

G.P. July '76

Barry Galbraith

By Arnie Berle



“Jazz Guitar: it’s nothing to mess with unless you’re serious.”

Galbraith . And although the words of praise are strong, all one has to do is look at the record to see that they are indeed justified.

Barry began his recording career in 1941 with artists like Teddy Powell, Billie Holiday, Peggy Lee, Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey, Stan Kenton, and Woody Herman. When jazz guitar great Tal Farlow made his first record, he chose Barry as his rhythm guitarist. It wasn’t long before Galbraith’s strong, rhythmic style, and unique chord voicings placed him in the position of being on first call for all rhythm dates in the studios.

From 1955 to 1960, Barry was the most recorded guitarist in the New York recording scene. He played on literally hundreds and hundreds of studio dates, for such artists as Ella Fitzgerald, Tony Bennett, Sarah Vaughn, Barbra Streisand, Carmen McRae, Lena Horne, Benny Goodman, Michel Legrand, Igor Stravinsky, and many more.

At present, Barry lives the quiet life in Vermont and comes into New York City two days a week to teach [1697 Broadway, #902, New York, NY 10019].

* * * *

What was your early musical background?

I was born in 1919 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. My mother played some piano, and my grandmother taught guitar. But the first music that left an impression on

me was when the marching bands would come through town for the Fourth of July parades. Then in 1929 when radio was in its infancy, there were about two or three programs on the air, and one of them featured Harry Reser And His Cliquot Club Eskimos. They had about fifty banjos all playing at once. At that time, I taught myself how to read music, and I was very happy about the whole thing. Then one day I went to the movies to see Bing Crosby in *The Big Broadcast*, and there was Eddie Lang playing guitar. Well, after hearing Eddie, that was the end of the banjo for me. Lang was the first jazz guitar player actually. He and Joe Venuti had a duo. Joe played violin, and as a matter of fact is still around and very active doing records and concerts with all the modern players. Eddie and he made a lot of records and were very popular [e.g. *Stringing The Blues*, Columbia, C2L24; out of print]. There were no other guitar players around and of course, no teachers, so I had to learn by myself. Later on, I heard [guitarists] Carl Kress and Dick McDonough when they were featured on some of the commercial programs coming out of New York. They gave me added incentive. Then I heard George Van Eps [see *GP*, Dec. '67 and Mar. '70], who was a great influence on everybody. This was in the mid-Thirties, before Charlie Christian. The kids should know more about Van Eps; there was nobody like him. He was, harmonically speaking, the greatest ever for guitar. And then came the late Thirties, and Charlie Christian came around with his use of amplification and his great single-string jazz lines. He influenced everyone.

Did you study harmony with anybody?

Well, don’t forget, harmony was much simpler at that time than it is today. Everything is relative to your ear. I had no formal study. I went along with the idiom, as the jazz culture grew; I went from one experience to another. I learned from all these experiences. Today, of course, it’s

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See page 26 for Barry’s music

particularly among guitar players, there is one who stands out especially. Bucky Pizzarelli, one of the leading studio guitarists in New York, said in an interview in the June 1974 *GP*, “I would have to single him out as my favorite.” Howie Collins, who, like Bucky, is also a member of the illustrious group of New York session men, says that “He is the consummate guitar player. He can read anything, his rhythm work is the greatest, and he can play single-string jazz solos with the best of them.”

The gentleman, of course, is Barry

Galbraith (R) with legendary jazz vocalist Billie Holiday and the Russin brothers (Babe on tenor sax, Jack on piano), 1941.



(L-R) Urbie Green, Don Lamond, Milt Hilton, Davey Schildkraut, Doc Severinsen, Eddie Costa, and Barry Galbraith, circa 1960.



'Walking Line'

By Barry Galbraith

G7 Dm7 G B7 C7 C9 C7 C7 G7 Dm7 G C#O G7 Ab7 G7 G7b5

C7 Gm7 C Gm7 C7 C9 C7 C7 G G Am7 Am G F7 E7 E7b5

A7 Em7 A A7b5 D7 D9 D7 D7 G7 F7 E7 E7b5 A7 E7b5 D7 D7b5

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such a complex art that you must study.

When did you start playing with bands?

I worked with bands all around the Pittsburgh area till I came to New York in 1941. Luckily, I got a job in a club on 52nd Street, which was the jazz street. I worked with Babe Russin, a fine tenor saxophonist, and his brother Jack who played piano. They were with Billie Holiday. That was great, because Art Tatum would always come by and sit in, which was a thrilling experience. There was a lot of jamming at that time; it was a marvelous era. But in those days, the big thing was to play with a big band, so I began working with bands like Teddy Powell's and Claude Thornhill's. Claude's band was exceptional; it was really an education just being with that band. Gil Evans, who went on to fame with Miles Davis years later, was the arranger for the group, and he influenced everybody he came in contact with. The band was like a family—we had [alto saxophonist] Gerry Mulligan, and [trumpeter] Red Rodney. Everybody respected one another. We played clubs and concerts, and did quite a few recordings. Then I went into the Army for two years, and when I came out I went back to Thornhill. In 1947, we recorded Charlie Parker's "Yardbird Suite," "Donna Lee," and

"Anthropology," all arranged by Gil Evans. I also played with the Hal McIntyre band and with Stan Kenton. Another very valuable experience came from traveling around the country as Peggy Lee's accompanist. This came in handy when I had to back up singers in my studio work. In the studios, I had to be ready to play anything that could come up on a record date.

Bucky Pizzarelli said that you have the greatest chord concept of voicings, for solo and rhythm guitar, he has ever heard. How did you develop this?

That takes a long time of trial and error and weeding out what you don't like and keeping what you do like. I was forced into developing these voicings when working with the Thornhill band. Gil Evans, in his arranging, would write chord changes on every beat, and I had to develop a line to fit with the bass. Nothing ever stopped—the bass line moved all the time—so I had to work out my voicings. It took a lot of work. Later on, I worked with George Russell, who was the best and most challenging writer I have ever played for, and he also helped in developing my voicings. It was in the 1940s that George put together his *Lydian Chromatic Concept* [\$26.50 from Concept Publishing, Suite 1104, 12 E. 41st St., New York, NY 10017]. When you play with people like Gil and George, you have to learn.

How do you go about teaching jazz improvisation?

I started teaching in 1970, after spinal surgery inhibited the use of my hands. My basic approach to teaching is the same as when we study the great masters of classical music, like Bach, Bartok, Mozart, Hindemith, and all the others. Well, I do the same with the jazz masters, like Charlie Christian, Tal Farlow, Jimmy Raney, Jim Hall, Wes Montgomery, and George Van Eps. My students study the solos of these great artists and try to use some of the things they like in their own improvisation—not to copy, but to take the best of recorded jazz and learn from it. It's a pool of information; here it is to do with as you wish. As far as the creative part of jazz, you can't give someone the jazz instinct or intuition. You can save them from taking the long road around, and you can speed up the time it takes to learn the right techniques. I give them the tools. I must say that even those students without great instinctive talent—such as Raney, Farlow, and Montgomery have—can still learn by working very hard at it. Remember, some instinctive players can tend to get lazy and not work too hard. They try to get by on their instinct. I've seen students with less talent wind up playing better than many of those with the instinctive ability, be-

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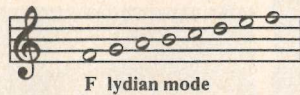
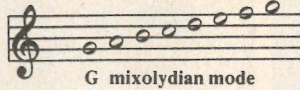
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cause they did work very hard at it.
Do you teach the relationship of scales to chords, as well as the use of the modes in improvising?

Oh, yes. After all, what is the G7 chord? It's just the mixolydian mode. When you run the G7 chord, that's what you're doing, playing the mixolydian mode. It's just another name for it. The Dm7-G7 modes are contained within the C tonality. You may think dorian for the Dm7 and mixolydian for the G7, or with the George Russell lydian concept, F lydian for both.



How is the F lydian mode different from the C scale?

F lydian is just one of the modes within the C tonality. The main function of the lydian mode is its application to a tonic chord, because it encompasses the entire overtone series; that is, F lydian contains not only the first, third, fifth, seventh, and

ninth, but also the eleventh.

Much is written on the importance of the ii-V chord changes, such as Dm7-G7 in the key of C. How important are they?

I would say it's very important to be able to handle those changes, since about ninety percent of all the jazz tunes are based on ii-V chords.

How much of jazz improvisation would you say is spontaneous?

Spontaneity is built on a base of knowledge. How spontaneous can you be without know-how? It's an accrued knowledge; you stuff it into your subconscious, and you play for ten or twenty years, and then you're spontaneous. But there is a selectivity of ideas. It depends very much on your emotions, who you are playing with, and your experience. Of course, there are times when you're playing and nothing is happening, and you pull out your old "Joe Millers." These are the cliches you've played many times before. But still, I must repeat, it's the emotional content and who you're playing with that really counts.

What do you think of the modal playing concepts so popular today?

