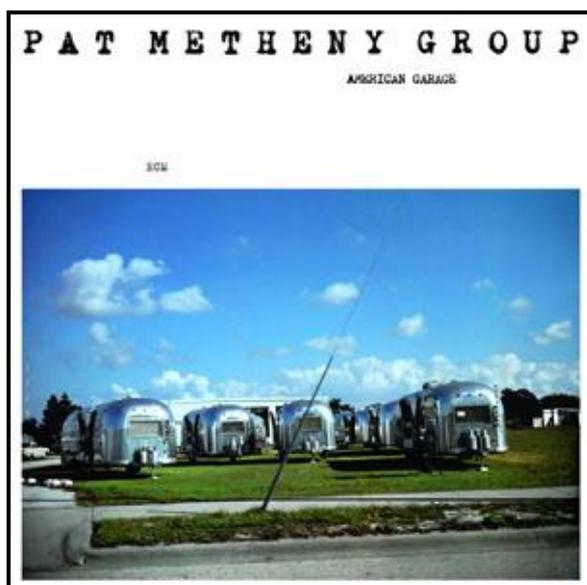


Pat Metheny 5

(Across the) Heartland-1979

Keywords:
Ostinato
Pentatonic
Diatonic
Syncopation
Polymetric
Motif
Motif Variant



American Garage reached No.1 in the US Billboard jazz charts as well as No.53 in the pop charts in 1980!

Key Features of Jazz Fusion:

Jazz Fusion began in the late 60s when jazz artists began 'fusing' Jazz with other musical styles e.g. Rock, Latin and African. New technologies previously shunned by Jazz artists were embraced. This included using synthesisers, electric guitars and basses and effects.

Jazz fusion pieces were often longer and featured a larger proportion of *pre-composed* music in preference to improvised solo sections. Many artists also experimented with odd time signatures and often took a more fluid approach to structure, rhythm and metre.

American Garage was the Pat Metheny Groups' second album. It represented Pat Metheny and Lyle Mays' most collaborative effort up until that point. Pianist Lyle Mays would go onto become Metheny's most frequent collaborator. *Heartland* is the second track on this 5 track album. The album also features Mark Egan on bass and Danny Gottlieb on drums. This quartet would form the nucleus of the band from 1977-1985.

Ensemble:

Pat Metheny	6 and 12 Electric and acoustic Guitar
Lyle Mays	Piano and synthesizers
Mark Egan	Fretless Electric Bass
Danny Gottlieb	Drums

Analysis

The structure of the piece is essentially **Intro + ABA**

Introduction 0:00-1:18	4/4 syncopated semiquaver keyboard ostinato x4 . Opening melody performed on electric guitar- G major pentatonic-motif X . Polymetres feature from 0:41. 0:41 Second melody based on irregular 7 note Motif Y . It is imposed on the 4/4 ostinato creating a polymetric effect.
Section A1 1:18-2:36	Ostinato ends, drum beat starts, 4/4 groove established. Inventive jazz chord progressions now accompany guitar melody. Bass alternates between providing harmonic and melodic accompaniment. At 2:02 distinctive 4 bar <i>Diatonic G Bm7 Em7 Bm7 Am7 Bm7 C D</i> (I-III-VI-II-II-III-IV-V) chord pattern heard twice with guitar playing a variation of motif X=X₁
A1 Coda- 2:18-2:36	Sense of coda to A section. Chromatic ensemble figures repeated twice to end section.
Section B 2:36-4:55	Ostinato returns, chords superimposed on top. A range of tonalities explore: G myxolydian (5 th mode) with chords F C and G as well C minor. Acoustic guitars introduced. Section climaxes (4:42) with Latin piano flavours Cm, Cm(ma7), Cm7 before Eb, F, G crescendo and piano glissando into guitar solo.
Section A2-Guitar Solo	The distinctive G Bm7 Em7 Bm7 Am7 Bm7 C D (I-III-VI-II-II-III-IV-V) from A1 returns and is used as a basis for the guitar solo. This repeats 9 times. The final 4 times the guitar restates Motif X₁ with the guitar restating motif X 1 st final is used in this section to form harmonic foundation for the guitar solo.
A2 Coda-6:29	Chromatic ensemble figures return again twice to close the piece.

Timeline:

0:00-1:14

The piece begins with a 1 bar ostinato on the keyboard repeated 4 times. It is a syncopated 4/4 semi quaver pattern emphasising the last semiquaver of each beat. It only uses the tonic and dominant notes G and D.

Keyboard ostinato



This ostinato provides the foundation for the opening 1:14 of the piece and returns in Section B.

Introduction Melody 1

The opening melody is performed monophonically on the guitar (0:10) answered by the bass. Unusually this melody is 6 bars long and repeated twice. The melody is pentatonic in G major.



