FROM JAMERSON TO SPENNER

A SURVEY OF THE MELODIC ELECTRIC BASS THROUGH PERFORMANCE PRACTICE

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PREFACE

> Every record back in the 1960s was signified by the bassline. You could just play the bassline to a song, just the bassline, and nine out of ten times, the listener could tell you what the song is. It was the beginning of an era where arrangers and producers and musicians were just trying to make something different. You know, if every record sounds the same from the bassline, then you can't name the song.

Phone interview, Chuck Rainey, Nov. 28, 2008

The melodically exaggerated electric bass playing that is common to the popular music of the 1970s has always fascinated me. These roaming basslines, which refused to stick to the rigid root/fifth structure of the past and even trespassed into the ranges traditionally occupied by the guitar and piano in the sonic landscape, will always represent the hallmark of that decade's best music, at least from my perspective as a bass player myself. Yet the specific features of this bass playing have received relatively little attention from scholars and performers alike. Through the years, I have discussed the melodic bass style with both my academic colleagues and other professional musicians, and while many people are familiar with the style and the era, no one can convincingly account for all of the elements involved. Descriptions like *overplaying*, *soloistic playing* and *busy playing* crop up often, but it is hard to dig any deeper. So where did this idiosyncratic style come from, and what exactly comprised it?

When I started my own career in music in the late 1980s, the bass playing convention in popular music had fallen back from its 1970s extremes to focus once again on the root of the chord, played in an accurate, tight, bass-drum oriented rhythm, no matter the particular genre (except for jazz, where melody and rhythm have always represented potential expressions of the bass's musical

independence). Personally, I never felt comfortable with this 'tight-with-the-bass drum' decade, but fortunately, styles continuously change (along with music genres), and the acid jazz movement of the early 1990s restored many of the playful elements of 1970s bass playing to their rightful prominence. Electric bass players were again 'allowed' to play more freely; however, the naive, cheerful and creative abandon of that first phase was gone. The style (and the mood) had become somewhat stiffer, and maybe more academic and clever as well.

In my own conservatory education, academic courses such as Musicological Theory and Method, Aesthetic Subjects and Science, and Musical Research did not exist, though they are now important aspects of the bachelor and master programs at the University of Agder, where I teach bass performance studies. My knowledge of music, both practical and theoretical, then, derives entirely from the performing tradition, while today's bachelor's and master's degree students possess much more academic ballast than I did upon graduating in the early 1990s. The new breed of performing musician that is on the way from universities in Norway will be able to approach music from both sides of the table, the scholarly and the performance-based, and they will take up the ongoing discourses of previous generations of musicians with more open minds.

In my two decades as chair of bass performance studies at the former Agder Conservatory of Music, now the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Agder, I have taught with a combination of existing bass method books and improvisational material as well as my own material, a fair amount of which is transcriptions from the melodic electric bass era of the 1960s and 1970s. Among the many reasons for using this material is the fact that the students, by listening to and transcribing the basslines from that period, really do improve their melodic sense and their ability to play more freely. They learn various playing techniques; they encounter new material for their own improvisation; they acquire a better knowledge of the fingerboard; and they gain the confidence to explore the instrument in ways that my generation of bass players did not, due to the

perceived ‘old-fashionedness’ of this melodic approach. The present thesis is my attempt to explore and even evoke an era of bass playing to which we all owe a great deal of gratitude, and from which we can glean an equally great deal of insight—into the electric bass itself, the many ways of playing it, and even the art of popular music altogether.

Throughout this thesis, I have attempted to conduct my research within a performance practice I have termed *the melodic electric bass*, dividing my study into three main sections. In Part I, chapter 1, I provide a detailed account of the background for my interest in the subject and accordingly present my hypothesis. Simultaneously, I position my research within the field of popular music studies and review the various discourses that have informed this discipline. In chapter 2, I describe my methods as well as three main approaches toward my subject—the analytical, the historical and the ethnographical, with a special focus on the processes of transcribing music.

In Part II, ‘The Melodic Electric Bass—Establishing Style as Performance’, which contains the bulk of my main musical research, I start with a presentation of the instrument behind the melodic approach (chapter 3), and in the following, I address one important aspect of the melodic electric bass as a performance practice: I ask whether it should be comprehended as a genre or as a style of playing (chapter 4). I end Part II with an elaboration of twenty bass specific features used during the era of research (chapter 5).

In the final section of the thesis, Part III, ‘Towards a Performance Aesthetic’, I consider two tendencies that relate to bass players: the studio player and the band player (chapter 6). This paves the way for my focus on the aesthetics of the melodic electric bass in chapter 7, where I turn to four key performers as case-studies. Chapter 8 prompts me to identify reasons for the preliminary termination of the melodic era, before I arrive at my conclusions in chapter 9.

PART I – PROJECT OUTLINE

1 FOCUS AND PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

1.1 Introduction and background

Back when I was 12 years old and looking through my LP collection of children's music, I decided I was ready for a musical change. 'Stian med sekken', 'Colargol' and 'Simen i Tegneland'[1] just did not compare to my friends' collections of Gasolin, Uriah Heep and Abba. I convinced my father, a high school lecturer with limited interest in popular music, to take me to the local supermarket to expand my record collection. I had heard of a band called 'Bitls', and I saw it as a ticket out of my musical purgatory. After a few minutes in the store, there I was, looking at four bearded pedestrian hippies in a

[1] Children's 1970s TV shows with LP spin-offs.

crosswalk: it was the cover of the Beatles' *Abbey Road.*[2] It was music I'd never heard before—'Oh! Darling', with its repeating piano figure, powerful drums and raw, hoarse vocals; the somewhat peculiar and childlike 'Octopus's Garden'; the lovely 'Here Comes the Sun'. And the opening cut, 'Come together'—what a song! But the music that really made an impression on me was in 'Something', the beautiful George Harrison ballad. I didn't pay much attention to the lyrics or to the vocals, or even the guitar solo—among Harrison's finest work—but instead to the dark, subtle, dancing bass line that wove the chords together so naturally. From that moment on, I was completely taken with the bass guitar.

Even if, at the time, I had never seen the instrument and knew nothing about it, I nevertheless started to listen to music in a different way from that moment; differentiating the instruments in the soundscape[3] and paying most of my attention to the bass. So what was so special about Paul McCartney's bass playing on 'Something'? What is it with a bass line that can attract attention from a 12-year-old kid and make him memorize and sing the whole line? At the time, back in the late 1970s, knowing nothing about bass playing, I would not have known what a bass player was supposed to play either. For me it made perfect sense that the bass should play its own melody together with the vocals—because it sounded great! I wasn't aware of the original role of the bass instrument, or its history, development and constant style changes. I was a *tabula rasa*, ready for anything.

The next time I heard a bassline that made that much of an impact on me was 1985, when I stumbled over another game-changing

---

[2] Capitol Records 82468. The recordings' catalogue numbers used throughout this thesis are mostly taken from the *All Music Guide* (allmusic.com); because most of the songs appear on compilation albums, repackaging projects and re-releases, I generally use the original numbers.

[3] First used by R. Murray Schafer in The Tuning of the World (Schafer, 1977), 'soundscape' signifies the sounds that surround us at all times. Here, of course, it refers specifically to the mix of sounds on audio recordings and/or a particular matrix of performed sounds in a live context.

record, this time in my high school music room. The record was a double LP with a yellow cover and a picture of something that looked like the sun: it was called *Jesus Christ Superstar*. I put it on, and I was promptly transported. By that time I had started playing the electric bass, and what captured me most, in addition to the intriguing libretto and fantastic vocals, was the varied, purely musical bass playing of Alan Spenner. Spenner was in fact not credited on the cover, so I did not discover his name until years later, when I also learned that he had died in 1991. But the sheer joy of his bass playing came through as if he were smiling at me from across the room.

These two memorable electric bass listening experiences, both by English musicians born in the 1940s who started on guitar, frame my interest to this day. In the time since I encountered them, however, that interest has grown and deepened considerably.

1.2 The melodic approach

In a rather short period of time, from the middle of the 1960s to the late 1970s, an unorthodox role for the electric bass guitar in popular music rose and fell. As late as the early 1960s, the convention for electric bass playing remained simple basslines focused on the root and fifth of the given chord—occasionally, the performer might introduce repeated eighth notes into a song's texture. This function had been long defined by players of the double bass,[4] the bass instrument of choice in Western popular music during the first part of the twentieth century. This instrument was hard to hear, hard to play and hard to carry around; given the extremely low frequencies it produced, it was generally meant to be sensed rather than actually listened to.[5] As popular music transitioned from strictly live

[4] Also known as the upright bass, string bass or contrabass: the big, wooden 'doghouse' used in classical music since the eighteenth century and in jazz up to the present.

[5] For a thorough description of the double bass's role in jazz, see Berliner (1994).

situations to the ever-more-popular phonograph, the double bass stayed in the background, even as drum sets got louder and guitar players began to amplify their own instruments. When the Fender Precision bass entered the market in the beginning of the 1950s to relieve the aching backs of the upright bass players around the world, a new moment was at hand—here was a bass one could *listen to*—but nothing happened right away, at least according to the music charts.[6] It would take a full decade for the new instrument to acquire a voice of its own in the popular music of an entire era.

A melodic approach on the double bass has much of its historic origins in the jazz domain, especially within the contexts of smaller combos, trios and quartets, where the individual musician has a greater responsibility for improvisational lines, and where the roles are seen as more free than in bigger band settings. Slam Stewart, Jimmy Blanton and Oscar Pettiford in the 1930s and 1940s, and Paul Chambers, Charles Mingus and Scott LaFaro in the 1950s and 1960s were all excellent soloists and highly influential in their melodic approach on the double bass. But despite the jazz tradition of performing improvised solos on the instrument, its role as an accompanying instrument in popular music, providing the root and the fifth or walking lines on the chords, did not change until the beginning of the 1960s, when four players from two different continents started to treat the new Fender Precision Bass very differently from what was considered the convention.

One of these players spent most of his time in a basement studio facility in Detroit, Michigan, as a member of Motown's recording band 'The Funk Brothers'. James Jamerson, originally a jazz upright bass player, started to record for the relatively newly founded record company in the late 1950s.[7] In the early 1960s, he switched to a

[6] For an overview of the *Billboard* Hot 100 charts between 1951 and 1982, see Appendix B.

[7] It is not clear when Jamerson made his first recording for Berry Gordy, but according to Alan Slutsky, aka 'Dr Licks', his first Tamla session was for the Miracles in 1959, playing on the track 'Way Over There' (Licks, 1989).

Fender Precision, on which he recorded almost exclusively for the next two decades, even as his career began its decline. In the same period, a studio guitar player in Los Angeles picked up a Precision bass during a recording session when the bass player failed to appear. Carol Kaye quickly demonstrated an ability to both read and invent very distinctive basslines on the spot, and she soon became one of the most sought-after studio bass players in Los Angeles. Her busy, Latin-inspired, funky playing was in many ways like Jamerson's, but her sound was different, and she used a pick. She even played several Motown recording sessions, when the Detroit record company started to cut tracks in Los Angeles in the mid-1960s.[8] At the time, record companies did not credit studio players on their album covers, so Jamerson and Kaye remained invisible to the public eye. In England, on the other hand, a left-handed bass player did his part to bring the instrument to the masses. Paul McCartney was probably the most famous bass player in the world at the time, and he was always quick to credit the 'Motown bass player' as his biggest influence;[9] by 1965 or so, one can clearly hear that his basslines are far busier and more melodic than the standard pop bass at the time. The last player in this 'quartet' of innovative bass players was also based in England, playing for the band Cream. With the band's record sales of approximately thirty-five million copies in mind,[10] Jack Bruce clearly did his share of bringing his busy bass playing out to the world.

Each of these players, first and foremost, broke with the bass's traditional role in the pop song's soundscape. Instead of playing the root and the fifth and repeating a one-bar motif or locked pattern, they played the instrument more capriciously—note values, pitches, and placements were executed differently all the time. No second verse, bridge or chorus bassline was played as a strict imitation of

[8] For additional information on Motown recordings, see, for example, George (1985).

[9] See, for example, Bacon (1995) or Jisi (2005).

[10] Several Internet sources cite this number of Cream's total sales; see, for example, a BBC News article from October 16, 2003 (BBC, 2003).

the previous one, and because of this simple fact, the instrument came alive in recordings compared to the staid bass of the preceding decades. This is a very demanding style of bass playing; one needs to know the fingerboard very well and to be fast, technically proficient, and well-versed in music theory, at least in terms of what notes relate to what chords. One also needs a high level of coordination between right and left hand and, above all, a great sense of time.[11] The best performers in this particular era of bass playing were instrumentalists of a very high caliber.

1.3 Hypothesis

Throughout this thesis I will attempt to identify, isolate and finally define a style of electric bass playing that I refer to as the *melodic electric bass*. I am fully aware of the somewhat artificial term 'melodic electric bass', and its questionable logical construction. I employ the term in this thesis to emphasize the stylistic features some bass players used during the 1960s and 1970s, as a concept of playing.

I will approach the challenges of this topic by asking the questions; how did the melodic style of electric bass playing come into being, and why did it disappear? In this two-part question, I intend to imply that:

(i) Something new happened with electric bass playing at a particular time, where this new style of playing had a profound musical impact on musical styles, as well as on the instrument's development, role and use in popular music genres;

(ii) A specific way of playing developed over time, which was gradually seen as a new consensual way of filling the bass role; and

[11] By 'time', I refer particularly to knowledge of rhythm manipulation.

(iii) This style eventually disappeared, paving the way for new approaches in bass playing.

While trying to define the beginning and end of the melodic era during the course of this study, I inevitably ran into certain problems. The rise and fall of musical genres and style preferences generally result from transitions that take place over years of performing practice; they are also informed by generally unanticipated social and cultural changes that affect music consumers and their interest in music. Nevertheless, we are able to mark some rather significant changes in bass performance in the mid-1960s. James Jamerson's signature style arrives at this time on a great number of Motown record productions, which in turn regularly appeared on the *Billboard* hit lists.[12] In 1965, the Beatles come out with *Help*[13] and *Rubber Soul*,[14] on both of which Paul McCartney breaks new ground with the electric bass. It is at this time, then, that I identify the beginning of the era of the melodic electric bass.

At the other end of the era, many things were happening stylistically as the 1970s drew to a close. Disco music had its big breakthrough via the movie *Saturday Night Fever*, which opened in 1977; here, bass players were expected to perform more repetitive, cyclical parts, and the 'disco bass' became known for the octave pattern heard in many of the genre's songs. An ironic ally in disco's crushing of the melodic bass was the punk band Sex Pistols, whose 1977 album *Never Mind the Bollocks*[15] appeared to advocate for a much more straightforward style of bass playing in rock as well. Lastly, the bass guitar's role in the pop song grew simpler in response to the introduction of drum machines and synthesizers in the recording

---

[12] According to the study made by Allan 'Dr Licks' Slutsky in the book *Standing in the Shadows of Motown*, in 1965, Jamerson 'exploded in a completely new direction'. (Licks, 1989, p. 38)

[13] 1965 Capitol 58222.

[14] Capitol 904531

[15] Virgin 8419372.

process. Producers could now record entire albums without the help or input of session musicians, which naturally gave some popular music genres a whole new instrumental character. A few years later, as Stan Hawkins (2002, p. 4) argues, the creation of MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) in 1983 allowed for yet other sounds—and, ultimately, a new sort of compositional thinking—that eventually worked against bass players who were interested in the 'roaming' style. Even the development of the 'slaphand' technique tended to deemphasize the melodic content of the bass part in favor of its rhythmic function. This confluence of events, together with the perpetual fluidity of styles and genres in popular music, led to the (temporary) demise of the melodic electric bass. There were, of course, bass players who still focused on this melodic approach, especially inside jazz, where melody has always been a key element, but, as I will discuss in chapter 1, the dominance of the bass as a melodic accompanying instrument in popular music disappeared and lost its significance.

Before I proceed further, I feel compelled to address the term *popular music*, which I rely upon to a large extent throughout this thesis. The term generally refers to a collection of musical genres that are easy accessible to the ordinary listener and that are set opposite Western European art music (henceforth called *classical music*). Any attempt to define the term more specifically in the immediate context would be redundant due to the complexity of the subject matter, the numerous angles from which we might approach it, the countless genres and subgenres we would need to account for, and the many interdisciplinary scholarly accounts that have already weighed in on this subject. I therefore advocate a 'common sense' understanding of the term.[16] By linking the melodic electric bass to popular music as a concept, however, I will now provide a short overview of some of the relevant scholarship, in order to create a fuller backdrop for my reliance upon it.

---

[16] See Roy Shuker (2008, p. 6).

1.4 The problematics of defining popular music

In *Oxford Music Online* (*OMO*),[17] Richard Middleton describes three perspectives upon popular music:

(i) Viewing popular music as a commercial product and measuring its consumption.

(ii) Viewing popular music in terms of its distribution in the mass media.

(iii) Seeing popular music in connection with social groups.

In the first two approaches, a song is categorized using quantitative factors such as sales figures and airplay, so that 'popular' comes to mean simply 'well-disseminated'. As Middleton argues in *Studying Popular Music* (1990), however, the reliability of sold items, the number of times a song is played on the radio, and a song's placement on the music charts are all in fact 'notoriously suspect' qualifications for its objective 'popularity'. In addition, all kinds of music are mediated and mass-distributed via recordings, radio/TV or the Internet, so this measure of popularity in fact has no bearing upon genre, which is one of the most obvious connotations of the term 'popular music' in common-sense parlance. In this way, social groups likewise fail to define the term musically, given the fluidity of alliances to genres (if popular music is mainstream music, what about when the alternative becomes mainstream—see punk, techno, hip-hop, and so on). In the end, popular music is often 'defined by negation'—that is, by what it is not—especially in relation to folk and art musics, for example.[18] This is perhaps the most familiar usage of the term.

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[17] Oxfordmusiconline.com

[18] See Tagg (1979), Brackett (1995), (Frith, 1996), or Shuker (2008).

Two of the three approaches described in *OMO* in fact coincide with Frans Birrer's four categories of popular music definitions, (Birrer, 1985, p. 104) as cited in Middleton (1990, p. 4):

> *Normative definitions*: Popular music is an inferior type.
>
> *Negative definitions:* Popular music is music that is not something else (usually 'folk' or 'art' music).
>
> *Sociologic definitions*: Popular music is associated with (produced for or by) a particular social group.
>
> *Technologico-economic definitions*: Popular music is disseminated by the mass media or in a mass market.

Middleton accepts these categories as important qualifications upon the various applications of the term, but he remains wary anyway:

> 'Popular music' (or whatever) can only be properly viewed within the context of the *whole musical field*, within which it is an active tendency; and this field, together with its internal relationships, is never still – it is always *in movement*. (R. Middleton, 1990, p. 7)

The *movement* Middleton refers to here is reflected on in Appendix B and in the development of the melodic and groove-based features used by the bass players on the *Billboard* hit lists. I will return to the fluidity of popular music genres in chapter 4.

In his PhD dissertation, *Kojak – 50 Seconds of Television Music*, Phillip Tagg (1979) discussed what popular music is, or, more likely, what popular music is not. Here, Tagg divided between music that is mass distributed—meaning popular music, and music that is not—meaning folk music and art music:

> Popular music is […] generally produced and distributed on a mass basis in the type of market in which the buyer(s) of a given musical product (i.e., a 'consuming' public) do not tend to be the same individuals as those producing, performing or selling the same product. (p. 30)

While Tagg acknowledged that both art and folk music can cross this line, becoming popular in their own right, he found that, in general, these three forms 'may be considered to exhibit traits, which [...] may be regarded as making any one of the three categories different from any of the others' (p. 34).

Finally, Roy Shuker (2008, pp. 6-7) identifies three main attempts to define popular music:

(i) definitions that emphasizes the term 'popular';[19]

(ii) definitions of *popular* as in the commercial orientation of the term;

(iii) identifying popular music from a musicological side by defining its musical and extra-musical characteristics.

Shuker concludes by saying that only a general definition of popular music can be offered, and that popular music

> 'consists of a hybrid of musical traditions, styles, and influences, with the only common element being that the music is characterized by a strong rhythmical component, and generally, but not exclusively relies on electronic amplification'. (ibid)

Like Shuker and others, I am comfortable in recognizing popular music as 'a shifting cultural phenomenon' (ibid, p. 7), and for that reason will move among pop, rock and jazz without troubling to qualify them each time with regard to what makes them 'popular music'. That said, some prefatory comments are provided that help address their differences. As the main goal of my thesis is to consider the role of electric bass playing in popular music, I will turn to various issues included in these genres, together with their relationship to popular music.

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[19] See, for example, Middleton (1990; Middleton 2000) or Kassabian (1999).

1.4.1 Pop versus rock versus jazz

The scholarly distinctions between *popular music* and *pop music* are confusing, as both are attached to the musical meta-genre as well as to very specific discourses about pop(ular) music aesthetics[20], the industry[21] and the musical identity. Hawkins argues that pop music 'is about shifting levels of styles, texts, genres and responses, and how these engender feelings' (Hawkins, 2002, p. 3), which can also be applied to any of the genres associated with the umbrella term 'popular music'.

Simon Frith describes pop music as a 'slippery concept' that is tidily differentiated from European art music and folk music but otherwise accommodates 'every sort of style' (Frith, 2001, p. 94). By using the term pop music in this connection, Frith shows that the two terms can be treated as having the same meaning, and that both can have inclusive characteristics. However, if popular music is considered as a generic expression, and pop music as the specific term when discussing a particular genre or a special song, then the two terms can be differentiated and used separately.

Popular musicologists of the 1970s and 1980s gave rock music precedence over pop music; as Simon Frith and Andrew Goodwin (1990, p. 275) observe at the end of that period:

> The majority of musicologists are happy to ignore pop music because they believe it is so obviously of no great aesthetic importance.

The ideological elevation of rock as an authentic expression, as opposed to pop as an inauthentic commercial entity, which some will have it, will be discussed more thoroughly in chapter 4. But for the meantime it is important to acknowledge the shift in popular music in the early 1960s, which Peter Wicke describes as leading to an

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[20] See, for example, Hawkins (2009a).

[21] See, for example, Frith (1981b, 1988).

'aesthetics of sensuousness' (1990, pp. 48-72). Wicke believes that the shift from popular music as an industry, with professional musicians and songwriters providing backing tracks for individual singers, to a music, composed and played by young amateur groups, led to a change in the understanding of how popular music was to be perceived. Wicke identifies the Beatles' release of 'Love me do'[22] in 1962 as a turning point, hence a popular music moving away from entertainment and dance alone (pop), to a music (rock), which is 'able to place one's own significance on the sensuous experience which it provides' (p. 72). In short, the understanding of rock as an autonomous expression of authenticity, compared with industrialized and mass-produced pop music, must be seen as a contradiction in terms, in that rock bands and rock artists are as dependent on the market and its will to receive the product made.[23]

Though I can only assume that jazz is meant to be included in Phillip Tagg's definition of popular music (he does not mention it explicitly), there has been a tendency in recent years to distinguish it from popular music. We might include among the reasons for this change jazz's entre into music conservatories in the 1960s as well as the establishment of academic jazz studies through organizations such as the International Association of Jazz Educators (IAJE; formed in 1968). In 'Constructing the Jazz Tradition', Scott Deveaux writes:

> There is a revolution under way in jazz that lies not in any internal crisis of style, but in the debate over the looming new orthodoxy: jazz as 'America's classical music'. As jazz acquires degree programs, piano competitions, repertory ensembles, institutes, and archives, it inevitably becomes a different kind of music – gaining a certain solidity and political clout, but no longer participating in the ongoing formulation of meaning; no longer a *popular* music in the best sense of the word. (Deveaux, 1998, p. 505)

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[22] Parlophone R4949

[23] This is also discussed further in Frith (1988, pp. 94-101) and Shuker (2008, p. 125).

The idea of American jazz moving towards an art form equal to its European counterpart is not a recent one. In a 1964 *Playboy* article[24] containing interviews with nine prominent American jazz musicians, the notion of jazz as 'America's classical music' was introduced by George Russell (Walser, 1999, p. 271). In the same article, the assumption of jazz as a genre that is melodically and harmonically influenced by European art music is discussed, and the panel is unanimous in the opinion that jazz leans towards an art music; not popular music. These thoughts, presented 48 years ago by the jazz community themselves, shows that the question of jazz as popular music or not has been a long ongoing discourse.

Nevertheless, Simon Frith still feels compelled to ask in 2007 'Is jazz popular music?' (Frith, 2007). Here, Frith compares the criteria used when defining jazz with the definitions approaching popular music, and by this, he argues that jazz definitely belongs to the popular music category. This has also been the common understanding of the genre. Yet he acknowledges that in academia, jazz studies differs greatly from popular music studies, for at least three main reasons:

(i) When the International Association for the Study of Popular Music (IASPM) was founded in 1981, popular music studies immediately became juxtaposed with rock music; something from which the jazz environment wanted to dissociate themselves.

(ii) The interest of scholars coming from cultural studies led to relatively less emphasis upon musicians and their craft, whereas extra-musical elements were engaged and 'commercial' became equated with 'popular'.

(iii) Jazz scholars did not want to be a part of this mixture of rock, commercialism and cultural studies.

[24] (Playboy, 1964). According to Walser (1999, p. 262), the article was written by Nat Hentoff.

Frith also observes that aestheticians and theorists worked within the domain of popular music studies, while instrumentally skilled teachers populated the academic side of jazz, which led to differing priorities. Still, Frith wonders: Why will the jazz world not regard jazz as part of popular music? Jazz trumpet player Wynton Marsalis responds as follows:

> People think I'm trying to say jazz is greater than pop music. I don't have to say that, that's *obvious*. [...] The two musics say totally different things. Jazz is *not* pop music, that's all. (Walser, 1999, p. 342)

Marsalis uses the term 'pop music' as opposed to 'popular music', yet, like Hawkins and others, seeing the terms as interlocking. This attitude expressed by Marsalis—seeing pop music as something of a lesser value than jazz—coincides with Frans Birrer's normative association of popular music with both technical and expressive inferiority; it also echoes the attitudes of members of the European art music community as well—see, for example, Theodor W. Adorno's confrontational essay 'On Popular Music' from 1941 (Adorno, 2002). This question of value has long informed distinctions between categories of music; according to Lucy Green:

> Various ideological positions have suggested that superior musical value emanates from certain properties, including universality, complexity or originality. (Green, 1999, p. 6)

Here, Green refers to the ideological discourse about classical music's autonomy and universal value, such that it 'would always be good for any people in any social situation at any historical period' (p. 6). In addition, an autonomous music is not supposed to have commercial obligations or entanglements, which would be some of the essence of popular music, and this is probably the core of the discourse. In Paul F. Berliner's work *Thinking in Jazz* (Berliner, 1994), the index entry for 'popular music' is even replaced with 'commercial music', indicating an ideological difference between the two musics. It is possible that Marsalis's view towards the discourse of jazz versus popular music can be seen as an ideological one,

transferring the attitudes of classical superiority to a jazz superiority. I don't believe this attitude towards popular music is symptomatic of jazz scholars or musicians, but it is nevertheless a far-reaching attitude inside the discourse of jazz as an art music.

1.4.2 Notions of value

In Performing Rites (1996), Simon Frith considers the qualities associated with various musical genres as resulting from a 'judgment of values'. With regard to popular music, three groups—musicians, producers, and consumers—will have often differing opinions about 'what is good or bad, relevant or irrelevant, "awesome" or "trivial"' (p. 6). As a musician myself, I endorse Frith's observation that 'musicians most routinely use value judgments, and use them to effect' (p. 52) What Frith refers to here is the choices musicians need to make at any time; what notes to play, what sounds to make, which style features to play, etc., summed up as:

> The values on which successful performances depend: values concerning collaboration, the ability to play with other people; the values of trust, reliability, a certain sort of professionalism. (p. 53)

Tiran Porter, one of my informants,[25] reveals some of the choices he had to make while performing with the Doobie Brothers:

> [My basslines] suited the song I was playing, without stepping on the vocals. Just enough underpinning to, like I said, to mesh in with the rhythm section, and play melodically but not to step on what was happening on top. Just to add an extra layer of orchestration.

Interview Porter, Santa Cruz, Dec. 8, 2007

In addition to their sense of their own parts, musicians draw conclusions about the genre as a whole, based on the time they have spent with their instruments and their experiences with the music

[25] My informants will be presented more thoroughly in section 2.3.

they have rehearsed, played and listened to. All of my informants expressed value judgments of some sort during their interviews. Carol Kaye recalled:

> You had the Surf rock, and then you had the Monkees, which is really boring music, and I decided to quit recording at the very top because of the Monkees. I just couldn't stand it anymore. It was like cardboard music, and I missed the jazz, you know.
>
> Interview Kaye, Los Angeles, Dec. 12, 2007

Originally a jazz musician, Kaye, even if most of her work in the studios was in the pop environment, expressed a clear disparagement towards the quality of some of the music she was hired to play. She was very explicit in the interview on what music she liked and didn't like, and the comment above was directly aimed at one trend of music; commercially constructed pop music, which, according to Kaye, didn't require much effort from the session musicians.

These two above citations reveal two differing value judgements, whereby Porter points to the performance practice of an instrument and the choices a musician must make at all times. However, Kaye displays the values of an ideological discourse, considering one form of music as superior to another. In Part II of this thesis, I intend to focus on both of these value judgements, with a special emphasis on the performance practice of the melodic electric bass, where the questions of value emerges as a major consideration point when constructing bass lines suitable for the differing genres of popular music.

By now it should be clear from these discussions in section 1.4 that a concise definition of popular music is near impossible to reach, owing to the large amount of approaches available, the fluidity of genres, the questions of value, and the always-changing notion of 'what is hip'. Throughout this thesis, I will nevertheless apply the term 'popular music' to refer to the generic category of music I have collected, transcribed, described and analyzed in my study of the features of the melodic electric bass.

1.5 Situating the thesis within popular music studies

The core of this work is positioned within the broad, analytic field of popular musicology,[26] with a particular emphasis placed upon instrumental performance practice. In attempting to clarify the thesis' placement within the academic field, I will now turn to some of the prevailing scholarly discourses inside popular musicology, as well as more recent developments in the field.

1.5.1 Popular musicology

'Studying popular music is an interdisciplinary matter,' Phillip Tagg proclaimed in 'Analysing Popular Music: Theory, Method and Practice' (Tagg, 1982, p. 40), and today few would not concur with this assertion. The development of popular music studies as an academic field has involved contributing research from many disciplines over the past decades; as Shuker observes, 'The bulk of the associated writing has come out of musicology, sociology, and cultural and media studies.' (Shuker, 2008, p. 2). The establishment of IASPM in 1981 was, according to Tagg (1983, 2001), a joint effort from several participants who shared the same frustrations over the lack of appropriate popular music teaching methods as well as a shared astonishment over the fact that

> Most of the music entering the brain of the average inhabitant of industrialised society during about twenty-five percent of his/her waking life [...] has not been incorporated into bourgeois public institutions of education and funding. (Tagg, 1983, pp. 2,3 (pdf))

IASPM represented an attempt to marshal resources so as 'to act as an international, interdisciplinary and interprofessional association dedicated to the serious study of popular music' (Tagg, 2001, p. 4). The effort of bringing together so many scholars interested in

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[26] According to Derek B. Scott (2009, p. 1), 'the earliest usage of the term found in the RILM database is Stan Hawkins's article, "Perspectives in popular musicology: music, Lennox and meaning in 1990s pop", *Popular Music* 15/1 (1996): 17–36.'

popular music has resulted in a large number of discourses and, as Hawkins observes: 'It was the interdisciplinary nature of the IASPM that would prove in the later years to have a profound effect on the development of popular musicology' (Hawkins, 2002, p. 5).

Popular musicology as a field of study is now taken for granted by many of the new generation of scholars. However, the earlier indifference and neglect of popular music genres inside musicology has been a repeatedly discussed topic,[27] described by Moore as the 'pop–classical split' (2001b, pp. 18-20). Likewise, John Covach (1997) has pointed out in particular classical theorists' preoccupation with the musical 'text' as opposed to popular music scholars' interest in cultural, social and economic context. However, this 'musicological quagmire', a term coined by David Brackett (1995), and further excavated by Hawkins (2001), problematises the ideological and aesthetic baggage connected with the cultural context from both disciplines, must now be seen as a thing of the past. During the 1990s, several writings on popular music, from classically trained theorists and popular music scholars alike, started to emerge, both emphasizing musicological tools modified in relation to popular music. (Shuker, 2008, p. 3) These works have raised important discussions on whether conventional analytical tools and terminology are suitable for explaining the main aspects of popular music; seeing an audience's perception of a music as equally important as the technical tools used to make it. These two approaches to popular musicology are also described by Hawkins below:

> Popular musicology is undoubtedly a phenomenon of traditional Western musicology that brings to the fore an interdisciplinary focus on the musical text. The direction taken by scholars in this new discipline has been to situate the analysis of musical detail in

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[27] See, for example, Middleton (1990, p. 103; 2000, p. 104), McClary and Walser (1990, p. 280), Frith (1996, p. 64), Brackett (1999, pp. 125-128), Covach (1999, p. 454) and Shuker (2008, p. 96).

> a context that addresses the conditions of the music's effect. (Hawkins, 2001)

This direction is central to the aims and objectives of this thesis as I attempt to work out an approach for understanding an electric bass performance practice within an equally particular timeframe; I deliberately engage the musical text (basslines) within the cultural context (mid-1960s to late 1970s) in which it was performed. I will not take up the by now familiar text/context discussion of popular musicology,[28] instead concurring with Hawkins that a 'work is always embodied in the cultural context in which it is evaluated' (Hawkins, 2002, p. 28). Indeed, my analyses of the bass lines presented in chapter 5 reflect the time in which they were interpreted. The lines represent a time where the electric bass was in its infancy and where the players were looking for alternative means of interpretation inside an established role. Similarly, the new genres emerging simultaneously with the instrument must also be seen as a context, in which the electric bass is treated as a text interpreter. Allan F. Moore (2001b), on the other hand, distinguishes between the text and its interpretation, in that he pays less attention to the musicians producing the sound, to the advantage of considering the listeners' response to it. Although I draw largely on Moore and his methodological framework when considering (rock) sound as the primary text, my interest here can be distinguished from his by a strong focus on the performer and his or her utilization of performance features, seeing these as the primary text in this work. Much writings in musicology dealing with analysis of text situate the music within different contexts, for example, Walser, who sees heavy metal guitar performances in a 'politicized context of cultural struggle over values, power and legitimacy' (p. xiii), or the aesthetic and poststructural approach that Hawkins (2002) adopts when investigating performance strategies in such artists as Madonna or Morrissey. Moreover, Hawkins employs the term *reading*

[28] See, for example, Brackett (1995, pp. 17-19) or Shepherd (1999).

interchangeably with *analyzing*: he uses *reading* 'to designate a move between focusing on the structures of music alone and the broader contexts within which the music is located.' (p. 2)

The theoretical positions this work is based on are informed extensively by Tagg (1979, 1982), Frith (1981b, 1988, 1996, 2001), Fabbri (1982), Middleton (1990, 1993, 2006, 2000), Walser (1993), Brackett (1995, 1999), Hawkins (1997, 2001, 2002), Moore (1997, 2001b) and Shuker (2008). These scholars have, in addition to fronting the academic field of popular musicology, also brought up a number of discourses, which could be appropriate with reference to the melodic electric bass. In particular, I will employ the distinctions to various degrees through an analytic, historical and ethnographic approach in chapter 2.

1.6 Previous research

Despite much of the work undertaken popular musicology beginning in the 1990s, the area of instrumental performance practice has been somewhat neglected. Musicological studies dealing with specific popular music instrumental practice, and particularly with my choice of subject, the melodic electric bass, are difficult to find. While there are numerous performance-method books on the instrument, which I will return to later, and a handful of biographies of key performers, scholarly material is remarkably scarce. I have struggled to locate material that deals extensively with this subject matter.[29]

One study that deserves special mention in relation to my thesis is that of the US musician and scholar Richard J. Ripani's 2006 analysis of the top twenty-five R&B songs from each decade between 1950 and 1999, using the *Billboard* lists as a source (Ripani, 2006).

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[29] Having said that, there are some exceptions; among them Hawkins (2002, p. 40; 2009b, p. 341), who explicitly describes the bass playing in Madonna's 'Don't Stop' (*Bedtime Stories.* Warner Bros. 45767), and Prince's 'Chelsea Rodgers' (*Planet Earth.* Sony Music Distribution 1515). Also see chapter 6 in Hawkins & Niblock (2011).

Though his research differs from mine in both subject and execution, I have drawn upon his methods in my own work.

The most significant information concerning electric bass performance practice is, perhaps unsurprisingly, found in bass-dedicated music magazines such as *Bass Player Magazine*, *Bassics Magazine* (USA), *Bass Guitar Magazine* (UK), *Bass Professor* (Germany), and Internet fanzines[30] such as *Global Bass* and *Bass Musician Magazine*. These magazines profile performers in almost every genre of popular music, and are quite concerned with the presentation and conservation of the history of the instrument. In addition to interviews and biographical articles, they often include transcriptions (both notes and tablature), equipment descriptions/advertisements and articles on terms as 'groove', 'time' and 'improvisation'. The articles in *Bass Player* or *Bass Guitar Magazine* are furthermore often written by performers for performers; in that sense, they reside far from the purview of musicology. Nevertheless, these magazines are a terrific source for empirical data. During my research into this subject, I have located only one PhD thesis dealing with the topic of electric bass performers,[31] a thesis that is primarily a biographical work, and for that reason not concerned with the instrument, as such. There are also books and anthologies written about electric bass players from the era I am interested in, for example, *Standing in the Shadows of Motown* (Licks, 1989), *Brave New Bass*, edited by *Bass Player* senior contributing editor Chris Jisi (2003), and *The R&B Bass Masters* (Friedland, 2005). While they are not geared towards musical analysis, they do contribute to my fleshing out of the relevant context. In that sense, these works must be treated as representing material of the electric bass's instrumental performance practice

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[30] A fanzine is a fan club publication, generally non-commercial, that is distributed by amateurs to address a specific topic for a like-minded audience; see Shuker (2005, pp. 101-103).

[31] (Waters, 2003)

Although it is not my intention to further explore the lack of scholarly studies on the melodic electric bass, I would surmise that much of this has to deal with an attitude towards the role of this style of performance practice, which in spite of its increasing popularity at the time, acquired a somewhat ridiculed status—it was considered quite un-hip to play like that for a period of 20 years.[32] In short, then, much work remains to be done on an important era in the performance history of an equally important instrument to the meta-genre of popular music.

1.7 Issues of performance practices

> If performance remains key to the realization of all musics, musics differ in what performance is seen as realizing. (Shumway, 1999, p. 197)

Within traditional musicology, performance practice has held an important position. Much of the research carried out concerns the composer's intentions when writing a piece of music,[33] the ways in which a specific instrument was played,[34] how a composer's music was instrumentally interpreted according to the norms of the era,[35] or a blend of all these topics.[36] Within jazz studies, interest in performance practice has also been apparent for a long time in both academic and practical music curricula. Within popular musicology, the comparatively recent interest in performance practice and issues of interpretation informs three main paradigms:

(i) the *analytic* paradigm, which answers to formalist concerns;

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[32] This is also observed by Allan F. Moore: 'Among the more widely known groups, most bass lines of this period are not content to sit on the root of each harmony as played by the guitar or keyboard, but construct an independent melodic line (a technique that has rather fallen out of fashion in more recent times). (Moore, 2001b, p. 39)

[33] For example, Taruskin (1992)

[34] For example, Hadaway (1973)

[35] For example, Crane (1979)

[36] For example, Stauffer (1985)

(ii) the *reading* paradigm, which views the musical text in relation to other performer-related issues; and

(iii) the *context* paradigm, an 'intertextual discursive theorisation[s] of musical expression' (Hawkins, 2002, p. xii).

When addressing the performance practice of the electric bass throughout this work, I relate to all three paradigms to a large extent, and although these paradigms must be seen as different musicological approaches, they are often applied to the same music and therefore will consist of common interests. In order to introduce my ideas on performance practice, I will first enter a discussion that contextualizes the musical styles, conventions and performance trends I am engaged with during this thesis.

1.7.1 Billboard

As previously discussed, popular music is a broad subject to tackle. The term contains numerous genres and style performances that are determined by a vast number of participants, from the instrument maker to the audience via the musician and the record company, not forgetting academia, writing about it all. When embarking on this form of research, it is easy to become overwhelmed by the amount of information available from all of the different actors that make up the popular music community. Therefore, to keep track of my initial task, I have had to restrict my empirical supply of material in several ways. First, the audio material: where should I start looking for the melodic bass, and from which sources? The players already described – Paul McCartney, with the Beatles; Carol Kaye, from the LA session scene; James Jamerson, recording for Motown; and Alan Spenner, from *Jesus Christ Superstar* – what do they have in common except for the melodically played electric bass? Record sales! Where does one find summaries of record sales? Music charts! I visited www.billboard.com and found a tangle of charts presenting singles and albums, apparently in every possible existing genre. After some checking and pondering, I landed on the 'Hot 100' chart. This listing of a song's popularity and its success in the radio and record

outlets, no matter the genre, seemed a good choice for research, bearing in mind that the mentioned bass players operated in several musical situations genre-wise.

National hit lists have always been important sources of information for the music business as well as for the music consumer. They predict record sales and guide artist promotion and other aspects of industry trendsetting. The American *Billboard* list, with its numerous charts, has for decades been the most important list for promoting popular music in the Western world.

Billboard magazine has a somewhat diverse history. From its first appearance in 1894 as a publication for the billposting business,[37] its editors were always on the lookout for a lucrative trend. By the turn of the nineteenth century, the magazine had moved toward entertainment gossip and the coverage of scandals related to the 'stars' of the era. It featured stories about the lives of vaudeville artists and their travelling circuses, and it included the 'Letter-Box', a mail-forwarding service for performers on the road. Makers of musical instruments and sheet music publishers began advertising in the magazine, which also printed the itineraries for minstrel acts and musical ensembles. By 1914, *Billboard* had offices in both London and Paris, as well as in several of the biggest cities in the United States. The music business had already been part of the magazine's contents for years through the advertisement of concerts and the coverage of radio and theatre shows, but in the 1930s, jukebox manufacturers got into the act and began to advertise intensely. In 1936, perhaps as a response to the growth of recorded music, *Billboard* introduced a feature called 'Chart Line' that listed the most-played songs on the three major radio stations.

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[37] See Schlager (2008).

1.7.2 Song selection

The Hot 100 list commenced in August 1958, immediately predating the period I am engaged with in this thesis, namely that which saw the rise of the melodic electric bass in the early 1960s. However, since the first successful attempt to manufacture an electric bass occurred in late 1951, I have examined the charts of that earlier era as well. Between January 1951 and November 1955, *Billboard* ranked songs primarily in three categories: 'Best Sellers in Store', 'Most Played by Jockeys' and 'Most Played in Jukeboxes'. I focused in particular on the songs from the first list, partly because the music journalist Fred Bronson (2007) uses this list when composing his alternative charts before 1955, and also because it seemed to best represent the preferences of the audience.[38] In November 1955, Billboard launched the 'Top 100' chart, listing the one hundred most popular songs in USA, before settling on the Hot 100 in August 1958. These three lists, then, – 'Best Sellers in Store', 'Top 100' and 'Hot 100' – would provide the empirical data I would need to determine the music for this thesis.

As stated previously, the melodic era of bass playing came to an end well before I started my career as a bass player. With my encounter with the 1980s convention of strict, machine-like bass playing in mind, I assumed that the melodic approach had disappeared some time before my early attempts on the instrument. For this reason, I chose 1982 as the year to halt my search of the Hot 100 list for material. Furthermore, I limited my selection to the songs that appeared as number one hits each week over the course of these

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[38] As Fred Bronson demonstrates in his book *Billboard's Hottest Hot 100 Hits* (Bronson, 2007), charts can be reworked based on a song's *performance* on the *Billboard* Hot 100 (as opposed to its sales figures or airplay); he created lists such as 'The Top 100 Songs of the Beatles', 'The Top 50 Songs Written by Carole King', 'The Top 50 Songs Produced by Phil Spector' and 'The Top 100 Songs on Atlantic'.

thirty-one years, ending up with 617 songs for further examination.[39]

To avoid any potential over-determination of material, arising from the exclusive use of one list, and with my knowledge of James Jamerson as an R&B bass player in mind, I further noted the 554 number one songs from Billboard's Hot 100 R&B charts[40] as well as the 492 songs topping the UK Top 100 between 1953 and 1980. Even if the same song appears on each of these three lists every now and then, given the quantity of songs and the fact that these songs all reached number one in their respective lists, I would argue that the selection gives a fair indication of what bass playing was like during that period.

1.7.3 Player selection

The type of research I am engaged in requires a closer look at key bass players and their contribution in developing the performance practice of the melodic electric bass. Among the over two hundred bass players represented in the hundreds of number one songs discussed above, I have intentionally limited myself to the four that I know best from my experience with the instrument as a performer and educator, the literature I have read, and the interviews I have conducted. Certainly I have bypassed numerous famous performers in favour of others; the charts themselves are at best imperfect guides. I am fully aware that worthy material exists in countless songs that did not reach number one in the charts, and that my findings would probably differ somewhat if I had selected the songs reaching, let us say, to number 32. I am also well aware of the fact

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[39] When I discuss the *Billboard* Hot 100 list in this thesis, I am referring only to the number-one songs except when noted otherwise.

[40] This list has also changed its name several times since midcentury. From October 1958 to November 1963, it was called 'Hot R&B Sides'. In January 1965, it became 'Hot Rhythm & Blues Singles'; in August 1969 it became 'Best Selling Soul Singles'. Between 1973 and 1980, when I stopped searching it, the chart was called 'Hot Soul Singles' (see billboard.com).

that if a new bass feature is found on the Hot 100 in, for example, October 1964, it does not mean that the feature appears for the first time in the history of popular music—it simply means that it appeared for the first time on the Hot 100 in October 1964.[41]

The four players I introduce in chapter 7 have markedly different approaches to the instrument, in terms of both style and adaptation to their respective genre conventions. James Jamerson, the unknown 'Motown bass player' for most of his career, undeniably impacted the instrument's development and use in popular music. The basslines he used to back up the world-famous artists on the Motown labels were vital early attempts to pull away from the simple but established root-fifth tradition of decades previous.

By virtue of ubiquity alone, Carol Kaye had an equally great impact on the development of the language of the modern electric bass. As a session bassist, she is part of a vast number of American top ten hits in the 1960s, and she was among the first electric bass players to write method material for aspiring bassists. Though Kaye played a male-dominated instrument in a male-dominated environment, she does not recall this as an issue (particularly since she did her work in the studio and out of the public eye), and therefore I do not intend to problematize it here.

At the other extreme, Paul McCartney was the most famous and recognizable bass player on earth in the 1960s, and he doubtlessly motivated generations of kids to pick up the instrument. His contribution to the growth in stature of the electric bass cannot be overstated.

Lastly, Alan Spenner represents the truly unsung hero, a hard-working, talented performer whose contributions remain least recognized of the small group here. (James Jamerson was in a similar position until Alan Slutsky wrote *Standing in the Shadows of*

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[41] For a further discussion on the selection of songs and research design, see sub-section 5.1.3.

Motown,[42] which rescued Jamerson from oblivion and gave bass players a name for the 'Motown bass'). While Carol Kaye wrote method books and now participates in Internet discussion forums and on her own website, carolkaye.com, Alan Spenner died before the time of the Internet and populates only a few Wikipedia stubs.[43] I had never even seen an article discussing Spenner in bass magazines, until relatively recently.[44] His work mainly lives on in the memory of those who toured and played with him, and it is thus difficult to find collected and relevant information. Nevertheless, I find his bass performances to be every bit as important as many of his more famous peers, and I will make this case later on. Spenner is also one of the few players to give a relevant representation of bass playing during three decades.

Other electric bass players could have been chosen, of course, and some will contribute in an incidental fashion as I discuss my findings. For example, Joe Osborn, a contemporary Los Angeles player, participated in at least as many hit recordings as Carol Kaye, and Chuck Rainey is also a terrific bass player who has constantly adapted his playing to changing musical styles for five decades. Instead of Paul McCartney, I could have chosen Jack Bruce, maybe the most experimental bass player to appear on the English popular music scene. I could also have investigated the Americans Tommy Cogbill,[45] Elvis's melodic player Jerry Scheff, Carl Radle,[46] Gerald 'Jerry' Jemmott,[47] Paul Jackson,[48] Scott Edwards[49] or Leland

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[42] The title was taken from Nelson George's article on Motown in *Musician* magazine. (George, 1985).

[43] A Wikipedia stub is an article that is too short to be considered 'encyclopedic'.

[44] In the July 2009 issue of *Bass Player* magazine, I provided the material for an article on Spenner (Jisi, 2009c).

[45] Muscle Shoals session player (b.1932–d.1982); credits include Aretha Franklin, Elvis Presley and Wilson Pickett.

[46] Session player (b.1942–d.1980); credits include Eric Clapton, Leon Russell, Gary Lewis and the Playboys.

[47] Session player (b.1946–); credits include Aretha Franklin, George Benson and King Curtis.

Sklar.[50] English alternatives would certainly include Mo Foster,[51] John Deacon,[52] Jim Lea,[53] Dee Murray,[54] John Gustafson[55] or Herbie Flowers.[56]

In the end, though, my selection of two Americans and two Englishmen serves different but important priorities for my study. They all represent an era in which bass playing changed, and they all participated in creating a new vocabulary for bass players working in the various genres of popular music. Carol Kaye and James Jamerson had, previous to their studio careers, extensive jazz training and experience in differing jazz combos, while McCartney and Spenner came from 'skiffle' and English R&B, respectively. All except for Jamerson started out on guitar before changing to electric bass. Kaye played exclusively with a pick all through her career. McCartney switched between pick, thumb and fingers, while Jamerson and Spenner were exclusively finger players.

I have in this chapter dealt with the various discourses of popular music, and I have sought to give my work a theoretical foundation on which this thesis is based. My research into the electric bass's melodic features has demanded an interdisciplinary approach that incorporated methodological material from ethnomusicological

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[48] Session player (b.1947–); credits include Headhunters, Miles Davis and Chick Corea.

[49] Session player (b.1948–); credits include Stevie Wonder, Hall and Oates, and Donna Summer.

[50] Session player (b.1947–); credits include James Taylor, Phil Collins and Ray Charles.

[51] Session player; credits include Jeff Beck, Ringo Starr and Cher.

[52] (b.1951–) Bass player for the rock band Queen.

[53] (b.1949–) Bass player for the rock band Slade.

[54] David Murray Oates (b.1946–d.1992); was most notably Elton John's bass player during the periods 1970–75 and 1981–85; also performed with Procul Harum, Alice Cooper and Rick Springfield.

[55] Session player; credits include Quatermass, Roxy Music and Ian Gillan Band.

[56] Session player (b.1938–); credits include David Bowie, Lou Reed and Paul McCartney.

works, historiography, popular music analyses, popular music practice studies and performance studies. In the next chapter I will review that material and position this project within its various spheres of influence.

As I mentioned in section 1.6, I have not found much literature that focuses on instrumental performance practice within popular music studies, so I have had to partly develop my own methodology. In what follows I will explain my process while dealing with the conflicts inherent to the insider/outsider relationship in a work such as this.

2 THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

2.1 Three approaches

This thesis straddles the tradition in popular musicology that deals with musical analysis (Hawkins, 2002; Middleton 1990; Moore, 2001b; Ripani, 2006; Tagg, 1982) and the study of instrumental performance practice (Friedland, 2005; Jisi, 2003). In addition, I rely upon contextual approaches partly derived from ethnomusicology, which I will come back to in the following chapter, and I draw extensively from my own experience as a performer on the electric bass. This often-problematic insider–outsider issue of ethnographic research is a challenge, and something a researcher needs to be aware of when adopting a position in a field of study. Although Robert Walser's *Running with the Devil* (Walser, 1993) is firmly placed within the field of musicology, and probably not set out to be an ethnographic research as such, it is a good example of a scholar dealing with a specific culture through an interdisciplinary approach to the field. Walser, an accomplished musician before he began work on his book, took heavy metal guitar lessons, in addition to attending concerts and analyzing records in order to get a better understanding of the subject matter.[57] In this work, I occupy an insider's role as well, in that as a performer of the instrument researched, I can make an evaluation of the field from within. Over the two decades I have spent inside the performance practice tradition of the instrument, I have become familiar with most of the performance issues, the interpretational practices and various types

[57] In addition to his own flirtation with the genre, Walser's engagement with secondary sources is also an issue in his research methodology. As Deborah Wong (1998) observes, his quotations from performers derive mostly from music magazines rather than firsthand interviews, and therefore participate at one level of remove from their actual source.

of tacit knowledge that are typical for electric bass. Yet I tried to be an outsider in the interviews I have made. Even if I was very familiar with my informants' performance practices in advance, I did not know them personally while interviewing them and, in that sense, I will be perceived as an outsider.

2.1.1 Analytic

As mentioned in section 1.5, I focused mainly on three methodological approaches when analyzing the melodic electric bass. The first of these three approaches informs the study's primary musical research (see chapter 5), and the analytical methods I apply there resonate with the methodological analyzing tools introduced by Phillip Tagg (1982). In order to investigate the properties of the bass performances in question, I specifically employed four of Tagg's six points in his analytical model:

(i) *A checklist of parameters of musical expression* (the twenty features presented in Table 5.1);

(ii) The establishment of musemes (minimal units of expression) and museme compounds by means of interobjective comparison (see subsection 5.2.3);

(iii) The establishment of figure/ground (melody–accompaniment) relationships (see chapter 5, passim); and

(iv) The transformational analysis of melodic phrases (see section 5.3).

Whereas Tagg's model is fundamentally hierarchical, in that he focuses on the smallest units before engaging with larger musical structures, I prefer to engage with various stylistic features as discrete events without reducing them to their littlest parts. However, the melodic bass player's use of technical, musical and communicative tools in live settings as well as the recording studio lends itself very well to the strategies I have derived from Tagg's early work.

2.1.2 Historic

My approach must likewise be historical, given that my main topic, and the audio material I have collected, derives from an era that is to a large extent at odds with the tastes of the present day's sound aesthetic and likewise the stylistic features used. The investigation of historical performance practices has a long tradition inside classical musicology; journals like *Early Music* or *Early Music History* focus almost entirely on classical music's many repertoires and the interpretive performance techniques of the past. A similar focus is also found in jazz scholarly literature, for example, Berliner (1994), O'Meally (1998) or Fischlin and Heble (2004), which deals to a large extent with improvisational and instrumental stylistic characteristics in jazz performances. This thesis must be seen to be in line with these traditions when it comes to the retrospective glance, but also in my focus on instrumental performance as opposed to popular musicology's emphasis on the star performer. It is, of course, understandable that a popular musicology dealing with a metagenre where the fronting figure is in most cases a vocalist rather than an instrumentalist, would concentrate its research on this matter for the benefit of the backing musician producing the music that supports the singer. Instrumental popular music is rare (except in jazz), and starring instrumentalists even rarer,[58] and seeing the major bulk of popular musicological literature are not written by professional performing musicians, it is easy to understand the present disregard for the instrumentalist.[59] Popular musicology has also followed traditional musicology in its tendency to stress the

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[58] There were several instrumental rock bands that appeared in the wake of the Shadows in the 1960s, but a truly instrumental subgenre of rock music would wait until the advent of 'shredding' in the 1980s. This movement was fronted by technically advanced guitarists like Yngwie J. Malmsteen, Steve Vai, Michael Angelo, Marty Friedman, Vinnie Moore and Tony MacAlpine, among others, who often used classically inspired modes in both their chord progressions and improvised solos.

[59] In line with comments by Tagg (2001) and Frith (2007), I would likewise assume that though some popular musicologists might play an instrument or even have a background as a professional performer, the two pursuits would be difficult to maintain in tandem.

canon,[60] and in that sense, it is not difficult to see the absence of scholarly work on this matter.

Lastly, though I ultimately view the melodic electric bass as a stylistically determined modification of the bass's role in popular music, it must also be seen as an event that occurred within a timeframe. According to Brackett, then, I would have to accommodate the powerful tradition within *historical* musicology that 'has tended to place musical works, composers, and styles in their social and cultural context' (Brackett, 1995, p. 20).

2.1.3 Ethnographic

> Ethnomusicology carries within itself the seeds of its own division, for it has always been compounded of two distinct parts, the musicological and the ethnological, and perhaps its major problem is the blending of the two in a unique fashion which emphasizes neither but takes into account both. (Merriam, 1964, p. 3)

Ethnography attempts to say something about the research perspective the scholar applies to his or her collected material, as well as the approach that informs its organization and analysis. According to Alan P. Merriam (1964), ethnomusicology should be defined as the study of music in culture, and he describes its labor in three stages;

(i) Collection of data;

(ii) analysis of the data;

(iii) application of the results to relevant problems.

Though these three stages do not differ much from other research disciplines, ethnomusicology involves unique categories of study as

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[60] See, for example, well-known work on Springsteen (Frith, 1988, pp. 94-101), the Sex Pistols (Wicke, 1990, pp. 135-153), Prince (Hawkins, 1992, 2009b; Hawkins & Niblock, 2011), James Brown (Brackett, 1992), The Beatles (Moore, 1997), Peter Gabriel (Taylor, 1997, pp. 39-52) or Madonna (Hawkins, 1997).

well as specialized techniques of research. Traditionally, ethnomusicologists have been occupied with the study of music other than the Western music familiar to Europeans or Americans, for example, and have consequently objected to the ethnocentrism of the West overall. Recently, ethnomusicological approaches have been applied to popular music studies – see, for example, Cohen (1991) or Finnegan (2007). The collection of data often implies fieldwork, and an ethnomusicological approach would

> Ideally [...] involve a lengthy period of intimate study and residence with a particular group of people, knowledge about the spoken language, and the employment of a wide range of observational techniques, including prolonged face-to-face contacts with members of the local group, direct participation in some of that group's activities, and a greater emphasis on intensive work with informants than on the use of documentary and survey data. (Cohen, 1993, p. 124)

Merriam (1964) further mentions six areas of inquiry of interest for ethnomusicologists:

(i) The study of musical instruments;

(ii) The study of song texts;

(iii) The categories of music;

(iv) The study of the musician;

(v) The function of music; and

(vi) The study of music as a cultural activity.

Because I touch upon most of these areas in this study of both content and context for the melodic electric bass, I will engage with some of the methodologies of ethnomusicology. Merriam sees ethnomusicology as both a field and a laboratory discipline, and therefore ethnomusicological methods such as transcribing and

analysis of music sound are emphasized throughout, together with the conduction of interviews during my fieldwork.[61]

2.2 Insider or the outsider?

As a performing musician, I have had my own share of struggles with musicological texts and treatises, with their esoteric Greek names for chord progressions and scales, overdone psychological interpretations, and social agendas concerning 'pluralism' or 'cultural domination'. The musicologist's conclusions—even his or her language—can be totally incomprehensible to outsiders and even act to distance them from the much more straightforward performative aspects of the music. In most cases, I believe, a musician or a composer wrote the piece of music 'because I wanted to' or 'it just came to me'.[62] As thoughtful a pop musician as John Lennon is even more abrupt:

> There is a guy in England, William Mann, who was the first intellectual who reviewed the Beatles in *The Times* and got people talking about us in that intellectual way. He wrote about aeolian cadences and all sorts of musical terms, and he is a bullshitter. But he made us credible with intellectuals. He wrote about Paul's last album as if it were written by Beethoven or something. He's still writing the same shit. But it did us a lot of good in that way, because people in all the middle classes and intellectuals were all going, 'Oooh'. (Wenner, 1971)

These issues persist, as Phillip Tagg observed in a 2001 speech at the 11th International IASPM Conference in Turku:

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[61] It is important to emphasize that my ethnographical approach applied to this study is merely in the adoption of traditional tools used in ethnographic research. I am not relating to the recent debates inside ethnomusicology described by, for example, Philip V. Bohlman or Martin Stokes in *Oxford Music Online*.

[62] The gap between the music scholar and the performing musician is also mentioned in Frith (1981b, pp. 12-13), concerning two very different approaches to the Animals' 1964 song 'I'm crying'.

> Indeed, who can blame these brother practitioners [Franco Fabbri, Gerard Kempers, Chris Cutler] for shunning international IASPM events which have yet to include musicians imparting musical knowledge through music as an intrinsic part of conference proceedings rather than as add-ons we can opt for if we're not worn out after another day of 'embeddedness' discourse. (Tagg, 2001)

Yet each needs the other. If musicians might show scholars the 'reality' of their subject, scholars lend musicians legitimacy by elevating their art form within the walls of academia. Certainly a performing musician's point of view would benefit from a non-performing musicologist's point of view in terms of analyzing works performed on a particular instrument and examining the use of that instrument in different musical situations (some of which the performer might not have experienced). As a freelance bass player, I have a very practical perspective upon the choices one makes in a musical setting, and this affects my analyses as much as any outside reading does. Along these lines, in the introduction to *Running with the Devil* (Walser, 1993), Robert Walser writes:

> As a musician, I cannot help but think that individual texts, and the social experiences they represent, are important. My apprenticeships as a performer – conservatory student and orchestral musician, ethnic outsider learning to play Polish polkas, jazz trumpeter, pop singer, and heavy metal guitarist – were periods spent learning musical discourses. That is, I had to acquire the ability to recognize, distinguish, and deploy the musical possibilities organized in styles or genres by various communities. Each song marshals the options available in a different way, and each musical occasion inflects a song's social meanings. Becoming a musician in any of the styles I have mentioned is a process of learning to understand and manipulate the differences intrinsic to a style, which are manifested differently in each text and performance. Unlike many scholars, I think it is possible to analyze, historicize, and write about these processes. (p. xii)

Though I do not know the Polish polka, I have, among other things, performed professionally in classical environments with symphony orchestras and in most of the genres making up the meta-genre of popular music. I have also participated in several world tours over the past fifteen years with my band, Secret Garden.[63] Given all of the hours I have spent in the company of the electric bass, either in the practice room, in the recording studio or on the stage, it is fair to say that I have some insight into the subject of this thesis. Certainly the musicologist or popular music scholar without this background would still be able to write with insight about the melodic era of electric bass playing. Yet I find that it has been a little easier to encourage informants to open up as 'one of them', and I find that my experience gives me some insight into the decisions that are reflected in the basslines that I have analyzed. Middleton (2000) concurs, finding in his own work that 'the role of the "scholar-fan" becomes vital' (p. 108).

Yet the insider scholar must avoid the likely possibility of idolizing informants in such a way that a critical perspective becomes impossible. This intersects with the concept of the 'canon', which has, as mentioned earlier, a long tradition inside musicology. Brackett observes:

> The majority of these writings [inside historical musicology] have accepted the relative importance of the canon as a given and have largely foreclosed discussions of musical meaning. (Brackett, 1995, p. 20)

The performers who are present in this work, both in interviews and in analyses, are clearly a part of an electric bass canon, and as an insider, I have admired these people my whole career. In order to gain a sufficient critical perspective, then, I have had to find and utilize analytical tools that allowed the bass *playing* precedence over the bass *player*, and consequently, it could seem difficult to get an

[63] See www.secretgarden.no

adequate distance from the presented analyses of the audio material collected. Even though my 70-plus CD recordings as a session musician make a rather limited number in proportion to most of the players mentioned in this thesis, my confidence as a session player and my familiarity with the bass player's role in a studio setting could eventually color my interpretations of the bass performances discussed here to such a degree that my final conclusions would differ from the actual truth.

The approaches described above, together with the insider/outsider discourse, are essential parts of qualitative research methods, and I will now go on to describe what Michael Quinn Patton (1990, p. 46) calls 'the central activity of qualitative inquiry', namely the fieldwork.