In modal playing you avoid all the chord changing and play on just a particular mode or maybe several modes within one piece. Today, all players have to be able to function in all these styles. Music can't stand still, it has to go somewhere. A certain piece may be modal for eight or

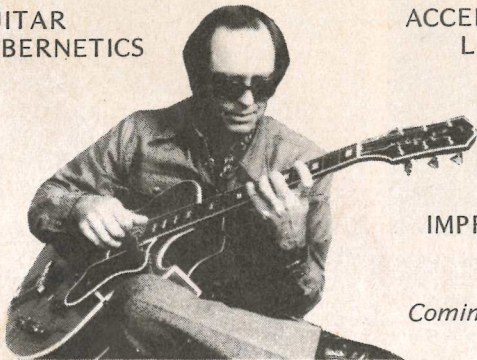
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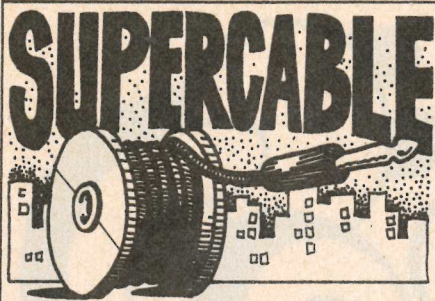


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sixteen measures and then go into chord changes.

In modal playing, how is tension and release created, since there is no tonic-dominant relationship?

The tension is created by going in and out of the mode—seeing how far you can go creates the tension, and the returning gives you the release.

How about the problem of fingering scales and arpeggios?

The problem on the guitar has always been visualization. Most great players of jazz guitar know three or four places where they can run any chord. You must be able to run any scale, chord, or arpeggio in four different places. The next problem is to be able to go from one place to another; that is, to connect these different places. This is easily solved by either a slide or a short shift. The great players all have good visualization of where everything lies on the guitar fingerboard.

How do you develop the ability to read well on the guitar?

There again, it's a matter of visualization. You have to see the fingerboard and recognize the various scales or chords on the paper and relate them to the fingerboard. You can't read well unless you can visualize. For example, if you can recognize the notes of a C7 or a G7 chord, you

can move your hand into position on the fingerboard where those chords and scales are. The Bach inventions are very good practice studies. He was the "jazznick" of his day, and his music reflects that. I have my students try to write in the chords over the music that they think Bach intended, then relate that chord or scale to the fingerboard.

What kind of picking do you use and teach?

I like all down-strokes unless it's too fast—then I alternate down-up. Phrasing is very important, though, in determining picking. Charlie Christian used to pick all down-strokes, and he was fast. Of course, short strokes should be taken, because there is less motion in coming back up. The fingers should also be kept on the pickguard as a point of reference. I don't know where so many kids got the idea that this is cheating; it isn't. I keep the palm of my hand on the bridge for my point of reference. I should add, as far as picking, that it should vary to make the phrase sound the way you want it to sound, depending on the accents.

Who are some of your favorite players?

Well, of course, those that I mentioned before—like Tal Farlow, Wes Montgomery, Jimmy Raney, Jim Hall—and Joe Pass is just great. One of the most sensitive players is Gene Bertoncini. Also, if you're in the New York area, it's a pleasure to hear Bucky [Pizzarelli] wherever he's playing, and also

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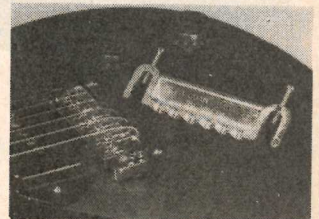
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the duo of Chuck Wayne and Joe Puma. Then, of the newer guys around, I like George Benson, Pat Martino, Larry Coryell. Jerry Hahn is an excellent player, and Jack Wilkins is just amazing.

What do you listen for in other guitar players?

Imagination and musicality. I listen to what they are trying to say. I'm not interested in their speed or technique. Some guys run all over the place, but don't say anything. If a guy is saying something musical, that's what counts.

What about jazz orchestration?

Well, I'm teaching at the New England Conservatory and its president is Gunther Schuller, one of the most astute musicians of our times. He has been developing a fine jazz program over the past several years. George Russell is teaching his lydian concept there, besides rehearsing an orchestra. Actually, there are several jazz orchestras there. Recently, a concert was given in which George conducted his group in playing his music, and they did a beautiful job—and George's music is very demanding. I know how difficult it is, because I recorded most of it.

Do you play classical guitar? I know a lot of jazz players do.

Yes, I do, too. Actually, the difference between jazz and the classics is very slight. There is a story which you might find

amusing. Some years ago, Julian Bream, the great classical guitarist, was playing a concert at Town Hall in New York. After the concert, David Rubio, the fine classical guitar maker, invited Julian, myself, Howie Collins, and some of the fellows who had played with Bream at the concert over to his house for a little party. Well, Julian is a jazz buff and a big fan of Django Reinhardt. So after a while, he felt like having a little blowing session, playing some jazz. Bream started calling the tunes, all Django songs—and believe me when I say he played them just like Django. Every lick, the same drive, and the same feeling as Django. It was amazing. He played with the same enthusiasm and excitement as when he plays the classics. Anyway, we played till about 5:00 in the morning, and since we were all playing with picks, including Julian, those classical guitars were scratched all over the tops of them.

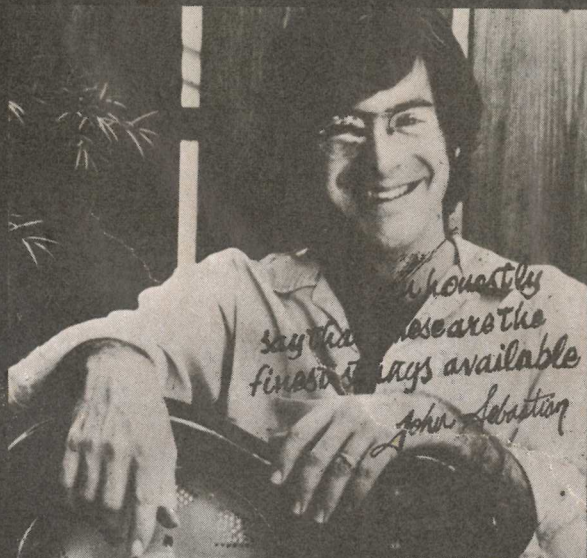
What equipment do you use?

My guitar is an old Gibson Byrdland with the neck copied after the Stromberg. It has a bar pickup; it's the best sound for jazz, I think. As for picks, I like a small, hard pick, so there is nothing flapping around down there. My strings: I like medium round, the make doesn't matter. As far as the action on the guitar, most players in jazz like a stiff action for resistance. Jim Hall is an exception; he plays with a light touch and prefers soft action.

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Farlow and Raney both prefer the stiff resistance, like myself. Even Julian Bream plays with a high, stiff action. It's like a tenor saxophonist who plays with a stiff reed, or a piano player who won't play on a piano if the action is too easy. As for amplifiers, I have a Fender, about twenty years old. I like the circuitry better in the older model; it has some velvet edges to it. Today, it's all sharp edges. I like a nice mellow sound.

Do you find many rock guitar players going into jazz?

Well, yes. They play rock for money and jazz for pleasure. There is a definite trend toward jazz, and I'm happy that there are more places for kids to play now, and it's getting better all the time. Some of my students are doing guitar duo work, which is nice for guitar players.

What would you tell the kids today who want to learn jazz guitar?

These aren't good times for musicians, but who can predict the future? There are two categories; those who can't help themselves—they will become the professionals; and the others—who might love and enjoy the guitar but aren't driven—they become the teachers and part-time players and will get a lot of pleasure and satisfaction from the instrument. But it's

nothing to mess with unless you're serious.

A Selected Galbraith Discography

Modern Jazz Concert, Columbia, WL 127. *The Rhythm Section*, Epic, LN 3271. *Rhythm Plus One*, Epic, LN 3297. *After Hours Jazz*, Epic, LN 3339. Thad Jones-Mel Lewis, *Central Park North*, Solid State, SS 18058. Hank Jones, *The Talented Touch*, Capitol, T 1044. Joe Newman, *The Midget*, VIK, LX 1060. Maynard Ferguson, *Screamin' Blues*, Main Steam, MRL 316. Ralph Burns, *Porgy and Bess*, Decca, DL 79215. Gil Evans, *Into The Hot*, Impulse, A-9. Urbie Green, *6-tet*, Command, RS 857 SD. Benny Goodman and Igor Stravinsky, *Meeting At The Summit*, Columbia, ML 6205. *The Memorable Claude Thornhill*, Columbia, PG 32906. *The Best Of Kenny Burrell*, Prestige, 7448. *The Bobby Jasper Quintet*, Columbia, FPX 123. *The Unpredictable Jimmy Smith*, Verve, V6-8474. *Michel Legrand Jazz*, Columbia, C11250. *Jimmie Cleveland And His All Stars*, Mercury, 36066. George Russell, *Jazz Workshop*, Victor, LPM 2534; *New York, New York/Jazz In The Space Age*, MCA (2), 24017. Hal McKusick, *Jazz Workshop*, Victor, LPM 1366; *Hal McKusick*, Bethlehem, BCP 16; *Jazz At The Academy*, Coral, CRL 57116.

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By Barry Galbraith

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Bass line comping, an accompaniment technique in which bass lines and chords are played simultaneously, gives the illusion of two instruments performing in tandem. Its roots are probably less in blues and country music than in the desire of jazz guitarists to take the instrument beyond its traditional role of providing mere rhythmic figures or single-line melodies. And sometimes the economic necessity of keeping the size of an ensemble small is reason enough for a guitarist to cover more territory: Successful use of a bass line comping approach can make a bare-bones group sound much larger.

