

OSCAR PETERSON NIGHT AT IRIDIUM 6/26/11

Oscar Peterson (1925 -2007) was one of the prominent figures in jazz piano in the twentieth century. A native Canadian, Oscar's playing elements included a huge technique, a wide palette of pianistic colors, a strong soulful bluesy flavor, a rich harmonic language and a powerful swing feel. His tremendous speed of execution, combined with a deep lyricism and marvelous command of the piano and the jazz language, made Oscar a major force in jazz piano from the 1950's until he death in 2007. In this master class, we will focus on some of Oscar's solo playing live in concert in 1972.

Elements of "Oscar Style"

- 1) Big two-hand chords
- 2) Intricate superfast runs down and/or up the keyboard, ending on target note (descending)
- 3) Two- hand octave improv lines, one octave and two-octaves apart, often in one octave sequences
- 4) Blues riffs as part of RH jazz lines
- 5) Glissandos
- 6) Unexpected volume/touch changes for drama
- 7) LH stride style – 2 layers of melody
- 8) "Locked hands" chord improvs
- 9) Trills/tremolos to extend note value
- 10) 2 hand melody phrases with full tension supporting chords
- 11) First chorus two-hand chords, second chorus chorded melody or improv with 10ths stride style (starts a few measures before end of first chorus)
- 12) Chromatic slides to melody note
- 13) unexpected octave switching in melody
- 14) Occasional extra-tense two-hand chords
- 15) Multiple arpeggiations for grand sound
- 16) Use of altered dominant and diminished scales for Dom7 runs

Yesterdays – solo

Two hand melody w/inner supporting chords

Melody with slides and ascending/descending runs

3rd phrase played 3x

Rubato melody harmonized w/chords or alone with runs

Melody played again with varying intensities/moods

Stride comes in at end of first chorus

Chorded Melody with stride LH

Another chorus of stride LH interrupted by runs/line

Rubato melody as first chorus, switching melody harmonizations, moods, with multiple arpeggios

Ends on low single root note

Here's That Rainy Day – solo

Lush Two-hand intro

Melody in Oscar style

Stride with chorded melody starting before end of first chorus

Double time stride/RH improve ½ chorus

Back to original tempo stride melody 1/3 chorus

Rubato melody w/runs, reharms, two-hand lines and feel changes

Classical type ending

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