2.3 The qualitative research interview

Qualitative research is about obtaining data, where the inquirer searches in-depth information from what people say or do. Anne-Marie Ambert and colleagues (1995) also describe qualitative research as contextual research that

> has at it base (a) oral words whether in conversations, sentences, or monologues; (b) written words in journals, letters, autobiographies, scripts, texts, books, official reports, and historical documents; (c) the recorded field notes of observers or participants of meetings, ceremonies, rituals, and family life; (d) life histories and narrative stories in either the oral or the written form; (e) visual observations (whether live, videotaped, or in pictures) or other modes of self-expression such as facial expressions, body language, physical presentation of self, modes of dressing, and other forms of self-expression (for example, how one decorates the home). (p. 881)

Qualitative research is traditionally associated with sociologists and anthropologists and their investigations of our social surroundings, and according to Patton,

> Qualitative methods consist of three kinds of data collection: (1) in-depth, open-ended interviews; (2) direct observation; and (3) written documents. (Patton, 1990, p. 10)

I have drawn upon Patton's first kind of data collection extensively as I sought opinions and anecdotes from my subjects. I have spoken at length both with my informants and with my advisors and colleagues, and my role in these conversations has ranged from simple listener to eager student to interested peer. For example, my advisors are supposed to give me guidance and answers, and they are very likely to have read about, written about and discussed theoretical and methodological problems more than I have. This type of conversation is not based on equality between participants. Having a technical conversation with a colleague, on the other hand, is different. The roles are equal and the professional expectations are not as clear-cut, so either of us can dispense or absorb information and advice. Lastly, I can treat advisor or colleague as an informant, converting our standard interactions into what Steinar Kvale (1996) calls a professional conversation—that is, legal interrogations, academic oral examinations, or qualitative research interviews. This interview in turn has three modes based upon intention and depth: the daily life conversation, the professional interview, and the philosophical dialogue. My work with all of my partners in conversation has favored the latter two, in that I have generally sought information over anecdote, and preferably information of a particular caliber.

Choosing my bass player informants was both easy and difficult, because I wanted to talk to performers who knew a lot about the subject, and to performers who had 'been there'. In order to find the right first-generation players to interview, I needed an overall sense of the relevance of each player, and in order to ask the right questions, I needed good information from knowledgeable musicians. So, before I started the interviewing process, I worked out my three main ways to collect qualitative data: (1) the email interview, (2) the face-to-face interview, and (3) the telephone interview.

2.3.1 The email interview

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) is the term that describes the 'direct use of computers in a text-based communication process' (Mann & Stewart, 2000), and this includes the asynchronous communication form of email. Nalita James and Hugh Busher (2006) describe some of the methodological possibilities for email as a medium for qualitative interviews (as well as the practical benefits related to distance), and write:

> An asynchronous email exchange [...] encourages participants to explore and revisit their insights into their developing professional identities, allowing them to move back and forth through their narratives, thinking about their responses, drafting and redrafting what they want to write. (pp. 405-406)

Initially, I planned to use email interviewing as the main method for collecting my oral material, but after a few attempts, I saw that it would be a rather cumbersome way to glean enough information, and also to get the 'right' information. My chosen procedure was to send an enquiry to the possible informants, present my project, and ask if it would be okay if I troubled them with a few questions. As James and Busher propose, the main logic behind such a method is that the informant could receive written questions and have sufficient time to consider them thoroughly and prepare well-founded answers. Unfortunately, this turned out not to be the case. The distance and the lack of eye contact make it convenient for the informant not to answer the whole question, or to choose not to answer questions at all. It is, of course, possible to send follow-up inquiries, but it is easy to be regarded as either rude or just simply stupid if one insists on additional answers. Similarly, James and Busher identify disadvantages to the asynchronous process, including discontinuous responses, difficulty in clarifying questions and answers, and misunderstandings of intent.

I had prepared questions along the lines of, 'Who inspired you to start playing? Where do you think this bass playing [melodic] originates? What are your thoughts of "locking" with the drummer?'

The questions asked were mostly short and to the point, and although some of the questions could be perceived as expecting a reflective response, this asynchronous form of conversation made it easy for the informant to ignore questions at will. One world-famous bass player, who had been very friendly and encouraging when he agreed to be part of my research, read the questions and then wrote:

> I am getting the feeling that you are using me to avoid doing research on the subject. I could be very helpful to you but you must understand that my time is valuable. I would think better of you if you would respond to the suggestions in my emails. Please do your homework and then write me.

His only suggestion were to visit All Music Guide (see section 2.4) to find the 'most instrumental [players] (no pun intended) in furthering the bass as a melodic instrument', something I already had beeing doing rather frequently prior to contacting him. Though I tried to explain that I wanted only to hear his view of the melodic bass era, he never came back to me. Mostly it seemed as though writing felt harder for people than speaking, and I received relatively few responses to my email queries. That said, there were also informants who answered my enquiries conscientiously, for example Dave Bronze, bass player for Eric Clapton, among others. His answers, together with fragments from other email conversations in the beginning of this work, formed the basis for the face-to-face interviews I turned to next.

2.3.2 The face-to-face interview

The face-to-face interview is the traditional qualitative research approach and probably the most rewarding means of soliciting information on a topic. What follows here is a presentation of a sampling of my many interviewees at this important stage of my project.

Jisi

As an enthusiastic reader of *Bass Player* magazine during the 1990s, the name and work of senior contributing editor Chris Jisi was very familiar to me. Jisi, a seasoned bass player himself, had also published well over three hundred interviews with bass players from every genre of popular music in addition to transcriptions and analyses of key bass performances from five decades of bass playing. He had also contributed to several books[64] and published two books himself: *Brave New Bass* (Jisi, 2003) and *Bass Player Presents The Fretless Bass* (Jisi, 2008). I first sent him an email describing my subject, and he immediately came back to me with suggestions about and new angles on my research questions. Given his extensive knowledge of electric bass performance practice and long list of contacts in the industry, he proved to be an incredible resource. In addition to remaining available to me via email, he also met with me in his hometown of New York during my fieldwork there in April 2008.

Bascomb

The movie version of the Galt MacDermot-composed musical *Hair* from 1979,[65] directed by Miloš Forman, has always stood out to me as one of the prime examples of the busy (and melodic) bass playing of the 1970s. My copy of the recording did not credit the musicians, so I had to wait until the Internet made it possible for me to identify Wilbur Bascomb, son of jazz trumpeter Wilbur 'Dud' Bascomb, as the performer on the soundtrack. Galt MacDermot is relatively easy to reach through his website galtmacdermot.com, so I sent a note and asked if it was possible to be put in touch with Bascomb, and soon enough I was interviewing him in New York as well.

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[64] See *Bass Heroes* (Mulhern, 1993), *The Bass Player Book* (Coryat, 1999), *How The Fender Bass Changed The World* (Roberts, 2001), *Playing From The Heart* (Doerschuk, 2002), *Bass Guitar For Dummies* (Pfeiffer, 2003), *Sittin' In With Rocco Prestia* (Prestia, 2003) and *American Basses* (Roberts, 2003).

[65] RCA Records 3274-2-R.

Kaye

As one of the four bass players I anticipated returning to for in-depth analyses, Carol Kaye was very important for me to reach. Thankfully, she is an avid Internet user via carolkaye.com. After approaching her via email, I received a polite letter back that stated her interest in my subject and included some material consisting of interviews she has given over the years, together with her own comments and some clippings from her website. Even with all of this information on Kaye as a performer, I still wanted to hear some stories directly from her, and she agreed to meet me for an interview at her Santa Clarita home in Los Angeles in December 2007. I also took a lesson with her and experienced her tremendous perspective on instrumental performance practice and grasp of functional jazz theory.

The Wickershams

On the west coast of the United States, especially in the San Francisco Bay Area, some of the most eclectic and melodic bass work of the 1960s and 1970s took place. Players like Phil Lesh of the Grateful Dead and Jack Casady of Jefferson Airplane started their careers during the psychedelic movement and already in the mid-1960s displayed a very different approach to the instrument than did the session players of Los Angeles, New York, Memphis and Detroit. They handled the bass role more intuitively, in a manner formed through their endless jam sessions and close interactions with the audience. Both Lesh and Casady had their instruments first modified and later made by Ron Wickersham of Alembic, Inc., starting in the late 1960s. As an owner of a couple of Alembic basses myself, it was natural for me to pay a visit to the Alembic factory in Santa Rosa, north of San Francisco, to speak with Ron and Susan Wickersham and their daughter Mica.

Porter

Tiran Porter, the bass player for the multiplatinum-selling rock band Doobie Brothers from 1972 to 1992, had always been a source of

inspiration for me. His busy, melodic and very atypical approach to bass playing represented a huge part of the Doobies' sound for twenty years; in addition, he had been part of the Bay Area music scene since the early 1970s. He had not appeared much in bass magazines or the music media in general, so it took some time to track him down. After some searching, I found Dale Ockerman's homepage on the Internet. Ockerman, a seasoned guitar player in Doobie Brothers circles and a close friend of Porter, agreed to forward my questions to him (Porter is not a frequent Internet user). After some correspondence back and forth, I decided to fly over and meet Porter in person, so I travelled to San Francisco, rented a car and drove south toward the mountains of Santa Cruz, where he lives.

Visceglia

Chris Jisi suggested that I should contact Mike Visceglia, the musical director and bass player for Suzanne Vega for the past twenty-five years and the author of the book *A View from the Side* (Visceglia, 2004). Visceglia, besides being a veteran performer for artists like Bette Midler, Phil Collins and Jackson Browne, is also an outspoken and thoughtful music journalist (see mikevisceglia.com). I interviewed him at his home in New York.

Westwood

When researching the melodic bass era of the 1960s and 1970s, the British bass scene comes up again and again. Players like John Entwistle of the Who, Chris Squire of Yes, John Paul Jones of Led Zeppelin, Trevor Bolder of Uriah Heep, Colin Hodgkinson of Back Door, and Andy Fraser of Free made a substantial contribution toward the foundation of the electric bass's expanded role in popular music. Having been long familiar with session player Paul Westwood through his work with Elton John, Madonna and Andrew Lloyd Webber, among others, and also through his voluminous method book *Bass Bible* (Westwood, 1997), it felt very natural to meet up

with him and hear his stories about the English music scene of that time.

Lawson

Steve Lawson has made a name for himself mainly as a solo bass player. He has toured extensively in Europe and the United States over the past decade performing his electronica-influenced music and armed with loops, technological gadgets and his basses. He has released ten CDs under his own name and is seen as one of the leading solo bass players of his generation. Being a relatively young performer, Lawson was not part of the music scene in London in the 1970s, but as a freelance music journalist in his early years, he possessed valuable knowledge about my research subject and proved to be an important interviewee.

2.3.3 The telephone interview

After I finished the face-to-face interviewing fieldwork, I had a few questions left about particular aspects of performance practice, and I contacted Jisi for advice. He suggested Chuck Rainey, among others, and in lieu of another costly trip abroad I decided to try a telephone conversation. According to Kimberly Musselwhite and colleagues (2007), this form of interaction has several benefits in addition to its economy:

(i) the researcher is able to take notes without distracting the informant;

(ii there is no chance of a physical response bias (facial expressions, body language, and so on), so the participants in the interview influence each other less;

(iii) the telephone's attendant feeling of anonymity sometimes encourages the informant to be more candid in his or her responses to the questions.

The disadvantages of telephone interviewing can, on the other hand, be all the three previous points, in that seeing the inquirer taking

notes can actually emphasize the importance of what is being said; leading the informant to continue a flow of thoughts. The lack of eye contact and the interview participant's hidden facial expressions can, as such, lead to misunderstandings and misinterpretation of both questions and answers. Nevertheless, I decided to go ahead with a few of these phone interviews.

Rainey

Chuck Rainey, one of the most influential electric bass players of all time, will be presented at length later in this thesis. He is a first-generation bass player who picked up the instrument in 1961 and continues to play today. I did not have much experience with telephone interviews when I set up my appointment with Rainey via email, and I was nervous as I sat in my office at the university and waited for the scheduled time to dial the number. Rainey, obviously an experienced interviewee, did his best to make me feel comfortable, however, and we ended up speaking for nearly ninety minutes, discussing many aspects of his career and his attitude toward the melodic approach.

Spenner-Birch, Rowland and Hubbard

As I mentioned in the introduction, Alan Spenner was one of the players that first impressed me during my teens. Searching the web to find his discography was not hard at all. Several Internet sites are dedicated to English bands and artists and are filled with information on recording rosters, so tracking Spenner's professional career was not difficult. Learning about his life, on the other hand, was more challenging. He died in 1991, before the Internet was everyone's tool for sharing personal information, and no one had yet made a page in tribute to him. However, on one of the more dedicated Internet sites, *The Musicians' Olympus*,[66] the name Bruce

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[66] Miguel Terol has made a thorough inquiry of several English rock musicians at http://www.reocities.com/sunsetstrip/palladium/9932/.

Rowland appeared often. Rowland played drums on the original album of *Jesus Christ Superstar* (*JCS*),[67] as well as in Joe Cocker's Grease Band and several other recordings together with Spenner, but to get to him or his email address or phone number seemed rather difficult. One of the bands that Rowland also played with was Fairport Convention, a very Internet-friendly group and highly active on the net. Through Simon Nicol, the guitar player and one of the original band members of Fairport Convention, I got an email address leading me to Bruce Rowland. After we had exchanged a few letters, he answered some of my *JCS* questions, and also wrote me a short biography on Alan Spenner, parts of which I have included in Appendix A. Looking through Spenner's discography and session credits, there is another name that appears more frequently than others, namely the guitar player Neil Hubbard. He was a member of the band Wynder K. Frog together with Spenner and Rowland, and he also accompanied Spenner in the Grease Band, Chris Stainton Band, Joe Cocker band, Kokomo and Roxy Music, and several other bands. I got Hubbard's phone number through Kokomo percussionist Jodie Linscott, whom I approached on Facebook, and I called Hubbard to ask if he could shed some light on Spenner's career. Linscott also kindly provided the phone number of Spenner's wife, Dyan Spenner-Birch, and she was very helpful as well.

In both face-to-face interviews and telephone interviews, I recorded the conversations with the informant's permission. The transcriptions were then transferred into a qualitative research software tool called NVivo for coding and easier handling.

2.3.4 Computer-assisted qualitative analysis (CAQDA)

Analyzing qualitative data basically involves breaking down written text or audiovisual material into smaller units, coding those units and comparing the findings that appear after coding. Fieldwork often results in massive amounts of data, however, which makes this

[67] MCA Records Inc. MCD 0051.

analysis difficult. In a paper presented in the journal *Anthropology Today* by Aaron Podolefsky (1987), for example, the author remarks upon the difference between non-ethnographic and ethnographic qualitative research when it comes to generating data by comparing two research situations: (1) a qualitative sociologist interviews residents of a particular community, collecting lots of information regarding everyday life, and (2) a researcher moves into the community, lives among his informants, takes part of everyday life, and makes notes and records observations in a field notebook. The second, ethnographic situation obviously generates considerably more material. In the same article, Podolefsky also describes a study from 1978 where the data consisted of ten thousand typewritten pages of field notes as well as a telephone survey with around six thousand respondents. Organizing, indexing and analyzing this amount of data demands dedicated computer software, but at that time, Computer Assisted Qualitative Analysis (CAQDA) was in its infancy, and the handling of data had to be done manually, or with the help of, for example, key sort cards. Since then, however, researchers have developed several types of CAQDA software, including QSR NUD*IST Vivo—Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing, Searching and Theorizing, or NVivo for short. The name recalls the 'in vivo' categories, well described in grounded theory, and refers to its use of categories when coding text. NVivo9, as the current version is called, can do the work that had to be done manually 30 years ago, namely managing, sorting, coding and analyzing textual and visual data.

2.3.5 Working with NVivo

After my field trips to Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York and London, I imported my interview transcriptions into NVivo before starting the work of coding the material and making categories for my project. In qualitative research, categories serve as short

substitutes, or headlines, for research questions,[68] and in NVivo it is possible to gather all of one's empirical material in one place; including text, audio interviews, video footage or any documents relevant to the project. My categories included 'influences', 'bass players before 1960s', 'playing with a pick' and 'origin', among others.

The process of coding—also called indexing—in qualitative research acts to reduce the amount of empirical material without losing important information, but as Lyn Richards points out, it is also about data retention:

> Coding is not merely to label all the parts of documents about a topic, but rather to bring them together so they can be reviewed, and your thinking about the topic developed. (Richards, 2005, p. 86)

Richards distinguishes between three sorts of coding: *descriptive* coding, *topic* coding and *analytical* coding. Descriptive coding is often associated with quantitative studies where the stored information describes a case, but it also plays a role in qualitative projects. In my research, I used it to store information about my informants—name, age, gender, influences, instrument brand of choice, and so on. Topical (or category) coding involved linking passages of text to an appropriate category. For example, an interviewee's information regarding which bass player he or she considered to be the most influential of the 1950s would be linked to 'bass players before 1960s'. Analytical coding is a tool for interpreting the text—what does the informant really mean? For example, my informant states the following:

> Yeah, I'm listed on the record. They're starting to list the musicians, they never listed the musicians before. Studio

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[68] 'The conceptual elements (constructs) of grounded theory are referred to as categories and properties. A category is a basic theoretical concept that enables the researcher to explain and predict behaviour' (Darkenwald, 1980, p. 67).

> musicians did the dates and never got their names listed on the back of the albums at all. (Kaye, 2007)

From this text, I can code its *nodes*, which relate to the following questions: When did record companies start listing musicians on the covers of their LPs? How did musicians feel about not being credited? Why didn't record companies list their musicians? Who where the musicians on the recordings? These nodes in NVivo are in fact the places where information about a category resides. When the researcher codes the material, he highlights words or sentences that are in turn connected to the chosen node. It is also possible to go back and recode sources as needed.

When I came across material or references in the transcribed interviews that interested me, I made either annotations that link to particular spots in the NVivo document or memos that link to anything I want there. I also created external links to related material such as music transcriptions and recordings. In qualitative research, the links among data points allow the researcher to make sense of his various sources—they are, in short, the heart of the endeavor.

One result of traditional coding is the reduction and schematizing of data, even though CAQDA allows the researcher to handle data in much larger quantities than manual systems can handle. So, when it is time to look at the data for a general view of what the project is about, what results have been found, and where the information is going, the researcher needs to catalogue the findings. One very useful NVivo option involves matrices or visual models of the project or discrete parts of it. On the basis of my data, I created this preliminary model to see who influenced whom among the bass players in question. (Figure 2.1)

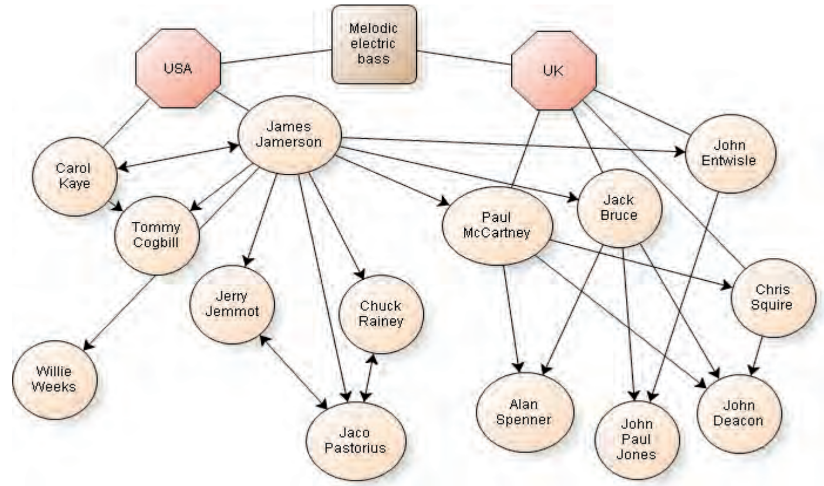

Figure 2.1 Preliminary model of selected bass players' influences

These models comprise sketches of data when one is seeking relationships between theses and facts. They also function as 'proof' of one's thinking at a particular stage of research.

Despite NVivo's virtues as a cataloguer, either by constructing matrices or making visual models of the project, in this thesis the software has been merely used as a tool for handling the interview transcriptions and to lighten the amount of work the material entails. The coding done in NVivo has made it much easier to create a backdrop of the historical angle of the melodic electric bass, as well as to visualize the connections between stylistic features and the performers utilizing them.

2.4 Internet as a research engine

Internet technology as a method of data collection is now part of qualitative research, and a whole range of books dealing with online

research have arisen over the past two decades.[69] Among the numerous approaches the Internet researcher can pursue, the ethnographic angle engages in particular with, among other things, *who* uses Internet (and for what reason). My approach to Internet research is more of a 'how to use the tools provided by Internet'—instead of studying the Internet, I have used the Internet for studying. I used several Internet sources in particular, both commercial and non-commercial, that I will describe below.

To access all the songs essential to this thesis, and to research their performers, I have been obliged to search the Internet to buy records. Everything was downloadable for purchase online, though it was often unclear exactly which *version* of a given song I was buying. An artist with a number one hit is likely to record several versions of the song, including live performances, new arrangements, and digital remasters. For example, Lloyd Price had a number-one hit on the Hot 100 R&B list in 1952 with 'Lawdy Miss Clawdy'[70] as well as three more hits before the turn of the decade. The only recordings I could get hold of at first had an electric bass present, and the playing was very much late 1960s style, so it was not hard to decide that the recordings were not original.

YouTube

Happily, YouTube.com has made up the difference, as a surprising number of people 'film' their record collections of rarities and oldies and put them on YouTube. The downside with these kinds of YouTube clips is the audio quality, which varies greatly between digitally transferred sound in either mono MP3/AAC, or, when using the video camera's microphone as source. When transcribing and using the latter method as a source, it can often be hard to identify

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[69] SAGE Publications has published many books on qualitative research and Internet, including Jones (1999), Hine (2000), Fielding *et al.* (2008) and Markham & Baym (2009).

[70] Disky 904803.

the differing instruments, for example, to differentiate an upright bass from an electric bass.

Spotify

I started to look for my selection of Hot 100 songs in the beginning of 2008, and this laborious process was transformed with the October 2008 release of Spotify.com, a music streaming application that sells access to an extensive library of music. Though some bands, like AC/DC, the Beatles, Led Zeppelin and Metallica, are still not accessible through Spotify, the selection of songs is otherwise almost comprehensive and easy to browse.

All Music Guide

The task of determining which bass player played on which song at what time and on what instrument can be very time consuming as well. A few record companies' websites on the Internet provide session indexes; the *Jazz Discography Project*,[71] for example, provides the record company Atlantic's very thorough session index. The *All Music Guide* at allmusic.com provides information on musical genres, artist biographies, discographies, participant credit data, copyright info, and so on. However, I have found many errors there, some of which may even have seeped into my own data relating to recording credits. I will address the problem of musicians' credits later, in section 3.4 and subsection 7.2.1.

Internet shopping

Internet shopping must also be considered a valid Internet research approach as well, given the amount of information (and products) available via sites such as Amazon, ITunes and Ebay.

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[71] See http://www.jazzdisco.org/.

Tribute sites

The differing tribute sites have been a great source of information on artists. There are numbers of fans around the world occupied with designing websites and collecting data on their favorite artists, to continue the legacy and uphold the chosen artists' reputations. From a musicologist's point of view, the information available on these websites is not very scientific, but it is culturally significant and occasionally unexpectedly valuable. I have also bought several compilation CDs containing Hot 100 hits and R&B hits, but it is hard to verify that the song you hear is the song that was actually played on the radio at the time in question. Therefore, I have found it necessary to cross check every song displayed in this research several times, together with information regarding record credits found from net sources.

Wikipedia

During my research, I have frequently used *Wikipedia* as an important and easy accessible site for information. This web-based encyclopedia, however, is not typically up to the standards of scholarly work, because content is contributed by both professional researchers and laymen and is often uncited. Nevertheless, using *Wikipedia* as an instrument for finding specific data on artists, albums and songs, has led to further reading and investigation in my subject of research. I have been very careful using this online encyclopaedia as source, and the only occasions I have utilized *Wikipedia*, as such, is in the cases of searching *Billboard* Hot 100 and the listings of number one hits. The information listed here states references and can act as a reliable source in that matter, although I have cross-checked the hit lists with *Billboard*'s own Internet sites.

Via my secured virtual private network (VPN) client at my home office and my office at the University of Agder, I have also enjoyed access to the university's library of e-books and a large selection of journals subscribed to by the university.

2.5 Transcription as method

The transcribed basslines included in this study are not exact replications of what was played, nor are they intended to be, following Peter Winkler's thoughts on the issue:

> The most a conscientious transcriber can hope for is a plausible correspondence between his notation and what is actually heard on a recording; there is no such thing as a completely accurate transcription. But, this *caveat* notwithstanding, a transcription can make a performance 'hold still' so that we can observe it – or some traces of it – in detail. (Winkler, 1988, p. 11)

While classical music notation, which I employ in the forthcoming chapters, is always incomplete as a source of playing instructions, it remains true that 'any discussions of notation must be laced with references to WEAM [Western European art music]' (Bennett, 1983). Drawing upon Charles Seeger's (1958) distinction between prescriptive and descriptive notation,[72] and his summary of the shortcomings of the traditional notational system, I will comment below on the transcriptions shown in this thesis.

2.5.1 Notation

Seeger (1958) singles out six principal functions of notating a single melody; pitch, amplitude, tone-quality, tempo, proportion and accentuation, and seeing the bass lines discussed in this work as single melodies, I will discuss my choices according to the mentioned functions.

First of all, the transcriber is able to give the reader information of pitch to within a half tone, but beyond that,

> the attempt to increase accuracy by superscription of additional symbols such as cents numerals, arrows, plus and minus signs,

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[72] '[…] prescriptive and descriptive uses of music-writing, […] between a blueprint of how a specific piece of music shall be made to sound and a report of how a specific performance of it actually did sound.' (Seeger, 1958, p. 184)

> modifications of accidentals, etc., found in many ethnomusicological works is severely limited by the decrease in legibility. (p. 188)

Occasionally, the bass player alters the pitch of the main note, either to enhance the sound (vibrato) or as the result of a slight glissando up to it from the previous note. In most of the bass lines transcribed, the purpose has been to show which notes are used to represent the chords of a song. Any alterations of such notes—bends, hammer-ons, small glissandos and so on—are treated as sound features and marked as such without measuring the exact length or duration, and cannot in that matter be seen as an accurate representation of the recordings.[73]

In addition, the dynamics of a performance (the line's amplitude) are traditionally marked using either letters or lines and therefore never represent absolute measurements of such. I have not used any dynamic markers in my transcriptions, since the bass performances (mostly) follow the dynamics of the overall production, which is not my focus here.

The quality of a tone cannot be described at all using Western notation but only using words. I have chosen not to discuss sound explicitly, though the issue arises several times—I am simply more interested in the succession of notes, the shape of the melody and the techniques used to produce it. I do see that it can be debatable to exclude sound per se, since it could be argued that it is the combined features of a player's interpretation that should be understood to be a player's individual and personal sound. It can also be argued that the melodic electric bass does possess sound qualities that differ from other styles of bass playing and that, consequently, this aspect should be dealt with. Though others may differ, I have concluded that tone quality is not a determining factor

[73] I have added a bass notation legend in the appendix. Bass-dedicated magazines such as *Bass Player* and *Bass Guitar Magazine*, have over the years suggested a standard for notating bass-specific features such as slaphand, bends, 'deadnotes', etc.

in the melodic electric bass, and its role will be incidental to the analyses in sections 3.4 and 5.6 and in chapter 7.

I have included tempo indications as beats per minute (BPM) in all examples and transcriptions. In classical music, tempo indicators have traditionally been prescriptive suggestions from the composer's side that draw upon established terminology. The BPM numbers here are not exact, because the starting tempo of a song occasionally differs from the ending tempo, but they represent an average value for the sake of argument.

By 'proportion', Seeger refers to alterations in meter or rhythmic notation—that is, from breve to alla breve, and so on. When transcribing, it is not always clear whether a song is based on sixteenth- or eighth-note subdivisions, for example; in these cases, I have chosen to notate basslines in time signatures that simplify the reading of the parts.

I rely heavily upon accent symbols as indicators of duration, dynamics and relative emphasis. The staccato symbol applied to a quarter note, for example, is simply easier to read than a sixteenth note followed by a dotted eighth-note rest.

2.5.2 The transcriber's role

In his essay 'Writing Ghost Notes: the Poetics and Politics of Transcription', Peter Winkler (1997) describes his process of transcribing Aretha Franklin's 'I Never Loved a Man' (p. 176). Given his acknowledgment that a truly accurate descriptive rendering of the human voice into musical notes, tonal nuances and phrasing and all, is impossible, he still takes the reader step by step through his work. Along the way he points out the challenges particular to transcribing from a recording, such as the 'illusion of additional tones' when more than one note is playing simultaneously, or the masking of sounds when soft and loud parts appear together. Problems also arise when instruments in the same frequency area share similar voicing, and Winkler singles out low-frequency instruments like the bass as particularly resistant to notation,

especially when the performer plays fast passages in those lower registers. Despite Winkler's use of filters to cut frequencies and clean up his source recording, I spotted fourteen notational errors in his thirty-two bars of bassline, mainly concerning octaves or sixths. This indicates the challenge at hand and the tentativeness of any transcription from a recording.[74]

To give another example of the challenges of popular music transcription, I also found transcription anomalies in Anne Danielsen's (2001) excerpt from James Brown's 'Sex Machine' (p. 94, figure 10). Though she does not indicate the particular recording she used, I know that most of the existing versions of the song were played in D, so her Eb version is likely from the original 1970 recording with Bootsy Collins on bass.[75] If so, Danielsen's transcribed bass line does not resemble what Collins is actually playing, and she has also notated the bass one octave lower than played, which gives the impression that Collins was playing a five-string bass with a low B string, and which did not enter the market until the mid-1970s. While Danielsen is admittedly charting a groove, not an instrumental part, I would say from a bass player's perspective that the notes I choose to play are as much a part of the groove as my rhythmic placement of them. Consequently, errors in a transcription can even affect the results of one's analysis.

2.5.3 Transcription processes

As Winkler (1997) suggests, there are several ways to increase the accuracy of a transcription beyond the use of a well-trained ear, including some filtering of the overall sound and the slowing down of

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[74] I only checked the bass part, rather than the entire transcription, but a quick look at the electric piano staff for the first bar reveals another instrument-specific issue: which notes belongs to which hand? A keyboard player, for example, would voice the opening F chord as a first inversion triad with the root notes as octaves in the left hand, but Winkler's transcription implies something much more awkward.

[75] James Brown, 1970, 'Get up (I Feel Like Being Like a) Sex Machine', (Brown, Byrd, Lenhoff). No 15 *Billboard* Hot 100, October 1970, Bootsy Collins electric bass, *Get Up (I Feel Like Being Like a) Sex Machine,* King 6318.

the playback speed. I used a software program called Transcribe![76] to apply audio processing effects to slow down the music while keeping it in pitch or to apply EQ filtering possibilities to remove unwanted sounds or noise. My overall process of transcription involved three distinct phases:

In the first phase I located my audio material and prepared it for transcription by converting the song to an MP3 file. I used the MP3 format instead of the uncompressed Audio Interchange File Format (AIFF) because it was faster and easier to store and work with the smaller files, and the relative lack of sound quality on the MP3 files was not an issue when transcribing basslines. When necessary, I compared the compressed file to an AIFF file to clarify a given passage.

In the second phase, I opened my MP3 file in Transcribe! and located and notated the bassline in the notation software Sibelius via a MIDI keyboard. Most of the time, I transcribed the notes using a 20 to 25 percent speed reduction. Slowing it down further occasionally leads to unwanted digital noise and the loss of the recording's characteristic sound. If the bass drum was masking the bass guitar notes, however, I might reduce the tempo by 40 percent. The attack of the bass drum would then stand out, which made it easier to hear the bass underneath it. Now and then, I also used the EQ function to remove certain frequency areas—for example, 5,000 Hz and up—or to enhance the area in which the bass works, usually between 90 and 400 Hz.

In the third phase, I checked my rough transcriptions against the MP3 file in several tempi. As Winkler mentions, 'masking' is a problem for transcribers, whereby certain sounds or events that are hidden in one tempo appear in other. These run-throughs are also useful for pitch corrections.

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[76] Available from seventhstring.com; other options on the market include Amazing Slow Downer, TwelveKeys, HyperTRANSCRIBE and Express Scribe.

Additionally, I used Trancribe! on the fieldwork interviews. I recorded the conversations using a digital voice recorder and converted them to MP3 files on my MacBook.

2.5.4 Terminology

Musicology takes advantage of a systematic and thorough terminology regarding its subject matter and methods of analysis (all founded, of course, upon the tradition of Western classical or art music). Popular musicology has terminology too, but it is much less refined (Lilliestam, 1996). According to Middleton (1990), the disparity in relevant and accurate terminology is a major bone of contention between the traditional and the popular poles of music analysis. It is easy enough to transfer words like motif, harmonic organization, tonality and form from classical to popular music, but what about the latter's other typical or defining features—timbre, sound, riff, groove, microtonality, swing and so on? Middleton also notes the ideological aspects of terminology—while a motif in classical music contributes a building block to the very thematic development of the work itself, in popular music it may be merely a repeating riff. Popular music analyses must frequently deal with the presence of entirely new instruments as well—classical terminology simply does not have the words for all of these sounds.[77]

While I borrow most of my terminology from the classical idiom, I also rely upon the language of my performance practice. As I mentioned in section 1.6, some of my empirical data comes from bass-dedicated magazines, which have contrived a terminology since the 1960s and 1970s that is appropriate for players within the idiom of popular music. Magazines like *Down Beat*, *Guitar Player*, *Keyboard Player*, *Bass Player* and *Modern Drummer* have all participated in devising a common language to refer to the different sounds, techniques, features and performances of the 'new instruments', and

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[77] For example, the electric bass/guitar, electric piano/synthesizers, samplers, drum machines, etc.

it is at least as apt as the classical terminology in a study such as this one.

2.5.5 Comments

As discussed in chapter 1, popular music is a fluid term, and the circumstances of its realization have changed profoundly over the course of its first four decades. The studio orchestras and big bands of the 1950s and early 1960s studios required meticulously written scores in stark contrast to the smaller recording combos of the decades following. Instruments came to reflect the individual qualities of their players rather than the generic qualities of the genre in question—consequently, the gap between the arranger/composer's notated scores (where there were any) and the finished result expanded. Soon enough, the songwriter's intention for a song became descriptive rather than prescriptive, and bass players, along with the rest of the band, found themselves free to determine their own musical destiny.

A good part of the basslines transcribed for this study, especially those played by session musicians, were not rehearsed before the recordings took place; they represent the individual bass player's interpretation of a prescriptive chart made by a composer or an arranger prior to the recording session. The band bass players represented on the *Billboard* lists would know their parts before they went into the studio, or sometimes they used studio time to sketch, compose and record the lines on the spot. At this point I can only faithfully transcribe what I hear on the recordings, then cast backward to the cultural state of mind that gave rise to the melodic electric bass. The next chapter will deal with the electric bass's entry into the domain of popular music and must be seen as a backdrop for chapter 5 and the musical analysis following.

PART II – THE MELODIC ELECTRIC BASS—ESTABLISHING STYLE AS PERFORMANCE

3 THE BASS IN POPULAR MUSIC

> My father used to come home from work, from his recording sessions and he would say, 'Son, you know', he said, 'starting not to see upright on the sessions anymore.' This was the rhythm and blues days, you know. He says, 'Why don't you buy one [electric bass] just in case somebody needs that kind of music, you'd have one.' I would say, 'Dad, well, I'm gonna play be-bop. I don't wanna play any bass guitar, man!' And he would say, 'Why, you'd just get one, you know, you should have one,' you know.
>
> Interview, Wilbur Bascomb, New York, 1 April 2008

3.1 Brief history and tradition

It is commonly thought that the electric bass descended directly from the various acoustic bass instruments used in classical music since the fifteenth century, among them bass violas of different sizes,[78] the *violone* or the *viola da gamba*, and of course the double bass, which immediately preceded the electric bass in the meta-genre of popular music. The double bass is, in general, strung with four strings like the electric bass; it is mostly played with two fingers and it is tuned the same way as the smaller electric bass. Yet along with the size,

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[78] See, for example, Webster (1976) for more information regarding the history of the double bass.

the orientation of the instrument in relation to its player changed profoundly between the two basses. Therefore, Jim Roberts, a former editor of the magazine *Bass Player,* proposes in his book *How the Fender Bass Changed the World* (Roberts, 2001) that the antecedents of the electric bass might in fact be found in other horizontally played basses related to the old lute and its family of instruments with more than one peg box

Different bass lutes were used to play basso continuo parts as early as the sixteenth century. They include the *tiorba*, or *theorbo*, as it was called in England,[79] a bass lute with eight unstopped bass strings attached to a second peg box, as well as the *chitarrone* and the *archlute*. These bass instruments had large bodies with round backs, and were played in much the same way that a multiple strung electric bass guitar is played today. Although the bass lutes were mostly used as vocal accompaniment and in small ensembles, they were also used in the orchestra pit together with the vertically played bass.[80] These double bass instruments, like the bass lutes, also came in several sizes, tunings and forms, and they date back to as early as the fifteenth century.[81]

For luthiers of any era, 'size equals volume' has been a dictate for bass instruments, though size also has obvious disadvantages, such as the fact that the instrument can be a cumbersome travelling companion. In late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century American jazz bands, the upright bass gradually succeeded the tuba and the sousaphone in the lower register, although the lack of volume remained an issue. As jazz bands grew bigger during the 1920s USA and developed into the standard eight brass, four saxophones and rhythm section big bands, more and more volume was required. At the same time, portability became more important. Eventually, in

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[79] See Spencer (1976) for a thorough description of these instruments.

[80] 'The theorbo, because of its power, serves best in groups of thirty to forty musicians, as in churches and operas.' (Spencer, 1976, p. 419).

[81] See 'Double bass', *Oxford Music Online* (Slatford & Shipton).

late 1950, Leo Fender built the bass instrument that would solve both problems and be playable by guitarists who wanted the extra work as well.[82] The improvements represented by the new electric bass addressed the following issues:

1. Reliability and stability

The body and neck of the double bass are very susceptible to humidity and temperature changes, which can cause cracks in the wooden top. The thin walls of the body are also vulnerable to physical impact, which can result in fallen sound posts or loose necks. Changes in temperature can destabilize string tension, which causes pronounced tuning problems as well as unwanted neck movements. The Fender bass's body was built from a solid piece of wood, as was the neck, and it was also equipped with a truss rod for even more stability.

2. Playability

The large size of the double bass makes it a physically demanding instrument to handle. With a scale length of forty-four inches, string tension can be as high as seventy lbs on the G-string, compared to the electric bass's thirty-four-inch scale length and forty lbs string pressure. Much strength is required to press the strings down, and tendonitis and neck problems are very common among acoustic bass players.[83] The scale length of the upright bass also means that the performer needs to extend the fingers significantly to play when in first position, compared with the one finger per fret technique used on the electric. The relatively short fingerboard where the neck meets the body likewise forces the upright player to change the position of the hand completely to reach notes over F#3, whereas the electric

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[82] See, for example, Klaus Blasquiz (1990) for further information on the Fender basses.

[83] Several studies show that musicians are generally at risk of developing muscle problems (among other problems) due to their repetitive and static playing postures; see Zaza (1996).

bass's fingerboard is playable all the way up without using thumb position.

3. Sound and volume

Due to its frequency, the double bass is not a particularly loud instrument despite its size, and it has difficulties showing up in ensemble playing if it is not electronically miked. It can also be an ordeal for sound engineers to make it cut through a mix and get it to 'sit', due to the frequency range of the instrument and the tremendous dynamic response produced inside its hollow sound chamber. In addition, hollow-body instruments are also more prone to unwanted feedback sounds. The solid-body electric bass is more forthright soundwise, and even if the earliest Fender Precision bass had issues with electrostatic noise and hum,[84] it was immediately audible in any ensemble situation.

Despite the litany of improvements, the new instrument was not an instant hit. Jazz upright bass players were used to the muffled and indistinct sound, and very few of those players wanted to make the switch to the Fender bass, at least in a jazz setting. They had mastered their instruments through years of playing and practice, founded the bass's place in the soundscape, and the sonic qualities of the instrument fitted the acoustic settings it was used; being discrete and understated, and yet the perfect accompanying partner for the melody instruments in the foreground. In his 2003 PhD thesis, Andrew Waters describes performers' reservations about the electric innovation,[85] citing, among others, John Goldsby:

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[84] According to Blasquiz (1990, p. 10), the Fender Precision went through a complete remake in 1957, that included new pick-ups.

[85] William 'Monk' Montgomery (1921–1982) was probably the first bass player to record using the electric bass in a professional jazz setting, participating on *Lionel Hampton in Paris* (Vogue 68214) and *He Swings the Most* (Vogue 167-8). In order to get the job in Hampton's orchestra, Montgomery was expected to switch to the Fender bass. Though he was reluctant at first, Montgomery eventually made the swap and played it for most of the rest of his career (Bacon & Moorhouse, 1995).

> The acoustic instrument can blend with the other instruments, especially with the sound of the drummer's ride cymbal. In jazz, the two main repetitive timekeeping pulses come from the bass and ride cymbal. It is easy for an amplified bass sound, electric or acoustic, to compromise or even drown out the sound of the ride cymbal. When this happens, the music loses its essential swing element. (Waters, 2003, p. 42)

If the electric bass was a long time being accepted into jazz, it found an immediate welcome in the R&B music of the 1950s, and soon enough jazz double bass players had to learn to play the new instrument in order to get jobs. Some never bothered to explore its novel possibilities, however, as bass player Wilbur Bascomb observes:

> They didn't have a feel for the [new] music and that hampered them learning the instrument. Most of those guys probably weren't gonna go out and buy a whole bunch of rhythm and blues forty-fives and sit home and listen to them. They went from that recording session where they were asked to do [the electric] and go right back to their jazz gigs. They never bothered with the bass guitar again until somebody else called up for a session.

Interview Bascomb, New York, April 1, 2008

What Bascomb suggests here is that the jazz players in the 1950s played the electric bass the same way as if it were a double bass. They did not take the time to explore it, so they either kept to the root and fifth of the chord or played walking bass four to the bar, being loyal to the original role of the instrument.

Most of the bass players used as examples in this study were originally guitar players, not double-bass players, with the exception of James Jamerson. This Motown bass player came from a traditional jazz environment and initially had little interest in the electric. Once persuaded to buy a '57 Fender Precision in 1960, however, Jamerson went on to record almost exclusively on the instrument, though he kept up a busy schedule of live jazz gigs on the upright as well (Licks, 1989). I see this jazz background as

having interesting ramifications for Jamerson's work on the instrument, as opposed to the approaches of former guitar players, and I will return to this point in later chapters.

Before I go further into a discussion of the melodic approach to the instrument, it is necessary first to establish the 'normal' way to play or, in other words, the typical patterns used by bass players.

3.2 The 'normal' bass

There does not really exist a formalized approach on how to play the electric bass, as opposed to instruments that have traditionally been used in the bass role in classical music, such as the bass lute, piano or double bass.[86] There are, however, many method books for electric bass,[87] though none have become iconic—typically, the fluidity of popular music styles and genres makes any given method seem 'old-fashioned' very quickly.

In section 1.7, I narrowed my empirical audio material down to the number one songs on the *Billboard* Hot 100 between 1951 and 1982. The songs appearing here are mostly compositions from popular music genres, such as pop, rock, R&B or country-and-western; genres where the bass instrument originally has an accompanying function, and where a traditional, or 'normal', bass line is likely to be performed. If we go back to before the time of the *Billboard* charts and look at the popular music of the 1920s and beyond, we find the same bass lines and the same method of carrying out the bass's function as in the early Hot 100 years. The following examples (Example 3.1–3.3) are taken from www.dismuke.org, an Internet site dedicated to the early popular music.

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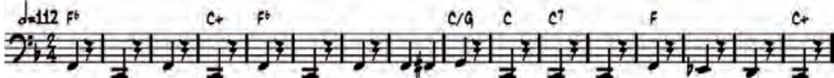
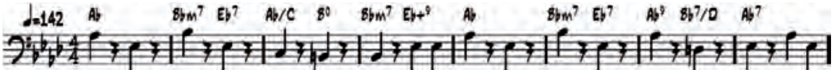
[86] According to the American bass player/blog writer Jason Heath, there are two predominant double bass pedagogical methods in the United States: the *New Method for the String Bass* by Franz Simandl and François Rabbath's *New Technique* vols 1–3 (Heath).

[87] See, for example, Chuck Rainey's *The Complete Electric Bass Player*, 1–5; Carol Kaye's *Electric Bass Lines* 1–6, and Hal Leonard's *Bass Method*, 1–3.

Example 3.1 Six Brown Brothers 1917. 'Smiles And Chuckles', baritone saxophone excerpt, bars 9–21 (Victor 18385-A), downloaded from http://dismuke.org/how/.



Example 3.2 Clyde Doerr And His Dance Orchestra 1927. 'You Sing That Song To Somebody Else', tuba groove excerpt, bars 17–32 (Lincoln 2695 mx 2612), downloaded from http://dismuke.org/how/.



Example 3.3 Richard Himber And His Ritz Carlton Orchestra 1934. 'Were You Foolin'', double bass groove excerpt, bars 5–8 (Victor 24757-A), downloaded from http://dismuke.org/how/.

Studying these chosen examples, and spending some hours listening to the Dismuke's radio, in general I find that:

(i) The bass instrument used is mostly the double bass;[88]

(ii) the bass plays the root note on the first beat and the fifth note on the third beat in the bar;[89]

(iii) it occasionally plays walking lines four to the bar.

I am fully aware that there could be other music containing variations of the mentioned bass lines, but based on my knowledge of the instrument and its function, I would argue that this, as a general rule, can be considered as the 'normal' way to execute the

[88] In some sub-genres, tuba, sousaphone, saxophone and guitar took the role of the bass.
[89] For music in ¾ time, the bass plays on the first beat.

bass role in most musical situations in the early times of popular music.[90]

3.3 The melodic electric bass

As I now turn to the term *melodic electric bass*, I do not refer to the electric bass as a solo or a melody-playing instrument, as opposed to the accompanying function of the instrument. A bass instrument as a solo or melody performer has probably been around as long as the bass itself, especially in classical music,[91] and from the twentieth century in jazz,[92] but it took almost fifteen years between the appearance of the Fender Precision and the first recorded solo on the instrument. This first attempt by an electric bass player to step forward and play soloistically was not in a jazz environment; it was John Entwistle from the English rock band The Who, whose solo bars in the song 'My Generation' from 1965 are considered to form the first recorded electric bass solo (Example 3.4).

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[90] I will return to this practice in subsection 5.2.1.

[91] According to an article by James Webster (1976), concertos for the *violone* (double bass) began to be composed in the late 1760s.

[92] Jimmy Blanton is seen by some jazz historians as the first bass player to have 'contributed the earliest fully satisfying jazz solos' (Robinson, 1994), though David Chevan begs to differ. In the article 'The Double Bass as a Solo Instrument in Early Jazz' (Chevan, 1989), he traces the first recorded double bass solo to a pair of two-bar breaks played by John Lindsay on 'Grandpa's Spells' by Jelly Roll Morton in 1926, some fifteen years before Blanton made his impact on the instrument's role in jazz.

Example 3.4 The Who ‘My Generation’ (Townshend, Peter), John Entwistle electric bass excerpt, tracktime 0 min 54 s, *The Who Sings My Generation,* Virgin 2179.

Other players from the rock genre were soon following Entwistle’s approach; among others, Jack Bruce from the band Cream and the Americans Tim Bogert (Cactus), Phil Lesh (Grateful Dead) and Jack Casady (Jefferson Airplane), who all maintained a soloistic role in their respective bands in addition to the traditional accompanying role. The end of the 1960s also saw the appearance of a new genre called jazz fusion or jazz rock, which formally embraced an increased use of electric instruments and encouraged experimentation with the bass. Since the 1970s, notable electric bass players like Stanley Clarke, Jaco Pastorius, Jeff Berlin, Anthony Jackson, John Patitucci, Gary Willis, Victor Wooten, Oteil Burbridge and Richard Bona, among others, have made a substantial contribution toward advancing the electric bass as a solo/melody interpreter, and it is now considered as a soloistic tool of expression on the same level as, for example, the guitar. These players have all made a career of using the whole range of the bass’s fingerboard, and in particular the tones found on the outer range of the instrument. Their approach towards using the electric bass for something other than the traditional accompanying function have led luthiers to build five- and six-string electric basses, which are now seen as standard, at the same level as the original four-string that Leo Fender built.

On the net, I have googled the combination 'melodic+electric+bass' regularly, and the hits generally refer to the bass as a melody instrument, and by that, not close to my definition of the term. There exist several forums on the Internet,[93] where bass players and interested readers and writers can discuss different topics concerning the electric bass, and I have spent some time there searching for any use of the expression 'melodic+bass', to little avail. In those situations where I have found the term used to mean something other than 'a melody', the adjective has mostly been attached to a few key performers, for example, 'Paul McCartney is a melodic bass player,' or 'the bass playing on "Lemon Song"[94] is very melodic'. These statements do not, however, indicate what lies behind the adjective, other than an assertion that the performer is playing melodic lines and that the bass lines are considered melodic. In the book *Standing In The Shadows Of Motown*, Stanley Clarke is quoted: 'He [James Jamerson] was the first melodic electric bass player,' (Licks, 1989, p. 185). Jamerson is widely seen as the originator of electric bass playing, and the first player to develop the melodic patterns and features still used in popular music genres today, but in the mentioned book, *melodic* is used only twice, giving a further impression of a term used mostly for solo performers.

In this work, I will maintain a careful distinction between the noun *melody* and the adjective *melodic*. *The Oxford Companion to Music* defines the former as 'the result of the interaction of rhythm and pitch' (Whittall); *Grove Music Online* defines it as 'pitched sounds arranged in musical time in accordance with given cultural conventions and constraints' (Ringer). The adjective *melodic,* which is applied to many musical situations, has broader connotations regarding performance practice as well as the quality of the music in question. Albeit a diffuse and subjective term, a melodic (or non-melodic) performance describes the quality of the music at question,

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[93] See, for example, www.activebass.com and www.talkbass.com.

[94] Led Zeppelin. 'The Lemon Song' (Bonham/Jones/Page/Plant). John Paul Jones electric bass, *Led Zeppelin II,* Atlantic SD-8236.

its composition or succession of notes, the placement of notes according to the beat, the choice of notes in the current scale, the quality of timbre and largely every element in a musical performance. With such a broad understanding of the term melodic, it is hard to limit oneself, in order to come up with a definition of a melodic electric bass. In my interview with Chuck Rainey, I introduced and explained my choice of term for him, and his replay was:

> Well, I thought differently until I started talking with you, so I guess it is two ways of looking at it; melody and rhythm or something like that. I kind of think, you know, in different parts of the world, there are different players whereas they mean different things, to be where your constituency is. So I think that once it's explained – melodic bass playing – that is very clear. [...] I think that it's cool; I think that it's alright.
>
> Phone interview, Chuck Rainey, 28 November, 2008

The definitions of melody and melodic can, of course, only be seen as scratching the surface of the extensive content the term contains, and I will not go into a lengthy discussion of these terms here.[95]

To clearly define the melodic electric bass may seem as difficult as defining, for example, *funk bass*. It is possible to argue that funk bass is the way you play when performing in a funk band, but anyone familiar with funk knows that the genre is a very diverse one. A clear and concise definition of funk bass does not exist, since the term must include such technical issues as the way in which the instrument is played, for example, slap bass or finger bass or played with a pick. One must take into consideration whether it is funk played in the 1960s or any following decade due to the fluidity of the genre, and one must reflect on what type of artist the bass player is

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[95] In the article 'Melody: a popular perspective' (Stefani, 1987), Gino Stefani sets out to cure the 'musicological disease', which is what he calls the methodical and systematic lack of knowledge of melody, as opposed to the vast amount of research material existing in harmony, musical form and theory. He proposes a medicine for the disease by trying to see melody as a notion of popular culture, and by searching for a common melodic competence among the people of this culture.

accompanying. The same thing goes for rock bass, jazz bass, R&B bass, Latin bass or whatever other music genre a bass player must cover. But since a melodic approach to bass playing can be seen as having comprehensive qualities and owning common stylistic features or functions regardless of genre, it would be possible to summarize the elements into a definition.

When I first started this project, I came up with this way of describing the subject:

> The term melodic electric bass playing is characterized by an improvised, not necessarily repeated bassline, where the artist plays melodic lines during a chord progression – also in the higher register – and simultaneously looks after the instrument's original role; concentrating on the root and keeping the groove. This in an accompanying, non-soloistic situation.

This definition is very general. It says something about the approach to the instrument. It says something about the role of the instrument in a performing situation, but it does not say anything about what specific scales one can use, what licks are to be played, what techniques to use or which choices are made according to the musical situation one might be in.

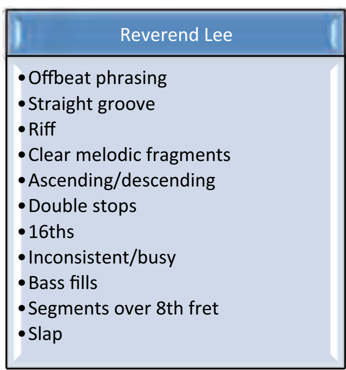
As mentioned, the melodic approach to the role of the bass had its heyday from the mid-1960s throughout most of the 1970s, particularly in genres such as R&B, jazz rock, soul, pop, rock (including heavy rock and progressive rock), fusion and to some extent funk. Traditionally, the bass instrument takes a supportive role in music, and the function and main role of the bass in music of all times is to present the root tones upon which the melody rests. This applies in general to all genres of music. The function and role of the bass in orchestras and bands is to give the other instruments a harmonic base where they can have room for improvisation, play and melodic freedom, and of course to lay down the rhythmic foundation together with drums or other percussion. It is this approach that the melodic electric bass sought ultimately to transcend.

I will now continue by giving one example of what could be called a prime example of melodic electric bass playing (Transcription 3.1), and by that anticipate the work appearing in chapter 5.

3.4 Reverend Lee

> And you watched a lot of the guys, you know, James and Chuck Rainey and Carol Kaye, they're not performers, they are quite shy people, and they just stand in the background and play, you know, but they lay it down. So you put a bass in their hands and they're giants. But if you take the bass out of their hands they're just ordinary people, and it's extra-ordinary!

Interview Paul Westwood, London, Dec. 6, 2007



Reverend Lee
• Offbeat phrasing • Straight groove • Riff • Clear melodic fragments • Ascending/descending • Double stops • 16ths • Inconsistent/busy • Bass fills • Segments over 8th fret • Slap

Table 3.1 Bass features of 'Reverend Lee'

The song is 'Reverend Lee' from Roberta Flack's album *Chapter Two*, and though this song never reached the *Billboard* Hot 100 at all, its outstanding melodic bass performance amounts to a summary of many of the features bass player Chuck Rainey developed in the 1960s. Rainey, who was born in 1940 in Cleveland, Ohio, started out as a guitar player but switched to bass in 1961. He worked extensively in New York for the first ten years of his career, recording albums with Aretha Franklin, Louis Armstrong, King Curtis and others before moving to Los Angeles in 1972. Rainey is one of the few

session players from the 1960s who remains in demand for studio recordings right up to present time, due to his ease in adapting to new styles and genre features throughout his life.

The recording of ‘Reverend Lee’ took place on December 8, 1969, in New York, and twenty-six musicians participated.[96] The arranger for the session was Donny Hathaway, who also played piano. The lyrics tell the story of a black southern minister and his fight with the devil. This is not a typical twelve-bar R&B song, however; it does not alternate A (verse) and B (chorus) sections, nor does it use the very familiar ‘call and response’, shouted hook lines or instrumental solos.[97] The musical structure is based on an accompanying main theme that is divided into sections of four plus four bars, and there are only three chords (with variations): A-blues, D^7 and E^{11}. Several prearranged unison lines repeat among various instrumental sections. The main theme, which is played by Rainey on his ’57 Fender Precision, together with session arranger Donny Hathaway on Fender Rhodes and quarter-note rim shots for percussion accompaniment, is presented as an intro underneath Roberta Flack’s spoken voice as she begins the story; she switches to singing in bar 9 and remains singing throughout the rest of the song. This main theme (with variations) is audible among different instruments until bar 41, where the chords take over as a base upon which the rhythm section improvises; the theme returns in bar 73. Beginning in bar 89, the chords A^7 and D^7 are used as a base for an improvised vamp until the song fades out.

The instrumentation is arranged very dynamically throughout by using the rhythm section as base, carefully adding sustained strings from bar 25 and introducing the first tutti riff in bar 40—the first half played by saxophones before adding brass in the two last beats of the riff. The riff repeats three times every eight bars, then expands

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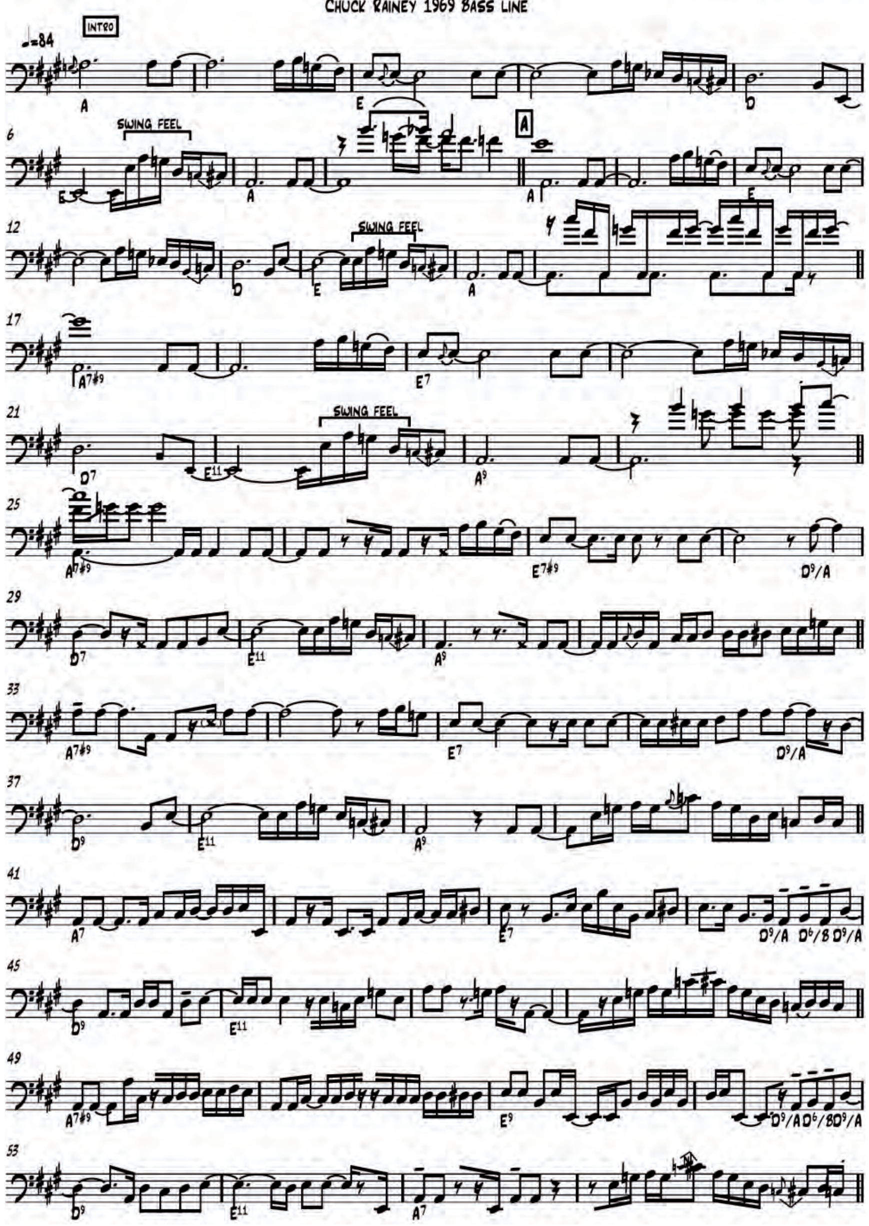
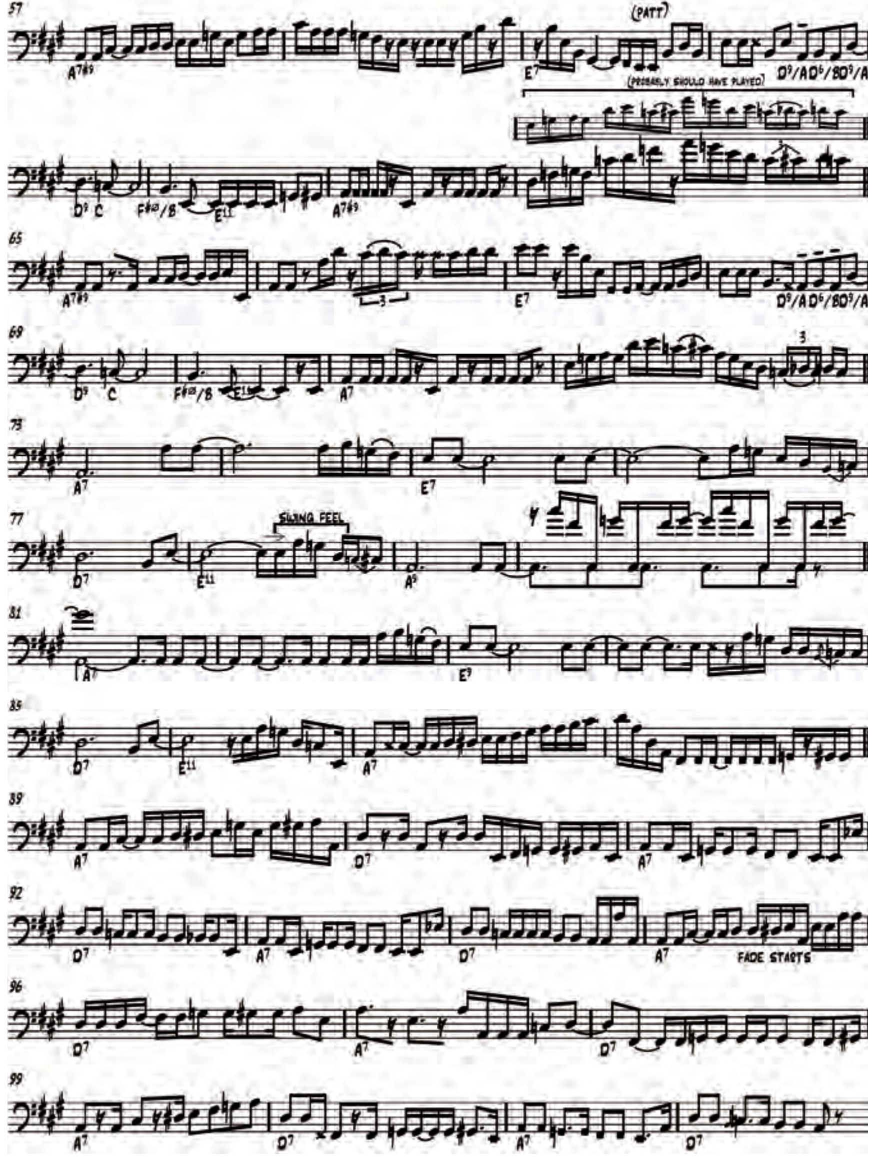
[96] According to Atlantic’s own discography at www.jazzdisco.org/atlantic-records.

[97] See Richard J. Ripani (2006) for a thorough examination of the features inherent to R&B music.

in bar 64 and repeats in bar 72. A new element is introduced in bar 44: a blocked phrase played by the whole ensemble, which is repeated every eight bars until bar 68. The tempo increases throughout the song—it starts at 82–84 beats per minute and accelerates to 94–96 beats per minute by the time of the fade-out.


Reverend Lee
Chuck Rainey 1969 Bass line
Gene McDaniels
Intro
♩=84
Swing feel
A
A7♯9
E7
D7
E11
A9
E7♯9
D9/A
D9
A7
D9/A D6/B D9/A
E9
D9/A D6/B D9/A



Transcription 3.1 Flack, Roberta. 'Reverend Lee' (McDaniels, Eugene), Chuck Rainey electric bass, *Chapter Two*, Atlantic 1569.