With the introduction of the keyboard—especially the *electric* keyboard—in small bands one dues-paying member is frequently missing: the bass player, who is often replaced by the pianist's left hand. A style of piano playing that delegates bass parts to the left hand and comping to the right is certainly not new; its incorporation into two- and three-piece situations has been commonplace for many, many years.

Since the guitar can be visualized as a sort of miniature piano, it is only natural that guitarists have evolved an accompaniment style akin to that of keyboardists. This approach is often preferred when a guitarist is paired with a singer or solo instrumentalist, not to mention with another guitarist. Its effect is even more dramatic when applied to the harmonically expansive 7-string guitar; notable examples lie in the styles of Bucky Pizzarelli and Howie Collins.

In constructing a bass line comp, certain guidelines should be observed. For instance, in terms of structuring a bass line, the strongest note in any chord is the root (the note from which the key is named), which is followed in strength by the 5th. When a chord is introduced, it is often most solidly reinforced by placing either the root or the 5th in the bass. In the piece at the end of the article, "Wind #2," one exception to this is found in measures 12, 13, and 14, where we have a strong chromatic bass line (in which the notes ascend or descend by half-step intervals). But even here, roots fall on most of the strong beats of the bar—in this case, beats one and three (note that the stems of the bass notes point down, while the stems of all other notes point up; downward stems also indicate which notes should be played with the thumb):

Next, the bass note of each new chord can be approached by either whole- or half-steps. Here are two alternate ways of playing the first two measures following this rule:

When the same chord is held for the duration of a measure (or longer), we have the choice of either arpeggiating the bass line (outlining the notes of the chord), or playing scalewise (using scale tones as the material with which to build a line). Since pure arpeggios tend to sound stilted, it is best to mix them with notes of the scale:

Notice that the roots fall on beat one, with chordal tones on beat three, while passing tones (notes not contained in the chords) fall on the weak beats, two and four. The following is a common bass line derived from the *Fm7* (*F* dorian) and *Bb7* (*Bb* mixolydian) scales, with additional chromatic tones that connect one strong beat to the next. Again, roots fall on the first beat of every measure:

An exception to the preceding rule occurs during chromatic bass lines, which should usually start and end with either the root or 5th (to point to the key center), but other chord tones may be used in between.



It is possible to rename the chords on which the chromatic bass line in bars 13 and 14 is based (as in the following example); however, note that in such a case the relationship of the bass notes to the chords would be different:



If the bass line in measure 30 were to *descend* from the 5th of the Bb7 chord, rather than *ascend* from its root (as it does in the piece), then the roots and 5ths for the chords in measures 31 and 32 could be exchanged. Notice how such a variation changes the shape of the entire bass line:



Now let's look at an illustration of a weak bass line. While technically correct, it has a preponderance of 5ths, and not enough roots:



This can make the bass line sound too nondescript, because 5ths by themselves do not point to the key center as strongly as when they're integrated with roots.

As for the upper part of our comp, the main rhythmic choices are placing the chord on the beat, after the beat, or in anticipation of the beat. Another pattern places the bass note and chord together either on the beat (as in measure 12), or off the beat (measure 7). These may be mixed according to taste.

Harmonically, we should have 3rds and 7ths in each chord, to indicate their functions (major, minor, dominant, etc.). An exception



occurs with the triads used in bars 13 and 14, where a common tone is maintained throughout the progression. Had 7th chords been used instead of the triads, the common tone would not have been possible.

For the best possible voice leadings (smooth transition from the notes of one chord to those of the subsequent chord), we try to maintain the common tones as much as possible, while the other voices move to the closest notes of the next chord:



"Wind #2," on the next page, is an example of a standard progression that employs the bass line comping technique. It is excerpted from my book, *Guitar Comping*. Included are a wide variety of bass lines, rhythmic alignments between upper and lower voices, and excursions through various key centers—examples of concepts that you can apply to some of your favorite tunes. The added versatility afforded through this technique will almost certainly make you a standout—especially when your bass player doesn't show up.

* * * *

BARRY GALBRAITH IS ONE OF THE East Coast's most respected jazz guitarists, studio musicians, and teachers. Known for his dazzling single-line solos and sophisticated harmonic sense, he has, in a career spanning more than 40 years, played with many jazz luminaries, including Tal Farlow, Kenny Burrell, Billie Holiday, Benny Goodman, and Ella Fitzgerald. In his three-part Jazz Guitar Study Series of books (all available from Weybridge Productions, 3 Park St., Middlebury, VT 05753), he has penned *The Fingerboard Workbook: Concepts In Logical Fingering*, *Daily Exercises In The Melodic & Harmonic Minor Modes*, and *Guitar Comping With Bass Lines In Treble Clef* (with play-along record featuring Galbraith and bassist Milt Hinton). He has also written a separate volume (with accompanying record) entitled *Play Along With Bach*, which contains transcriptions of Bach's 15 two-part inventions arranged for guitar duet (also available from Weybridge).

The article above, geared toward the intermediate to advanced guitarist, offers insight into the use of simultaneous bass lines and chords in accompaniment contexts. It will not only expand your harmonic technique, but will increase your versatility—allowing you to adapt to playing situations where a bassist is called for, but not present.

—Editor

BASS-LINE COMPING ON GUITAR

Continued from previous page.

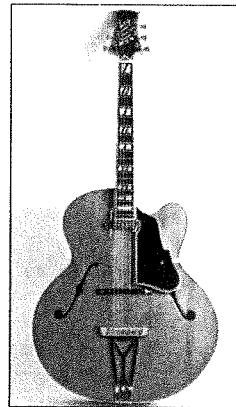
“Wind #2”

The musical score for "Wind #2" is presented in a single system with eight staves. Each staff contains a bass-line with guitar-specific fingerings (circled numbers) and chord diagrams above the notes. The chords are: Fm9, Bb13, Ebmaj7, C7#9, Fm7, Bb7, Ebmaj7, Am7, D9, Gmaj7, E7, Am7, D9, Gmaj7, Ebmaj7, F#dim7, Fm7, Fm, Bb7, Fm7 C#dim7 Bb, Eb, Bbaug, Bbm, C7, Fm7, Fm, Bb7, Gm7, F#m7, Fm7, Bb13, Ebmaj7, Gm7, C7, Fm7, Bb7, Ebmaj7, Am9, D13, D7#5, Gmaj9, E7#9, Am7, D9, Gmaj7, Fm7, Cm, Cm/Bb, Abmaj7, Gm7, C9, Fm7, Bb7, Eb9, D9, Db9, C9, F#m7, B9, Fm7, Eb7, Ab7, Db7, Gb7, Bb7, E7, Fm7, F#dim7, Eb.

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No. 26 FEBRUARY 2001

My Dad... Barry Galbraith

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INTERVIEWS/PROFILES

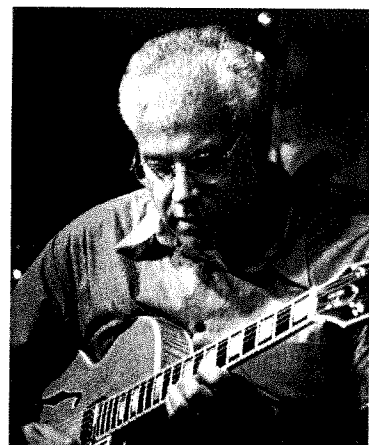
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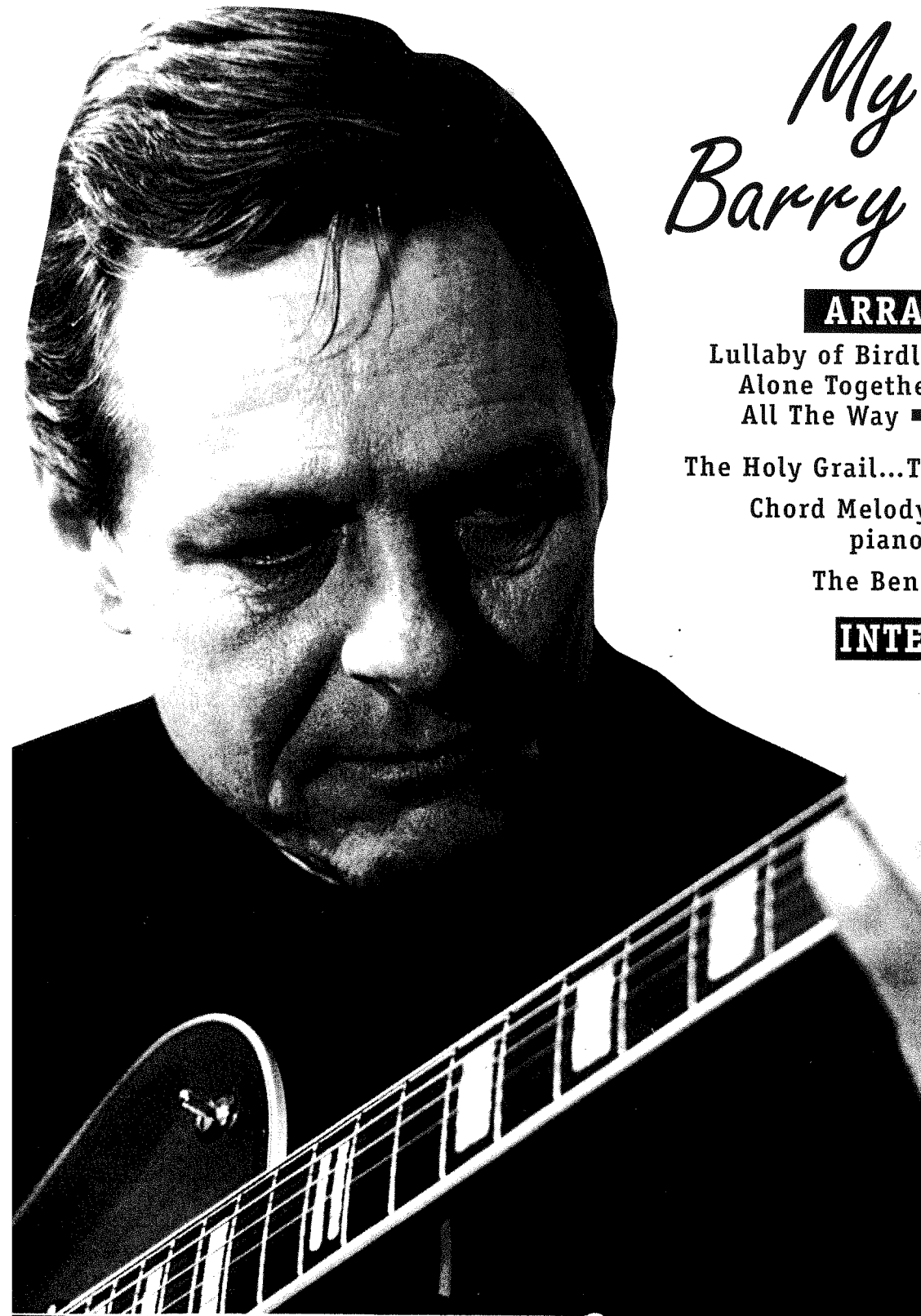
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Mitch Holder



