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# **Pat Metheny: Composing to Exploit the Sound of the Guitar**

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## ***Abstract***

The study's objective is to relate the development of Pat Metheny's stylistic characteristics from his interpretation of jazz standards to their incorporation into his own compositions. Stylistic elements are established and a sample of his compositions are analysed to compare his solo style in standards with his compositional style.

Metheny is a recognised innovator in technique and uses a wide range of instruments in the guitar family, both traditional and radically new. The use of such instruments frees Metheny from some restrictions and the possibility that this freedom is a major influence in his improvisation and composition is remarked on.

There is scope for further work based on a wider sampling, and the methodology used in this study could probably be modified to focus on this objective.

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## ***Introduction***

Pat Metheny's contribution to the jazz guitar has been enormous. Bursting onto the international jazz scene in 1974 with vibraphone great Gary Burton, Metheny has reinvented the sound of the jazz guitar many times over, extending and innovating in the jazz genre. Using new technology and working with young musicians, Metheny has progressively improved the technical and sonic potential of the guitar.

Metheny has a large body of compositions. This includes compositions for solo guitar, small ensembles, electric and acoustic instruments and large orchestras in styles ranging from modern jazz, to rock, to classical. He has stated that his main reason for composing was to develop a source of material that suited his conception of playing. (Goldstein, 1993, p.100-101). The impact of his debut album *Bright Size Life* (1976) was immediate. He has continued to compose in a way that emphasises his concept of playing.

The object of this study is to relate the development of Metheny's stylistic characteristics from his interpretation of jazz standards to their incorporation into his own compositions. A further aim is to investigate influences on his compositions coming from the novel capabilities of the unusual instruments he uses to supplement the standard jazz guitar. Once these characteristics are established, then his compositions are analysed to determine the extent to which his compositions follow his playing style. Trends in the employment of these stylistic devices are then established.

The intention of this research is to provide interesting insights into Metheny's playing and composing style to help jazz guitarists with developing their own style through the study of composition, and for the information of jazz musicians in general.

## **Background**

Pat Metheny was born on August 12, 1954 in Lee's Summit, Kansas City, Missouri. Beginning on trumpet at age 5, Metheny switched to playing guitar when he was 12. By the time he reached 15 he was already playing with the best jazz musicians in Kansas City. In 1974, Metheny entered the international jazz scene playing with Vibraphonist Gary Burton. During the 3 years he spent with Burton, Metheny began to display his trademark style mixing loose articulation with advanced rhythmic and harmonic concepts.

Metheny reinvented the jazz guitar sound on his debut album *Bright Size Life* (1976) with his trademark clean, chorused guitar voice. The compositions on the album were specifically written to exploit Metheny's playing style.

Metheny's composing style is heavily influenced by Brazilian music, both by the European tradition and the polyrhythmic Afro-Brazilian sounds. Metheny lived in Brazil and played with several local musicians including Milton Nascimento and Toninho Horta. Ornette Coleman is also a major influence on Metheny. He has recorded Coleman compositions on many of his own records and has featured on Coleman's album *Song X* (1985).

The Pat Metheny Group was founded in 1977 after the release of the album *Watercolours* (1977) featuring Lyle Mays on Keyboard. The group was heavily influenced by Latin music which continued to dominate its collective compositions. The Latin style is particularly prevalent on *Still Life (Talking)* (1987) and *Letter From Home* (1989) in its bossa and samba pieces. During the 90's, the Latin influence diminished, with the compositions having a less commercial and wider scope, incorporating Hip-Hop styles and free form improvisations.

Metheny has continued to innovate using the guitar in a jazz genre. For instance, he used an electric 12-string in alternate tuning on "Sirabhorn" on *Bright Size Life* and "IceFire" on *Watercolours*". He was also one of the first jazz guitarists to use the Roland GR300



Guitar/Synthesizer. Unlike many guitarists, he limits himself to a very small number of sounds and treats each sound as a different instrument changing his approaches on the guitar. The most unusual guitar that Metheny plays is a 42-string Picasso guitar which can be heard on *Imaginary Day* and *Trio->Live*. He also uses a mini guitar, an acoustic sitar guitar and a baritone guitar.

Metheny has also led a remarkable double life, becoming one of an elite group of musicians who have achieved worldwide commercial success while receiving respect and admiration from their peers. Winning countless polls as “Best Jazz Guitarist”, Metheny has also received three gold records for *Still Life (Talking)* (1987), *Letter From Home* (1989) and *Secret Story* (1992). He has also won sixteen Grammy Awards including Best Rock Instrumental, Best Contemporary Jazz Recording, Best Jazz Instrumental Solo and Best Instrumental Composition.

Metheny continues to be one of the most successful artists in jazz, devoting his time to his own projects as well as collaborating with emerging jazz artists and established performers; the list of musicians he has played with reads like an A to Z of contemporary Jazz. (Denyer, 1998, p. 31)

## ***Literature Review***

There is no shortage of material on Metheny's style that not only discusses his left and right hand technique, but also the sound he generates through effects and equipment. Also, there is a complete set of lead sheets for Metheny's compositions to be found in the *Pat Metheny Songbook* (2000). This book also contains quotations from Metheny on his playing style and composing style. Compositional devices and reference to his influences (e.g. Ornette Coleman) can be found in the *Jazz Composer's Companion* (1993).

Transcriptions that can be used in conjunction with this study can be found in Pat Metheny's books *Question and Answer* (2003) and *Rejoicing* (2004). These transcriptions are of high quality and are a great aid to learning Metheny's solos. These transcriptions are included with my own solo transcriptions.

With exception to *The Jazz Composer's Companion* (1993) and the *Pat Metheny Songbook* (2000), there is not much material on the devices that Metheny uses within his approach to composition and how this is related to his approach on the guitar.

My research will attempt to discern these devices in Metheny's playing and isolate them within his compositions.

## ***Methodology***

This study seeks to establish that Metheny incorporates stylistic devices employed during his improvisations on standards into his own composing style and that he has continually built on that expanding base of standards and original compositions throughout his career. The methodology for the comparison of Metheny's treatment of a standard during the solo in comparison to other guitarists was transcription analysis. Using this method, the research will establish the stylistic characteristics of Metheny's playing by transcribing note for note the material he uses in his improvisation during the solo of a particular standard.

It is important to note that some of the tunes are not standards but are of a standard form such as "Rejoicing" which has "rhythm" changes in C.

Once these characteristics are established, the compositions of Metheny will be then listened to and studied through lead sheets to establish how he uses these characteristics in his own compositions.

The lead sheets of Metheny's compositions taken from the *Pat Metheny Songbook* (2000) will be put into tablature to provide a consistent base for comparison.

Bar numbers were annotated to the transcriptions taken from *Question and Answer* (2003) and *Rejoicing* (2004) to allow the reader to reference passages.

To facilitate the transcription process, the program Transcribe was used. Transcribe slows down music playback while retaining the original pitch and is particularly useful in fast or multiple-note passages where it is difficult to hear what is being played during the solo. The music notation program Sibelius was used to notate the transcriptions from the original handwritten score. Sibelius' play back feature allows comparison between the original solo and the transcribed version to be made to verify the accuracy of the latter.

The following solos were taken as a representative sample of Metheny's albums from 1983 to 2000.

- "Rejoicing", Rejoicing, (1983)
- "Solar", Question And Answer, (1990)
- "All The Things You Are", Question And Answer, (1990)
- "Law Years", Question And Answer, (1990)
- "Old Folks", Question And Answer, (1990)
- "Turnaround", Wish, (1993)
- "Windows", Like Minds, (1998)
- "Giant Steps", Trio 99>00, (2000)

The following compositions were taken as a representative sample of Metheny's albums from 1976 to 2000.

- "Bright Size Life", Bright Size Life. (1976)
- "Unity Village", Bright Size Life. (1976)
- "James", Offramp. (1981)
- "Never Too Far Away", Question And Answer, (1990)
- "Question And Answer", Question And Answer, (1990)
- "Always and Forever", Secret Story, (1992)
- "Soul Cowboy", Trio 99>00, (2000)
- "Lone Jack", Trio 99>00, (2000)
- "Go Get It", Trio 99>00, (2000)
- "What Do You Want?", Trio 99>00, (2000)

The solos transcribed by the researcher were "Turnaround", "Windows" and "Giant Steps". "Turnaround" was chosen because it is a good example of Metheny's improvisation during a standard blues. "Windows" was chosen because it is later Metheny improvisation over a 3/4 tune and "Giant Steps" was chosen because it is a good example of Metheny playing his own Latin arrangement of a common standard.

The compositions were chosen as a representative sample of Metheny's body of composition over a sufficiently long period to establish possible trends. Included are blues tunes like "Soul Cowboy", 3/4 tunes such as "Question and Answer", Rhythm changes such as "What Do You Want?" and ballads such as "Always and Forever".

## ***Instruments and sound production***

Metheny is recognised as an innovator in his use of different instruments and electronic sound production techniques. While he continues to use standard jazz guitar equipment, he has employed a wide range of tools to produce new sounds and to support his musical objectives. Increasingly he has used a number of instruments while performing a single number to make each passage very distinct.

There are several main components in the Metheny tool kit.

### Electric instruments

The core instruments are standard electric jazz guitars – the Gibson ES175 with which Metheny persevered in spite of age and condition in the conviction that it was essential to his “sound”. When the Gibson and the Acoustic amplifier had to be retired, the Ibanez PM100 which Metheny helped to develop, became the mainstay along with new sound processing and amplification.

Although the sound of these guitars is amplified and processed in a particular way, it is similar to the guitar sound of many other jazz musicians. It is an evolution, and has been emulated by many others to the extent that it has become a norm.

The 12 string electric guitar and electric sitar are Metheny innovations producing harmonics, resonances and more sustained notes while the soprano guitar was specifically developed to allow him to go higher up the register than a standard guitar is able to.

### Amplification and sound processing

Amplification has always been solid state with qualities being introduced from the instrument and sound processing equipment and reproduced without further modification.

With the retirement of the Acoustic 134, Metheny transferred to a combination of amplifiers and delay lines with tone and volume pre-set using the Digitech 2101. He aimed to achieve a similar sound to the old equipment, but also to simplify the achievement of precision of his settings.

Each instrument or synthesiser is depended upon to produce its own sound. The processing and amplification stage is not used to radically change the sound character of the instrument in use.

### Acoustic instruments

As would be expected, the acoustic instruments' signals are captured by microphone, either built-in or free-standing.

The wide variety of acoustic instruments used, seems to reflect a desire to experiment in collaboration with luthiers he is associated with, the most prominent of whom is Linda Manzer.

There are two main groupings: instruments which have a sound quality like resonances, and harmonics (12 strings, sitars and the Pikasso), and instruments which widen the range outside the normal guitar scale (baritone and soprano guitars).

### Synthesisers

Guitar synthesisers have been produced for a long time, but most early models were not really capable of following the gamut of a guitarist's techniques such as bending, hammering etc. The Roland 300 system overcame many of the technical difficulties and was able to overlay guitar techniques onto a synthesised note.

A large number of Metheny tracks feature synthesiser passages where the sound texture has no discernible guitar features, being perhaps brass or woodwind, but the style is recognisably guitar in origin. Synthesisers also remove all limitations on pitch since the sound generated is not based on the tuning of the source instrument.

Refer Appendix 1 (p.84) for timeline chart



## Explanation of Guitar Notation

The following is an excerpt from *The Guitar Handbook* (1998).

“Tablature is a system of writing down music for the guitar as well as for other fretted instruments. It has existed in various forms through the centuries and has been used for flamenco, folk and lute music. It simply sets out the fingerings for a piece of music in a sort of shorthand. The system relies on you being able to hear a piece of music so that you are familiar with the rhythmic structure of the piece and the timing of the individual notes. In other words, it is used in conjunction with memory. Compared with music notation, it is easy to understand.

However, tablature cannot convey precise information about timing and the duration of notes. Nor does it help you to understand the harmonic structure of a piece in the way that notation can. Don’t fall into the trap of thinking you can do everything with tablature that you can with notation. Treat it for what it is – a form of shorthand.

Tablature is based on a six-line grid (as opposed to the five-line grid of music notation), but the major difference is that each line represents one of the guitar strings. The top line is the 1<sup>st</sup> (top E) string, and the bottom line is the 6<sup>th</sup> (bottom E) string. The numbers that appear on the lines are the fret numbers. So, a number 3 on the 2<sup>nd</sup> line from the top, for example, tells you to play D on the 3<sup>rd</sup> fret of the 2<sup>nd</sup> string. An O on the same line indicates that you play the open 2<sup>nd</sup> string.”

**How tablature works**  
This diagram shows the basic tablature “grid” – six lines, each representing one of the guitar strings. The numbers indicate at which fret the note is to be played.

**Example**  
As above, this shows the scale of G major. It starts on the G at the 5th fret on the 4th string.

			2	3	2		
		3	5		5	3	
2	4	5				5	4 2
5							5

(Denyer, 1998, p. 67)

## ***Part One: Soloing Style Characteristics***

Metheny's playing style is instantly recognisable. The accessibility to his playing comes from his extremely melodic and fluid improvised style, further enhanced by his trademark 'chorused' guitar sound. Although Metheny is very easy to listen to, it is possible to overlook how harmonically and rhythmically advanced he can be, playing extremely chromatic and 'outside' phrases while still holding the attention of the listener.

Adding to this is Metheny's advanced phrasing, with his ability to float over the time. Moving backward and forward, his playing seems to be separated, yet still perfectly in time.