As seen in Table 3.1,[98] Rainey utilizes eleven bass typical features during this song, in addition to playing a pre-composed line from bar 1 to bar 24. Rhythmically, the feel of 'Reverend Lee' is of even sixteenths, but in the two last beats of bar 6 this is changed to a swing feel; this happens again in bars 14, 22 and 78. Rainey's first bass fill, in bar 8, sets up Flack's changeover from speaking to singing; he plays an open A string while simultaneously playing a high B and G, thus insinuating a G/A chord (A^{11}), and then he slides chromatically down two frets independently, on the fourteenth fret's high E in bar 9. From A, Eric Gale's guitar joins the unison line, and Ray Lucas expands the drum part by adding eight-note hi-hat taps while marking the line with his bass drum. After four plus four bars, Rainey plays a new fill, a counter-rhythmic figure starting at the sixteenth fret that consists of continuous sixteenth notes, changing between an A^6 and A^7 with the third on top along with the open A-string.

From bar 25 onward, Rainey starts to expand the theme line by adding sixteenth notes and focusing more on the song's overall groove, but he does not abandon the line completely until bar 41, after the brass and saxophones enter. Throughout the song, he uses offbeat phrasing extensively (see bars 41, 50, 57 and 65) as well as slapped notes, at first as a single event in bar 21 but later as a feature (see bars 59, 63, 67 and 88).[99] Rainey's improvised sixteenth-note groove is for the most based on the blues scale, starting on the root and ascending to the octave (see bars 32, 57 and 89), but he also extends the lines, as in bars 87–88, climbing upward from an open A string to the D on the sixth fret, then making an almost two-octave drop down to the $F^{\#}$ on the second fret.

The most impressive feature in this bass track is not in fact Rainey's innovative use of consecutive sixteenth notes or double stops,

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[98] These features will be explored in section 5.1.

[99] Rainey calls his early approach to slapped notes 'patting'. Instead of using his thumb the conventional way, he hits the string with his palm.

though they are fairly difficult to execute, nor is it the way Rainey changes between 'patting' and finger playing, or his interaction with the drummer. It is instead how he manages to relate to a score while improvising in a pressure-filled situation—there were at least thirty people present in the studio that day, including the sound technicians, and any mistake would require another run-through of the song.

Many informants told me that the worst thing about recording was the tedious repetition of the songs. It was not uncommon to play through a song twenty or thirty times before the producer was satisfied, and sometimes a very early take turned out to be the best. The producer, as a rule, seeks the best 'feel', both in terms of groove and in terms of individual performances.[100] The final recording of 'Reverend Lee' sounds like one of the early takes; the rhythm section still sounds very relaxed, and this is probably why the producer kept this take even despite Rainey's small mistake in bar 64 during the extended tutti riff. A mistake like that would not be difficult to repair with the digital multi-tracking possibilities of today with its punch-in–punch-out features, but in 1969, the procedure of fixing blunders was complex. I would presume that the producer ordered a couple more run-throughs to get the bass right, but in the end stayed with this take because of its overall feel.

Rainey repeats his 'improvisational' bar 16 counter-rhythmic figure in bar 80, indicating that it was prepared in advance. At this level, too, players have their own licks, distinctive marks and favourite phrases they love to use, and these particular fills executed by Rainey are no exception. He has explained several times in interviews his use of double stops, 'patting' and sixteenth-based grooves, and uses these features extensively on numerous occasions.

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[100] See Moorefield (2005) for more on the role of the producer.

In R&B sessions in the 1960s, the horn and string arrangements were often written after the basic tracks containing bass, drums, guitar and keyboard was done. Rainey observes:

> The individual musician had a lot to do with a lot of these arrangements. You know, I can't remember reading one notated note during my Aretha Franklin or Roberta Flack recordings. [With] Quincy Jones, you know, there was no notated music, just chord changes for the rhythm section. And so, like the sidemen, they do a lot of arrangements without given credits for. And a lot of producers will say that they worked hard to do a particular thing, whereas there was not a hard job at all because the band was already doing that. [...] So there, back in those days, a rhythm section in a band had a lot to do with what the world heard, and they just made it up, just made the music out of it. [...] A lot of these arrangers did not arrange anything. All they did was just copy what was done.

Phone interview, Rainey, Nov. 28, 2008

This opinion of the 'theft' of arrangement credits or the matter of not being credited for substantial efforts in the arrangement of a song, is still a problem for many rhythm section players. There exist numerous examples of songs in various popular music genres where a session player in the studio makes up the hook line or a recognizable trait without being credited for such effort. The reputational consequences in that a player is known as responsible for this hook line or that musical solution does not weigh up against the economical consequences of not being paid arrangement- or production royalties. This goes hand in hand with the problem of not being credited as performers at all on the record covers during the 1960s.[101] I would presume that this recording session had 'notated notes' based on the fact that there were seven horn players and

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[101] Los Angeles session bass player Neil Stubenhaus adds, 'To drive a whole song on bass, or for a rhythm section to come up with a killer arrangement, and be paid a flat labor wage just doesn't seem fair. Especially when the rest of the business doesn't work that way. Songwriting and publishing all pay again on radio, TV, and film, but what the sideman contributes doesn't.' (Jisi, 2003, p. 91)

thirteen string players on the session. The overall feel of the arrangement is that it is through-composed and therefore prearranged; also, the credited arranger Donny Hathaway was a conservatory-trained performer.

When trying to define the melodic electric bass as a style of bass playing, one must define one's terms. What does 'style' imply? What features make a particular type of playing into a style? How does style relate to genre? What defines a style as 'authentic'? Although it remains a widely debated matter in popular music studies, the consensus appears to be that genre is a comprehensive term identified by style features.[102]

I will now frame these terms and concepts with regard to my own research.

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[102] 'In popular music, a genre is best conceived of as a category, such as blues, rock and country. Style can then be reserved for discussing the musical features that characterize different cultural features within a particular genre (for instance, psychedelic rock or hard rock)' (Scott, 2009, p. 5) .

4 STYLE AND GENRE

4.1 Labelling

Placing music into styles and genres is one way for individuals to separate good from bad music, art from commercial music, or just music from other music. As music consumers, the first questions we ask about new songs seek to place them somehow: What kind of music is this? What does it remind me of? How can I categorize this music? We want order in what we hear, based upon our previous experience and preferences.

Labelling music is, of course, not the exclusive prerogative of the audience, as Simon Frith discusses in *Performing Rites* (1996). Commercial entities apply generic categories for a number of reasons:

(i) The sales process;

(ii) the playing process, and

(iii) the listening process.

Since (i) and (iii) cover much of the same territory and (ii) will be commented on later, I will here address the first of these three strategies of popular music evaluation. Frith sees music labeling as a commercial construction designed to target a paying audience, where record labels, radio stations and record outlets, often in differing ways, all compete to find the right music for the right consumer.

As an example of a record company's strategy, it is natural to mention my own band, Secret Garden. The music of this band can best be described as contemporary pop mixed with Irish folk with classical elements blended in, and, from a record label's point of view, it is not easy to categorize. When the first album was released in the United States, the marketing department of Phillips Classic decided to introduce the music as New Age; Rolf Løvland, Secret

Garden's composer, saw this as an attempt to target an adult audience in particular. Løvland did not see Secret Garden as a typical New Age band, but after the album started to sell very well in the United States, Secret Garden found itself topping *Billboard*'s 'Top New Age Album' chart and staying there for almost two years. Løvland therefore had to change his narrative to the media as a result of this categorization. In Ireland, on the other hand, Secret Garden was marketed as Celtic music; in England, it was categorized as neo-classical music; in Japan, it was 'healing music'; and when singer Josh Groban recorded Løvland's song 'You Raise Me Up',[103] using arrangements that were very close to the band's original version, that song entered the *Billboard* 'Adult Contemporary' chart. Overall, it was less the music than the best available market that determined the categorization of Secret Garden. Chuck Rainey confirmed that the 1960s were no different in this regard:

> Record companies have to play a lot of games when they market things. Young Rascals, when their music came out, they were … they sounded like they were black, and Atlantic withheld their photo as long as they could because they wanted the environment to think that they were black, because Atlantic basically was into selling black music. But now, The Rascals, once it was seen that they were white, [they] were never considered R&B. However, they may have been on some R&B charts, but they were pop, because they were white; or rock. So they have all these categories just to make a difference on where an artist is in order to sell it.

Phone interview, Rainey, Nov. 28, 2008

Record outlets, on the other hand, do not always categorize the music in the same way that record companies do when the outlets display the music on the shelves or online. At HMV.com, Secret Garden is labeled under both classical and easy listening. At Amazon.com, the band is described as neo-classical but labeled under pop, new age, folk, soundtracks, Broadway and vocalists,

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[103] Secret Garden; *Once In a Red Moon*, 2001, Decca 548678.

rock, world music, children's music and even miscellaneous. Tower Records labels the band as Celtic and general rock and pop, among the other aforementioned genres, and the Nordic retailer CDON.com places the band in the categories of classical, Norwegian, pop and rock, relaxation music and miscellaneous. Given this multiplicity, it is easy to agree with Frith that popular music genres are constructed and that they are products of commercial rather than musicological considerations:

> Genres is a way of defining music in its market or, alternatively, the market in its music. (Frith, 1996, p. 76)

4.2 Rules of genre

In 1981, the Italian musician and scholar Franco Fabbri delivered a paper at the *First International Conference on Popular Music Studies* in Amsterdam, in which he suggested a definition of the term genre:

> A musical genre is a set of musical events (real or possible) whose course is regulated by a definite arrangement of socially accepted rules. (Fabbri, 1982, p. 52)

These rules are, in no particular order, formal and technical, semiotic, behavior-based, social and ideological, and economical and juridical. With the first of them, Fabbri invokes the work of traditional musicology, which assesses a composer's form, style, genre and use of music theory in the name of designating a specific genre. Fabbri includes here as well the musician's choices made and techniques used in performance. A music listener's ability to organize sounds into music rather than noise also belongs within this formal rule.

While all genre rules are semiotic, according to Fabbri, because they all link musical content to musical event, those that are uniquely semiotic are those designated to incite the audience's emotion via the aesthetic codes that produce anger, sorrow, joy, and so on. The musical strategies that create or erase distance between artist and public are connected to these rules as well, in that meaning can

transcend text, vocals or instrumentation and derive from certain agreed-upon signs of emotion or aesthetic significance. These semiotic rules overlap in some ways with Fabbri's *behavior rules.*

These gestural rules, or performance rituals, are easily detectable in nearly every genre, from the Stetson hat in country and western music to the permed hair in 1980s metal, the raised hands in gospel, the closed eyes of a jazz soloist, and the concertmaster's chair at the left side of the conductor. These rules, more than any other, define a genre. The audience also participates according to the same rules: either by dressing up appropriately, or by making appropriate gestures, such as the 'rock sign' or head banging at metal concerts, or, at a football stadium, shouting vocals when singing the team's chants.

The latter example of fans chanting could also be used to explain Fabbri's *social and ideological rules*, in that the social composition of people following a specific football team accepts the rules belonging to that specific class. As Fabbri mentions, sociological studies of music have been occupied with questions regarding music and social structure and class for a long time, and the social and ideological rules of a genre can be related to the codes of specific social groups.

The *economical and juridical rules* refer to music as a commercial product, which I have discussed already. Fabbri points out that this listing of rules '[…] cannot possibly give all the types of rule that can be involved in the definition of a genre,' (Fabbri, 1982, p. 54) but although these rules do overlap on several occasions, they give a broad overview of what defines a genre. Fabbri doesn't discuss style in his lecture, except by acknowledging that styles of genre exist, but in a later article he explains style as

> … a recurring arrangement of features in musical events which is typical of an individual (composer, performer), a group of musicians, a genre, a place, a period of time. (Fabbri, 1999)

Here, he sees our modern usage of the term as a heritage from the Romantic idea of style as a sign of subjectivity and personal taste,

but at the same time he acknowledges style as a feature in *musical events*, which he refrained from doing in 'A theory of musical genres'.

4.3 Genre versus style

The traditions of criteria setting, which separate one music from another, and the confusion of terms, according to which musical practice one comes from, are described by Roy Shuker (Shuker, 2008) in *Understanding Popular Music Culture*. He sees genre as a key component of textual analysis, and as a term used as a 'central organizing element', in which style is subordinated. This categorization is frequently used by record companies, musicians, music consumers, music store displays, etc., in addition to music charts, such as the American *Billboard* lists. Shuker himself prefers the terms metagenre, genre and subgenre[104] as a way of dividing different musics and music cultures (Figure 4.1) but does not use this classification consistently.

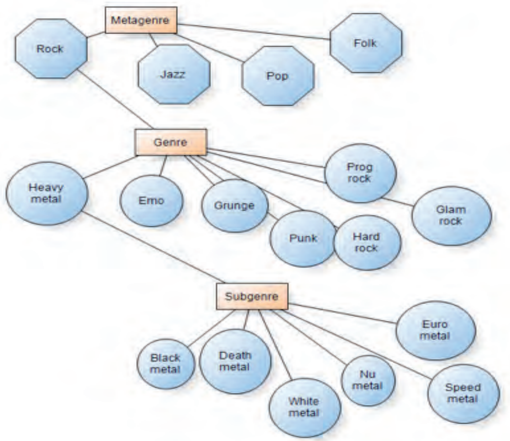

Figure 4.1 Shuker's terms applied to rock

[104] See also Fabbri (1982, p. 52).

When mentioning heavy metal, for example, Shuker uses both genre and style as overlapping terms, and he also describes glam rock as both a genre and subgenre, leaving the impression that he is using the terms more to avoid repetition of words in a sentence than to be consistent in his distinction. Elsewhere, Keith Negus (1996) also uses the terms interchangeably, referring to country and western as both a style and a genre; he also uses constructions such as 'genre style' and collective terms such as 'generic form' and 'generic style' without differentiating them.[105] Shuker (2008) identifies Allan Moore as someone that prefers style to genre, and in *Rock, The Primary Text* (Moore, 2001b), Moore does take a stand for style as preferred to genre in his attempt to separate rock from other music, albeit with reservations, writing:

> The confusion obtaining particularly between 'style' and 'genre' has become for me far more problematic, such that it requires treatment elsewhere. (Moore, 2001b, p. 8)

'Elsewhere' turns out to be an article in *Music & Letters* (Moore, 2001a) where he sums up the scholarly conversation about the issue and expands upon the usefulness of the terms, which he sees as

> concerned with ways of erecting categorical distinctions, of identifying similarity between different pieces (songs, objects, performances even, 'texts'). (p. 432)

He then proposes three possibilities for the relationship between the terms, using heavy metal as his example:

(i) Heavy metal has some characteristics that belong to both terms.

[105] In explaining his expression 'pastichists', Negus writes: 'I also intend to indicate how music genres are adopted in a broad context and played among cabaret and club circuits around the world. New musical generic styles should not be just understood in the context of teenage consumption or the most commercially successful recordings of artists in the top 40.' (Negus, 1996, p. 146)

(ii) Heavy metal is both a style and a genre, which implies that one has to be inferior to the other.

(iii) The terms are in fact identical.

Moore elaborates on this by comparing heavy metal with white (Christian) metal, and concludes that the categorization of style/genre likely depends upon the scholarly tradition of the categorizer. Extending Moore's example to R&B versus soul, we see also that these two categories of music share technical instrumental characteristics, artists and modes of performance, and even lyrics and subject matter (Moore's metal genres stopped here). But the vocal performances go separate ways. Musicologists might see the gospel-influenced, melisma-rich vocal aesthetics of soul as a style difference, while cultural theorists might see the mixed soul audience as a genre difference. As Moore suggests, to see the terms' different areas of reference is the most satisfying approach in this discourse. Moore sums up four characteristic interpretations of the relationship between the terms:

> First, style refers to the manner of articulation of musical gestures and is best considered as imposed on them, rather than intrinsic to them. Genre refers to the identity and the context of those gestures. This distinction may be characterized in terms of 'what' an art work is set out to do (genre) and 'how' it is actualized (style). Secondly, genre, in its emphasis on the context of gestures, pertains most usefully to the esthesic, while style, in its emphasis on their manner of articulation, pertains most usefully to the poietic. Thirdly, in its concentration on how meaning is constituted, genre is normally explicitly thematized as socially constrained (Kallberg, Neale, Krims). Style, on the other hand, in its emphasis on technical features and appropriability, frequently simply brackets out the social (Cope, Crocker) or at least regards this realm as minimally determining, where it is considered to operate with a negotiable degree of autonomy (Green, Hebdige). Fourthly, in its consideration manners of articulation, style itself operates at various hierarchical levels, from the global to the most local. At global levels it is usually considered to be socially

constituted, while it may operate with greater degrees of autonomy at more local levels. (Moore, 2001a, pp. 441-442)

The incorporation of new instruments, the fusion of musical styles and the flow of new talent into the industry results in perpetual tumult in the music industry; with that tumult comes new genres of music.[106] Following up on Moore's four interpretations, I can, from my point of view as a performing musician, see that genre is the comprehensive category, which both contains and divides individual and discrete gestures of musical expression. A genre implies things about sociocultural elements such as class, gender, language, values, social grouping and age as well as musical text. A style, on the other hand, collects the features and means a musician uses to perform music within a given genre. Style is an aesthetic arising from within, and genre characterizations are made from the outside. As a freelance performer, I mostly work from within, where 'style' is the preferred term when categorizing music, although genre knowledge is implicit and expected. When in a studio, working for a producer, my task as a bass player is to play stylistically true to the genre in question and make musical choices based upon my previous experience with the genre (together with the producer's requests). This work implies a broad knowledge of musical features (part of Fabbri's 'formal and technical rules'). As I will discuss in subsection 4.5.1, there does exist a consensus among bass players on the rules of a given genre—how to play it 'right' and keep to the established formula. Take the genre Latin as an example, where the bass groove in the subgenre bossa nova in most cases is played like this (Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2 Traditional bossa grooves

[106] An alphabetical list of current styles and genres can be found at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_music_styles. In April 2009 it contained 423 style/genre names just between the letters A and E.

If in a studio session a bass player is asked to perform a bossa groove and instead plays a beguine bass line, this would be perceived as a violation of the rules of Latin and the player would probably be asked by the producer to change style and to play appropriately according to the genre. Although the typical session player is expected to have a vast knowledge of styles and is supposed to act according to the rules of genre, more often than not producers select the players because they have a special sound or they possess a special knowledge of one particular style. This would turn music in other directions based on the musician's stylistic choices, and consequently contributing to the fluidity of genres.

4.4 Style and authenticity

In classical music, scholars have long linked the notion of authenticity to two main questions: 'Is this played in a stylistically correct manner?' and 'How would the composer like this to sound?'[107] Obviously the problematics of an authentic performance practice before the age of the gramophone, and the composer's intentions, does not effect the implications of the term in popular music in the same way, where the composer's job, in many cases, is simply to provide a melody with a chord progression that will likely be altered by the arranger or producer anyway. Among the numerous intentions of the producer in popular music is that of commercial gain and success. Thus, authenticity concerns the producer's know-how of the consumer market. So if we consider the term 'authenticity' in a popular music context, we find that the term deals more with an artist's intentionality and audience expectation than with the notion of stylistic correctness.

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[107] In his essay 'The composer's intention and deification: rethinking the war on early music,' Erlend Hovland discusses some of the terms that have been central to historical performance studies of (classical) music in past years, among them authenticity as well as *intentionality* (Hovland, 2007). Hovland describes a lengthy discourse among musicologists, critics and philosophers concerning 'the question of the aesthetic and ethical validity of the historical performance movement' (p. 117).

The dichotomy of rock versus pop, or serious intent versus commercialism, constitutes a major part of the discourse in popular musicology, with the term authenticity encompassing vastly different meanings depending on from where or from specific claims are made. For instance, a fan might expect his favorite artist to appear as sincere, trustworthy, genuine, real and honest as possible. Commonly it will be expected that the artist be true to his or her roots and not spoilt by commercial forces, as well as having credibility in terms of the style of music in which he or she started. Other fans would focus on an artist's originality and his or her ability constantly to come up with new ideas. Such markers of authenticity flow from the audience to the performers, who must then rise to the occasion or risk their reputations (and, ironically, their commercial viability).

Seeking out the authenticity in a performer or performance is not something that belongs solely to the discourse of rock music (even if it might seem so). In the article 'Vicars of "Wannabe": Authenticity and the Spice Girls', Elizabeth Eva Leach insists,

> The notion of authenticity has been a source of moral and artistic value attributed to the commercial underdog at every point in the history of popular music. (Leach, 2001).

Additionally, as David Brackett points out in *The Pop, Rock and Soul Reader,* debates concerning authenticity and commercialism were common to jazz already in the late 1930s and early 1940s. (Brackett, 2005, p. 216) These statements indicate that the discourse of authenticity and commercialism is not new, and has not been an exclusively rock versus pop question. The 'modern' discourse on authenticity, however, has its roots in the folk music scene in America in the late 1950s, according to Simon Frith:

> It was within the folk movement that musicians kept alive a popular music that was defined, politically and musically, in opposition to commercial pop. (Frith, 1981a, p. 162).

Fans thought folk music should be performed as purely as possible on strictly acoustic instruments such as acoustic guitars,

harmonicas, flutes, and so on. Authenticity in folk music, then, arose from a performance seen as undefiled by showmanship or exaggerations that might disturb one's focus on the text.

4.4.1 Perspectives on authenticity

For fans and consumers it is important that the music we like and care about, the music we relate to, is created and performed with integrity, and that the artist acts honestly. We believe in music, because of such expectations; the artist must be seen as a genuine and authentic performer, who is driven to compose or perform the music because it is important from an aesthetic point of view, and not for commercially driven reasons. An artist who 'sells out', in the obvious commercial sense of the term, loses his credibility and will, therefore, be seen as less artistically important. Music consumers are, of course, a miscellaneous group, and a good proportion don't really care whether an artist or a composer makes music for commercial or aesthetic reasons, but for the dedicated fan and the well-versed music consumer, authenticity is utterly important. In his article, 'Reconsidering rock', Keir Keightley observes,

> Authenticity can be thought of as the compass that orients rock culture in its navigation of the mainstream. (Keightley, 2001, p. 131).

From a critical perspective, Keightley sees the fetishization of authenticity by critics and fans as means of elevating rock above its kin. Authorship plays a big part here—a band/performer that writes original material, as opposed to interpreting someone else's work, ranks higher on the authenticity scale.

This is a construction, however, based upon the dual myths of rock's sourcing in minds of regular musicians and pop's sourcing in the commercial machinations of professional insiders. In truth, the situation in either genre is considerably more fluid; regarding rock, Peter Wicke concludes:

> In fact it is really ironic that the ideology of rock should amount to anti-capitalism, even though this is only illusory, since more than

> any other this music is inextricably linked to the basic mechanisms of capitalism and itself became an industry organised along capitalist lines. (Wicke, 1990, p. 114)

Rock music has always been commercially linked, from the Beatles in the 1960s, Led Zeppelin in the 1970s, Guns N' Roses in the 1980s, Oasis in the 1990s, to whoever survived the 2000s. Rock's way of legitimising authenticity as a method of differentiating between quality and deficiency has been largely successful and is, in many ways, essential in upholding a continued interest in rock culture. In *Music for Pleasure* (Frith, 1988), Simon Frith demonstrates an inherent contradiction by using the example of Bruce Springsteen, whose 'realness' has made him into a phenomenal commercial success. Frith perceives Springsteen as *the artist* embodying authenticity in almost every aspect of his public life, including the way he dresses (as a 'worker' or regular guy), how he appears on stage (the same) and the content of his songs (which are written from a regular guy's perspective). This has succeeded to the extent that it is perceived, through the rose-tinted spectacles of the rock fan, in opposition to the artifice of pop, or the industry. As Frith concludes, 'Springsteen is real *by contrast*" (p. 98).

Keightley (2001) however looks back to the nineteenth-century cultural movements of romanticism and modernism to unpack much more recent notions of authenticity in rock music. Broadly speaking, while the romantic artist appreciated nature and the notion of the artist as society's 'conscience', the modernist embraced urbanism and saw the need for a break with the past. Where the romantics privileged the sincere, unmediated expression of the human experience, the modernists sought first and foremost to be true to their own artistic integrity (p. 136). Keightley finds it useful to group various aspects of the mythos of rock authenticity according to his (sometimes arbitrary) divisions between romanticism and modernism in order to demonstrate that (at least) two currents persist within this community (Table 4.1).

Romantic authenticity tends to be found more in	*Modernist authenticity tends to be found more in*
tradition and continuity with the past	experimentation and progress
roots	avant gardes
sense of community	status of artist
populism	elitism
belief in a core or essential rock sound	openness regarding rock sounds
folk, blues, country, rock'n' roll styles	classical, art music, soul, pop styles
gradual stylistic change	radical or sudden stylistic change
sincerity, directness	irony, sarcasm, obliqueness
liveness'	recorded-ness'
natural' sounds	shocking' sounds
hiding musical technology	celebrating technology

Table 4.1 Tendencies of authenticity (Keightley, 2001, p. 137)

Ostensibly, artists as well as fans move among these alternative tendencies quite freely—Queen, for instance, slid from avant-garde to folk to hard rock in a single song and still appeared authentic, while David Bowie was alternately overwhelmingly romantic and modernist at different points in his career. Still, Keightley's distinctions problematize a powerful criterion of value in rock and prepare the way for Allan F. Moore (Moore, 2002), who, in his article 'Authenticity as authentication', further articulates authenticity through three perspectives: first person, second person, and third person. First-person authenticity, or the *authenticity of expression*, is

> (…) when an originator (composer, performer) succeeds in conveying the impression that his/her utterance is one of integrity, that it represents an attempt to communicate in an unmediated form with an audience. (p. 214).

Moore continues: 'This conceptualization of authenticity is undeniable.' Describing rock singer Paul Weller's gravelly vocals, presumably shaped by years of 'crying or shouting', Moore argues that this is an avenue through which his audience can access the traumas that caused such pain (and, in turn, access [and buy] his songs themselves). Furthermore, Moore points to Weller's choice of vintage electric guitars as a way to 'reencounter' the rock sound of the 1970s, and to Weller's practice of live recording in the studio as a historicized homage to the recording practices of, among others, the Stax Studio in 1960s Memphis.

This raises a range of considerations, which demonstrate the instability of the criterion of authenticity, first person or otherwise: late-1960s guitars are often chosen simply because they are more playable or have a different sound than newer guitars; Weller's voice might well be gravelly due to vocal cord nodes; and recording live is often preferred to layered tracking because it allows for superior communication among musicians in the studio. The *intention* of a given performance, therefore, no matter its surface qualities, can never be guaranteed to be authentic—any artist has personal motives for how he or she appears to an audience, whatever those fans decide to take away from it.[108] Regardless, however, Moore clearly sees authenticity as the product of a communication between the artist and the audience, whereby the artist's performance will be intended to substantiate the music's message through the use of appropriate effects understood by the dedicated fan.

Moore links second-person authenticity, or the *authenticity of experience*, to the term 'belonging'. A genre known to inspire like-minded groups of people, who rely upon it for identity reasons and cultural communication, will be regarded as authentic. Likewise, an artist who is able to validate a listener's experience of life in a convincing way, or, as Moore puts it, 'tell it like it is', will also be understood as authentic. In her article 'Where Is the "Promised Land"?: Class and Gender in Bruce Springsteen's Rock Lyrics' (Moss, 1992), Pamela Moss identifies three themes in Bruce Springsteen's lyrics in which she discusses:

> (1) Dichotomized notions of gender, based on Western philosophies, and class, based on American working class traditions;
>
> (2) A concomitant expression of oppression of women within the working class and awareness of dominating class relations; and

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[108] See also *Faking It: The Quest for Authenticity in Popular Music* (Barker & Taylor, 2007).

> (3) A comparatively subtle expression of an entrenched patriarchy and an overt characterization of class consciousness. (p. 167)

It's not clear if Springsteen himself would relate to these three notions, but the categories of description can nevertheless be used to characterize an artist who is willing to elaborate on his life experience and background and is, in that respect, a good example of Moore's second-person authenticity.

With regard to third-person authenticity, or *authenticity of execution*, Moore points to the artist who

> (...) succeeds in conveying the impression of accurately representing the ideas of another, embedded within a tradition of performance. (Moore, 2002, p. 218).

In this respect, Moore refers to Eric Clapton's obsession with African American blues guitar players, especially Robert Johnson and B. B. King, and his uncanny ability to convey to his audience both 'this is what it's like to be me' *and* 'this is what it was like to be Johnson' at the same time. Clapton is in many ways regarded as a traditionalist with roots in the African American blues guitar playing of the early twentieth century, but at the same time he is also regarded as an originator of modern blues guitar. Clapton shares this duality of tradition/modernity in expression to differing degrees with, among others, Jimi Hendrix, James Brown and Elvis Presley.

An equally telling recent example of a rock-based authenticity discourse took place in 2009 among the fans of Chris Cornell, the singer from the 1990s grunge band Soundgarden and later the hard-rock band Audioslave. On his solo album *Scream,* Cornell teamed up with R&B producer Timbaland, who is known for his working with artists like 50 Cent and Justin Timberlake.[109] The result, which mixed Cornell's rusty rock voice with a modern R&B feel, obtained using drum loops and sampling techniques, left his fans with decidedly mixed feelings. Cornell is known as one of the most

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[109] Chris Cornell, *Scream,* released March 10, 2009, Interscope 1201802.

capable singers to survive the grunge era, and for his whole career, he has been recognized as a significant rock singer–songwriter–personality. Many of his fans reacted negatively to the release of *Scream*, as the following comment from his website reveals:

> This music makes me want to scream, THAT IT SUCKS! My favorite musician, vocalist, icon lets a Back Street Boy produce his album! I know he is a chart fart but come on buddy! Get back your SOUL!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! (www.chriscornell.com)

Critics have also been very negative toward the new album.[110] By choosing Timbaland as his producer, then, Cornell appears to have strayed according to all three of Moore's perspectives in the authenticity discourse:

1. From his fans' point of view, Cornell chose to work with the 'enemy', a matter of failed integrity and disloyalty to his rock roots. This criticism resonates with the furore over Bob Dylan's famous embrace of the electric guitar in the mid-1960s.[111]
2. Cornell also shook those fans inside the rock community who saw him as the ultimate authentic rock singer/songwriter. The situation resembles the rock band Queen's experiences when releasing *Hot Space*[112] in 1982. Having been regarded as a pure rock band who used only 'organic' instruments, they suddenly based a whole album on drum machines and synthesizers, which 'upset many of their European fans who preferred the familiar hard rock' (L. Jackson, 1994, p. 116).
3. The mixture of Cornell's characteristic rock voice and the smooth machine-made Timbaland soundscape represents a major break with both the rock tradition and the modern R&B idiom. Such a

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[110] Stephen Thomas Erlewine from *All Music Guide* writes: '*Scream* is one of those rare big-budget disasters, an exercise in misguided ambition that makes no sense outside of pure theory' (www.allmusic.com).

[111] This is a repeated topic for several scholars: see Middleton (1990, p. 90), Frith *et al.* (2001, pp. 13,122), Sheinbaum (2002, pp. 111-112), Brackett (2005, p. 130) or Pattie (2007, p. 59).

[112] Queen, *Hot Space,* 1982 Elektra 60128.

breach of style is not seen as compatible with a tradition of performance, either in the black-dominated R&B environment or in the predominantly white rock community. A similar situation arose in 1997, when the pop icon Pat Boone released *In a Metal Mood: No More Mr. Nice Guy*,[113] and quite likely lost all respectability among his largest fan base, conservative Christians.[114]

4.5 Fluidity and the transgression of rules

It seems that genre categorizing can never be absolutely correct and agreed on from all sides of the music culture, since music is always in constant motion. Robert Walser observes this in his book *Running with the Devil* and writes; 'Nowhere are genre boundaries more fluid than in popular music.' (Walser, 1993, p. 27). Shuker (2008) agrees:

> musical genres continue to function as marketing categories and reference points for musicians, critics and fans, particular examples clearly demonstrate that genre divisions must be regarded as highly fluid. (p. 120)

Middleton is also occupied with this notion of fluidity:

> Genre is always important for representational strategies, defining what can and cannot be said, and in what ways. But genres in pop are exceptionally fluid and polyvalent, the representational spaces they cover governed by a multitude of factors. (R. Middleton, 2000, p. 232)

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[113] Boone, Pat, *In a Metal Mood: No More Mr. Nice Guy*, 1997 (Hip-O 40025). 'There is no logical reason for human beings to deliberately expose themselves to Mr Boone's new wash-off tattoo, Harley fixation, and deadpan milktoast delivery as he, his cookie-cutter female background chorus, and underachieving big band samba their way to Deep Purple's "Smoke on the Water," and jive to Guns N' Roses' "Paradise City", and swing through the most ludicrous read imaginable of Metallica's "Enter Sandman". Other abominations include Alice Cooper's "No More Mr. Nice Guy", Ozzie's "Crazy Train" and that ultimate nightclub closer… (wait for it) … Led Zeppelin's "Stairway to Heaven"' (Roch, Parisien in *All Music Guide*, www.allmusic.com).

[114] See, for example, Gilbreath (1999).

In this thesis I had to take this fluidity of genres into consideration when deciding which empiric musical material I should choose as suitable for displaying the progression of the melodic electric bass. The bass-line excerpts transcribed and used as examples in, for example, chapter 5, are collected from an all-genre singles chart, making it clear that even if the Billboard Hot 100 must be seen as a conglomerate of popular music genres, the bass playing is rather consistent and does not differ much from genre to genre, hence the twenty features discussed in section 5.1.

Nevertheless, the notion of fluidity must, in addition to be accepted as a natural evolvement inside a given genre, also involve the occurrence of what Franco Fabbri calls the transgression of the rules. According to Fabbri, this transgression of rules in a genre leads to the development of other genres, and this seems also to be true of style characteristics. As I mentioned, Walser, Shuker and Middleton discuss the fluidity of genre divisions, but styles could also be seen as equally fluid. A style feature in the 1960s is often not the same as a style feature in the 1980s or the 1990s, as can be observed in this next example. In her book *How to Play the Electric Bass* (Kaye, 1969), Carol Kaye shows one of the earliest attempts to discuss 'how to play bass proper according to genre',[115] and gives several examples of the popular bass styles at the time; Rhythm and Blues, the Boogaloo, the 'Motown' style, the Gospel style, and so on.[116] This is the example of Hard Rock (Example 4.1).

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[115] Shirley Douglas is acknowledged as the first author of a method for electric bass. In 1960, she published the *Easy Guide to Rhythm & Blues for Bass-Guitar* (Douglas & McDevitt, 1960), a collection of exercises and advice for the aspiring bass player. It also includes notated examples of bass grooves such as 'Rockashake', 'Rocka bass' and 'Rollin' bass', among others.
[116] Kaye's capitalized letters and quotation marks.

Example 4.1 Example of hard rock (Kaye, 1969, p. 9)

The excerpt is introduced as follows:

> Acid (or Psychedelic) Rock is a highly imaginative hard-feeling style. Usually freaky light shows help one to create in this style which requires the hardest physical playing of all. It is similar to Boogaloo, Memphis-Nashville, and Soft Rock all put together. (p. 9)

It is of course hard to summarize a style of playing in only four bars, and I will leave largely untouched Kaye's juxtaposition of three heterogeneous genres,[117] the construction of her four bars,[118] and even the key[119] of the example. What is important at present is that Kaye uses the term style for both a way of playing and a category of music that this way of playing represents. In the example, we also find 'offbeat phrasing' (bars 1–3) emphasized, which I will come back to in subsection 5.2.8.

Chuck Rainey evoked style in my interview with him:

> Well, it's kind of hard. I play to what I'm listening to. You know, I play … I still do that today. I mean, my habit is to try and complement what I'm listening to. And everybody has a style. My style is to play across one-five-one and five-eight, like Jamerson. And I do that no matter what: it's part of my concept, part of my style.

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117 Acid rock is generally considered a subgenre of psychedelic rock; Kaye is likely thinking of Jefferson Airplane or the Grateful Dead with this excerpt, which sounds stylistically like Jack Casady, Jefferson Airplane's bass player.
118 From a bass player's point of view, the last bar's bass fill would not occur until the end of a longer musical period.
119 Most hard rock songs would be played in the key of E or A due to the availability of open-string chording in those keys on guitar.

Phone interview, Rainey, Nov. 28, 2008

Here, Rainey juxtaposes style with an electric bass performance practice as well as a personal way of interpreting stylistic features. This is typical of performers, who often evoke style as a representation of both their playing and the features of a particular genre.

Brackett (2005, p. 267) points to Boston, Foreigner and Journey as examples of modern hard rock bands, and I can confirm from that music and my own experience that the typical hard rock bassline of today is based on even eighth notes, not dotted-eighths followed by sixteenths as in Kaye's example. Also her sense of the bass's offbeat phrasing in hard rock likely arose from several of the number-one songs of the 1960s and 1970s *Billboard* Hot 100 chart, as in this example from the Rolling Stones (Example 4.2).

Example 4.2 Rolling Stones, 'Get Off My Cloud' (Jagger/Richards), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, November 1965, excerpt from verse, Bill Wyman bass line, *December's Children (And Everybody's)*, London 451.

There are two ways music might be produced in terms of a specific genre: the musician (composer) has an idea of what kind of music he wants to make, has a genre in mind when writing, makes stylistic choices and takes steps to hit (or intentionally miss) his mark within the genre and succeeds with the critics, or, alternatively, he does all of those things and fails with the critics. This coincides with Fabbri's discussion of 'conditions of codification' (Fabbri, 1982, pp. 60-61), whereby the rules of one genre form through transgressions of the rules of another genre. Fabbri is convinced that a musical genre does not arise from nowhere. A new genre will always develop within an existing musical system, borrowing and recombining features and stylistic marks from other genres, and occasionally breaking some of their rules as well.

A great part of these rule-breaking musicians was to be found in the American studio scene of the 1960s and 1970s, which was characterized by, what bass player Anthony Jackson refers to as, 'the industry rhythm section' (Jisi & Jackson, 1992) — that is, the generic studio bands and session musicians employed by the recording studios or labels on many of the backing tracks for *Billboard* hits. In Los Angeles, a fluid pool of musicians, later dubbed 'The Wrecking Crew'[120] was hard at work; the same applied to their colleagues in the cities of New York and Detroit[121]. Generally, these were musicians with a jazz background, which implied a knowledge of jazz theory, an awareness of time/groove, well-developed improvisational skills and an ability to supply a chord progression with melodic musical ideas on the spot. As session musicians, they also had to be able to shift among musical styles and genres comfortably. In many cases, due to their participation on pioneering records, these people in fact *invented* the playing styles on which many of the popular genres and subgenres hinged, including surf rock, Boogaloo, disco and funk.[122] They provided originality and creativity to the music, devising new styles or elaborating upon existing styles. In the 1960s the Wrecking Crew and their colleagues were among the most sought-after instrumentalists in a growing field, and their work laid the foundations and supplied the guidelines

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[120] A lot of the older musicians in Los Angeles at the time famously felt that this new wave of musicians was 'wrecking' the music industry because of their somewhat informal way of dressing, behaving and playing, hence the self-applied nickname (Blaine, 2003).

[121] I will discuss this further in section 6.1.

[122] It is possible to argue that The Beach Boys originated surf music; that boogaloo was a style feature in Herbie Hancock's music; that disco was personalized by the Bee Gees; and that funk was invented by James Brown. Each of these performers relied heavily upon session musicians, and consequently, these musicians invented the grooves and set the preferences for subsequent players in the mentioned styles and genres.

for playing stylistically correctly in a variety of genres, new and old.[123]

4.5.1 Instrumental performance transgressions

There are several examples of instrumentalists, which have also walked the fine line between style conception and style *misconception* — that is, the inappropriate insertion of a particular technique, for example, into a context that does not support it. And, as stated earlier, style misconception sometimes leads to the development of new ways of realizing an instrument's role within a genre. Chuck Rainey made double stops (see chapter 3), amongst other features, a significant trademark of R&B bass playing in the 1960s. Electric bass player Larry Graham, from the band Sly and the Family Stone, introduced the slap and pop technique at the end of the 1960s and transformed funk bass playing. American Steve Swallow was among the first players to change from the upright bass to the electric bass, much to the dismay of his jazz colleagues.[124] He also started to play the bass with a plectrum, something unheard of in jazz music at the time. Lastly, Stuart Hamm and Billy Sheehan pioneered the two-handed tap craze that played a distinctive role in the bass shred era of the 1980s. These musicians all set new standards for playing stylistically correctly by altering established techniques to suit new contexts. This consensus of style consistency or aesthetic lies, in general, in the work of key players of each style, and in their documentation of how they fulfill the bass role through their performances; solo, or together with different artists in diverse styles. The consensus is always open for change and original input from

[123] Among instrumentalists, style misconception is, in general, frowned upon, and as a bass player, one does not use slap-hand techniques in a jazz standard, or play sixteenth notes in a country and western ballad. Such transgressions of the rules of genre will eventually lead to the premature end of a career.
[124] 'Swallow executed this transition in the midst of a highly successful career as an acoustic bassist, yet the switch from acoustic to electric bass was fraught with perils, as a general animosity toward electronic instruments in the jazz world was prevalent when he made the conversion.' (Waters, 2003, p. 4).

new key players, allowing a new consensus to be established, but it is nevertheless expected for a seasoned player to have the knowledge and general view of the different aesthetic agreements that have been made through generations of players.

This style/genre discussion leads me to a view of the melodic electric bass as a style of bass playing, and seeing the performer deciding upon stylistic features to determine the genre is important for two reasons: (i) To recognize melodic electric bass playing as a comprehensive style, suitable in differing genres of music, and (ii); this style of bass playing utilizes several specific stylistic features in order to be determined as such. The next chapter will discuss the latter as a crucial part in establishing the melodic style as an authentic and credible style of bass playing.

5 DETAILS, FEATURES AND IDIOSYNCRASIES

Using the number-one songs on the *Billboard* Hot 100 from 1951 to 1982, I will below explore in detail the stylistic elements that define the melodic electric bass. These recordings will function here as evidence of the decision-making processes that eventually brought the melodic electric bass to fruition (and ultimately ushered it out of fashion as well).

A bass player's role in popular music (and most other music) is, as stated before, to maintain the root of the chord material and simultaneously keep a steady pulse. There are, of course, several methods of carrying out such a role, depending on which genre one performs in, the tempo, drum groove or time signature, whether it is a live or studio performance, the size of the band, and so on; so to define what kind of features a bass player can, should or want to use in a specific situation is of course impossible without being present at the concert or in the studio while tracking. On the other hand, the final result of the bass player's or producer's knowledge and choice of musical elements is evident in the recordings available, and by that, it is the key player's way of coming up with musical features and solutions that paves the way for new methods to be established.

The common features that bass players would use to execute the bass role stylistically, both according to genre and across genre boundaries, occur in great numbers, as I will describe in this chapter. The *Billboard* Hot 100 chart contains songs from very diverse genres, and within the more than thirty-year time span I have followed the list, the stylistic features used by bass players to designate these genres are quite numerous. I have, in the time span from 1951 to 1982, been able to identify twenty distinct features of bass playing that appear there, eighteen of which I will discuss in detail in what follows. These twenty features are typical stylistic choices for a bass player to make while performing, and also so typical that I listed at least twelve of them even before I started the

aural work of going through the songs. There is no doubt that there exist other minor features and combinations of features used by the bass players in the selected songs besides the ones I mention in this research, but to recognize those properly, I would have had to make complete transcriptions of all 617 number one hits. For obvious reasons, I have not taken on such a task, so the features mentioned here are the twenty main tools used by bass players within a 30-year perspective.

5.1 The features

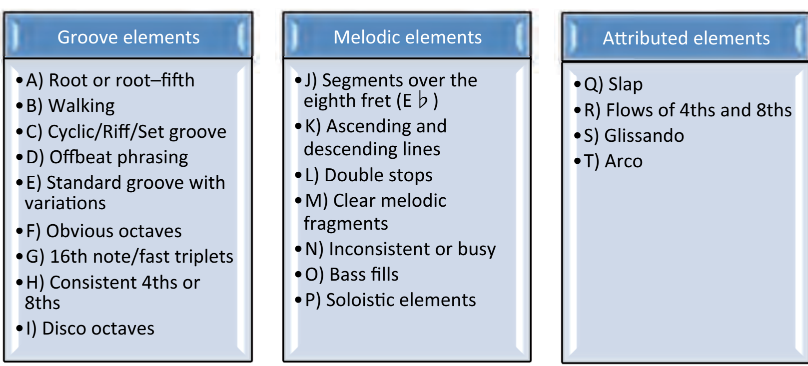

Table 5.1 Featured elements

I have chosen to group my twenty designated features (Table 5.1) in the following categories: *groove elements*, *melodic elements* and *attributed elements*. Though the boundaries among these groupings are particularly fluid between eras of popular music, they are consistent within the era in question and help to simplify the organizational scheme applied to this data. ‘Slap’, for example, is an attributed element here, but would certainly be a groove element in the decade between, let’s say, 1984 and 1994, due to its popularity and frequency at that time; in this study I see it as a sound element, used as an occasional sound effect. Though ‘offbeat phrasing’ holds obvious melodic contents, for me as a bass player, it is clearly a groove feature and is thus categorized as such. The classification of

'sixteenth notes/fast triplets' as a groove element during this era could also be debatable. Inside funk, jazz and fusion music, the feature is frequently used as an important groove component, but since those genres are almost non-existent on the Hot 100, it would perhaps be more suitable to see these elements as attributed. However, as we will see from my findings, sixteenth note grooves do exist to a moderate extent in addition to occasional ornamentation, and will therefore here be looked upon as a groove feature. Some of the features played have also been marked more than once in one song, for example, a cycled bass groove may have elements of offbeat phrasing and/or 'flows of quarters and eighths'. An inconsistent or busy groove would also typically consist of sixteenth notes, and will therefore be marked as two features. In both the text and the spreadsheets of Appendix B, each feature is listed using capital letters for ease of comprehension.

In relation to his second rule of genre labeling—'organizing the playing process' (Frith, 1996, p. 87)[125]—Frith notes the way musicians talk to each other during rehearsals or performances, using generic labels or metaphors to describe a sound or style: 'Give it some funk!'; 'Try a reggae bass!'; 'Hit that Phil Collins hi-hat!' (ibid). He argues that musicians must have the ability and musical knowledge to respond appropriately to this code, and that 'genre labels describe musical skills and ideological attitudes simultaneously' (ibid). The names of my twenty features include 'performer code' as well, but hopefully of a more benign and accessible variety—that is, 'walking' or 'slap' describes, or at least evokes, the actual physical action involved with the feature. Other terms, such as 'glissando', 'arco' and 'double stops', are derived from classical music terminology, while 'clear melodic fragments', 'segments over the eighth fret' and 'consistent quarters or eighths' are constructed terms that describe the musical result of a

[125] See my discussion in chapter 4.

performative action. In a conference paper, Morten Michelsen notes that

> the metaphorical process involves an act of understanding and the consequence is a production of meaning, where we suddenly understand a thing, a pattern, or a set of circumstances in a relation that has till then been hidden. (Michelsen, 2001)

Earlier in this work, I used metaphorical terms like *free*, *playful*, *naive*, *exaggerated* and *cheerful*, among others, to describe bass lines; Stan Hawkins has also used *booming*[126], *pounding*[127], jerky[128], *pulsating*, *muddy*, *jumpy*, *jungle-like* and *funk-like*.[129] Yet these generic descriptions are of lesser use when we isolate small and fragmented bass features as in this study. These features demand specific and concrete descriptive terms that evoke the act of performance and/or relate to the relevant music theory.

Some of the features in Table 5.1 are more likely to appear in some genres than in others, but it will become clear that they all transcend genre to some extent and are therefore treated as independent elements. Before I continue the discussion of the three feature groupings, I will give a brief overview of some of my other findings during this research.

5.1.2 Other findings

Although the electric bass was on the market from late 1951, it did not appear on the hit lists for another six years. The first time it appeared in a *Billboard* Hot 100 number-one song is November 1957, when Bill Black played one for the recording of Elvis's 'Jailhouse Rock'.[130] Though the Fender Precision sounded quite

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[126] See Hawkins (2002, p. 40).
[127] See Hawkins (2001).
[128] See Hawkins (Hawkins & Niblock, 2011, p. 148).
[129] See Hawkins (1997).
[130] RCA Victor 47-7035. On the Hot 100 R&B list, 'Jailhouse Rock' reached number one the month before (October 1957).

similar to the standard upright bass in the early years, the sonic elements coming from Black's bass are rather evident. Interestingly, in April 1951, some months before the Fender Precision appeared, Les Paul and Mary Ford had a number-one hit with the jazz standard 'How High the Moon'.[131] Here, Les Paul imitates a bass on the two lowest strings on his guitar playing the 'normal' bass line, and the sound he produces is very equal to the sound that will prevail one decade later (Buskin, 2007). The electric bass's growth in popular music from the 1950s onwards, is clearly visible in the following figure (Figure 5.1); from Bill Black's introduction of the instrument in 1957, we see an increasing use of the electric bass throughout the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, and in 1963, only eleven of the twenty songs on the list are performed on double bass.

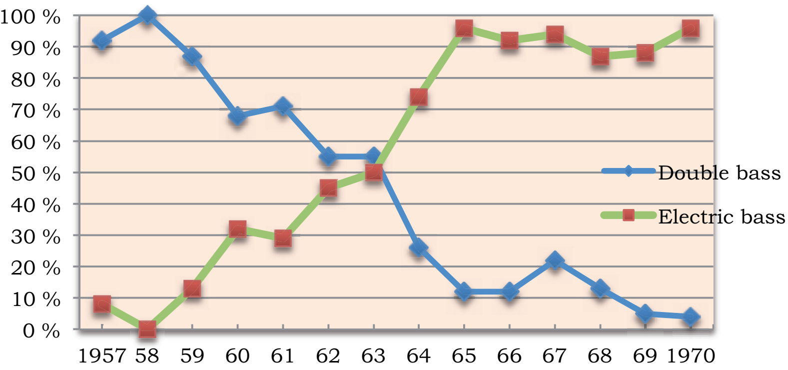

Figure 5.1 Use of bass instrument on *Billboard* Hot 100 no 1 songs.

By 1964, the electric bass has thoroughly superseded the double bass, at least on the Hot 100; it is perhaps no coincidence that this year also marks the start of the 'British Invasion' with the arrival of its advance guard, the Beatles. On February 1, 1964, the single 'I

[131] *The Hit Makers!*. Capitol Records 416.

Want To Hold Your Hand'[132] climbed to the number one position on the chart and stayed there for seven weeks, the first of three Beatles singles in a row to claim that spot (Table 5.2).

Although English bands started to appear on the Hot 100 from 1964 and onwards, the use of electric bass had already started to pick up couple of years before. In 1960, over 30 percent of the songs included electric bass, and the same was also the case for the Hot 100 R&B. Both James Jamerson and Joe Osborn, who will be presented thoroughly later, had their debut on the Hot 100 in 1961, and both players would dominate the Hot 100 well in to the 1970s.

1964	Song title	Artist	Bass player	Instrument
Jan	There! I've Said It Again	Bobby Vinton		Double bass Tic tac
Feb	I Want To Hold Your Hand	The Beatles	Paul McCartney	Electric bass
March	She Loves You	The Beatles	Paul McCartney	Electric bass
April	Can't Buy Me Love	The Beatles	Paul McCartney	Electric bass
May	Hello, Dolly	Louis Armstrong		Double bass
	My Guy	Mary Wells	James Jamerson	Double bass
	Love Me Do	The Beatles	Paul McCartney	Electric bass
June	Chapel Of Love	The Dixie Cups		Electric bass
	A World Without Love	Peter & Gordon		Electric bass
July	I Get Around	The Beach Boys	Carol Kaye	Electric bass
	Rag Doll	The Four Seasons	Nick Massi	Electric bass
August	A Hard Day's Night	The Beatles	Paul McCartney	Electric bass
	Everybody Loves Somebody	Dean Martin		Electric bass
	Where Did Our Love Go	The Supremes	James Jamerson	Electric bass
Sept	The House Of The Rising Sun	The Animals	Chas Chandler	Electric bass
	Oh, Pretty Woman	Roy Orbison	Billy Gilmore?	Electric bass
Oct	Do Wah Diddy Diddy	Manfred Mann	Tom McGuinness	Electric bass
	Baby Love	The Supremes	James Jamerson	Electric bass
Nov	Leader Of The Pack	The Shangri-Las		Electric bass Tic tac
Dec	Ringo	Lorne Green		Double bass Tic tac
	Mr Lonely	Bobby Vinton		Double bass
	Come See About Me	The Supremes	James Jamerson	Electric bass
	I Feel Fine	The Beatles	Paul McCartney	Electric bass

Table 5.2 Hot 100 1964.

The new dominance of the electric bass is also apparent on the *Billboard* Hot R&B list (Table 5.3). Though this particular list was

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[132] *Meet the Beatles!*. Capitol (S)T 2047.

discontinued between November 30, 1963 and January 3, 1965,[133] we find that there was a majority of number one songs using double bass before the chart pause, and when re-emerging in 1965, the double bass had almost vanished from the chart. Aside from Motown artists, the number-one R&B positions in the 1960s were dominated by Stax and Muscle Shoals artists, along with the occasional James Brown hit. Between January 1965 and December 1969, there were eighty-two different songs on the Hot 100 R&B: James Jamerson playing bass on at least thirty-three of them; Tommy Cogbill from Muscle Shoals and Donald Dunn from Stax played on seven apiece; and James Brown's bass player, Bernard Odum, played on five of them. All of these players except Odum also appeared on the Hot 100, and together they contributed significantly to popular culture's appreciation of the electric bass in its first full decade of use.

1965	Song title	Artist	Bass player	Instrument
Jan	My Girl	The Temptations	James Jamerson	Electric bass
March	Shotgun	Jr. Walkers & the All-Stars	James Jamerson	Electric bass
April	Got to get you off my mind	Solomon Burke	David Adams	Electric bass
May	We're Gonna Make it	Little Milton		Electric bass
	I'll be Doggone	Marvin Gaye	James Jamerson	Electric bass
	Back in my arms again	The Supremes	James Jamerson	Electric bass
June	I can't help myself (Sugar Pie Honey Bunch)	The Four Tops	James Jamerson	Electric bass
Aug	In the Midnight Hour	Wilson Pickett	Donald 'Duck' Dunn	Electric bass
	Papa's Got a Brand New Bag (Part 1)	James Brown	Bernard Odum	Electric bass
Oct	I Want to (Do Everything For You)	Joe Tex	Unknown	Electric bass
	Rescue me	Fontella Bass	Louis Satterfield	Electric bass
Nov	Ain't that peculiar	Marvin Gaye	James Jamerson	Electric bass
	I got you (I Feel Good)	James Brown	Bernard Odum	Electric bass

Table 5.3 Hot 100 R&B 1965.

It is worth mentioning that there were also other bass instruments in popular music during the 1960s, including Les Paul's aforementioned electric guitar. One popular alternative was the UB2

[133] 'When it came to integration in America, the pop music charts set a model example. By 1963 they became the most integrated ever in terms of race and gender. So much rhythm and blues and soul music appeared on the heretofore white-dominated pop charts that *Billboard* discontinued its rhythm and blues singles chart that November, because it had become so similar to the publications prestigious Hot 100 pop chart' (J. A. Jackson, 2004, p. 29).

Danelectro six-string bass made by Nathan Daniel from 1956 onward. This short-scaled bass often worked in tandem with the double bass, producing its sought-after 'clicky' sound while tuned one octave down from a guitar and played with a pick, and the result was a more prominent and audible bass line (Bacon & Moorhouse, 1995, p. 20). Carol Kaye remembers:

> At the time that I started playing bass they were usually using two or three bass players. They were using the string bass, the Fender bass, and they were using what is called the Danelectro (the Dano) six-string bass guitar. (Kaye, 2007)

This 'Tic-tac' bass, otherwise known as the 'Dano', generally doubled up the preexisting bassline but was occasionally used as a solo instrument as well. By 1967, however, the electric bass had won out over the Tic-tac bass as well, which disappeared completely from the number-one songs on the Hot 100 chart.[134]

Another instrument that occasionally replaced or added color to the electric bass was the keyboard bass (see Figure 5.2). This is less a specific instrument than a range of possibilities for bass sounds produced by a keyboard; in the 1970s the popular choices included a Moog or ARP instrument, or a clavinet; and as the 1970s headed into the disco age, it seems that record producers began to rely more on keyboards to carry out the job that bass players and drummers had done in the previous decades.[135] The sudden jump in the graph in 1979 shows that the use of the keyboard bass is very high at the turn of the decade, but it drops back again already in 1980. Obviously this graph does not extend into the 'synth-pop' music that dominated the 1980s, however telling that data might have been for the fate of the electric melodic bass later on.

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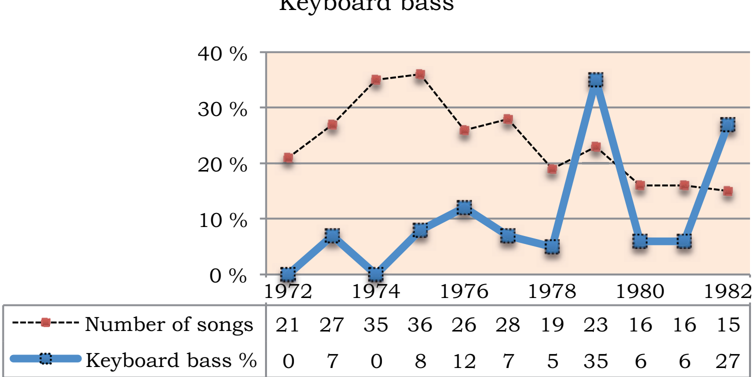
[134] Elvis's 'Stuck on You' (RCA 1187) notably included the Tic-tac bass—it reached number one in April 1960—and Glen Campbell used it as a solo instrument for his 1968 recording of 'Wichita Lineman' (Capitol 52039).

[135] There had been one earlier attempt to substitute the bass role before 1972. The band Steam had a number one hit with 'Na Na Hey Hey Kiss Him Goodbye' (Mercury 61254) in December 1969, in which the bass was played using a keyboard.



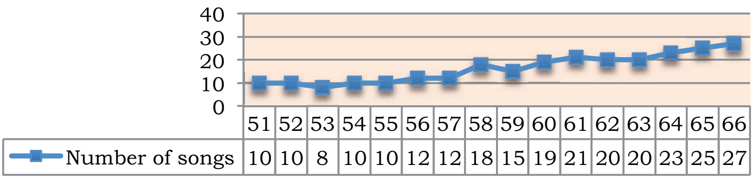
	1972		1974		1976		1978		1980		1982
Number of songs	21	27	35	36	26	28	19	23	16	16	15
Keyboard bass %	0	7	0	8	12	7	5	35	6	6	27

Figure 5.2 Use of keyboard as bass on Hot 100.

5.1.3 About the diagrams

The diagrams in the subsequent subsections (5.2 – 5.7) are intended to visualize the use of bass features shown in Table 5.1, and uses the findings in the excel pages in Appendix B as basis. They display the use of features each year divided on the number of songs the same period; the y-axis measures percent of features used each year, and the x-axis displays the year the features were used. As is clear from the Appendix B and Figure 5.3, the amount of songs during the period researched shifts from one year to another.

Number of songs Hot 100
1951 - 1966



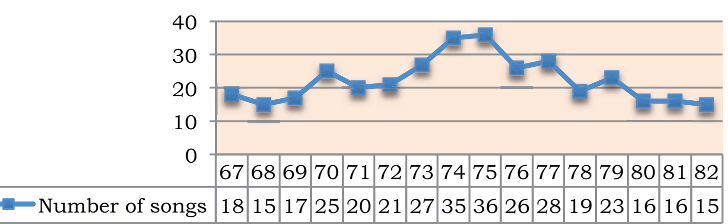


Figure 5.3 Number of songs Billboard Hot 100 1951 – 1982.

In 1953, for example, only eight songs reached to the number one spot on the Billboard's 'Best sellers in store' list, but in 1975, thirty-six songs climbed to the top of the Billboard Hot 100 list. This inequality can be confusing when looking at the graphs, seeing, for example, the use of one feature in six songs in 1953 represents 75%, while in 1975 the same feature used on six songs represents 22%. To avoid any miscomprehensions of reading the data, I have included a line on every diagram representing the number of songs each year.

It is important to assert that my selection of songs in this thesis represents only samples from the Hot 100, and if so, the statistics visualized via the graphs can be considered as inferential statistics[136]. Urdan (2010) argues that 'samples are not necessarily

[136] 'Inferential statistics refer to the use of sample data to reach some conclusions about the characteristics of the larger population that the sample is supposed to represent' (Urdan, 2010, p. 2).

good representations of the populations from which they were selected' (p. 2), and if so, to make a general statement on melodic electric bass playing choosing only the number one song out of a number of one hundred, can be potential problematic. However, my research design can in this case also be perceived as a form of descriptive statistics,[137] in that my research consists of only the Billboard Hot 100 number one songs. Consequently, I have generated parameters applied to this population. In either case, I will argue that I have conducted a representative sampling,[138] and that my decision to choose the number one songs is aimed at generalizing, to some extent, the results from my samples to the population of all songs participating on the Hot 100 lists in the period researched. Because of the commercial nature of the popular music idiom, it is reasonable to conclude that record producers, record companies and artists strive to get a number one hit because of the success factor, the economy and the resultant publicity. Given this, I believe that the bass playing in these selections of songs is representative of the era from which it comes and, as such, is able to act as empirical material for my study of the progression of melodic electric bass playing.

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[137] 'Descriptive statistics apply only to the members of a sample or population from which data have been collected' (Urdan, 2010, p. 2).
[138] When a researcher purposely selects cases 'so that they will match the larger population on specific characteristics' (Urdan, 2010, p. 3)

5.2 Groove elements

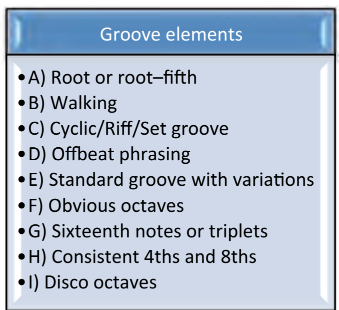

Table 5.4 Groove elements.

> It determines the direction of the song, the form, the dynamic level, and the length of the solos. It *controls* the song. The player who is able to direct the groove can control the band – and the bass player does more things at one time that affect everyone in the band than anyone else.
>
> Ron Carter in *Bass Player* (Roberts, 1993)

As should be clear by now, the bass player's main role is to provide the music with a harmonic foundation and to supply the rhythm together with the drummer or the percussion player. There is, however, one more essential concept in bass playing, namely *the groove*. The concept of groove, is, especially among musicians, one of the most debated elements of playing music. The 'ability to groove', or 'to lay down a groove', is probably the single most fundamental concept in the popular music idiom among bass players, and it is still a term surrounded by mysticism and ambiguity, being a subjective and personal idea of how a music works, though, simultaneously, there exists a common tacit agreement on what can be considered an effective and successful groove. The inherent duality of the term is also asserted by Danielsen (2010): 'The two aspects of groove are [...] so interconnected that groove becomes a noun that includes itself as a verb: it has to groove to be a groove' (p. 12). The use of the term as a noun—or the groove as connected to a

rhythmic pattern as opposed to the verb version of the term, is the most innocuous sense of the word, and it is this meaning of the word that I will mostly focus on here, even if the noun and verb often act concurrently. The noun *groove* has at least two commonly construed meanings:

(i) The placement of notes according to a mutually decided pulse, and

(ii) a set rhythmic pattern that is frequently used within a genre and that can act as a 'genre determinant'.

In the empirical material collected for this study, I treat these grooves as completed musical acts—while I can describe relevant timing issues, the placement of notes in relation to pulse, and the bass player's positioning in the groove's unfolding, I will not weigh in on whether a given groove is particularly aesthetically satisfying or not. Even if the term has been severely debated[139] and now seems to be treated as a common phrase that might not need further explanation, I feel that it is necessary to problematize the term as a musical phenomenon to a certain degree. I might begin my consideration of this phenomenon with Middleton's definition from 1999:

> The concept of groove – a term now theorized by analysts but long familiar in musicians' own usage – marks an understanding of rhythmic patterning that underlies its role in producing the characteristic rhythmic 'feel' of a piece, a feel created by a repeating framework within which variation can then take place. (R. Middleton, 1999, p. 143)

The *feel* Middleton mentions here constitutes a popular and telling synonym for the word groove among practicing musicians. *Bass Player* magazine dedicated a whole issue to 'the groove' in April 1993, when editor Jim Roberts asked sixteen members of the

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[139] See, for example, Keil and Field (1994), Berliner (1994, pp. 349-357), the journal *Ethnomusicology* (Titon, 1995) or Danielsen (2001, 2010).

magazine's advisory board to share their thoughts about the term, to no clear consensus (Roberts, 1993):

> When it's there, you know it.
>
> (Will Lee)

> The groove honors and respect the pulse of the song and the root of the chord. [...] Those are the only two requirements, but *how* a person adheres to the pulse and honors the root defines his or her style.
>
> (Jeff Berlin)

> Everything is built from the groove, so it requires conviction and consistency.
>
> (Mark Egan)

> I'd describe the groove as the part of the music that comes closest to being part of your biological being.
>
> (Lee Sklar)

> The best, and probably only, way to learn to play in the groove is by playing with people who already know how. [...] But they won't want to let you, so start with records.
>
> (David Hungate)

From these citations we derive a clear sense of the insider's acute sense of ownership over the whole phenomenon. The musician's status as a player would often equal his or her ability to make a music groove, and this vagueness concerning the practical use of the term is an important part of the mysticism surrounding it.