Barry Galbraith

By Joel Frutkin

Barry Galbraith has left one of the greatest recorded legacies of jazz guitar. Many examples of his best playing are available on CD today, but others still await discovery in the vaults of record companies. I first discovered Barry Galbraith as a sub for Mary Osborne on the Jack Sterling CBS radio show in New York in the mid '50s. I found out from my teacher, Bill Suyker, that Barry was considered by many to be "The Man." Unfortunately his playing career was cut short in the '70s, but he continued to impart his love for the guitar and music as a teacher until his death in 1983.

Barry was a favorite of arranger-composer George Russell and is heard to great extent on these CDs: New York, N.Y. Decca MCAD-31371, George Russell Sextet: RCA-6467 and Jazz Workshop: RCA-6471. On these records he appears with a who's who of jazz including John Coltrane, Bill Evans, Art Farmer, Milt Hinton and Hal McKusick. Recording RCA-6471 has Barry in a combo arranged by John Carisi and has tunes such as *Israel*, *Springville* and *Barry's Tune*. A must hear is *The Alabama Concerto* by John Benson Brooks. The orchestra is Julian "Cannonball" Adderly, Art Farmer, Barry, and Milt Hinton, that's all! It's available on Riverside OJCCD-1779. His versatility can be heard in a reissue of the Claude Thornhill band from the 1940's, Columbia CK-46152. As an accompanist to singers I recommend: *Portrait of Sheila*, with Sheila Jordan, Steve Swallow, bass and Denzil Best drums. On the song *Who Can I Turn To*, Barry is the sole accompanist and his entrance in the second chorus of *Falling In Love With You* is sublime. On Blue Note CDP-789000; *Dream Of You* with Helen Merrill EmArcy 314-514-074 and Johnny Hartman's *The Voice That Is* Impulse GRD-144.

Barry's output on LP was remarkable for quality and excellence. Among these rarities are *The New Jazz Sound of Show Boat*, a joint project of Barry and John Carisi using a 5 guitar choir along with Phil Woods and Bob Brookmeyer, Jim Raney has some of the guitar solos (Columbia CL-1419). The rhythm section is Milt Hinton, Hank Jones and Osie Johnson (Epic LN-3271), no more need be said. *Modern Jazz Concert* which featured extended works by George Russell, Milton Babbitt, Jimmy Giuffre, Charles Mingus and Gunther Schuller for a large jazz ensemble featuring solos by Bill Evans, Art Farmer, Hal McKusick and Barry. Any of these three should be made available on CD.

On all these recordings, Barry moves effortlessly from single note section work where his guitar is voiced as a member of the reed or brass section or as an adjunct to the piano or vibes, into Freddie Green style rhythm, comping or solo passages. His sight-reading skill was amazing, coupled with a good ear, fine technique and superb musicianship making Barry a premier studio guitarist, and when unable to play at the level he demanded of himself, an excellent teacher.

About the author:

Joel Frutkin has been a long time admirer of Barry and had the good fortune of knowing him during the last 10 years of his life. Joel studied in New York with Charles Ruoff and Willard "Bill" Suyker. He played club dates in the New York area and began teaching on 48th street in New York in 1960. He has a degree in music from New York University and has studied classical guitar with Albert Valdes-Blain. His favorite players besides Barry are Django Reinhardt, Jim Hall, Johnny Smith, Howard Alden and Frank Vignola.

BARRY GALBRAITH BY SAL SALVADOR:

I first heard about Barry before I left Springfield, MA. to go to New York to pursue a career in music. Big band leader Claude Thornhill had featured him on a recording of *Ornithology*. I was knocked out by his solo so much that I went to the State Theater in Hartford, CT and sat through the movie between the stage shows all day long just to hear him play that tune.

After I went to New York to stay, I felt privileged when he invited me to his house to have dinner and play. We did this a number of times and I'll never forget that he showed me the changes to "The Wind and the Rain in Your Hair."

Barry would often show up at Tal Farlow's gigs, Jimmy Raney's gigs or mine and was always complimentary and encouraging. He often remarked, "You guys are really into it." Picture how that made me feel. When I decided not to go to Europe with Stan Kenton's big band, which I was a member of, Barry and I traded jobs because he thought he would like to make the trip. He went with Stan and turned Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis engagements and the job at the Blue Angel night club over to me. We both traded back when the trip ended.

Another high point was in doing studio work that Mundell Lowe helped me get. I wound up sitting next to Barry on record dates. What a fine reader he was. One of the best! We eventually shared office/teaching space in what was the CBS building. It is now occupied by the David Letterman TV show. We would occasionally sit back and have some quiet conversations. I learned a lot from those talks. Barry was the perfect example of what a pro should be and he left us with five of the finest instruction books I've ever seen. What treasures! I use them in my teaching practice with great results.

Thanks, Barry.

(1919-1983)

MY DAD, BARRY

By Don Galbraith



Barry Galbraith

bone lessons and he played trombone in the high school band. His brother tells of their home being the center for jam sessions with high school friends, including Tay Voyer, who went on to play the vibraphone professionally, and Joe Kennedy, the talented jazz violinist, arranger, and Richmond educator. Not bad company!

As a teenager he played around the Pittsburgh area. One of his acquaintances at this time was guitarist Joe Negri, who remained in Pittsburgh to become THE guitar player in the area. He always spoke highly of Joe's playing. In 1940, Dad hit the road with Red Norvo, the legendary xylophonist. His travels with the Norvo group ultimately landed him in New York where he would spend most of his professional life. In 1941, he played the Famous Door with the Babe Russin band and later that year joined the Teddy Powell band, followed by a stint with Vaughan Monroe. Later that same year he joined the Claude Thornhill band until it broke up in 1942 when Claude went into the Navy. I remember an episode around this time. He had come home to McDonald to visit when, just as he arrived, a long-distance call came to do a gig with the Woody Herman band. He was back on the train in a flash. The world's shortest visit! He played with the Jerry Wald and Hal McIntyre bands and made a nationwide tour with the Raymond Paige band before he was drafted into the Army in 1943. I think he may also have been with the Charlie Barnet and Hal Mooney bands during this time, or after his discharge in 1945, but I'm not entirely sure.



Barry in 1942

I remember Dad telling me about his first professional gig (he earned \$2.00). I think it was in West Virginia, which was close to his hometown of McDonald, Pa. It was a hillbilly band consisting of Dad on guitar, a fiddle player who kept time with his peg leg, and his wife, a piano player who, anticipating Errol Garner, required a phone book to reach the keyboard. From this start, anything was possible!

Dad was the oldest of three boys who, with brothers Don and Rex, were raised in a multi-generational home in which music was an important though not dominant part of family life. His grandmother played a guitar, his grandfather a fiddle, and his mother was a competent pianist. His brothers tell of how the boys loved to jump on the bed as their grandfather played "Turkey in the Straw." Maybe his hillbilly beginning was preordained! I remember him telling me that when he was a boy he would run home from school every day to listen to the most swinging band on the radio...Guy Lombardo! I don't know how old he was when he began to play, but I recently discovered pictures of him posing with a banjo and with his grandmother's guitar when he was twelve years old. I also found a picture of him at two years of age holding some sort of unidentifiable stringed instrument. I would guess his grandmother got him started but nobody in the family remembers either how or when he began to play. Although he had no formal training in guitar, he did take the train into Pittsburgh for trom-

While in the Army he played for a short time with a special services band and then he was transferred to the Corps of Engineers. As usual, the army got it wrong. In spite of his dexterity when moving over the frets, he was “mechanically challenged.” I remember a kitchen shelf he once installed; anything round rolled right off of it! And my Uncle Don tells of a record date he attended in which the score called for a crescendo climaxed by a cymbal crash. Having only a single percussionist, they called on Dad to play the part. Simple enough, right? However, when the moment arrived, instead of the resounding crash of cymbals there was sort of a thup, clank. After a moment of silence, the recording engineer’s voice reverberated throughout the studio: “Barry, if you hold your arms further away from your body you won’t catch your stomach in the cymbals!”