Another prominent feature of his playing is its extremely lyrical and vocal quality, frequently using grace notes, Metheny also uses slides, hammer-ons, pull-offs and bends as much as possible which enhances the laid back feel of his phrasing.

This section will discuss the characteristics of Metheny's improvising style during his solos in selected standards and other jazz tunes.

### **Metheny Signature Licks**

Metheny's playing style is very guitar based, meaning that a lot of what he plays within his solo improvisations is derived from common patterns based around chord and scalar shapes on the guitar. Because of the layout of the guitar, it is often possible to play musical passages on different places on the guitar. Due to this, the way in which he fingers the line is very important because often the fingering dictates the melody being played with him often ignoring limitations imposed by the harmony. Because of this, a lot of Metheny's improvisations seem 'free', though these lines are often resolved on chord tones within the progression. He puts these limitations to good use, however, with the melodic contour taking precedence; working within his palette of licks and patterns, in conjunction with his ear, to play extremely melodic solos.

Here we look at the different pattern based licks that are exclusive to Metheny's soloing style as well as fingering licks from which he derives some of his melodies.



Ex. 2 “Solar” (bars 153-158)

### Chromatic licks

Another important feature of Metheny’s style is his heavy use of chromaticism within his improvisations. One of his trademarks is a chromatically ascending and descending major and minor thirds intervallic lick. The first finger plays the upper interval while the second or third finger plays the lower note of the interval depending on whether the third interval is major or minor. A good example of such a lick can be found in “Giant Steps” (Ex. 3).

Ex. 3 “Giant Steps (bar 16)

In this example Metheny begins the descending thirds lick from G melody note (b5<sup>th</sup>) over C#min7, shifting down chromatically with the first finger concluding the lick on C# melody note, the 9<sup>th</sup> of Bmaj7. The lower interval of the thirds lick is the less important of the two, used to embellish the upper interval. Other examples of this chromatic lick can be found in “Giant Steps” (bars 30, 78).

Another good example of how Metheny resolves this chromatic lick to a chord tone can be found during “Solar” (Ex. 4).

Ex.4 “Solar” (bar 63)

In this example, he begins the thirds lick from the minor third of Gmin7 (B $\flat$ ), moving chromatically down to the #5<sup>th</sup> of C augmented triad (G#) moving into a D augmented triad over C7.

### Triads

Metheny uses triads frequently within his solos using a mixture of major, minor, augmented and diminished triads. The most frequent being major triads, and he uses these in a multitude of applications. These triads are usually played in root position and start from the 4<sup>th</sup> string of the guitar. Often these triad-based lines are played “outside”, ignoring the harmonic implications from the chords progression, but again, are resolved logically using “inside” extensions. An example of this is played during “Solar” (Ex. 5).

Ex. 5 “Solar” (bars 198-200)

In this example he starts the phrase on an F major triad during Fmaj7, ascending to a G major triad giving “Lydian” extension (9-#11-13) over Fmaj7. He then ascends to an Ab major triad over Fmin7, moving “outside’ up a semitone to an A triad and he concludes

the ascending triad movement resolving with a B $\flat$  major triad over B $\flat$ 7. Similar examples of ascending major triad movement can be found in “Rejoicing” (bars 48-49, 89-90) and “All The Things You Are” (bars 98-100) in which Metheny plays major triads starting on the 5th string of the guitar.

Metheny uses Augmented triads similarly. They are used most commonly starting in root position and are often played on the 5<sup>th</sup> string of the guitar. Similar to Wes Montgomery, he uses ascending and descending augmented triads ascending in tonal movement. For example, during “Old Folks” (Ex. 6), on the third beat of the bar Metheny plays a descending D augmented triad to an ascending E augmented triad over D7 $\flat$ 9.

The image shows a musical example for guitar. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B $\flat$ ) and a D7 $\flat$ 9 chord symbol above it. The melody consists of a descending eighth-note line (D5, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4) followed by an ascending eighth-note line (F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5). The bottom staff is a guitar tablature for the 5th string (T, A, B) with fret numbers 7, 6, 5, 6, 3, 4, 5, 7, 6, 5. The first two notes (7 and 6) are beamed together, and the last two notes (6 and 5) are also beamed together.

Ex. 6 “Old Folks” (bar 56)

Using these two augmented triads, all 6 notes of the D whole-tone scale are played giving the effect of the D whole-tone scale being played during a dominant chord. Similar examples of this application of the whole-tone scale can be found in “Solar” (bars 41-42, 63-64).

Minor triads are less prevalent during Metheny’s solos. An example of his using a minor triad is can be found in “All The Things You Are” (Ex. 7) where he plays an ascending minor triad sequence during the bridge sequence.

Ex. 7 “All The Things You Are” (bars 19-23)

Metheny begins with a B minor triad over Gmaj7 (bar 20) moving to a C# minor triad over F#min7b5 (bar 21). He finishes the sequence on an E minor triad over Emaj7 (bars 22-23).

Diminished triads are also common in Metheny’s improvisations and again, are mostly played from the fourth string of the guitar. An example of his use of diminished triads can be found in “Rejoicing” (bar 55) where he substitutes an ascending B diminished triad over a G7, moving up a minor third to a descending D diminished triad. He uses a similar application during “All The Things You Are” (bar 60) with an ascending E diminished triad played over C7b13.

### Fingering licks

These are licks where the improvised melody is derived from the fingering pattern being played at the time. They are often very chromatic and sequence based following a logical pattern.

A good example of such a lick is a chromatic sequence played during Metheny’s solo in “Solar” (Ex. 8).

Ex. 8 “Solar” (bars 205-208)

During this example, he uses the first, second and third fingers. The first finger is used on the second fret, the second finger on the third fret, and the third finger on fourth fret. The pattern ascends one fret (one semitone) at a time. This line resolves to a fully chromatic passage (bar 208). He follows this with a line based on thirds and chromatic ascensions over Fmaj7 (bar 209) into a chromatically descending thirds lick into Fmin7 (bars 210-211).

3-2-1-2 Fingering pattern

One of the most common patterns used is a 3-2-1-2 fingering pattern. This is usually used as a chromatic passing figure where the first finger (third note of the pattern) is one semitone above the target resolve tone with Metheny allocating a finger to each interval within the pattern.

The second finger plays the last note in the pattern located on the string above that of which the pattern began on. This is used as a passing tone for the first finger to resolve easily down a semitone from its original position and is similar to the descending thirds lick in that the lower interval (second finger) is an embellishing tone for the upper interval (first finger).



Ex. 9 “All the Things You Are” (bar 3)

Fingering Pattern	3	2	1	2
Interval (Eb7)	5	#11	11	b9

This is demonstrated in “All the Things You Are” (Ex. 9) where Metheny begins the line on the fourth string (D-string) from the 5<sup>th</sup> of Eb7 (Bb) with the third finger. He then moves down chromatically to the 11<sup>th</sup> (Ab) using the second and first fingers, using the second finger again to play the b9<sup>th</sup> on the string above (the fifth string). The pattern is resolved by shifting the first finger down one semitone to the 3<sup>rd</sup> of Eb7 (G).

Metheny uses the same pattern over Gmaj7 (bar 15) beginning on the 5<sup>th</sup> (D) and resolving the fingering pattern to the 3<sup>rd</sup> (B) of Gmaj7. A very similar pattern to (Ex. 9) is played during Eb7 again (bar 27). However, in this example he omits the second finger leaving out the #11<sup>th</sup> chromatic passing tone (A).

Another form of this lick is where he begins from the root of the chord in question. In “Old Folks” (Ex. 10), Metheny uses multiple fingerings; the first of which he begins from the 3<sup>rd</sup> of F7 (A) during beat one. This is resolved with the first finger shifting to the b9<sup>th</sup> moving into a C diminished arpeggio. During the last beat of the bar he uses the same fingering pattern, but this time starting from the root (F) resolving to the 3<sup>rd</sup> of Bb (D) in the following bar (bar 37).

Ex. 10 “Old Folks” (bar 36)

Fingering Pattern	3	2	1	2	and	3	2	1	2
Interval (F7)	3	b3	9	#7		1	#7	b7	b5

Parallel Fingering licks

These are licks that use a similar fingering or fret sequence when moving up or down from string to string. They are often used during fast passages and allow Metheny more harmonic and melodic freedom connecting melodic phrases. An example of parallel fingering can be found in “Old Folks” (Ex. 11).

Ex. 11 “Old Folks” (bar 12)

This lick occurs during the first beat of the excerpt using a sixteenth-note rhythm. The sequence begins on the fifth fret (C) of the third string (G string) then moves up to the eighth fret (Eb). He then moves down to the second string (B string) starting on the eighth fret (G) moving back down to the fifth fret (E) forming a parallel shape. This pattern based on parallel string shapes generates unusual extensions (b7-b9-4-9) over a D7b9 chord. As illustrated in the last example, this device is used more for playing fast runs and pattern based licks and as a segue into more vertical and melodic passages. For

instance, after this Metheny outlines D7 $\flat$ 9 by playing the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of (F $\sharp$ -A) resolving to the  $\flat$ 9<sup>th</sup> (E $\flat$ ), using another finger based lick to move into the next bar. Further examples of this can be found in (bar 49) and also “Rejoicing” (bars 73-77) and the two pick bars into the solo of “All the Things You Are” (Ex. 12).

Ex. 12 “All the Things You Are” (1<sup>st</sup> pickup bar)

In this example the line has very little relevance to the harmony. However, what is interesting about this example is the interval in which each pattern starts. Beginning on 9<sup>th</sup> of A $\flat$ maj7 (B $\flat$ ), Metheny resolves down chromatically to the root (A $\flat$ ) with an F passing note on the string above. Then, during Gmin7 $\flat$ 5 he begins on the major third (B) moving up chromatically to the  $\flat$ 5<sup>th</sup> (D $\flat$ ) with a 13<sup>th</sup> (E) on the second string moving chromatically back down to the third, finishing on a G note.

## Metheny Scales

Within his improvisational style, Metheny has developed scales which have become an important part of his playing vocabulary.

The first scale that he uses commonly is the minor pentatonic/ blues scale with a 9<sup>th</sup> addition tone. This allows Metheny to outline the 9<sup>th</sup> interval of a minor seventh chord while using a minor pentatonic/ Blues pattern. An example of such a scale can be found in “Old Folks” (Ex. 13). In this example, he embellishes the C minor pentatonic line with a 9<sup>th</sup> passing tone over a Cmin7 chord.

The image shows a musical example for guitar. At the top, a treble clef staff is labeled 'Dm7'. The melody is written in a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 9/8 time signature. The notes are: C (5th string, 5th fret), Eb (5th string, 6th fret), F (4th string, 10th fret), G (4th string, 12th fret), Ab (4th string, 12th fret), Bb (3rd string, 10th fret), and C (3rd string, 13th fret). The guitar tablature below the staff shows the fretting for each note: 5, 6, 10, 12, 12, 10, 13, 10, 12, 13, 13, 12, 10, 12, 10, 12, 11.

Ex. 13 “Old Folks” (bar 43)

The same scale can be found again (bar 110) over Cmin7. Although this scale could be considered as a Dorian or Aeolian derivative, the reason it has been named as such is because it uses a guitar based Root-5 (beginning from the fifth string) C minor pentatonic-based scale shape.

Another example of this can be found in “Old Folks” (bar 43) using a D Blues scale over a Dmin7 chord with the 9<sup>th</sup> addition tones (E) occurring on the second and first strings.

Another scale frequently used in Metheny’s improvisations is a Spanish Phrygian scale with a #9 addition tone with an 11<sup>th</sup> interval omitted. This gives the standard Spanish Phrygian scale a more ‘altered’ sound and is used most commonly over dominant chord structures. An example of this scale is played during “Solar” (Ex. 14).

Ex. 14 “Solar” (bar 84)

During this eighth note phrase he begins on the 7<sup>th</sup> of the G Spanish Phrygian (#9) scale (F) over a minor II-V in C. He then ascends up the scale omitting the 11<sup>th</sup> (C), finishing on the #9<sup>th</sup> (B $\flat$ ).

Further examples of Metheny’s use of this scale in “Solar” are played (bars 96), in which during this particular example Metheny uses a #11<sup>th</sup> passing tone (D $\flat$ ) integrating a parallel fingering lick into the scale using the first and third fingers. Examples from other solos can be found in “All the Things You Are” (bars 96) in the form of a fingering lick using the first and second fingers.

Examples of this scale including the 11<sup>th</sup> interval are played during “Rejoicing” (bar 52) over an A7 chord and also in “All the Things You Are” (bar 37) using C Spanish Phrygian #9<sup>th</sup> over Fmin7 with a #7<sup>th</sup> passing tone (B). This brings the research to another application of this scale.

Using the Spanish Phrygian #9<sup>th</sup> scale, Metheny also uses a #7<sup>th</sup> addition/ passing tone. This gives the scale a chromatic, dominant bebop scale based sound which suits his chromatic, legato style.

Examples of Metheny using this scale can be found in “Solar” (bar 72) using a G Spanish Phrygian #9<sup>th</sup> with an 11<sup>th</sup> addition tone over Dmin7 $\flat$ 5-G7. He also uses this scale omitting the 11<sup>th</sup> during “All The Things You Are” (bar 114) over Dmin7 to G7.

Also, when he omits the 6<sup>th</sup> of the Spanish Phrygian #9<sup>th</sup>, the scale resembles a minor pentatonic scale in root 6<sup>th</sup> position. For Example, in “Solar” (Ex. 15) he plays an ascending G Spanish Phrygian #9<sup>th</sup> scale beginning from the 7<sup>th</sup>. The notes generated are F-G-A $\flat$ -B $\flat$ -B-D-F-G. If this is compared to the notes generated from a G minor pentatonic scale starting from the 7<sup>th</sup> also- F-G-B $\flat$ -C-D-F-G we find that the two scales have 4 notes in common ignoring the notes repeated up an octave.