If we cannot say exactly *what* it is, we can say with more certainty *where* it is. In popular music genres, the collaboration between the drummer and the bass player typically determines the song's groove. In his early essay 'Motion and Feeling through Music', Charles Keil (1966) sees the interplay between the drummer's 'tap' and the bass player's 'pluck'—whether laying back from or staying on top of the

metronomic pulse—as a process-based point of access to the music that is at least as important as the more musicologically familiar syntax-based approaches. Keil was trying to account for the musical processes that standard Western music notation does not reproduce well, and he used the concept of *vital drive*[140] to begin to describe the small irregularities in a song's pulse that comprised the raw material, if you will, of its eventual groove. Twenty years later, Keil refined the concept into his important theory of participatory discrepancies (PDs) (Keil, 1987). As Waadeland (2000) explains, the PD concept

> points to the empirical fact that in a situation of several musicians playing together, the different musicians are in varying degree *asynchrone* with another; [...] [a]nd, according to Keil, '*the power of music' lies precisely in this asynchronicity.* (p. 47)

This attempt to describe the microrhythmic variations that make up a groove, or

> the little discrepancies within a jazz drummer's beat, between bass and drums, between rhythm section and soloists, that create "swing" and invite us to participate. (Keil, 1987, p. 277),

has, according to Tellef Kvifte,

> been a core concept of the [groove-] debate to the extent that I will make references to a 'PD school'. (Kvifte, 2004, p. 55).

Central to Keil's theory of PDs stands the claim that groove involves a focus on process, which he sees as more important than the syntactic tradition of examining Western art music, and by this, Keil opened up an alternative view when analyzing groove-oriented popular music genres. Although Keil only described PDs, and, to my knowledge, never actually measured their existence, several other researchers have focused on, and tried to visualize, the microrhythmical variations that musicians utilize when playing.

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[140] Keil acknowledges the French critic André Hodeir as originator of the term.

Prögler (1995) is able to develop the concept of 'rhythmic displacement' by drawing upon Kofsky's study of Elvin Jones's style of drumming (Kofsky, 1977), Thomas Owens's use of Charles Seeger's melograph when transcribing one of Charlie Parker's improvisations (Owens, 1974), and Reinholdsson's research on a bass player's swing (Reinholdsson, 1987). Prögler's own pathbreaking research on PDs involved recording jazz musicians and then displaying their note placements against a fixed grid. Over the past decade, technology has caught up to research like this, now allowing anyone to reckon a given performance against a metronomic pulse, whether performer, producer, or researcher. Using digital audio workstations such as Steinberg's Cubase,[141] Apple's Logic,[142] or Digidesign's Pro Tools,[143] music engineers are able to display and even manipulate a musician's groove in whatever way necessary.

With regard to my empirical audio material from the three decades between 1951 and 1982, the recording was done using mainly magnetic tape recorders, from 1950s two-tracks through three-, four-, eight-, sixteen- and then twenty-four tracks by the end of the 1970s, all leading up to the introduction of digital recording in the beginning of the 1980s (Zagorski-Thomas, 2007). The grooves, then, began and ended with the musicians; there was no studio manipulation of timing or interaction. Judging from some of the songs presented in this study, playing on a pre-recorded click-track was also rare,[144] as a comparison of opening tempi with closing tempi makes clear. So one begins to doubt whether PDs are in fact measurable at all during this long and fertile period of popular music-making; Kvifte (2004) likewise wonders how we might gauge PDs in the absence of a steady tempo, which is not the same thing

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[141] See www.steinberg.net.

[142] See www.apple.com.

[143] See www.digidesign.com.

[144] In the written material provided by Carol Kaye, she mentions the studio use of click-track in the 1960s, though this was primarily a feature of movie or TV music recording. For more information regarding the use of click-track in popular music recording, see Zagorski-Thomas (2010)

as saying there is not tempo at all. If musicians agree upon some ebb and flow to the tempo of a song, do these discrete events constitute discrepancies at all? Kvifte eventually distinguishes between the fixed beat represented by a metronome and the ‘musically meaningful entities’ that constitute the groove as the musicians in fact play it, then modifies Keil’s assertion that groove arises solely from process by arguing that ‘syntax provides the hooks on which the PDs hang’ (p. 61). In other words, a musician’s attack, which is determined by his/her internal clock in relation to the others in the band, must be seen as syntactical, in a sense, to the groove.

In the following subsections, I will display grooves and groove features as ‘found [...] in the *relation between syntax and process*.’ (ibid), rather than looking for PDs. I will also draw upon Stan Hawkins’s notion of ‘rhythmic syntax’, which he explains as ‘the recurring groupings and combinations of metric patterns that communicate the “beat”, groove, and “feel” of the text’ (Hawkins, 2002, p. 12). The nine features listed as groove elements (Table 5.4) are all essential parts of the ‘toolbox’ that bass players possess when performing, and consequently, I have not tried to rank them in any order of importance, although I do start with the basic root–fifth feature.

5.2.1 Root or root–fifth

As discussed in section 3.2, the ‘normal’ way to play the bass guitar in a pop song is as follows:

(i) In a 4/4 song, a given chord’s root is typically played on the first beat of the bar, and (additionally) the chord’s fifth note on the third beat of the bar.

(ii) In a 2/4 song, the chord’s root is again played on the first beat, and the fifth (additionally) on the second beat.

(iii) In a 3/4 song, the chord’s root is played on the first beat, and the fifth (additionally) on the third beat.

This, together with playing only the root on the first beat no matter what the time signature, must be considered as the ‘normal’ and traditional way of bass playing. Of the 617 songs I surveyed for this study, 277 of them were either strictly played as ‘root or root–fifth’ or were very close to it. Though this ‘normalcy’ fades as the decades pass, it remains a striking tendency and must be seen as the defining feature of pop music bass playing. In this category I have also included songs where the player plays or ‘implies’ (strongly hints at) an anticipatory eighth note, eighth-note triplet or sixteenth note before the first or third beat in a 4/4 time signature. Often on ballads, the bass player might play whole notes during the intro as well, and I have also included them in this feature. If we take a look at the tendency of the ‘root or root–fifth’ feature year by year, we get the following curve (Figure 5.4).

Root or root-fifth

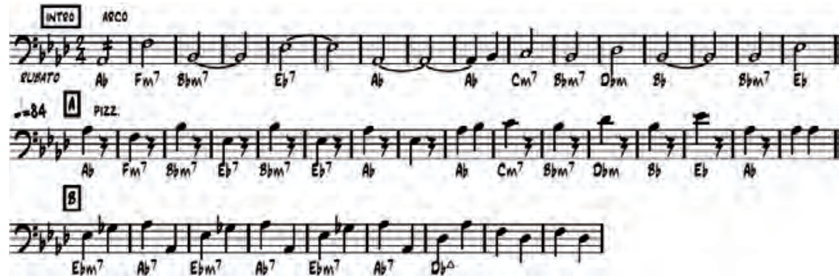
Figure 5.4 Frequency of ‘root or root–fifth’ use

In the early 1950s (and presumably in the era leading up to that point), the ‘root or root–fifth’ style was overwhelmingly dominant. After a gradual decline, a major drop occurs in 1965, about the time the electric bass supersedes the double bass on the Hot 100 charts, as mentioned. If first-generation players showed some reticence about exploring the possibilities of the new instrument, there were evidently other players around to pick up the slack and begin to

experiment. Interestingly, the ‘root or root–fifth’ makes a comeback in the years 1977 and 1981, respectively, where 75 percent of the songs display it. Overall, however, the era is characterized by a rejection of the traditional responsibilities of the bass in popular music.

5.2.2 Walking

Walking bass[145] is a familiar feature in jazz music, and together with ‘root or root–fifth’ and arco playing (see Figure 5.24), it comprises the relatively limited arsenal of features the double bass players brought to popular music recordings in the 1950s. A typical way of combining these three features was by playing arco during the intro, pizzicato root notes for the verse, and walking bass for the chorus, as in this example from Kitty Kallen’s 1954 hit ‘Little Things Mean a Lot’ (Example 5.1).



Example 5.1 Kallen, Kitty. ‘Little Things Mean A Lot’ (Lindeman/Stutz), No 1 *Billboard* Best Sellers in Store, June 1954, bars 1–40, *My Coloring Book,* BMG 38163.

[145] Gunther Schuller defines this technique as follows: ‘In jazz, a line played pizzicato on a double bass in regular crotchets in 4/4 metre, the notes usually moving stepwise or in intervallic patterns not restricted to the main pitches of the harmony. The style arose as the use of Stride piano patterns declined, and its first master was Walter Page in the late 1920s and early 1930s; it has since become *lingua franca* for jazz bass players, allowing them to contribute pulse, harmony and counter-melody simultaneously’ (Schuller, 1994, p. 1257).

However, the most common combination of features in the beginning of the 1950s was the 'root or root–fifth' and arco playing. The lighter side of the jazz genre was well represented on the Hot 100 list before R&B, pop and rock eventually took over the chart, and crooners like Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett, Perry Como and Bing Crosby, among others, often sang music prepared by jazz-trained arrangers accompanied by large studio orchestras. The volume-limited sound produced by pizzicato double bass, would often be drowned out in tutti passages. Therefore, it would seem that the pizzicato 'root or root–fifth' would normally be used with smaller ensembles or quieter passages in the music. The use of large studio orchestras declined during the 1960s, which might be one of the reasons the walking feature disappeared (along with the jazz phase-out on the Hot 100) (Figure 5.5).

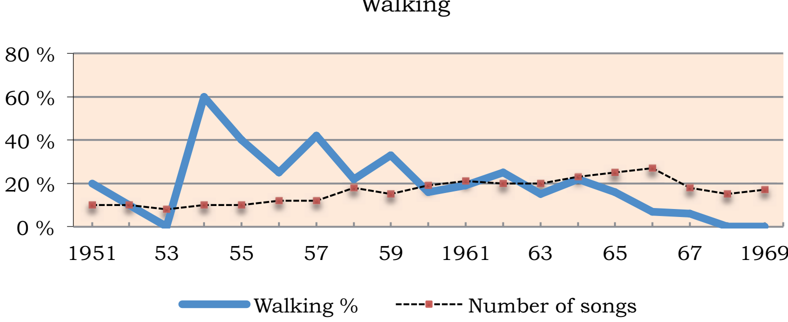


Figure 5.5 Frequency of walking use

5.2.3 Cyclic, riff or set groove

Another important observation regarding the 'normal' way to play bass is that it is typically cyclic, due to the recursive character of the chord sequences used in popular music. Several scholars have described popular music's use of the cyclic form as one of its main

features and, in particular, Richard Middleton's focus on *musematic repetition* has often been cited (Middleton 1990).[146] Middleton adopted the term *museme* from Phillip Tagg's *Kojak – 50 Seconds of Television Music* (Tagg, 1979), where Tagg describes the term as

> the basic unit of musical expression which in the framework of one given musical system is not further divisible without destruction of meaning, (p. 108)

or, as he explains later, 'minimal units of expression in any given musical style' (Tagg, 1982, p. 48). There are, of course, an infinite number of ways of executing repetitions, but Middleton distinguishes between two different groups of repetition, which he calls *musematic repetition* and *discursive repetition*. The former term, which can be described as looping of the smaller units, is well suited to describe all the three cyclic forms of bass line in this study, and is also, as Middleton suggests, a typical feature of Afro-American music. The discursive repetitions, which Middleton applies to longer musical phrases, can also be found in some of the riff-based lines, together with through-composed bass lines, which I will come back to in subsection 5.2.7. The discourse on repetition has long preoccupied jazz researchers; in a 1999 article, American jazz scholar Ingrid Monson, for example, describes the ways repetition was

> used in swing era arrangements; (i) as melodies, (ii) in call and response, (iii) as continuous ostinatos, and (iv) in layers. (Monson, 1999, p. 34)

I have chosen to combine three features in one, identifying *cyclic bass lines*, riff-based lines and set grooves as one feature. This is because these three features function as repeated events, and very often have similar functions; it is consequently difficult to separate them without going into speculations. The difference between the three is also difficult to spot since they occasionally intertwine, and it depends very much on the situation in which they are executed. In

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[146] See also Brackett (1995, pp. 118-119) and Moore (2001b, p. 37).

his book *The New Blue Music*, Richard J. Ripani describes cyclic form as a feature that is

> used to indicate a musical section that is characterized by the use of a repeating pattern, or a 'cycle', usually one to four measures in length. The cyclic form is often riff-based and sometimes features a solo performer with a group answer. The form includes a cessation of harmonic function or development and is thus outside the bounds of what has been generally accepted in European art music (although there has been some use of this feature in the minimalism movement in twentieth-century music). (Ripani, 2006, p. 11)

The cyclic form can, in general, be understood as the umbrella beneath which *riff* and *set groove* naturally fall, but a *cyclic bass line* can also be seen as an equal feature at the same level as these features. I will now present some examples from the Billboard lists containing cyclic forms:

5.2.4 Cyclic bass line

Adapting Ripani's definition to bass, a cyclic bass line forms a repeated sequence of notes, which is often, but not necessarily riff-based, and it can partly be seen as a style-determining feature. By that, I am referring to its frequent use in blues-based music, as in the 'guitar-boogie' line and other permanent blues and R&B bass lines. The 'normal' bass line playing root/fifth on a multiple repeated chord can also be seen as a cyclic bass line, but in the following examples it is natural to distinguish between *cyclic form* and the *cyclic bass line*. A cyclic bass line is more likely to possess more notes than two per bar, and will typically consist of a more complex combination of notes. In Example 5.2 below, we see a cycled 'boogie woogie' bass line supplied to many R&B songs of the fifties. It is based on a simple twelve-bar blues harmonic pattern, and the bass player uses swung eighth notes to outline the triads of the chords. This line can determine a genre or not, depending on which musical surroundings it is played in. The same line can also be played underneath a slow shuffle blues; it can fit in an up-tempo rockabilly

situation, and, if played as quarter notes, it can be used as the base of a mainstream jazz walking line.

Example 5.2 Harrison, Wilbert. ‘Kansas City’ (Leiber/Stoller), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, May 1959, double bass excerpts from guitar solo, *Kansas City,* Top Rank International 45-JAR-132.

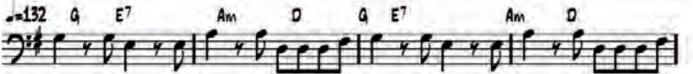
In *Studying Popular Music*, Middleton labels a similar example (Example 5.3) of a repetitive bass line a ‘bass riff’. (Middleton 1990, p. 282). I will come back to the difference between the riff and the cycled line in subsection 5.2.5.

Example 5.3 Presley, Elvis. ‘All Shook Up’ (DeKnight/Freedman), No 1 *Billboard* Best Sellers in Store, April 1957, Bill Black double bass, main verse groove, *All Shook Up*, RCA 47-6870 5560.

The first hint of a repeated bassline on the *Billboard* ‘Bestsellers in Store’ chart occurs in February 1955 with ‘Sincerely’ by the McGuire Sisters. (Example 5.4) Even if the double bass is largely concerned with supplying the roots of the chords, the verse’s repeated I–VIm^7–IIm^7–V^7-turnaround, doubled by a tenor saxophone, gives the strong impression of a cyclic bass line. The song was originally performed by The Moonglows, and topped the *Billboard* Rhythm & Blues Best Sellers list the previous month. The latter version’s bass line is doubled in the voice.

Example 5.4 McGuire Sisters. ‘Sincerely’ (Fuqua/Freed), No 1 *Billboard* Best Sellers in Store, February 1955, double bass excerpts from intro, Ponytails, Hooped Skirts & Bobbysocks: American Gals of the ‘50s, Acrobat 7017.

The rather common chord progression of Example 5.4 can be found in several songs on the *Billboard* lists, for instance in Example 5.5, where Nick Massi is very consistent, playing almost the same cycled line, but here in a 4/4 time signature. Such a strict and repetitive bass line will in many occasions be altered with octave variations and passing notes, but in doing so, the looped feel of the line would disappear. I will return to these less-dominant cyclic forms in subsection 5.3.5 when I review the 'inconsistent/busy' feature.



Example 5.5 The Four Seasons. 'Big Girls Don't Cry' (Crewe/Gaudio), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, November 1962, Nick Massi electric bass, main groove excerpt, *Sherry & 11 Others*, Vee Jay 1053.

5.2.5 Riff

> I always tried to support the melody, [...] I had to. I'd make it repetitious, but also add things to it... It was repetitious, but it had to be funky and have emotions.
>
> James Jamerson, cited in George (1985, p. 126)

While the significance or even the function of a riff depends upon the particular musical context, a riff itself is generally understood to be a short, repeated sequence of notes or chords, sometimes played in unison by two or more instruments; it often represents a song's hook, or at least the most recognizable element within the song. The electric bass seldom carries the riff, which is more often the responsibility of the electric guitar or horn section, letting the bass or drums provide a steady pulse for the others to play against. Obviously the bass's low frequencies do not (typically) dominate the soundscape as convincingly as the higher-pitched instruments, and will therefore often possess a 'join-in' function; supporting the riff from underneath instead of taking a lead role. Many of the riff findings on the Hot 100 are just short, prepared, unison lines where the bass takes on a unison supportive function for a short time before going back to the accompanying elements it left before the riff.

This is certainly borne out by the Hot 100 charts, where the electric bass at best will join in on the riff at a certain point in a song, before resuming the accompaniment. Therefore, the difference between a bass-played riff and a cyclic bassline comes down to the presence of other instruments in the case of the former, as in Example 5.6. While the notation indicates Jamerson's cyclic bassline, the actual music reveals a piano playing in unison with the bass from the beginning of the song, and a string section joining in from bar 3, and a guitar from point A, and by then we have a riff instead of a cyclic bassline. A riff will, therefore, have a different function from a cyclic line; possessing hook characteristics and propel the song forward due to its rhythmic elements, and will in most cases not contain stylistically determining features to the same extent as a cyclic line. So although both Example 5.3 and Example 5.4 are bass lines doubled with another instrument, they tend to be seen as bass lines that have an accompanying character and stylistically determining functions, but will not be seen as having qualifying riff traits. Lastly, a riff is in most cases pre-composed, prepared and arranged prior to studio recording, while a cyclic line is more likely to be formed on the spot by the instrumentalist alone.

Example 5.6 The Four Tops. 'I Can't Help Myself (Sugar Pie, Honey Bunch)' (Holland/Dozier/Holland), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, June 1965, James Jamerson electric bass, intro and 1st verse, *Four Tops' Second Album*, Motown 8127.

I have identified three different types of bass riffs on the Hot 100 in the melodic electric bass era. Besides the *escorting riff* of Example 5.6, in which Jamerson plays the repeated 8-5-6 figure, there is the *core riff,* upon which a whole song is based. One such riff is reflected

in Example 5.7: John Deacon's bass part in 'Another One Bites The Dust' from 1980, performed by Queen.

Example 5.7 Queen. 'Another One Bites The Dust' (Deacon, John), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, October 1980, John Deacon electric bass, excerpt from intro, *The Game*, EMI Records CDP 7 46213 2.

Made up of two cycled events, this core riff in fact introduces the song, with the bass guitar accompanied only by the drums. Soon the guitar joins in on the riff one octave above, and by the time the singing starts, a keyboard bass also doubles the riff. Deacon sticks to the two riffs all the way through and refrains from going into a traditional comp function, as Bernard Edwards does in 'Good Times'. (Example 5.8) The latter number one song from August 1979, performed by Chic, and which apparently was the inspiration for 'Another One Bites the Dust',[147] also contains a core bass riff, which the song is spun around. Unlike Deacon, Edwards just uses the riff for the intro and the choruses and plays standard root four-to-the-bar comping for the verses.

Example 5.8 Chic. 'Good Times' (Edwards/Rodgers), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, August 1979, Bernard Edwards electric bass, excerpt from intro, *Risqué*, Atlantic 7567804062.

The third bass riff is the *interlocking riff*, a one- or two-bar repeated phrase whose rhythmic character derives from a close and constructive interaction with the drum groove. Anne Danielsen (2001) describes exactly this situation in the music of James Brown, who largely abandoned harmonic progression altogether in favor of

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[147] The two lines sound quite similar, and the link between the songs has come up in interviews with Edwards as well; see Snowden (1991).

this kind of riff/interaction, paying more focus on the groove instead of the melody.

> In *Cold Sweat* only fragments are left. All the accompanying instruments, including vocals, work more or less in the same way, forming small but significant rhythmic gestures that are linked in all directions. The groove has become an intricate fabric of sharp percussive sounds where the one brings on the other: the texture has changed, from horizontally divided layers of sound to rhythmic patchwork. (p. 40)

The distance popular music had traveled from the chord-rich Tin Pan Alley style of songwriting is particularly obvious in this mid-1960s genre, later called funk. Ripani (2006) notes the enormous influence Brown's song 'Papa's Got a Brand New Bag, Part 1' had on musicians, record companies and fans when it was released in 1965. Its harmonic stasis and rhythmic complexity made up from several simple but separate musical parts, represented something entirely new to R&B music at the time. Wilbur Bascomb marveled about James Brown's impact on the contribution of the electric bass to popular music:

> When James Brown came along in the late 1960s, all of a sudden, first thing he did, he turned the beat around with accents. [The] accent being on two and four. [clapping and tapping foot] He turned it around so now the accent was on one. That turned everything around, and he started using [whispering] 'bass lines'. Before that there were no bass lines, you see what I'm sayin'? […] James Brown started using bass lines, and all of a sudden bass lines became popular. You see? And so most guys who were arrangers then, and performers then, they wanted [whispering] 'bass lines', you see, and that pretty much killed that style of music, right? But I attribute that to James Brown. I don't know anybody else that was doing that before him – could have been, I could be wrong, maybe you could ask Purdie when you see him on Friday, but bass lines; I think James Brown came in with bass lines and that changed everything. You see? So, you weren't free to roam anymore [laughing], your roaming days were over after that, when the bass lines came in.

Interview Bascomb, New York, April 1, 2008

Although Bascomb humorously accuses James Brown for the shift from the inconsistent approach to the ‘bass line’, he refers here to the popularity of the interlocking riff and it’s far-reaching importance in modern bass playing.

Example 5.9 Brown, James. ‘Cold Sweat’ (Brown, James), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100 R&B September 1967, main verse groove, Bernard Odum electric bass, *Cold Sweat,* King 1020.

Example 5.9 shows a typical James Brown interlocking bass riff; Bernard Odum counters the ‘fatback’ drum groove[148] with a two-bar cycled line consisting of two parts, an 8-♭7-5 sequence and a chromatic ascending line that begins on the third beat and repeats every other bar. Even if Brown never made it to the number-one position on the Hot 100, his use of rhythmically intricate but cyclic riffs inspired many who did, including, most notably, Sly and the Family Stone, whose Hot 100 hits included ‘Everyday People’,[149] ‘Thank You (Falettinme Be Mice Elf Again)’, ‘Everybody Is A Star’[150] and ‘Family Affair’.[151]

Aside from the work of Family Stone bass player Larry Graham, the Hot 100 chart did not reflect many examples of interlocking riffs until the disco era, when Chic’s Bernard Edwards and KC and the Sunshine Band’s Richard Finch, among others, took elements from

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[148] The expression ‘fatback groove’ has several meanings depending on whom you ask. While Gary Chaffee write in his method book *Time Functioning Patterns* that ‘the Fat-Back exercises deal with situations in which the snare drum is always playing an accent on two and four’ (Chaffee, 1980, p. 5), the drummer Pat Petrillo states that the fatback beat ‘is a two bar groove that places the snare on the "&" of 4 in the first bar’ (www.drummerworld.com/forums/showthread.php?t=21611).

[149] *Stand!*,1969, Epic 0230415.

[150] *Greatest Hits*, 1970, Epic PE 30325.

[151] *There’s a Riot Goin’ On*, 1971, Epic PET-30986.

the funk lines of Brown and incorporated them into their disco bass lines. Example 5.10 and Example 5.11 show ways in which Finch adopted funk elements by creating a one-bar offbeat F minor line in combination with the 8-b7-5 motif (like Odum's line in Example 5.9) in the second bar of the chorus.

Example 5.10 KC and the Sunshine Band. 'That's the Way I Like It' (Casey/Finch), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, November 1975, Richard Finch electric bass, 1. main groove excerpt, *KC and the Sunshine Band,* TK 603.

Example 5.11 KC and the Sunshine Band. 'That's the Way I Like It' (Casey/Finch), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, November 1975, Richard Finch electric bass, 2. main groove excerpt, *KC and the Sunshine Band,* TK 603.

5.2.6 Set groove

A 'set groove' is a cycled bass line that is stylistically participatory when determining a genre, and has become standardized in such a way that there exists a common understanding of the bass line as a characteristic feature as such. There have been many popular set bass grooves on the *Billboard* charts over the years, but they were most common in the first decade of the era in question here.

I will not consider here whether the set groove is played because it belongs to the genre or whether it is the genre that demands such a groove, but it is obvious that most genres own such set bass grooves, the Latin subgenres in particular, such as the bossa nova, the samba and the habanera, which I will discuss later. I am fully aware of the alterations and the differing ways one can play these Latin grooves, depending on tempo, geographical idioms and occasion, but nevertheless, they have all a basic rhythm or a recognizable mark that is specific for the genre. Other genres also possess the same traits: When asked to play a disco groove, a bass player would immediately think cycled eight notes octaves, or if a reggae groove

were asked for, most bass players would play with a palm mute and omit the first beat.[152]

Example 5.12 Prado, Perez. ‘Cherry Pink (And Apple Blossom White)’ (Guglielmi, Louis), No 1 *Billboard* Best Sellers in Store, April 1955, double bass main verse groove, *Mambo Mania,* RCA Victor LPM-1075.

From the Hot 100 charts, Example 5.12 is a simple mambo bassline, and Example 5.13 is a typical tango bassline; both also indicate the influence of Latin rhythms upon American popular music at this time.

Example 5.13 Anderson, Leroy. ‘Blue Tango’ (Anderson, Leroy), No 1 *Billboard* Best Sellers in Store, May 1952, double bass main verse groove, *Blue Tango,* BD 77025.

Syncopated Latin rhythms, according to Ripani (2006), have been important to the American popular music scene since the middle of the nineteenth century, particularly the habanera, which became a standard groove in several popular music genres. The habanera can be found already in the early ragtime works of Scott Joplin and ‘Jelly Roll’ Morton; it was also one of the first Latin dances to merge with American jazz. Originally an English country dance that was imported to the Americas by the Spanish, the regular rhythm of the dance eventually transformed into the dotted and syncopated rhythms we associate with it today.[153] The rhythmic basis of the habanera groove is shown in Figure 5.6(a) and a common bassline derived from it is shown in Figure 5.6(b).

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[152] According to bass player and author Ed Friedland (1998), however, the practice of omitting the first beat in Reggae, Ska and Rock Steady bass lines must be considered a myth. While most of the well-known riddims (Jamaican bass lines) are played in an extremely laid back manner, the overwhelming majority do contain the first beat.
[153] See ‘Habanera’, *Oxford Music Online* (Barulich & Fairley)

Figure 5.6 (a) The habanera groove; (b) a common bass interpretation of the habanera groove.

The genre that seemed to take to this groove the most was 1950s rock 'n' roll, and Elvis's 'Don't Be Cruel' from September 1956 features a guitar line that soon after would find its way to the bass (Example 5.14).

Example 5.14 Presley, Elvis. 'Don't Be Cruel' (Blackwell, Otis), No 1 *Billboard* Top 100, September 1956, Scotty Moore guitar, intro figure, RCA 47-6604.

While 'Don't Be Cruel' upright bass player Bill Black plays a 'normal' bassline all the way through, the introductory habanera line played by guitarist Scotty Moore informs the bass part of the flip side of this same single, 'Hound Dog', which reached number one in August 1956 on *Billboard*'s 'Best Sellers in Stores' chart. Here, Bill Black uses the habanera consistently throughout, occasionally alternating the syncopated third with a note directly on the third beat.[154] The second time a habanera groove appears on the *Billboard* Top 100, in November 1956, Jim Lowe used it in the verse of 'The Green Door' (with a walking bass in the chorus) (Example 5.15).

Example 5.15 Lowe, Jim. 'The Green Door' (Davie/Moore), No 1 *Billboard* Top 100, November 1956, double bass main verse groove.

Figure 5.7 indicates that the frequency of the 'cyclic/riff/set groove' feature increases during the 1950s to a peak in 1961, where 86

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[154] Roy Brewer (1999) explains this discrepancy by suggesting that Black's background as a hillbilly/western swing musician made offbeat phrasing a challenge for him.

percent of the songs contained repeated lines, it then falls back to an average of below 60 percent in the period researched. From Appendix B, one can also observe that, during the 1950s, the songs that do not contain cyclic formed bass lines would, in most cases, feature the 'root or root–fifth'. Together with the declining tendency of the 'root or root–fifth' towards the 1960s (Figure 5.4), it is clear that cyclic lines became established as the new norm for bass players towards the 1960s. Ripani's study of the *Billboard*'s R&B Hot 100 backs up this tendency: of the top twenty-five R&B songs between 1950 and 1959, 5 percent used the cyclic form, and in the period from 1960 to 1969 an average of 33 percent of the songs contained the feature. Ripani describes a greater acceptance of R&B music by the American public in general from the beginning of the 1960s and onward, something which partly led to the discontinuation of the *Billboard* R&B Hot 100 between November 30, 1963 and January 3, 1965, as described previously.

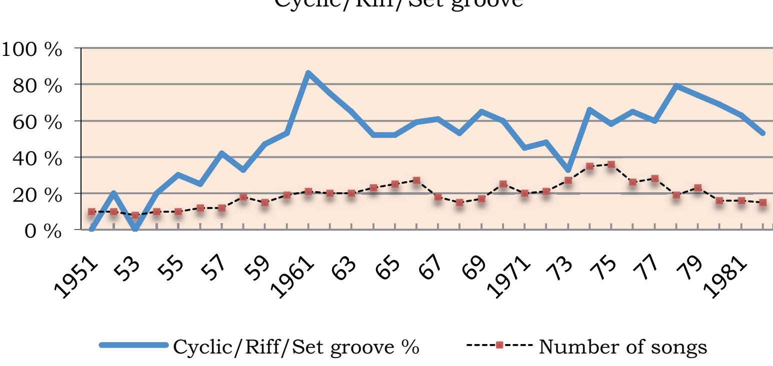
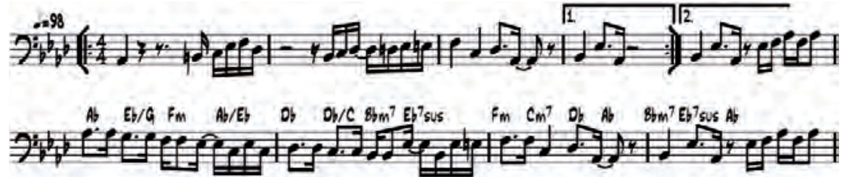


Figure 5.7 Frequency of 'cyclic/riff/set groove' feature.

5.2.7 Composed lines

The last element in this collective feature is the long-form cyclic through-composed or arranged bassline, which is a primary example of Middleton's *discursive repetition* (R. Middleton, 1990).[155] As mentioned above, Middleton distinguishes between longer musical phrases or sections that answer to a 'hierarchically ordered discourse' and *musematic repetition,* which 'tends towards a one-levelled structural effect' (p. 269). Middleton locates typical examples of the latter in Afro-American music, and the former in typical Tin Pan Alley products (as well as the European art tradition, on a larger scale). By this, Middleton suggests that the two modes of repetition must be seen as connected to the oral and literal modes of music, and although he mainly uses vocal examples to underpin the differences between the two modes, the discursive repetition is also found several times in bass lines in the Hot 100.

In the era in question here, discursive repetition characterizes several well-known number-one hits, though it can be difficult to determine the extent to which these lines were pre-composed versus developed on the spot.[156] Primary examples would include the first three hits of the Jackson 5 in 1970: 'I Want You Back' (Example 5.16), 'The Love You Save' (Example 5.17) and 'ABC' (Example 5.18).



Example 5.16 The Jackson 5. 'I Want You Back' (Gordy/Mizell/Richards/Perren), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100 September 1970,

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[155] Also described in Middleton (1999, pp. 146-147)

[156] As stated earlier, several of my informants mentioned that producers often demanded that musicians play a song up to twenty times before they captured a 'final' version; after a few takes, then, the bass player would settle on a permanent line whether he or she intended to or not.

excerpt from intro, Wilton Felder electric bass, *Diana Ross Presents the Jackson 5,* Motown 700.

Example 5.17 The Jackson 5. 'The Love You Save' (Corporation), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100 June 1970, track time 0 min 20 s, Wilton Felder electric bass, *ABC,* Motown 709.

Example 5.18 The Jackson 5. 'ABC' (Gordy/Mizell/Richards/Perren), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100 April 1970, track time 0 min 26 s, Wilton Felder electric bass, *ABC,* Motown 709.

All of these songs contain composed basslines that Wilton Felder repeats note for note; in addition, they share similarities among themselves that indicate the application of a specific formula. 'I Want You Back' is the only number-one hit—and likely the only Felder performance—from the Jackson 5's debut album *Diana Ross Presents the Jackson 5*; the other songs sound like signature melismatic James Jamerson improvisations.[157] The other two number-one hits came from their second album, *ABC*. All three examples are introduced by musematic riffs, before their longer discursive repetitions begin. These basslines are also occasionally overdubbed by piano, vocals or guitar, which gives the impression

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[157] Wilton Felder on 'I Want You Back': 'The bass part, which essentially mirrors and counters the melody, was mostly written out; I added just a bit of myself to it. [...] I used my '60s Telecaster Bass with flatwound strings and recorded direct' (Jisi, 1998).

that the electric bass has assumed important new responsibilities by this point in time, whatever sort of repetition is used.

5.2.8 Offbeat phrasing

Most of the number-one songs on the *Billboard* Hot 100 between 1951 and 1982 depend upon the framework of an even, steady and equally spaced beat, supplied by drums and/or percussion, though there are occasional *rubato* exceptions, where the pulse of the song itself varies or note values change within a fixed tempo. This practice of 'disregarding strict time'[158] was relatively common during the 1950s, when studio string orchestras were a large part of the recording sessions. Close to 20 percent of the songs on the *Billboard*'s 'Best Sellers in Store' between 1951 and 1958 contained rubato passages to some degree, typically to enhance the expressiveness of vocal performances by the likes of Mario Lanza, Nat King Cole or Eddie Fisher.

Another development in the bass player's repertoire of rhythmic accompanying techniques arose early in the 1960s. As described in the set groove chapter, the syncopated Latin grooves were already an important feature from the mid 1950s and up, but the emphasis on the weak beat in these grooves was often limited to one incident per bar. Already in the late 1940s, Richard A. Waterman (1948) is able to point to *offbeat phrasing* as a feature of 'the drum rhythms of African "hot" music'.[159] This 'temporal displacement of the melodic phrase' (p. 25) was brought to 'The New World' by the African slaves, Waterman continues:

> The music of the Negroes themselves, or of other music that has been influenced by Negro rhythms, Latin American music may be said to manifest, by and large, more African traits than North

---

[158] See 'Rubato', *Oxford Music Online* (Latham)

[159] I will not dwell upon the overreaching connotations of the geographical designation 'Africa' here; for more, see Phillip Tagg's article *Open Letter: 'Black Music', 'Afro-American Music' and 'European Music'* (Tagg, 1989).

> American music. In Latin America, African rhythms were accepted as such, and were allowed to continue in the original tradition; in North America, [...] they were in effect forced underground, where they lingered for generations to become firmly established only when, in somewhat modified form, they became accepted by the total population. (p. 33)

Several ethnographic studies have explored the polyrhythmics of the traditional music of the African continent,[160] and there are no doubt similarities between the syncopated Latin rhythms like the habanera and samba and the rhythms of certain African drum grooves. However, the extended form of the single syncopated groove, in this thesis described as offbeat phrasing, became a much-used bass feature during the 1960s and 1970s, even in songs having no resemblance to Latin at all. Offbeat phrasing gradually became a major trait of R&B, as Ripani (2006) observes. Syncopation, which Ripani argues is a suitable term for describing the occasional offbeat accents in, for example, classical music, is not applicable in music that uses offbeat patterns on a regular basis. In addition, offbeat phrasing in American popular music can be traced back the late nineteenth century's ragtime genre, where the left hand provided a steady beat and the right hand playing offbeat melodic figures, as shown in Example 5.19.

Example 5.19 Joplin, Scott. 1903, excerpts from 'Weeping Willow' (Wilford, 1974).

According to Ripani, the feature was inherited from previous styles of music as minstrel songs, marches and black folk dances (p. 47), and offbeat phrasing has since remained an important feature in

[160] See, for example, Merriam (1959), Locke (1982) or Chernoff (1991)

American popular music. As mentioned above, the anticipation of the down beats was a widely used feature in the 1960s and 1970s bass lines, especially in R&B and its subsequent sub-genres, but also in the white dominated rock and pop genres.

Example 5.20 shows Aretha Franklin's bass player Tommy Cogbill performing a typical 1960s R&B bass line—on the F chords in the B parts of the song, he plays an ascending bassline that utilizes offbeat phrasing. This practice of anticipating downbeats with an upward melodic motion characterizes several other Hot 100 basslines of the 1960s and 1970s as well.

Example 5.20 Franklin, Aretha. 'Respect' (Redding, Otis), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, June 1967, Tommy Cogbill electric bass, main groove excerpt, *I Never Loved a Man the Way I Love You*, Atlantic 8139.

Example 5.21 Ross, Diana. 'Touch Me In The Morning' (Masser/Miller), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, August 1973, Bob Babbitt electric bass, track time 3 min 23 s, *Touch Me In The Morning*, Motown 772.

Example 5.21 notates Motown bass player Bob Babbitt's similar part on Diana Ross's 1973 hit 'Touch Me in the Morning' from 1973, an ascending line on the dominant chord in bar 4.

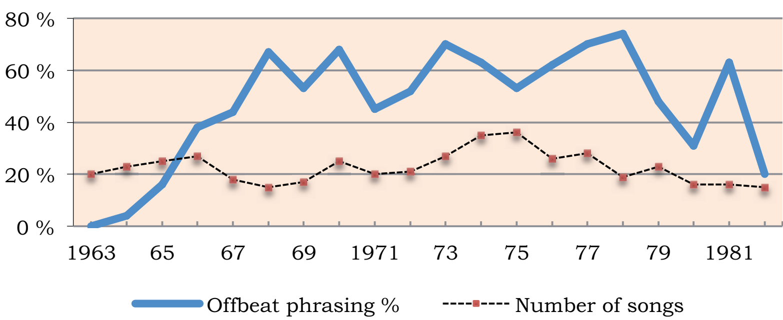


Figure 5.8 Frequency of offbeat phrasing.

The graph in Figure 5.8, indicates how common offbeat phrasing was at this time; to indicate an extreme, I also present Klaus Voormann's exaggerated offbeat phrasing in John Lennon's 1974 hit 'Whatever Gets You Thru the Night'; here utilized throughout the song to such a degree that the feature almost loses its effect and becomes wearing (Example 5.22).

Example 5.22 Lennon, John. 'Whatever Gets You Thru The Night' (Lennon, John), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, November 1974, Klaus Voormann electric bass, bars 96–99, *Walls And Bridges*, Apple 3416.

The graph (Figure 5.8) indicates a prominent increase in offbeat phrasing in 1965, after which it stabilizes at an average of 61 percent of the songs that appear as number-one hits between 1968 and 1978. This would imply that offbeat phrasing was exclusively an electric bass phenomenon, and that the introduction of this feature was probably one of the prominent elements occurring at the time of the double bass phase out on the Hot 100. The graph also suggests that it was a typical feature of late 1960s and 1970s bass lines, and

it is also worth mentioning that the disco era also featured a large degree of offbeat phrasing, as I will discuss further in section 5.2.13.

5.2.9 Standard groove with variations

For lack of a better term, I call the presumably Latin-inspired rhythm of a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note and another quarter note (or a half note) the 'standard groove'. I have yet to come across a universally accepted name for it, though Chuck Rainey used a Spanish word, in accordance with its Latin derivation.

> Per Elias Drabløs: Chris Jisi told me that you have a name for this standard bass–drum groove [singing],

> but he didn't remember what you used to call it.
>
> Chuck Rainey: Oh, it is a Latin term—a *bajon*.
>
> PED: The *bajon*? Do you know when you started to play that groove?
>
> CR: Well, it's almost been mandatory, in a way, you know, the dotted quarter-note followed by an eight-note, and a quarter note. It's in all kinds of music [...] you know, that's not jazz but even in a lot of jazz players, it's just the easiest thing to play; it fits everything. Especially back in that day, it fit everything, fits everything now. That and derivatives of it.
>
> Phone interview, Rainey, Nov 28, 2008

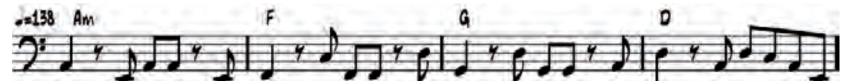
Interestingly, however, the *bajon* groove, or *baião*, as it was originally called, is slightly different, as shown in Figure 5.9. It is similar to the habanera groove in that the second beat is anticipated and not played which lends the rhythm a strong forward motion.

Figure 5.9 Baião groove

The standard groove, on the other hand, has a more staid feel, and although the centre of gravity is evened out throughout the bar, the focus and the accentuation of the third beat makes it feel as if the groove is making a pause every bar. The standard groove first appeared in the number-one position on the *Billboard* Hot 100 in February 1962 in Gene Chandler's 'Duke of Earl'.[161] As Chuck Rainey points out in the interview, this groove has many variations to it, as we can see in the following examples:

Example 5.23 The Temptations. 'My Girl' (Robinson/White), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, March 1965, James Jamerson electric bass, track time 0 min 11 s, *The Temptations Sing Smokey*, Gordy 912.

In Example 5.23, we see James Jamerson's main bass groove on the Temptation song 'My Girl'. The song starts with Jamerson alone, playing three eight notes in a repeated pattern (shown in Example 5.45) before settling into this root groove (Example 5.23) for the first section A. Instead of the anticipated feel of the third beat, as in the standard groove, this variation stresses the third to a greater degree by emphasizing the beat, and thereby suggests the root/fifth groove, which he then supplies in the second section A.



Example 5.24 The Box Tops. 'The Letter' (Thompson, Wayne C.), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, September 1967, Bill Cunningham electric bass, track time 0 min 4 s, *The Letter/Neon Rainbow*, Bell 6011.

In Example 5.24, the Box Tops' bass player plays a similar groove to Jamerson's in Example 5.23 but anticipates both the first and third beats and subsequently evens out the staidness of the groove.

---

[161] *Duke of Earl*, Vee-Jay 416.

Example 5.25 America. 'Sister Golden Hair' (Backley, Gerry), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, June 1975, David Dickey electric bass, track time 0 min 47 s, *Hearts*, Warner Bros. 2852.

Example 5.25 is another good illustration of the standard groove combined with the 'root/fifth' feature. The combination of these two features is also the distinctive mark of the bossa nova groove, demonstrating that certain bass grooves are fluid concepts and suitable for use in differing genres of music

From the graph (Figure 5.10) it is evident that the 'standard groove with variations' is related to the electric bass, not the double bass. In 1965, a high point of 72 percent of the songs include the standard groove and variations upon it; the proportion stabilizes at approximately 50 percent of songs in the following years.

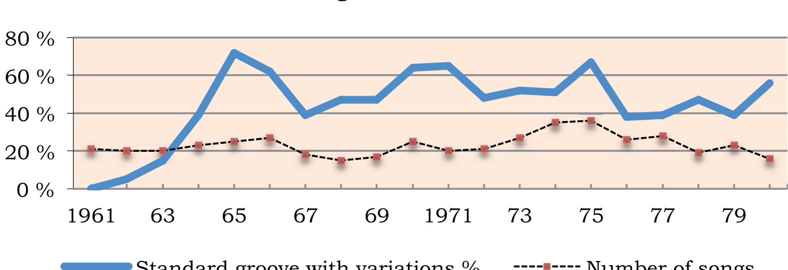


Figure 5.10 Frequency of 'Standard groove with variations'.

5.2.10 Obvious octaves

By 'obvious octaves' I do not refer solely to the root-octave jump but also to the root-fifth-octave sequence. Surprisingly, given how easy it is to play, this was not a particularly common technique until the mid-1960s; in 1966, for example, James Jamerson built a whole bassline around it, as seen in Example 5.26. The graph in Figure

5.11 reveals an ascending curve of octave frequency in 1969, after which it falls back to a more modest proportion in the early 1970s. The disco era embraces obvious octaves once again, and the popular 'disco octave' (see subsection 5.2.13) is at least partly responsible for a frequency rate of 47 percent of songs in 1978. Though I distinguish between these two features, they are closely connected, as in the use of consequent eight notes, the repeated patterns, and the fixed expression and fingerboard movement they represent.

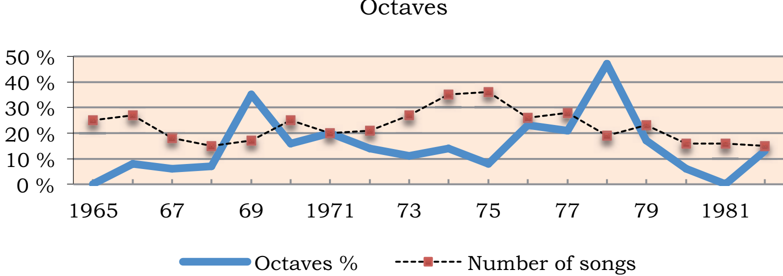


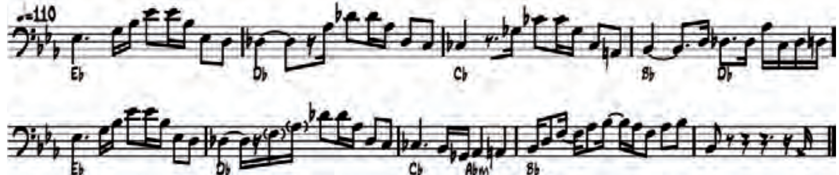
Figure 5.11 Frequency of octaves.

'Reach Out' by The Four Tops (Example 5.26) is a prime example of the octave-based patterns that James Jamerson favored from the mid-1960s onward. These basslines communicate a continuous 'galloping' motion from root to octave; that is very different from the staid feels of the 'root or root/fifth' or the standard groove, and although these patterns do display a repetitiveness from one bar to another, the impression made is one of inconsistency.

Example 5.26 The Four Tops. 'Reach Out (I'll Be There)' (Holland/Dozier/Holland), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, October 1966, James Jamerson electric bass, track time 0 min 47 s, *Reach Out,* Motown 660.

Example 5.27 displays a similar octave pattern recorded the year after with the same band, same songwriters—and even though this song did not reach the Hot 100 top position, it is apparent that a

similar formula of bass playing to that used on ‘Reach Out’ was also tried for ‘Bernadette’.[162]



Example 5.27 The Four Tops, ‘Bernadette’ (Holland/Dozier/Holland), No 4 *Billboard* Hot R&B Singles, 1967, James Jamerson electric bass, bars 3–11, *Reach Out,* Motown 1104.

5.2.11 Sixteenth notes or fast triplets

The frequency of the ‘sixteenth notes or fast triplets’ feature, as shown in Figure 5.12, is difficult to track precisely; it is a subtle feature that shows up best in full transcriptions. This graph is made from an overall consideration of each song as having a bass line based on sixteenth notes, or as containing triplets in such numbers that it can be included as such. As discussed previously, sixteenth-note bass grooves are fairly genre specific (jazz, funk, fusion), though they have a marked presence on the Hot 100 charts as well, particularly starting in 1967. A peak of 32 percent of the songs in 1970 included this feature, which then settled down to approximately 20 percent for the remainder of the decade. Based on its pace alone, this feature perhaps best responds to the overall trend toward busier basslines until about 1980 or so.

[162] As described in section 5.2.7, a similar formula of emphasizing a prominent bass line was tried with the Jackson Five in 1970.

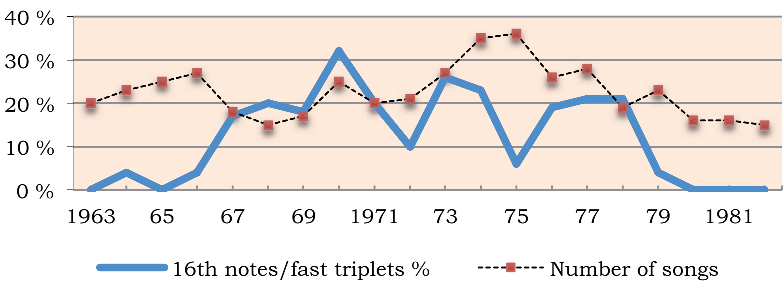
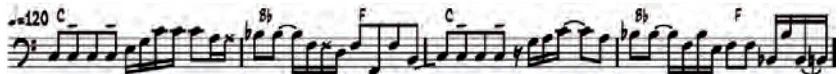


Figure 5.12 Frequency of sixteenth notes/fast triplets.

A song's tempo often determines its groove, and slower songs obviously allow for more notes, as the player has more space to move around in. The following examples show two up-tempo songs (Example 5.28 and Example 5.29) and one song with a typical pop-ballad tempo of 78 beats per minute (Example 5.30). In Example 5.28, we see Jamerson's line on upright bass on the often-covered Mary Wells hit 'My Guy' from 1964, a triplet-based jazz number with horn arrangements. While Jamerson for the most part keeps to root/fifth playing with the occasional triplet 'rakes'[163], as in the excerpt below, he turns to walking lines (bars 2–5) and concludes the $V^7/II–IIm^7–V^7$ progression with a bar of triplet fill. I have not found this feature in songs before 1964, so this 'busyness' which Jamerson reveals in what was to become a number one hit, really stands out as a pioneering event.

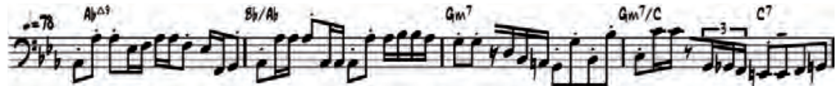
[163] 'Raking', or a 'rake': A commonly used bass technique where the performer strikes one string and continues the motion immediately (with same finger) on the next lower string.

Example 5.28 Wells, Mary. ‘My Guy’ (Robinson, Smokey), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, May 1964, James Jamerson double bass, track time 1 min 9 s, *Mary Wells Sings My Guy,* Motown 617.



Example 5.29 Houston, Thelma. ‘Don’t Leave Me This Way’ (Gamble/Huff/Gilbert), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, April 1977, Henry Davis electric bass, track time 1 min 9 s, *Any Way You Like It* (Version 2), Motown 37463-5226-2.

‘Don’t Leave Me This Way’ boasts several recorded versions, including the famous Thelma Houston rendition, but Example 5.29 represents the first Motown recording of the song from 1977; it also appears on the Motown 50th anniversary album. Bass player Henry Davis follows the busy Jamerson tradition of octaves and sixteenth notes, but the features are now adapted to suit the disco era, and again showing the fluidity of bass lines according to genres.



Example 5.30 Mathis, Johnny/Williams, Denice. ‘Too Much, Too Little, Too Late’ (Kipner/Wallins), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, June 1978, Scott Edwards electric bass, Track time 1 min 3 s, *You Light Up My Life,* Columbia CK-35259.

Lastly, Scott Edwards’s bassline on Johnny Mathis’s ‘Too Much, Too Little, Too Late’ combines at least seven of the features I describe in this chapter, and there is a full transcription of this outstanding performance on page 269. Example 5.30 features Edwards’s use of sixteenth notes in the main groove as opposed to the occasional ad-libbed ornamentation found in many bass lines.

5.2.12 Consistent quarters or eighths

The 'consistent quarters and eighths' feature typically appears in rock music and its offshoots as the main groove. The bass player will often stick to the root, as in Example 5.31 below, to achieve a steady, driving foundation for the song, or they will form, as in Example 5.32, a grouped eight note walking bass line presenting the seventh chords.

Example 5.31 Carnes, Kim. 'Bette Davis Eyes' (DeShannon/Weiss), No 1 Billboard Hot 100, May 1981, Bryan Garofalo electric bass, track time 0 min 44 s, *Mistaken Identity*, EMI America E4-91665.

Example 5.32 The Beach Boys. 'I Get Around' (Wilson/Love), No1 *Billboard* Hot 100, July 1964, Carol Kaye electric bass, track time 0 min 8 s, *All Summer Long,* Capitol 1016.

When performing inside the genres funk, rock, pop and soul, Carol Kaye (Example 5.32) often dropped the third of the chord, playing root-fifth-seventh or combinations of those, and thereby clearly separating those basslines from jazz.

> Creating a good bass line, you kind of stay away from the third, so, for major chords, you go one, fifth and sixth. You can play a third, but the main notes are root, fifth, sixth. For the minor; instead of root, flat third, fifth, it's root, fifth, flat seventh, and of course, for the seventh it's one, fifth, flat seventh and you use the third as a fill. It's the opposite of jazz. In jazz you use the third a lot, but in

> funk and rock'n'roll and pop and soul and all that stuff, you stay away from the third and you create state and answer lines.
>
> Interview Kaye, Los Angeles, Dec. 12, 2007

As seen in Figure 5.13, the 'consistent quarters or eighths' also accompany the electric bass, not the double bass; during the 1970s, an average of 30 percent of the Hot 100 number-one hits feature it.

Consistent quarters or eights

60 %
50 %
40 %
30 %
20 %
10 %
0 %

1963 65 67 69 1971 73 75 77 79 1981

Consistent quarters or eights % Number of songs

Figure 5.13 Frequency of consistent quarters or eighths.

5.2.13 Disco octave

The 'disco octave' became one of the most characteristic stylistic patterns of the electric bass since the instrument's introduction in 1951. The entry of the disco era in the mid 1970s, paired with the introduction of the drum machine, the sequencer and the synthesizer, represented a big change for the session musicians, who until that time had been responsible for the instrumental efforts on every studio recording. Suddenly, a consistent tempo throughout the whole song became the standard, using a drum machine as a time-keeping guide, and the repetitiveness of a static bass groove seemed to suit this new dance music well. Craig Werner (2004) cites the music critic Iain Chambers:

> In disco the musical pulse is freed from the claustrophobic interiors of the blues and the tight scaffolding of R&B and early soul music. A looser, explicitly polyrhythmic attack pushes the blues, gospel and soul heritage into an apparently endless cycle

> where there is no beginning or end, just an ever-present 'now'. Disco music does not come to a halt. Restricted to a three-minute single, the music would be rendered senseless. The power of disco lay in saturating dancers and the dance floor in the continual explosion of its presence. (p. 217)

Even if disco in many ways fused soul, funk and Motown pop music, it was also partly a simplification of the complex rhythms that these genres possessed; taking away the details of the grooves and making them more standardized through repetition. The octave bass was not the only feature used by electric bass players during the disco era, but it became the most audible and typical pattern. None of my informants have been able to explain its popularity entirely, but if nothing else, I would argue that the great scope of the feature is a result of the easy accessibility of the pattern. The octave interval involves a very natural grip for the fingerboard hand, and together with the movable and bouncing character of the repetitive eight-notes, it can be seen as a rewarding groove played with minimal effort.

As described in subsection 5.2.10, the disco octave must be seen in relation to the 'obvious octave', which anticipated it for years before disco music took over the Hot 100. That groove, or pattern, usually consisted of even eighth notes repeated in octave sequences, with two root eighths followed by two eighths one octave up, as in Example 5.33,[164] or root–octave–root–octave as in Example 5.34, Example 5.35 and Example 5.36.

Example 5.33 King, Carole. 'I Feel The Earth Move' (King, Carole), No1 *Billboard* Hot 100, June 1971, Charles Larkey electric bass, track time 0 min 41 s, *Tapestry,* Ode 34946.

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[164] Charles Larkey's octave playing on Carole King's 1971 hit 'I Feel the Earth Move' anticipates the disco-era by five years. The displayed bass line must rather be seen as an *escorting riff* as described in subsection 5.2.5. I have not registered the line as 'disco octave' in Appendix B.

Example 5.34 Rick Dees and His Cast of Idiots. ‘Disco Duck (Part 1)’ (Dees, Rick), No 1 Billboard Hot 100, October 1976, main groove, *The Original Disco Duck*, RSO 3017.

Example 5.35 Ohio Players. ‘Love Rollercoaster’ (Beck/Bonner/Jones), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, January 1976, Marshall Jones electric bass, main groove, *Honey,* Mercury 1038.

Example 5.36 Ross, Diana. ‘Love Hangover’ (Sawyer/McLeod), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, May 1976, Henry E. Davis electric bass, track time 3 min 37 s, *Diana Ross,* Motown 861.

Stepwise ascending or descending eighth-note octaves were also typical of these disco patterns, as seen in Example 5.34, Example 5.35 and Example 5.36. The small slide up to the first eighth note in the sequence, as in bar 1 of Example 5.36, were a stylistically ‘correct’ execution of the pattern according to the norm.

Also the duration of the root versus the octave is important and, as Chris Jisi observes,

> The three most common methods are; two short notes; two long notes; or a long root with a short, often accentuated, octave. (Jisi, 2006, p. 73)

These octave patterns were also occasionally played utilizing the slap technique.

The graph in Figure 5.14 indicates that the disco octave came into existence around 1973–74, peaked around 1979, and then disappeared in the beginning of the 1980s—it is now mostly used tongue-in-cheek.

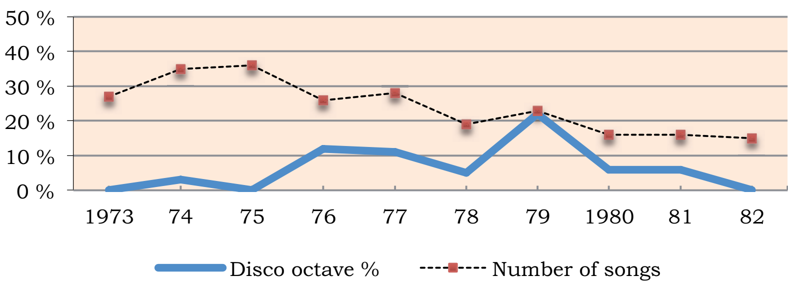

Figure 5.14 Frequency of the 'disco octave'.

5.2.14 Comments on the groove elements

The nine groove elements displayed above must be seen as a foundation for which the melodic approach appears. As mentioned earlier, the bass players appearing on the Hot 100 was obliged to follow the consensus of the differing musical styles and genres—or at least to take care of the traditional role of the instrument to a certain degree. A focus on melodic elements alone would therefore, in a popular music setting, appear as meaningless, implying that there cannot exist melodic elements in a bass player's approach without focusing on the groove first. Additionally, a change from a groove element to a melodic element during a song would in many cases appear as a gradual transition and it is in that respect relatively difficult to separate where a groove feature ends and a melodic element starts. In the next section, I will elaborate on the seven melodic elements of this research.

5.3 Melodic elements

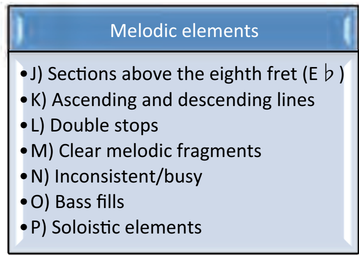

Table 5.5 Melodic elements.

As documented previously, bass players before 1960 usually stayed below the fifth fret when playing, concentrating on the low-frequency notes and staying clear of instruments like the piano or guitar. But as the 1960s went on, a tendency to use the whole range of the fingerboard developed, often for bass fills, but also for chord accompaniment. There are probably three main reasons for this:

(i) First-generation electric bass players were often guitar players who saw the lower instrument's tonal possibilities (and fingerboard) through a different lens than the upright bass player.

A major proportion of the bass players credited as performers on the *Billboard* Hot 100 in the 1960s and 1970s, as well as the most significant band bass players in the same period, began as guitar players. I have already mentioned Carol Kaye, Paul McCartney, Chuck Rainey, Joe Osborn and Tommy Cogbill, all of whom appeared several times on the number one songs, and these players seemed to take to this new instrument without the baggage of predisposition and traditional performance practice issues that the upright players carried with them. Consequently, in the light of the high frequency of guitar players taking to the electric bass, it may seem that it was mainly this approach that led to the development of many of the features of the electric bass, especially the features

involving the higher register of the electric bass's fingerboard. The Fender Precision Bass could also easily be played with a pick. It was impossible to play out of tune owing to the frets, and it could be fingered the same way as a guitar. Since the instrument was a newcomer in the 1950s, it is also natural to conclude that it had to be already seasoned musicians coming from other instruments without predisposed attitudes towards the bass's role who started to use it professionally.[165]

(ii) First-generation electric bass players who played double bass would often come from a jazz background and had improvisational skills that transferred easily to the new and physically more comfortable instrument.

The *Billboard* Hot 100, primarily a chart for measuring the popularity of a song based on sales figures and airplay, does not have many representatives from the jazz genre during the melodic bass era. Nevertheless, the players who recorded for it, at least before 1960, would generally have been classically trained or jazz-trained musicians with many options for interpreting a pop song's often fairly straightforward chord progression. This would eventually lead to what I have called *inconsistent* playing. Both Jamerson and Kaye had extensive jazz training prior to and during their studio careers, and this informed their basslines.[166]

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[165] Joe Osborn: 'I went down to the local music store and bought a Precision Bass. The next night, I was the bass player – same amp, same settings, same pick and technique. I played it just like I played the guitar' (Jisi & Jackson, 1992, p. 44).

[166] 'From experience fashioning lines in the practice room and during formal events, bass players develop gestures of varying degrees of detail that serve the function of representing particular chords or bridging successive harmonic areas. […] As bass players experiment with different realizations of such ideas, they continually discover new versions that appeal to them, and enter them into their store-houses as fully detailed figures. Subsequently, they may use them with the same chord as it arises in different parts of progressions, and, where compatible, with different chords. At the same time, within the limitations of their role as accompanists, they alter the figures through transposition, pitch substitution, rhythmic rephrasing, displacement, augmentation, and the like' (Berliner, 1994, p. 323).

(iii) The Fender Precision had been around for ten years by the mid-1960s, and players naturally wanted to explore its sonic and technical possibilities.

In addition, any instrument that goes on the road and is played live will begin to open itself up to the performer, and the rather more flamboyant gestures that make for a good show eventually work their way back to the studio as well. It would be natural to conclude that the session players working in the studios during the 1960s had extensive live performance experience prior to their studio work, since this would be how they got into the studios in the first place.

5.3.1 Segments above the eighth fret (E^b)

The first feature in the melodic element category, I have called 'segments above the eighth fret (E^b)'. The reason for choosing the eighth fret as a dividing point is the tuning of the four-string Fender Precision bass. With E as the lowest note, any song in the key of E^b will have the E^b on the G-string's eighth fret as the only variation of the root note except for the highest note available on the fingerboard, and by that a more limited repertoire on the tonic chord in an accompanying situation.[167] Movements, or sections of notes, played over E^b are therefore here treated as being in the higher register of the electric bass, and would consequently serve as a cue for a likely melodic feature.

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[167] I am, of course, fully aware of the possibilities of playing the corresponding E^b on the 13th fret of the D-string.