Barry playing his Stromberg.

Following his discharge from the Army, he returned to New York City where, in 1946, he was with the Jerry Gray band on radio’s weekly Phillip Morris Show. I recall that Margaret Whiting was the female vocalist with this band but forget who the male vocalist was. Herb Shriner was the comedian on the show. I, at age nine, was fascinated to see that Johnny, the “caaall for Philip Morrriiss” boy, was actually a diminutive older man. In 1947 Dad rejoined the Thornhill band until it became a victim of the mass extinction of big bands, which occurred in the post-war years. I had been spending parts of summers with him since 1946 when he and my mother were divorced, and thought musicians were the greatest people on earth and that there was no better life than being on the road! I don’t know how many musicians would want a little kid hanging around but the guys were always great to

me. I remember Sandy Spiegelstern, one of the french horn players in the Thornhill band, apologizing every time he let forth with a word that he didn’t think was (or should be) included in the vocabulary of a ten-year old. I have no clear memory of what Dad did immediately after the demise of Claude’s band but he eventually hooked-up with Peggy Lee and Dave Barbour, and was back on the road again. When I arrived on the scene that summer, Peggy and Dave were settled in for several weeks at the Paramount sharing the billing with the Jimmy Dorsey band and a young comic team by the name of Martin and Lewis. The bass player, Joe Shulman, arranged a jam session with some saxophone player and all the musicians seemed to be pretty excited at the prospect of playing with this guy. Immediately after one of the afternoon shows, they set up on a basketball court on an upper floor of the Paramount building. Finally, after they had given up on his arrival, this big (to me) guy wearing a pork-pie hat sort of shuffles in, sits down, takes out his horn, and provides an unforgettable experience. I later learned that Prez was one of Dad’s idols and I’m sure he must have really been thrilled, but you would never have known it from his typically low-key manner. Joe Shulman later joined Lester in what was probably one of his last groups.

Few people probably know that when George Shearing arrived in this country he organized a quintet in which Dad was the guitarist. However, instead of the guitar-vibes combination done so well by Chuck Wayne and Marjorie Hymes, the original quintet featured guitar and clarinet. This group never recorded and thus exists only as a memory.

Although some musicians lived to be on the road, most eventually became worn down by the grind. Dad used to like to tell about the time the Thornhill band was nearing the end of a long string of one-night stands and everybody was really beat. The band had just finished a tune, but Billy Exiner, the drummer, kept right on playing. There he sat, relaxed, eyes closed, sound asleep! And keeping perfect time! Well, by the time Peggy and Dave decided to come in off the road, Dad had grown tired of the grueling road trips so he got his cabaret card and settled in New York City. He played the clubs and did record dates but most of his work was as a studio musician with NBC and CBS. Among the shows he did, to the best of my memory, was the Kate Smith show for several years in the early days of television (worth a few jokes but he hated it), the Ernie Kovacs show, “Name that Tune” (a few inter-

esting stories here!), and the George Skinner radio show with the Mort Lindsey band. There were others but I don't remember what they were. During the Kate Smith years, and for several years afterward, he studied piano but the instrument never felt natural to him, probably because it was too mechanical. He used it mainly for composing, an activity he didn't particularly enjoy, and he later gave it up altogether.



Barry in the studio.

His favorite show was the Ernie Kovacs show which featured Ernie and his wife, singer Edie Adams. Those who remember Kovacs know what a comic genius he was and how creative and even diabolical his humor could be. The show would frequently close with a skit featuring the Nairobi trio, three guys in monkey suits, top hat and tails, ape masks and hairy hands. As the band played mechanical little tunes, the trio would move about like wind-up toys while building a tension that would erupt in some wild sight gag bringing the show to an abrupt close. Dad always called his mother when the band was going to be on camera - a rare event - and one day she got the call to watch the Kovacs show. So we all gathered around to see Dad live on national TV but began to get a little antsy when the show was almost over and still no band. Finally, the Nairobi Trio appeared. The show was over. Obviously, my grandmother had not remembered the correct date. Then, just

as the trio's skit reached its climax, the camera panned to the band ... And there was Dad and the rest of the band all decked out in top hat and tails, ape faces and hairy hands! Fortunately, grandmother shared Dad's sense of humor!

Another example of Dad's sense of humor, as well as his patience, involved me as his foil. When I was a teenager I played alto sax (I put it away and went to college when I discovered that Jackie McLean was only a year or two older than I) and would play with Dad when I saw him in the summer. He would write things out for me - mostly Bird's lines and some of the things Lee Konitz (my idol; still is) and Wayne Marsh did with Lennie Tristano - and we would play these together. I struggled through them but had a great time anyway. Years later, when I was married and had a family, I received a tape in the mail cryptically labeled "Saxophone Player." I couldn't imagine what it was and, when I played it back, it took a moment to figure out what I was listening to. I couldn't believe what I was hearing. He had secretly recorded our duets and had waited well over ten years to give me the tape! Well, I wasn't as bad as I thought but I immediately understood why dad encouraged me to get an education rather than go into the music business. He emphasized how difficult it was to make a living as a musician, a theme he reiterated when he taught at the New England Conservatory and saw first hand the unfavorable ratio of excellent student musicians to available jobs. It was a lesson easily absorbed because I remembered the time when he was with the Thornhill band, he had only enough money to buy each of us a hamburger and a drink for dinner as the week's pay dwindled away.



Barry in the studio in mid 50's.

In 1953, Dad joined the Stan Kenton band for its European tour. According to Sal Salvador, the band's regular guitarist, he and Dad traded jobs so that Dad could make the trip. He enjoyed playing with the Kenton band and really dug the appreciative European audiences. But the trip was to have a lasting negative effect on him. Travel was by an antiquated two-engine aircraft into which the entire band, their wives, and all the equipment were crammed. Every takeoff seemed as if it were going to be the last as the plane shuddered down the runway and didn't become airborne until the very end of the paving. The guys felt as if they were collectively willing the plane into the air! They flew through many thunderstorms and the plane leaked water through every seam as they pitched and bounced through the air. There was more than one terrifying moment and the memory of that terror never left Dad. Before that trip he loved to fly; after the trip, I don't think he ever flew again. He happily returned to New York and stayed there, safe on the ground, driving his Volkswagen beetle like a maniac, for most of his remaining years. From the mid to late '50s until the end of his career, he spent most of his time in the recording studios with a club date now and then, one of which, I recall, was with the Benny Goodman band. He did quite a few things at the "Blue Angel" with various artists. He had little tolerance for arrogance and was put off by the "stars" who would show up there to be seen and admired. One night singer Tony Martin strode out of the audience, commandeered the bandstand and ordered the band to play something like "Over the Rainbow" in C. Well the band played "Over the Rainbow," but a key higher, and enjoyed watching Martin crash and burn. The more subtle the revenge, the sweeter it is.

Dad was renowned for his ability to read and, according to an article written in his memory by a former student, Barry Morton of Australia, he was known as "The Hawk of New York." Morton also relates a story in which Jim Hall, having difficulty with a particular passage to be recorded threw up his hands and said "Get Galbraith!" Somebody once told me that he was probably the only guitarist around who could play George Russell's complex compositions. He had the greatest respect for George, who was also a good friend, and he thought George's work reflected a rare genius. Those who know Dad's work also know that he had a wonderful sense of harmonics. He told me that he learned an enormous amount by playing the guitar parts in the Thornhill band. He said they were often

written as if for a horn section and, initially, he had to simplify them so that he could play them. This embarrassed him, but, with an enormous amount of work, he finally got his chops around the music. As a consequence, however, he possessed a dimension in his playing that most guitarists lacked. Young guitar players, take heart!



Barry concentrating

Sometime around the mid-60's Dad felt his left hand beginning to lose its feeling. Over a period of several years the condition worsened to the point that he could no longer feel the strings. He told me he was playing from "muscle memory." He went to physician after physician, chiropractors, acupuncturists—you name it—in an attempt to find out what was wrong but to no avail. Nobody seemed to be able to figure out what was going on, and though he tried not to reveal it, he was becoming very alarmed. Finally, in 1969, a neurosurgeon at Columbia University discovered, in a set of x-rays taken two years previously by another physician, that several of the cervical vertebrae had bone growths that were pressing on and destroying the sensory nerves entering the spinal cord. This condition very likely resulted from the many years of pressure placed on that area by the posture he assumed while playing. He was told that in six months more time the nerves would have been permanently destroyed. He immediately had surgery to remove the excess bone. Although the nerves were saved, the operation not only failed to improve the use of his left hand, it impaired his use of the right hand as well! As one might imagine, the following months were very difficult. He had to teach himself to play again and it was a very discouraging business. It was also difficult to listen to him struggling so hard to regain his lost skills. He would comp for hours with Count Basie records and attempt

o play lines he had transcribed from other guitarists, Pat Farlow in particular. Much to my surprise, and perhaps to his as well, within less than a year he was back in harness, mostly doing jingles, and then he joined the Billy Taylor band on the David Frost TV show. He must have felt that this was the ultimate test because some years later one of his friends told me it was the hardest job in town. He also did a club gig with Lena Horne during this time and an album with the Mel Lewis - Thad Jones big band ("Central Park North"). I think he was with the Taylor band for about a year before he left, feeling that he couldn't cut it anymore. He told me that it was just too hard. He continued to do jingles and a little studio work but for the most part earned his living by teaching.