Ex. 15 “Solar” (bar 192)

Because the minor pentatonic is a simple five-note scale, using this scale as a template adding addition tones, allows the improviser to use the basic pentatonic pattern while adding more colourful extensions.

## Harmonic Generalisation

This takes place when the improviser uses a single scale over two or more chords during a progression. One of the simplest forms of harmonic generalisation occurs when the major or minor pentatonic scale is used. Metheny favours the minor pentatonic scale as well as the blues scale, using these scales frequently, which are the basis for many of his improvisations. For example, during “Solar” (Ex. 16) he begins the first chorus using a C minor pentatonic scale over Cm7-Gm7.

The image shows musical notation for three bars of a guitar solo. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (Bb, Eb). The first bar is labeled Cm7 and contains the notes C, Bb, Ab, G, F, G. The second bar is labeled Gm7 and contains the notes G, F, Eb, D, C, D. The bottom staff shows guitar fingering: bar 1 (6-3-7-5-5-7-4), bar 2 (5-4), and bar 3 (5-6-5-6-4). The strings are labeled T, A, B.

Ex. 16 “Solar” (bars 1-3)

This is repeated later when Metheny plays the C blues scale over Gmin7-C7 (bars 75-76). He also uses a ‘bluesy’ Ab minor pentatonic passage during the bridge section of “Windows” (bar 29-30) over Ab7-A7, repeating this theme during the bridge section in the following chorus using Ab blues scale over A7-Ab7 (bars 74-75).

In “Rejoicing”, he uses a D minor pentatonic scale in the form of a parallel fingering lick over the chords Dm7-G7-C-C7/E (bars 104-105). Also, in the final 3 bars of his solo during the A section, he uses a common cliché finishing the Rhythm Changes with a C blues scale phrase over F-F#dim7-C (bars 126-129). Similar to this, on “Turnaround” he also uses a ‘bluesy’ phrase based around the C blues scale to finish his solo in the final turnaround: C7-A7-Dm7-G7-C7 (bars 59-61).

“Old Folks” also features minor pentatonics and blues scale lines frequently. During the first A section, Metheny uses the D minor pentatonic scale with guide tone comps to fill in the harmony over Cm7-F7-Bbmaj7-Eb7 (bars 4-6). Then, he uses another D minor pentatonic sequence with ‘Double stop’ interspersions over the chord sequence D7b9-Gm7-C7 (bars 28-30).

Metheny's "Giant Steps" solo features harmonic generalisation heavily with him using the Ionian mode frequently over II-V-I's and V-1's (Ex. 17). For example in the pick-up bar of his solo Metheny starts his solo using a line based around B Ionian over F#7. Continuing with this scale over the corresponding I chord Bmaj7 (bar 1), he then modulates into G major using the G Ionian mode over D7, continuing with this mode over Gmaj7-Bb7 (bar 2).

Ex. 17 "Giant Steps" (bars 1-2)

This use of Ionian modes is repeated again over F#7-Bmaj7-Fmin7-Bb7-Ebmaj7 with Metheny using B Ionian over F#7-Bmaj7 (bars 6-7), then using Eb Ionian over Fmin7-Bb7-Ebmaj7 (bars 8-9). These are just a few examples from "Giant Steps" of harmonic generalisation.

A similar example of him using Ionian modes can be found in "All The Things You Are" in which Metheny plays a G Ionian scale over Am7-D7-Gmaj7 (bars 17-19). He repeats this idea playing a phrase using single-lines, octaves and chord melody from the E Ionian mode over F#min7b5-B7-Emaj7 (bars 201-203).

Another example of harmonic generalisation can be found in "Windows" (Ex. 18) where he uses the E Lydian scale over the chord progression Emaj7-D#min7-C#min7-C#min7/B-Bbmin7b5- /Ab-Eb7/G (Ex. 18).



E<sup>7</sup>                      D<sup>#m</sup><sup>7</sup>                      C<sup>#m</sup><sup>7</sup>                      C<sup>#m</sup><sup>7</sup>/B

3                      3                      4

T  
 A  
 B

6 7 4 6 4 6 7    6 8 9 6 7 8    9 8 6 9    5 6 9 7 9

Ex. 18 “Windows” (bars 33-36)

This application of the E Lydian mode is repeated again over the same progression of chords in the following chorus (bars 81-86) following a similar ascending motif.

## Digital Patterns and Scalar Patterns

Metheny uses digital patterns and scalar patterns frequently amongst his improvisations and they are found in eighth and sixteenth-note passages. He plays many lines based on the digital pattern 9-7-1-3-5 and 9-7-1-3. Like John Coltrane, he uses these patterns commonly in “Giant Steps” amongst others. For example in “Giant Steps” (Ex. 19) Metheny plays this pattern using the E<sup>b</sup> Ionian mode over E<sup>b</sup>maj7 on the third beat of the bar.

The image shows a musical example for guitar. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a time signature of 4/4. The key signature is indicated by a B-flat symbol. The staff contains a melodic line starting on the third beat of the bar. The notes are: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), D5 (quarter), E5 (quarter), F5 (quarter), G5 (quarter). The notes are grouped into four pairs of eighth notes. The bottom staff is a guitar fretboard diagram with six strings labeled T (Treble), A, and B (Bass). The fret numbers are: 8, 6, 8, 5, 6, 8, 5, 6, 5, 8, 7, 5, 8. The fret numbers are grouped into four pairs of eighth notes, corresponding to the melodic line above.

Ex. 19 “Giant Steps” (bar 9)

Further examples of this digital pattern can be found during “Giant Steps” (bars 11, 19, 27) and also during “Windows” using the digital pattern 9-7-1-3 based on the E Lydian mode over Emaj7-D#min7 (bars 33-34).

Another use of this digital pattern is to act as a base point for Metheny to move into other licks. An example of this can be found in “Turnaround” (bars 19-20) where he plays a D major 9-7-1-3 digital pattern over C7 (E-C#-D-F#). This then moves into a ‘Metheny’ descending thirds lick which then moves into a ‘Metheny’ ascending 7<sup>th</sup> chord lick. The same usage of this pattern can be found in “All The Things You Are” (bars 49-50) with Metheny again playing a 9-7-1-3 digital pattern over Abmaj7 based on the Eb Ionian mode (A<sup>b</sup> Lydian) (F-D-Eb-G) which then moves into a ‘Metheny’ descending thirds lick. Another common digital pattern Metheny uses frequently within his improvisations is a 5-3-2-1 pattern. An example of this pattern can be found in “Turnaround” (Ex. 20).

BU 1/4

Ex. 20 “Turnaround” (bars 56-57)

In this example, Metheny anticipates the Dmin7 chord by super imposing a 5-3-2-1 digital pattern over A7 on the fourth beat of bar 56 using a sixteenth-note rhythm. Similar to this, in “Giant Steps” (bar 24) Metheny super imposes a Eb Melodic minor scale over Bb7. On the fourth beat of the bar, he uses the Ebmin7 5-3-2-1 digital pattern (Bb-Gb-F-Eb) during the Bb7 chord.

Metheny also uses this digital pattern as a fingering based pattern moving it up and down in semitones (frets). An example of this device can be found in “Solar” (Ex. 21).

Ex. 21 “Solar” (bars 93-96)

In this example, he begins using a 5-3-2-1 pattern over Ebmaj7, anticipating Ebmin7 using the corresponding pattern and repeats it again over Ab7. Over Dbmaj7 he sideslips up a semitone using a D major 5-3-2-1 pattern. The line is resolved by moving back down to Db major, repeating the digital pattern over Dmin7b5.

Like the last example, sometimes Metheny plays lines that are based on the four note 5-3-2-1 digital pattern but the digits do not represent the intervals within the pattern. During “All The Things You Are” (Ex. 22), he uses a Db major 5-3-2-1 pattern at the beginning of the excerpt over Gb7 Giving the intervals (Ab-F-Eb-Db).

The image shows two systems of musical notation for guitar. Each system consists of a treble clef staff with notes and a guitar tablature staff with fret numbers. The first system has three measures with chords G<sup>b</sup>7, C<sup>m</sup>7, and B<sup>0</sup>7. The second system has three measures with chords B<sup>b</sup>min<sup>7</sup>, E<sup>b</sup>7, and A<sup>b</sup>maj<sup>7</sup>. The tablature includes various techniques such as triplets and slurs.

Ex. 22 “All The Things You Are” (bars 174-180)

Metheny repeats this pattern during the excerpt using subtle variations on the original such as lowering the F to F<sup>b</sup> (Gmin7<sup>b</sup>5- C7) and lowering the D<sup>b</sup> to C (A<sup>b</sup>maj<sup>7</sup>). Note: The top note (A<sup>b</sup>) stays constant throughout most of the excerpt with exception to the chord Cmin7 where he uses a 5-3-2-1 (G-E<sup>b</sup>-D-C).

Other examples of his using this pattern can be found in “Windows” (bar 41) over A<sup>b</sup>min<sup>7</sup> and “All The Things You Are” (bar 77) over Abmaj<sup>7</sup>.

## Sequence

Sequences make up a large part of Metheny's improvising style and are present in most of his improvisations. His sequences are often quite long in duration, taking up a large number of bars.

The solo in "Windows" is a good example of sequence and is used on a number of occasions during the solo. Many of the sequences throughout "Windows" use a four over three polyrhythm. He also uses the E Lydian mode heavily within both the sequences and the solo itself. For example, during "Windows" (Ex. 23), Metheny plays a sequence using the E Lydian scale over Emaj7#11.

Ex. 23 "Windows" (bars 18-23)

A similar descending sequence is played in the last four bars of the first chorus (bars 45-48) based around the 5<sup>th</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> intervals of each chord with exception to C9#11. Similar to the first, Metheny uses an ascending sequence over Emaj7#11, again using the E Lydian scale (bars 66-68). This scale is used again during a sequence over the last section of the head during the descending chord progression (bars 81-86). He concludes the solo with a descending Lydian sequence within the final four bars of the head using the 5-4-3 intervals of each chord (bars 93-95).

Metheny also uses sequence during his solo in "Giant Steps". These sequences are very 'guitaristic' and are based on patterns which are shifted up and down in tones and semitones through the different key centres. For example, during "Giant Steps" (Ex. 24) he plays an ascending sequence starting with the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> intervals over E♭maj7, which are played in turn with the first, third and first fingers.

Ex. 24 “Giant Steps” (bars 41-44)

Metheny anticipates the Amin7 chord playing the previous pattern up a tone during Ebmaj7. This pattern then moves up another tone over the chords D7-Gmaj7. At this point he modulates the rhythm from sixteenth-notes to triplets. Finally, he shifts the pattern up one more tone anticipating the C#min7 chord during Gmaj7 with the sequence finishing on G#. During the entire sequence, Metheny uses the same first-third-first finger pattern. Metheny plays a similar sequence at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> chorus (Ex. 25) in which he uses an ascending doubles stops sequence based on diatonic major and minor thirds of each key centre.

Ex. 25 “Giant Steps” (bars 61-64)

This example illustrates well how Metheny uses patterns parallel to each other to create a sequence. The pattern that is played during C#min7-F#7 (bar 64) is exactly one tone up from the pattern that he plays during Fmin7-Bb7 (bar 62) using the same fingering also. During the fifth chorus (Ex. 26) he uses an ascending jumping octaves sequence which ascends in tones and semitones through the different key centres.

Ex. 26 “Giant Steps” (bars 69-74)

This sequence starts by using a repeating D octaves line over the chords Gmaj7-B $\flat$ 7-E $\flat$ maj7. Metheny then moves the pattern up a semitone to E $\flat$  over F#7 introducing a low passing note (C) played with the third finger. This pattern is repeated over F#7-Bmaj7-Fm7. He then ascends the pattern up a tone to F over the chords B $\flat$ 7-E $\flat$ maj7 concluding, moving up another tone to G over E $\flat$ maj7-Am7.



### 7-3 Resolutions and 3-b9

Although Metheny's improvisation style is very modern and unique, bebop devices such as 7-3 resolutions and 3-b9 movement are still common within his improvisations. A 7-3 resolution is defined by the movement from the seventh ( $\flat 7^{\text{th}}$ ) of the  $\text{IIm}7$  chord to the third of the  $\text{V}7$  chord during a  $\text{II-V}$  progression, major or minor. Also a 7-3 resolution can be used on a perfect cadence:  $\text{V}7\text{-I}$  using the  $\flat 7^{\text{th}}$  of the  $\text{V}7$  chord to the third of the  $\text{I}$  chord. Similar to this, a 3-b9 is defined by the movement of the  $3^{\text{rd}}$  of a dominant chord to the  $\flat 9^{\text{th}}$  or the  $\flat 9^{\text{th}}$  to the  $3^{\text{rd}}$  of the same chord.

He uses the 7-3 resolution most commonly during the  $\text{V}7\text{-I}$ . An example of his application of this resolution can be found during "Solar" (Ex. 27), Metheny using a 7-3 resolution over a  $\text{-V-I}$  in  $\text{E}\flat$  major.

Ex. 27 "Solar" (bars 19-21)

In this example, Metheny starts on the  $7^{\text{th}}$  of  $\text{B}\flat 7$  ( $\text{A}\flat$ ) using chromatic approach tones to move up to the  $3^{\text{rd}}$  of  $\text{E}\flat\text{maj}7$  ( $\text{G}$ ). However, sometimes his use of the 7-3 resolution does not fit the standard definition. In an example during "All The Things You Are" (Ex. 28), He uses this resolution but only over the  $\text{V}7$  chord  $\text{E}\flat 7$  as part of a descending thirds intervallic lick.