Segments above the eight fret

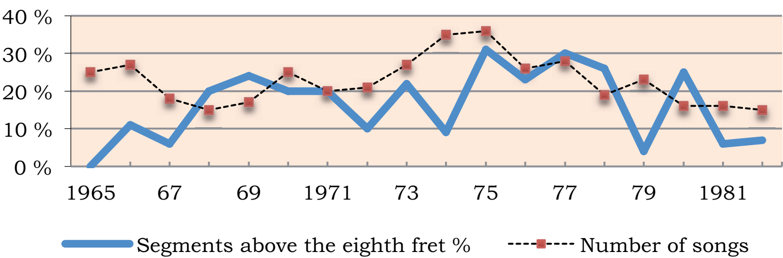


Figure 5.15 Frequency of segments above the eighth fret.

Before 1966, I did not spot a single occurrence of notable upper range bass playing on the Hot 100 charts. The first person to move away from the standard bass area of the fingerboard is Paul McCartney, in his performance of the song 'Paperback Writer' (Example 7.3). He continues to use the feature in four out of nine number one hits between 1966 and 1970 (Table 7.6).

In Example 5.37, we see Joe Osborn moving freely around in the higher register on the song 'I Am Woman' performed by Helen Reddy.[168] The frequency of this melodic tendency is recorded on the graph in Figure 5.15, where it reaches a high point of 31 percent of the number-one songs in 1975, before retreating again later in the decade.

Example 5.37 Reddy, Helen. 'I Am Woman' (Burton/Reddy), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, December 1972, Joe Osborn electric bass, bars 1-4, *I Am Woman,* Capitol/EMI 11068.

[168] For complete transcription of 'I Am Woman', see Transcription 5.1.

5.3.2 Ascending and descending lines

Ascending and descending lines are also difficult to verify without full transcriptions of the songs, and one has to consider how many notes in a row must be present before categorizing the event as a line, and whether the intervals used have to be diatonic half steps or whole steps. There is no doubt that bass players use rising and falling movements on most occasions when playing, but I have chosen to define the feature as those occasions when continuously melodic diatonic scale elements are used in an accompanying function relatively high, or high up on the fingerboard. I have also chosen to differentiate it from the 'clear melodic fragments' because the latter feature does not necessarily have to contain diatonic lines and it does not have to include an obvious bass function, as in presenting the chords in an accompanying situation.

Example 5.38 is taken from the Jackson 5's 'I'll Be There' from 1970, where Wilton Felder plays a descending, offbeat diatonic major seventh line from F to G in the two last bars. It was most likely prepared beforehand, given that it is overdubbed by a high-pitched instrument as well, but the descending motion of the bass has clearly a comp function and simultaneously sticks out as a melodic figure.

Example 5.38 Jackson Five. 'I'll Be There' (Gordy/Davis/Hutch), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, October 1970, Wilton Felder electric bass, track time 0 min 12 s, *Third Album,* Motown 718.

On the 1968 hit 'Mrs. Robinson', Larry Knechtel plays exceptionally busy and inconsistent basslines, and Example 5.39 is taken from the first chorus, in which, in the last two bars, he descends from D to B and then returns using a chromatic passing note up to the root of the dominant E chord, then plays diatonically again down to the tonic A.

Example 5.39 Simon and Garfunkel. 'Mrs. Robinson' (Simon, Paul), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, June 1968, Larry Knechtel electric bass, track time 0 min 34 s, *Bookends,* Columbia CK-9259.

Figure 5.16 indicates a peak for this melodic feature in 1970, followed by a steady decline through the disco era.

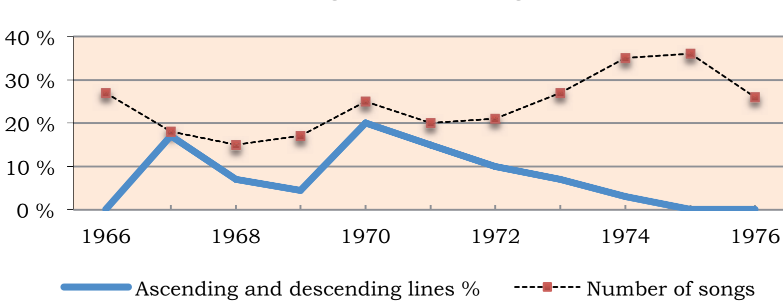


Figure 5.16 Frequency of ascending and descending lines.

5.3.3 Double stops

Double stopping, or double stops, is a term taken from classical music's terminology; describing the technique of bowed string instruments playing two notes at the same time. This indicates that it is an old technique, and that it may have existed as a feature among double bass players for centuries, but among bass players appearing on Hot 100, the element was non-existent until August 1966, when The Lovin' Spoonful make their first and only appearance at the top position. While the main bass groove of their much-covered song 'Summer In The City' is a reasonably straight sequence of quarter- and eighth-note roots, in the last two bars before every B section, bass player Steve Boone adds the third (E) of the new dominant (C), played on the G-string—emphasizing the

chord shift from minor to major—while simultaneously playing a low C on the E-string (Example 5.40).

Example 5.40 The Lovin' Spoonful. 'Summer In The City' (Sebastian/Boone), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, August 1966, Steve Boone electric bass, track time 0 min 16 s, *Hums Of The Lovin' Spoonful*, Kama Sutra 8054.

The introduction of double stops to the electric bass may be traceable to R&B bass player Chuck Rainey, who adopted the technique as a signature in his playing. Rainey played on several key albums during the 1960s and was widely acknowledged as a top performer in any genre. This would imply that other bass players copied his playing extensively, and that his signature trademarks would be spread around. Since double stops can be viewed as a typical R&B feature and also as a dominant and space-requiring expression, it is quite surprising that the frequency reached as high as 29 percent in 1972 (Figure 5.17).

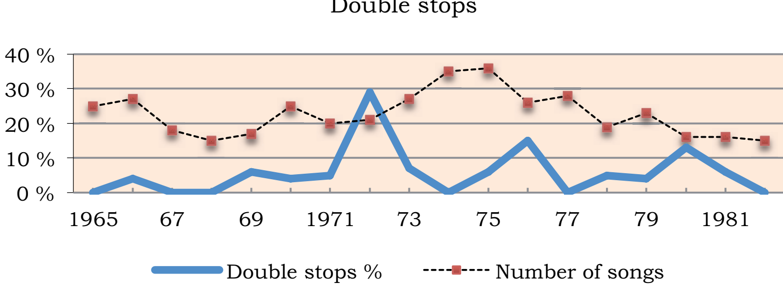


Figure 5.17 Frequency of double stops.

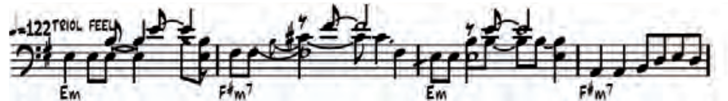
> Well, double stops… there are two places I got them from. Number one: the upright players have been playing double stops for years, all the way back to the twenties and thirties and forties. Milt Hinton, George Duvivier, all of the jazz players were playing double stops. Now, the first time I started to play double stops, this was

around 1962, and there was a band called Don Gardner & Dee Dee Ford. They had a hit record out called 'I Need Your Lovin' Every Day', and I played on that recording. But the road band that they had, the bass player was a guy named Mervin Bronson. He was also an ex-upright player. He played double-stops and it just excited me and I went directly to my bass and started checking it out – just heard it and started trying it, 'cause I liked the way it sounded.

Phone interview, Rainey, Nov. 28, 2008

Bass players would frequently use the feature as a fill ingredient or as elements in part of the main groove, but also as an accompanying feature, occasionally executed on dominant chords, to heighten the intensity underneath a soloist.

'A Horse With No Name' from 1972 was the first of folk band America's two number-one hits on the Hot 100. The two-chord song (Im and IIm^7 throughout) is built upon a laidback cycled shuffle bassline consisting of the root played four to the bar and occasionally interrupted by a triplet fill starting on E on the ninth fret. The double stop example here (Example 5.41) is taken from the first four bars of the guitar solo, as Dan Peek plays 1-5-8's, to fill in for the missing rhythm guitar.



Example 5.41 America. 'A Horse With No Name' (Bunnell, Dewey), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, March 1972, Dan Peek electric bass, track time 2 min 06 s, *America,* Warner Bros. 46157.

Example 5.42 shows double stops as part of the main groove in Diana Ross's 'Love Hangover' from May 1976. The song has two pronounced parts, different in both tempo and style, and bass player Henry Davis cycles this riff in the first part (with some alterations).

Example 5.42 Ross, Diana. 'Love Hangover' (Sawyer/McLeod), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, May 1976, Henry E. Davis electric bass, track time 0 min 10 s, *Diana Ross,* Motown 861.

As we can see from Figure 5.17, double stops did not represent a prominent part of the bass players toolbox, and the use of the feature was erratic in the period I observed it.

5.3.4 Clear melodic fragments

As mentioned earlier, this feature is related to the 'ascending/descending' category of bass lines, and it is also tricky to single out, because sometimes a melody sounds like a fragment but occurs often enough to be otherwise. I have tried to distinguish between an accompanying functional bassline that happens to be in the higher register and a freestanding melodic ornament detached from the normal bass role. Here I will provide Carol Kaye's bassline on 'Good Vibration' as an example (Example 5.43).

Example 5.43 The Beach Boys. 'Good Vibrations' (Wilson, Brian), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, December 1966, Carol Kaye electric bass, bars 1–8, *Smiley Smile,* Capitol ST8-2891.

This little melody, consisting of two short musemes—a fifth–root–fifth answered by a root–second–third—forms a countermelodic statement against the vocal line by dropping diatonically down from the tonic E^{b}m to the dominant B^{b7} and then repeating the whole sequence. This bassline does not have an accompanying role here, as is evident when Lyle Ritz's double bass comes in at the repetition of the

sequence to supply the root notes one octave below Kaye's line. Her bassline, then, which is not of the song's main melodies either, stands out as a clear melodic fragment of its own.

James Taylor's bass player in the beginning of the 1970s was Leland Sklar, and in the often modest and sparse soundscape of Taylor's arrangements, Sklar found his place by interweaving his basslines between the acoustic guitar and the voice. Example 5.44 is taken from Taylor's hit 'You've Got A Friend' from 1971.

Example 5.44 Taylor, James. 'You've Got A Friend' (King, Carole), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, July 1971, Leland Sklar electric bass, tracktime 3 min 00 s, *Mud Slime And The Blue Horizon,* Warner Bros. 2561.

Here, Sklar departs from an accompanying function and performs ascending diatonic and melodic lines underneath Taylor's voice.

From the graph (Figure 5.18) we see that the 'clear melodic fragment' feature accompanies the invasion of the electric bass into the Hot 100, constitutes a measurable contribution to pop bass playing for almost a decade, then falls off again toward the 1980s.

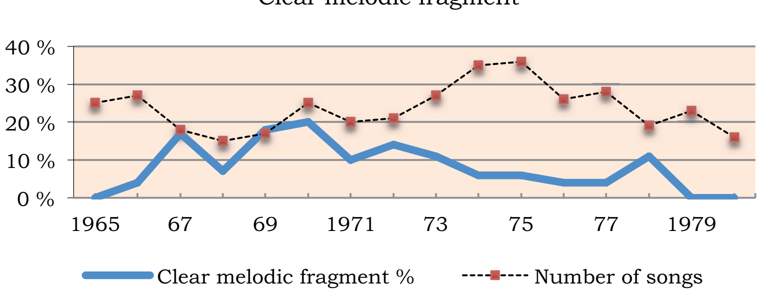


Figure 5.18 Frequency of clear melodic fragments.

5.3.5 Inconsistent or busy

I have labeled the opposite of the cyclic, shaped bassline the 'inconsistent approach', though I hasten to reject the negative connotations of the word. In fact, this attitude towards bass playing could also be described as bouncy, playful, naïve, cheerful, exploratory, roaming or busy. While the chord changes in a given song repeat themselves from verse to verse and chorus to chorus, the inconsistent bass player eschews a standardized line or a set groove in favor of constantly shifting notes and rhythmic values with an improvisatory character. The graph in Figure 5.19 reflects a pronounced rise in 'inconsistent' bass playing after 1965 and an equally pronounced drop toward the end of the 1970s.

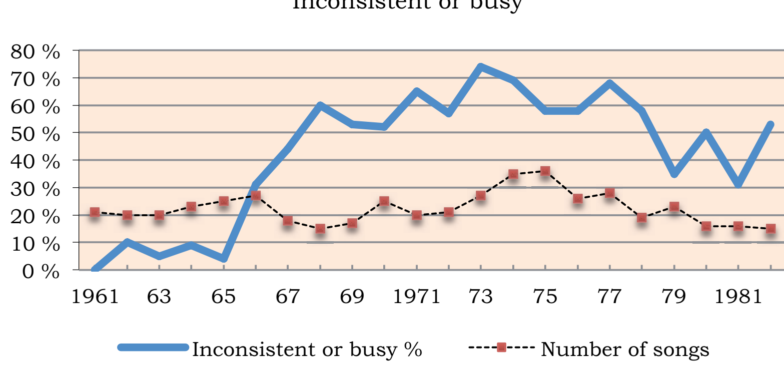


Figure 5.19 Frequency of inconsistent or busy bass lines.

One player in particular played this way, and he has been mentioned in the context of other groove-based and melodic elements as well: James Jamerson. In Table 5.6, the letter N represents this feature, which clearly becomes much more frequent from 1966 onward.

		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
1961																					
	Please Mr Postman	x		x																	
1964																					
	My Guy	x	x	x				x							x	x					
	Where Did Our Love Go?			x		x													x		
	Baby Love		x						x												
	Come See About Me			x	x														x		
1965																					
	My Girl	x				x											x				
	Stop! In The Name Of Love			x	x	x															
	Back In My Arms Again			x		x									x				x		
	I Can't Help Myself (Sugar Pie Honey Bunch)			x	x																
	I Hear A Symphony			x		x													x		
1966																					
	You Can't Hurry Love			x	x										x		x				
	Reach Out (I'll Be There)			x	x	x	x		x						x	x	x		x		
	You Keep Me Hangin' On			x	x	x	x		x						x						
1967																					
	Love Is Here And Now You're Gone			x				x						x					x		
	The Happening			x	x				x						x						
1968																					
	Love Child			x	x		x	x							x	x			x		
	I Heard It Through The Grapevine			x	x				x						x						
1969																					
	I Can't Get Next To You			x	x			x	x						x	x					
	Someday We'll Be Together			x		x															
1970																					
	Ain't No Mountain High Enough	x		x	x	x		x	x						x	x			x		
1973																					
	Let's Get It On				x	x	x								x	x				x	
	Keep On Truckin' (Part 1)			x					x												
1974																					
	Rock The Boat			x	x		x				x			x	x						
1976																					
	Boogie Fever			x																	
1977																					
	You Don't Have To Be A Star (To Be In My Show)	x		x	x			x							x	x					

Table 5.6 James Jamerson features on Hot 100

One of my informants, the English bass player Paul Westwood, recognized the inconsistent approach and the busyness of the nature of this playing by saying:

> Paul Westwood: Do you remember 'American Pie', Don McLean? You listen to the bass playing on that, it's all over the place. Every single verse is different.
>
> Per Elias Drabløs: Who is that?
>
> PW: I have no idea. I mean it's a fantastic record, but it's a mess! It's a complete mess from [a] rhythm section point of view, simply because it's never standardized. But how can you say it's wrong?

PED: It's about taste.

PW: It is what it is, he got away with it. [laughing]

Interview Westwood, London, Dec. 6, 2007

Westwood sees Bob Rothstein's bass approach used on 'American Pie'[169] as 'a mess', and despite being a sworn Jamerson-fan and familiar with this playing, he observes that the inconsistency feature can be taken to an extreme, where no pattern exists but only aimless lines without a clear plan for direction.

The inconsistency of the basslines in the 1960s and 1970s described here, also arises from a *melismatic* approach, whereby the players who played more notes than necessary as they fulfilled the bass's role in the pop song probably were inspired by R&B and gospel singers. In *The New Blue Music*, Ripani (2006) describes 'melisma' as a common feature in blues-based music that 'imparts a sense of individualism that is related to ambiguity of both pitch and rhythm' (p. 57). If we view this bass playing as a melismatic idea, the busy approach and the 'need' to fill empty spots in a bar with audible subdivisions becomes more understandable.[170]

5.3.6 Bass fills

Bass fills did not exist on the Hot 100 before 1964. The nature of this feature is, in large, to leave the regular bass pattern of a song to perform a variation of some sort during the last bar of a period. Bass fills inside the duration of a four-, eight- or sixteen-bar period except for the last bar, are scarce, but as we can see from Figure 5.20, the feature became quite popular leading up to the 1970s. The decrease

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[169] *American Pie*, 1971, EMI Music Distribution E4-46555.

[170] Chris Jisi observes: 'If it can be said that rock and roll is a guitar-dominated music, and jazz is a tenor-sax dominated music (piano, too), then clearly R&B is the bass-dominated music. As a very general rule, in R&B the drums lay it down, the guitar has a rhythm niche, but the bass often "runs free"' (Email correspondence with Chris Jisi).

towards the 1980s was probably the result of a new interest in repeated and machine-like bass patterns.

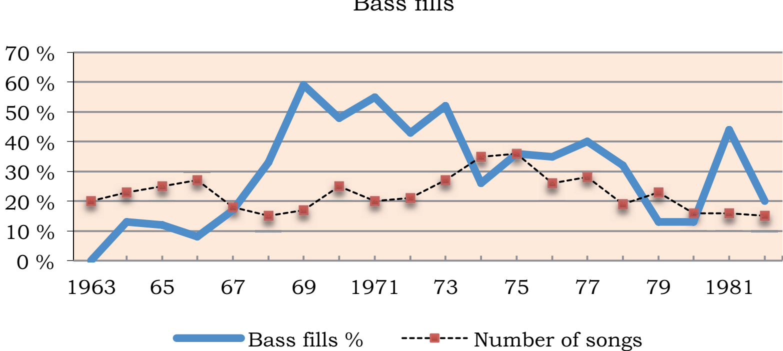


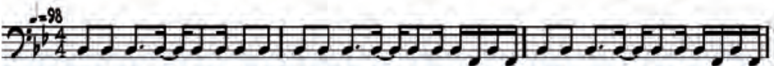
Figure 5.20 Frequency of bass fills.

5.3.7 Soloistic elements

This feature is represented only occasionally in the *Billboard* charts, either on double bass or electric bass—neither instrument has traditionally lent itself to solos in popular music. On the *Billboard* Hot 100, bass 'solos' consist mainly of one-bar phrases or sudden breaks between parts of a song. In 'My Girl' (Example 5.45), the Temptations' number-one hit from 1965, Jamerson starts alone, playing the two first bars of the song by himself and giving the impression that his first eighth note is the first beat of a measure, before a guitar enters, together with finger snapping, and reveals the 'real' first beat.

Example 5.45 The Temptations. 'My Girl' (Robinson/White), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, March 1965, James Jamerson electric bass, excerpt from start, *The Temptations Sing Smokey*, Gordy 912.

In 1966, the Supremes likewise allowed the bass to start the song 'You Can't Hurry Love', and Jamerson sets up the main groove, this time accompanied by bass drum and tambourine (Example 5.46).



Example 5.46 The Supremes. 'You Can't Hurry Love' (Holland/Dozier/Holland), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, September 1966, James Jamerson electric bass, excerpt from start, *The Supremes A'Go-Go*, Motown, 37463-5138-2.

5.3.8 Comments on the melodic elements

The features I have listed under the 'melodic elements' category serve a variety of purposes in bass playing that transcend groove (Table 5.5). The 'inconsistent/busy' feature, for example, attempts to label the growing tendency over the course of the era in question to avoid simple repetition in favor of variation, or even sheer *variety*. It affects groove in that the player focuses on the general beat together with the drums, but through constant altering of the note sequence, it could also be seen as an isolated melodic approach. Most of the elements in this category are nevertheless played higher up on the fingerboard than the bass function would require, and are therefore often looked upon as melodic playing. The inherent quality of a typical melody instrument is its high pitched range, and a bass played above the eighth fret on the G-string, passing the 150 MHz frequency-range, would in most cases be looked upon as 'leaving the bass role'. However, it is important to stress that melodic approaches can also be traced in an inconsistent or busy feature played in the bass's lower register.

5.4 Attributed elements

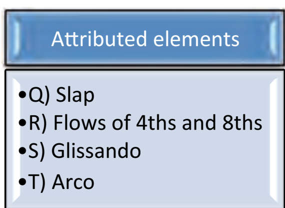


Table 5.7 Attributed elements.

I have labeled the features used for altering the bass guitar's sound or improving its possibilities for phrasing *attributed elements* (Table 5.7). These features do not have significant impacts upon either the groove or the character of the bassline, but they do spice up the song. There are countless possibilities in this regard, and I have limited myself to the four most prevalent of them: slap, flows of quarters and eighths, glissando and arco playing.

5.4.1 Slap

The slap technique is an old feature, having arisen among New Orleans double bass players such as Steve Brown and Bill Johnson as early as the 1920s (Chevan, 1989). Before the widespread use of amplification, this technique probably forced the bass sound through the mix of other instruments. It also supplied a percussive function, as double bass player Milt Hinton described:

> Many smaller places often hired only a pianist and a bass player without a drummer, so we would keep time by slapping against the fingerboard with the side of our right hands in between the plucked notes. (Jisi, 1991, p. 35)

The percussiveness of the sound arose in two ways:

(i) By lifting the string up from the fingerboard and allowing it to snap back (hook slap);

(ii) by hitting the strings with the right hand so that they struck the fingerboard (stroke slap), before plucking them in a normal manner.

Both techniques could be used either simultaneously or independently and the slap was widely used by double bass players up to the bebop era, where a gentler approach of playing took over as the standard. Double bass players from the early rock era stuck with it, however, and it remains a standard feature of rockabilly bass to this day.

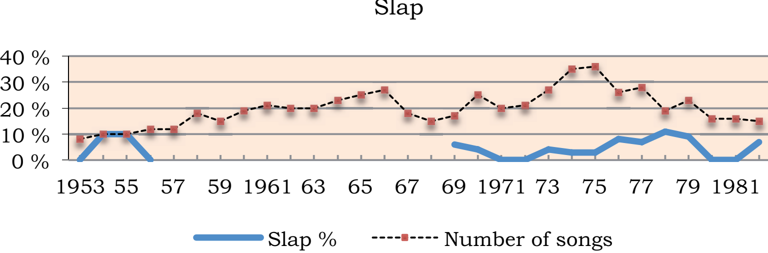


Figure 5.21 Frequency of slap.

On *Billboard*'s Hot 100, there are not many songs featuring slap bass (Figure 5.21). 'This Ole House',[171] performed by Rosemary Clooney in 1954 and Bill Haley and the Comets' 'Rock Around The Clock' in 1955 (Example 5.47) are the only number-one hits after 1951 that reveal a double bass slap.

Example 5.47 Bill Haley and His Comets. 'Rock Around the Clock' (DeKnight/Freedman), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, July 1955, Marshall Lytle double bass, main verse groove, *Shake Rattle & Roll,* Decca 5560.

[171] Phillips B25566H.

The feature does not return to the top position of the Hot 100 until 1969, when Larry Graham, the bass player for Sly and the Family Stone, used a slap technique on his Fender Jazz bass but called it 'thumping' and 'plucking' (Roberts, 2001, p. 115).[172] Recalling the 'stroke slap' of the double bass players, Graham struck the two lowest strings with his thumb, but unlike those early slappers, he could produce pitches by fretting the strings with his left hand. 'Plucking' was the same thing as the old 'hook slap', but when Graham combined his techniques in a cyclical motion, he laid the foundation of the stylistic feature now known as slaphand. On Sly and the Family Stone's 'Everyday People', Graham displays the 'thumping' technique, hitting the G note on the E-string throughout the song and thereby performing what would seem to be the simplest bass groove ever on the Hot 100 between 1951 and 1982 (Example 5.48).

Example 5.48 Sly and the Family Stone. 'Everyday People' (Stewart, Sylvester), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, February 1969, Larry Graham electric bass, excerpt from main groove, *Stand,* Epic 26456.

5.4.2 Flows of quarters and eighths

One of the features an electric bass player utilizes specifically to heighten the intensity of the music leading up to a chorus or to emphasize some other event during a song is to repeat quarters or eighths for the last bar before the change. As is evident from the graph in Figure 5.22, this is clearly an electric bass feature; it appears for the first time in 1961, and a sudden increase in its popularity coincides with the 'British Invasion' in 1964.

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[172] For additional information on this, see Bass Player (Staff, 1992).

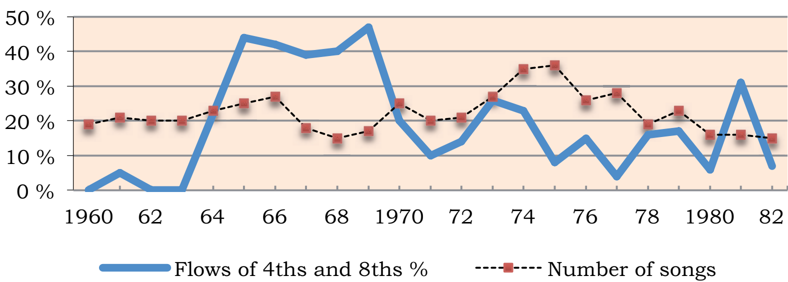


Figure 5.22 Frequency of 'flows of quarters and eighths'.

5.4.3 Glissando

> Joe was the first one known for his slides, I mean it was a thing. 'Call Joe Osborn for those slides!'
>
> Interview Jisi, New York, April 2, 2008

It may sound strange to treat glissando as a feature, given that it is a straightforward and very accessible technique on the bass, but it actually does not appear on the Hot 100 until 1965, when the Byrds' bass player, as the second bass note of the song 'Mr. Tambourine Man'[173] plays a glissando from D on the fifth fret to the A on the twelfth fret. Bass players generally apply glissando mostly for effect—as a short build-up to the chorus, or as an entrance signal. It is also used as a featured technique as one moves stepwise from one pitch to another within a given pattern. This is also called a 'slide', referring to the bottleneck tool used by blues guitarists. Several bass players have made this a signature feature of their playing, including Joe Osborn (see the quotation above) and Leland Sklar. Carol Kaye commented on her use of the feature as well:

[173] *Mr. Tambourine Man*, 1965, Columbia 9172.

> All Jack [Nitzsche] did was to write out the chord charts [for Bob Lind's 'Elusive Butterfly',[174] 1966], and I was left on my own as usual and remember how boring that tune was to play chordal-wise and made a mistake on the take and slid back down the bass neck then. The producer heard that (I felt badly for making that mistake and knew he'd catch it, which he did) and he loved that effect, calling for more slides, wanting me to 'milk that' – so that began my signature 'gliss' on a lot of recordings after that.
>
> (Email attachments Kaye, May 2007)

The graph on Figure 5.23 shows that this feature was quite common on the Hot 100 in the 1970s and almost disappeared early in the 1980s.

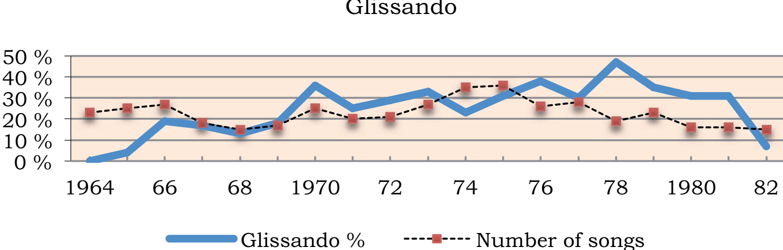


Figure 5.23 Frequency of glissando.

5.4.4 Arco

Though arco is a feature that is exclusive to the double bass, I have nevertheless chosen to include it because of its frequent appearances on the early Hot 100 charts. As mentioned before, arco playing was one of the three attributed elements bass players had at their disposal when accompanying—excluding slap, and the graph in Figure 5.24 shows the relative prevalence of the feature during the 1950s. The descending curve toward 1956 may be due to the decline

[174] *Don't Be Concerned*, World Pacific 1841.

in the use of big orchestras for studio productions; it also mimics the timing of the decline of the walking bass (Figure 5.5).

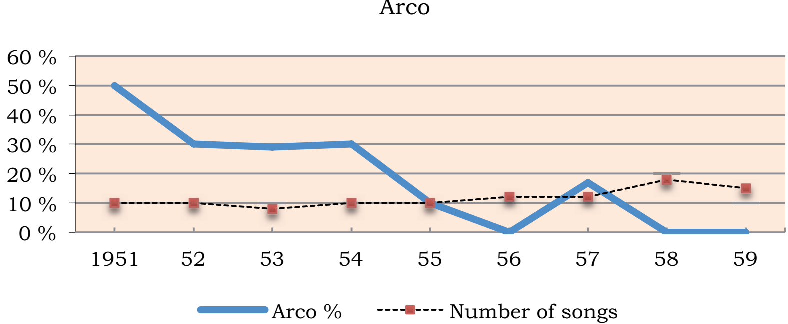


Figure 5.24 Frequency of arco playing.

5.4.5 Additional feature – the 'broken fifth'

The 'broken fifth' refers to the 1960s bass player's predilection for interrupting a continuous eighth-note groove on the root to go down a fourth or up a fifth to build intensity in the song. I expected to see more of this element before I started actually going through the songs, but it seldom appeared in the number-one hits, so I abandoned the search. In these two examples (Example 5.49 and Example 5.50) it is applied to the main groove.

Example 5.49 Presley, Elvis. 'Suspicious Minds' (James, Mark), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, November 1969, Tommy Cogbill electric bass, track time 0 min 39 s, *Suspicious Minds,* RCA GB13275.

Example 5.50 Zager and Evans. 'In The Year 2525 (Exordium and Terminus)' (Evans, Rick), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, July 1969, Mark Dalton electric bass, track time 0 min 28 s, *In The Year 2525 (Exordium and Terminus),* RCA 1860.

5.5 Feature comments

It is important to note that this part of the research is based primarily on what my ears perceive as a trained music listener. Without full transcriptions of all of the songs, it is virtually impossible to hear all of the details or count every occurrence of a given feature, but the present graphs represent tenable summaries of the growth of the features that would come to define the melodic electric bass era.

Even counting 'finds' for my graphs immediately raised fundamental questions. For example, how many times did a feature need to appear to be designated a find? How long did it need to continue in order to count? In the case of 'slap', for example, how many slapped notes did I have to hear before I could distinguish a find from the occasional ornamentation? In the case of 'offbeat phrasing', did one syncopated event constitute a find, or did the whole groove have to consist of anticipations, as occurs in some Latin grooves? Chromaticism were particularly challenging—how many events were enough?—and it proved ultimately too difficult to track without full transcriptions, so I abandoned that particular feature. Besides, is it a chromatic line when using one chromatic passing note to get from I^{maj} to IIm^{7}? If so, the larger part of the songs on the Hot 100 would contain this feature. Occasionally, of course, a single bass event would include two or more features—that is, a long sixteenth-note bassline could be counted as simply; (i) a bass fill; (ii) an ascending or descending line; (iii) a clear melodic fragment; or (iv), use of sixteenth notes.

In the event of such a bass fill, the chances are that the rest of the bass performance in the song would consist of any of the four mentioned features, and would therefore not be seen as one single occurrence. I ended up with one clear principle before all others: based on my experience as a bass player, I had to be able to clearly register the given feature without a full transcription, and the feature had to be an essential part of the song's basic bass groove. This

principle alone generated most of the material for the previous graphs and discussions.

As one can see from the Excel spreadsheets in Appendix B, I marked the appearance of each feature in a given song with an *x*. Some songs contain up to twelve identifiable features, while others are recorded without any bass at all, though I integrated the latter anyway for statistical purposes. I 'altered' the original Hot 100 lists on a few occasions—when one song tops the list in December of one year and stays there in January of the next year, for example, I did not include the song the following year. Occasionally, a song would regain the top position after being replaced by another song—'Le Freak'[175] by Chic held the number-one position three different times during 1978 and 1979—but I would only list that song once.

5.6. 'I Am Woman'

Naturally, none of the number-one songs from the Hot 100 lists contains all features described in the preceding subsections, but according to Appendix B, there are several recordings where the bass player utilizes ten or more in the same song. This is also the case for the Australian singer Helen Reddy's 'I Am Woman', which topped the Hot 100 in December 1972 and won her a Grammy Award for Best Female Performance. The bass player is Joe Osborn, and here he delivers one of the most melodic basslines that ever made number one. Osborn, who was born in 1937 in Louisiana, was originally a guitar player, but in 1959, he switched to electric bass while playing with Bob Luhman's band in Las Vegas. Osborn participated in more than two hundred top-forty hits during his career, which makes him one of the most successful session bass players in the American popular music scene (Jisi & Jackson, 1992, p. 46).

[175] *C'est Chic,* 1978, Atlantic 81552-2.

Genre-wise, 'I Am Woman' is a pop song that relies upon the standard instrumentation of drums, bass, piano, and two guitars—an acoustic steel string and an electric that in this case lends a country and western mood through its high-pitched glides and constant fills. Additional instruments include a synthesizer, brass, strings and backing vocals, and the production sounds very 'big'. The four-bar intro begins with the electric guitar, panned left, playing fills while the acoustic guitar, panned right, presents the chord progression together with the bass. An octave-dubbed flute enters after two bars to anticipate Reddy's verse melody, followed by a drums fill to introduce the A section's groove. The song's structure is rather standard, alternating A sections in G major with B sections in F major (similar to the Beatles' 'Penny Lane' in Transcription 7.5).

In 1972, Osborn was already a veteran of the Los Angeles recording scene who had played bass on at least fourteen number-one hits before 'I Am Woman'. It is likely, then, that the producer knew what kind of bass playing Osborn would provide and gave him free rein to do so. The drum accompaniment, played by Jim Gordon, is rather straightforward throughout the song, going from rim shots on beats 2 and 4 for the first four bars of the verse, then snare drum for the last four bars, then a fill leading into the chorus. The bass drum plays mostly on beats 1 and 3 in the A sections, then takes up the 'standard groove' with variations in the B sections, making lots of room for the bass to 'roam'. Table 5.8 shows the features Osborn makes use of in this recording; typical for the time, he uses most of the fingerboard to perform this song's bassline.

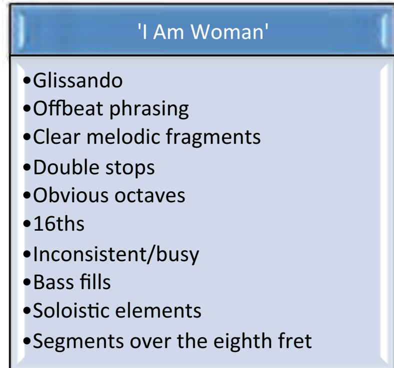
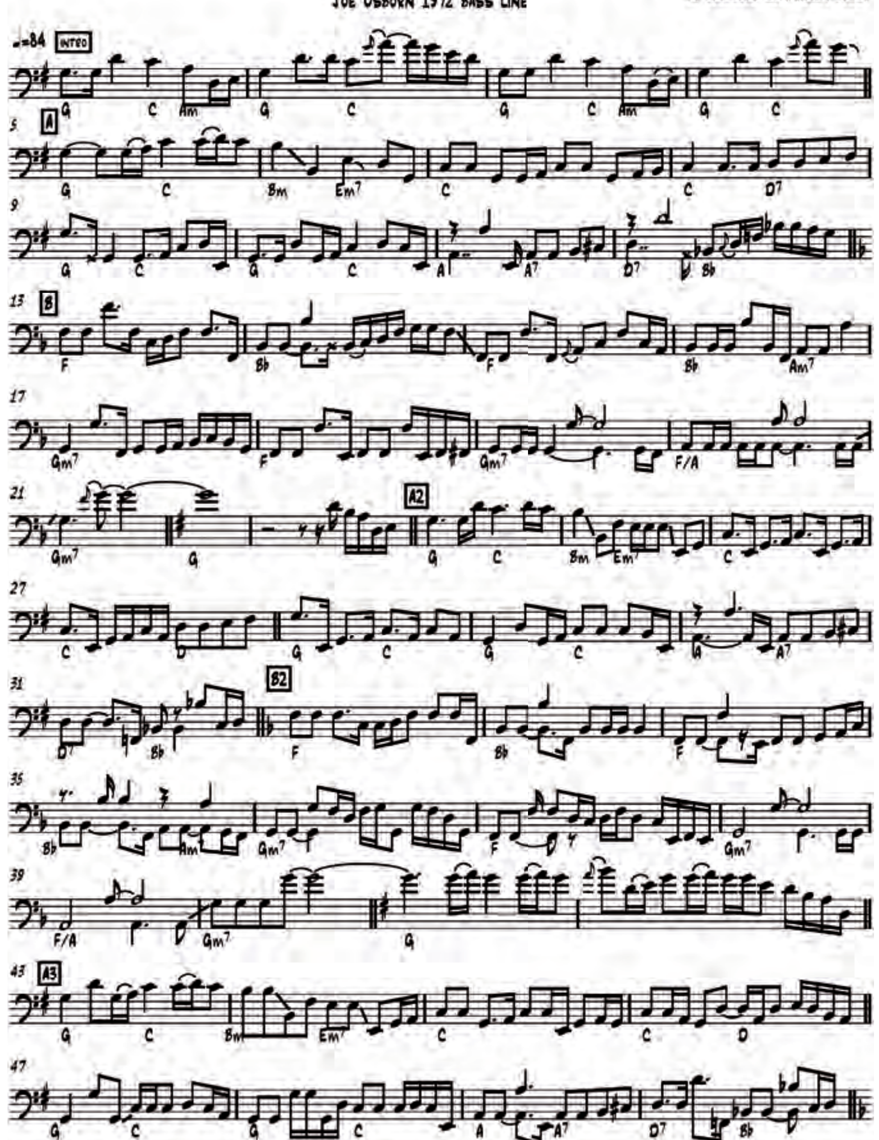


Table 5.8 Features of 'I Am Woman'.

Osborn's improvisational bassline has a strong sense of perpetual development behind it. He rarely repeats any particular musical idea during the whole three-minute song, indulging an obviously prodigious capacity for invention while still supporting the chord progression throughout. His melodic approach begins already in bar 2, where he anticipates beat 3 by playing a small glissando up to the subdominant's sixth note on the fourteenth fret, pausing a bit, and then dropping back to the tonic via sixteenth notes. These two last beats of bar 2 alone combine five melodic electric bass features: offbeat phrasing (he emphasizes the last eighth note on beat 3); sixteenth notes in a bass fill with a clear melodic fragment; and the positioning of this busy line above the eighth fret of the G string.

Osborn, who played a Fender Jazz bass exclusively for most of his career, was 'known for his slides'—he applies this feature fourteen times during the song, including the first prominent glissando in bar 6, which starts at the B on the ninth fret and falls an octave to the B on the second fret. These slides are not always continuous; sometimes he is forced to switch strings and therefore breaks the motion.


I AM WOMAN
JOE OSBORN 1972 BASS LINE
AS RECORDED WITH HELEN REDDY
♩=84
INTRO

Transcription 5.1 Reddy, Helen. 'I Am Woman' (Burton/Reddy), No 1 Hot 100, December 1972, Joe Osborn electric bass line, *I Am Woman,* Capitol 11068.

Interestingly, offbeat phrasing is not a dominant feature in this particular performance, though it characterizes many other number-one songs in the 1970s. Osborn uses it occasionally, as in bar 14, but instead of letting the tied B^b stand alone, he adds the octave on beat 2 and thereby avoids a syncopated feel. Similar incidents occur in bars 34, 36, 49 and 52, as well as an obvious offbeat event in bar 65, but the overall feel of the bassline is a straightforward, non-syncopated sixteenth-note drive forward. Osborne also only seldom utilizes double-stops here, apart from playing simultaneous octaves, though in bar 51, he lets the tenth fret's F ring while he plays the eighth fret's C.

In bars 41 and 42, between B2 and A3, Osborn is allowed a little solo (the first time this opportunity arises, in bars 22 and 23, guitar player Mike Deasy filled the two bars). Osborn begins his break like

Deasy, twice utilizing sixteenth-note hammer-ons[176] from G to A and back before playing a sixteenth-note pentatonic descending line to the root of G. The most consistent element in his playing on 'I Am Woman' is in fact these pentatonic lines, together with the pronounced double eighth notes on beat 1 that we see first in bar 13. He repeats this particular groove-determining feature in almost every bar of the B section, and it is the only time he locks up with the kick drum during the song.

There are two obvious alternatives for a bass player in relation to the other low-frequency instrument in the typical pop band—that is, the bass drum. On the one hand, he or she can play exactly what the bass drum plays by using simple lines and relatively few notes; on the other hand, he or she can create completely independent lines with lots of notes and little reinforcement from the bass drum. Both approaches are of course subject to groove, tempo, chords and melody, but they represent two distinct methods and ways of interpreting the bass line to a song. In this case Osborn clearly ignores the bass drum except for those first-beat eighth notes, preferring a rhythmic counterpoint to the lockstep feel of a shared rhythm, and at the same time he avoids getting in the way of the vocals' melody and lyrics. Osborn in fact remarks upon this knack for adding another layer to the song in a *Bass Player* interview from 1992:

> Aside from the given of locking with the drummer, I always play for the song. If you listen to the song – the lyrics, the feel, the vocals – it will feed you and tell you what to do. What it all comes down to, in the end, is attitude. You can learn the notes and the form, but ultimately you've got to just put both feet on the floor, dig in, and play! (Jisi and Jackson, 1992)

Several others of my informants stressed the importance of being aware of the melody and the lyrics in order to come up with a good bass performance that suits the song, including Wilbur Bascomb:

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[176] See Appendix C for explanation of techniques.

> Sometimes the music calls for—like I always say—the music itself will tell you what to do. […] I mean, that is if you have any kind of awareness of the music that you're dealing with, it will say, 'Well, hey, this music doesn't call for this, it calls for this'. It's as if music itself is telling you what to do.
>
> Interview Bascomb, New York, April 1, 2008

5.7 Comments and summing up

In the preceding sections I have described some of the most important features bass players utilize on the number-one hits of the melodic electric bass era. The list is not comprehensive. There are, of course, other elements in the players' toolbox, some of which are used but not described here, for example, the frequency of players using a pick compared with finger playing, or, how many times the 8–6–5–8 eight-note lick and variations on it are used in the material collected. Neither have I discussed the use of additional effects added to the bass sound, such as Bootsy Collins' use of 'stomp boxes',[177] for example on Johnnie Taylor's 'Disco Lady'[178] from 1976. I have not discussed drop D tuning, as in Chi-Lites' 'Oh Girl'[179] from 1972, or the 'reversed' Habanera (8–6–5–6) used in Sheb Wooley's 1958 hit 'The Purple People Eater'[180]. Nevertheless, I have begun to flesh out the development of the electric bass as an accompanying instrument in the years in which it arguably flourished most. From the traditional 'root or root/fifth' double bass comping of the 1950s through the uninhibited electric bass's roaming in the late 1960s and early 1970s to the indication of a more retrenched playing in the early 1980s, these features supply an important perspective on how the bass has filled out its role in the pop song. In Figure 5.25, Figure

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[177] Also called 'effects unit' or 'effects pedal': an electronic device, usually placed on the floor; used to alter an instrument's sound.

[178] *Eargasm*, Columbia PCT-33951.

[179] *A Lonely Man*, Brunswick 754179.

[180] Bear Family 16149.

5.26 and Figure 5.27 the features of the *groove*, *melodic* and *attributed* element groups are combined and clearly demonstrate the transformation in the performance practice of the electric bass particularly between 1965 and 1980.[181]

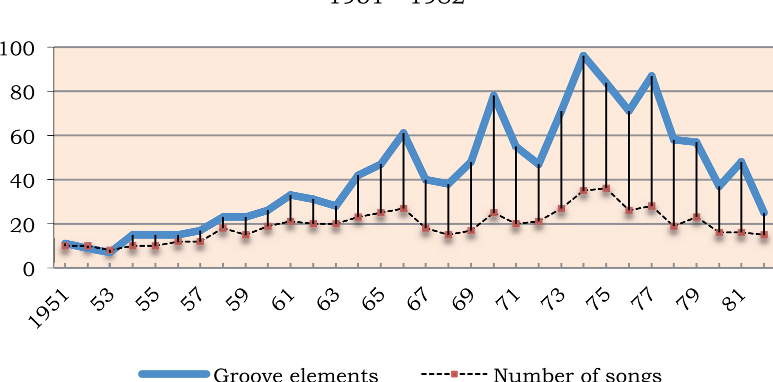

Figure 5.25 Groove elements combined.

Figure 5.25 shows that the bass players use of groove features were relatively modest until 1963 or so, when the electric bass finally overtakes the double bass once and for all in popular music (see Figure 5.1). The figure displays an increase of groove features usage towards the 1970's, and reaches a top in 1977 when eighty-seven features are used on twenty-eight songs. The falling curve does coincide with fewer songs on the Hot 100 towards the 1980's (the use of features are twenty-five on fifteen songs in 1982), but the tendency is still a decrease of groove feature usage.

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[181] The y-axis on Figure 5.25,Figure 5.26 and Figure 5.27 shows the total number of features used each year (x-axis).

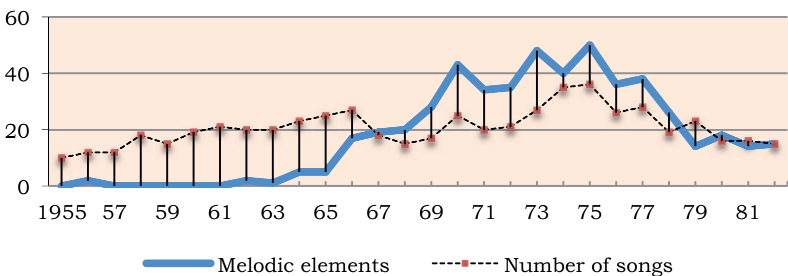

Figure 5.26 Melodic elements combined.

The graph in Figure 5.26 reflects the relatively minimal use of melodic features before 1965 (zero between 1957 and 1961), then a marked increase in their use until 1973. Interestingly, the disco era does not appear to play a major part in the declining curve here; I will return to this point further in chapter 8.

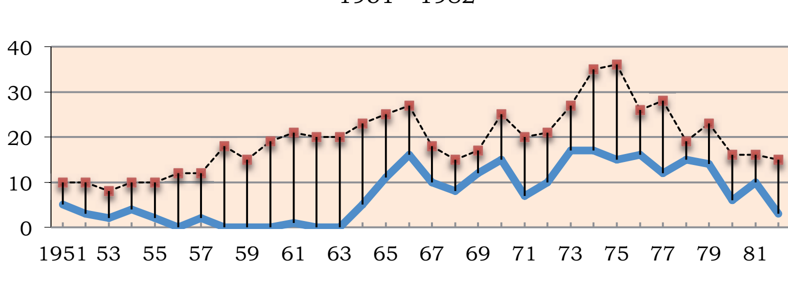

Figure 5.27 Attributed elements combined.

The descending curve through the 1950s in Figure 5.27 is due to the inclusion of arco playing as an attributed element, but here also, we note a marked increase in 'attributed elements' in the 1960s as well.

I pointed earlier to the role of the 'British Invasion', in the triumph of the electric bass on the Hot 100 charts. The next figure (Figure 5.28) shows the percentage of UK versus American artists on the Hot 100 from 1961 to 1970, and as we can see, it shifts suddenly between 1963 and 1964.[182]

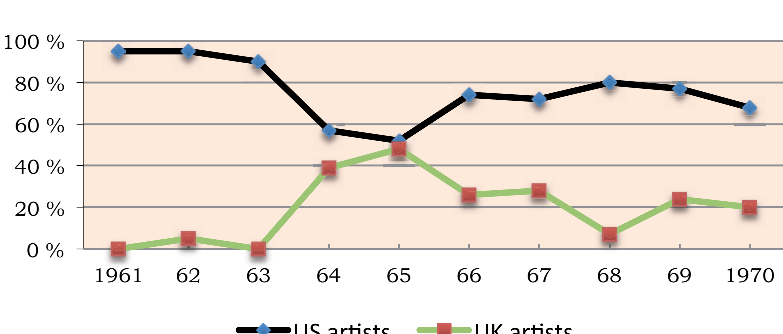

Figure 5.28 The 'British Invasion' – UK and US artists' appearance on the Hot 100.

With the exception of American bands like the Four Seasons and the Fireballs, the number-one artists before 1964 mostly consisted of solo singers, vocal duos/trios or instrumental orchestral music. The Beatles' appearance on the charts in 1964 paved the way for several more 'the' bands in the following years, along with new musical genres and a new appreciation for the electric bass. English rock bands like *the* Dave Clark Five, *the* Rolling Stones, *the* Animals, *the* Troggs, Wayne Fontana and *the* Mindbenders, alongside Freddie and *the* Dreamers, Manfred Mann and Herman's Hermits, all reached number one during the years 1964–66. Then American bands began

[182] The Tornados, an English instrumental band, supply the 5 percent in 1962 with the hit 'Telstar'; before them, only Englishwoman Vera Lynn had ever reached the number-one spot, with 'Auf Wiederseh'n, Sweetheart' in 1952.

to join them, including *the* Beach Boys, *the* McCoys, *the* Byrds, *the* Young Rascals, Tommy James and *the* Shondells and *the* Lovin' Spoonful, among others. These bands, together with the established studio scenes of Los Angeles, Detroit, Memphis and New York, were now using the electric bass almost exclusively. But, as we can see from Figure 5.25 and the Excel spreadsheets in Appendix B, they played it just like the double bass at first. The groove elements were mostly the same, save for the introduction of the 'standard groove' and the attributed element 'flows of quarters and eighths'. Aside from that, it was business as usual (until it wasn't).

There are other angles from which one could approach the evolution of the melodic electric bass. One is the new distinction of 'rock' as opposed to 'pop', represented respectively by, for example, Bill Wyman of the Rolling Stones and Paul McCartney of the Beatles. As Allan Moore observes in his book *The Beatles, Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Heart Club Band* (1997), rock was seen as 'extrovert, revolutionary and masculine, whereas pop was more introvert, evolutionary and feminine' (p. 14). But Wyman's rock bass was not entirely that way, because he took after the simpler approaches to music of Chuck Berry and Muddy Waters (Fortnam, 2002). McCartney, representing the 'gentler' pop, in fact took after the advanced bass of Motown's James Jamerson and the inventiveness of the Beach Boys' Carol Kaye. This is simply to say that one's influences are as relevant as one's genre—certainly rock bass players like John Entwistle of the Who and Jack Bruce of Cream played up to the stereotype in their own unique ways.

The two latter band players, like others who did not appear at the top of the Hot 100, nevertheless made a difference to how the electric bass was used in popular music. As is evident from the *Billboard* charts, there were two distinct categories of performers in the melodic bass era: the session bass player and the band bass player. In real life, careers were fluid; James Jamerson arguably played in a

band, in that the Funk Brothers were a more or less an established unit.[183] In addition, none other than Paul McCartney actually took some work as a session musician.[184] Still, the two roles informed the electric melodic bass era in rather different ways that merit further comment in the chapter to follow.

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[183] They even recorded one album of their own, called *That Motown Sound* (Motown 631) in 1965 under the name Earl Van Dyke and the Soul Brothers, but according to George (1985) the players 'were forced to cut instrumental versions of Motown's hits. Compounding the musician's frustration, all the solos were curtailed to conform strictly to the melody line, so that even on their own album they weren't allowed to stretch out.' (pp. 119-120).

[184] Among other projects, McCartney played bass on James Taylor's 1968 album *James Taylor* (Capitol Records C2-97577) and the Steve Miller band's 1969 album *Brave New World* (Capitol Records C2-91246).

PART III – TOWARDS A PERFORMANCE AESTHETIC

6 STUDIO BASS VS. BAND BASS

> You have to hire the right person. That's why you find a lot of the same names on a lot of recordings once they started naming sidemen, because, you know, you got certain people that just work well together with other people, and they're very creative, so you keep hiring them—everybody keeps hiring the same people. So that's why you find somebody like my name is on so many different records, but you also see it with Bernard Purdie.

Phone interview, Rainey, Nov. 28, 2008

6.1 The industry rhythm section

If we take a look at the bass players appearing on the number-one songs on both the *Billboard* Hot 100 and the *Billboard* Hot R&B 100, then, we find that some names reappear several times supporting different artists. These players were, in most cases, part of a group of musicians who record companies and music producers repeatedly used because of their abilities as instrumentalists, their versatility in diverse genres, their music-reading skills, their particular or identifiable sound, and their professionalism. In addition, the Musicians Union was a factor, especially in Los Angeles, where sessions were limited to three hours and wages were set; the players most in demand often did as many as three sessions per day, six days a week. Carol Kaye recalls:

> Studio musicians were mostly comprised of big-band and jazz musicians with a handful of what I call 'natural talents'

> (unschooled or not experienced in big-band or jazz) thrown in, from their years of experience in either playing rock, pop, country, etc... The rest were highly skilled, sometimes decades-long experienced, musicians in all fields of music, specializing in jazz or big-band music. This means touring and playing a lot with a big-band, playing gigs, concerts for years before they ever saw the insides of studio work.

Email attachments, Kaye, May 2007

As was looked into in chapter 5, these freelance players were the originators of the new genres, subgenres and stylistic features we now look upon as a natural part of the instruments popular musicians play. I will now describe a few of the scenes that supported them.

6.1.1 Detroit

> Berry Gordy used to laugh and say, 'Everybody came running here to Detroit like it was in the air.' It wasn't in the air! It was in this building with these writers, with these musicians and these producers; that's what it was.

Interview Bascomb, New York, April 1, 2008

Between January 1965 and December 1970, there were ninety-seven number-one songs on the *Billboard* Hot R&B list, and James Jamerson's name shows up as the bass player on thirty-four of them. On the more genre-comprehensive Hot 100 chart, there are 126 songs in the same period, and Jamerson is the bass player on fifteen of them. Each time he was playing with the other members of Motown's house band, known as the 'Funk Brothers'—most often, Earl van Dyke and Joe Hunter on keyboards; Benny Benjamin and Richard Allen on drums; Robert White, Eddie Willis and Joe Messina on guitar; and Jack Ashford and Eddie Brown on percussion. There were also various horn and string players. Motown biographer Allan Slutsky (1992) breaks down the Motown golden years into three distinct periods:

(i) The early years, from1959 to 1962, when the hits were mostly blues based, and the arrangements often were made up on the spots by the musicians themselves;

(ii) 1963 to 1967, where the Funk Brothers evolved into the tight unit that would became one of the most successful session bands in the history of popular music; and

(iii) 1968 to 1972, which saw a change to the traditional Motown sound brought by producer Norman Whitfield's psychedelic-soul revolution. In 1972, as well, Motown moved its operations to Los Angeles, and the Detroit era came to an end.

Of course, there were other bass players doing sessions for Motown, whether in Detroit or in Los Angeles, from the early 1960s on. According to Carol Kaye, at least nine bass players from the Los Angeles pool of session musicians recorded for Motown artists from as early as 1962, and Detroit-based players like Bob Babbitt, Tony Newton and Eddie Watkins also contributed on records for the Temptations, Stevie Wonder, the Supremes and Gladys Knight, among others.

6.1.2 Memphis

The three studios in Memphis, Tennessee—Sun, Stax and American Sound—together with FAME Studios and later Muscle Shoals Sound Studios in Muscle Shoals, Alabama, produced numerous chart hits in the 1960s and 1970s. Like Motown, these studios provided artists with regular recording bands, but Stax and FAME in particular were run by mostly white contractors and musicians as the homes of what would be called 'Southern soul'. In this regard, Craig Werner (1998) notes the irony:

> what was almost universally received as the *blackest* of the soul styles had by far the largest amount of white participation. (p. 72)

Nelson George (1988) compares Stax and Motown further, particularly in terms of their inverse race relations:

> Motown and Stax were the twin towers of sixties soul, feeding ideas and energy into house parties and love scenes of all colors. Though connected by their simultaneous success, the two companies were total opposites. Motown in Detroit were black-owned, secretive, rigidly hierarchical, totally committed to reaching white audiences, with production styles that ultimately made its producers, writers and musicians the real stars of the Motown sound. Stax in Memphis was initially white-owned, easily accessible to outsiders, filled with leaders of all kinds. Its records, the offspring of musical miscegenation, appealed primarily to black Americans and were consistently highlighted by some of the most unencumbered soul-shouting ever recorded. (p. 86)

At Stax Records, the racially mixed house band Booker T. and the MGs, with their white bass player, Donald Dunn, provided the backing tracks for black artists like Otis Redding, Sam and Dave, Eddie Floyd and Wilson Pickett, and the 'Memphis sound' soon became the Stax trademark. Jim Stewart, Stax's founder, described this sound in a 1965 issue of *Billboard* magazine:

> All our artists at Stax are Negroes. Naturally, our sound is directly oriented in that direction. The sound is hard to describe. It has a heavy backbeat. We accent the beat and rhythm in our recordings. It is very dominant. New York recordings wouldn't bring out the drums or beat as we do. But that beat – a hard rhythm section – is an integral part of our sound. The combination of horns, instead of a smooth sound, produces a rough, growly, rasping sound, which carries into the melody. (Elton Whisenhunt, 'Memphis sound: a southern view', *Billboard* (12 June 1965), cited in Bowman (1997, p. 60))

The 'Memphis sound' also caught the attention of New York producer Jerry Wexler from Atlantic Records, and he flew his artists down to Memphis to record with the house bands there on a regular basis. He also used Rick Hall's FAME studios in Muscle Shoals. FAME's rhythm section consisted mostly of bass player David Hood and drummer Roger Hawkins, together with keyboard player Barry Beckett and guitarist Jimmy Johnson, and this unit was responsible for numerous songs appearing on the *Billboard* lists. It must be said

that much 'Southern soul' and 'Memphis sound' music involved relatively strict, root-oriented bass playing, whether from Hood and Dunn or other Memphis/Muscle Shoals contributors such as Norbert Putnam, Junior Lowe or Lewie Steinberg. One man, however, embraced the burgeoning melodic stylings of the era: Tommy Cogbill. This former guitar player turned bass player is credited with two number-one hits on the Hot 100 and seven number-one hits on the R&B list, and his busy, melodic style animated recordings by Aretha Franklin, Elvis Presley, Dusty Springfield, Wilson Pickett and Neil Diamond, among others. Cogbill recorded for both Stax and FAME but also for studios in Nashville.

Along with the Detroit, Los Angeles and Memphis/Muscle Shoals house bands, there were equally hard-working regular units in other American cities, most notably Philadelphia,[185] New Orleans,[186] Chicago and New York.

6.2 The band bass player

The number one songs on the *Billboard* Hot 100 in the 1950s involved a surprising number of genres, from small-budget novelty songs such as Patti Page's 'Doggie In the Window'[187] and 'This Ole House', sung by Rosemary Clooney, to big movie-orchestra productions such as Tony Bennett's 'Because of You'[188] or 'Cold,

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[185] The house band responsible for the hit songs collectively known as 'Philadelphia Soul' was called MFSB (Mother Father Sister Brother), and it included bass player Ronnie Baker. The songwriting team of Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff, together with arranger Thom Bell, used this group of musicians on most of their songs, and according to John A. Jackson, 'Gamble and Huff's signature sound was rooted in that rhythm section.' (J. A. Jackson, 2004, p. 67)

[186] Among the many individual musicians and bands, genres and style features that emerged from New Orleans, the instrumental band the Meters, with their bass player George Porter, Jr., stood out. As a house band for the Sansu label, the Meters backed artists like Earl King and Lee Dorsey, played on albums by Robert Palmer and Paul McCartney, and even performed on their own (Bogdanov, Bush, Woodstra, & Erlewine, 2003).

[187] Mercury Records 70070.

[188] Columbia Records 39362.

Cold Heart'[189] and Percy Faith's 'Delicado'[190]. Doo-wop, a subgenre of R&B, achieved great commercial success for vocal groups including the Crew-Cuts' ('Sh-Boom [Life Could Be A Dream]'),[191] the Elegants ('Little Star') and the Silhouettes ('Get a Job'). The smooth-jazz era was still going strong, with songs like Jo Stafford's 'You Belong To Me' and Eddie Fischer's 'I Need You Now'. All of these artists were backed by freelance session upright-bass players, and according to my empirical material (see Appendix B), the players never departed from the tradition of 'root or root/fifth', walking bass and arco playing. Even if the glimmers of a new style of music had been around for several years through R&B artists such as Louis Jordan, Chuck Berry, Ike Turner and others, these bass players had yet to embrace it.

On July 9, 1955, however, Bill Haley and the Comets topped the *Billboard* 'Bestsellers in Store' chart (they would remain there for eight weeks in a row) with 'Rock around the Clock'. This song represented a 'critical symbol in the popularization of the new musical form' (Shuker, 2008, p. 228) that would be known as rock'n'roll, and even if Haley's particular fusion of black R&B and white country and western eventually stagnated as 'rockabilly', it was the root of rock and all of its subsequent subgenres (Shuker, 2005, p. 235).[192] Based on the Hot 100 list in the appendix, 'Rock around the Clock' had little immediate impact on the role of the bass in particular, which stuck with mostly 'root or root/fifth' or walking. Still, this was the first time an artist with his own instrumental performing band had topped the charts since Nat King Cole Trio in 1947 (with the smooth jazz song '(I Love You) for Sentimental Reasons'), made it to the number-one position. All of the previous

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[189] Columbia Records 39449.

[190] Sony Music COL CD 6085.

[191] Mercury 30048.

[192] Carl Perkins said, 'I put a little speed and rhythm to what Uncle John [Westbrook] had slowed down. That's all. That's what rockabilly music or rock'n'roll was to begin with: a country man's song with a black man's rhythm' (cited in Werner (1998, p. 59)).

number-ones (except for Nat King Cole) were either performed by a solo artist or a solo artist with a vocal group accompanied by studio musicians. Bill Haley and the Comets—young men writing their own material—was something new.

6.2.1 Skiffle and the 1960s crossover

> I think I was about 15… there was a big thing called skiffle. It's a kind of American folk music, only sort of jing-jinga-jing-jinga-jing-jiggy, with washboards. All the kids, you know, 15 onwards, used to have these groups, and I formed The Quarry Men at school. Then I met Paul.
>
> John Lennon cited in Foster (1997)

In England in the 1950s, just a few years before the studio bands started to emerge on the American session scene, two significant musical movements arose that also influenced those 'beginner popular musicians'. The first was 'skiffle', described by Oxford Music Online as 'a hybrid style of popular music that has affinities with jazz and country blues'. Originally an American genre of music that had flourished in the first half of the twentieth century, it saw a revival in England soon afterward, and according to UK session bass player Mo Foster,

> many of the rock stars of the 1960s and 1970s born around the time of World War II came to develop their love of the more energetic and dynamic rock'n'roll through an early appreciation of skiffle. (Foster, 1997, p. 43)

The bass instrument typically used in skiffle was the 'tea chest' bass, a cheap but functional instrument made with a broomstick, a string, and a wooden box as a resonator that had often been used to ship tea (hence the name). American electric basses by Fender and Gibson were not available in England until the end of the 1950s due

to the European postwar discrimination against U.S. goods,[193] and the difficulty of procuring band instruments in the fifties England could probably be one of the reasons for the popularity of the 'tea chest' bass in skiffle bands. The Lonnie Donegan Skiffle Group was the main inspiration, and bands like the Shadows, the Hollies and the Beatles acknowledge skiffle and Donegan's music as the reason for their early interest in music.[194] As Ian Inglis (2009) observes, this movement was

> 'a "positional shift" or "switch", in which music-making rather than music-listening became, for many young people a plausible social activity.' (p. 380)

Inglis describes this, for England, new and arising popular music scene as 'a level of awareness to that had previously been confined to the consumption of jazz music in the UK.' (ibid) Even though skiffle was a short-lived phenomenon,[195] it became a key factor in inspiring young people in England to make their own music. It is also important to mention the immense popularity that the Shadows had in England, and their subsequent influence in standardizing the four-member rock band format, consisting of solo guitar, rhythm guitar, electric bass and drums.[196]

Soon after skiffle faded, the English music scene in the 1950s was overwhelmed once again, this time by the 'British blues-rock explosion', as it is described by McSravick and Roos (2001). This

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[193] According to Killick (1997), one element of the Marshall Plan was to allow the European market to discriminate against American goods in order to improve trade balances. This led to a devaluation of the European currencies against the dollar and eventually a trade embargo on non-essential U.S. goods such as cars and other consumer durables. See also Rooth and Scott (2002).

