

A Classic from Pittsburgh

Module 7 of *Music: Under the Hood*

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Osher Course
July 2017

Outline

- Biography of Erroll Garner
- Analysis of *Misty*

Biography

- Erroll Garner, 1923-1977
 - Pittsburgh native
 - Watched his older siblings take piano lessons.
 - Started playing age 3.
 - Memorized classical compositions his siblings studied.



Biography

- Education

- Attended George Westinghouse High School

- As did Billy Strayhorn and Ahmad Jamal!
 - Band director advised against lessons.
 - Fits stereotype of self-taught jazz composer who cannot read music.
 - This is actually rare.



Biography

- **Early experience**
 - **In Pittsburgh...**
 - Played on KDKA at age 7
 - Played on Allegheny riverboats at age 11
 - Played with saxophonist Leroy Brown at age 14
 - **Moved to New York City, age 21**
 - Played with legendary Charlie Parker at age 24



Charlie Parker

Biography

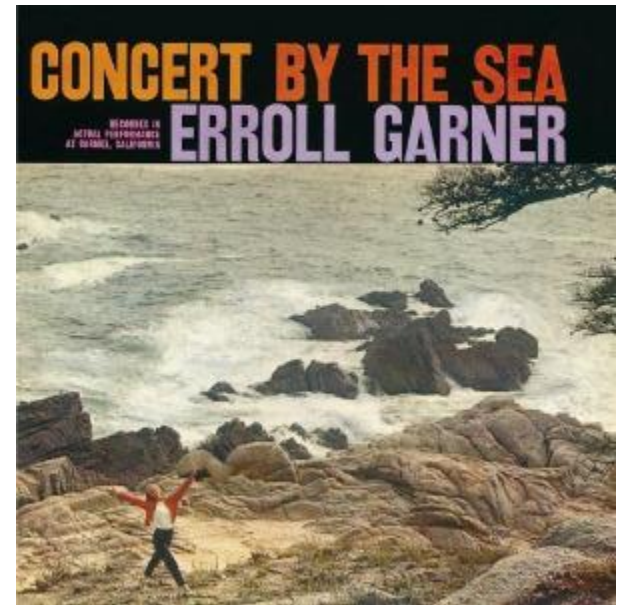
- Musical career

- Known for prodigious memory and flawless improvisations.

- When recording, one take was enough.
- 1955 recording *Concert by the Sea* was best-selling jazz album of the day.

- His song *Misty* became a jazz standard.

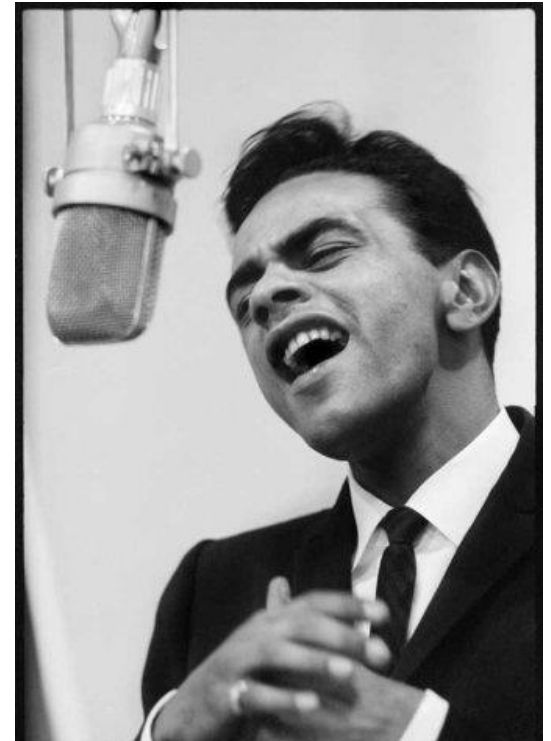
- Appeared frequently on Johnny Carson's *Tonight Show*.



Misty

- Originally composed for piano, 1954
 - First recorded in Garner's album *Contrasts*, 1955
- Popularized by Johnny Mathis
 - Using lyrics by Johnny Burke
- Used in film *Play Misty for Me*, 1971
 - Directed by Clint Eastwood
- A jazz standard
 - Garner's best known song

Johnny Mathis recording *Misty*, 1959



Original sheet music

[Audio file](#)

$\text{♩} = 44$

Piano

5

Pno.

a tempo

9

Pno.

13

Pno.

Pno.

* Lea * Lea * Lea * Lea * Lea * Lea *

Pno.

* Lea * Lea * Lea *

Pno.

Lea * Lea * Lea * Lea * Lea * Lea * Lea

rit.

Pno.

* Lea * Lea * Lea * Lea * Lea * Lea *

a tempo

Pno.

* Lea * Lea * Lea * Lea * Lea * Lea *

rit.

Misty

Audio file

(Erroll Garner at piano)

- What makes it work?

A guess:

– Classical structure

- AABA form
- Standard key sequence

– Appealing melody

– Reliance on standard jazz progression

- **I-vi-ii-V-I** or **ii-V-I**
- But with **very** interesting harmonic variations



Classic form

[Audio file](#)

$\text{♩} = 44$

Piano

Leo. * Leo. * Leo. * Leo. * Leo. * Leo.

Exposition

Pno.

I *a tempo*

IV

* Leo. * Leo. * Leo. * Leo. * Leo. * Leo.