Ex. 28 "All The Things You Are" (Bars 38-39)

During this excerpt the 7<sup>th</sup> of B $\flat$ min7 (A $\flat$ ) is delayed and used instead over E $\flat$ 7 becoming the 11<sup>th</sup> of the chord. Metheny then uses a b9<sup>th</sup> embellishing tone resolving to the third of the same chord (G). This lick is used again later in the solo over B $\flat$ 7 (bar 47).

Like the 7-3 resolutions, he uses the 3-b9 device in the up-tempo tunes. During “Solar” (Ex. 29) Metheny uses one of the most common applications of the device skipping from the 3<sup>rd</sup> of G7 to the b9<sup>th</sup> resolving down a semitone to the 5<sup>th</sup> of Cmin7.

Ex. 29 “Solar” (bar 180-181)

Metheny plays a similar line during “All The Things You Are” (Ex. 30) over an Amin7 $\flat$ 5.

Ex. 30 “All The Things You Are” (bars 14-15)

In this excerpt Metheny uses a 7-3 resolution and a 3-b9 simultaneously in the same phrase. The 7-3 occurs when he resolves from the 7<sup>th</sup> (G) to the third of D7 (F#). (Note that once F# is played that a D7 chord is being referred as part of a minor II-V into Gmaj7 although this has not been notated in the transcription). The third (F#) is preceded by the b9<sup>th</sup> (E $\flat$ ) with F# melody note used not only as resolution tone for the 7-3, but the beginning of the 3-b9.

He uses these devices simultaneously again later in the solo (bar 193-194) over a minor II-V with Metheny displacing the line an eighth note early.

During “Rejoicing” (Ex. 31), he uses 3- $\flat$ 9 in the form of diminished triads.

The image shows a musical example for guitar. The top staff is a treble clef with a G7 chord symbol above it. The melody consists of six eighth notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4. The bottom staff is a guitar TAB with fret numbers 9, 7, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12. Vertical lines connect the notes in the melody to their corresponding fret numbers in the TAB.

Ex. 31 “Rejoicing” (bar 55)

During this example Metheny, begins on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of G7 ascending up a B diminished triad. The highest note of the passage, he plays the  $\flat$ 9<sup>th</sup> (A $\flat$ ) of G7, which is the  $\flat$ 5<sup>th</sup> of D diminished triad finishing this on D melody note. The device is later repeated (bar 119), again, using diminished triads over a G7 chord.



## Chord Melody Soloing

Chord melody is a style of guitar where the melody and chord are played simultaneously with the chord harmonising the melody note. Metheny's use of Chord melody is very similar to his single-line style of playing using stock voicings and chord shapes as well as using sequence heavily.

One of his trademarks during the playing of chord melody is his use of 4<sup>th</sup> voicings. Many of these fourth chords Metheny uses are built from inversions of the 'So What' chord voicings. For Example, in the key of D minor, starting from the leading note, the 'So What' voicing is built on the intervals 3-4-4-4-4, giving the notes A-F- C- G- D. During "Solar" (Ex. 33) he uses three voicings during Fmaj7 harmonising down in fourths from C, the E and C melody note.

The image shows a musical score for a guitar solo. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The melody is written in eighth notes: C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3. The chord is Fmaj7. The guitar tablature below shows the fret numbers for the strings: Treble (T) 13, 12, 12; Middle (M) 5, 4, 7, 0; Bass (B) 12, 3, 0. The second measure shows a barre at the first fret (1) and fret numbers 5, 5, 3, 6, 6, 4.

Ex. 33 "Solar" (bars 221-222)

When harmonising the C Melody notes Metheny uses the first inversion of the 'So What' voicing: 4-4-4-4-3 but the bottom two notes of the chord are omitted. During the 7<sup>th</sup> chord melody note he uses a #11<sup>th</sup> interval between the B and F melody notes creating an Fmaj7#11 voicing

Another voicing used frequently that is built up of fourths is when Metheny harmonises a major seventh melody note during a major seventh chord. From the melody note down this chord voicing is built on the intervals 3-4-4-4 and is not completely built on fourths like the prior chords. An example of this voicing can be found in "Giant Steps" (Ex. 34) during Bmaj7.



Ex. 36 “Giant Steps” (bars 97-98)

Within this example, both the chord voicings and the melody notes of each of the chords use subtle resolutions while moving between the chord changes. This is evident during the movement of the melody notes of ascending from the major 7<sup>th</sup> of Bmaj7 to the 13<sup>th</sup> of D7, finally ascending to the 5<sup>th</sup> of Gmaj7.

Another example of Metheny using sequence can be found in “Solar” (Ex. 37) using an ascending sequence with the leading notes based around the C minor pentatonic scale with a 9<sup>th</sup> addition tone (D).

Ex. 37 “Solar” (bars 217-220)

During this example he starts using a single-line motif which is developed during Cmin7 to Gmin7 (bars 218-220) using inversions of triads derived from G Aeolian scale (Bb major scale). This is further developed during C7 where he uses first inversions of G and Bb diminished triads.

### Parallel Movement of Chord Shapes/ Voicings

Similar to his use of parallel fingering licks during single-line soloing, Metheny uses this device during chord-melody as a method of moving fluidly between chord changes. This is achieved by using a particular chord shape and moving it in parallel along the neck of the guitar on the same strings creating different voicings when changing between chords

and the chord voicings themselves. During the last example during “Solar” (Ex. 37), he uses two separate examples of parallel chord movement during the sequence. The first example is used during Gmin7 (bar 219) where he uses an inversion of a major triad shape on the second, third, and fourth strings using the  $b13^{th}$  ( $E_b$ ) of Gmin7 as a leading note. This triad shape is then played up a tone shifting the chord shape up two frets creating a new voicing for Gmin7 using the  $7^{th}$  (F) as the leading note and the  $9^{th}$  (A) as the lowest note of the voicing of Gmin7. The second example is used during C7 (bar 220) where Metheny uses inversions of diminished triads. The first diminished triad uses the  $5^{th}$  (G) of C7 as a leading note. The diminished chord shape is then shifted up a minor third (three frets) creating another inversion of the original triad with the  $7^{th}$  ( $B_b$ ) of C7 as the leading note. During “Solar” (Ex. 38), Metheny uses parallel movement again while changing from the chords Fmaj7 to Fmin7.

The musical notation for Ex. 38 shows two measures. The first measure is labeled (Fmaj7) and the second measure is labeled Fmin7. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 4/4 time signature. The guitar fretboard is shown below the staff with fret numbers for strings T, A, and B.

T	1	5	6	(6)	7	8	(8)
A	0	5	6	(6)	7	8	(8)
B	0	3	4	(4)	7	6	(6)

Ex. 38 “Solar” (bars 222-223)

In this example Metheny uses an Fmaj7 chord voicing using the major  $7^{th}$  as the leading note on beat three of bar 222. This chord shape is then played up one semitone anticipating the change to Fmin7 creating a dissonant voicing with the root as the leading note. This tension is released when he resolves the chord up a tone using the  $9^{th}$  (G) as the leading note creating a minor  $9^{th}$  voicing during Fmin7. Metheny also uses this technique frequently during the chord-melody solo in “Giant Steps”.



## Free Improvisation

Heavily influenced by the compositions of Ornette Coleman, Metheny plays free improvisations frequently within the guitar trio setting. This is particularly evident on his 1983 album *Rejoicing* in which he recorded three Coleman Tunes: “Tears Inside”, “Humpty Dumpty” and “Rejoicing”. While having had recorded completely free improvisations, when playing free improvisations in a guitar trio, Metheny often uses ‘free’ harmony using one chord as a reference to the harmony while maintaining the metre throughout the improvisation. This is the case during “Law Years”, another Ornette Coleman tune, in which the improvisation is based around Cmin7 but is ultimately free from any harmonic restrictions.

Although the majority of the solo style characteristics are the same, due to the importance of free improvisation to Metheny’s soloing style, during this section stylistic characteristics have been separated from the Solo Style Characteristics chapter in order to highlight specific devices used during the free improvisation.

### Chromatic Licks

As with the solos in the other standards, Chromatic licks feature heavily in Metheny’s free improvisation. These licks are often resolved on inside tones related to the reference chord (Cmin7). His signature chromatically descending thirds intervallic lick is used frequently and can be found in “Law Years” (Ex. 39) concluding a chromatic phrase in the opening two bars of his solo.

N.C (Cm7)

Slight P.M.

T  
A  
B

9 10 11 8 10 9 8 10 7 8 6 (6) 8

Ex. 39 “Law Years” (bars 1-3)

Developing the theme of chromatism, he uses an extended four bar fully chromatic lick (Ex. 40). Starting from F, he ascends chromatically up to A and then descends back down

to G $\flat$  where again, the lick is concluded using a ‘Metheny’ descending thirds lick ending on the root note (C) of the reference chord Cmin7.

N.C (Cm7)

Ex. 40 “Law Years” (bars 93-96)

### Triads

Again, triads appear frequently in Metheny’s free improvisation and are used typically on the second, third and fourth strings. During “Law Years” (Ex. 41) he uses a G major triad which then moves into a 7-3 resolution, moving from F to E implying a perfect cadence (G7-C) over Cmin7.

N.C (Cm7)

Ex. 41 “Law Years” (bar 29)

Metheny uses another one of his trademark triad licks during “Law Years” (Ex. 42) in which he uses Augmented triads ascending in tones. In this case, he ascends from a D



## Fingering Licks

During free improvisation, Metheny uses fingering licks frequently. One of the most common fingering licks he uses is his 3-2-1-2 fingering lick. Like his playing during the other standards under investigation, he uses these licks as a means of outlining harmony within the improvisations. For example, during “Law Years” (Ex. 44) Metheny uses a 3-2-1-2 fingering lick on the second and third strings merged with a chromatically descending thirds lick to create a C harmonic minor lick with a  $\flat 5^{\text{th}}$  passing note ( $G\flat$ ).

Ex. 44 “Law Years” (bar 71-72)

Metheny begins the fingering lick using the third finger to play G melody note (the  $5^{\text{th}}$  of C minor). He follows this using the second finger playing  $G\flat$  melody note ( $\flat 5^{\text{th}}$ ) and then the  $1^{\text{st}}$  finger playing F melody note ( $11^{\text{th}}$ ). The final note in the pattern D ( $9^{\text{th}}$ ), played on the third string, is used to merge the fingering lick into the descending thirds lick.

He also uses the inverse of the 3-2-1-2 lick: a 1-2-3-2 fingering lick where the last note in the pattern (2) is played on the string below the one on which it began. For example in “Law years” (bar 4) he plays a dissonant fingering lick where the last note of the pattern (C) is used as the target note and is the base in which the lick is formed. Using the first finger, Metheny begins the pattern on  $F\sharp$  played on the fifth string. He then moves chromatically up from G to the  $G\sharp$  using the second and third fingers. The last note of the pattern (C) is played using the second finger on the fourth string.

This lick is repeated again in bar 7.

## Parallel Fingering Licks

These licks are used frequently during “Law Years” and are a means for Metheny to create phrases based on symmetrical shapes on the guitar, which are identifiable to Metheny soloing style within free improvisation.

For example, in “Law Years” (Ex. 45) he uses a 3-2-1-2 fingering lick that moves into a parallel fingering lick.

The image shows a musical score for a guitar lick. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb) and a common time signature. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of two flats, and a common time signature. The melody consists of eighth notes: Bb4, Ab4, Gb4, F4, Eb4, D4, C4, Bb4, Ab4, Gb4, F4, Eb4, D4, C4. There are slurs over the first four notes and the last four notes. The bottom staff is a guitar tablature with six lines labeled T, A, B from top to bottom. The fret numbers are: 6, 5, 4, 5, 3, 5, 3, 5. There are slurs over the first four frets and the last four frets.

Ex. 45 “Law Years” (bar 37)

In this example, the parallel fingering lick begins from beat three of the bar. This lick pivots between the third and fifth frets using the first and third fingers, over the second, third and fourth strings generating and in the context with the fingering lick, a line based around C minor bebop scale. Another example can be found in (bar 68) where Metheny plays a similar parallel fingering lick based around the fourth and sixth frets over the second and third strings. This lick generates a whole tone scale pattern ascending from B melody note.

## Parallel Structures

Parallel structures are similar to parallel fingering licks in that the melody created is defined by the shape of the structure played on the guitar. But, instead of the structure being parallel up and down strings, Parallel structures move across the strings parallel to the frets.

Used frequently in “Law Years”, these structures work well within the free improvised format and have become strongly associated with the Metheny soloing style which is also reflected in his solos during more conventional harmony.

An example of a parallel structure is demonstrated during “Law Years” (Ex. 46) in which Metheny begins with an intervallic structure based on a parallel fingering lick. The first structure is based on a fourth to sixth fret pattern using the first and third fingers, beginning on the first string of the guitar.

Ex. 46 “Law Years” (bars 73-76)

In the second bar of the excerpt (bar 74) Metheny moves the first structure down a tone (two frets) beginning the new structure on the fourth fret of the second string. This new parallel structure is played over the second and fourth frets over the guitar. He starts a new parallel structure down a semitone (one fret) on the first fret on the third string on the second beat in (bar 75) with the new structure played on the first and third frets. The following structure moves up a minor third (three frets) beginning on the first string on the fourth fret. This structure is played over the fourth and sixth frets on the guitar. Another example can be found in “Law Years” (Ex. 47) in which Metheny begins using one parallel structure and then develops this into another parallel structure.