[194] See Foster (1997)

[195] According to Foster (1997) its popularity peaked in about eighteen months.

[196] Jet Harris, Shadows bass player, was, according to his own website, jetharris.biz, 'the first man in the UK to play the electric bass guitar'.

crossover[197] was a consequence of American blues artists like Lonnie Johnson and Muddy Waters toured England during this decade and made a profound impression upon musicians like Alexis Korner and Cyril Davies, which both directly and indirectly led to the founding of bands like the Yardbirds, the Rolling Stones, Blues Incorporated and John Mayall's Bluesbreakers. Besides those bands' guitar players—Keith Richards, Jeff Beck, Eric Clapton, Jimmy Page and Peter Green, among others—melodic electric bass players such as Jack Bruce, Andy Fraser, John McVie and Danny Thompson also started here.

6.3 Comments

Studio session players in America and the electric bass players in bands that followed in the wake of the British R&B boom all played a substantial part in forming the new bass role in popular music. There are many suggestions of cross-pollination between the two countries in interviews with musicians,[198] and this is also evident through albums themselves, as when Motown artists recorded Beatles songs [199] and vice versa,[200] and it is therefore natural to conclude that the players on the two continents were aware of each other's playing.

As previously discussed, the studio artists who made it to the pop charts were admired and copied by the new generation of musicians who came of age in the late 1950s. All of my informants idolized at

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[197] The 'crossover' refers to the introduction of black American music to Britain, which was 'less burdened by social restraints and racial tensions and, perhaps more importantly, enamored with all things American' (Celmins, 2001, p. xvii).

[198] See, for example, Bowman (1997, pp. 132,199), Werner (1998, pp. 82-83), Chun (2001), Droney (2002) or Kempton (2003, p. 255).

[199] For example, the Supremes, 1964, 'A Hard Day's Night' (Lennon, McCartney), *A Bit of Liverpool*, Motown 635 429, or Stevie Wonder, 1970, 'We Can Work It Out' (Lennon, McCartney), *Signed, Sealed and Delivered*, Motown 37463-5176-2.

[200] For example, the Beatles, 1963, 'Money (That's What I Want)', (Bradford, Gordy), *With the Beatles,* Capitol Records 82420.

least one bass player, for reasons that were personal but also practical, as Lucy Green observes:

> By far the overriding learning practice for the beginner popular musician […] is to copy recordings by ear. (Green, 2002, p. 60)

The busyness and melodic playing of the English electric bass players is obvious in the music of bands like the Who, Yes, Led Zeppelin, Fleetwood Mac, and so on, and it comes up several times in my interviews with English informants. Dave Bronze explains:

> UK bassists were hearing Jamerson, Bob Babbit, Duck Dunn, Carol Kaye, Jerry Jemmott and the other important US players, even though they probably didn't know their names. They would be influenced by these innovators, but what they came up with in response was not a straight copy of these players. The British players, whether intentionally or not, put their own spin on these ideas and produced a distinctly different identity; more aggressive and not so laid back behind the beat.

Email interview, Bronze, April 30, 2007

Paul Westwood also commented on this English busyness on bass:

> By and large, bass players weren't trained; very often they were failed guitar players. If he couldn't play lead guitar, 'Oh, put him on bass.' That's often what happened. And then the bass player would be trying to be a lead guitar player, so when the Americans came over, they'd look at the English bass players and say, 'Oh, failed lead guitar player', so we were famous for being busy on the bass.

Interview Westwood, London, Dec. 6, 2007

Electric bass players who spent their careers in bands as opposed to in studio settings in the 1960s and 1970s had a very different experience. While studio musicians had to play prearranged basslines or, at best, devise lines on the spot in an often stressful and competitive environment, the band player had the luxury of composing and rehearsing his own lines as well as editing or changing them as needed while recording. English bands like Yes,

Led Zeppelin, the Who, Cream and Uriah Heep, together with American bands like Vanilla Fudge, Jefferson Airplane, the Doobie Brothers, the Grateful Dead and the Allman Brothers all had electric bass players that explored the instrument's possibilities and experimented with new ways to fill the bass role. Informant Mike Visceglia noted their relative freedom to invent parts:

> It was a combination of the writing and the experimenting in the studio that created the freedom for musicians to start experimenting with their instrument, and contributing beyond what their roles were—as in the case of the bass as a rhythm section instrument, [transforming] into more of a melodic, compositional instrument. […] Once they got into a studio environment where you weren't restricted doing one song an hour, then you could start to experiment. You could start to improvise. You could start to say, 'What if we put this section over here and turn this around, and what if I came up with this bass line and threw it in here as a new motif for the next part of the song?' You didn't have that kind of freedom before that.

Interview Visceglia, April 3, 2008

The performance practice of the melodic electric bass, then, must have been informed by both English band players and American session players, through an indisputable cross-pollination between the two countries. In the following chapter, I will elaborate upon the contributions of four of the key players in the melodic electric bass era, as I try to transcend the broad distinctions perpetuated in the literature between 'pop' and 'rock'. As is clear by now, the melodic approach does not arise from any one particular feature but represents a compounding of features that came to fruition during a particular era. In that respect, it is now natural to relate to a performance practice containing stylistic features in such numbers that one can speak of a style tradition of performance rather than isolated incidents that frequently occur inside one genre, and these performers, then, can be seen as part of this tradition rather than isolated pioneers of a given style within a given genre. The following transcriptions will likewise demonstrate both the features discussed

previously and the given performer's interpretation and, particularly, combination of them. I have transcribed two songs per bass player and also chose some of the number-one hits that exemplified the players' personal styles and techniques.

7 ARTISTS, PERFORMANCE STYLE AND AESTHETICS

7.1 James Jamerson

> He was an ideal guy in an ideal situation. Whereas if he had been in New York and had just been a freelance guy, we might never have known of his talent, because here, some guy would probably have music in front of him and want exactly what's on that paper, and 'Play it this way!' [...] He had a free hand to be James Jamerson.

Interview Bascomb, New York, April 1, 2008

James Lee Jamerson was born on January 29, 1936, in Charleston, South Carolina, where he grew up.[201] According to Alan Slutsky (Licks, 1989), he first picked up the double bass when he enrolled at Detroit's Northwestern High School, and he promptly started to play with combos in local clubs and bars. He was offered a music scholarship at Wayne State University but declined on the grounds that he could already support himself and his then-pregnant girlfriend by playing the bass, and in 1958 he got his first recording date, backing some local artists in Detroit. Jamerson's playing must have made an impression, because the year after he found himself sitting in the basement studio at 2648 West Grand Boulevard, later known as 'the Snakepit'—Motown's recording studio, owned by Berry Gordy. Nelson George describes Jamerson in his Motown biography as

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[201] For supplementary biographical material on the Internet, visit allmusic.com, bassland.net or other dedicated Jamerson sites. The birthdate January 29, 1938, was stated in his obituary (a scan of the document is found at http://bassland.net/Jamerson.html), but according to Alan Slutsky (Licks, 1989, p. 3), Jamerson's birthdate was January 29, 1936.

> a large, imposing man with big hands and a serious, unfrivolous face. [...] But whether it was swaying on 'Love is Here and Now You're Gone', rocking out on 'Heat Wave', funky on 'Ain't Too Proud to Beg', or loud and demanding on 'Ain't no Mountain High Enough', the invention, technique, and drama that emanated from James Jamerson's 1962 Fender Precision Bass made him one of the most influential musicians of the sixties. (George, 1985)

Though he was strictly an upright player in his earliest years at Motown, he was eventually talked into trying out a Fender Precision by a friend, and by 1961 he was recording almost exclusively with it—two number-one exceptions from the Hot 100 were 'Please Mr Postman'[202] by the Marvelettes and 'My Guy'[203] performed by Mary Wells, which he recorded on the double bass

Lacking sufficient studio work to earn a steady income at first, Jamerson had to go out on the road backing artists like Jackie Wilson and also sit in with the Motown road shows, which Berry Gordy sent out to promote the albums produced at the Snakepit.[204] By 1964, Jamerson and the rest of the musicians that had come to comprise the Motown house band (the 'Funk Brothers') were seen by Berry Gordy to have such an important role in his hits that he offered them salaries to keep them off the road and available for recording whenever needed. Like their Los Angeles contemporaries, Jamerson and the other Funk Brothers often worked two or three sessions a day and 'were probably some of the highest paid studio musicians in the country' (Licks, 1989, p. 36).[205]

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[202] *Please Mr. Postman*. Motown 37463-5266-2

[203] *Mary Wells Sings My Guy*. Motown 37463-5167-2

[204] Jamerson is also credited with backing artists from other record companies in the early 1960s, such as J. J. Barnes for Kable Records, and, according to Slutsky, he also travelled to Chicago several times to record for Vee-Jay and Brunswick.

[205] Carol Kaye describes the Los Angeles studio scene in this way as well: 'The studio musicians were "freelance"—all very independent—and we all had phone exchanges with which to get our jobs—they called in weeks ahead of time to book the busiest, it all paid extremely well—like doctor's pay . . . "Studio musician" was a highly esteemed profession' (email attachments, Kaye, May 2007).

There does not exist any definitive discography of Jamerson's work, mainly due to the poor crediting of musicians on the albums coming out from Motown while Jamerson worked there. Even if a particular recording can be traced to Detroit, there were other bass players in the picture, including Bob Babbitt and Tony Newton, while the possibility of contributions from Los Angeles would also potentially involve Wilton Felder, Carol Kaye, and Bill Pitman, among others. It is therefore no surprise that confusion reigns on the Internet today, and a complete and trustworthy discography of Jamerson's work will probably never be made.[206] However, given the many successful tracks that were produced by Motown in Detroit from 1959 to 1972 and Jamerson's undisputed role in most of them, we would have to agree with his peers that he was possibly the most influential contemporary electric bass player in the world.

In *Where Did Our Love Go* (George, 1985) Nelson George notes that rumors of Motown's pending relocation to Los Angeles surfaced as early as 1965, but it would be another seven years before the company was settled on the West Coast. As session work in Detroit began to slow down around this time, Jamerson was released from his contract with Motown, and in 1973, he moved to Los Angeles to find more work. Though he stayed somewhat busy, his longtime propensity for alcohol started to interfere with both his attitude and his playing. Also the always changing stylistic features seemed to be hard for Jamerson to adapt too, such as the producers demand for round wound strings and the new sounds of slap playing. The last years of his life, Jamerson's mental condition deteriorated to a degree that he could not work anymore, and he died at the USC County Hospital in Los Angeles on the evening of August 2, 1983.

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[206] Compare, for example, the discographies on bassland.net, philbroadieband.com, allmusic.com or ricksuchov.com.

7.1.1 His playing

> Through 1965, James probably had the funkiest and most melodic eight-note bass style in the universe, but for some reason toward the end of the year, he exploded in a completely new direction. Sixteenth notes, quarter note triplets, open string techniques, dissonant non-harmonic pitches, and syncopations off the sixteenth seemed to enter in his style overnight. It closely paralleled the change in the jazz world from Charlie Parker's eight-note bebop style to the evolution of John Coltrane's sixteenth note 'sheets of sound' approach. There is a distinct break from the bass lines Jamerson was playing in '64 and early '65 on tunes like 'Dancing in the Street' and 'Stop! In the Name of Love' to '66 and '67 masterpieces like 'Reach Out' and 'I'm Wondering'. Out of nowhere, James started playing almost as if he was the featured soloist. Even more amazing was his ability to play extremely busy bass lines without getting in the way of the vocalists. (Licks, 1989, p. 38)

Jamerson's right-hand technique was unorthodox, even for the 1960s. At the time, Fender delivered their basses with a finger grip—or finger rest, attached to the body under the strings close to the neck. This was probably done to suggest that the instrument was to be played with the thumb if it were not picked, as guitar players would do. As the habit of playing with the index and middle finger became standard, Fender moved the finger rest up and made it a thumb rest. The way Jamerson played, however, was to rest three fingers on the pick-up cover, and while his thumb hung loose over the strings, he plucked just with his index finger. This one-finger technique likely arose from his background as a jazz double bass player, where it was standard for many years.

One of Jamerson's distinctive trademarks was his approach of using open strings regardless of key,

> to facilitate position shifts, particularly when followed by a fretted note on the next lower string in one raking motion.

Anthony Jackson in Jisi (2009a)

This habit of using non-chordal notes was crucial to the fluid yet coherent lines heard in so many Motown productions, and coupled with Jamerson's slightly distorted sound and jazz-based perspective on chord progressions, those lines remain uniquely complex and particularly difficult to reproduce.

7.1.2 Equipment and sound

For most of his career in the Snakepit, Jamerson played and recorded on a 1962 sunburst Fender Precision strung with LaBella flat-wound strings. According to Jamerson biographer Allan Slutsky, the string height was 'extremely high' due to the loose truss rod not being able to straighten the neck, and the instrument was almost unplayable by anybody else. Additionally, Jamerson, like most Fender players at the time, placed foam under the bridge cover in order to reduce overtones and 'deaden' the strings. Most of the time he recorded directly into the mixing board, and he would

> boost the volume on the input to get the VU meter slightly in the red, giving him a bit of warm overdrive from the tube console. (Jisi, 2009a),

He also recorded through a miked Ampeg B-15.

7.1.3 Examples and analyses

'Love Child'

'Love Child'

- Cyclic/Riff /Set groove
- Offbeat phrasing
- Obvious octaves
- 16ths
- Inconsistent/busy
- Bass fills
- Flows of 8ths

Table 7.1 Features of 'Love Child'.

Several sites on the Internet contain contributors' bass transcriptions,[207] and most of the bass-dedicated magazines print transcribed bass performances on a regular basis as well. Youtube.com is also a good source for listening to slowed-down, note-for-note transcriptions, but in terms of 'Love Child' (Transcription 7.1), I have never seen it transcribed anywhere, probably due to the bass's placement in this particular mix. Motown in the 1960s and 1970s was known for its bass-heavy productions—according to Slutsky (Licks, 1989), the electric instruments used in the Snakepit were usually recorded direct and not via amplifiers and microphones, and in 1964, Motown also invested in an eight-track recording console, which meant that the bass could have a track to itself and be controlled independently. The bass's sound quality on 'Love Child', however, is decidedly not up to this standard; it is one of the few Motown tracks where the bass has problems cutting through the other instruments. The guitars and percussion/drums are very prominent in the mix, forcing the bass to the background, where it is very hard to hear the details of the bassline. In order to properly transcribe it, I had to tweak the equalizer on my software significantly, and decrease some of the high frequencies as well.

'Love Child' was composed by a group of songwriters called 'the Clan': Frank Wilson, Henry Cosby, Deke Richards, R. Dean Taylor and Pam Sawyer. Berry Gordy assembled them in the wake of his loss of the highly successful trio of Holland, Dozier, and Holland in 1968 to try to restore the Supremes to the top of the charts (George, 1988). 'Love Child' was the Clan's first collaboration, and it was not the typical light-pop love song that Diana Ross and the Supremes had long done so well. The lyrics dealt with the subject of illegitimate children, and Diana Ross performs the song in a new way, by singing in a more aggressive and dramatic manner.

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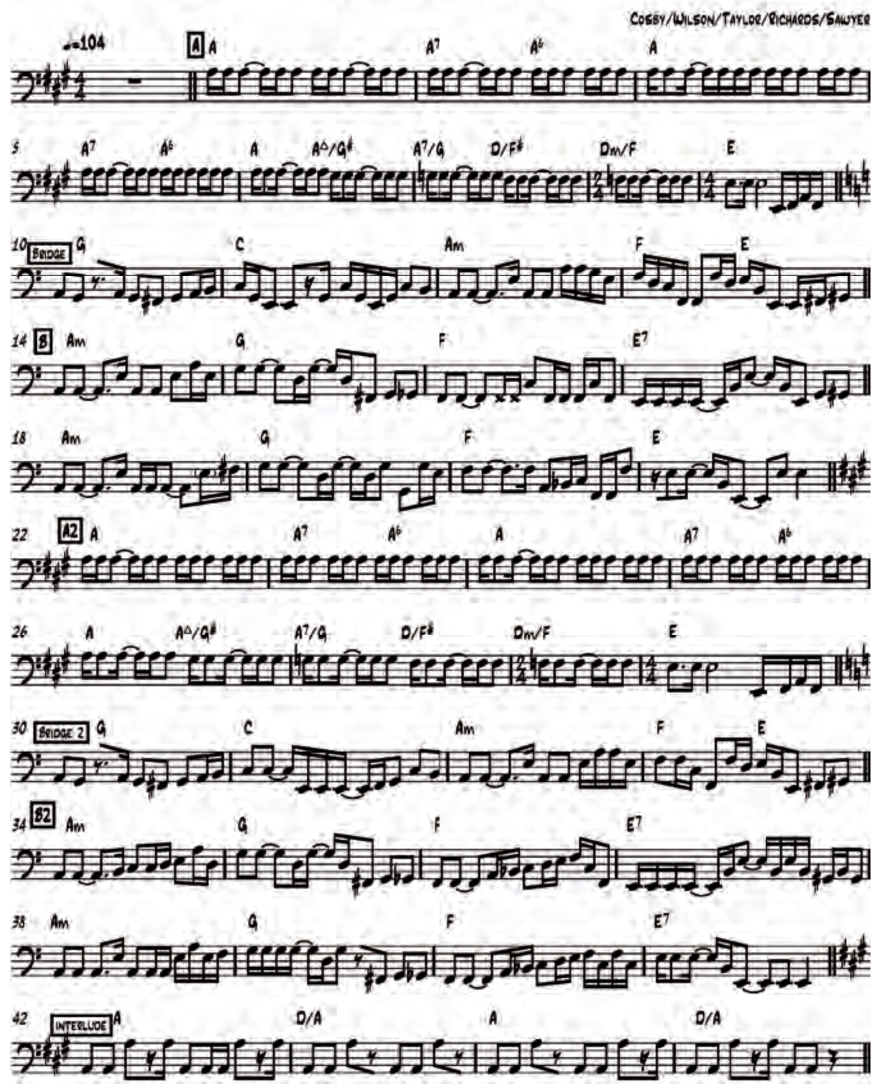
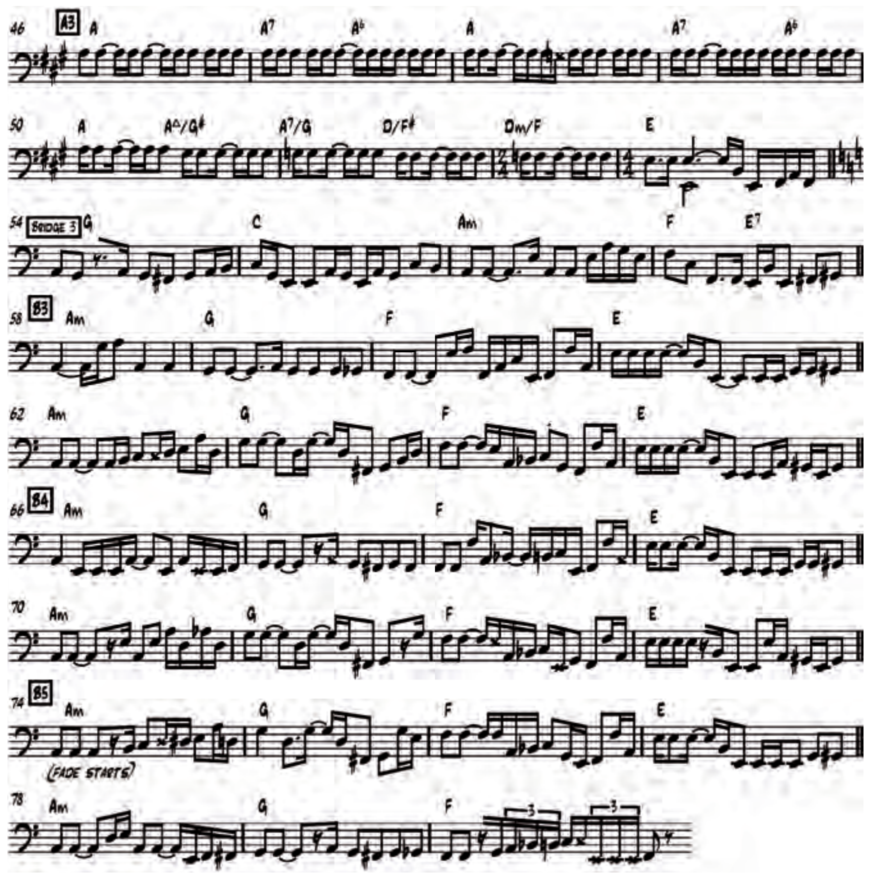
[207] For example, see www.lucaspickford.com or www.accattatis.com.

Love Child

James Jamerson 1968 Bass line





Transcription 7.1 Diana Ross and the Supremes. 'Love Child' (Wilson/Taylor/Richards/Sawyer), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, November 1968, James Jamerson electric bass, *Love Child,* Motown 11095.

The verse is built around two line clichés:[208] a compositional technique that had been seldom used in the earlier Supremes' songs. For the first four bars of A, the melody starts on the fifth of the tonic, jumps to the seventh, moves a half step down to the sixth and then

[208] A line cliché is a stepwise descending or ascending line that moves against a single stationary chord (see Berkleeshares.com).

returns to the fifth again.[209] For the next four bars, the bass follows a descending line by dropping by half steps from A to the dominant E. The song's structure is quite standard: a repeated sequence of A, bridge and B, only interrupted by a single four-bar interlude after B^2. The verses are in the key of A major, which modulates to A minor before the bridges.

After a one-bar intro played by an electric guitar, Jamerson and a second guitar present the main riff of the song: a sixteenth-note/eighth-note row of A parts, played in an asynchronous fashion so as to give the impression of continuous sixteenths. A glockenspiel then anticipates the forthcoming melody in tandem with the vocal group 'the Andantes', who perform their backing vocal arrangement before Diana Ross enters at the four-bar bridge leading to the first chorus.

Jamerson's relatively busy bassline consists mainly of sixteenth notes throughout the whole song, although he underpins the root of each chord very clearly and consistently by playing two eighth notes on the first beat of every bar before cutting loose again. He uses offbeat phrasing extensively in almost every other bar—see, for example, bars 15, 17, 19 and 21. He also plays a lot of octaves and mixes in a variety of melismatic ornaments. These four features—tonic presentation, sixteenth notes, obvious octaves and inconsistency—characterize this bass performance and in fact Jamerson's style overall, which recalls his contemporaries Chuck Rainey and Gerald 'Jerry' Jemmott, as well as the important stylistic traits of his successors Jaco Pastorius and Francis 'Rocco' Prestia. All four men credit Jamerson as a source of inspiration.

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[209] This line cliché is also used in 'Ain't That Peculiar' (Motown 11033) performed by Marvin Gaye in 1966, as well as more recent songs such as 'Sign O' the Times' (Paisley Park 25577), by Prince, 'Let Me Entertain You' (EMI Music Distribution 6127), performed by Robbie Williams, or 'Streets of Pain' (Capitol 95874), by Richard Marx.

'Darling Dear'

Table 7.2 Features of 'Darling Dear'.

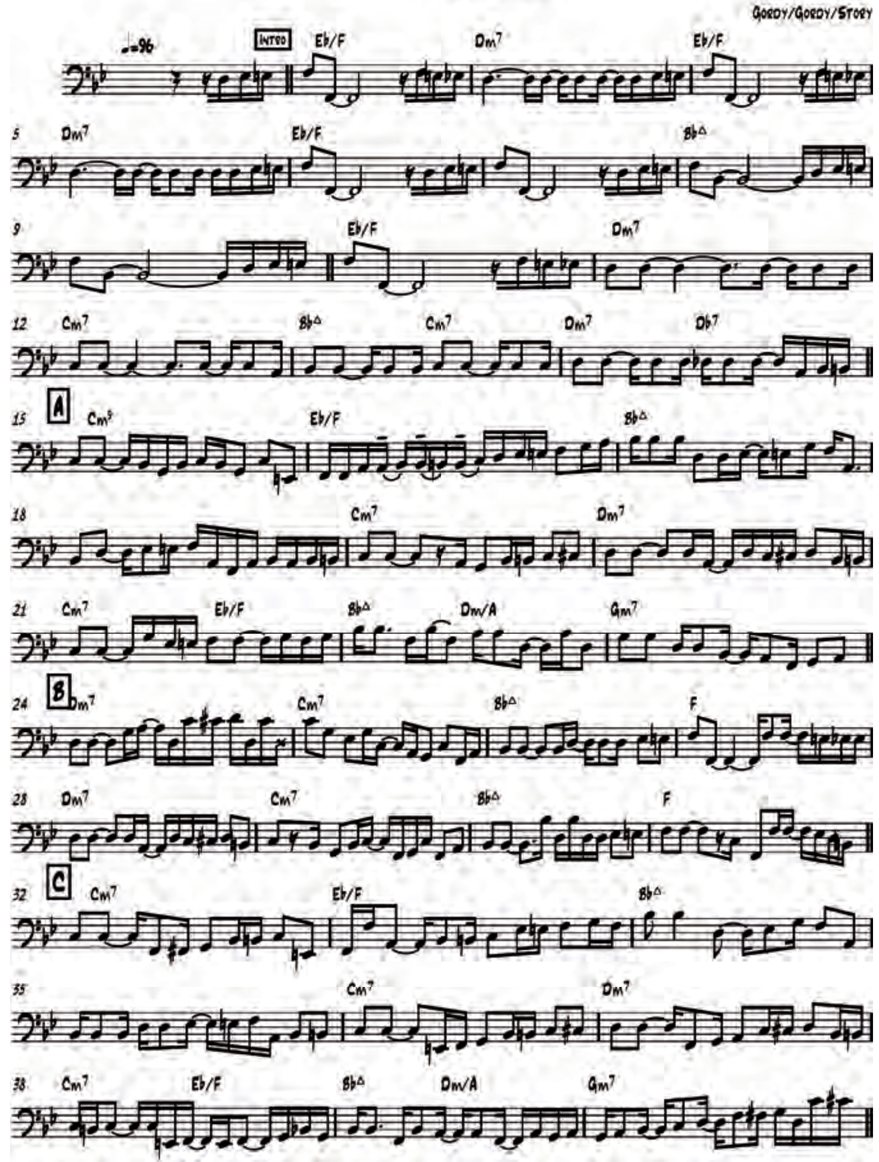
'Darling Dear' (Transcription 7.2) is taken from the Jackson 5's *Third Album*. *All Music Guide* credits Jermaine Jackson as the bass player on the song, but the sound, phrasing and features used points directly to Jamerson.[210]

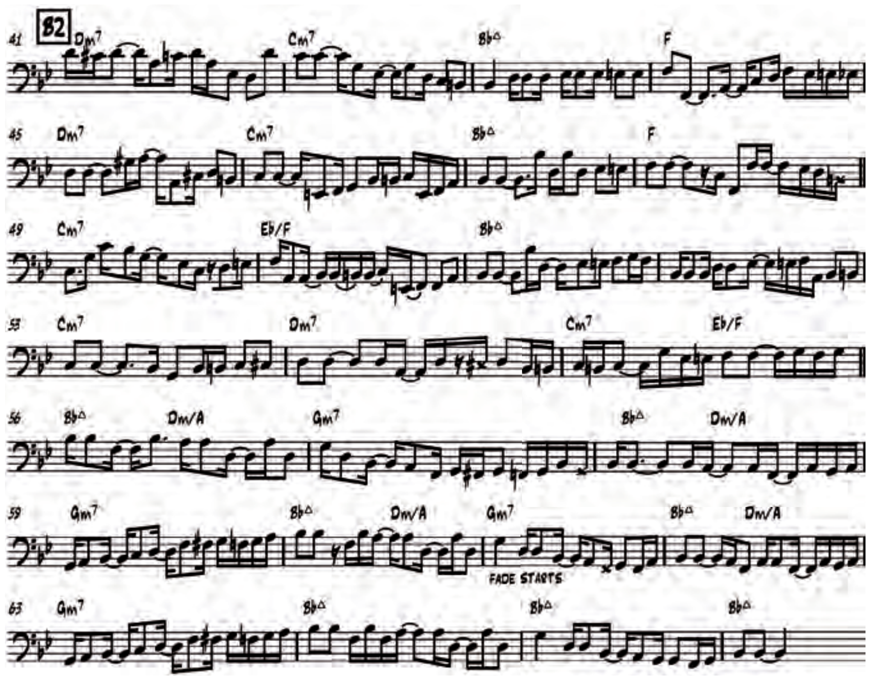
'Darling Dear' was the B-side of the single 'Mama's Pearl', which reached number two on both the *Billboard* Hot 100 and the Hot R&B chart in 1971. Though it is not one of the number-one hits Jamerson participated on, this song's bassline reflects many of the features that he utilized during his career, and it also shows Jamerson at his absolute best. The transcription is based on two versions: the original single and a remix from an album released by Motown in 2009 titled *The Stripped Mixes*.[211] This album features ten early songs from Michael Jackson and the Jackson 5, and on 'Darling Dear', everything except vocals, strings and bass is removed, making the bass transcription an easy task. The last four bars in this transcription are not audible in the original version.

[210] Jamerson's participation on the song is confirmed by Licks (1989, p. 114) and discographies found at www.philbrodieband.com, www.bassland.net, and at www.jackson5abc.com, the credits for 'Darling Dear' includes 'the Funk Brothers'.
[211] Island 2715449.

Darling Dear

JAMES JAMERSON 1970 BASS LINE





Transcription 7.2 Jackson Five. 'Darling Dear' (Gordy/Gordy), James Jamerson electric bass, *Third Album,* Motown 718.

Jamerson kickstarts the song, together with the snare drum, by playing the three last sixteenth notes of the bar as a pickup to the intro of the song and as an anticipation of the bassline's hook, which attaches those three sixteenths to two eighths in a figure he uses extensively throughout the song as a springboard to a new period. The last of these two eighth notes is generally tied to the next note as well, and together with other phrasing that generally places a sixteenth on the downbeat followed by repeated 8ths, this bassline lends the song its consistent offbeat feel. Already on the first bar of A, where most players would back off and give some space to the singer, Jamerson uses the IIm9 to play a repeated sixteenth-note 8-7-5-7 line, a lick he returns to quite often during his career but not again in this particular song. In the second bar of A, Jamerson

establishes the busy sixteenth-note groove from the previous bar while letting his jazz background shine through with an ascending F bebop scale. In the last bar before B, Jamerson plays an offbeat descending broken minor triad; a movement he repeats in bars 25, 42, 49, 57 and 61, which can therefore be treated as a main lick, probably inspired by the similar guitar phrase during the intro. Another typical feature of this groove is the offbeat ascending Gm^7 line in bar 40, which he repeats in bars 59 and 63 during the fade-out. In all three cases, this line is played on bar four of a four-bar phrase, implying that it is used to emphasize a new phrase coming up.

'Darling Dear' does not contain double stops or segments high up on the fingerboard, and there are no slides and soloistic elements or even memorable melodic fragments. The bassline is simply a stream of variously and inconsistently pitched eighth and sixteenth notes, making this bass performance an epitome of how to breathe life into a quite ordinary song.

7.2 Carol Kaye

One of the most recorded bass players in the history of popular music, Carol Kaye, was born in 1935 in Everett, Washington, but spent much of her childhood in Wilmington, California, during World War II. She took her first guitar lessons at the age of fourteen from Horace Hatchett, a Long Beach guitar teacher, and after some months of study, Hatchett took her on as an assistant teacher. Hatchett himself was a jazz guitarist who had played with Jimmy Dorsey's band, among others, and he started Kaye on jazz immediately. The popular music on the radio in the 1950s was mostly jazz standards, and Hatchett asked Kaye to practice chord progressions, arrange melodies over chords, and transcribe solos by Charlie Christian and Django Reinhardt, among others. While she was still in her teens, Kaye started gigging around the Los Angeles area, playing jazz music in trios and small combos, but it was not until 1957 that she got an opportunity to get into the recording

business. She was at the time working with Teddy Edwards's jazz group, and after a gig one night she was asked by the record producer Robert 'Bumbs' Blackwell if she were interested in studio work. Reluctant at first, having heard stories about the often tedious, long hours and the negative effect it could have on one's 'jazz chops', she eventually decided to try it, knowing that steady studio work could provide a good income.

Her first studio experience was a Sam Cooke session, and though she was limited mostly to guitar fills, she must have made an impression on the producer and was invited back on a regular basis. She got in on sessions with Ritchie Valens, playing rhythm guitar on 'La Bamba',[212] among many others, and she kept up a busy recording schedule on the guitar until a studio session at Capitol Records in late 1963 when the Fender bass player failed to appear on time. Kaye had already done several sessions on a Dano bass, so being somewhat accustomed to it, she was handed a Fender Precision and asked to finish the session on bass. As a guitar player who was accustomed to playing with a pick, she used the same technique on the Fender bass, and the sound engineers loved the sound she produced. Though she continued to record on guitar for the Beach Boys, Sonny and Cher and several Phil Spector artists, most of her work from that point on involved the Fender bass. Kaye followed a very busy studio schedule throughout the 1960s, playing mostly pop and rock productions with the Beach Boys, the Righteous Brothers, Herb Alpert, Ray Charles and others, but then she took an eight-month break from the business in 1969:

> There's a lot of bad things that happened right in the road of 1969. And I was so sick and tired of playing Surf rock, didn't want to work for Motown anymore, and I thought, wait, my life is turning to shit! I got to stop. I got to stop recording. And other people were starting to feel that too because we were tired, you know, we were recording day and night and getting about five, six hours of sleep

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[212] *Ritchie Valens*, Rhino Records 70231.

> each night, and this is for years, see. So, we were getting tired and I didn't like recording and so I stopped playing for eight months, and then when I went back I wouldn't record any more rock groups; wouldn't record for Motown. I recorded for [Henry] Mancini and maybe for Ray Charles and Glen Campbell and a few others like that, but mostly stayed with the movie scores, because by that time the movie companies were trying to revive the movies, because the TV had taken over, [...] and they got the finest of composers: John Williams, they got Quincy Jones, Michel LeGrand, and here I am working for these guys, you know! And the music was beautiful! And you are playing with seventy-six-piece orchestras, and you are the bass player to that!
>
> Interview Kaye, Los Angeles, Dec. 12, 2007

During the break from the endless studio sessions, she tried her hand at writing her first method book, *How to Play the Electric Bass*, published through her own company, Gwyn Publishing in 1969. This method book was the first of its kind to 'give away' the secrets of studio bass playing, and it contained examples from some of the most popular bass grooves of the time. By the mid-1970s, she had problems with arthritis and retired from recording, though still plays the occasional jazz gig even today, taught privately at the now-closed Henry Mancini Institute and wrote method material for the bass. She has published around fifteen books and blogs on her own forum at carolkaye.com.

7.2.1 Her playing

It is impossible to construct a full and accurate view of all of the recordings Kaye participated on. Record companies did not credit session players until the end of the 1960s, and even after that, the listings were not always reliable even into the 1970s. On her website, Kaye does include a who's who list of the world-famous artists she has recorded with, and the range is astonishing. Working at the peak of the studio session scene, Kaye claims to have logged over ten thousand recording sessions, a number that is unlikely to be repeated.

Given the ongoing confusion over attribution at this busy yet remarkably fluid time, it is perhaps inevitable that controversy has arisen, and a particularly notable dispute between Kaye and Jamerson has carried on since at least 1971.[213] The core of this dispute is about who played the original bass line on the Motown hits 'Reach Out I'll be There' (Example 5.26) and 'Bernadette' (Example 5.27), performed by the Four Tops, and 'I Was Made To Love Her' by Stevie Wonder (Example 7.1). This matters in terms of both a player's status within the studio session scene and a player's legacy, to say nothing of the economic consequences that result from having been a crucial part of a hit song.[214]

Example 7.1 Wonder, Stevie. 'I Was Made To Love Her' (Wonder/Moy/Hardaway/Cosby), No 1 *Billboard* Hot R&B Singles, July 1967, James Jamerson electric bass, bars 3–6, transcribed from Motown Legends 37463 8527-2.

The popularity and the quality of the Motown tracks make them beacons for controversy, certainly, and some of these issues will likely never be resolved. The performances are outstanding, highly melodic and far from the standard root–fifth playing, and they are still referred to as being great bass lines, over forty years after their creation.

In Example 7.1, I have credited Jamerson as the bass player despite Kaye's claiming of the tracks, for three main reasons:

(i) Carol Kaye plays with an easily recognizable pick sound on all of her recordings, while this track is played with fingers.

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[213] In 1971, Carol Kaye printed a transcription of the Stevie Wonder hit 'I Was Made to Love Her' in her book *Electric Bass Lines No. 4* (Kaye, 1971), and claims credit for recording it: 'He [Stevie Wonder] often tells his band "it was Carol Kaye who recorded the bass on IWMTLH"' (p. 24).

[214] Another notable example of a song that has been credited to two players is Gloria Gaynor's 1979 number-one hit 'I Will Survive', the bass track of which is claimed by both Scott Edwards (Jisi, 2009b) and Eddie Watkins (eddiewatkinsjr.com).

(ii) Kaye has a tendency to play on the beat or a slight feeling of being ahead, whereas Jamerson's style is generally more relaxed when playing on the beat, although in 'IWMTLH', some of the sixteenth-notes are quite pushy. Interestingly, a similar bassline appears on the same song in the same year when the Beach Boys covered it on the record *Wild Honey*, and in this case one can clearly hear the picked sound of an electric bass that probably is played by Kaye (Example 7.2).[215]

Example 7.2 The Beach Boys. 1967, 'I Was Made To Love Her' (Wonder/Moy/Hardaway/Cosby), Carol Kaye electric bass, excerpt from intro, *Wild Honey*, Toshiba-EMI 50861.

(iii) Jamerson's tone is also quite recognizable here, due to the slightly distorted Precision bass sound on most of his Motown recordings—Kaye generally favored a cleaner sound.[216]

Regardless of who did what, such obvious success in the highly competitive environment of the 1960s studio session scene in Los Angeles demanded a very particular set of qualities and skills. First of all, Carol Kaye had a very distinctive bass sound that set her apart from her peers. When she made the transition to the Fender Precision bass, she kept using the picking technique she brought from the guitar instead of playing the instrument the traditional way, with the thumb or the index and middle fingers. She used a drop-shaped, very stiff plectrum and played most of the time between the split pick-up and the upper end of the fingerboard to achieve a fuller, deeper sound. Together with a very aggressive attack, whereby she consistently applied downstrokes to the downbeats and upstrokes to

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[215] According to Kaye's website, she is the one behind the bass on the Beach Boys version of the song.

[216] In October 2009, Chris Jisi, Anthony Jackson and James Jamerson Jr. were given the opportunity to listen to isolated and custom-mixed Jamerson tracks taken from the original Motown master tapes, and according to Jisi, the track 'I Was Made To Love Her' was definitely played by Jamerson (email correspondence, Jisi, 2009).

the upbeats, she supplied a very different bass to her recording sessions. In the early 1960s, most recordings were made with two- or three-track tape machines, and sound engineers had problems with the output of an upright bass. Sometimes they would even have to double up the bassline with a Danelectro bass to get a more defined sound, especially on rock or country and western recordings. With her picked bass sound, Kaye instantly penetrated the sound mix, so engineers did not have to double her lines. Her righthand picking technique also involved locking her arm over the strings, so that the movement comes from the wrist rather than the elbow or fingers.

One of Kaye's trademark parts was her sixteenth-note Boogaloo lines.[217] According to Kaye, this particular groove, which she also calls 'doubletime funk', was brought from New Orleans to the Los Angeles session scene by session drummer Earl Palmer, and in the interview, she told me how it all began:

> Carol Kaye: Well, it's a double-time, it's a word meaning double-time. Earl Palmer brought the Boogaloo drumbeat from New Orleans. Here we are, we are doing like this: [playing guitar chords]

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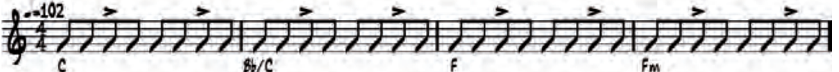
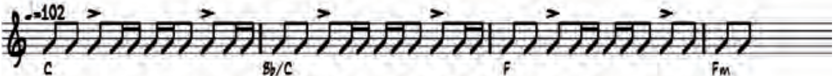
[217] One of my email informants writes the following: 'The Boogaloo began as a derivative of Latin music. It became popular in the USA in the early 1960s, primarily among young people in New York City, which had a sizable Latin American community. The Boogaloo was a fusion of rock'n'roll elements blended with Latin and, in this case, heavily influenced by the music and rhythms of Puerto Rico. Rhythmically speaking, the Boogaloo was based on the quaver subdivision common to both rock and Latin music, and the rhythm section underlaid all of that with a double-time feel. But in terms of melody and harmony, it incorporated elements of Jazz, as evidenced by Herbie Hancock's then popular Watermelon Man, a piece considered by many to be definitive of early '60s Boogaloo. New York's Ray Baretto was a major figure, along with a number of others based primarily on the east coast. A Boogaloo with a solid 'groove' was commonly referred to as being 'funky', – which is not to be confused with the word 'funk', which was soon to follow. The Boogaloo even spawned its own dance – The Watusi, associated with Ray Barretto's popular tune, El Watusi, which infiltrated America's homes via the television on Rowan & Martin's Laugh-in, 1968-1973' (from an email exchange with Joel Leach, Professor of Music at California State University, Northridge, Los Angeles).



Very boring, so Earl goes: [playing guitar chords]

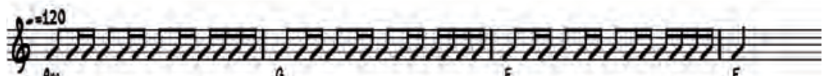


So I'm going like, 'Oh, yeah, double'em up!'

So I'm doing my Samba, he's doing his Boogaloo, then pretty soon, that became funk—and he is the first one in town that I've heard called it funk. He said, 'Oh, yeah, we've been calling that funk down in New Orleans since the end of the forties.'

Per Elias Drabløs: That groove?

CK: That groove, right. But he called it 'Boogaloo'—it's a Boogaloo beat, but the style of music is called funk, you know, so that kind of started the funk idea out here, you know. But everybody started doubling up, it wasn't just me, but I think a lot of my basslines rhythmically came from the rhythms that I played [on] guitar—you hear this, you hear a lot of this on the guitar thing: [playing guitar chords]



So then this: [playing bass on the guitar]

Yeah, well the Boogaloo is southern, it's a southern term. And it's just like calling something jazz—you have fusion jazz, you have ragtime jazz, you've got Dixieland jazz, you've got freedom jazz, you know, you got all kinds of jazz too, see. So, yeah, it's a different thing, but that's all I know is about where I got the term Boogaloo. Boogaloo to me means double-time bass.

Interview Kaye, Los Angeles, Dec. 12, 2007

As we can see from the last transcribed example in the interview, in addition to the sixteenth notes, Kaye also utilizes offbeat phrasing in every bar. The Boogaloo groove is taken to an extreme in the song 'Games People Play' (Transcription 7.3).

7.2.2 Equipment

After being handed a Fender Precision in 1963, Carol Kaye continued to use this instrument throughout her career. By far the most widely used electric bass of this era, it produced (and still produces) the bass sound sought for almost every popular music setting. Kaye had an endorsement agreement with Fender in the late 1960s, even promoting them in her first method book, but in the early 1970s, she tried the Gibson Ripper bass and was impressed with its slimmer neck. She considered an endorsement deal with Gibson but ultimately went back to the 'trusty' Precision after a while. Kaye always recorded with Fender medium-gauge flat-wound strings in the 1960s, preferring their warm, muffled sound to the bright, overtone-rich and edgier-sounding round-wound strings. Rotosound was manufacturing round-wound strings already in the early 1960s, but they did not achieve popularity until the end of the decade; bass players were simply too accustomed to the smooth surface and sound of the upright bass (flat-wound) string. In the 1960s, the Fender Precision came with two metal covers, one over the split pick-up and one over the bridge; underneath the latter, Fender had attached a piece of foam to mute the strings. To increase the 'deadness' of the strings as well, Kaye attached a piece of felt on top of the strings near the bridge to

> get rid of the offensive definition-killing overtones and undertones of the strings, making your bass sounds more defined.
>
> (email attachments, Kaye, May 2007)

She claims she never changed a set of strings once during her career—when the strings got too old, every couple of years or so, she would simply trade in the bass to get new ones.

In the studio, she recorded mostly with a Fender Super Reverb Amp with four ten-inch speakers, which the engineers close-miked; they did not record her bass directly until 1968. She also used a Versatone Pan O'Flex amplifier at the end of the 1960s.

7.2.3 Examples and analyses

'Games People Play'

'Games People Play'
• Glissando • Offbeat phrasing • Double stops • Obvious octaves • Flows of 8ths • 16ths • Inconsistent/busy • Bass fills • Solistic elements

Table 7.3 Features of 'Games People Play'.

Transcription 7.3 is taken from a recording of a Mel Tormé song recorded at Capitol Records in 1969; though it never reached number one on the Hot 100, it is too good an example of Kaye's bass playing to pass up. Joe South's 'Games People Play' was recorded in a typical 1960s live studio session with a big band, as Kaye describes:

> Carol Kaye: There's one time when I got on that Mel Tormé date and we were playing this tune ['Games People Play'], and the drummer hadn't gotten enough sleep, he was a tour drummer, you know, so he was slowing down, and we're talking about horns were there, it's a live date with a big band, and 'Sweets' Edison [on trumpet], and I'll never forget this, 'cause he looked over at me, he says, 'Carol, we're slowing down—do something!' So I tried to wake up the drummer, see, so about midway, then I got into a nice pattern, you know, and so I apologized after the take. I went

in the booth, listened to it, and Mel Tormé is there, and it's a bass solo, right, all the way through it, and I thought, 'No, no, no—wrong thing', it's a bass concerto all the way, but he said, 'No, it's fine, it's fine, it's good!'

Per Elias Drabløs: The producer liked it?

CK: They loved it! And I got home thinking, 'Oh, my God, it'll never sell'. That was his biggest selling record of all time, not kidding you. It reached number one, I think it reached number one. But he said he made more money off of that record than anything.

PED: That's great!

CK: Isn't that funny? Yeah! You can be wrong, but usually when you were on a hit take and it felt good, the hair on my arm used to stand up, that electric feeling, and you know that feeling when you know it's right, it's the right take, you know. It could be take thirty-three, but it's the right take, you know.

Interview Kaye, Los Angeles, Dec.12, 2007

According to Kaye, the published version here was in fact the fourth take, after a couple of recorded run-throughs that presumably suffered from the drummer's timing issues.[218] The chord changes are simple—I, IV and V—and the eight bars constituting a verse are repeated eight times, with half-step modulations after verses 4 and 6. At the session, there were no written notes on the bass charts, just the basic chord sheets, and on the first three takes, Kaye improvised a rather simple statement/answer-based line that was probably similar to bar 6 here (Transcription 7.3).

After noticing that the tempo was slowing down, she started adding sixteenth notes to the groove for the fourth take. The final recorded bassline ended up being an excellent example of Kaye's signature

[218] The drummer was probably 'Panama' Francis, according to Kaye (email attachments Kaye, May 2007).

sixteenth-note blues-based Boogaloo-type bassline in the 1960s with its double-stops, octave playing, and anticipation of the third beat in every other bar. The composed horn arrangement contributes a laid-back feel in concordance with the drums, so the groove is in fact kind of divided between the bass and the rest of the band, but it is the bassline that drives this song in a way that may well have saved it. This drive is very noticeable in the first beat of A3 and the succeeding two bars, where the horns in particular hang behind the bass. The original version of the song, written and performed by Joe South,[219] differs from Torme's version in several ways—it has no modulations, a more relaxed pace at 82 beats per minute, and a shuffled groove.

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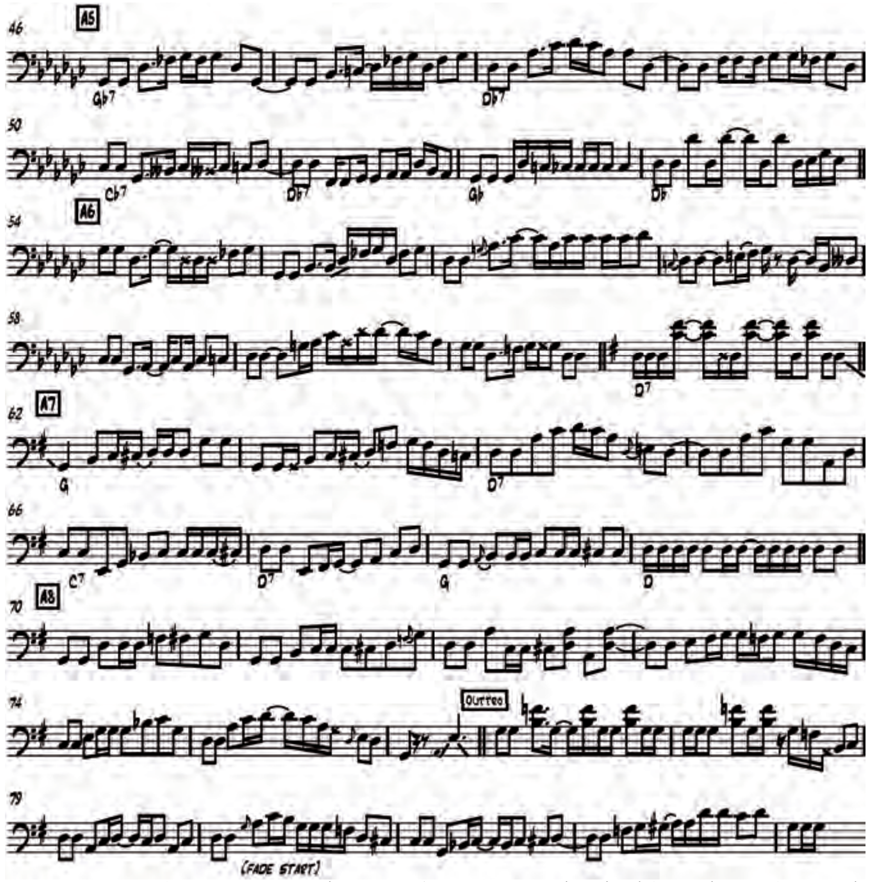
[219] *Games People Play*, 1969, Capitol Records St-235

GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

CAROL KAYE 1969 BASS LINE

JOE SOUTH
AS RECORDED WITH MEL TORME

♩=118



Transcription 7.3 Tormé, Mel, 1969. 'Games People Play' (South, Joe), Carol Kaye electric bass, *A Time For Us,* Capitol 8835.

'Games People Play' starts with the bass playing solo for the first four bars as the song's intro, before Tormé comes in to introduce the melody by humming from the pick-up spot. The drummer joins in for an interlude consisting of bass, drums and Tormé's vocalizing, which sets up the busy overall feel of the song. The piano and guitar join in at A, the former in particular combining fills and accompanying figures. The brass section plays short accents on beats 2 and 4 together with the guitar before going into a more typical big band

block-harmonized accents from A^{3} in order to provide space for the saxophones to engage in a 'call and response' with Tormé. The song increases in its instrumental intensity through two modulations and reaches a climax at A^{7}, where it stays until the fadeout.

Kaye brings her whole arsenal of bass style features to this song. Of the twenty features I have described elsewhere, she integrates nine: glissando in bars 5, 19, 37, 61 and 76; $^{b}7/10$ and 1/5 double-stops in bars 19, 61, 72, 77 and 78; obvious octave playing in bars 9, 14, 21, 29, 37 and 53; and flows of eighths (here, sixteenths) in bars 13, 45, 61 and 79, together with extensive offbeat phrasing and a very inconsistent and busy feel despite the rootedness of the 1-5-$^{b}7$-8 that underpins this highly improvised performance. The three remaining features are the unaccompanied bass solo that introduces the song, her many bass fills, and the consistent sixteenth notes that give the song its spirited pacing. 'Games People Play' reflects a very seasoned and determined bass player who is not afraid of taking over, even in such a high-profile recording situation; not to mention taking risks that eventually could force the whole band into another take.

'The Way We Were'

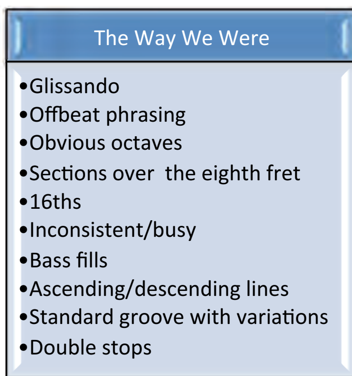
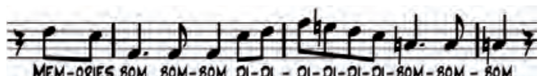


Table 7.4 Features of 'The Way We Were'.

One of the most famous number-one songs Kaye participated on was Barbra Streisand's 'The Way We Were', the title song from the popular 1974 movie (Transcription 7.4):

Carol Kaye: I hadn't seen strings in years, you know, because we had been layering dates, you know, just the rhythm section in, and it was 1973, I believe, 1973 in the wintertime when we cut that. And we get on this date and you knew the tune was gonna be a smash, but it's just kind of laid there like a dead duck, thirty-three straight takes, and she's singing every one of them. And the arranger told me, he says, 'Don't do anything but the part', because I started adding notes immediately, so he said, 'No, don't do that! Only play what I wrote!', you know, so I said okay, 'cause it's boom-de-bom stuff, you know:



I said, 'Oh, shit, man, we're gonna be here all night long and I got an early morning thing tomorrow', so I start adding notes on the thirty-third take, I said, 'Shit, I'm gonna go for it, he can fire me, he can do anything, I'm gonna start playing'.

Per Elias Drabløs: 'Cause you were bored?

CK: Yeah, bored. And there was take after take for no reason. All it needed was a little 'goose' from the rhythm section. So I'm starting to add notes and some rhythm stuff, and Paul Humphrey was on drums, he looked over and smiled, and he started to change, you know—people started [saying] 'Yeah!'—we all changed a little bit, and then it was, we knew it was the hit take, and we just felt it, you know, it was great. But you know something? That composer never called me again for another date. I don't care, it was a good hit, you know, and it was a good hit for her.

Interview Kaye, Los Angeles, Dec. 12, 2007

Transcription 7.4 Streisand, Barbra. 'The Way We Were' (Bergman/Bergman/Hamlisch), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, February 1974, Carol Kaye electric bass, *The Way We Were,* Columbia 85153.

Kaye utilizes ten of the twenty features on this recording of 'The Way We Were', and additionally includes hints of double-stops in bars 17, 24, 33 and 38. As she expresses in the interview, the song is a straightforward pop ballad that implies the standard groove, which she plays as the song's overall rhythmic foundation. But already in bar 13 she starts applying glissandi, something she uses extensively

throughout the song. In bar 25, she plays her first bass fill, using broken fifths and octaves; other fills include bars 27, 29, 41 and 43. Even if the overall feel of the song speaks to a highly melodic bass performance, there are in fact no clear melodic fragments here. The bass fills, played high up on the fingerboard, are more ornamental than structural or primarily melodic, even if she does have two clearly ascending lines in bars 45 and 46.

7.3 Paul McCartney

No bass player in the world has approached the fame of onetime Beatles bass player Paul McCartney over the course of almost five decades. As a first-generation electric bass player in the most famous band in popular music history, he also had a powerful part in raising that instrument's profile. McCartney started out as the guitar and piano player in the Beatles, because John Lennon first persuaded Stuart Sutcliffe to take on the bass role. However, Sutcliffe left the band during the Beatles' second Hamburg period, and McCartney reluctantly accepted to switch to bass:

> None of us wanted to be the bass player. [...] It wasn't the number one job: we wanted to be up front. In our minds, it was the fat guy in the group who nearly always played the bass, and he stood at the back. None of us wanted that; we wanted to be up front singing, looking good, to pull the birds.
>
> McCartney quoted in *Bass Player* magazine (Bacon, 1995, p. 32)

Soon enough, however, McCartney saw the potential in the instrument to lead the music in any direction:

> So once I got over the fact that I was lumbered with bass, I did get quite proud to be a bass player. It was all very exciting. 'Once you realized the control you had over the band, you were in control. They can't go anywhere, man. Ha! Power! I then started to identify with other bass players and talk bass with the guys in the bands. In fact, when we met Elvis he was trying to learn bass, so I was like, 'You're trying to learn bass are you son? Sit down, let me

> show you a few things.' So I was very proud of being the bass player. (p. 41)

Between February 1964 and April 1970, McCartney is credited as the bass player on *nineteen* number-one songs on the *Billboard* Hot 100,[220] a number matched only by Jamerson. After the Beatles broke up in 1970, McCartney started all over again, forming the band Wings and continuing to play bass. Though his post-Beatles bass playing never again reached the creative highs of his work on *Sgt. Pepper's* and *Abbey Road*, he came up with eight more number-one hits between September 1971 and May 1982. As a member of the Beatles and Wings, and as a solo artist, he therefore boasts twenty-seven number ones, making him the most successful bass player in the history of the *Billboard* Hot 100.

7.3.1 His playing

> Because the Hofner's so light, you play it a bit like a guitar. All that sort of high trilling stuff I used to do, I think, was because of the Hofner. When I play a heavier bass, like a Fender, it sits me down a bit and I play just bass. [...] I think it was just because it was such a light little guitar that it led you to play anywhere on it. Really, it led you to be a bit freer. (ibid)

McCartney started out playing the standard root/fifth bass, boogie-woogie lines and the occasional walking bass, following the custom of the time. Nevertheless, it is evident from the Beatles' earliest recordings that his choice of notes reflected an already very capable and creative player, as did his aggressive plectrum-based sound and clever basslines. He first moved decisively beyond the customary in 'I'm Happy Just to Dance with You', from the 1964 album *A Hard Day's Night*,[221] roaming around the scale with consistent eighth notes to double the vocal melody while still emphasizing the root of

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[220] The Beatles wrote a total of twenty-two number-one songs, but John Lennon plays bass on 'The Long and Winding Road', while 'Yesterday' and 'For You Blue' do not contain bass.

[221] Parlophone PMC 1230.

the chord. The big shift, however, took place during the recording of *Revolver*[222] in 1966.

Obviously McCartney wanted to build right away upon his experiments on the previous Beatles album, *Rubber Soul*; in the intro to 'Michelle', for example, he had played a little melody on top of a line-cliché chord progression that does *not* in fact depend upon the root, and in 'The Word' he had demonstrated his fast-maturing technical abilities by playing a very busy eighth- and sixteenth-note cycled bassline. In the *Revolver* sessions, though, he truly found his own voice. First of all, he improved his sound greatly, partly by switching to a Rickenbacker 4001S, partly by taking advantage of nineteen-year-old sound engineer Geoff Emerick's interest in trying new things. McCartney admired James Jamerson's playing as well as the bass sound that characterized Motown productions, and he pushed Emerick to reproduce it on 'Paperback Writer':

> 'Geoff,' he began, 'I need you to put your thinking cap on. This song is really calling for that deep Motown bass sound we've been talking about, so I want you to pull out all the stops this time. All right, then?' (Emerick, 2006, p. 114)

As mentioned earlier, Jamerson's sound arose partly from the process of recording the bass directly, without going through an amplifier and a microphone like McCartney always had. For 'Paperback Writer' (Example 7.3), then, Emerick converted a loudspeaker into a microphone, placed the speaker right in front of McCartney's amplifier and recorded the bass to the board. The result was a much bigger and warmer bass sound that accommodated McCartney's higher notes as well.[223]

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[222] Capitol C1-90452.

[223] According to Ryan and Kehew (2006), the use of DI for bass recording was not introduced to Beatles sessions until 1967. (p. 440)

Example 7.3 The Beatles. ‘Paperback Writer’ (McCartney, Paul), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, June 1966, Paul McCartney electric bass, *Paperback Writer,* Parlophone R5452.

The same recording technique was also used for ‘Rain’, the B-side of the ‘Paperback Writer’ single, which was even busier and mostly played one octave higher.

According to McCartney, another of his influences was Brian Wilson of the Beach Boys, because ‘he went to very unusual places’, to use organ points and frequently emphasized non-root tones—for example, the fifth of the chord (Bacon, 1995, p. 34). Though Brian Wilson was the bass player on the first albums and the live shows (until his retirement from the latter in 1964), he was also known to use session musicians extensively for bass parts, so McCartney may in fact have been thinking of Carol Kaye’s actual performances on the Beach Boys albums. (Kaye, on the other hand, credits Wilson for all of the basslines on, for example, *Pet Sounds*, insisting that she simply played his written bass arrangements most of the time).[224]

McCartney’s playing can, according to the bass performances on the Hot 100 songs, be loosely divided into three periods:

(i) The early years, pre-*Rubber Soul*;

(ii) the innovative years leading up to the dissolution of the Beatles;

(iii) the mature years, with Wings and as a solo artist.

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[224] ‘Most of the parts were written by Brian—you know he wrote practically all the notes we played, and certainly all the bass parts (except for one lick I got in on one tune)’ (email attachments, Kaye, May 2007). The lick Kaye refers to is two minutes and nine seconds into ‘California Girls’, from *Summer Days (And Summer Nights!!*), Capitol DT-2354 (it reached number three on the Hot 100 in 1965).

The first period can be seen as establishing the basics of bass playing, by presenting the chords properly and playing the bass according to custom, as seen in Table 7.5. His bass lines here included mostly the 'root or root/fifth', walking lines and the 'standard groove'.[225]

		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
1964																					
	I Want To Hold Your Hand	X				X															
	She Loves You	X		X		X															
	Can't Buy Me Love		X	X																	
	Love Me Do	X																			
	A Hard Day's Night														X	X			X		
	I Feel Fine	X				X															
1965																					
	Eight Days A Week		X																X		
	Ticket To Ride					X													X		
	Help!	X	X			X													X		
	We Can Work It Out	X				X													X		

Table 7.5 Paul McCartney bass features 1964 and 1965.

The second period, on the other hand, reveals McCartney to be an innovator on the instrument who would ultimately challenge many of the established conventions of bass playing.

As shown in Table 7.6, he begins to explore the fingerboard in a much more extended way on 'Paperback Writer' and subsequent songs, and when comparing McCartney's use of melodic features with the contemporary bass players appearing on Hot 100, he is evidently among the busiest players.

[225] The letters on the first row of Table 7.5 and Table 7.6 represents the twenty features presented in chapter 5. For a full overview of the features, see chapter 5 or Appendix B.

		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
1966																					
	Paperback Writer			X	X			X			X				X	X			X		
1967																					
	Penny Lane		X		X		X				X	X		X	X	X				X	
	All You Need Is Love	X			X									X	X	X				X	
	Hello, Goodbye	X		X				X				X				X			X	X	
1968																					
	Hey Jude	X				X									X				X	X	
1969																					
	Get Back			X			X		X						X	X					
	Come Together			X	X			X	X		X		X		X	X			X	X	
	Something				X		X	X			X	X		X	X	X			X	X	
1970																					
	Let It Be	X		X		X									X	X			X	X	

Table 7.6 Paul McCartney bass features 1966–1970.

7.3.2 Equipment

From the first recordings with the Beatles up to the present, Paul McCartney has favored the German-made Hofner 500/1 'violin bass' as his signature instrument, both live and in the studio. He acquired his first Hofner in 1961 during the second of the Beatles' Hamburg periods when Sutcliffe quit the band, and has owned several others of this model through the years, viewing the 1963 model as his main instrument.[226] In the early Beatles years, McCartney used a Selmer Truvoice before shifting to a mono Quad II valve amp connected to a 15-inch speaker inside a five-feet tall cabinet made by guitar player Adrian Barber. In 1963, McCartney changed to Vox equipment, and throughout his live playing career with the Beatles, he used mostly T-60 and AC-100 cabinets powered by either T-60, AC-30 or modified AC-100 heads. For studio work he mostly used Vox equipment, or a Fender Bassman through an Altec 605A speaker miked by an AKG C12 or a Neumann U67; from 1967 on he also used a DI (Direct Injection) box in addition to the miking.

[226] See Babiuk (2002, pp. 49-50) for a thorough description of these instruments.

George Harrison and John Lennon often played Rickenbacker guitars, which may be the reason why McCartney acquired a 1965 Rickenbacker 4001S before the recording of *Revolver*. According to Babiuk (2002, p. 113), McCartney was presented with a custom-made left-handed Rickenbacker 4001 as early as February 1964, but turned the offer down. He has also used a Fender Jazz bass[227] and a Yamaha BB-series bass. All of his basses have been strung with flat-wound strings.

