strong a sense of continuity exists between the past and the present. While certain ideas and conceptions of sound and rhythm have gone in and out of fashion, an analysis of these solos shows how musicians rework and extend ideas already used into new shapes that fit their own worldview and time. This is part of the beauty of the jazz form, that it gives us a way to express ourselves creatively within the context of a shared language, across divisions of time, culture, and geography.

I can't encourage strongly enough that musicians using this book also check out the original recordings of these transcriptions, as well as other recordings of the tune by non-saxophonists. Eric has done a great job of transcribing and analyzing these solos in a very thoughtful and intelligent way. Nevertheless, music exists as sound, and there is no way to apprehend all the little nuances of phrasing, sound and rhythm used by a player to express meaning, except by listening. Personally, during the writing of these words, I have immensely enjoyed revisiting those recordings I already knew and familiarizing myself with those I did not. I hope you will share that same joy of discovery while using this book, and I hope it helps deepen your knowledge and appreciation of the jazz tradition and its beauty.

-Chris Potter

Analysis of Coleman Hawkins' Solo

Coleman Hawkins' 1939 version of *Body and Soul* is widely considered to be one of the most important recordings in the history of jazz. It was among the genre's first tour de force solo statements, had a very modern, advanced sound for the time and firmly established the tenor saxophone as a jazz solo instrument. Despite being very sophisticated musically, it became a commercial hit, the first true jazz recording to accomplish this feat.

DELAYED RESOLUTIONS

There are several devices Hawkins used to achieve his cutting-edge results. By far, the most prominent is the use of delayed resolutions. There are several instances during the solo where Hawkins creates tension and dissonance by continuing to play over one chord, even though the rhythm section has moved on to the next chord. In the following examples, notes from the previous chord that are still being played are enclosed in a box and the point at which he completes the delayed resolution is circled.

The image displays a musical score analysis of Coleman Hawkins' solo, focusing on delayed resolutions. The score is presented in six lines of music, each with a key signature and a time signature. The notes from the previous chord that are still being played are enclosed in a box, and the point at which he completes the delayed resolution is circled.

Line 1: F-7, G7(b9). Measure 14 shows a delayed resolution from F-7 to G7(b9).

Line 2: EbΔ7, Bb7, EbΔ7. Measure 16 shows a delayed resolution from EbΔ7 to Bb7.

Line 3: D7, C#7, C7(b9). Measure 24 shows a delayed resolution from D7 to C#7.

Line 4: F-7, Bb7, E7, EbΔ7. Measure 27 shows a delayed resolution from F-7 to Bb7.

Line 5: G-7, F#o7, F-7. Measure 29 shows a delayed resolution from G-7 to F#o7.

Line 6: G7(b9), C-7. Measure 47 shows a delayed resolution from G7(b9) to C-7.

Line 7: F-7, Bb7, E7, EbΔ7. Measure 54 shows a delayed resolution from F-7 to Bb7.

Line 8: EbΔ7, A-7, EbΔ7. Measure 51 shows a delayed resolution from EbΔ7 to A-7.

ALTERATION OF DOMINANT 7th CHORDS

In the following examples, where Young is clearly playing the same changes as the piano and bass, he limits alterations of dominant chords to the 9ths:

Example 1: E^b7 $C7(b9)$ $F-7$

Example 2: E^b7/B $B7$

Example 3: $D7$ $C\#7$ $C7(b9)$

Example 4: E^b7 $C7(b9)$ $F-7$

Example 5: E^b7 $C7(b9)$

Based on what he plays in the 2nd and 7th measures of the “A” sections, Young seems to be treating the parenthesized chords below as B^b7 . In this context, his ideas feature altered 5ths in addition to altered 9ths. In the examples that follow, any alterations noted are in relation to B^b7 :

Example 1: B^b7 $F-7 (E7)$ E^b7

Example 2: $C-7$ $(B7 E7)$ E^b7

Example 3: B^b7 $F-7 (E7)$ E^b7

John Coltrane

October 24, 1960

From the album "Coltrane's Sound" (Atlantic CD 1419-2)

SWING $\text{♩} = 142$

F- F- $\Delta 7$ A $\flat\Delta 7$ B $\flat 13$ F-

B \flat PEDAL

B \flat PEDAL

A F- F- $\Delta 7$ A $\flat\Delta 7$ B $\flat 13$ A $\flat\Delta 7$ F- F- $\Delta 7$ A $\flat\Delta 7$ B $\flat 13$ (b9)

B \flat PEDAL

(NO PEDAL)

F- F- $\Delta 7$ A $\flat\Delta 7$ B $\flat 13$ A $\flat\Delta 7$ B $\flat 13$

B \flat PEDAL

D-7 G7(#9) G+ A+ G+ A+

(NO PEDAL) B \flat PEDAL

Analysis of John Coltrane's Solo

John Coltrane's recording of *Body and Soul* is a reimagining of the song itself. The tempo is significantly faster than previous versions, the form has been lengthened from 32 to 64 bars, there is a driving swing feel, parts of the melody have been altered and it makes heavy use of harmonic substitutions. All of these elements combine to form a version that sounds drastically different than any other recordings of the song up to that point.

Here are the biggest changes Coltrane made to the "A" sections:

- Bass plays a B \flat throughout entire section, except for mm. 8, 12 and 16.
- Lowered the melody notes at the beginning of measures 6 and 8 by a half step and changed the chord quality or reharmonized these areas. In the following example, the melody notes that have been lowered are circled.