N.C(Cm<sup>7</sup>)

Ex. 47 “Law Years” (bars 141-144)

In this excerpt Metheny plays a melodic structure based around a 1-2-3-4 digital pattern over beats one and two in (bar 141). This structure is repeated up a tone (two frets) in (bar 142) again, over beats one and two. The original structure is developed in (bars 143-144) using a structure based around a 1-2-3 digital pattern beginning from the fifth fret (C) of the third string. This structure moves up one semitone (one fret) beginning from the third digit (3-2-1) from the sixth fret (F) of the 2<sup>nd</sup> string. The final structure is played up a semitone beginning from the seventh fret (F#) on the second string in (bar 144).

## Metheny Scales

Although less common in his free improvisation, Metheny still uses these scales commonly within his free improvisational style.

During the first example during “Law Years” (Ex. 48), he uses a C blues scale with a 9<sup>th</sup> addition tone beginning from the 9<sup>th</sup> interval (D).

The image shows a musical score for a guitar solo. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a common time signature. It contains a melodic line with various note values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and some slurs. The bottom staff is a guitar tablature with fret numbers (10, 8, 10, 11, 10, 8, 11, 11, 8, 10, 8, 10, 8, 10, 10, 6, 10, 10, 9) and some slurs. Above the first few notes of the treble staff, the text "N.C (Cm7)" is written.

Ex. 48 “Law Years” (bars 175-178)

This theme is developed into clusters based around the C minor pentatonic. Metheny repeats this theme again later (bars 179-183) where Metheny begins with a C minor pentatonic scale using a parallel fingering lick based around the sixth and eight frets. This theme is developed in (bars 181-182) where Metheny plays clusters based around the C minor pentatonic scale with a 9<sup>th</sup> addition tone.

Another ‘Metheny’ scale that appears in “Law Years” (Ex. 49) is the Spanish Phrygian scale with a #9<sup>th</sup> addition tone and the 11<sup>th</sup> interval has been omitted.

The image shows a musical score for a guitar solo. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a common time signature. It contains a melodic line with various note values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and some slurs. The bottom staff is a guitar tablature with fret numbers (3, 4, 3, 4, 3, 6, 5, 3) and some slurs. Above the first few notes of the treble staff, the text "N.C (Cm7)" is written.

Ex. 49 “Law Years” (bar 186)

In this example, Metheny uses a G Metheny Spanish Phrygian scale beginning from the root note (G) descending through the octave to the 7<sup>th</sup> interval (F) omitting the 11<sup>th</sup> interval (C). This scale only appears once in Metheny’s’ solo during “Law Years”.



## Digital Patterns and Scalar Patterns

Though not as common as in his other solos, both these types of patterns are present during “Law Years” in free improvisation. Although it is hard to identify digital patterns because of the lack of harmony, Metheny super imposes these patterns over the free harmony mostly, in cyclical patterns.

An example of a digital pattern during free harmony can be found in “Law Years” (Ex. 50) in which Metheny super imposes a digital pattern moving in a fourths dominant cycle from B $\flat$ 7-E $\flat$ 7-A $\flat$ .

N.C (Cm $^7$ )

The musical notation for Ex. 50 consists of two staves. The top staff is a treble clef staff with a key signature of two flats (B $\flat$  major/C $\flat$  minor). It contains a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes. The bottom staff is a guitar tablature staff with fret numbers: 7, 8, 6, 5, 8, 8, 6, 5, 7, 8, 6, 4, 3, 6, 6. Above the tablature staff, there are vertical lines indicating fingerings: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55.

Ex. 50 “Law Years” (bars 53-55)

Based around a 7-3 resolution, this pattern begins using a 5-4-3-5-8-7 digital pattern over the imposed B $\flat$ 7 chord. The digital pattern changes over the imposed E $\flat$ 7 chord using a 3-2-8-7 digital pattern. The cycle is finished using a 3-5-8 digital pattern over the imposed A $\flat$  chord.

Scalar patterns are used during “Law Years” (Ex. 51) also, in which Metheny uses an ascending thirds pattern during a descending C Melodic minor scale pattern.

N.C (Cm $^7$ )

The musical notation for Ex. 51 consists of two staves. The top staff is a treble clef staff with a key signature of two flats (B $\flat$  major/C $\flat$  minor). It contains a melodic line with quarter notes. The bottom staff is a guitar tablature staff with fret numbers: 17, 19, 15, 17, 13, 15, 12, 13, 10, 12, 9, 11. Above the tablature staff, there is a dashed line labeled "Slight P.M" with vertical lines indicating fingerings: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55.

Ex. 51 “Law Years” (bars 13-15)

## Intervallic Licks

Much of Metheny's playing style is defined by wide intervallic patterns used during improvisations. Metheny's soloing style during free improvisation is no different with these intervallic lines used frequently often, over a number of strings creating wide intervals.

Examples of such intervallic patterns are used during "Law Years" (Ex. 52) in which Metheny uses an intervallic lick similar in construction to a parallel fingering lick.

N.C (Cm<sup>7</sup>)

Let Ring - - - - -

T  
A  
B

7 6 5 6 4 7 5 (5) 7 4 (4) 6 4

Ex. 52 "Law Years" (bars 81-82)

During this example, Metheny begins the intervallic lick starting from F# melody note. Ascending a minor 6<sup>th</sup> to D melody note and then up a 5<sup>th</sup> to A melody note, Metheny creates a D major triad. This intervallic sequence is repeated again from G with Metheny playing the notes from G major triad with the intervals inverted (G-D: a 5<sup>th</sup>, D-B: a 6<sup>th</sup>). This lick concluded with Metheny moving down a semitone to a Gb major triad.

Developing the intervallic theme, Metheny uses another intervallic sequence (bars 86-89) in which he uses repetition transposing the sequence of intervals played in bar 87 up one tone in bar 89.

Based on a parallel fingering lick, Metheny uses another intervallic during "Law Years" (bars 166-174) in which this lick is based around the G Half Whole Diminished scale inferring G7b9 harmony. The first lick uses the b3<sup>rd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and #9<sup>th</sup> intervals (Bb, Cb and Bb). These sets of intervals are repeated up a minor third (bar 169-170) creating a diminished substitute, giving the #11<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and #11<sup>th</sup> intervals (C#, D and C#).

## **Chord Melody**

Although there is chord melody present during “Law Years” the melodic aspect of the chord melody is very simple, with only a few different leading notes, and a small number of chord voicings.

The main device being used during the chord melody solo is parallel chord voicings. Metheny begins using an open second string drone melody note (B) with an A# and a B doubled note (third and fourth frets on the third string), (bar 234-235). This is further developed with Metheny adding E# and an F# notes respectively to those chords (third and fourth frets on the fourth string), (bars 236-237). This is then developed, adding E# and F# melody notes respectively (first and second frets on the first string), (bars 238-245).

This chord melody solo is mostly based on parallel motifs and avoids conventional harmony.

## **Part Two: The Compositions of Pat Metheny**

The main reason I began composing was to develop a source of material which suited my conception of playing. (...) Some of the early music I wrote was a little more guitar like. (...) Many of the tunes I wrote in that period were designed to emphasize the unique features of my guitar playing style.

Pat Metheny (Goldstein, 1993, p.100)

The primary device in Metheny's composing is melody, generally starting with the theme, then harmonised with chords. Ornette Coleman was major influence on Metheny in this way: "... what drew me to his tunes and his playing is the fact that the melody implies the harmony. And in some cases it's not harmony in terms of chordal harmony." (Goldstein, 1993, p.100). This has been a major factor to the compositions found on his trio albums including *Bright Size Life* (1976), *Question and Answer* (1990) and *Trio 99>00, (2000)* with the melody and bass movement implying harmony.

During this section, a representative sample of Metheny's compositions will be analysed to establish the common devices in Metheny's compositions.

### **Bright Size Life**

A Metheny Classic, this is the title track from Metheny's debut album *Bright Size Life* (1976). This tune is idiomatic of the tunes being written by him at the time, being very 'guitaristic' and based around common Metheny licks and chordal harmonies. This piece has a straight eighths feel bordering between Funk and Latin.

During the recording of this album Metheny used his standard set-up of that time using a Gibson-175 guitar into an Acoustic 134 amplifier. This combination created his distinctive mellow, clean tone with lots of midrange.

AABA in structure, the First A Section is based around D major. The melodic motif of the tune is introduced using a 'Metheny-esque' ascending 5<sup>th</sup> intervallic lick during the pick up bar. The harmony of the piece is introduced beginning on a Gmaj7 with Metheny moving into a legato double stop 4<sup>th</sup> lick based around D major pentatonic (bar 1). The next figure is a common Metheny legato triplet line based around D Ionian (bar 2). This

uses the first, second and fourth fingers playing a three-note-per-string pattern, picking the first triplet only. The tune then shifts from major to minor harmony with the chord ascending from Gmaj7 to B♭maj7♭5/A (bar 3-4), with Metheny using an open E string melody note. The melody then modulates back to D major using a melody based around an open D chord, held over D/C. Metheny then uses a D minor digital pattern 1-2-♭3-2-1 over B♭maj7 (bar 7) before the returning to the opening lick on the first time ending over G/A. The second time ending uses a melody that is very similar to the first bar of the first time ending.

The B section opens with a descending intervallic lick over G/A built around a Gmaj7#11/ Dmaj7 guitar block chord shape. Moving into a descending D Ionian line, the sequence is repeated a tone lower over F/G using D Mixolydian (bar 13-14). An intervallic lick is used again over G/A this time, using an A13#9 chord shape (bar 15) moving into a descending D Ionian line. Metheny uses a line built around D major triad with an added 9<sup>th</sup> interval (bar 17), concluding playing the opening theme in unison with the bass moving into the final A section.

The last A section is similar to the first two differing only in the last 2 bars of the head with Metheny using a “countryish” guitar lick based around A7 moving into a cluster voicing over Dmaj (bars 25-26).

### **Unity Village**

Originally played as a multi-tracked duo, with the accompaniment on 12-String guitar, this Ballad has a straight-eighths feel with an AB structure with a 16 bar A section and an 8 bar B section. Along with the 12-string, Metheny plays the main melody of the piece on his Gibson-175 guitar through an Acoustic 134 amplifier.

The A section uses an ascending intervallic line based on an Amin9 guitar chord shape then moving to a Fmaj#11 chord shape over Amin (bar 1). An A harmonic minor scale is then used over E7 ascending to the #9<sup>th</sup> (G) resolving down to E over Fmaj7 (bar 2). This is repeated over the next four bars with a B♭maj7#11 passing chord being used to modulate into Amaj7 (bar 8).

Another intervallic line is played over Amaj7 based around C#min9 chord shape (bar 9) which then moves into a digital pattern 1-2-3-5 over Amaj7 to a 9-♭7 digital pattern over

C#min7 (bars 9-10). Metheny then uses a descending melody based on G# melodic minor scale over G#min7 – Eb7#9 (minor II-V) into a simple E major pentatonic line over F#min7- B7sus4. This theme is kept using harmonic generalisation over the next sequence of chords: Emaj7- E/C (bars 13-16).

The first four bars of the B section use a common Metheny composition device: Key centres ascending in minor thirds. This section also uses a D pedal to build tension. The melody begins with a G major pentatonic over C/D moving into a G Ionian figure over G/D (bars 17-18). This sequence is repeated over the next key centre Bb major, using Bb major pentatonic scale over Eb/D- Bb/D, the melody differing slightly over Bb/D but retaining Bb major pentatonic scale. The key then modulates again up a fourth to F with Metheny making use of slash chords for chromatic bass movement (Bb- C/Bb- F/A (bars 21-22) using a melody line based around F Ionian. The tune then modulates down a semitone to E using B/F#- E with the melody following suit. Metheny finally uses an E7sus4 chord to return back to A minor.

This tune is a good example of how Metheny uses melodic sequences with shifting key centres to create interest while still retaining the listener's attention by keeping the melody simple and expressive.

## **James**

A joint composition written with Lyle Mays, "James" first appeared on the 1981 Pat Metheny Group release *Offramp*. This tune was inspired by the singer/songwriter James Taylor of whom Metheny says, "His musicianship is pretty amazing. Every time I have ever been to any of his concerts I have walked away just knocked out with the way he is able to make each note do its thing, perfectly in tune and in time. He is a really great musician." (Callard, 2006, p. 38)

Again being very guitar based, this tune is a good example of how Metheny uses intricate chord melodies, harmonising first and second string guitar melody lines with block chords underneath.

For the recording of this piece Metheny used his Gibson-175 through 2 Lexicon Prime-Time digital delay lines with a very slight 'pitch bend' to create his unique 'chorused' guitar sound.

AABA in structure, the tune starts off with an 8-bar introduction with the melody essentially in G major. A common Metheny device, the melody is harmonised using secondary dominant chords (B/D#, A/C#) (bars 1 and 2) and inversions to provide chromatic bass movement from B/D#- Gmaj9/D (bars 1-2). The last four bars of the melody shift from D major to D minor, harmonised with thirds over an A pedal (D/A- Amin7) before introducing the A section using major triads (G- A) (bar 8). It is important to note that this transcription of “James” includes a chord melody arrangement during this introduction section which was not on the original recording.