Barry's Vermont stream. Find Barry!

He moved from Manhattan to Queens in the early 50's when he was married briefly to singer Marcy Humes. He married again in 1957 to Nancy Albam. He and Nancy owned a home in the Jamaica area of Queens, an area rich with jazz musicians. Eventually, in the early 60's, he tired of battling the interminable construction delays he encountered on the freeways to the city, so they moved to Irvington, about 20 miles up the Hudson from the city. Finally, around 1975 he sold his Irvington home and he and Nancy moved to Vermont. For many years they had owned a rough log cabin beside a mountain stream, which they used as a weekend retreat and summer vacation spot. They loved the area, so they settled in nearby Hennington from where he commuted to New York to teach and do the occasional recording session or jingle. They continued to use the cabin, and chances are if you

stopped in on a sunny day, you would find him sitting on a rock by the stream practicing and drinking coffee. This, in fact, is one of my son's most vivid images of him. He also had students come to the cabin on weekends for lessons. A couple of kids drove all the way down from Montreal! And I was floored recently when talking with Frank Varela, a very fine Hartford guitarist, to discover that Frank had been one of Dad's "cabin students."

Dad loved to have his friends up to the cabin to breathe the clean Vermont air and cook steaks on the stone barbeque his brother Don had built. He had a little woodshed where he would practice if the cabin was occupied but it would get cold out there in the fall. To solve this problem, Don hauled up from McDonald an old cast-iron stove taken from a caboose (his father once worked on the railroad). Uncle Don, who is "mechanically gifted" (as a geneticist, I find the distribution of traits in my family to be very interesting), put the stove together and installed it in the shed but for some reason didn't vent it. Juanita Giuffre tells about the raw October day when husband Jimmy and Dad were jamming in the shed as it poured rain outside. Once she looked out to see Jimmy, head and flute sticking out of the doorway into the rain, while Dad sat inside, comping away, completely oblivious to the smoke filling the shed and pouring out the door from the un-vented stove! Who needs Carnegie Hall!

Dad was an enormously versatile musician whose work ranged from the composition and performance of the music for an award winning cinematic adaptation of the children's book "A Snowy Day" to a Carnegie Hall performance of a modern composition for electric guitar and cello featuring renowned Russian cellist Miristlav Rostropovich and the London Philharmonic. His ability to play all types of music also led to an enormous variety of recording work. He always dreaded the dates that required a banjo but I wonder what he would have thought about the jazz banjo some of the guys are playing now. He did a lot of rock & roll work but I was surprised when R & R guitarist Al Anderson, who was with NRBQ, wanted to talk about Dad's career as a rock & roll guitarist. I was astounded! I knew he did R&R dates - many with kids who were hoping to make it big - but had no idea anybody identified him with rock. It was a short conversation because I knew very little about this other than 1) at the height of Beatlemania, he sent me a photo of himself, bewigged and holding a Fender guitar, with the caption, "I Play the Beatle's Method," an obvious

spoon on ads that appeared in trade magazines at the time and 2) one problem he had on these dates was getting the "right sound." His big, full sound just didn't cut it. His former student and good friend Howard Collins apparently had the same problem for one day Howard showed up with an ugly green plastic guitar for them to share on the rock dates. Problem solved ... for about \$25.

Several years before his death in 1983, Dad accepted a teaching position at the New England Conservatory in Boston at the invitation of its director, Gunther Schuller, but he continued with his students in New York. He would take the train to NY early Monday, teach Monday and Tuesday, return to Bennington on Wednesday, then drive to Boston on Thursday and return either Friday night or Saturday morning. Even when he was ill he maintained this schedule. Sounds to me as if he was on the road again!

In spite of the fact that he didn't think he could play - he told me he had regained about 60%-70% of his ability-I would have a hard time distinguishing between the pre-and postoperative Barry Galbraith. As a teaching technique, he would copy jazz lines from records and then go over them with his students. Of course he had to play them to ensure that they were accurate. One day I overheard him playing some Pat Martino lines in preparation for a lesson and if it weren't for the fact that Pat had a rhythm section on his recordings, I wouldn't have known who was who! Nevertheless, he stopped playing when I entered the room. He really didn't want me to hear how "poorly" he played.

Dad was a quiet man, and a private man, not a self-promoter. As a consequence, not much is known by the public about his private life which, of course, would be OK with him. He was basically a shy person who least of all wanted to be in the limelight. He was very uncomfortable if asked to play at social gatherings. I think maybe he felt that that would be showing off-a trait for which both his wife and close friends gently kidded him. I don't know if he appreciated how truly talented he was. If so, he never gave the slightest indication of it, always minimizing his skills and praising those of other players. When I was a kid I would ask him who was a better musician, X or Y, like who's better, the Yankees or the Dodgers. And even though I knew he had his favorite players, his answer would always be something like "I like the way X does this and Y is really good at doing that." He was a non-judgmental person who always was able to see the good in

a person or a situation. His life philosophy was along the lines of take what life gives you and make the most of it. I've mentioned his patience, which I, as a kid, could stretch to exasperation but never beyond. There were few things he couldn't tolerate unless it was pretension, ostentation, or bigotry and he could spot a phony a mile away. But he could find humor in almost any situation, even his terminal illness. Though he was a man of few words, he was very thoughtful and had a keen insight into life. He was an avid reader and he loved to tell humorous stories. I remember most the great laughs we always seemed to have when we got together.

I would guess that not too many people knew of his love of sports. He was on the high school football team until the coach caught him and a friend smoking on the way to practice. He loved tennis and taught me how to play. We always had our tennis racquets whether we were in the city or on the road. I played on my college tennis team and once challenged him to a game so I could show him how it should be played. He hadn't touched a racquet in years but he still beat me! In my defense I should point out that he had recently read Stephen Potter's book, "Gamesmanship," and he employed Potter's principles in such a skillful manner that he kept me either unnerved or laughing uncontrollably for the entire match. He was an avid Giants football fan and for many years had season tickets, along with a bunch of other musicians, until the Giants moved from Yankee stadium. When I came down from Connecticut each Thanksgiving, one of the guys would give up his ticket so I could go to the game. Among the musicians were his great friend Milt Hinton and Milt's wife Mona, trumpet player Bernie Glow, pianist and good friend Moe Wechsler, drummer Mel Lewis-he and Mel would drive in together when they were neighbors in Irvington-french horn player Jimmy Buffington, pianist and vibraphonist Eddie Costa, and a handful of others who I can't remember. He got hooked on the Giants when they had their great teams of the late 50's and then suffered through the next twenty-years with teams that sports writers describe as "hapless." He could hardly wait to see how they would manage to lose the next game. I always thought it was too bad that he died just as the Giants were on the verge of becoming a winner under coach Bill Parcells. Although, on second thought, they would not have given him the laughs he enjoyed in the previous two decades.

In his later years he thoroughly enjoyed study-

ing and playing classical guitar and lute. When Julian Bream came to this country, he would give Julian lessons in jazz guitar (according to Dad, Julian loved playing "Honeysuckle Rose"), and Julian, in turn, instructed him in the art of playing classical guitar. One of his favorite weekend gigs was to play classical guitar at a Playboy Club that was near his Irvington home. He explained that he liked it because "nobody listens to me so I can play anything I like, do a lot of experimentation, and get a good feel for the room!" A year or so before he passed away, he received a request to come down to the city to play the lute in an ad that was to be produced. By this time he wasn't accepting many commercial things, but the opportunity to play the lute, which had been sitting untouched in the corner for some time, was irresistible. He put the lute in the basement so that it would absorb some much needed moisture, bought new strings for it, and practiced assiduously for the weeks preceding the date. He was really looking forward to this date and finally the day arrived and he drove down to the city, entered the studio, and, as he was tuning the lute, one of the ad agency guys—he was often bemused by the Mad. Ave types—came over to him with a puzzled look on his face.

"What's that instrument you're playing? You were supposed to bring a lute."

"Why, this is a lute."

"A lute? That's not a lute! A lute is one of those little guitars they play in Hawaii!"

Well, they sent out for one of those little guitars from Hawaii and he did the date. What the hell, he had already made the trip and a buck's a buck!

Regrettably, as it turned out, the neurological damage was to be the least of Dad's health problems. He was a very heavy smoker and he started very young. He smoked at least three packs of unfiltered cigarettes a day but he must have been at least a little concerned about his intake since he frequently used a cigarette holder equipped with a filter. It is difficult to find an unposed picture of him without a cigarette either in his mouth or burning on a nearby music stand. A memory that sticks with my oldest daughter is the image of his fingers; strong, calloused and stained with nicotine. In the later years of his life he stopped smoking but only according to his own wryly stated definition: "When I finish my pack of Luckies I smoke only one pack of filtered cigarettes and a bowlful of pipe tobacco now and then to fill in the gaps." The predictable outcome was lung cancer to which he succumbed after fighting gamely for a year and a half following diagnosis. He

maintained his sense of humor (he attributed his illness to "too much high livin'!") and he had an astoundingly upbeat, positive attitude and life perspective throughout this painful struggle. His physician marveled at his attitude and told me that he was the most remarkable patient he had ever treated. This kind of high regard was not limited to his physician; in many respects his humanity as well as his talent was obvious to those who knew him well. Everybody had glowing words for him as a person and as a musician. How many times had I heard him described as a "musician's musician." It was a privilege to be his son; he provided me with experiences and parenting, under very difficult circumstances, that I deeply appreciate as an adult. And he certainly left a lasting impression on my children who knew him, not as a talented musician, but as "gramps," who was really mellow and who liked to play the guitar, smoke his pipe and cook hot dogs over a wood fire.