Exposition (repeat)

Pno.

I

IV

* Leo. * Leo. * Leo. * Leo. * Leo. * Leo.

Exposition (repeat)

Piano score for measures 17-20. The score is in G minor (three flats) and 3/4 time. It features a piano accompaniment with a steady eighth-note bass line and a treble line with eighth-note patterns. Measure 17 starts with a red 'I' in the bass line. Measures 18 and 19 contain triplets in both hands. Measure 20 ends with a red 'V' in the bass line. The word 'Lea' is written below the bass line in measures 17, 18, 19, and 20, with asterisks marking the beginning of each measure.

Development

Piano score for measures 21-24. The score continues with the same accompaniment. Measure 21 has a red 'V' in the bass line. Measure 22 has a red 'IV' in the bass line. Measure 23 has a red 'II' in the bass line. Measure 24 has a red 'V' in the bass line and is marked 'rit.' (ritardando). The word 'Lea' is written below the bass line in measures 21, 22, 23, and 24, with asterisks marking the beginning of each measure.

Recapitulation

Piano score for measures 29-32. The score returns to the exposition material. Measure 29 starts with a red 'I' in the bass line, marked 'a tempo'. Measure 30 has a red 'IV' in the bass line. Measure 31 has a red 'V' in the bass line. Measure 32 ends with a red 'I' in the bass line, marked 'rit.'. The word 'Lea' is written below the bass line in measures 29, 30, 31, and 32, with asterisks marking the beginning of each measure.

Appealing Melody

[Audio file](#)

Naturally shaped melody due to descending notes

Piano

$\text{♩} = 44$

Leo. * Leo. * Leo. * Leo. * Leo. * Leo.

Pno.

a tempo

D to C

C to B_b

Leo. * Leo. * Leo. * Leo. * Leo. * Leo.

Pno.

B_b to A_b

A_b to G

Leo. * Leo. * Leo. * Leo. * Leo. * Leo.

Pno.

Leo. * Leo. * Leo. * Leo. * Leo. * Leo.

Piano score system 1 (measures 17-20). The right hand features a melodic line with triplets and a final chord with a circled Eb. A red line is drawn through the final chord.

Jump of minor 7th
Eb to Db

Piano score system 2 (measures 21-24). A blue arrow points from a circled Eb in measure 21 to a circled Db in measure 22. A blue arrow points from a circled Db in measure 22 to a circled C in measure 23. A red line is drawn through the final chord.

Db to C

Jump of major 7th
Eb to D

Piano score system 3 (measures 25-28). A blue arrow points from a circled Eb in measure 25 to a circled D in measure 26. A blue arrow points from a circled D in measure 26 to a circled Bb in measure 27. A red line is drawn through the final chord.

D to C to Bb

Piano score system 4 (measures 29-32). The system begins with the marking *a tempo*. The right hand features a melodic line with triplets.

Piano score system 5 (measures 33-36). The system ends with a double bar line and a 4/4 time signature. The right hand features a melodic line with triplets and a final chord.

Audio file

Harmony can be explained as a series of **I-vi-ii-V-I** (or **ii-V-I**) riffs

Riff = a frequently used chord progression

Basic jazz progression

I vi⁷ ii⁷ V⁷ I

Jazzed up a bit

I⁶ vi⁷ ii⁷⁹ V⁷⁹ I⁶

Piano

The image shows a piano score in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The score is divided into two sections. The first section, labeled 'Basic jazz progression', consists of five measures: a major triad (I), a minor 7th chord (vi⁷), a minor 7th chord (ii⁷), a dominant 7th chord (V⁷), and a major triad (I). The second section, labeled 'Jazzed up a bit', consists of five measures: a first inversion major triad (I⁶), a minor 7th chord (vi⁷), a minor 7th 9th chord (ii⁷⁹), a dominant 7th 9th chord (V⁷⁹), and a first inversion major triad (I⁶). Arrows from the labels 'Major triad', 'Minor 7', and 'Dominant 7' point to the first three chords of the first progression.

Improvisation relies on combining **licks** and **riffs**

Lick = a frequently used sequence of notes

Audio file

$\text{♩} = 44$

Piano

Exposition

5

Ab: ii⁷ → V⁷ → I⁶ **Gb: ii⁷ → V⁷ → (I)**

Pno.

Some say Db results from modal interchange with mixolydian

9

Eb: I⁷ → vi → ii⁷ → V⁷_{o9} → (I) **Eb: II⁷ → V⁶₇ → I^{maj7}**

Pno.

(I) = deceptive cadence

Exposition
(repeat)

13

Ab: ii⁷ → V⁷ → I⁶ **Gb: ii⁷ → V⁷ → (I)**

Pno.

Exposition
(repeat)

Pno. **Eb: I⁷⁹ → vi → ii⁷ → V⁷ → I**

Development

Pno. **Ab: ii⁷ → V⁷ → I⁶**

Pno. **G: ii⁴⁷ → V⁷ → i⁷⁹** rit.

Recapitulation

Ab: ii⁷⁹ → V⁷ → I⁶ **Gb: ii⁷⁹ → V⁷⁹ → (I)**

(I) = deceptive cadence

Pno. **Eb: I⁷⁹ → vi → ii⁷ → V⁷ → I^{rit.}**