It should be noted that Nat "King" Cole recorded a trio version of *Body and Soul* in 1944 with F \sharp -7 (concert E-7) in place of the usual F \sharp o7 in m. 4 of the "A" sections and another version in 1946 with F \sharp -7 B7 in this measure. Coltrane may have drawn inspiration for his substitutions in m. 8 of his "A" sections from these recordings.

Handwritten musical notation for the first four measures of the "A" section. The staff shows a melody line with a B \flat pedal point indicated by a dashed line below the staff. Chords are written above the staff: E \flat 7, B \flat 13, G+, A+, E \flat 7, B \flat 7sus, F \sharp -7, and B13. Melody notes in measures 6 and 8 are circled. Measure numbers 6, 7, and 8 are indicated below the staff.

EXAMINING THE FIRST FOUR MEASURES OF THE "A" SECTIONS

Upon first glance, the functionality of first four measures of the "A" sections isn't readily apparent and, taken at face value, this section might be difficult for a soloist to navigate cohesively.

Here is what the rhythm section is playing. The third chord is listed as A \flat Δ 7 instead of F-7 because F is not being played by either the bass or piano:

Handwritten musical notation for the rhythm section accompaniment. The staff shows a bass line with a B \flat pedal point indicated by a dashed line below the staff. Chords are written above the staff: F-, F-7, A \flat 7, B \flat 13, A \flat 7, F-, F-7, A \flat 7, and B \flat 13(b9).

RECURRING MATERIAL AND SEQUENCES

The following melodic shape appears several times in Coltrane's solo, including sequentially in mm. 133-135. It works well in both the "A" section and the bridge:

Handwritten musical notation showing a recurring melodic shape in two systems. The first system (mm. 133-135) shows a melodic line in G-flat major with a 3-note triplet and a 4-note triplet, with chords $E\flat_{13}(b9)$ and $E\flat\Delta 7$. The second system (mm. 155-156) shows the same shape in D major with chords $E\Delta 7$, $G7$, $C\Delta 7$, $E\flat 7$, $A\flat\Delta 7$, and $B7$.

The following descending whole step sequence fits perfectly over the bridge's key centers, which descend by major thirds:

Handwritten musical notation showing a descending whole step sequence over bridge key centers. The sequence consists of four groups of notes: $F7sus$, $F7$, $B\flat\Delta 7$, $C\#7$, $F\#\Delta 7$, and $A7$.

A SIMILARITY TO STAN GETZ' SOLO

The following melodic shape is very similar to the approach tone leaps used throughout Stan Getz' solo. In Coltrane's solo, an anticipated chord tone (in this case, D on the staff) is approached by half step and followed by a large upward leap:

Handwritten musical notation showing a melodic shape in G-flat major. It features a half-step approach to the chord tone D (the 3rd of $E\flat\Delta 7$) followed by a large upward leap to the 5th of $G\Delta 7$.

Michael Brecker (continued):

Musical notation for measure 48. The key signature has two flats (Bb, Eb). The chord is C7(b9). The lick consists of the notes: G4, Ab4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, Ab4, G4. A bracket with a '3' indicates a triplet over the first three notes.

In measure 56, Brecker plays the *Cry Me A River* lick over a diminished 7 chord, an application which usually isn't mentioned. It's also interesting that Brecker plays the same notes when he uses the lick over C7 (see m. 48 above). This is another example of Brecker employing the concept of tritone substitution in an unconventional manner. As mentioned previously, he also plays a C# minor triad over a G-7 chord in m. 55.

Musical notation for measure 56. The key signature has two flats (Bb, Eb). The chord is F#o7. The lick consists of the notes: G4, Ab4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, Ab4, G4. A bracket with a '3' indicates a triplet over the first three notes.

Brecker's last use of the lick is the only time it appears in full and is unaltered:

Musical notation for measure 84. The key signature has two flats (Bb, Eb). The chord is 8b7. The lick consists of the notes: G4, Ab4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, Ab4, G4. A bracket with a '7:6' interval is shown over the last two notes (Bb4, Ab4). The chord Eb o7 is also indicated.

Chris Potter, 1993

Musical notation for measure 21. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The chord is A7. The lick consists of the notes: B4, C#5, D#5, E5, D#5, C#5, B4. A bracket with a '5' indicates a quintuplet over the first five notes. The chord D o7 is also indicated.

Musical notation for measure 150. The key signature has two flats (Bb, Eb). The chord is 8b7. The lick consists of the notes: G4, Ab4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, Ab4, G4. A bracket with a '3' indicates a triplet over the first three notes. The chord Eb o7 is also indicated. A note is marked as (last 2 notes of lick played 8va).

Original	F-7	Bb7	G7	C-	F-7	Bb7	Eb	C-	C7			
Hawkins	F-7	G7(b9)		C-7	Bb7	EbΔ7	GΔ7	C7(b9)				
Young	F-7	A7	Bb7	BΔ7	C-7	B7	E7	Eb	C7(b9)			
Getz	F-7	DΔ7	G7(b9)	C-7	F7	B-7	E7	EbΔ7	GΔ7	C7(b9)		
Coltrane	F-7	Bb13	D-7	G7(#9)	G+	A+	G+	A+	G+	Bb13	EbΔ7	C7(#9)
Gordon '67	F-7	DΔ7	G7(b9)	C-7	F7	F-7	Bb7	EbΔ7	C7(b9)			
Gordon '70	F-7	DΔ7	G7	C-7	F-7	Bb7	EbΔ7	G-7	C7(b9)			
Modern	F-7	DΔ7	G7(b9)	C-7	F7	F-7	Bb7	EbΔ7	C7(b9)			
	49	50		51			52					