*Photos courtesy Don Galbraith
— JIG Thanks Allan Johnson for
his help in this article.*

GALBRAITH BOOK IN THE WORKS

Jim Lichens has recently completed a book of Barry Galbraith's arrangements. As soon as it becomes available we'll let you know how to order it. Our thanks to Jim for providing the arrangement of "Alone Together."

IN THE MAY ISSUE JIG TALKS TO 12 YEAR OLD JAZZ GUITARIST JULIAN LAGE



MY FRIEND BARRY... *Remembering Barry Galbraith*

By: Allen Johnson, Jr.

When I was a young man, I had the good fortune to study jazz guitar for ten years with Barry Galbraith. The last three years of Barry's life, I produced the books and records of his Jazz Guitar Study Series. What follows are some of my memories of Barry, his approach to music, the guitar and to life.

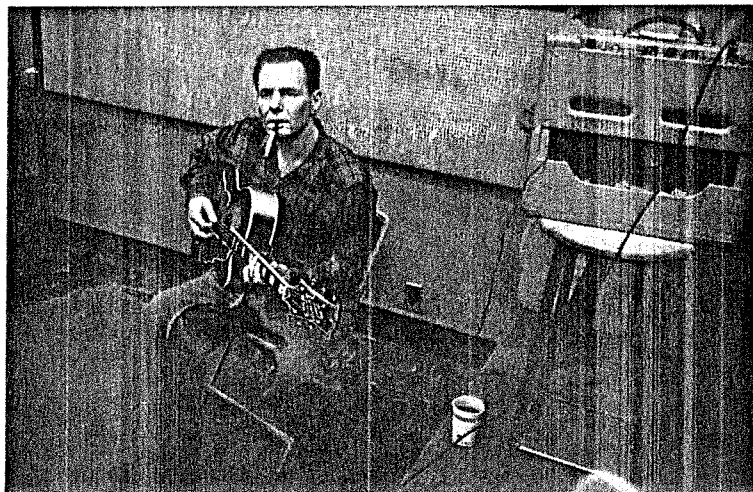
Although Barry made a beautiful "solo" album (GUITAR IN THE WIND), he had so little ego that he seldom got himself featured or fronted his own group. Anyone who asks the famous jazz artists of the forties, fifties and sixties, however, will soon find out in what high regard he was held as a musician. If you are lucky enough to have some of his records and a good pair of ears, you don't have to ask anyone to know he was one of the greats of jazz guitar. All you have to do is listen.

Barry was living outside of New York City when I first met him in 1970. I had decided I wanted to study jazz guitar and had asked Jimmy D'Aquisto to suggest a teacher. I had a D'Angelico New Yorker back then. (It was back in the days when you could still pick up a D'Angelico for a few thousand bucks.) It is not false modesty when I say that the guitar was considerably better than I was. It seems to me that I chunked out "Lady Be Good" for him with some changes I had learned as a teenager back in the fifties. This was probably about a third of my repertoire. Barry had had serious back surgery and felt it had slowed his hands down some and had moved into teaching. He taught mostly very advanced students and professionals. I can't imagine why he took me on. Maybe he saw some potential, or maybe he thought something like... "if I don't help this poor guy, he'll never learn how to play!" In any case, he agreed to give me lessons and this was the start of a long and interesting friendship.

I got a real break when Barry moved to Benning-

ton, Vermont. I was living in Middlebury, Vermont and Bennington, while three hours away, was still a whole lot closer for me than New York. I could drive down, have a three hour lesson and then drive back... a long day, but worth it. He would write out enough material to last me for two or three months and I'd go home and work on it.

Barry was a wonderful teacher. While he lived in Vermont, he commuted on weekends to a studio in New York City where he taught with Sal Salvador and Allen Hanlon (his oldest friend in the music business). For years Barry also commuted to Boston where he had the jazz guitar program at the New England Conservatory. He did a killer amount of driving. I was able to see him for lessons at his home in Bennington. Sometimes I would drive down with Cal McCarthy a buddy of mine (and a great player from Middlebury). Barry would usually treat us to some of his



Barry in a recording studio

Photograph by Mitt ©

homemade chili and, once in awhile, we would spend the night in his rustic little log cabin in the mountains near his home. This was a great place to hear stories about Barry's career in music. As far as guitar went, he had done it all.

I have a good ear and good taste in music but only fair dexterity. I have always had to try to make up in taste for what I lacked in chops. I couldn't have been with a better teacher for my purposes. Barry got me onto scales all over the neck which helped to get me reading, and his concept of chord voicing was the essence of simplicity and taste. Everything he gave me was musical and worth remembering, and everything worked. I remember showing him a difficult fingering I had worked out for some chord and asking if it was good. He said, "Nah. Too hard" and showed me an easier way to grab it. I asked him about Johnny Smith's chords which are difficult to grab, and he said somewhat dryly, "Yeah, but Johnny has great

hands." I took the point. Barry's approach was a practical acknowledgment that playing jazz guitar was difficult. Why make it any harder! This was very liberating, very pragmatic. If it works, use it. I quit trying to learn tortured fingerings. Barry never bothered with tablature or chord diagrams. He gave you the music with sparse but logical fingerings where needed. The result was that you learned to read. His hand appeared messy at first, but the way he wrote made so much musical sense that his hand written arrangements were really not too difficult to work out.

"Nah, too hard" was a typical Galbraith remark. Talk about a man of few words! Barry was laid back in the extreme. I think the biggest praise I ever got from him after working on something for a month was, "That's alright, Allen." My respect for Barry was such, however, that such an off-handed compliment from him would make me feel good for days.

Barry made several remarks to me about how hard it was to play jazz guitar. Once he commented on how much easier the piano was. Barry almost never said anything critical about anybody. An exception was Kate Smith, who evidently was a terribly difficult person (and I'm understating!) to work for. Barry was in the band on her radio show for a couple of years and was so unhappy that he gave up the guitar and started playing the piano. He was amazed at how much easier it was than guitar. The piano proved too mechanical for Barry, however. He found it boring and was drawn back to the more personal and versatile guitar.

Barry was a competent classical guitar player, and once I asked him which was harder, classical or jazz guitar. "Jazz," Barry said. "Not only do you have to play the guitar, then you have to go and make something up!" It now strikes me as odd that he made this remark. Never was there a more effortless improviser than Barry.

The high point of a lesson with Barry was getting to jam with him. He played so great, and his comping made you sound so good. The experience generated enough inspiration to last until the next lesson. I taped some of these jam sessions and later transcribed some of his solos and studied them. They were superb...perfect, complete mini-compositions.

Barry pointed out that many classical musicians couldn't improvise. One exception, who Barry greatly admired, was Julian Bream. He was Barry's favorite classical player. Barry said he played with tremendous intensity. Barry was friends with Bream and told me a story about jamming with him one night at a party. They were both drinking and as the evening wore on, Barry said that no matter what song they started out on they always ended up on "Making Mischief With You!" Though Barry didn't drink much when I knew him, I am sure he did his share as a young man.

Even though I produced Barry's Jazz Guitar Study Series, I was never able to get really complete biographical information about him. He just wasn't interested in documenting his past. It is known that in the early forties, he performed with Art Tatum, Hal McIntyre, bandleader Teddy Powell and Red Norvo. A highlight in Barry's career was playing with Claude Thornhill. He was in the Thornhill band both before and after an army stint during world war II. He toured with Stan Kenton in 1953 and accompanied Peggy Lee but gradually moved into studio work. As a top guitarist of the fifties and sixties, a list of

who Barry recorded with would be a who's who of jazz and popular music including such names as Bucky Pizzarelli, Benny Goodman, Gil Evans, Tony Bennett, Ella Fitzgerald and Tal Farlow. Another highlight in Barry's career was the work he did for George Russell.

When George got ready to record one of his intricate jazz compositions, he would call on Barry for the guitar part. Barry told me that George's music was

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If one were looking for a guitarist who played superb rhythm, jazz, classical, etc. their man would be

Barry. It was always easy and pleasurable to sit next to him on the numerous studio sessions we did together. Among the top jazz players of today are the many guitarists he has inspired. He was unsurpassed as a teacher and coach. Barry was a perfectionist who was diligent in writing out his arrangements and solos, and it is my belief that this body of work is the wonderful legacy he left behind for other guitarists to benefit from.

Don Arnone

”

the most challenging music he ever played on the guitar. He and George admired each other greatly. In fact, when Barry died, he left all of his music to George. I suspect that Barry may have been the only jazz guitar player who could have sat down and read George Russell's music at a recording session. For years, Barry was the guy they called in if there was trouble with a difficult guitar part in a recording session. Jimmy D'Aquisto told me a funny story that relates to Barry's reputation as a trouble shooter.