The Melody during the A section is based completely on D major pentatonic and is harmonised using block chords and 4<sup>th</sup> voicings (Gmaj7- F#m7). Although the chords are derived from D major, a minor II-V is used to move to B minor (the relative minor of D major) (bars 13-14). Into the last four bars of the A section into the first time ending, Metheny uses a D major pentatonic sequences, harmonising these with Gmaj7 and Dmaj7 block chords (bars 14-17) before concluding the first A section with major triads (G/A- A). On second time ending, Metheny uses a 4<sup>th</sup> suspension to a 3rd resolution (G/D- D). The B section continues the motif of the tune using secondary dominant chords and key modulations with chord melody, with Metheny again utilising inversions for smoother bass movement. The keys modulate from D major- B minor- D major- F# minor- A major and finally back to D major. The melody follows an ascending sequence based around a digital pattern 3-5-1-7. Metheny harmonises this section using triads and maj7 block chord shapes. The B section is concluded using a melody based around D major pentatonic and D Ionian (bars 35-36).

The final A section is the same as the first but with the exception of a secondary dominant substitution: D7- G7 (bar 41). On the final time through the head, the coda is taken on the last A which repeats the last 4 bars of the melody with the chords resolved to B minor (relative minor) rather than D major, concluding on D major.

## Never Too Far Away

During the recording of *Question and Answer* (1991) Metheny used an Ibanez Pat Metheny model prototype guitar plugged straight into the recording desk with a slight 450-500 MS delay to lengthen his notes.

Another even eighths feel ballad, this tune again is a good example of how Metheny harmonises the melody using chord melody. This tune also contains many Metheny trademark devices including slash chords, pedal points and key modulations. The melody especially in this tune seems to be derived from the harmony and chordal guitar shapes in this piece with the melody notes being dominantly on the first and second strings. Also, although this tune has a straight eighths feel, Metheny regularly visits a 3/4 rhythm giving the piece a more 'floaty' feel.

The A section begins in B minor/ G major with a descending bass line with uses of slash chords, the melody being derived from the chord. Metheny uses a II-V in G major but then changes key into F# major using a II-V (G#m7- C#7) (bar 5). Metheny then uses an ascending melody with the harmony derived from F# major. This melody settles landing on an Emaj7 chord which is used as a b9maj7 passing chord to D#min7 (bars 7-8). The final four bars of A are based around D# minor with Metheny using a D/E chord, used as a Vsus7 to change key into A major for the next section (bars 11-12).

The B section uses a Metheny trademark: Ascending key centres in minor thirds, moving from A major to C major to Eb major finally settling on a Cmin7 chord (bars 13-16).

The melody during the C section follows a repetitive ascending motif with Metheny using a F/G substitute V chord to Cmin7 and II-Vs (Cmin7- F7/C) embellishing the melody. In the last two bars of the C Section he uses a descending sequence of II-V into D major (F#min7- B13- Emin9- A13) (bars 23-24).

The D section for the most part is in D major but briefly modulates into B minor using a Gmaj7/F# slash chord (bars 29-30 with the melody based around D major pentatonic/ D Ionian during that chord. Metheny uses a II-V (bar 32) to move to the IV chord (Gmaj7) finally using a D/A slash chord to move into B minor for the following section.

The E section sees a return of the opening A section but instead of using a descending bass line, he uses an ascending minor third key sequence with the melody following (bars 35-38). In the fifth bar of the E section he uses a descending chord sequence using chord inversions, with the melody using a similar descending sequence (bars 39-40). During the



last four bars of E Metheny then uses another trademark: a pedal with shifting harmonies on top concluding the E section.

The Final section uses a very common Metheny vamp (II/1- 1) (A/G – G), which acts as a resting point after the head and solos, concluding the form.

### **Question and Answer**

A modern standard, this tune is a good example of how Metheny uses a simple melody with open duration of chord changes to create a memorable tune.

The instrumentation is the same as for “Never Too Far Away”.

AABA in form, the piece opens with a Dmin- Emin/A vamp, using parallel chord structures and open string pull-offs (bars 1-16).

The A section is 16 bars in length using an altered minor blues chord progression. The opening four bars of the melody (bars 17-20) use an ascending minor CESH (Contrapuntal Elaboration of Static Harmony) sequence. Then moving to the IV chord (Gmin7), the chords ascend diatonically through D Aeolian (bars 21-24). Moving back into the CESH sequence, Metheny then uses a II-V in the key of Bb major (bar 28), but instead of going to Bbmaj7, he uses a B7 altered passing chord into a chromatically descending dominant chord sequence (B7alt, Bb7#11, A7alt) resolving back to Dmin (bars 29-32). The melody during the A section is simple and very lyrical based on D minor pentatonic/ blues scale with a 9<sup>th</sup> addition tone (E), giving the sequence of notes (D- E- F- G-G#-A-C-D). He also uses another one of his trademarks: a four over three rhythm. Again, this melody sounds like a Metheny solo due to the heavy use of pentatonics.

During the B section, Metheny uses a D pedal with a Gm7- D7b9 progression above it (bars 49-52). This pedal point is followed by an ascending Coltrane Matrix with the melody working in counter point using a descending sequence based on major triads with major bebop chromaticisms (13-b13-5 intervals). Again, during this section the melody uses a four over three rhythm.

The last A section is the same as the first with Metheny using open string harmonics before his solo (bar 72).

Like many Metheny tunes, due to the open nature of the chord progression during the solo, this tune is a good vehicle to ‘blow’ over, allowing the improviser more freedom to be melodic and lyrical which suits Metheny’s style.

### **Always and Forever**

Recorded on *Secret Story* (1992), Metheny enhances the mood of the piece by using a nylon-string acoustic guitar due to its softer attack and tone.

Beginning with a simple introduction based around Am7- Dm7 (bars 1-4), this tune has an ABA structure, the last A being extended for solos.

The melody of for the A section begins with a simple intervallic motif based around the 9<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of Amin9 and Dmin7 resolving to G over Emin7- Fmaj7 (bars 5-6). Moving to a third interval jump, the melody then moves into a descending line based on A Aeolian scale (bar 6). This acts at counterpoint to the ascending chord progression (G9- E7/G#). The chord progression then descends chromatically from Amin9- Fmaj7 (bars 7-9) using an A<sup>b</sup>maj7 passing chord and inversions (Cmaj9/G). The melody is sparing until Cmaj9- F#min7<sup>b</sup>5 where Metheny uses a 5<sup>th</sup> intervallic jump into an ascending A melodic minor line over F#min7<sup>b</sup>5 (F#locrian9) (bar 8). This can also be interpreted as a D7#11 (b7#11 four chord of A Melodic minor) with an ascending D Lydian Dominant scale (Fourth mode of A melodic minor). From Fmaj7, Metheny reprises the melody from the third bar of A (Amin9- A<sup>b</sup>maj7) using an E<sup>b</sup>maj<sup>6/9</sup> passing chord resolving to D9, used as a secondary dominant passing chord to G7sus4 (bars 9-12). Metheny again using a 5<sup>th</sup> intervallic jump during the melody (bar 10), finishing the phrase using a C Mixolydian ‘bluesy’ legato line, concluding the progression on Cmaj7. Metheny uses an E/G# slash chord to resolve up to Amin9 for the B section (bar 12).

Using the beginning of the melody from A, Metheny substitutes a II-V- I in E<sup>b</sup> major (bar 13) with the melody following the same pattern found in (bar 2) of A. Instead, this time Metheny uses an E<sup>b</sup> Ionian scale using a 7-3 resolution (bar 13) resolving on the 5<sup>th</sup> of E<sup>b</sup>maj7 (B<sup>b</sup>). The melody follows a simple sequence based around E<sup>b</sup> Ionian during the descending chord progression E<sup>b</sup>maj7- B<sup>b</sup>/D- D<sup>b</sup>maj7 (harmonic generalisation) (bars 15-16). The piece then modulates to Cmin7 with Metheny using intervallic jumps again during the melody (G-C-E<sup>b</sup>, a second inversion of C minor triad) (bar 17). Using an

ascending minor 7<sup>th</sup> arpeggio over Fm7 (bar 18), the melody then uses a sequence based around G Aeolian minor scale over Gm7-Amin7<sup>b</sup>5- D7<sup>b</sup>5 (bar 19). This is resolved to D with Metheny substituting a major I chord (Gmaj7) (bar 18-19) before finishing the section using a minor II-V into A minor (Bmin7<sup>b</sup>5- E7) (bar 20).

The C section is a repeat of A but has a 2-bar extension at the end using Cmaj7- Fm6/G for the purpose of the building the piece into the solo.

### **Soul Cowboy**

A “Colemanesque” C blues off *Trio 99>00* (2000), this tune features a simple repetitive melody with a quirky 2-bar turnaround. Keeping it simple, Metheny recorded this album using his workhorse Ibanez PM1000 played directly into the recording console with some added reverb.

The melody of this piece is based around a C major / minor hybrid pentatonic scale. This motif continues until bar 8 of the melody where Metheny uses a 3-b9 resolution over A7 into an enclosure around an A melody note (bar 8). During D7 the melody descends down D major triad with an ascending Bb diminished triad pattern resolving on D (bar 9). The diminished triad theme is repeated with Metheny using an ascending F# diminished arpeggio over D7 (D7<sup>b</sup>9). The diminished line is resolved using a descending 6<sup>th</sup> interval jump from D-F (5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of G7) (bar 10). Continuing the theme, he uses ascending diminished triads but develops this with a crotchet triplet rhythm using G# diminished triad into C diminished triad over C7 (bar 11). Using a tritone intervallic jump from G-C# over G7, he concludes the tune with a C octave stab over A<sup>b</sup>7 (bar 12).

### **Lone Jack**

First appearing on the album *Pat Metheny Group* (1978), Metheny recorded this tune again on *Trio 99>00* (2000) in B minor, up one semitone from the original key Bb minor. Using an AABA form, this tune is classic Metheny. 64-bars in length, this piece uses a straight eighths samba feel with an extra 2 bars at the end of the final A section and a 10-bar separate interlude.

The harmony during the A section is based around B minor with three different chords: Bmin7-Gmaj7-F#7#9. Using a call and response motif, the melody during the A section

uses B minor pentatonic scale with a 9<sup>th</sup> addition note. Metheny especially accentuates the 9<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of the scale during Gmaj7 (bar 7). Metheny makes use of a 6<sup>th</sup> interval jump from F# to D before resolving to the #11 of Gmaj7 (C#) (bars 10-11). Metheny uses another trademark: a descending B minor pentatonic line using a triplet rhythm (bar 12). This resolves to an E melody note over an F#7#9 chord (bars 13-14) prior to his use of triads underneath the respective A to B melody notes (A-Bmin) during the first and second time endings (bars 15,17).

The B section uses more syncopation in the melody with large interval jumps, especially during the first 8 bars. In contrast to the melody, the bass and drums play a 3/4 rhythmic pattern giving the B section a 'floaty' feel.

Based around the B Aeolian mode, these interval jumps are based on guitar arpeggio shapes and digital patterns corresponding to the chord being played at the time. For instance, in the first bar of B during Emin7 (bar 19) Metheny uses a 1-9-5-b7 digital pattern which move into a 7-3-5 pattern over Dmaj7 (bar 20), the seventh being anticipated during Emin7. Metheny sustains a 5<sup>th</sup> interval over Cmaj7 before again using a descending triplet line based around B minor pentatonic (bar 23-24), resolving this line to the 9<sup>th</sup> of Bm7 (bars 25-26). The rhythm of the melody simplifies for the final 8 bars of B with Metheny using a simple 3-2-1 pattern over Dmaj7 (bars 27-28) before using a sequence during Gmaj7#11- F#7#9 (bars 29-32). Using a D major triad over Gmaj7#11, he uses the blue note of B blues scale (F) over F#7b9 resolving from F to E, resolving using the leading notes of A major to B minor triad (bars 33-34).

The harmony during the B section again is mostly derived from B minor with Metheny using a 9<sup>th</sup> maj7 passing chord (Cmaj7) (bar 23) between Dmaj7 and Bmin7. The chord progression follows a simple sequence descending in tones with exception to Cmaj7-Bmin7 (bars 24-25) and Gmaj7-F#7#9 (bars 30-31).

The final A section is the same as the first with the exception that he adds an extra 2 bars as a transition before moving into the interlude.

The interlude uses another common Metheny device: suspended slash chords (b7/1) moving in tones and semitones. The melody during the first 4 bars of the interlude uses the B melodic minor scale. The slash chords are derived using the melody notes as 9<sup>th</sup>s of each slash chord moving in parallel with the melody.

Moving up a semitone, the following four bars using an ascending melody using the C major pentatonic and C Mixolydian scales using parallel slash chords again. The interlude and piece conclude on a B melody note using a G/A slash chord taking the tune back to B minor for solos and returning back to the final head.

### **Go Get It**

A blues in A with a 6-bar tag, this tune is characteristic of Metheny's playing style with the melody predominantly using digital patterns and Metheny licks.

The melody begins with a simple ascending pattern up A Mixolydian scale which is then resolved to an A minor pentatonic scale line (bars 1-2). Metheny then uses an ascending digital pattern based around G Ionian scale over D7- A7 (bars 2-3), this 5-6-7-3-9 pattern is resolved to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> intervals over A7 (A-E) (bar 3). Metheny uses a similar digital pattern over Eb7 but this time, he begins from the root of Eb Mixolydian: 1-2-3-5-3-4-6 (bar 4). He uses the same pattern but this time starts from the 7<sup>th</sup> of D7: 7-1-2-4-2-3-5 (bar 5), which he continues up a fourth over G7 (bar 6). Over A7, Metheny uses the same pattern but begins from the 5<sup>th</sup> of A7: 5-6-7-9-#7-1-3, substituting an A Ionian scale over an A7 chord (bar 7). Then he uses a 7-3 resolution over F#7 from B to A# with a passing 9<sup>th</sup> interval (G#) (bar 8). Although there is no II chord (C#min7) preceding F#7, a 7-3 resolution is inferred by the resolution to the 3<sup>rd</sup> of F#7. Metheny then uses one of his signature licks: descending and ascending minor third intervals moving in semitones which are used over B7 and E7 (bars 9-10). During E7, he uses this as a chromatic line within the A minor pentatonic scale moving chromatically from D melody note (4<sup>th</sup>) to C melody note (b3rd) with a passing major third interval (C#) between. This phrase concludes with the uses of a 5<sup>th</sup> intervallic jump up to G melody note (bar 10).