According to Ryan and Kehew (2006, p. 397), McCartney started to overdub his bass during the 1965 *Rubber Soul* sessions and would continue to do so on most of the his later recordings as well:

> It was much better for me to work out the bass later, [...] it allowed me to get melodic basslines.

Quoted in Ryan and Kehew (2006, p. 441)

Bass overdubbing was necessary both because McCartney also played piano and other instruments during recording and because it enhanced the bass sound, in keeping with the bar that was being set by Motown.

[227] See Ryan and Kehew (2006, p. 479).

7.3.3 Examples and analyses

'Penny Lane'

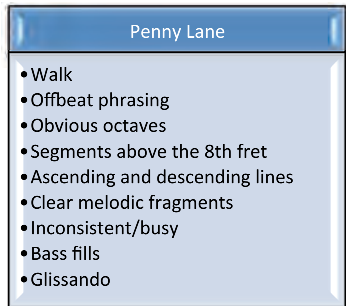


Table 7.7 Features of 'Penny Lane'

The recording of 'Penny Lane' (Transcription 7.5) started in late December 1966, and was the second song recorded during the *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* sessions. The Beatles had already finished 'When I'm Sixty-Four' when McCartney announced that he wanted a 'really clean American sound' for the next one (Emerick, 2006, p. 142). Emerick describes in detail the production of 'Penny Lane', including the fact that McCartney repeatedly played the Beach Boys album *Pet Sounds* on his portable gramophone during breaks. Given McCartney's obvious interest in the surf band, it is probably no surprise that the bass on 'Penny Lane' recalls Carol Kaye's bass on the Beach Boys song 'God Only Knows'.[228] The songs share approximately the same tempo; a piano plays four to the bar in the verses; both songs feature brass instruments—a piccolo trumpet and an F-horn, respectively; and the electric bass's introductory pick-up figure is somewhat similar, as is the time spent in the bass fingerboard's upper register. The basslines of both songs' choruses likewise utilize offbeat phrasing with triplet-subdivided grooves, and both basslines are played with a pick.

---

[228] Beach Boys, 1966, *Pet Sounds*, Capitol DT-2458.

Penny Lane
Paul McCartney 1967 Bass line
Paul McCartney
♩=112
8va
A
B B/A# B/G# B/F# E C#m7 F#sus F# B B/A# B/G# B/F# Bm7 Bm6/G# G△
F#sus F#sus F#sus F#7 B B/A# B/G# B/F# E C#m7 F#
B B/A# B/G# B/F# Bm7 Bm6/G# G△ F#sus F#7 E
B
A A/C# D D/A
A A/C# D F#/C# F#
A2
B B/A# B/G# B/F# E C#m7 F#sus F# B B/A# B/G# B/F# Bm7
Bm6/G# G△ F#sus F#sus F#sus F#7
Trumpet solo
B B/A# B/G# B/F# E C#m7 F#sus F# B B/A# B/G# B/F# Bm7
Bm6/G# G△ F#sus F# E
B2
A A/C# D D/A
A A/C# D F#

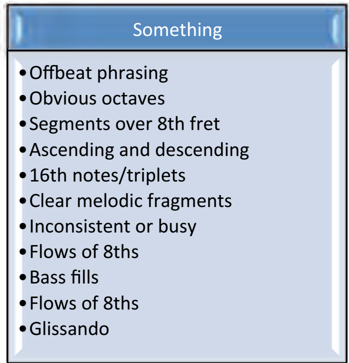
Transcription 7.5 The Beatles. 'Penny Lane' (McCartney, Paul), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, March 1967, Paul McCartney electric bass, *Magical Mystery Tour,* Parlophone 48062.

Structurally, 'Penny Lane' has an A A B form that is repeated three times with a double chorus at the end; the choruses are modulated one step down from the verse key of B major via the verse's subdominant E on the last bar, which becomes the new dominant of the key of A major. The last chorus, however, modulates back to B major.

McCartney's bass playing here incorporates nine of the twenty features I have described elsewhere, and among them, the walking bass is particularly noteworthy—this is the last time a Hot 100

number-one hit will include it through 1982. (Figure 5.5) Presumably McCartney saw the feature as nostalgic in a way that nicely reinforced the content of the lyrics.

'Something'


Something

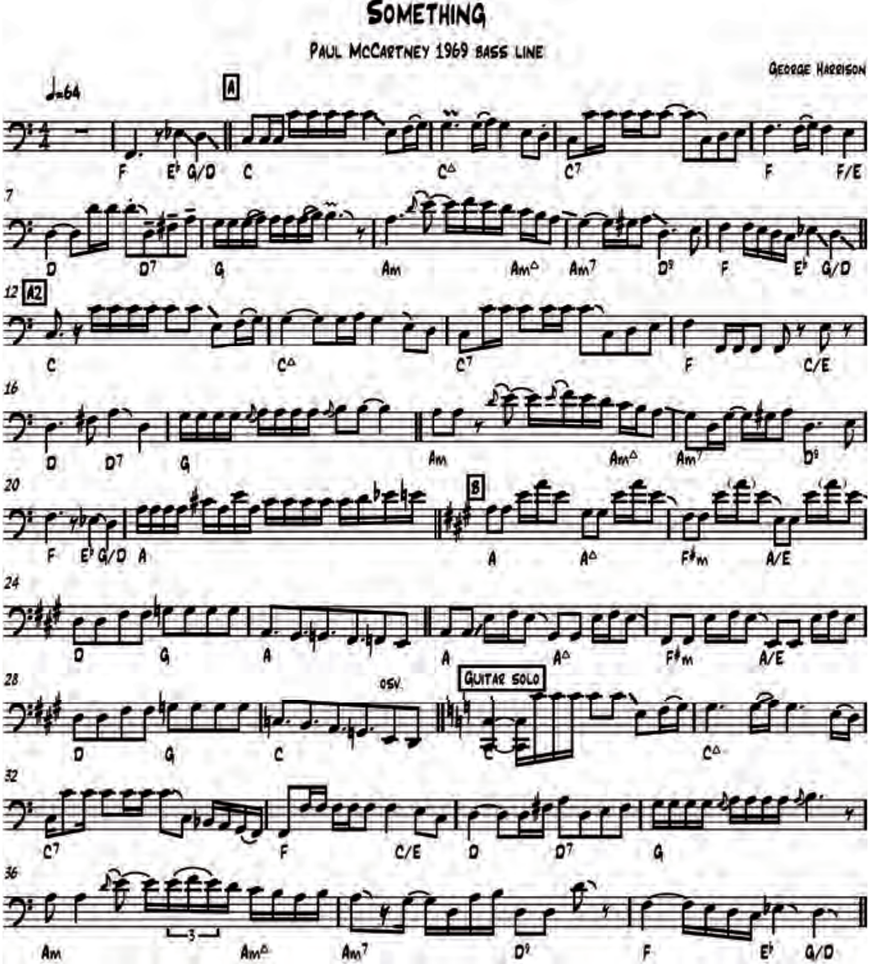
- Offbeat phrasing
- Obvious octaves
- Segments over 8th fret
- Ascending and descending
- 16th notes/triplets
- Clear melodic fragments
- Inconsistent or busy
- Flows of 8ths
- Bass fills
- Flows of 8ths
- Glissando

Table 7.8 Features of 'Something' (The Beatles)

> I'm a melodicist; I like melodies, which I think you can hear in my songwriting. So I always try to get a bit of melody out of the bass part, but not too much – you can get in the way if you do it all the time or play too many notes. You have to be selective, or else the composer can get a bit annoyed. I don't think George [Harrison] was too pleased with what I did on 'Something' at first; I mean, I had to sell it to him!
>
> Paul McCartney quoted in Jisi (2005, p. 42).

As I described in the introduction, Paul McCartney's flowing bass line on George Harrison's 'Something' (Transcription 7.6) is nothing short of breathtaking, no matter what your individual experience may be with the bass. The song is not a standard ballad. The tempo is relatively slow, even for a slow song, at approximately sixty-four beats per minute. The modulated B part only appears once, and the A parts consist of nine bars rather than four or eight. A tenth bar is tacked on to the second A to build toward the eight bars of B, which are in turn followed by a Harrison guitar solo over an A part. The

last A anticipates another B part by returning to that extra build-up bar, but the song instead goes into a two-bar conclusion that recalls the two-bar introduction.



Transcription 7.6 The Beatles. 'Something' (Harrison, George), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, November 1969, Paul McCartney electric bass, *Abbey Road,* Apple 7088.

After Ringo Starr's triplet fill in the opening, McCartney plays the root of the two first chords, and, to get a succeeding line towards the tonic, he plays the fifth on the dominant G chord which leads to the first A. On the two last beats of the introductory bar he also plays the first of his many glissandos. According to Emerick (2006, pp. 278-279), at this stage of recording what was going to be the *Abbey Road* album, the Beatles had already finished 'Maxwell's Silver Hammer'. For that song, McCartney wanted to achieve the sound of a tuba, and he used glissandos into the notes instead of a normal articulation to produce a tuba-like effect. On 'Something', McCartney uses much of the same effect, and by adding grace notes and small slides both at the start and end of a phrase, his playing expresses a nonchalant and laid-back feel to the song, even if the overall subdivision is sixteenth-notes.

Harrison's chord structure invites three separate line clichés in the verses, at bars 3 to 5, bar 6, and bars 9 and 10, but McCartney does not give in to the temptation to play the typical descending lines that would follow these chords. Instead, he keeps to the root, playing sixteenth notes, then jumps up to the fifth on the C^{maj} chords and back again on the C^7 before playing the standard country-and-western ascending line up to the subdominant in bar 6. The two A parts appear quite similar and it is obvious that McCartney has considered the bass part thoroughly before recording, particularly

given that the distinctive descending sixteenth-note line 5–4–♭3–2–1 appears each time in the Am parts; it also characterizes the build-up bars 21 and 48, where McCartney prepares a new fingerboard position for the succeeding B. The latter part is played high up on the fingerboard; placing the index finger on the twelfth fret in order to reach the high A on the fourteenth fret and similarly playing a descending bass line while keeping the top musemic riff intact. Halfway through the chorus, he repeats the motion one octave below, producing a more ‘bass-like’ feel before the guitar solo.

McCartney’s phrasing is quite inconsistent, in that the duration of otherwise equivalent notes changes all the time as he shifts from lagging just behind the beat to driving forward; together with his use of extensive dynamic variations, he achieves a performance that is virtually impossible to transcribe accurately. Yet it is a truly memorable contribution to the electric bass repertoire.

The four-string Rickenbacker 4001S he used for the recording is tuned down, probably to a low C, for the bar preceding the guitar solo, indicating that the bass part was not recorded in one take; according to Ryan and Kehew (2006, p. 522), it was also recorded through a DI box.

7.3.4 Comments

McCartney’s ‘busyness’ and inconsistent bassline on ‘Something’ must be seen in relation to the era in which it was recorded. As I noted in chapter 5, this type of attitude toward the bass’s accompanying role was normal for the late 1960s, but this rendition of ‘Something’ pushed even those boundaries. According to Emerick, George Harrison told McCartney ‘repeatedly that he wanted the part greatly simplified’ (Emerick, 2006, p. 282). In addition, Ringo Starr’s bass drum strikes on beats 1 and 3 for the most part, setting up the possibility of a bassline with a ‘standard groove’ or some slight variation upon it. Yet McCartney’s confidence as a musician (and status in the band) gave rise instead to one of the most innovative and exciting ballad basslines ever recorded.

7.4 Alan Spenner

Alan Henry Spenner was born May 7, 1948 in Dalston, a working-class district in the East End of London. His father gave him a guitar at an early age to keep him off the streets, and at the age of fourteen he was already playing blues gigs around the area. Eventually he switched to bass, and together with his good friend, drummer Bruce Rowland, he played with a variety of artists in and around London, including Georgie Fame, Zoot Money and Geno Washington. In 1967, Mick Weaver, a Hammond organist, approached the two friends about joining the instrumental band Wynder K. Frog. They ended up making two albums, *Out of the Frying Pan*[229] and *Into The Fire,*[230] and they opened for several of the most popular blues and soul groups in England.

In 1969, Spenner and Rowland were invited to join Joe Cocker's Grease Band. Started up in the later 1960s as a Sheffield-based cover band, the Grease Band had become a household name in England by this time as the band backing Joe Cocker on the 1968 hit 'With a Little Help from My Friends'.[231] Not long after that it became clear that the Grease Band's keyboard player, Tommy Eyre, and drummer, Kenny Slade, wanted to move the band more toward jazz, and in January 1969, Joe Cocker and the Grease Band's musical director/bass player, Chris Stainton, replaced them with Spenner and Rowland (Bean, 2003). Stainton switched to keyboard, and the second incarnation of the Grease Band left England in April 1969 for a U.S. tour that would last almost a year and start off with the Ed Sullivan show.[232] There were festivals all summer; they played the Newport Festival in June in front of 150,000 people; the Atlanta Pop Festival in July in front of 140,000 people; and the soon-

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[229] United Artists 6695.

[230] United Artists 6740.

[231] A&M QU-54182.

[232] They played 'Feelin' Alright'—on the recorded version, Carol Kaye plays the original bass line (A&M 75021-3106-4).

to-be legendary Woodstock Festival in August in front of at least 300 000, and from there Joe Cocker's career really took off. The same year, Spenner participated on Leon Russell's self-titled album,[233] sharing credits with superstars like Bill Wyman, George Harrison and Eric Clapton. Exhausted from the extensive touring, Spenner and Rowland returned to England in February 1970 while Cocker went on to join forces with Leon Russell and form Mad Dogs and Englishmen. Back in England, Spenner and Rowland continued to work under the name the Grease Band, again sometimes collaborating with Mick Weaver on keyboard.

In the spring of 1970, Rowland got a phone call from young lyricist Tim Rice, asking if the Grease Band could lay down backing tracks for a full version of the rock opera whose title track they had recorded the previous year. Rowland, Spenner and the rest of the band went into the Olympic Studios in London and recorded what would be the million-selling *Jesus Christ Superstar* album.[234] After the *JCS* sessions, the now just twenty-two-year-old Spenner continued to play around London, helping out friends in the band Spooky Tooth by recording bass on their album *The Last Puff*,[235] and providing three tracks on *The Road to Ruin* by John and Beverly Martyn.[236] The Grease Band, now in their third incarnation, recorded their self-titled debut album,[237] in early 1971 for release later that year; after two U.S. tours, however, they broke up due to internal differences

In 1972, Spenner was asked to join the Chris Stainton All Star Band and ended up touring the world extensively with Joe Cocker again before going back to London to join a soul/funk outfit named Kokomo, a project started by keyboard player/singer Tony O'Malley

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233 *Leon Russell*, Shelter 8901.

234 The album reached the number-one position on the *Billboard* 200 for one week in February, 1971, before re-entering at the top position in May same year.

235 A&M 4266.

236 Island 1882.

237 *The Grease Band*, Shelter 8904.

and the drummer Terry Stannard. O'Malley came from the vocal harmony group Arrival, and when this band disbanded in 1973, he brought his three fellow Arrival singers, Frank Collins, Dyan Birch and Paddie McHugh, to the new band, which also included guitarists Neil Hubbard and Jim Mullen. Spenner joined them full time after their first gig at the Pheasantry nightclub in Chelsea; he would end up marrying Dyan Birch in 1979.[238]

Through the remainder of the 1970s Spenner concentrated mostly on Kokomo but also participated on records such as Donovan's *Essence to Essence*,[239] Alvin Lee's *In Flight*[240] and Alexis Korner's *Get Off My Cloud*.[241] He recorded with artists including Marianne Faithful, Steve Winwood, Ted Nugent, David Coverdale and Bryan Ferry before joining the group of great bass players that were part of Ferry's band Roxy Music. Spenner was never an actual member of the band, but he recorded three studio albums[242] and one live album[243] as well as doing three tours. After the last Roxy Music tour in 1982, his work began to suffer from his increasing dependency on drugs, and he died in his home about ten years later in 1991, at the age of forty-three.

7.4.1 His playing

Spenner had no formal music education and could not read music. According to Dyan Spenner-Birch, he acknowledged the influence of James Jamerson and Stanley Clarke as well as 'the girl from Motown' (presumably Carol Kaye). According to Neil Hubbard,

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238 Kokomo released five albums: *Kokomo*, 1975. Columbia 33442; *Rise and Shine!*, 1976, Columbia 34031; *Kokomo*, 1982, CBS 85604; *Live in Concert 1975*, 1998, MLP 01; *To Be Cool*, 2004 (live rehearsal tape from 1974), Hux 58.

239 Sony Music Distribution 489443.

240 Columbia 32729.

241 Columbia 33427.

242 *Manifesto,* 1979, Polydor 001; *Flesh & Blood,* 1980, Atco 32102; *Avalon,* 1982, Warner Bros. 23686.

243 *The High Road,* 1982, Polygram 83375.

Spenner also listened a lot to Chuck Rainey and was very much inspired by his playing in particular.

Spenner was generally more involved with band projects than with 'typical' session playing, and the four bands that stand out—Wynder K. Frog, the Grease Band, Kokomo and Roxy Music—represent very diverse genres and styles as well as different phases within the melodic bass era. It was probably the Grease Band that shaped Spenner the most as a bass player, however.

Spenner's first album after joining the Grease Band was *Joe Cocker!*, which includes a rendition of the Beatles song 'Something' (Transcription 7.8). The musical arrangements are quite different from the original, though Spenner's bassline is clearly influenced by Paul McCartney's original. The twenty-one-year-old Spenner shows himself to be an already mature bass player who is confident in both R&B and gospel/rock grooves, and this ability to adapt to different genres is most apparent in the album *Jesus Christ Superstar*. The *JCS* sessions were done over a four-month period at the Olympic Studios in Barnes, London, and recorded by Alan O'Duffy, and Andrew Lloyd Webber's music touches upon a multitude of styles and genres, from ragtime to 5/4 ballads and heavy rock to classical, and Alan Spenner's Fender Precision bass participates in most of the songs. The following examples from the album show his use of some of the bass features I discussed previously.

The overall bass performance on the *JCS* album is so vigorous and spirited as to seem almost exaggerated by today's standards, and indeed it is as busy as I have ever heard Spenner, either before or after. Possibly Lloyd Webber requested this level of activity while picturing the music staged in a theatre; he probably also wanted the improvisatory feel that busyness suggests. I played the song 'What's the Buzz?' (Transcription 7.7) for the English session bass player Paul Westwood, who responded this way:

> I call it 'bad party music'. Very often if you're watching a movie and there's a party going on, and they wouldn't play the latest record that had been properly produced and everything, they get session

musicians to play this what I call crappy party music, and they'd say 'Here's some chords, might be twelve bars, just play whatever you want', and it's all crazy stuff, and they say, 'just lots of notes, lots of noise, it's a busy party, everyone is having a good time and they're clinking glasses and people shouting' and all that sort of thing, and I call it crappy party music. They are trying to create a buzzy atmosphere and with some of the music in the hippie era—it's a bit chaotic.

Interview Westwood, London, Dec. 6, 2007

Westwood rightfully draws attention to the fact that the concept behind the *JCS* album is not the standard pop/rock production but a musical meant for future staging, so the bass playing should not be compared to the 'norm' for studio albums at the time. That said, Spenner's performance represents a remarkable compendium of 1960s melodic bass features in particular, whatever the motivation for the music behind it, and for that reason it represents a consequential contribution to the empirical material in this work.

The very era-typical offbeat phrasing is used numerous times on the album, and Example 7.4 shows the feature used on the dominant A^7 chord in the fourth bar, here as part of a bass fill.

Example 7.4 Jesus Christ Superstar Original Cast Recording, 1970. 'Heaven on their minds' (Lloyd WebberRice), Alan Spenner electric bass, track time 2 min 28 s, *Jesus Christ Superstar,* MCA Records Inc. MCD 051.

Chuck Rainey's influence on Spenner shows up in Example 7.5 in the combined features of glissando and double stops, while Example 7.6 shows Spenner using the open strings of E and A to execute chordal comping, using the third and seventh on both chords during the fade-out of 'Everything's Alright'.

Example 7.5 Jesus Christ Superstar Original Cast Recording, 1970. ‘Everything’s Alright’ (Lloyd Webber/Rice), Alan Spenner electric bass, track time 0 min 59 s, *Jesus Christ Superstar,* MCA Records Inc. MCD 0051.

Example 7.6 Jesus Christ Superstar Original Cast Recording, 1970. ‘Everything’s Alright’ (Lloyd Webber/Rice), Alan Spenner electric bass, track time 4 min 50 s, *Jesus Christ Superstar,* MCA Records Inc. MCD 0051.

On the swing number ‘This Jesus Must Die’ (Example 7.7), Spenner forgoes the traditional walking bass to instead double the note value and create a spirited and dancing melodic bassline that (perhaps unintentionally) stands in sharp contrast to the gravity of the lyrics.

Example 7.7 Jesus Christ Superstar Original Cast Recording, 1970. ‘This Jesus Must Die’ (Lloyd Webber/Rice), Alan Spenner electric bass, track time 2 min 58 s, *Jesus Christ Superstar,* MCA Records Inc. MCD 0051.

The title track ‘Superstar’ (Example 7.8) was, according to original drummer Bruce Rowland:

> […] recorded at 10 a.m. without vocals or sight of lyrics, from a chord chart; offered a few riffs inspired by Tim [Rice] doing Elvis. […] Three takes later, everybody is happy.

Email conversation with Bruce Rowland

Example 7.8 Jesus Christ Superstar Original Cast Recording, 1970. 'Superstar' (Lloyd Webber/Rice), Alan Spenner electric bass, track time 2 min 11 s, *Jesus Christ Superstar,* MCA Records Inc. MCD 0051.

Spenner's 'Superstar' verse groove, with its obvious octaves, offbeat phrasing, sixteenth notes, glissando and, in bar 8 of the example, a bass fill leading into the famous chorus, stands out even in the company of the spirited bass performances that comprise this album.

The Grease Band's debut album in 1971, recorded a year after the *JCS* sessions, presents a band firmly planted in the folk rock tradition, including McCullough's acoustic guitar work and Spenner's solid, grounded Fender bass playing. Spenner has abandoned his over-the-top busyness from the *JCS* sessions for more traditional basslines, with two exceptions: 'Let It Be Gone' and 'Down Home for Momma", the latter of which he both composed and sang as well, and where he delivers some excellent melodic lines.

Spenner's main electric basses were mostly Fender Precision basses, but he was also known to use a Wal JG model 1119[244] and a seldom used Ampeg fretless bass. For amplification, he preferred Acoustic bass amps, but he also used the Ampeg Portaflex B-15. Despite having begun his career on guitar, he played the bass with his fingers, though he incorporated the slap-hand technique to some degree in the 1980s as well with Roxy Music.

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[244] The model number is mentioned in www.trevorandthea.eclipse.co.uk/wal_specifications.htm. Spenner uses this instrument on 'A Song For Europe', 'Can't Let You Go' and 'Avalon', for example, from Roxy Music's DVD *The High Road* (Universal Music and Video B0003590-09).

7.4.2 Examples and analyses

I have chosen two songs from Alan Spenner's early career for closer analysis, both because they reflect his remarkable precocity and because they so clearly derive from the sorts of 1960s melodic bass features I have discussed elsewhere. Furthermore, he is clearly inspired in these two tracks by the three other players presented in this chapter. While there are of course interesting basslines to be found in his later work, the *JCS* session was special, as mentioned, so I include here Andrew Lloyd Webber/Tim Rice's 'What's the Buzz?' In addition, I include Spenner's bassline on Joe Cocker's rendition of 'Something', both based on its own merits and in order to compare it to McCartney's interpretation in Transcription 7.6.

'What's the Buzz'

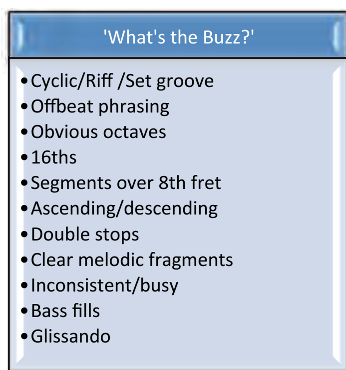


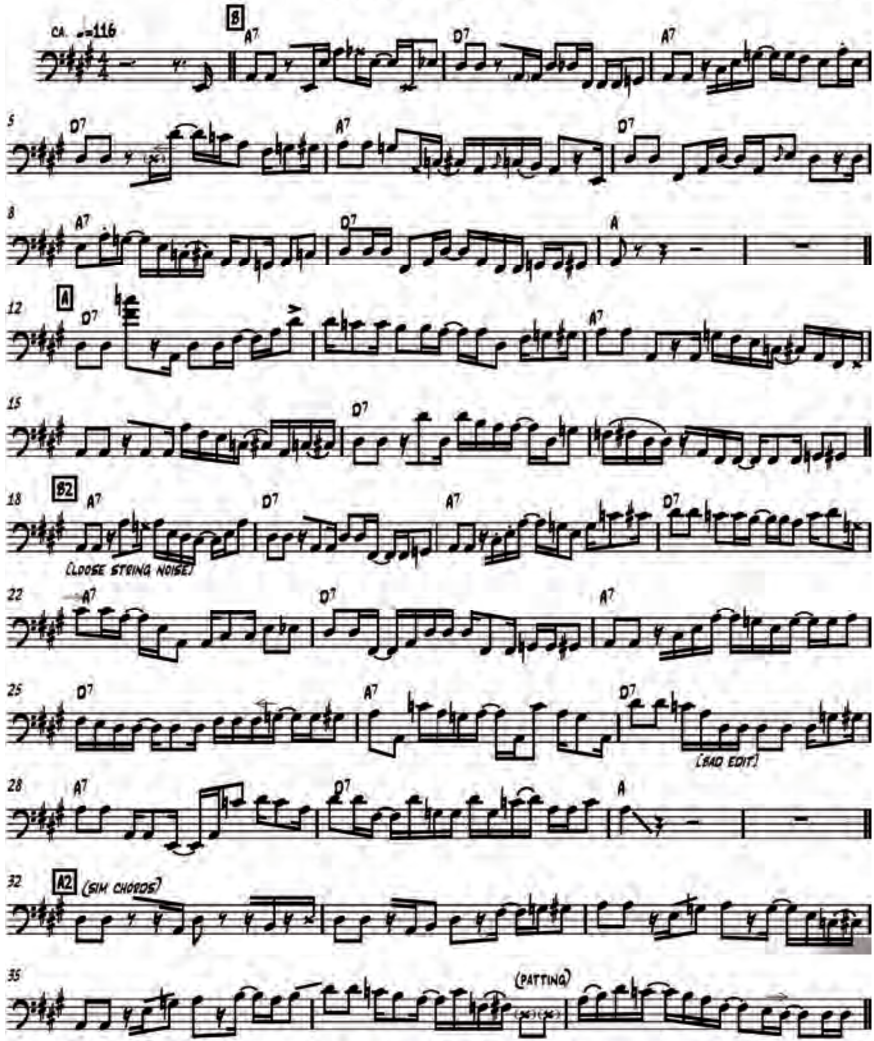
Table 7.9 Features of 'What's the Buzz?'

'What's the Buzz?'[245] (Transcription 7.7) is a repeated sequence of six-bar A sections and eight-bar B sections, separated by a two-bar vocal pickup. Harmonically, the song consists only of two chords, D^7 and A^7; the tempo is 116 beats per minute, and its chaotic groove

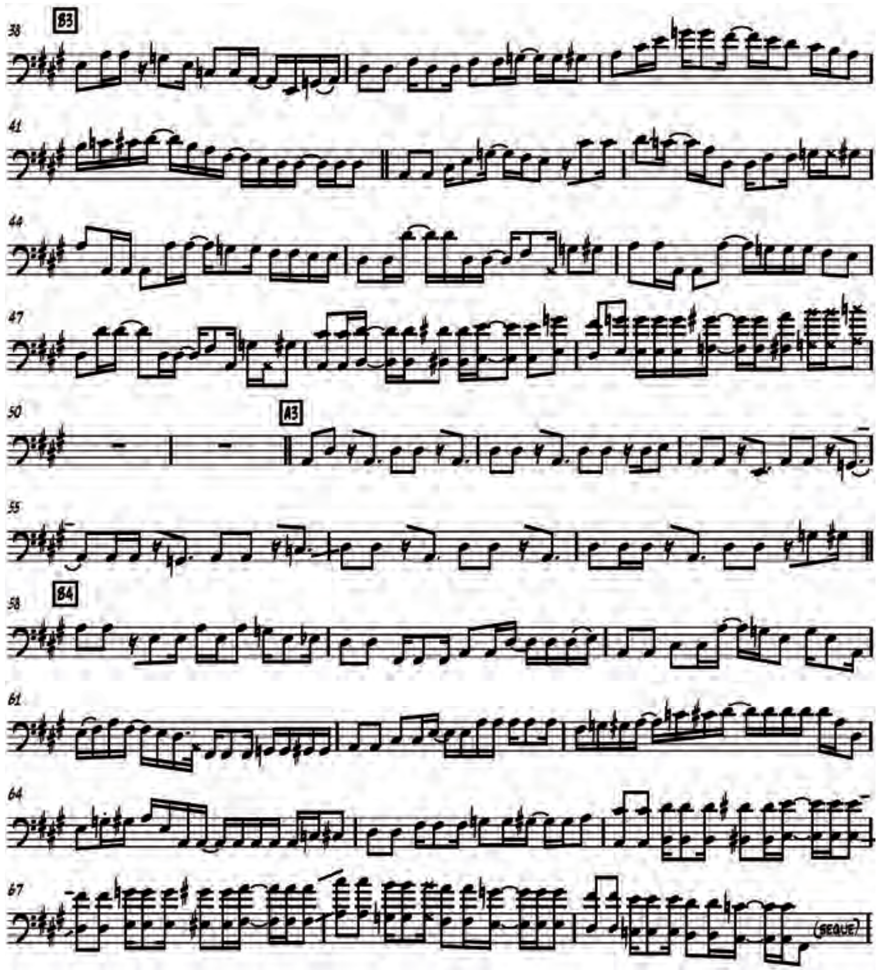
[245] This transcription also appears in the July 2009 issue of *Bass Player Magazine* together with an article discussing Alan Spenner's career.

rather literally expresses the frustration of the disciples singing its choruses. According to Bruce Rowland, several of the songs were in fact recorded in small parts of even three or four bars at a time, and 'What's the Buzz?' appears to have been one of them.[246] While inconsistent basslines seldom repeat themselves, for obvious reasons, this bassline is so complex it almost had to have been recorded in parts. Sixteenth notes at this tempo without blunders and with a clear idea of harmonic progression demand considerable forethought. Spenner also makes each A part unique; the first one perpetuates the busy feel of the opening B section, the next one is reduced in intensity and the third one locks into an eighth-note groove.

[246] Lloyd Webber's practice of recording short sections of songs also led to a great amount of extra work during the mixing of the album. Rowland told me he was asked to attend all mixing sessions of *JCS* to overdub places where the cymbals were 'choked' off due to cutting and splicing of tape, and bar 27 of 'What's the Buzz?' is an example, where on the third beat, the driving ride cymbal covers up the bad editing.



WHAT'S THE BUZZ?
ALAN SPENNER 1970 BASS LINE
ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER
CA. ♩=116
B
A7
D7
A
B2
(LOOSE STRING NOISE)
(BAD EDIT)
A2
(SIM CHORDS)
(PATTING)



Transcription 7.7 Jesus Christ Superstar Original Cast Recording, 1970. ‘What’s the Buzz?’ (Lloyd Webber/Rice). Alan Spenner electric bass. Jesus Christ Superstar. MCA 501

In Table 7.9, we see that Spenner is using eleven of the twenty melodic bass features—six of them from the melodic category, grounded only by the two sequenced eighth notes on the first beat of most of the bars. ‘What’s the Buzz?’ segues into ‘Strange Thing Mystifying’ at same tempo but with a totally different groove.

Tellingly, while Spenner goes straight from a sixteenth-note descending double-stopped line into the standard groove, an audible cut and splice reveals the separately recorded parts.

After Spenner's sixteenth-note upbeat, he falls into line with Bruce Rowland's intense ride cymbal on steady eighth notes, which, together with a snare on beats 2 and 4, drive this busy texture forward. From the beginning, Spenner goes right into the obvious octave feature, revealing Jamerson's influence, and in bar 4 we recognize the typical Carol Kaye's 1–3–5–^{b}7 from 'Games People Play' (Transcription 7.3).

After the two-bar vocal pickup at bars 10 and 11, Spenner uses his first double-stop, playing an open D string and simultaneously sounding the 3/^{b}7 on frets 16/17, a favorite move of Chuck Rainey's. Spenner also evokes Rainey, unintentionally or not, in bar 36 when he pats the strings with his right hand and creates a percussive sound.[247] Era-typical offbeat phrasing is also used consistently throughout, as in bars 13, 20 and 21, and the glissando discussed previously constitutes a striking feature of the A2 section.

Among Spenner's unique attributes is his use of small bends, as in bars 6, 8 and 15—mostly, such bends supply a vibrato effect, but Spenner also uses them several times to change from ^{b}3 to 3 in the middle of a phrase. These movements are hard to execute at such a fast tempo. Spenner also applies root/tenth double stops in bars 48–49 and from bar 66 to the end. While we have come across double-stopping elsewhere in the examples, no one has used the feature to the extent that Spenner does here.

The first sequence of bars 48-49 (Figure 7.1) shows an ascending offbeat root–tenth movement from A^7 to $A^7/C^\#$ via A/E on the last eighth note that concludes directly on the first beat of the D^7 bar and then drives forward to a dynamic and non-tonal finish before the next vocal pickup.

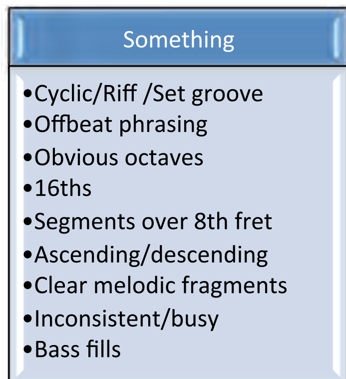
[247] See footnote 99.

Figure 7.1 ‘What’s the Buzz?’ bars 48 and 49.

For the ending bars of the song (Figure 7.2), Spenner starts the same ascending line in bar 66, but because there are no more vocal pickups, he simply reverses the movement and descends the same way he came up. The last bar shows how he manages to create a natural dominant D^7 passage down to the new tonic G of the next song ‘Strange Thing Mystifying’.

Figure 7.2 ‘What’s the Buzz?’ ending line.

‘Something’



Something
•Cyclic/Riff /Set groove •Offbeat phrasing •Obvious octaves •16ths •Segments over 8th fret •Ascending/descending •Clear melodic fragments •Inconsistent/busy •Bass fills

Table 7.10 Features of ‘Something’ (Joe Cocker).

Before the 1969 *JCS* sessions, Alan Spenner had already made a name for himself in Wynder K. Frog and Joe Cocker’s Grease Band,

and his taste for busy, melodic and often unexpected and original basslines is apparent on the album *Joe Cocker!*. An excellent example is the cover version of the Beatles' 'Something', which differs from the original in terms of key, tempo, instrumentation, chord arrangements and style. It is Cocker's second Beatles cover, following his success on 'With a Little Help from My Friends', and it was recorded in 1969, the same year the Beatles released *Abbey Road.*

Transcription 7.8 Cocker, Joe. ‘Something’, (Harrison, George), Alan Spenner electric bass, *Joe Cocker!,* A&M 75021-3326-4.

Seven bars along in the guitar- and voice-driven first verse, Spenner enters on a ninth-fret F# (VIm) and immediately jumps to the thirteenth fret for a 9–8–5 line before settling on the basic root movements for the rest of the verse. Drums do not enter until the third beat of bar 17, when Spenner forgoes the melodic introduction to section A2 for an emphasis on the root/octave and the

presentation of the chords for the rest of the song. The most obvious difference between Spenner's and McCartney's interpretations is in the way they treat the line-cliché progressions of the verses. Where McCartney performs a repeated melodic museme, Spenner uses the F#m-F#m$^{(maj)}$-F#m^{7}-F#m^{6} progression to create a melisma-rich chromatic descending line that he then repeats in similar situations later on. In bar 34 of the instrumental section A3, Spenner comes up with a sixteenth-note lick I have only heard this one time. It is a simple diatonic succession of notes, but its particular sequence together with its placement on beat 2 makes it an utterly unprecedented bass fill for the time.

As in 'What's the Buzz?', Spenner starts each bar of the verses with a double eighth note on the root. This consistent emphasis on the first beat appears in all of the transcriptions in this thesis, including Carol Kaye's line in 'Games People Play' (Transcription 7.3) and both Jamerson transcriptions: 'Love Child' (Transcription 7.1) and 'Darling Dear' (Transcription 7.2). Occasionally, players form longer phrases by overlapping chords and concluding on beats 2, 3 or 4, but the general custom is to focus on one bar at a time and always present the root on the first beat. This nod to predictability in the midst of so much inconsistency indicates an ongoing awareness of the original role of the instrument, despite the progress that has been made.

7.5 Comments and summing

As explained in subsection 1.7.3, the four players presented in this chapter are selected due to their impact on the electric bass' performance practice during the 1960s and 1970s. In addition to maintain a busy recording schedule, they have also had the added bonus of adding that 'little extra' which sets them a side in relation to their contemporaries. Similarly, the transcriptions shows a significant propensity for extending the bass role a bit further than that found in others, and particularly their use of the melodic features in a recording context was extensive when compared to the

traditional role of the instrument. These features, merging together with the groove elements (chapter 5), are then a part of the melodic electric bass' vocabulary and performance practice. In chapter 4, I suggested various aspects of performance that relate to the melodic approach as a style, and in the chapter that succeeded that one I explained the twenty features that belong to this style.

The next chapter will deal with the preliminary termination of the melodic electric bass as it was heard during the late 1960s and 1970s. No one particular thing brought about the decline; instead, three main factors combined to pave the way for a stricter, more root-based orientation that eventually resulted in the 'tight-with-the-bass drum' decade of the 1980s, as also observed by Carol Kaye:

> Musicians were still inventive and playing rhythmic lines in the 1970s for other styles of rock'n'roll, and… you had Jaco, Stanley Clarke and others who were using the electric bass to play some good jazz improv with (mostly in a fusion style but some was straight-ahead jazz), but commercially, hip rhythmic bass notes were going out of fashion in favour of slapping, more simple lines, and even synthesizer-created bass lines—music was becoming fragmented parts, not a whole picture anymore of sounds—fragmentation was the style. Bass has been in steady decline since then although sometimes you still hear it come back up and regain its once all-important part of the sound structure of the tune, backing up the singer(s).

Email attachments, Kaye, May, 2007

8 ON THE DECLINE? CONCLUDING REMARKS

> But mid 70s saw a definite shift in bass-playing. Drums were being defined in what Plas Johnson calls the 'slave beat', a four-beat monotonous pattern and bass was relegated to playing simple octaves, almost 8th notes everywhere with the accent on the lower octave, yuck—disco was hot.

Email attachments, Kaye, May, 2007

8.1 The disco wave

Several of my informants saw disco's appearance as the main reason for the fading of the melodic approach on the electric bass, but it is more complicated than that. First of all, disco was much more than a sound and gave rise to more than one sound:

> Disco is also kinds of dancing, club, fashion, film – in a word, a certain *sensibility*, manifest in music, clubs, and so forth, historically and culturally specific, economically, technologically, ideologically, and aesthetically determined [...]. (Dyer, 1979, p. 20)

From a musicological point of view, disco comprises at least three subgenres with distinct stylistic features, according to David Brackett (2005):

(i) *R&B Disco*, 'was derived more directly from previous styles of soul and funk, often retained gospel-oriented vocals and syncopated guitar and bass parts, and was sometimes recorded by self-contained bands associated with funk, such as the Ohio Players, Kool and the Gang, the Commodores, and KC and the Sunshine Band' (p. 299).

(ii) *Eurodisco*, represented by Donna Summer, which 'tended to feature simple, chanted vocals, less syncopated bass parts, thicker arrangements filled with orchestral instruments and synthesizers, and relied on a producer who directed anonymous studio musicians' (ibid).

(iii) *Pop disco*, represented by the Bee Gees, among others, as well as the movie *Saturday Night Fever* (1977).

These three variants of disco had clearly differing bass groove approaches. As I discussed in chapter 5, R&B disco favored the core and interlocking riffs that appeared in soul or the funk music of James Brown. The repetitiveness of these grooves was perfect for dance clubs, but it was rather the massive use of endless repetitive and machine-like eighth-note based grooves in eurodisco that my informants refer to when mentioning disco as the cause of melodic playing vanishing. Paul Westwood calls this 'industrial music':

> It's very hard to get into in a musical sense, because it kind of excludes all the subtleties of what the melodic bass lines were trying to do.

Interview Westwood, London, Dec. 6, 2007

Westwood also described the tedious work of sitting in the studio for hours in the mid-1970s playing repetitive octave patterns to emulate a keyboard bass:

> I don't know, but once the disco clubs opened and the producers went to the disco clubs and they heard [singing]

> You get into the studio, 'This is the tempo! Hundred and twenty!' and suddenly you are playing club music at ten o'clock in the morning and it's no longer [singing]

> None of that, you know, it's too cool.

Interview Westwood, London, Dec. 6, 2007

Nevertheless, according to my findings on the *Billboard* Hot 100, melodic playing persists through the mid-1970s, whatever the popular (and professional) perception (see Figure 5.26). Bass player Josquin des Prés confirms, 'Funk and disco bass lines of the '70s

were intricate, sometimes complex' (des Prés, 2001, p. 2). Even the monotonous grooves of the major disco hits 'Fly, Robin, Fly'[248] by Silver Convention and Donnas Summer's 'Hot Stuff'[249] contain bass features beyond repetitive musematic riffs. Certainly the pop disco of Barry White, the Bee Gees and Abba featured highly inconsistent and melodic bass performances that did not resort to rigid octave lines. Still, use of the keyboard bass continued to expand (Figure 5.2), partly as a result of the introduction of the sequencer into the studio. Ultimately, as Hawkins points out, 'disco was never meant to be performed live; it became liberated from the traditions of sonic realism' (Hawkins, 2009b, p. 346).

8.2 The producer as star

> The new generation of instruments and software created fresh sound possibilities, expanded style, techniques and concepts of production, and raised the status of producers. (Shuker, 2008, p. 35)

With the arrival of synthesizers and sequencers in the late 1970s, the role of the studio producer changed profoundly. The first record producers in popular music had, according to Pekka Gronow and Ilpo Saunio (1998), a more administrative role:

> [He would] contact the artist and agree on the numbers to be recorded. If the band was not a permanent one, he would procure the accompanists and arrangements. A good record producer was, above all, a talent scout. (p. 70)

Later on, producers like John Hammond (1930s and 1940s) and Mitch Miller (1950s) got more involved in the actual music while pursuing an aesthetic 'in which the concert hall experience was to be

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[248] Silver Convention, 'Fly, Robin, Fly' (Levay, Prager), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100 November 1975, *Save Me,* Midland Int. 1129.

[249] Donna Summer, 'Hot Stuff' (Bellotte, Faltermeyer), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100 June 1979, Scott Edwards, electric bass, *Bad Girls,* Casablanca 822557-2.

recreated as faithfully as possible' (Moorefield, 2005, p. 3). By the late 1950s, however, producers like Phil Spector and George Martin had begun to embrace studio enhancements such as editing or overdubbing:

> Spector can be thought of as the link between the shift away from the 'realistic' recording aesthetic of the fifties to the innovations of the sixties. (p. 15)

Both Spector and Martin saw the advantage of using the studio as an additional instrument, experimenting with microphone placements, variations in sound and technological manipulation.

As discussed previously, electronic instruments had long supported traditional instruments, and producers were always on the lookout for new sounds to use,[250] even while they remained dependent on session musicians to produce the actual music. When instrument manufacturers such as Moog and ARP and, later, Oberheim, Roland and Korg (among others),[251] began to develop instruments that could produce previously unheard sounds (as well as familiar ones) and were reliable and easy to use, the need for session musicians in the studio started to decrease. Jason Toynbee (2000) describes the entry of the Roland MC-8 sequencer in 1977 as a 'paradigmatic device' (p. 94); together with the industry-standard protocol MIDI, it went a long way toward 'obviating the need for conventional keyboard skills and dexterity on the part of the programmer' (ibid). Several informants recalled the dip in studio work that resulted from this new technology, and in Tony Scherman's book *Backbeat: Earl Palmer's story* (1999), session drummer Paul Humphrey described the situation in the late 1970s:

> Everything changed [...] Today the cat who scores the music has got him a module, an MT-32 or a D-110 with a little eight-track or some ADAT. He can play the piano part, play the bass line, play

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[250] See, for example, Emerick (2006), and his pioneering methods in creating new signature sounds for the Beatles.
[251] See Rasch (2009) for an historical overview of the synthesizer.

> the drum track at home and then take it into the studio and they transfer it to 24- or 48-track. In the old days, the contractor had his Rolodex. Now you don't even need the contractor because you don't need musicians. (p. 127)

Ripani (2006) also describes the profound effect that the sequencer and the drum machine had on studio productions in the late 1970s, when 'technology took R&B by storm' (p. 138). These electronic instruments were very capable of generating the short, repetitive figures (in perfect time) that R&B depended on.

8.3 Slaphand

As stated elsewhere, slaphand was introduced to audiences through Larry Graham's work with Sly and the Family Stone, particularly through the hits 'Everyday People'[252] and 'Thank You (Falettinme Be Mice Elf Again)'[253] Notable players like Louis Johnson, Stanley Clarke and Marcus Miller picked up the technique, and toward the end of the 1970s, slaphand had become a standard feature of bass parts, particularly in the R&B/funk genres. Tiran Porter observes:

> Bass players seized [the chance] to be melodic and started, I guess, being percussive all over the place because they were thumbing everything they'd have. [...] But that took away a lot of melodic bass playing.

Interview Tiran Porter, Santa Cruz, Dec. 8, 2007

As Porter points out above, slaphand answered to the desire for compelling yet percussive and accessible grooves; the earliest slaphand techniques utilized mostly octave figures and were for that reason easily adapted to the disco era's bass patterns.

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[252] Sly & the Family Stone, 'Everyday People' (Stewart, Sylvester), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, February 1970, Larry Graham, electric bass, *Stand.* Epic 26456

[253] Sly & the Family Stone. 'Thank You (Falettinme Be Mice Elf Again)' (Stewart). No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, February 1970. Larry Graham electric bass. *Greatest Hits.* Epic PE 30325

Judging by the number-one songs on the Hot 100 list in Appendix B, or Figure 5.21, slaphand was not utilized much during the 1970s, though approximately 10 percent of the songs between 1976 and 1979 contain it. Nevertheless, the popularity of the slap technique continued to increase during the 1980s in particular genres.

8.4 Comments

Each of the above three events contributed to more repetitive and pattern-based bass playing, and as a consequence, the bass in popular music shifted from an independent and mobile voice to a musematic repeating figure. Bass player and informant Mike Visceglia also sees the shift in connection to the songwriting at the time, particularly regarding the commercialism of the music industry and the standardization of the hit song:

> So suddenly you had to conform to a very strict structure, where [a song] is not gonna be more than, you know, two minutes and forty seconds, you're gonna have very short verses and very hooky, repeated choruses. [...] So instead of having the room to experiment with ideas, or somebody like James Jamerson who would change his ideas from verse to verse or chorus to chorus, you have things that had to be repeated exactly the same way; short phrases, short motives, short licks, hooky—so you would come up with a four-note hook and that would be the ostinato bass pattern for the whole song, rather than a more extrapolated or improvised kind of composed-through lines.
>
> Interview Visceglia, New York, April 3, 2008

The growth of discothèques in Europe and the United States during the 1970s is described by DJ Rob Wegner as 'The Second-Wave of Club DJ Growth' (Wegner, 2003), as economic troubles in the early 1970s began to make DJs more attractive than bands to club owners. DJs, of course, are primarily interested in filling the dance floors:

> It was their taste that dictated disco's sense of style, rather than the singers and instrumentalists of soul and rock musics, and

> successful DJs could acquire their own following in much the same way as a recording artist. (Brackett, 2005, p. 298)

The influence of DJs on disco music, together with an inclination toward electronic music—seeing a lesser use of trained musicians, would then imply a simplification in songwriting and production.

As discussed in section 1.4 and chapter 4, the fluidity of styles and genres inside popular music causes session musicians to constantly adapt to the notion of 'what is hip', but these three major changes: genre (disco), production (sequencer), and style feature (slap), together with the repetitiveness of the ostinato bass pattern required by music producers, were all contributory to the declination of the studio session careers of both Jamerson, Kaye and Spenner.

9 CONCLUSIONS

> [The electric bass] really changed the sound of music because it ate up so much space. Its sound was so imposing in comparison to the upright bass, so it couldn't have the same function. You couldn't just have it playing 4/4 lines because it had too much personality. Before the electric bass and the electric guitar, the rhythm section was the support section, backing up the horns and piano. But when they were introduced, everything upstairs had to take a back seat. The rhythm section became the stars. All because of this technological development. The old style didn't work anymore and it created a new language.

Quincy Jones cited in George (1988, pp. 38-39)

9.1 Comments on the research

My main proposals, as articulated in section 1.3, involved the appearance and disappearance of the practice itself: (i) something new happened to bass playing upon the arrival of the electric bass, and this new style of playing had a profound musical impact on the various genres and subgenres of popular music as well as on the role of the bass itself; (ii) this new performance practice developed over time and was gradually seen as a new consensual way of filling the bass role; (iii) this performance practice eventually disappeared but paved the way for yet other approaches to the electric bass.

I elaborated upon the first proposal in chapter 3, where I gave an account of the electric bass's progression from the 1950s and onwards. I discussed my second proposal in chapter 5, identifying twenty features that are part of the performance practice as well as the timeline in which they appeared. In chapter 8, I reviewed the decline of those features in the music of the late 1970s. Again, it must be emphasized that the melodic approach did not vanish completely in all aspects of bass playing. While session players needed to accommodate the expectations of producers, which had

changes significantly regarding melodic aspects of the bass, band bass players were able to continue to accommodate this practice as they saw fit.

In the course of my thesis, I decided not to dwell upon the various musical genres represented on the pop charts. Though genre is certainly relevant to the prominence of the melodic bass in a particular song, assigning that song to one genre over another is a remarkably fraught endeavor. This point I discussed with Chuck Rainey, amongst others:

> Chuck Rainey: Actually there's no difference between R&B and soul music […] It's just you got, you know, they put terms on music to market it. You call James Brown like a soul artist, soul music. But you can also call it R&B because it's all under the banner of R&B. And you call it soul because it's wanna be in that category, or they make it different, but it's really the same thing. R&B basically is originally… traditionally it's a shuffle […] Now, it got to a place where all the black acts were R&B. Motown was R&B because the company had black acts. So if you were black, it was R&B. Soul came under the banner of R&B because it was also black. Now, once they start adding soul… white artists and white musicians began to play R&B, they sort of kind of begin to change categories.
>
> Per Elias Drabløs: Did it matter for the musicians in the studios?
>
> CR: No.
>
> PED: No? So this is just for the record companies to label stuff… for selling it?
>
> CR: Right. For musicians… we don't care what you call it. Rock is a lot simpler on the bass. As a lot of the rock was just one–five, one–five music. Or one–one–one–one–one–one–one, or one–five, one–five–one kind of music—a lot easier to play, you know, if it got rhythm. But the soul and the R&B and the rock, it's all the same. With popular music, pop is a little different, with that *bajon* feel, it always works in that music; it is not as busy, but I think it's the same thing, soul and R&B. Nowadays they have something like eighty categories that they put people into.

Phone interview with Rainey, 28 November 2008

I considered the difference between the terms *genre* and *style* in chapter 4, and Fabbri's (1982) comments on the transgression of rules in a genre led me to identify the melodic electric bass as a style feature that contributed to genre.

In this research, I have not addressed the specific placement of the bass relative to the drums in the songs in question here. As a practicing bass player, I am very aware of the relevance of this interaction. A bass player's groove and choice of notes will change depending upon the drum part, and a good bass performance requires a good drum groove. I had to separate the bass grooves in my empirical material from the drum grooves for two reasons: (1) the analyses could not accommodate another instrument without growing too ungainly, and (2); I focused on what was actually there, not what might have been different had the drum player changed his part. Several informants emphasized the great impact a drummer's groove had on their own performances, but that is a different topic.

My intention has been to take a closer look at what actually came out from the recording studio, not the probable discussions of the songs in the studio. This angle of research is also shared by others, for example, Allan F. Moore, who mentioned in a conversation in September 2009 that he is very clear that it is not the musicians that are of interest; it is the music they produce that he cares about. Although I clearly emphasize the bass players in this thesis, I have been determined to clarify that it is the finished result that is the essential, not the process of getting there.

9.2 Diversity in playing

The four players presented in chapter 7 share, as we have seen, distinct similarities as well as differences in approaches when it comes to a consideration of the role of the bass: Jamerson with his melisma-rich bass lines, Kaye's Boogaloo-bass, McCartney's vocal-like lines and Spenner's busy melodic playing. The other bass

players participating in the 617 songs selected for my research were also crucial in assisting all the songs to make it to the highest position. My findings indicate that the players were as diverse as the performances under question, with the songs and the genres, the 'one-hit wonders' appearing together with seasoned key players. The latter demonstrates that the quality of the musicians on a track is not necessarily connected to the placement on the charts, revealing some bass performances as not up to standard. One example is the original recording of Chubby Checker's 'The Twist', where the electric bass player has probably forgotten to tune his D string all the way up to the proper 73.4 Hz. Having said that, seasoned musicians can easily reveal a bad day at work. I have observed how a couple of the songs on the Hot 100 contain serious timing issues between drummer and bass player, and although production values were not at the standard that we now are used to, there are some notable discrepancies in some of the well-known hits. One example is the 1966 hit 'The Sounds of Silence' by Simon and Garfunkel, where the (out-of-tune) acoustic and electric guitars and drums seem to have a dispute around who is actually leading during the song. While Gladys Knight and the Pips' 'Midnight Train to Georgia' also suffer from timing issues, the case that really stands out is that of the intro on Steve Miller Band's 'Rock'n Me' from 1976. Here, it seems as if both the guitar and the bass are in conflict with the drummer in their bid to find the right tempo.

As I have discussed elsewhere, the musical styles, genres and taste change, the aesthetics of musical choice also undergo modifications and alterations. The rather lenient attitude towards metronomic tempi before the introduction of the sequencer is one example, as Paul Westwood observed:

> As soon as you get a machine playing the things perfectly and you get everything working to a click track, it doesn't have the same essence. The Motown records and the records that we used to do right at the beginning, the verse would be slightly slower than the chorus – you always moved into the chorus. It moved ahead a little bit and then it just dropped back a fraction for the verse, and that

> was common. We all knew about that. And we didn't do it in a conscious way; you just made it a bit more exciting. And when you came to the verse, you relaxed again, 'cause you're telling a story. And then when it gets to the hook-line, it's got this dancing and insistent feel.
>
> Interview Westwood, London, Dec. 6 2007

Wrong notes in relationship to the chord progression are also prevalent in a variety of songs, such as, 'Bad, Bad Leroy Brown' by Jim Croce, where the very experienced bass player Joe Macho, after playing fluently through the whole song, forgets the turnaround at the end; his desperate aborted attempt to end the song in an orderly fashion is blatantly evident. Likewise, 'If You Wanna Be Happy' by Jimmy Soul and 'I'm Leaving It Up To You' by Dale & Grace, both from 1963, are examples of bass players disregarding the appropriate chord changes for the song. The former song's bass player sounds as though he is really floundering. Clearly, many of these incidents can be blamed on the record producer responsible for the finished product. That said, though, the musicians involved must share some of the responsibility.

9.3 Final words

The work carried out in this thesis entails a study of the melodic electric bass's performance practice, and over the course of about thirty years, then, the electric bass came into its own as a melodic as well as a harmonic contributor to the pop song. Throughout this study, I have shown how the instrument and its players started out as copyists of the traditional bass lines developed by double-bass players through decades of American popular music, and how the instrument moved towards a new standard of performance practice through the 1960s and 1970s. The title *From Jamerson to Spenner* should be seen as referring to this time span. Jamerson was obviously not the first electric bass player, and Alan Spenner was for sure not the last melodic player, but their performances documented

in this thesis would make up a decent representation of the evolution of the melodic electric bass's performance practice.

Among the results of this research, it is natural to mention the following:

(i) Finding the combination of style features decisive in making a change in the bass function in popular music;

(ii) Displaying the increasing and decreasing use of melodic features between 1965 and 1982 as shown in, for example, Figure 5.26;

(iii) To see the double bass phase out in popular music between 1963 and 1964, as shown in Figure 5.1;

(iv) To research into the probability of former guitar players being responsible for most of the melodic features, and seeing the inconsistent bass lines as related to (among others) James Jamerson and Paul McCartney (Table 5.6 and Table 7.6);

I began this project with an admitted attraction to the exaggerated bass playing of the 1970s, and I ended it with a much fuller knowledge of what made that performance practice work, and where it came from. Next, of course, might be a better sense of where it went to—that is, in terms of the role of the electric bass during the 1980s and its relationship to the sequencer and synthesizer.

Now, where is my bass?[254]

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[254] Freely adapted from Wigestrand (2004)

Too Much, Too Little, Too Late

Scott Edwards 1978 bass line

Kipner/Wallins
as recorded with
Johnny Mathis and Deniece Williams

♩=78 Eb△ Ab△/Eb Eb△ Ab△/Eb

6 A Eb△ Ab△ Gm7 C7sus4 C7

10 Fm7 Abm6 Eb Bb11

14 Eb△ Ab△ Gm7 C7sus4 C7

18 Fm7 Abm6 Eb Fm7 G7

22 B Ab△ Bb/Ab Gm7 Gm7/C 3 C7

26 Fm7 Abm6 Eb Fm7 G7

30 Ab△ Bb/Ab Gm7 Gm7/C C7

34 Fm7 Abm6 Eb Fm9/Bb

38 A2 Eb△ Ab△ Gm7 C7sus4 C7

42 Fm7 Abm6 Eb Bb11

Transcription 9.1 Mathis, Johnny/Williams, Deniece. 'Too Much, Too Little, Too Late' (Kipner/Vallins), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, June 1978, Scott Edwards electric bass, *You Light Up My Life*, Columbia CK-35259.

Transcription examples

Six Brown Brothers 1917. 'Smiles And Chuckles', baritone saxophone excerpt, bars 9–21 (Victor 18385-A), downloaded from http://dismuke.org/how/. 71

Clyde Doerr And His Dance Orchestra 1927. 'You Sing That Song To Somebody Else', tuba groove excerpt, bars 17–32 (Lincoln 2695 mx 2612), downloaded from http://dismuke.org/how/. 71

Richard Himber And His Ritz Carlton Orchestra 1934. 'Were You Foolin'', double bass groove excerpt, bars 5–8 (Victor 24757-A), downloaded from http://dismuke.org/how/. 71

The Who 'My Generation' (Townshend, Peter), John Entwistle electric bass excerpt, tracktime 0 min 54 s, *The Who Sings My Generation,* Virgin 2179. 73

Example of hard rock (Kaye, 1969, p. 9) 105

Rolling Stones, 'Get Off My Cloud' (Jagger/Richards), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, November 1965, excerpt from verse, Bill Wyman bass line, *December's Children (And Everybody's)*, London 451. 106

Kallen, Kitty. 'Little Things Mean A Lot' (Lindeman/Stutz), No 1 *Billboard* Best Sellers in Store, June 1954, bars 1–40, *My Coloring Book,* BMG 38163. 129

Harrison, Wilbert. 'Kansas City' (Leiber/Stoller), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, May 1959, double bass excerpts from guitar solo, *Kansas City,* Top Rank International 45-JAR-132. 133

Presley, Elvis. 'All Shook Up' (DeKnight/Freedman), No 1 *Billboard* Best Sellers in Store, April 1957, Bill Black double bass, main verse groove, *All Shook Up*, RCA 47-6870 5560. 133

McGuire Sisters. 'Sincerely' (Fuqua/Freed), No 1 *Billboard* Best Sellers in Store, February 1955, double bass excerpts from intro, Ponytails, Hooped Skirts & Bobbysocks: American Gals of the '50s, Acrobat 7017. 133

The Four Seasons. 'Big Girls Don't Cry' (Crewe/Gaudio), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, November 1962, Nick Massi electric bass, main groove excerpt, *Sherry & 11 Others*, Vee Jay 1053. 134

The Four Tops. 'I Can't Help Myself (Sugar Pie, Honey Bunch)' (Holland/Dozier/Holland), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, June 1965, James

Jamerson electric bass, intro and 1st verse, *Four Tops' Second Album*, Motown 8127. 135

Queen. 'Another One Bites The Dust' (Deacon, John), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, October 1980, John Deacon electric bass, excerpt from intro, *The Game*, Elektra 513. 136

Chic. 'Good Times' (Edwards/Rodgers), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, August 1979, Bernard Edwards electric bass, excerpt from intro, *Risqué*, Elektra 513. 136

Brown, James. 'Cold Sweat' (Brown, James), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100 R&B September 1967, main verse groove, Bernard Odum electric bass, *Cold Sweat,* King 1020. 138

KC and the Sunshine Band. 'That's the Way I Like It' (Casey/Finch), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, November 1975, Richard Finch electric bass, 1. main groove excerpt, *KC and the Sunshine Band,* TK 603. 139

KC and the Sunshine Band. 'That's the Way I Like It' (Casey/Finch), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, November 1975, Richard Finch electric bass, 2. main groove excerpt, *KC and the Sunshine Band,* TK 603. 139

Prado, Perez. 'Cherry Pink (And Apple Blossom White)' (Guglielmi, Louis), No 1 *Billboard* Best Sellers in Store, April 1955, double bass main verse groove, *Mambo Mania,* RCA Victor LPM-1075. 140

Anderson, Leroy. 'Blue Tango' (Anderson, Leroy), No 1 *Billboard* Best Sellers in Store, May 1952, double bass main verse groove, *Blue Tango,* BD 77025. 140

Presley, Elvis. 'Don't Be Cruel' (Blackwell, Otis), No 1 *Billboard* Top 100, September 1956, Scotty Moore guitar, intro figure, RCA 47-6604. 141

Lowe, Jim. 'The Green Door' (Davie/Moore), No 1 *Billboard* Top 100, November 1956, double bass main verse groove. 141

The Jackson 5. 'I Want You Back' (Gordy/Mizell/Richards/Perren), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100 September 1970, excerpt from intro, Wilton Felder electric bass, *Diana Ross Presents the Jackson 5,* Motown 700. 143

The Jackson 5. 'The Love You Save' (Corporation), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100 June 1970, track time 0 min 20 s, Wilton Felder electric bass, *ABC,* Motown 709. 144

The Jackson 5. 'ABC' (Gordy/Mizell/Richards/Perren), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100 April 1970, track time 0 min 26 s, Wilton Felder electric bass, *ABC,* Motown 709. 144

Joplin, Scott. 1903, excerpts from 'Weeping Willow' (Wilford, 1974). 146

Franklin, Aretha. ‘Respect’ (Redding, Otis), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, June 1967, Tommy Cogbill electric bass, main groove excerpt, *I Never Loved a Man the Way I Love You*, Atlantic 8139. 147

Ross, Diana. ‘Touch Me In The Morning’ (Masser/Miller), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, August 1973, Bob Babbitt electric bass, track time 3 min 23 s, *Touch Me In The Morning*, Motown 772. 147

Lennon, John. ‘Whatever Gets You Thru The Night’ (Lennon, John), No 1 *Billboard* Hot 100, November 1974, Klaus Voormann electric bass, bars 96–99, *Walls And Bridges*, Apple 3416. 148

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Appendix A Letter from Bruce Rowland

Alan Henry Spenner was born in May 1948 to Henry and Joy in Dalston, a tough working-class district in the East End of London. The matriarch of the family – Henry's mother – had moved up in the world by dint of hard work and thrift and had a smallholding in the Essex countryside where she grew fruit and bred English mastiff dogs. Henry was a heavy-goods lorry driver in the days before power steering and was known behind his back as Popeye. He was of middle height with arms like George Foreman. There was a younger sister to Alan – Dawn. Alan grew up with a strong sense of family, formidable role models in Henry and Joy, a wonderfully loving and irreverent banter-filled relationship with the grandmother who doted on him (he was the only one in the family who wasn't frightened of her) and whilst apolitical, a healthy left-wing sense of social justice. Unschooled, but well educated and very bright with sharp Cockney humour, Henry bought him a guitar to keep him off the streets, as he was asthmatic. When I first met Alan, he was a really good blues guitarist who also played the bass and that was the root of his bass style.