"Photograph by Milt ©"

Barry in a recording studio

For some reason Jimmy was at one of Barry's recording sessions. When they were on a break, Jimmy and Barry went into the next studio where another session was going on that included four top guitarists. I believe the names Jimmy mentioned were Tony Mottola, Bucky Pizzarelli, Don Arnone and Vinnie Bell. Anyway, evidently the session was not going well because Jimmy said it was really funny to see the look on these guy's faces when they saw Barry walk in. According to Jimmy, Barry said, "Relax fellas. I'm just visiting!"

For years, Barry was a member of a group of studio players known informally as the New York Rhythm Section. These four guys were Barry, Hank Jones on piano, Osie Johnson on drums and Milt Hinton on bass. Once again, when there was a really difficult session to be done, this was the group that got called in. They were on hundreds of albums. Everything from pop to the most sophisticated jazz. Milt Hinton and Barry were really good friends. A couple of years ago I bumped into Milt at the Atlanta Jazz Party and went up to introduce myself. I stuck out my hand and said, "Are you Mr. Hinton?" He said, "Naw, I'm Milt!"

When he found out that I was a friend of Barry's, he said, "Any friend of Barry's is a friend of mine!" We were soon reminiscing about our mutual friend, and he told me the following story:

Evidently Milt had had a really bad automobile accident when, as a young man, he was driving for Al Capone in Chicago. (The accident may have been a blessing in disguise because I doubt if a career working for Capone would have been as productive for Milt as music proved to be.) The accident upset Milt so much that he refused to drive again, and since Milt and Barry both lived on Long Island, Barry used to drive him to and from recording sessions. The funny thing was that Barry had a yellow Volkswagen beetle. Milt said that they would come out of the studio about eleven at night and start to load up. He said that by the time they got Barry's guitar and amp in the car and Milt's bass and had managed to crawl in themselves, there would usually be a small crowd on the sidewalk watching their contortions. Milt would stick his head out of the car as they drove off and say, "Now we're going 'round the corner and pick up the drummer!"

Barry's taste ran to playing very sophisticated music. Interestingly, the jazz player he most admired was Charlie Christian. He said that Christian's solos were brilliant and completely "unstudied." Though Barry admired many other players such as Tal Farlow (with whom he made an album) and Jimmy Raney, when it came down to listening to jazz guitar records, Barry, like me, usually wound up with Wes Montgomery or Jim Hall. He knew many of the great players personally. He said that Jack Marshall was one of the funniest jazz guitar players he ever met. According to Barry, Jack made the classic remark that ought to tickle every jazz guitar player. "The trouble with life is, it just doesn't lay right."

Barry also greatly admired players who were not guitar players. Two who come to mind are Bill Evans and Lester Young. Knowing I would never have great chops, Barry encouraged me to try to play more lyrical solos. He told me to listen to Lester Young. Barry said that when Lester Young first recorded "These Foolish Things" it had a huge impact on the jazz world. Barry said, "All of us went around trying to figure out how to do what Lester had done in that solo." He warned me that the trouble was that Lester recorded with some pretty bad groups and that you had to wade through a lot of junk to hear Lester's good stuff.

Barry's own sense of humor was wonderfully dry and laid back and would pop up in unexpected ways. Once he wrote an end-chord on a chord solo he had written out for me to learn. The chord stretched over five frets on the lower part of the neck with a high E on the first string at the twelfth fret... impossible to

play, but he had written in the fingering. Over the top note he had written "nose!"

Barry was a great admirer of Stromberg guitars. He once told me that he was responsible for introducing them into Nashville when he showed his Stromberg to Hank Garland and Hank ordered one. As jazz guitar became more and more amplified, Barry moved with the times. When I knew him, he was getting a wonderful acoustic-type sound playing an old Guild laminated archtop through a Polytone amp with a fifteen inch speaker. He liked an extra wide neck and would use no effects, not even reverb.

Around 1980, Barry helped when I brought Jimmy D'Aquisto to Vermont to work with Roger Borys in perfecting Roger's laminated jazz archtop: the B-120 (see drawing on page 30 of JIG's February '96 issue). Judging by the number of pros who now use the B-120, Roger, Jimmy and Barry really came up with something.



Barry in a recording studio with his Stromberg guitar

One of the accomplishments of my life which gives me great satisfaction is the production of Barry's Jazz Guitar Study Series. There are more well-known players than Barry, but due to his broad playing and teaching experience and the way his mind worked, nobody, and I mean nobody, had his clear understanding of jazz guitar. By encouraging him to write his study series and by producing it and assuring its continuing distribution, I know I have preserved some extremely valuable musical knowledge that would have otherwise been lost. All of the books and records of the series are good (there are five books and three CDs), but book III, The Guitar Comping book (and CD with Milt Hinton) is the definitive study of jazz guitar comping. If this claim sounds extravagant, all you have to do is listen to the CD, better yet, play along with it. You will quickly come to agree with me.

Another good thing is that working on the study series allowed Barry to remain productive even after his health failed. He finished the series not too long before he died.

My little publishing company was not capable of doing a good enough job of distributing Barry's books and records, so shortly after he died, I decided to sell the series to Jamey Aebersold. Jamey has done a good job with the series. I no longer have any financial interest in the study series. The satisfaction of keeping it available meant more to me than maintaining ownership. Anyone who wants to order any of Barry's books and/or CDs can do so through Jamey Aebersold, P. O. Box 1244, New Albany, IN 47151-1244 or toll free: 800/ 456-1388.

Barry was more than admired. He would be embarrassed to hear this but he was loved. He was a combination of so many wonderful qualities—innate kindness, humor and lack of ego, not to mention all that talent and knowledge. All of us who knew him feel very, very lucky.

Allen Johnson, Jr.
1080 Highway 11
Chelsea, Al 35043

PS. I would love to hear from anyone who wants to share a story about Barry.

Selected Recordings

Guitar in the Wind	Decca 9200
The Rhythm Section	Epic LN 3271
After Hours Jazz	Epic LN 3339
Gil Evans: Into the Hot	
The Tal Farlow Album	Norg 35-6

Selected Music

Two Part Invention	Aebersold
Fingerboard Harmony	Aebersold
Guitar Improvisation	Aebersold
Guitar Comping	Aebersold

PHOTO CREDITS: Thanks to David G. Berger Ph.d Director of The Milton J. Hinton Photographic Collection, for allowing JIG to use these photos.

Our Love is Here to Stay

Arr. by BARRY GALBRAITH

This is one of thirteen standards in the Barry Galbraith Guitar Solos Volume 2 book/CD by Mel Bay Publishing

By GEORGE and IRA GERSHWIN

F E7 Eb7^{b5}_{b9} Dm7 G13 C9 F/A

5 7 6 5 5 4 3 3 6 3 3 6 3 3 5

7 6 5 4 3 4 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

8 7 6 5 4 3 4 3 3 3 3 3 5

Ab13 Dbmaj9 Fmaj7 Dm7 Db7#5 C9sus4

6 4 3 2 1 8 10 10 6

5 5 4 3 2 5 7 10 10 7

4 3 2 1 1 10 9 8 8 8

Eb9#11 D9 G#o

8 6 8 6 5 6 6 8 10 12 10

6 8 6 8 10 9 12 12 10

5 8 10 6 8 10 9 10 10 10 11

Am7 D7 Gm7 C7 F7

13 11 11 10 10 9 10 8 11

12 10 10 8 8 8 7 8 8

12 11 10 11 10 9 8 9 8

LOVE IS HERE TO STAY (a/k/a Our Love Is Here To Stay) Music and Lyrics by GEORGE GERSHWIN and IRA GERSHWIN
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Bb6 Em11 A7 Dm11 G13 F#13 G13 C13(9)

Musical notation for the first system, including a treble clef staff with notes and a guitar fretboard diagram below it.

Am7 Abm7 Gm7 C9#11

Musical notation for the second system, including a treble clef staff with notes and a guitar fretboard diagram below it.

Ab13 G13 Ab13 G13 Db9 C9 C9

Musical notation for the third system, including a treble clef staff with notes and a guitar fretboard diagram below it.

F7b5 Bb7 Eb7 Ab7 Db7 Gb7 F7

Musical notation for the fourth system, including a treble clef staff with notes and a guitar fretboard diagram below it.

C9 Eb9#11 Bbm9 Eb9#11 E9 Eb9 D9 G#o

Bbm9

3 6 3 6 5 8 5 8 7 6 5 12 10

3 6 3 6 5 8 5 8 7 6 5 12 10

3 6 3 6 5 8 5 8 7 6 5 12 10

3 6 3 6 5 8 5 8 7 6 5 12 10

Am7 D13 Gm7 C13 F7

13 10 11 8 10 8 11

12 11 10 9 8 8 11

12 11 10 9 8 8 11

12 11 10 9 8 8 11

Bb6 Bm7 E7 Am7 D9 G9#5 C9 C13

8 13 10 8 5

7 12 9 8 5

8 7 6 0 10 9 8 3 0 3 0

8 7 6 0 10 9 8 3 0 3 0

F9 E9 Eb9#11 D9 Db9 C13(9) A7#9 D9 Db9#5

8 10 5 8 5

8 7 6 5 4 3

8 7 6 5 4 3 2 8 10 10

8 7 6 5 4 3 2 8 10 10

C9 C13 E7/F

8 5 1 3 1 4 7 10 13 16 19 0

8 5 1 3 1 4 7 10 13 16 19 0

8 5 1 3 1 4 7 10 13 16 19 0

8 5 1 3 1 4 7 10 13 16 19 0