For the first and second time endings (bars 11-12, 13) and the tag (bars 14-20), Metheny uses two suspended dominant chords using parallel chord voicings (G#sus7-Asus7) with a 3 over 4 displaced rhythm.

## What Do You Want?

Based on rhythm changes in B $\flat$ , “What Do You Want?” is another Metheny composition where his playing style is reflected in the head by using common devices within his style. The common motif of this piece is the use of secondary dominant substitute chords and melodic sequence.

The melody of the A section begins with Metheny picking up on the 6<sup>th</sup> interval of B $\flat$  moving into a descending B $\flat$  major triad over (bar 1). Using a sequence, Metheny repeats this theme up a fourth playing the 6<sup>th</sup> interval of E $\flat$ 7 moving into a descending E $\flat$  major triad (bar 2). He then uses an E diminished arpeggio with an A $\flat$  passing note to resolve to G melody note over B $\flat$ /F and then introduces another common device: a descending intervallic sequence using 6<sup>th</sup> intervals which is played over an extended dominant cycle (G7-C7-F7). Using this sequence, Metheny moves the lower of the two notes down a semitone pivoting between the lower note and the top note (bars 3-7). While playing this sequence he incorporates a 3 over 4 displaced rhythm acting in counterpoint to the bass playing in four. During the first time ending (bar 8), Metheny plays an outside phrase moving up a semitone using a B major pentatonic line/ A# minor pentatonic line using a ‘characteristic’ fourth interval jump from G# to C#. He ends this phrase moving inside to B $\flat$  major using a 6<sup>th</sup> pick-up note (G) taking the tune back into B $\flat$  for the second time through A. During the second time ending (bar 9), Metheny plays a G minor pentatonic sequence over B $\flat$ 7 (B $\flat$  major pentatonic).

During the bridge section Metheny uses IImin7 substitute chords corresponding to each dominant chord: e.g. (Am7- D7). The G melody note from the previous minor pentatonic sequence note is sustained over Amin7-D7 (bars 10-11). Used as a guide-tone over Amin7, he repeats the sequence using a similar G minor pentatonic pattern over D7 (bar 11) holding the D melody note over Dmin7-G7. The break in the melody during Gmin7-C7 (bar 14-15) is used for a brief improvisation before moving into a ‘Metheny-esque’ fast ascending triplet line based on C Dorian over F7 (bar 16).

This line is resolved to the 7<sup>th</sup> of F7 (E $\flat$ ) with his use of a 2/4 bar to break up the section before moving back to the last A Section (bar 17).

The last A section is the same as the first except, during the final time through the head, Metheny uses the melody in the first time ending of the A section in the final bar or the last A to pick up into the coda (bar 25).

The coda modulates into 3/4 and uses a common Metheny device: a dominant chord cycle moving in fourths, much like the bridge section (bars 4-6). The melody uses a sequence based on the opening line of the A section, starting on the 6th interval and descending on a major triad repeating over each dominant chord. The tune finishes abruptly on a B $\flat$ 7#9 chord with the last four bars of the coda being dominant tritone subs of a III-VI-II-V progression (Dmin7-G7-Cmin7-F7).

### **Part Three: Comparisons Between Improvisational Style and Composition Style**

This section will discuss stylistic similarities between Metheny's improvisational style when playing standards and his compositions considering not only melody, but also harmony. Trends in the incidence of stylistic elements present in his compositions from 1976-2000 are displayed graphically in Appendix 2 (p.85).

#### **Bright Size Life**

The melody during this piece shares many characteristics with Metheny's soloing style. The opening intervallic line of "Bright Size Life" uses fifth interval jumps in a fourths cycle through the D major scale. This intervallic pattern is similar to Metheny's intervallic lick derived from major, minor and dominant 7<sup>th</sup> chord shapes in that, using the guide tones, the intervallic lick during this piece starts from the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> intervals of Dmaj7 (F#-C#). It is important to note, however, that Metheny had not developed his trademark 7<sup>th</sup> chord lick at the time that this piece was written.

Also, similar to his playing style Metheny uses double stops in the first bar of the A section which are separated by fourth intervals. This is similar to his chord melody style in which Metheny uses fourth voicings frequently. He also uses double stops similarly during "Giant Steps" (Ex. 53) employing 4<sup>th</sup> intervals.

Ex. 53 "Giant Steps" (bars 65-66)

The intervallic licks found during the B section of this piece are also very characteristic of Metheny's style. The first intervallic lick found during the G/A chord (bar 11) is based on a Gmaj7#11 chord shape on the guitar played over the first, second, third and fourth



strings. This pattern is very similar to the solo patterns found during “Law Years” (Ex. 52) in which Metheny creates an intervallic pattern based on chord shapes.

Another similarity can be found at the very end of the piece where Metheny uses a cluster over Dmaj7 using the root and major seventh together (D and C#) (bar 26). This use of clusters is very similar again to “Law Years” (Ex. 54) in which Metheny plays clusters within the C minor pentatonic scale with a 9<sup>th</sup> addition tone playing the minor third and 9<sup>th</sup> intervals (E $\flat$  and D).

N.C (Cm<sup>7</sup>)

Ex. 54 “Law Years” (bar 181)

This piece is similar to Metheny’s style using intervallic licks as well as double stops voiced in fourths and clusters on the second and third strings.

### Unity Village

Again, like “Bright Size Life” this piece uses intervallic licks based on chord shapes. The opening intervallic lick over beats one and two of the first bar uses the 2<sup>nd</sup>, b3<sup>rd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> intervals over Amin7. This lick is very similar to Metheny’s solo during “Law Years” (bar 166) in which he uses the same intervallic pattern but instead, he plays this pattern in reference to a G7 $\flat$ 9 chord using the b3<sup>rd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and #9<sup>th</sup> intervals (B, C and B $\flat$ ). The second intervallic pattern played during the third and fourth beats of the first bar is based on an Fmaj#11 chord shape. This again, is very similar to “Law Years” (Ex. 52) creating an intervallic lick based on a chord shape on the guitar.

Similar to the opening lick, Metheny uses another intervallic lick over Amaj7 (bar 9). This is followed by another common Metheny soloing characteristic: a 1-2-3-5 digital pattern as used in many of his improvisations.

As with his improvisational style, Metheny uses harmonic generalisation during the chords Emaj7-E/C (bars 13-16). This is similar to his use of minor pentatonic scale

generalisation but in a major pentatonic context. Moving up a minor third, this theme is continued during C/D where Metheny uses G major pentatonic scale (bar 17).

Using sequence, Metheny uses the same pentatonic pattern as used during C/D but up a minor third over E $\flat$ /D (bar 19).

Between these sequences, Metheny uses a parallel structure during G/D (bar 18) over beats three and four using a three-finger per string pattern on the 1<sup>first</sup> and second strings on the fifth, seventh and eighth frets.

In summary, similar to Metheny's playing style, this tune uses intervallic licks in the A section and harmonic generalisation in the B section as well as sequence and parallel fingering licks.

## **James**

This piece is very typical of Metheny's soloing style using only the D major pentatonic scale during the A section (harmonic generalisation), Metheny also uses parallel structures during the A section (bars 14-15).

The first structure begins from the offbeat of beat three (bar 14) during the A section over Gmaj7. Sliding from the 10th fret (A) up to the 12th fret (B) on the second string, Metheny uses the first finger to play the tenth fret on the first string, harmonising the B melody note on the second string with a Gmaj7 block chord. This structure is repeated again in the next bar (bar 15) on the offbeat of beat one over F#min7 where he plays the same structure, but down five frets (a 4<sup>th</sup> interval) from the fifth fret on the second string. Based on a 7-3 resolution, the melody used during the B section uses a 3-5-8-7 digital pattern through the D major scale where the 7<sup>th</sup> digit of the pattern resolves to the third digit of the following pattern. The melody is again harmonised with block chord voicings. This digital pattern is very similar to the digital pattern during "Law Years" (Ex. 50) where Metheny uses a pattern based around a 7-3 resolution. But instead, this pattern moves in a fourth cycle of dominant 7<sup>th</sup> chords over free harmony.

This tune is similar to Metheny's soloing style using parallel structures during the A section, 7-3 resolutions and digital patterns during the B section.

## **Never Too Far Away**

Metheny almost entirely uses chord melody during the melody of this piece and certain stylistic elements can be found within this style.

At the beginning of the B section (bars 13-16), Metheny uses parallel chord shapes during the ascending key centre movement in minor thirds. The first parallel shape begins from Amaj7 (bar 13) over the first, second, third, and fifth strings using the notes G#, C#, B, E from the highest to lowest. This chord shape is moved up a semitone creating a F/G voicing. This chord shape in turn is moved up a tone creating a Cmaj7 voicing (bar 14) which is the same voicing as that used during Amaj7. This shape is moved up another semitone to create an A $\flat$ /B $\flat$  voicing where the parallel chord shapes finish.

During the D section Metheny uses a short example of parallel fingering in which he plays the D major pentatonic scale on the fifth and seventh frets on the first and second strings during Dmaj7 (bar 26). This use of symmetrical fingerings is very similar to the opening melodic motif of "James" which also uses the D major pentatonic scale.

Parallel chord shapes are used again during the E section where he repeats the Gmaj7/B-F#7/A# chord (bars 35-36) up a minor third. Using the notes F#, D, G and B from highest to lowest during Gmaj7/B and E, D $\flat$ , B and G $\flat$  during B $\flat$ dim7, Metheny plays both of the chord shapes up three frets (a minor third) over B $\flat$ maj7/D and D $\flat$ dim7 (bars 37-38). This use of parallel voicings also creates an ascending sequence.

During this piece Metheny uses parallel chord voicings creating sequence and parallel fingering licks.

## **Question and Answer**

This tune again echoes Metheny's guitar style.

The first similarity is with Metheny using the D blues scale with a 9<sup>th</sup> addition tone during the Melody of the A section. This scale played with his loose, legato style is a Metheny trademark.

The second similarity comes in the B section of the piece where Metheny uses parallel structures based on major triads with bebop chromaticisms. The first parallel structure begins from D $\flat$ maj7 during the Coltrane Matrix progression where Metheny plays an Ab

major triad on the first and second strings (bar 54). He then uses chromaticism from the 13<sup>th</sup> of the preceding triad (D $\flat$ ) down to the b13<sup>th</sup> (C) on the first string. This becomes part of the next parallel structure where the triad structure is repeated down four frets (a major third) with Metheny playing an E major triad over Amaj7 over the first, second and third strings (bar 55). The final parallel structure is played from the 13<sup>th</sup> of C7 which leads chromatically into C major triad over Fmaj9 (bar 56).

This tune is similar to Metheny's style using the Metheny Blues scale with a 9<sup>th</sup> addition tone during the A section and parallel structures creating a sequence used in the in the B section.

### **Always and Forever**

This tune follows Metheny's playing style using large interval jumps as part of the main theme during the melody.

During the beginning of the melody, Metheny uses an intervallic pattern based around the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> intervals of both Amin9 and Dm7 (bar 5). These intervallic jumps are also used over Cmaj7/G (bar 8) using a 5<sup>th</sup> interval jump from the 3<sup>rd</sup> (E) to the 7<sup>th</sup> (B) using the guide-tones of Cmaj7. Metheny repeats this 5<sup>th</sup> interval jump theme over D9 (bar 10) using the 5<sup>th</sup> (A) and 9<sup>th</sup> (E) intervals.

The beginning of the melody during the B section is the same as the A section but this time Metheny modulates into E $\flat$  major. In the second bar of B (bar 14), Metheny again uses a 5<sup>th</sup> interval jump from the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> intervals of Fmin7 (A $\flat$  and E $\flat$ ).

As with his improvisational style, during the II-V Fmin7-B $\flat$ 7 (bar 14), Metheny uses a 7-3 resolution from E $\flat$  to D. He then uses another 3-7 resolution from D to A $\flat$  during the B $\flat$ 7 chord.

As with his improvisational style, Metheny uses 5<sup>th</sup> interval jumps as well as intervals based around the 7<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> intervals (guide-tones) as well as 7-3 resolutions during this piece.

## Soul Cowboy

Using a repetitive theme during the melody, Metheny uses a number of parallel fingerings within the minor/major pentatonic hybrid scale-based tune.

During “Soul Cowboy” (bar 3) Metheny uses a double stop bending technique in which when he plays clusters between the two melody notes D and E $\flat$  on the second and third strings. The lower of the two notes D is bent up a half-step to E $\flat$  melody note bringing the cluster notes into unison. Metheny uses a very similar technique to this during “Law Years” (Ex. 55) in which he plays a cluster using E and F melody notes on the first and second strings. The lower of the two melody notes (E) is bent up a half step to F bringing the two notes into unison.

The image displays musical notation for Ex. 55, "Law Years" (bars 203-204). It consists of a treble clef staff and a guitar tablature below it. The treble staff shows a melody in eighth notes with a key signature of one flat. Annotations include "8va" with a dashed line, "N.C (Cmin7)", and "BU" (bend up) above a double stop. The guitar tablature shows fret numbers: 12, 13, 13, 17, 18, 13, 17, 13, 13. The tablature indicates a double stop on frets 12 and 13, followed by a bend up on the 13th fret, and then a sequence of frets 17, 18, 13, 17, 13, 13.