Introduction Melody 2

At 0:41-1:13 the guitar and bass perform a **7 note descending motif** in octaves. This asymmetric figure is played across the bar line giving a **polymetric** effect against the 4/4 ostinato.



The cymbals crescendo before a sustained Gma9 chord followed by a Cma7 at 1:13-1:18 when the ostinato stops. The drums fill over the sustained chords before commencing a drum beat at section A1.

Section A1-

1:18-2:36

Trademark Metheny composition at its finest. The section begins with a G pedal in the bass before signature lyrical melodies seamlessly flow over inventive and syncopated jazz chord patterns and rhythms. Note how the drums emphasise the guitar melodies and the bass alternates between providing harmonic support and accompanying the guitar melodies.

1:52 a variation of opening melody, motif X, is heard on the bass twice, this time in a two bar fashion rather than over the original 6 bar format. (Bass 4 octaves below written pitch)



The guitar then echoes this melody at 2:00 in an extended format over a new symmetrical 4 bar chord pattern:

2:01-Perfomed on Guitar							
I	III	VI	III	II	III	IV	V
G	Bm ⁷	Em ⁷	Bm ⁷	Am ⁷	Bm ⁷	C	D

Motif X1 (variant)

Following this there is then a sense of coda. Syncopated chromatic ensemble figures repeated twice to end this section.

Section C 2:37

The ostinato returns and the drums return to playing atmospherically. Chords are superimposed over the ostinato to imply a range of tonalities and key centres. Chords F, C and G are frequently used over the ostinato giving a Mixolydian flavour whist a C minor tonality is also implied at times. Metheny uses *violining* on the guitar (playing the string(s) with the volume turned down then turning it up giving a soft crescendo violin bow effect). Metheny introduces acoustic and 12 string guitars.

The piano plays chords Cm, Cm(ma7) and Cm7 in a Latin like fashion towards the end of this section (4:43) before a climatic Eb F G progression in whole tones (4:48), with a cymbal crescendo to lead to the guitar solo.

Guitar Solo 4:57

The ostinato stops and the drums return to playing a 4/4 beat. The 4 bar chord sequence briefly heard at A1 returns to provide the foundation for the guitar solo.

I	III	VI	III	II	III	IV	V
G	Bm ⁷	Em ⁷	Bm ⁷	Am ⁷	Bm ⁷	C	D

This sequence is repeated 9 times with Metheny recapping the main theme X₁ four times ad.lib. to end (the last an octave up). This is the same melody used in section B which is also based on the opening melody:

I	III	VI	III	II	III	IV	V
G	Bm ⁷	Em ⁷	Bm ⁷	Am ⁷	Bm ⁷	C	D

Motif X1 (variant)

The same coda at the end of A1 then returns to end the piece.

Musical Elements:

Melody

The melody is predominantly pentatonic (root, 2, 3, 5, 6) based on **2 motifs X and Y**. It features heavy syncopation and metric displacement against the ostinato. This technique is often used in African music. When the ostinato and static harmony give way to jazz chord progressions, the melody becomes more chromatic and adapts to follow the shifting key centres. Metheny restates motif X at the end of the piece, before the chromatic ensemble figures close the piece.

Structure

Intro+A(coda) B A (coda)

Rhythm and Metre

Although predominantly in 4/4 with a steady tempo, the syncopations and metric displacements in the melody and ensemble figures often make this pulse hard to detect. A steady 4/4 beat is only really established as late as the guitar solo!

Harmony and Tonality

The Introduction features static harmony with a G5 chord implied by the ostinato. The B section then uses sophisticated syncopated jazz chord progressions that follow the melody. When the ostinato returns at B, chords are superimposed over the ostinato, notably chords F, C, G and C minor. Chords Eb F G, each a whole tone apart are used as a climax to the B section.

The guitar solo then features the distinctive 4 bar chord sequence first heard in A1:

I	III	VI	III	II	III	IV	V
G	Bm ⁷	Em ⁷	Bm ⁷	Am ⁷	Bm ⁷	C	D

Dynamics

Many of the dynamics have been compressed during the recording process. All of the instruments, bar the drums and acoustic guitars used in section C, are electric and at the mercy of amplification. The drums however, usually the determining factor in dynamics, are played from a quiet atmospheric dynamic to a medium dynamic. This is consistent with the jazz fusion idiom that seldom uses heavy dynamics.

Instrumentation and timbre

Metheny, ever the advocate of new sounds and technology, uses clear chorus inflected guitar sounds for the melodies (an effect that makes notes slightly 'wobble' and sound larger than they are). He also uses more traditional folk-like 6 and 12 string acoustic guitar sounds both strummed and picked in the B section.