### Ex. 55 “Law Years” (bars 203-204)

The first parallel fingering pattern occurs during F7 (bar 5) where Metheny uses a melody based around C minor pentatonic on the eighth and fifth frets on the second and third strings. Another parallel fingering structure is used in the following bar (bar 6) where he uses a C major pentatonic scale line on the fifth and seventh frets during F7-F#dim7 over the first, second, third and fourth strings.

Also, following his improvisational style, guide-tone resolutions are used during D7-G7 (bar 10). This occurs when an F# (3<sup>rd</sup> of D7) diminished triad is used over (D7 $\flat$ 9) to the 5<sup>th</sup> (D) and finally the 7<sup>th</sup> (F) of G7.

Metheny then uses a sequence of diminished triads (bar 11). First, a G# diminished triad is used over G7 (G7 $\flat$ 9) and then C diminished triad over C7.

These diminished triads then move into another Metheny soloing characteristic where he uses an intervallic lick based around crotchet triplets.

This piece parallels Metheny's style using parallel fingering licks, diminished triads, 7-3 guide-tone resolutions, sequences and intervallic patterns.

### **Lone Jack**

Again, this tune contains many devices within the melody common to Metheny's style. The first device he uses during the A section is a 'Metheny' B minor pentatonic with a 9<sup>th</sup> addition note (D). He also uses large interval jumps within this scale. An example of this can be found during A $\flat$ maj7 (bar 7) where Metheny uses an octave interval jump from the third to the first string. Also, he uses an ascending 13<sup>th</sup> interval jump during Bmin7 (bars 10-11) from the second to the first string.

Metheny uses a similar line to the descending minor pentatonic scale run from the 9<sup>th</sup> interval (D) during A $\flat$ maj7 (bar 12) during "Old Folks" (Ex. 13) in which he uses a descending blues scale line starting from the 9<sup>th</sup> interval (E) over Dmin7 (beat 2).

Metheny uses a number of large intervallic jumps during the B section. The first is used over Emin7 (bar 19) where he jumps from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> (G-F#) again on the third to the first string.

Also, Metheny uses harmonic generalisation during the B section using the 'Metheny' C blues scale with a 9<sup>th</sup> addition tone (bars 24-30). Within this scale he uses ascending 7<sup>th</sup> intervals. The first is used over Cmaj7 from E to D (bar 24) and the second 7<sup>th</sup> interval jump is used over Bmin7 from D-C# (bar 25).

During the B section Metheny uses a sequence based on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> intervals of Gmaj7#11- F#7#9 (bar 29-32).

This tune follows Metheny's improvisational style using a 'Metheny' minor pentatonic scale with a 9<sup>th</sup> addition tone as well as intervallic patterns and sequences.

### **Go Get It**

This tune is written in a way reflective of Metheny's soloing style to the point that it sounds like a Metheny improvisation. This is due to the fact that it contains many Metheny solo phrases and patterns.



He then moves into his characteristic ‘descending thirds lick’ from D melody note moving chromatically down to C over E7 (bar 10).

Metheny plays an almost identical phrase to this during “Giant Steps” (Ex. 58). This begins on the offbeat of beat 3 in bar 30. Using a sixteenth note rhythm instead of quavers, he then moves into a descending thirds lick in bar 30 concluding the phrase with a 7<sup>th</sup> interval jump from A $\flat$  to G on beat 2.

The image displays a musical example for guitar. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of several phrases. The first phrase is marked with a B<sup>7</sup> chord. The second phrase is marked with an Fm<sup>7</sup> chord. The third phrase is marked with a B $\flat$ <sup>7</sup> chord. Below the staff is a guitar fretboard diagram with two lines labeled 'T' (Treble) and 'B' (Bass). The diagram shows the fret numbers for each note in the melody, with some notes having fingerings (1-3) indicated. The fret numbers are: 6, 9, 7, 8, 6, 4, 7, 5, 3, 6, 3, 4, 4, 6, 4, 3, 4, 2, 3, 1, 3, 2, 1, 3, 2.

Ex. 58 “Giant Steps” (bar 29-30)

Metheny uses parallel chord shapes during the first and second time ending and during the tag. Using a G common tone within both the G#7 and A7 chords, Metheny uses his first finger to play both the G# and C# chord tones (1<sup>st</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> intervals) during G#7. he moves this shape up one fret (one semitone) with the first finger playing the A and D chord tone of A7 (1<sup>st</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> intervals).

During the tag he develops the parallel chord shapes with G common tone using a 5<sup>th</sup> intervallic jump from C to G again, using the G as a common tone within the intervallic structure.

This tune follows Metheny’s improvisational style using digital patterns moving in sequence, a ‘Metheny’ chromatically descending thirds lick, and parallel chord voicings.



## What Do You Want?

This tune again is very characteristic of Metheny's playing style and uses common stylistic devices within the melody.

The piece begins on the 13<sup>th</sup> (G) of Bb major chord moving into a Bb major triad in the first bar. This is repeated over Eb major where Metheny begins on the 13<sup>th</sup> (C) moving into part of an Eb major triad (Bb and G) creating a sequence (bar 2).

Metheny then moves into a descending diminished arpeggio from Bb melody note (beat two, bar 2) with a major third (Ab) passing note over Edim7. He uses a very similar diminished phrase to this during "All The Things You Are" (Ex. 59) in which a descending Eb diminished arpeggio with a 7<sup>th</sup> (G) passing note is used over Amin7b5.

The image shows a musical example for "All The Things You Are" (bars 13-14). It consists of a treble clef staff and a guitar fretboard diagram below it. The treble staff is in Bb major (two flats) and shows a descending melodic line: Bb4 (quarter), Ab4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter), Bb3 (quarter). Above the staff, the chord is identified as Amin7b5. The guitar fretboard diagram shows the following fingerings: Bar 13: 4 (on D4), 7 (on G4), 5 (on F4), 4 (on E4). Bar 14: 5 (on D4), 7 (on G4), 5 (on F4), 4 (on E4), 4 (on D4), 5 (on C4), 6 (on Bb3).

### Ex. 59 "All The Things You Are" (bars 13-14)

Metheny uses an ascending 13<sup>th</sup> intervallic pattern over the dominant chord cycle G7-C7-F7 (bars 3-7). The lower intervals of the intervallic pattern outline 7-3 resolutions. For example, during C7 (bar 5) Metheny uses a 7-3 resolution from F melody note (7<sup>th</sup> of G7) to E melody note (3<sup>rd</sup> of C7).

During the first time ending (bar 8), Metheny uses another intervallic lick based around G# minor pentatonic scale. This pattern is repeated in the second time ending (bar 9) where Metheny uses a G minor pentatonic over Bb7 and again over D7 (bar 11) using C minor pentatonic scale creating a sequence.

Following a very 'guitaristic' technique during bar 16, Metheny uses a parallel fingering lick as part of an ascending three-note per string pattern over F7.

The coda uses a repeating sequence based on the opening theme of the piece over a dominant cycle again, using major triads with 13<sup>th</sup> additions. This pattern begins on the

13<sup>th</sup> of B $\flat$ 7 (G) into a descending major triad. This pattern is repeated over each corresponding dominant chord.

This tune is very similar to Metheny's style using major triads with 13<sup>th</sup> additions, intervallic patterns with 7-3 resolutions, sequences and parallel fingering licks.

## **Conclusions**

The charts in Appendix 1 (p.84) provide a timeline of Metheny's use of different instruments. Appendix 2 (p.85) shows a possible trend in stylistic elements observed in the analysis of the ten compositions in the sample.

The melodies in Metheny's compositions lend themselves to "guitaristic" techniques such as: parallel structures, parallel fingerings, parallel chord voicings and intervallic licks and the combination is part of his characteristic sound. There is some evidence that compositions are created specifically for particular instruments and sound production techniques, although establishing this is not a key objective of this study.

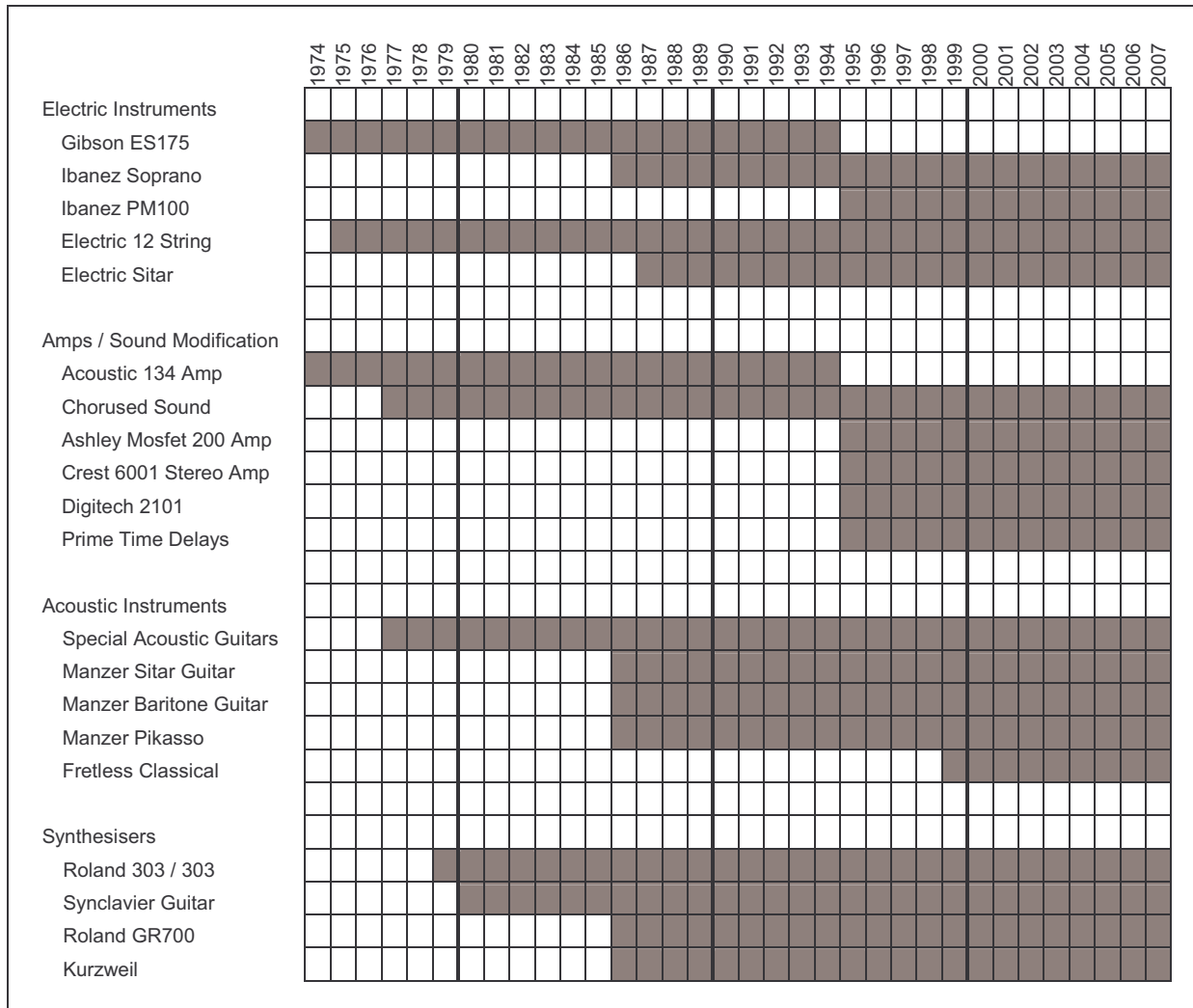
The analysis of trends and incidence of stylistic elements reveals those most commonly encountered are: sequences, intervallic patterns and parallel fingering licks. These techniques lend themselves to the guitar and Metheny's use of them makes a large contribution to his "sound". In particular, sequences based on fingering patterns occur very commonly and obviously in his playing. Intervallic patterns and parallel patterns are universal guitar techniques and he has brought them forcefully into his style.

It can be inferred that the commonly encountered stylistic elements in his compositions have derived from solo improvisations during standards in the early part of Metheny's career, but there is a paucity of recorded material available to look for the origins of much of Metheny's array of techniques. New techniques have emerged as he has come to perform more of his own material.

The analysis indicates that Metheny's later compositions have become intrinsically his and show a polished and practised mastery of his style. The trends illustrated in the charts do not really make an indisputable case for a true chronology in the appearance of the various techniques in Metheny's compositions. This means that it can only be inferred that his soloing style on standards influenced his composition. But, the evidence of trends could be extrapolated back in time prior to 1976 to support the evidence. Analysis of a

much wider sample would yield a much more reliable conclusion. In future, other studies supplementing the sample in this study could provide more evidence.

## Appendix 1- Instrument and sound production timeline



## Appendix 2 – Trends and Incidence of Stylistic Elements

		Double Stops	Clusters	Intervallic Pattern	Sequence	Harmonic Generalisation	Parallel Fingering Licks	Parallel Structures	7-3 Resolutions	Digital Patterns	Parallel Chord Voicings	Metheny Blues Scale / Min Pent + 9th	Diminished Triads	Chromatic Lick	Major Triads
Bright Size Life	1976														
Unity Village	1976														
James	1981														
Never Too Far Away	1990														
Question And Answer	1990														
Always and Forever	1992														
Soul Cowboy	2000														
Go Get It	2000														
Lone Jack	2000														
What Do You Want?	2000														
		1	1	6	9	3	5	2	4	2	2	2	1	1	2

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