We played with a variety of singers in and around London and, in a small pond, were big fish. Our main source of work came from Georgie Fame's road manager Martin Tempest, who, as a sideline, supplied the elite of the music business with ready-rolled joints in return for support spots for us with people like Georgie, Zoot Money, Gino Washington *et al.* We were more often than not paid in dope, which was then sold on for subsistence. We were approached by Mick Weaver – a Hammond organist – to be in his instrumental band. He had plenty of work, a recording contract and a transit van. (Up to that point we went to gigs in the grandmother's Ford Popular; three or four of us with all the gear. It should be noted that in those

days, the band that had two amplifiers was either very successful or poseurs. We had a single AC 30 amplifier – everything went through it – and one microphone and the drums, single-headed apart from the snare, fitted one inside the other.)

Alan was now playing exclusively bass. Mick's band – Wynder K. Frog – was, initially, very much in demand as a support to most of the blues or soul bands of the day until we got so tight that many of them did not want to follow us. We were getting steadily more and more bookings in our own right but were held back by being instrumental only. So Alan was persuaded to sing a couple of numbers. He had a high, gravelly voice and a soul or gospel turn of phrase. He could also do impromptu lyrics which could sometimes be surreally funny, suggestive or, occasionally, downright obscene and could fix a person in the audience – usually female – and tell her her immediate future, 'If you play your cards right, baby – oh only if you play dem right.'

He would also be confrontational with West Indians, which they loved as he would hurl the most awful insults at them in faultless patois.

Alan, as you may have gathered, was in awe of no one and respected very little. I frequently saw him engineer a tense situation and control it by sheer personality; a great debunker of pomp and arrogance but never cruel.

We joined Joe Cocker; at last, the big time. We left for America and, thanks to the Maffia management (Bandana Management – their other artist was Tony Bennett), overnight success.

Alan, as previously mentioned, was asthmatic; it never truly incapacitated him but he always had his puffer (early type of nebulizer) to hand. The ephedrine and histamines in the solution gave him indigestion but he had grown out of this by the time we spent a couple of nights in jail in Atlantic City N.J. because of his mother. When Alan had started doing gigs outside of Dalston at the age of 14 or so, his mother had bought him a small canvas zip-up

bag to hold puffer, solution, tissues, etc. and Rennies, which were grey lozenges wrapped in a twist of greaseproof paper, for his indigestion.

Ten years on, the only thing that had seen the light of day was the puffer. The Rennies had been crushed to powder – still in their wraps – at the bottom of it all.

At about 4 am., Alan and I were awakened in our hotel room by three of the local drug squad in Bermuda shorts and psychedelic T-shirts and holding guns. Alan said, 'Is this a stick up?', which amused the officers not at all. They went through our clothes and bags and found nothing (due to a management initiative of having the roadies carry the drugs) until they came to Alan's little bag. They pulled out his puffer and looked at it in amazement. 'What the hell is this?' Alan told them it was for giving enemas to sheep. I think that may have been the point at which they guessed they were not being given the respect they were used to. Also in the bag was a plastic orange with a green lid shaped like leaves. They convinced themselves that this was sunshine – a very potent form of LSD from San Francisco. When they came to the small, dirty, grey twists of paper, they were convinced we were heroin dealers. What's this? 'Medicine,' replied Spenner (knowing full well that that was a street name for heroin). 'My mother makes me take it.' We were duly arrested and locked up in the tank for two days while we waited for the Maffia management company to send a lawyer to get us out. He arrived and bailed us to the chagrin of the detectives who thought we had come up with heroin, which gave a negative response to their tests.

They cautioned us not to leave town and that they would retain our passports until the State had had a go at the heroin. 'Who is this gentleman?' one of them asked, pointing to Mr Silverstein. Alan replied 'He's my mouthpiece. You would do well not to fuck him around.' We are all very well-connected gentlemen, both in New York and Dalston. Al Silverstein then took the officers aside, gave them

some money, made us apologize and shake hands and we went on our way.

After two gruelling years with Joe, we came back to England and carried on as the Grease Band with Henry, Neil Hubbard and Mick Weaver. To cut a long story short, Henry and Alan had become – to put it kindly – complacent, sleepy and unreliable. Alan had always been pathologically unpunctual. I made no judgment of their drug use – with all of us, the dope had been an add-on to the music, but suddenly it was their full time occupation. I left on good terms and the band folded a year later. Alan shaped up due to a combination of poverty and a good woman and formed Kokomo – a band of substance and class. Alan was now living in Notting Hill in London and his and Dyan's were the only white faces in the street. He was accepted and popular there, which was unusual for the time.

Kokomo was fronted by two gay guys singing falsetto and Dyan singing the lowest harmony; predating the Scissor Sisters by some 30 years. Alan was still doing sessions but work was declining. He had a richly deserved reputation for being a character and unreliable. He got away with that sort of behaviour when in the Grease Band but without that kudos people would not put up with it. He was mostly doing live work with Kokomo and in backing bands for good but C-list artists. I would still socialize with him from time to time and the last time we played together was a Grease Band reunion concert promoted by Capital Radio. The line-up was augmented by some of the Kokomo and Alan was flying – truly magic.

Over the next few years, work for Alan was declining in proportion to an increasing heroin habit and he distanced himself from all of us in spite of some financial support from us all – especially Neil. Dyan was a saint; never judgmental and being a great mother to their son Henry. At Christmas 1990, if I remember correctly, he finally owned up and went to the country to get well, I spoke to him from time to time but he was mostly sullen and unapproachable. Resentful, self-pitying and not playing at all. I and others persevered and when I

called him early in 1991, I found the old Alan; playing again at home in anticipation of a reformed Kokomo, happy and full of life and getting to grips with fatherhood. He died at home of a heart attack on the 28th of July 1991, aged 43.

His funeral was sad and beautiful. We saw his family off from the crematorium in East London and went to Dyan's flat in Dalston for the wake, which was a riot. He was well-loved and I still think of him often.

Bruce Rowland

Appendix B Billboard charts

					Root or root/fifth	Walking	Cyclic/Riff/Set groove	Offbeat phrasing	Standard groove	Obvious octaves	16th notes/fast triplets	Consistent 4ths or 8ths	Disco octave	Segments over 8th fret (Eb)	Ascending/descending	Double stops	Clear melodic fragments	Inconsistent/Busy	Bass fills	Solistic elements	Slap	Flows of 4ths and 8ths	Glissando	Arco
					Groove elements									Melodic elements							Superficial			
	Billboard's 'best sellers in store'				A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
1951	**Song title**	**Artist**	**Bass player**	**Instrument**																				
Jan	The Tennessee Waltz	Patti Page		Double bass	x																			
March	If	Perry Como		Double bass	x																			x
	Be My Love	Mario Lanza		Double bass	x																			x
April	How High The Moon	Les Paul and Mary Ford	Les Paul	El-guitar	x																			
June	Too Young	Nat King Cole		Double bass	x																			x
July	Come On-A My House	Rosemary Clooney		Double bass		x																		
Sept	Because Of You	Tony Bennett		Double bass	x																			x
Nov	Cold, Cold Heart	Tony Bennett		Double bass	x																			x
Dec	(It's No) Sin	Eddy Howard		Double bass	x																			
	Cry	Johnnie Ray and the Four Lads	Ed Safranski	Double bass	x	x																		
1952																								
March	Wheel Of Fortune	Kay Starr		Double bass	x																			
May	Blue Tango	Leroy Anderson		Double bass			x																	x
June	Here In My Heart	Al Martino		Double bass	x																			x
July	Delicado	Percy Faith		Double bass			x																	
	Auf Wiederseh'n Sweetheart	Vera Lynn		Double bass	x																			x
Sept	You Belong To Me	Jo Stafford		Double bass		x																		
Oct	I Went To Your Wedding	Patti Page		Double bass	x																			
Nov	It's In The Books (Parts 1&2)	Johnny Standley		No bass																				
	Why Don't You Believe Me?	Joni James		Double bass	x																			
Dec	I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus	Jimmy Boyd		Double bass	x																			
1953																								
jan	Don't Let The Stars Get In Your Eyes	Perry Como		Double bass	x																			
Feb	Till I Waltz Again With You	Teresa Brewer		Double bass	x																			
March	The Doggie In The Window	Patti Page		Double bass	x																			
May	The Song From Moulin Rouge	Percy Faith		Double bass	x																			x
July	I'm Walking Behind You	Eddie Fisher		Double bass	x																			
Aug	Vaya Con Dios (May God Be With You)	Les Paul and Mary Ford		Double bass	x																			
Oct	St George And The Dragonet	Stan Freberg		Double bass																				x
Nov	Rags To Riches	Tony Bennett		Double bass	x																			
1954																								
Jan	Oh! My Pa-Pa (O Mein Papa)	Eddie Fisher		Double bass	x																			
Feb	Secret Love	Doris Day		Double bass	x																			x
March	Make Love To Me	Jo Stafford		Double bass		x																		
April	Wanted	Perry Como		Double bass		x																		x
June	Little Things Mean A Lot	Kitty Kallen		Double bass	x	x																		x
August	Sh-Boom (Life Could Be A Dream)	The Crew-Cuts		Double bass	x	x	x																	
Sept	Hey There	Rosemary Clooney		Double bass	x																			
Nov	This Ole House	Rosemary Clooney		Double bass	x		x														x			
	I Need You Now	Eddie Fisher		Double bass		x																		
Dec	Mr Sandman	The Chordettes		Double bass	x	x																		
1955																								
Jan	Let Me Go, Lover	Joan Weber		Double bass	x																			
Feb	Hearts Of Stone	Fontane Sisters		Double bass	x	x																		
	Sincerely	McGuire Sisters		Double bass	x	x	x																	
March	The Ballad Of Davy Crockett	Bill Hayes		Double bass	x																			
April	Cherry Pink (And Apple Blossom White)	Pérez Prado		Double bass	x		x																	
July	Rock Around The Clock	Bill Haley & his Comets	Marshall Lytle	Double bass		x															x			
Sept	The Yellow Rose Of Texas	Mitch Miller		Double bass	x																			
Oct	Love Is A Many-Splendored Thing	Four Aces		Double bass		x																		x
	Autumn Leaves	Roger Williams		Double bass	x																			
Nov Top100	Sixteen Tons	Tennessee Earnie		Double bass	x		x																	
1956																								
Jan	Memories Are Made Of This	Dean Martin		Double bass	x															x				
Feb	The Great Pretender	The Platters		Double bass	x		x																	
March	Rock And Roll Waltz	Kay Starr		Double bass	x	x																		
	The Poor People Of Paris	Les Baxter		Double bass	x																			
May	Heartbreak Hotel	Elvis Presley	Bill Black	Double bass		x														x				
June	The Wayward Wind	Gogi Grant		Double bass	x																			
August	I Almost Lost My Mind	Pat Boone		Double bass	x																			
	My Prayer	The Platters		Double bass	x		x																	
Sept	Don't Be Cruel	Elvis Presley	Bill Black	Double bass	x																			
Nov	Green Door	Jim Lowe		Double bass		x	x																	
	Love Me Tender	Elvis Presley		No bass																				
Dec	Singing The Blues	Guy Mitchell		Double bass	x																			

Table 9.1 Billboard's Best Sellers in Store Jan 1951—Dec 1956.

1957	**Song title**	**Artist**	**Bass player**	**Instrument**	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
Feb	Don't Forbid Me	Pat Boone		Double bass	x	x	x																	
	Young Love	Tab Hunter		Double bass	x																			
March	Butterfly	Andy Williams		Double bass	x																			
April	All Shook Up	Elvis Presley		Double bass		x	x																	
June	Love Letters In The Sand	Pat Boone		Double bass			x																	
July	(Let me be your) Teddy Bear	Elvis Presley	Bob Moore	Double bass		x	x																	
Sept	Tammy	Debbie Reynolds		Double bass																				x
Oct	Honeycomb	Jimmie Rodgers		Double bass	x	x																		
	Wake Up Little Susie	Everly Brothers		Double bass	x																			
Nov	Jailhouse Rock	Elvis Presley	Bill Black	Electric bass		x	x																	
Dec	You Send Me	Sam Cooke	Ted Brinson	Double bass	x																			
	April Love	Pat Boone		Double bass	x																			x
1958																								
Jan	At The Hop	Danny and the Juniors		Double bass		x																		
Feb	Get A Job	The Silhouettes		Double bass			x																	
March	Don't	Elvis Presley	Bill Black?	Double bass	x																			
	Tequila	The Champs	Cliff Hills	Double bass			x																	
April	Twilight Time	The Platters		Double bass	x	x																		
	Witch Doctor	David Seville		Double bass	x																			
May	All I Have To Do Is Dream	Everly Brothers		Double bass Guitar	x																			
June	The Purple People Eater	Sheb Wooley		Double bass		x	x																	
July	Yakety Yak	The Coasters		Double bass	x		x																	
	Patricia	Perez Prado	Instrumental	Double bass	x																			
Billboard's Hot 100 starts																								
August	Poor Little Fool	Ricky Nelson	James Kirkland	Double bass Tic tac	x																			
	Nel Blu Dipinto Di Blu (Volare)	Domenico Modugno		Double bass	x	x																		
	Little Star	The Elegants		Double bass			x																	
Sept	It's All In The Game	Tommy Edwards		Double bass	x		x																	
Nov	It's Only Make Believe	Conway Twitty		Double bass	x																			
	Tom Dooley	The Kingston Trio	David Buck Wheat?	Double bass	x																			
Dec	To Know Him Is To Love Him	Teddy Bears		Double bass	x																			
	The Chipmunk Song (Christmas Don't Be Late)	David Seville and the Chipmunks		Double bass	x																			
1959																								
Jan	Smoke Gets In Your Eyes	The Platters		Double bass	x																			
Feb	Stagger Lee	Lloyd Price		Double bass	x	x																		
March	Venus	Frankie Avalon		Double bass	x		x																	
April	Come Softly To Me	The Fleetwoods	LA player	Electric bass			x																	
May	The Happy Organ	Dave "Baby" Cortez		Double bass		x	x																	
	Kansas City	Wilbert Harrison		Double bass		x	x																	
June	The Battle Of New Orleans	Johnny Horton	Bob Moore	Double bass	x																			
July	Lonely Boy	Paul Anka		Double bass	x		x																	
August	A Big Hunk O'Love	Elvis Presley	Bob Moore	Double bass		x	x																	
	The Three Bells	The Browns		Double bass	x																			
Sept	Sleep Walk	Santo & Johnny		Double bass Guitar bass	x																			
Oct	Mack The Knife	Bobby Darin		Double bass	x	x																		
Nov	Mr. Blue	The Fleetwoods		Electric bass	x																			
Dec	Heartaches By The Number	Guy Mitchell		Double bass Tic tac	x		x																	
	Why	Frankie Avalon		Double bass	x																			
1960																								
Jan	El Paso	Marty Robbins	Bob Moore	Double bass	x																			
	Running Bear	Johnny Preston		Electric bass			x					x												
Feb	Teen Angel	Mark Dinning	Bob Moore	Double bass	x																			
	Theme From A Summer Place	Percy Faith	Percy Faith orch	Double bass	x																			
April	Stuck On You	Elvis Presley	Bob Moore	Double bass Tic tac		x	x																	
May	Cathy's Clown	The Everly Brothers	Floyd Chance? Lloyd Trotman?	Double bass Tic tac	x																			
June	Everybody's Somebody's Fool	Connie Francis		Double bass Electric guitar			x																	
July	Alley Oop	Hollywood Argyles		Double bass	x		x																	
	I'm Sorry	Brenda Lee	Bob Moore	Double bass Tic tac	x																			
August	Itsy Bitsy Teenie Weenie Yellow Polka Dot Bikini	Brian Hyland		Electric bass	x																			
	It's Now Or Never	Elvis Presley		Double bass	x		x																	
Sept	The Twist	Chubby Checker		Electric bass		x	x																	
	My Heart Has A Mind Of Its Own	Connie Francis		Electric bass			x																	
Oct	Mr. Custer	Larry Verne		Electric bass	x																			
	Save The Last Dance For Me	The Drifters		Double bass			x																	
	I Want To Be Wanted	Brenda Lee		Double bass Tic tac	x		x																	
Nov	Georgia On My Mind	Ray Charles		Double bass	x	x																		
	Stay	Maurice Williams and the Zodiacs		Electric bass			x																	
	Are You Lonesome Tonight?	Elvis Presley		Double bass	x																			

Table 9.2 Billboard's Bestsellers in Store/Hot 100 Feb 1957—Nov 1960.

1961	Song title	Artist	Bass player	Instrument	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
Jan	Wonderland By Night	Bert Kaempfert		Double bass Tic tac	x																			
	Will You Love Me Tomorrow	The Shirelles		Double bass			x																	
Feb	Calcutta	Lawrence Welk		Double bass	x		x																	
	Pony Time	Chubby Checker		Electric bass		x	x																	
March	Surrender	Elvis Presley		Double bass			x																	
April	Blue Moon	The Marcels		Electric bass Tic tac	x		x															x		
	Runaway	Del Shannon		Double bass Baritone sax		x	x																	
May	Mother-In-Law	Ernie K-Doe		Double bass			x																	
	Travelin' Man	Ricky Nelson	Joe Osborn	Electric bass			x																	
June	Running Scared	Roy Orbison		Electric bass			x																	
	Moody River	Pat Boone		Double bass	x		x																	
	Quarter To Three	Gary U.S.Bonds		Double bass Tenor sax	x		x																	
July	Tossin' And Turnin'	Bobby Lewis		Electric bass		x	x																	
August	Wooden Heart (Muss I Denn)	Joe Dowell	Jerry Kennedy	Electric bass	x																			
Sept	Michael	The Highwaymen		Double bass	x																			
	Take Good Care Of My Baby	Bobby Vee		Double bass	x		x																	
Oct	Hit The Road Jack	Ray Charles		Double bass	x		x																	
	Runaround Sue	Dion		Double bass	x		x																	
Nov	Big Bad John	Jimmy Dean	Bob Moore	Double bass			x																	
Dec	Please Mr Postman	The Marvelettes	James Jamerson	Double bass	x		x																	
	The Lion Sleeps Tonight	The Tokens		Double bass		x	x																	
1962																								
Jan	The Twist	Chubby Checker		Electric bass		x	x																	
	Peppermint Twist - Part 1	Joey Dee and the Starliters		Electric bass		x	x																	
Feb	Duke Of Earl	Gene Chandler		Electric bass			x		x															
March	Hey! Baby	Bruce Channel		Electric bass		x	x																	
	Don't Break The Heart That Loves You	Connie Francis		Double bass Tic tac	x		x																	
April	Johnny Angel	Shelley Fabares		Double bass Tic tac	x		x																	
	Good Luck Charm	Elvis Presley		Double bass Tic tac		x	x																	
May	Soldier Boy	The Shirelles		Double bass	x																			
	Stranger On The Shore	Mr. Acker Bilk		Double bass	x																			
June	I Can't Stop Loving You	Ray Charles	Lloyd Trottman	Double bass	x		x																	
July	The Stripper	David Rose		Double bass		x																		
	Roses Are Red (My Love)	Bobby Vinton		Double bass	x																			
August	Breaking Up Is Hard To Do	Neil Sedaka		No bass	x		x																	
	The Loco-Motion	Little Eva		Double bass	x													x						
Sept	Sheila	Tommy Roe		Electric bass	x		x											x						
	Sherry	The Four Seasons	Nick Massi	Electric bass			x																	
Oct	Monster Mash	Bobby "Boris" Pickett and the Crypt-Kickers		Double bass Tic tac	x		x																	
Nov	He's A Rebel	The Crystals		Electric bass			x																	
	Big Girls Don't Cry	The Four Seasons	Nick Massi	Electric bass Double bass Tic tac			x																	
Dec	Telstar	The Tornados	Heinz Burt	Electric bass			x																	
1963																								
Jan	Go Away Little Girl	Steve Lawrence		Electric bass	x																			
	Walk Right In	The Rooftop Singers		Double bass	x																			
Feb	Hey Paula	Paul & Paula		Electric bass	x																			
March	Walk Like A Man	The Four Seasons	Nick Massi	Electric bass			x		x															
	Our Day Will Come	Ruby & the Romantics		Double bass			x																	
	He's So Fine	The Chiffons		Double bass		x	x																	
April	I Will Follow Him	Little Peggy March		Double bass			x																	
May	If You Wanna Be Happy	Jimmy Soul		Electric bass	x		x		x															
June	It's My Party	Lesley Gore		Electric bass					x															
	Sukiyaki	Kyu Sakamoto		Double bass	x																			
July	Easier Said Than Done	The Essex		Double bass	x		x																	
	Surf City	Jan and Dean	Ray Pohlman	Electric bass		x	x																	
August	So Much In Love	The Tymes		Electric bass	x		x											x						
	Fingertips Pt 2	Little Stevie Wonder	Joe Swift? Larry Moses?	Electric bass			x																	
	My Boyfriend's Back	The Angels		Electric bass			x																	
Sept	Blue Velvet	Bobby Vinton		Double bass		x																		
Oct	Sugar Shack	Jimmy Gilmer and the Fireballs	Stan Lark	Electric bass Double bass Tic tac			x																	
Nov	Deep Purple	Nino Tempo and April Stevens		Double bass			x																	
	I'm Leaving It Up To You	Dale & Grace		Double bass Tic tac	x		x																	
Dec	Dominique	The Singing Nun		Double bass	x																			

Table 9.3 Billboard Hot 100 Jan 1961—Dec 1963.

1964	Song title	Artist	Bass player	Instrument	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
Jan	There! I've Said It Again	Bobby Vinton		Double bass Tic tac		x																		
Feb	I Want To Hold Your Hand	The Beatles	Paul McCartney	Electric bass	x				x															
March	She Loves You	The Beatles	Paul McCartney	Electric bass	x		x		x															
April	Can't Buy Me Love	The Beatles	Paul McCartney	Electric bass		x	x																	
May	Hello, Dolly	Louis Armstrong		Double bass	x	x																		
	My Guy	Mary Wells	James Jamerson	Double bass	x	x	x				x							x	x					
	Love Me Do	The Beatles	Paul McCartney	Electric bass	x																			
June	Chapel Of Love	The Dixie Cups		Electric bass	x		x												x					
	A World Without Love	Peter & Gordon		Electric bass	x				x															
July	I Get Around	The Beach Boys	Carol Kaye	Electric bass			x					x												
	Rag Doll	The Four Seasons	Nick Massi	Electric bass			x		x															
August	A Hard Day's Night	The Beatles	Paul McCartney	Electric bass														x	x			x		
	Everybody Loves Somebody	Dean Martin		Electric bass	x																			
	Where Did Our Love Go	The Supremes	James Jamerson	Electric bass			x		x													x		
Sept	The House Of The Rising Sun	The Animals	Chas Chandler	Electric bass	x																	x		
	Oh, Pretty Woman	Roy Orbison	Billy Gilmore?	Electric bass			x		x															
Oct	Do Wah Diddy Diddy	Manfred Mann	Tom McGuinness	Electric bass			x		x													x		
	Baby Love	The Supremes	James Jamerson	Electric bass		x						x												
Nov	Leader Of The Pack	The Shangri-Las		Electric bass Tic tac			x		x															
Dec	Ringo	Lorne Green		Double bass Tic tac	x		x																	
	Mr Lonely	Bobby Vinton		Double bass	x																			
	Come See About Me	The Supremes	James Jamerson	Electric bass			x	x														x		
	I Feel Fine	The Beatles	Paul McCartney	Electric bass	x				x															
1965																								
Jan	Downtown	Petula Clark		Double bass			x		x															
Feb	You've Lost That Lovin' Feelin'	The Righteous Brothers	Ray Pohlman Lyle Ritz	Electric bass Double bass Tic tac					x										x					
	This Diamond Ring	Gary Lewis & the Playboys	Joe Osborn	Electric bass			x		x															
March	My Girl	The Temptations	James Jamerson	Electric bass	x				x											x				
	Eight Days A Week	The Beatles	Paul McCartney	Electric bass		x																x		
	Stop! In The Name Of Love	The Supremes	James Jamerson	Electric bass			x	x	x															
April	I'm Telling You Now	Freddie and the Dreamers	Pete Birrell	Electric bass	x		x		x															
	Game Of Love	Wayne Fontana and the Mindbenders	Bob Lang	Electric bass	x		x		x										x					
May	Mrs. Brown, You've Got A Lov	Herman's Hermits	Karl Green	Electric bass	x	x			x															
	Ticket To Ride	The Beatles	Paul McCartney	Electric bass					x													x		
	Help Me Rhonda	The Beach Boys	Carol Kaye Lyle Ritz	Electric bass Double bass		x	x															x		
June	Back In My Arms Again	The Supremes	James Jamerson	Electric bass			x		x									x				x		
	I Can't Help Myself (Sugar Pie Honey Bunch)	The Four Tops	James Jamerson	Electric bass			x	x																
	Mr. Tambourine Man	The Byrds	Chris Hillman Larry Knechtel?	Electric bass Tic tac				x	x													x	x	
July	(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction	The Rolling Stones	Bill Wyman	Electric bass	x		x	x	x															
August	I'm Henry VIII, I Am	Herman's Hermits	Karl Green	Electric bass																		x		
	I Got You Babe	Sonny and Cher	Lyle Ritz	Electric bass					x										x			x		
Sept	Help!	The Beatles	Paul McCartney	Electric bass	x	x			x													x		
	Eve Of Destruction	Barry McGuire	Joe Osborn	Electric bass			x		x															
Oct	Hang On Sloopy	The McCoys		Electric bass Tic tac			x		x															
	Yesterday	The Beatles		No bass																				
Nov	Get Off My Cloud	The Rolling Stones	Bill Wyman	Electric bass			x															x		
	I Hear A Symphony	The Supremes	James Jamerson	Electric bass			x		x													x		
Dec	Turn! Turn! Turn! (To Everythi	The Byrds	Chris Hillman	Electric bass			x		x															
	Over And Over	The Dave Clark five	Rick Huxley	Electric bass	x																			
1966																								
Jan	The Sounds Of Silence	Simon and Garfunkel	Bob Bushnell?	Electric bass					x														x	
	We Can Work It Out	The Beatles	Paul McCartney	Electric bass	x				x													x		
Feb	My Love	Petula Clark		Electric bass					x															
	Lightnin' Strikes	Lou Christie		Electric bass			x	x	x									x						
	These Boots Are Made For Walkin'	Nancy Sinatra	Carol Kaye Chuck Berghofer	Electric bass Double bass	x		x		x															
March	Ballad Of The Green Berets	SSgt Barry Sadler		Electric bass	x																			
April	(You're my) Soul And Inspiration	The Righteous Brothers	Carol Kaye	Electric bass			x	x	x															
	Good Lovin'	The Young Rascals	Gene Cornish	Electric bass			x	x	x															
May	Monday, Monday	The Mamas & the Papas	Joe Osborn	Electric bass					x													x	x	
	When A Man Loves A Woman	Percy Sledge	Junior Lowe	Electric bass	x	x																x		
June	Paint It, Black	The Rolling Stones	Bill Wyman	Electric bass			x		x													x	x	
	Paperback Writer	The Beatles	Paul McCartney	Electric bass			x	x			x			x				x	x			x		
July	Strangers In The Night	Frank Sinatra		Double bass	x				x															
	Hanky Panky	Tommy James and the Shondells	Mike Vale	Electric bass	x		x											x						
	Wild Thing	The Troggs	Pete Staples	Electric bass			x															x		
August	Summer In The City	The Lovin' Spoonful	Steve Boone	Electric bass												x						x	x	

Table 9.4 Billboard Hot 100 Jan 1964—Aug 1966.

	Song title	Artist	Bass player	Instrument	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
Sept	Sunshine Superman	Donovan	Spike Heatly	Double bass Tic tac			x		x													x		
	You Can't Hurry Love	The Supremes	James Jamerson	Electric bass			x	x										x		x				
	Cherish	The Association	Jerry Scheff	Electric bass			x		x															
Oct	Reach Out (I'll Be There)	The Four Tops	James Jamerson	Electric bass			x	x	x	x		x						x	x	x		x		
	96 Tears	? & the Mysterians	Frank Lugo	Electric bass			x	x				x												
Nov	Last Train To Clarksville	The Monkees	Larry Taylor	Electric bass	x		x	x														x		
	Poor Side Of Town	Johnny Rivers	Joe Osborn	Electric bass					x									x				x	x	
	You Keep Me Hangin' On	The Supremes	James Jamerson	Electric bass			x	x	x	x		x						x						
Dec	Good Vibrations	The Beach Boys	Carol Kaye Lyle Ritz	Electric bass Double bass	x	x	x					x		x			x							
	Winchester Cathedral	The New Vaudevill	Neil Korner	Electric bass	x				x															
	I'm A Believer	The Monkees	unknown	Electric bass				x				x			x			x						
1967																								
Feb	Kind Of A Drag	The Buckinghams	Nick Fortuna	Electric bass			x		x									x						
March	Ruby Tuesday	The Rolling Stones	Bill Wyman	Electric bass Double bass					x													x		
	Love Is Here And Now You're Gone	The Supremes	James Jamerson	Electric bass Double bass			x				x						x					x		
	Penny Lane	The Beatles	Paul McCartney	Electric bass Double bass		x		x		x				x	x		x	x	x				x	
	Happy Together	The Turtles	Chip Douglas	Electric bass			x															x		
April	Somethin' Stupid	Nancy and Frank Sinatra	Carol Kaye Chuck Berghofer	Electric bass Double bass	x				x															
May	The Happening	The Supremes	Jamerson?	Electric bass			x	x				x						x						
	Groovin'	The Young Rascals	Gene Cornish	Electric bass	x		x	x																
June	Respect	Aretha Franklin	Tommy Cogbill	Electric bass			x	x			x							x				x		
July	Windy	The Association	Joe Osborn	Electric bass			x	x	x									x				x		
	Light My Fire	The Doors	Larry Knechtel	Electric bass			x																	
August	All You Need Is Love	The Beatles	Paul McCartney	Electric bass	x			x									x	x	x				x	
	Ode To Billy Joe	Bobbie Gentry		Double bass	x																			
Sept	The Letter	Box Tops	Bill Cunningham	Electric bass			x		x			x												
Oct	To Sir, With Love	Lulu	John Paul Jones?	Electric bass				x	x									x		x				
Nov	Incense And Peppermints	Strawberry Alarm (	Gary Lovetro	Electric bass			x	x	x			x			x			x						
Dec	Daydream Believer	The Monkees	Chip Douglas	Electric bass	x																	x		
	Hello, Goodbye	The Beatles	Paul McCartney	Electric bass	x		x				x				x				x			x	x	
1968																								
Jan	Judy In Disguise (With Glasses)	John Fred and his Playboy Band	Harold "Hog" Cowart	Electric bass			x	x				x						x				x		
Feb	Green Tambourine	The Lemon Pipers	Steve Walmsley	Electric bass			x	x			x			x				x				x		
	Love Is Blue	Paul Mauriat		Electric bass	x				x															
March	(Sittin' On) The Dock Of The Bay	Otis Redding	Donald Dunn	Electric bass	x			x	x									x					x	
April	Honey	Bobby Goldsboro		Electric bass					x										x					
May	Tighten Up	Archie Bell & the Drells	Jerry Jenkins	Electric bass			x	x						x				x		x				
June	Mrs. Robinson	Simon and Garfunkel	Larry Knechtel?	Electric bass	x		x	x						x	x		x	x	x					
	This Guy's In Love With You	Herb Alpert		Double bass	x		x																	
July	Grazing In The Grass	Hugh Masekela	Henry Franklin	Electric bass			x		x										x					
August	Hello, I Love You	The Doors	Doug Lubahn	Electric bass			x	x	x													x		
	People Got To Be Free	The Rascals	Gene Cornish	Electric bass				x			x							x	x					
Sept	Harper Valley PTA	Jeannie C. Riley		Double bass	x			x	x													x		
	Hey Jude	The Beatles	Paul McCartney	Electric bass	x				x									x				x	x	
Nov	Love Child	Diana Ross & the Supremes	James Jamerson	Electric bass			x	x		x	x							x	x			x		
Dec	I Heard It Through The Grapevine	Marvin Gaye	James Jamerson	Electric bass			x	x				x						x						
1969																								
Feb	Crimson And Clover	Tommy James and the Shondells	Tommy James?	Electric bass			x	x	x									x				x		
	Everyday People	Sly & the Family St	Larry Graham	Electric bass			x					x									x			
March	Dizzy	Tommy Roe	Joe Osborn	Electric bass			x		x					x			x					x		
April	Aquarius/Let the Sunshine In (The Flesh Failures)	The Fifth Dimension	Joe Osborn	Electric bass			x	x	x	x		x		x			x	x	x			x		
May	Get Back	The Beatles with B	Paul McCartney	Electric bass			x			x		x						x	x					
June	Love Theme From Romeo And Juliet	Henry Mancini	Carol Kaye	Electric bass	x				x										x					
July	In The Year 2525 (Exordium And Terminus)	Zager and Evans	Mark Dalton	Electric bass	x		x					x												
August	Honky Tonk Women	The Rolling Stones	Bill Wyman	Electric bass				x		x								x	x					
Sept	Sugar, Sugar	The Archies	Joey Macho	Electric bass			x	x	x										x			x		
Oct	I Can't Get Next To You	The Temptations	James Jamerson	Electric bass			x	x			x	x						x	x					
Nov	Suspicious Minds	Elvis Presley	Tommy Cogbill	Electric bass	x				x	x		x						x	x			x		
	Wedding Bell Blues	The Fifth Dimension	Joe Osborn	Electric bass				x	x										x			x	x	
	Come Together	The Beatles	Paul McCartney	Electric bass			x	x			x	x		x		x		x	x			x	x	
	Something	The Beatles	Paul McCartney	Electric bass				x		x	x			x	x		x	x	x			x	x	
Dec	Na Na Hey Hey Kiss Him Good	Steam	Paul Leka	Keyboard bass								x												
	Leaving On A Jetplane	Peter, Paul and Mary		Double bass			x	x		x								x						
	Someday We'll Be Together	Diana Ross & the Supremes	James Jamerson	Electric bass			x		x															

Table 9.5 Billboard Hot 100 Sept 1966—Dec 1969.

1970	Song title	Artist	Bass player	Instrument	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
Jan	Raindrops Keep Fallin' On My Head	B.J.Thomas		Double bass Electric bass	x				x															
	I Want You Back	The Jackson 5	Wilton Felder	Electric bass			x	x	x	x	x				x		x	x	x	x				
Feb	Venus	The Shocking blue	Klaasje van der Wal	Electric bass			x					x										x		
	Thank You (Falettinme Be Mice Elf Agin)	Sly & the Family Stone	Larry Graham	Electric bass			x	x								x					x			
	Everybody Is A Star	Sly & the Family Stone	Larry Graham	Electric bass	x			x	x													x	x	
	Bridge Over Troubled Water	Simon and Garfunkel	Joe Osborn	Electric bass	x				x					x	x		x		x				x	
April	Let It Be	The Beatles	Paul McCartney	Electric bass	x		x		x									x	x			x	x	
	ABC	The Jackson 5	Wilton Felder	Electric bass			x	x		x					x			x						
May	American Woman	The Guess Who	Jim Kale	Electric bass			x		x		x												x	
	No Sugar Tonight	The Guess Who	Jim Kale	Electric bass	x		x	x	x															
	Everything Is Beautiful	Ray Stevens	Norbert Putman	Electric bass	x			x	x									x	x					
June	The Long And Winding Road	The Beatles	John Lennon	Electric bass	x		x												x				x	
	For You Blue	The Beatles		No bass																				
	The Love You Save	The Jackson 5	Wilton Felder	Electric bass			x	x		x	x			x	x		x	x	x	x				
July	Mama Told Me (Not To Come)	Three Dog Night	Joe Schermie	Electric bass			x	x	x															
	(They Long To Be) Close To You	The Carpenters	Joe Osborn	Electric bass	x			x						x			x		x				x	
Aug	Make It With You	Bread	Robb Royer	Electric bass	x		x	x			x			x				x	x				x	
	War	Edwin Starr	Bob Babbitt	Electric bass			x				x							x						
Sept	Ain't No Mountain High Enough	Diana Ross	James Jamerson	Electric bass	x		x	x	x		x	x						x	x			x		
Oct	Cracklin' Rosie	Neil Diamond	Joe Osborn	Electric bass				x	x			x						x				x		
	I'll Be There	The Jackson 5	Wilton Felder	Electric bass	x			x	x		x	x		x	x		x	x	x				x	
Nov	I Think I Love You	The Partridge Fami	Joe Osborn	Electric bass			x	x	x		x	x							x					
Dec	The Tears Of A Clown	Smokey Robinson	Bob Babbit	Electric bass			x	x	x	x		x						x	x					
	My Sweet Lord	George Harrison	Klaus Voormann Carl Radle	Electric bass	x			x	x									x						
	Isn't It A Pity	George Harrison	Klaus Voormann Carl Radle	Electric bass				x	x									x					x	
1971																								
Jan	Knock Three Times	Dawn		Electric bass			x		x									x						
Feb	One Bad Apple	The Osmonds	Bob Wray	Electric bass			x	x		x	x	x						x						
March	Me And Bobby McGee	Janis Joplin	Brad Campbell	Electric bass	x			x	x		x			x				x	x					
April	Just My Imagination (Running Away With Me)	The Temptations	Bob Babbitt	Electric bass			x	x	x			x												
	Joy To The World	Three Dog Night	Joe Shermie	Electric bass			x	x	x			x						x						
May	Brown Sugar	The Rolling Stones	Bill Wyman	Electric bass								x						x						
June	Want Ads	The Honey Cone	George Perry?	Electric bass			x	x				x						x						
	It's Too Late	Carole King	Charles Larkey	Electric bass			x	x	x					x	x			x	x					
	I Feel The Earth Move	Carole King	Charles Larkey	Electric bass			x	x		x	x	x						x	x					
July	Indian Reservation(The Lament Of The Cherokee Reservation Indian)	The Raiders	Keith Allison	Electric bass			x												x				x	
	You've Got A Friend	James Taylor	Leland Sklar	Electric bass	x				x					x	x		x	x	x					
August	How Can You Mend A Broken Heart?	Bee Gees	Maurice Gibb	Electric bass					x										x				x	
Sept	Uncle Albert/Admiral Halsey	Paul and Linda McCartney	Paul McCartney	Electric bass	x				x										x			x	x	
	Go Away Little Girl	Donny Osmond		Electric bass	x				x									x						
Oct	Maggie May	Rod Stewart	Andy Pyle	Electric bass	x				x					x	x		x	x	x				x	
	Reason To Believe	Rod Stewart	Danny Thompson	Double bass	x				x		x					x		x	x			x		
Nov	Gypsys, Tramps & Thieves	Cher	Carol Kaye	Electric bass	x				x	x									x					
	Theme From Shaft	Isaac Hayes	James Alexander? Carol Kaye? Ronald Hudson?	Electric bass			x	x				x											x	
Dec	Family Affair	Sly & the Family St	Larry Graham	Electric bass				x	x	x		x						x	x					
	Brand New Key	Melanie	Don Payne	Electric bass	x																			
1972																								
Jan	American Pie	Don McLean	Bob Rothstein	Electric bass				x	x						x			x	x			x	x	
Feb	Let's Stay Together	Al Green	Leroy Hodges	Electric bass					x	x						x		x	x					
	Without You	Nilsson	Herbie Flowers	Electric bass	x																		x	
March	Heart Of Gold	Neil Young	Tim Drummond	Electric bass			x	x	x									x	x					
	A Horse Without No Name	America	Dan Peek	Electric bass			x					x				x		x	x					
April	The First Time I Ever Saw Your Face	Roberta Flack	Ron Carter	Double bass	x				x							x								x
May	Oh Girl	The Chi-Lites	Eugen Record	Electric bass			x	x				x					x	x	x					
June	I'll Take You There	The Staple Singers	David Hood	Electric bass			x	x			x			x			x							
	The Candy Man	Sammy Davis Jr.		Electric bass					x									x	x				x	
July	Song Sung Blue	Neil Diamond	Joe Osborn	Electric bass	x			x										x					x	
	Lean On Me	Bill Withers	Melvin Dunlap	Electric bass			x	x										x					x	
	Alone Again (Naturally)	Gilbert O'Sullivan		Electric bass					x															
August	Brandy (You're A Fine Girl)	Looking glass	Pieter Sweval	Electric bass			x	x	x			x						x	x					
Sept	Black And White	Three Dog Night	Joe Shermie	Electric bass			x			x						x		x						
	Baby, Don't Get Hooked On Me	Mac Davis		Electric bass	x			x	x															
Oct	Ben	Michael Jackson		Electric bass	x				x							x								
	My Ding-A-Ling	Chuck Berry		No bass																				
Nov	I Can See Clearly Now	Johnny Nash	Aston Barrett?	Electric bass	x		x	x				x						x				x		
Dec	Papa Was A Rollin' Stone	The Temptations	Leroy Taylor? Eddie Watkins?	Electric bass			x																	
	I Am Woman	Helen Reddy	Joe Osborn	Electric bass				x		x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	
	Me And Mrs. Jones	Billy Paul	Anthony Jackson	Electric bass			x	x	x										x			x		

Table 9.6 Billboard Jan 1970—Dec 1972.

1973	Song title	Artist	Bass player	Instrument	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
Jan	You're So Vain	Carly Simon	Klaus Voormann	Electric bass				x	x											x		x	x	
	Superstition	Stevie Wonder	Stevie Wonder	Moog bass			x	x			x			x				x	x				x	
Feb	Crocodile Rock	Elton John	Dee Murray	Electric bass	x	x	x	x	x			x						x						
	Killing Me Softly With His Song	Roberta Flack	Ron Carter	Electric bass	x			x	x							x		x	x					
March	Love Train	The O'Jays	Ronnie Baker	Electric bass			x					x				x		x	x					
April	The Night The Lights Went Out In Georgia	Vicki Lawrence		Electric bass	x			x			x							x					x	
	Tie A Yellow Ribbon 'Round The Ole Oak Tree	Dawn featuring Tony Orlando		Electric bass	x			x																
May	You're The Sunshine Of My Life	Stevie Wonder	Scott Edwards	Electric bass				x	x									x						
	Frankenstein	The Edgar Winter (	Randy Jo Hobbs	Electric bass			x	x				x						x	x			x		
June	My Love	Paul McCartney and Wings	Paul McCartney	Electric bass	x			x										x	x			x		
	Give Me Love (Give Me Peace On Earth)	George Harrison	Klaus Voormann	Electric bass				x						x	x		x	x	x			x	x	
July	Will It Go Round In Circles	Billy Preston	Louis Johnson	Electric bass			x					x									x			
	Bad, Bad Leroy Brown	Jim Croce	Joe Macho	Electric bass	x	x					x							x					x	
August	The Morning After	Maureen McGovern		Electric bass	x				x		x			x			x	x	x					
	Touch Me In The Morning	Diana Ross	Bob Babbitt	Electric bass	x		x	x	x					x	x		x	x	x			x		
	Brother Louie	Stories	Ian Lloyd	Electric bass			x	x			x			x					x				x	
Sept	Let's Get It On	Marvin Gaye	James Jamerson	Electric bass				x	x	x								x	x				x	
	Delta Dawn	Helen Reddy	Joe Osborn	Electric bass				x	x									x	x				x	
	We're An American Band	Grand Funk	Mel Schacher	Electric bass			x	x		x	x	x						x	x					
Oct	Half-Breed	Cher	David Hungate?	Electric bass				x	x	x		x						x				x		
	Angie	The Rolling Stones	Bill Wyman	Electric bass				x	x					x				x	x					
	Midnight Train To Georgia	Gladys Knight & the Pips	Bob Babbitt	Electric bass				x	x		x							x	x					
Nov	Keep On Truckin' (Part 1)	Eddie Kendricks	James Jamerson?	Electric bass Clavinet			x					x												
	Photograph	Ringo Starr	Klaus Voormann	Electric bass					x			x						x						
Dec	Top Of The World	The Carpenters	Joe Osborn	Electric bass					x															
	The Most Beautiful Girl	Charlie Rich	Henry Strzelecki	Double bass				x	x									x				x	x	
	Time In A Bottle	Jim Croce	Tommy West	Electric bass	x																			
1974																								
Jan	The Joker	Steve Miller Band	Gerald Johnson	Electric bass			x				x	x						x	x			x	x	
	Show And Tell	Al Wilson	Dennis Parker	Electric bass			x	x			x	x						x						
	You're Sixteen	Ringo Starr	Klaus Voormann	Electric bass		x			x									x						
Feb	The Way We Were	Barbra Streisand	Carol Kaye	Electric bass				x	x	x	x			x	x	x		x	x				x	
	Love's Theme	Love Unlimited Orchestra		Electric bass			x	x		x		x												
March	Seasons In The Sun	Terry Jacks	Bob Nelson	Electric bass			x		x			x												
	Dark Lady	Cher	prob Hungate	Electric bass			x	x	x														x	
	Sunshine On My Shoulders	John Denver	Richard Kniss	Double bass	x			x										x	x					
April	Hooked On A Feeling	Blue Swede	Bosse Lijedahl	Electric bass			x				x	x										x	x	
	Bennie And The Jets	Elton John	Dee Murray	Electric bass	x			x	x		x							x						
	TSOP (The Sound Of Philadelphia)	MFSB featuring the Three Degrees	Ronnie Baker	Electric bass			x	x	x									x	x					
May	The Loco-Motion	Grand Funk	Mel Schacher	Electric bass			x	x				x						x				x		
	The Streak	Ray Stevens		Electric bass	x																	x		
June	Band On The Run	Paul McCartney and Wings	Paul McCartney	Electric bass	x			x	x			x						x				x	x	
	Billy Don't Be A Hero	Bo Donaldson and the Heywoods	Joe Osborn	Electric bass			x		x															
	Sundown	Gordon Lightfoot	Rick Haynes	Electric bass			x		x									x						
July	Rock The Boat	Hues Corporation	James Jamerson	Electric bass			x	x		x				x			x	x						
	Rock Your Baby	George McCrae	Richard Finch	Electric bass			x	x	x									x						
	Annie's Song	John Denver	Richard Kniss	Double bass	x			x										x	x					
August	Feel Like Makin' Love	Roberta Flack	Gary King	Electric bass	x			x										x						
	The Night Chicago Died	Paper Lace	Cliff Fish	Electric bass			x		x			x												
	(You're) Having My Baby	Paul Anka and Odia	Lenny LeBlanc?	Electric bass					x		x							x	x					
Sept	I Shot The Sheriff	Eric Clapton	Carl Radle	Electric bass			x	x										x						
	Can't Get Enough Of Your Love, Babe	Barry White		Electric bass	x		x	x	x													x	x	
	Rock Me Gently	Andy Kim		Electric bass			x	x	x	x								x	x	x		x		
Oct	I Honestly Love You	Olivia Newton-John		No bass																				
	Nothing From Nothing	Billy Preston	Bobby Watson	Electric bass			x	x			x	x						x	x				x	
	Then Came You	Dionne Warwick ar	Bob Babbitt	Electric bass			x	x	x									x				x		
Nov	You Haven't Done Nothin'	Steve Wonder	Reggie McBride	Electric bass			x	x					x					x			x			
	You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet	Bachman-Turner Overdrive	C.F.Turner	Electric bass			x	x		x				x				x						
	Whatever Gets You Thru The Night	John Lennon	Klaus Voormann	Electric bass				x			x							x						
	I Can Help	Billy Swan		Electric bass			x		x															
Dec	Kung Fu Fighting	Carl Douglas	Frank McDonald?	Electric bass			x																	
	Cat's In The Cradle	Harry Chapin	John Wallace	Electric bass	x				x									x						
	Angie Baby	Helen Reddy		Electric bass	x		x	x	x									x	x				x	
1975																								
Jan	Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds	Elton John	Dee Murray	Electric bass			x				x	x		x				x	x				x	
	Mandy	Barry Manilow	Will Lee?	Electric bass	x				x					x			x						x	
	Please Mr. Postman	The Carpenters	Joe Osborn	Electric bass			x		x										x			x		
Feb	Laughter In The Rain	Neil Sedaka	Leland Sklar	Electric bass			x	x	x	x				x			x	x					x	
	Fire	Ohio Players	Marshall Jones	Electric bass			x																x	
	You're No Good	Linda Ronstadt		Electric bass	x		x	x	x									x	x			x	x	
	Pick Up The Pieces	The Average White Band	Alan Gorrie	Electric bass			x	x		x													x	
March	Best Of My Love	Eagles	Randy Meisner	Electric bass					x					x				x	x					
	Have You Never Been Mellow	Olivia Newton-John		Electric bass				x	x									x	x					
	Black Water	The Doobie Brothers	Tiran Porter	Electric bass	x		x	x						x				x	x					
	My Eyes Adored You	Frankie Valli	Chuck Rainey? Gordon Edwards?	Electric bass				x	x	x								x						
	Lady Marmalade	LaBelle	George Porter jr	Electric bass			x	x	x														x	

Table 9.7 Billboard Hot 100 Jan 1973—March 1975.

	Song title	Artist	Bass player	Instrument	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
April	Lovin' You	Minnie Riperton		no bass																				
	Philadelphia Freedom	Elton John Band	Dee Murray	Electric bass	x		x	x	x		x			x				x	x					
	(Hey Won't You Play) Another Somebody Done Somebody Wrong Song	B.J.Thomas	Mike Leech	Electric bass	x																			
May	He Don't Love You (Like I Love You)	Tony Orlando and Dawn		Electric bass			x	x						x				x				x	x	
	Shining Star	Earth, Wind & Fire	Verdine White	Electric bass			x		x					x		x		x	x		x			
	Before The Next Teardrop Falls	Freddy Fender	Bob Moore	Double bass	x				x									x						
June	Thank God I'm A Country Boy	John Denver		Electric bass	x																			
	Sister Golden Hair	America	David Dickey	Electric bass	x				x			x												
	Love Will Keep Us Together	Captain & Tennille	Daryl Dragon	Electric bass Synth bass			x	x	x															
July	Listen To What The Man Said	Paul McCartney and Wings	Paul McCartney	Electric bass					x									x	x					
	The Hustle	Van McCoy and the Soul City Symphony	Gordon Edwards	Electric bass			x	x	x									x						
August	One Of These Night	Eagles	Randy Meisner	Electric bass			x		x					x		x		x	x				x	
	Jive Talkin	Bee Gees	Blue Weaver Maurice Gibb	Synth bass Electric bass			x	x	x															
	Fallin' In Love	Hamilton, Joe Fran	Joe Frank Carroll	Electric bass				x	x					x				x	x				x	
	Get Down Tonight	KC and the Sunshine Band	Richard Finch	Electric bass				x	x									x						
Sept	Rhinestone Cowboy	Glen Campbell	Scott Edwards	Electric bass					x					x				x						
	Fame	David Bowie	Emir Kassan	Electric bass	x		x		x														x	
	Calypso	John Denver	Richard Kniss	Double bass	x													x	x					
	I'm Sorry	John Denver	Richard Kniss	Double bass	x				x									x	x					
Oct	Bad Blood	Neil Sedaka	Leland Sklar	Electric bass Clavinet			x	x																
Nov	Island Girl	Elton John	Kenny Passarelli	Electric bass			x	x	x			x						x						
	That's The Way (I Like It)	KC and the Sunshine Band	Richard Finch	Electric bass			x	x																
	Fly, Robin, Fly	Silver Convention		Electric bass			x	x	x			x								x				
Dec	Let's Do It Again	The Staple Singers		Electric bass			x	x										x						
1976																								
Jan	Saturday Night	Bay City Rollers	Alan Longmuir	Electric bass			x	x				x												
	Convoy	C.W.McCall	Brian Sampson	Electric bass Piano bass	x			x	x		x			x				x	x		x		x	
	I Write The Songs	Barry Manilow	Steven Donaghey	Electric bass	x			x	x															
	Theme From Mahogany(Do You Know Where You're Going To)	Diana Ross		Electric bass	x			x	x					x		x		x	x			x	x	
	Love Rollercoaster	Ohio Players	Marshall Jones	Electric bass			x	x		x	x		x					x	x				x	
Feb	50 Ways To Leave Your Lover	Paul Simon	Tony Levin	Electric bass	x									x					x				x	
	Theme From S.W.A.T	Rhythm Heritage	Scott Edwards	Electric bass Piano bass			x	x																
March	Love Machine(Part 1)	The Miracles	Scott Edwards	Electric bass			x	x				x						x				x		
	December, 1963 (Oh, What A Night)	The Four Seasons	Don Ciccone	Electric bass			x	x			x							x	x				x	
April	Disco Lady	Johnnie Taylor	Bootsy Collins	Electric bass			x											x	x		x		x	
May	Let Your Love Flow	Bellamy Brothers	Emory Gordy	Electric bass			x							x					x					
	Welcome Back	John Sebastian	David Hungate	Electric bass Double bass	x									x				x					x	
	Boogie Fever	The Sylvers	Leon F Sylvers James Jamerson	Synth bass Electric bass			x																	
	Silly Love Songs	Wings	Paul McCartney	Electric bass	x		x	x				x						x				x	x	
	Love Hangover	Diana Ross	Henry Davis	Electric bass			x	x	x		x		x			x		x						
July	Afternoon Delight	Starland Vocal Ban	Russell George	Electric bass	x			x																
	Kiss And Say Goodbye	The Manhattans	Ronnie Baker?	Electric bass					x										x			x		
August	Don't Go Breaking My Heart	Elton John and Kiki Dee	Kenny Passarelli?	Electric bass			x	x	x									x						
Sept	You Should Be Dancing	Bee Gees	Maurice Gibb	Electric bass	x		x				x							x	x				x	
	(Shake, Shake, Shake) Shake Your Booty	KC and the Sunshi	Richard Finch	Electric bass			x	x	x							x		x						
	Play That Funky Music	Wild Cherry	Allen Wentz	Electric bass			x			x														
Oct	A Fifth Of Beethoven	Walter Murphy and	Harvey Swartz	Electric bass			x	x	x	x		x												
	Disco Duck (Part 1)	Rick Dees and his cast of Idiots		Electric bass	x		x	x		x			x					x						
	If You Leave Me Now	Chicago	Peter Cetera	Electric bass				x	x	x				x	x		x	x					x	
Nov	Rock'n Me	Steve Miller Band	Lonnie Turner	Electric bass			x			x		x												
	Tonight's The Night (Gonna Be Alright)	Rod Stewart	David Hood?	Electric bass					x							x		x						
1977																								
Jan	You Don't Have To Be A Star (To Be In My Show)	Marlyn McCoo and Billy Davis jr.	James Jamerson	Electric bass	x		x	x			x							x	x					
	You Make Me Feel Like Dancing	Leo Sayer	David Hungate?	Electric bass			x	x		x		x	x								x			
	I Wish	Stevie Wonder	Nathan Watts	Electric bass Synth bass			x					x							x				x	
	Car Wash	Rose Royce	Lequeint Jobe	Electric bass	x		x						x					x	x	x	x			
Feb	Torn Between Two Lovers	Mary MacGregor	David Hood	Electric bass	x			x										x	x					
	Blinded By The Light	Manfred Mann's Earth Band	Colin Pattenden	Electric bass	x			x				x		x			x	x					x	
	New Kid In Town	Eagles	Randy Meisner	Electric bass				x	x															
March	Evergreen(Love Theme From A Star Is Born)	Barbra Streisand	Terry Paul?	Electric bass	x									x				x						
	Rich Girl	Daryl Hall and Johr	Scott Edwards	Electric bass	x				x									x						
April	Dancing Queen	ABBA	Rutger Gunnarson	Electric bass			x	x	x		x							x	x				x	
	Don't Give Up On Us	David Soul	Andy Kulberg?	Electric bass	x			x	x														x	
	Don't Leave Me This Way	Thelma Houston	Henry Davis	Electric bass	x					x	x							x	x					
	Southern Nights	Glen Campbell	Bill McCubbin	Electric bass	x		x	x										x				x		

Table 9.8 Billboard Hot 100 April 1975—April 1977.

	Song title	Artist	Bass player	Instrument	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
May	Hotel California	Eagles	Randy Meisner	Electric bass	x		x	x		x		x											x	
	When I Need You	Leo Sayer	Willie Weeks	Electric bass	x		x		x		x			x				x						
	Sir Duke	Stevie Wonder	Nathan Watts	Electric bass	x		x	x			x			x				x	x				x	
June	I'm Your Boogie Man	KC and the Sunshine Band	Richard Finch	Electric bass	x		x	x										x						
	Dreams	Fleetwood Mac	John McVie	Electric bass				x	x									x						
	Got To Give It Up (Part 1)	Marvin Gaye	Marvin Gaye	RMI Synth			x	x						x					x				x	
July	Gonna Fly Now (Theme From Rocky)	Bill Conti		Electric bass	x		x		x	x				x				x	x					
	Undercover Angel	Alan O'Day		Electric bass	x		x	x					x											
	Da Doo Ron Ron	Shaun Cassidy		Electric bass	x			x				x												
	Looks Like We Made It	Barry Manilow	Steven Donaghey	Electric bass					x					x				x	x					
	I Just Want To Be Your Everything	Andy Gibb	Hog Cowart	Electric bass	x		x	x	x									x					x	
August	Best Of My Love	The Emotions	Verdine White	Electric bass	x		x	x	x	x														
Oct	Star Wars Theme/Cantina Band	Meco	Neil Jason? Marcus Miller? A Jackson?	Electric bass	x		x	x		x	x			x				x	x				x	
	You Light Up My Life	Debby Boone		Electric bass	x													x						
Dec	How Deep Is Your Love	Bee Gees	Maurice Gibb	Electric bass	x			x	x									x						
1978																								
Jan	Baby Come Back	Player	Ronn Moss	Electric bass			x	x	x	x								x					x	
Feb	Stayin' Alive	Bee Gees	Maurice Gibb	Electric bass	x		x	x		x			x					x						
March	(Love is) Thicker Than Water	Andy Gibb	Harold Hog Cowa	Electric bass	x		x	x	x									x					x	
	Night Fever	Bee Gees	Maurice Gibb	Electric bass				x	x									x						
May	If I Can't Have You	Yvonne Elliman	Scott Edwards	Electric bass			x	x	x													x		
	With A Little Luck	Wings	Paul McCartney	Electric bass			x	x	x	x				x				x	x			x	x	
June	Too Much, Too Little, Too Late	Johnny Mathis and Deniece Williams	Scott Edwards	Electric bass			x		x	x	x			x				x	x					
	You're The One That I Want	John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John	B Bodine? D Hungate? D Cortez? D Ryan?	Electric bass	x		x	x			x							x					x	
	Shadow Dancing	Andy Gibb	Harold Cowart	Electric bass			x	x	x	x								x			x			
August	Miss You	The Rolling Stones	Bill Wyman	Electric bass			x	x		x	x			x				x					x	
	Three Times A Lady	Commodores	Ronald LaPread	Electric bass	x				x															
	Grease	Frankie Valli	B Bodine? D Hungate? D Cortez? D Ryan?	Electric bass			x	x	x	x													x	
Sept	Boogie Oogie Oogie	A Taste of Honey	Janice Marie Johr	Electric bass			x	x		x				x		x	x		x	x	x			
	Kiss You All Over	Exile	Sonny LeMaire	Electric bass	x		x												x					
Oct	Hot Child In The City	Nick Gilder	Eric Nelson	Electric bass			x	x											x					
Nov	You Needed Me	Anne Murray	Tom Szczesniak	Electric bass	x									x			x						x	
	MacArthur Park	Donna Summer	Sal Guglielmi	Electric bass Synth bass			x	x		x								x				x	x	
Dec	You Don't Bring Me Flowers	Barbra Streisand and Neil Diamond		Double bass																				x
	Le Freak	Chic	Bernard Edwards	Electric bass			x	x			x							x	x				x	
1979																								
Jan	Too Much Heaven	Bee Gees	Harold Cowart	Electric bass				x	x													x		
Feb	Da Ya Think I'm Sexy?	Rod Stewart	Phil Chen	Electric bass Synth bass			x			x				x									x	
March	I Will Survive	Gloria Gaynor	Scott Edwards	Electric bass	x			x	x	x	x							x					x	
	Tragedy	Bee Gees	Harold Cowart	Electric bass Synth bass			x	x	x									x					x	
April	What A Fool Believes	The Doobie Brothers	Tiran Porter	Electric bass Synth bass			x	x	x														x	
	Knock On Wood	Amii Stewart	Gerry Morris	Electric bass Synth bass			x	x				x												
	Heart Of Glass	Blondie	Nigel Harrison	Electric bass Synth bass			x					x	x											
May	Reunited	Peaches & Herb	Scott Edwards	Electric bass	x			x	x									x				x		
June	Hot Stuff	Donna Summer	Scott Edwards	Electric bass Synth bass			x					x							x					
	Love You Inside Out	Bee Gees	Harold Cowart	Electric bass			x	x	x				x					x					x	
	Ring My Bell	Anita Ward	Don Barrett? Ray Griffin?	Electric bass									x					x			x			
July	Bad Girls	Donna Summer	Scott Edwards	Electric bass			x	x										x	x			x		
August	Good Times	Chic	Bernard Edwards	Electric bass			x	x		x													x	
	My Sharona	The Knack	Prescott Niles	Electric bass			x			x		x							x	x			x	
Oct	Sad Eyes	Robert John	Dennis Belfield? Scott Edwards?	Electric bass			x		x									x				x		
	Don't Stop 'Til You Get Enough	Michael Jackson		Synth bass			x																	
	Rise	Herb Alpert	Louis Johnson	Electric bass			x									x		x			x		x	
Nov	Pop Muzik	M	Wally Badarou	Synth bass			x					x												
	Heartache Tonight	Eagles	Timothy B. Schm	Electric bass			x					x												
	Still	Commodores	Ronald LaPread	Electric bass	x				x															
	No More Tears (Enough Is Enough)	Barbra Streisand and Donna Summer	Neil Stubenhaus	Electric bass			x	x				x	x											
Dec	Babe	Styx	Chuck Panozzo	Electric bass	x			x	x															
	Escape (The Pina Colada Song)	Rupert Holmes	Frank Gravis	Electric bass			x																	

Table 9.9 Billboard Hot 100 May 1977—Dec 1979.

1980	Song title	Artist	Bass player	Instrument	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
Jan	Please Don't Go	KC and the Sunshi	Richard Finch	Electric bass	x		x		x															
	Rock With You	Michael Jackson	Bobby Watson	Electric bass			x	x	x							x		x	x				x	
Feb	Do That To Me One More Time	Captain & Tennille	Scott Edwards	Electric bass				x	x					x				x					x	
	Crazy Little Thing Called Love	Queen	John Deacon	Electric bass		x	x											x		x			x	
March	Another Brick In The Wall (Part II)	Pink Floyd	Roger Waters	Electric bass	x		x		x															
April	Call Me	Blondie	Nigel Harrison	Electric bass			x					x												
May	Funkytown	Lipps Inc		Synth bass			x					x	x											
June	Coming Up (Live At Glasgow)	Paul McCartney	Paul McCartney	Electric bass			x		x	x				x				x	x					
July	It's Still Rock And Roll To Me	Billy Joel	Doug Stegmeyer	Electric bass								x												
August	Magic	Olivia Newton-John	David Hungate	Electric bass			x		x			x				x		x					x	
	Sailing	Christopher Cross	Andy Salmon	Electric bass	x			x						x										
Sept	Upside Down	Diana Ross	Bernard Edwards	Electric bass			x		x															
Oct	Another One Bites The Dust	Queen	John Deacon	Electric bass			x	x												x				
	Woman In Love	Barbra Streisand	Harold Cowart? David Hungate?	Electric bass	x			x	x									x						
Nov	Lady	Kenny Rogers	Nathan East	Electric bass					x					x				x					x	
Dec	(Just like) Starting over	John Lennon	Tony Levin	Electric bass			x					x						x				x		
1981																								
Jan	The Tide Is High	Blondie	Nigel Harrison	Electric bass	x		x																	
Feb	Celebration	Kool & the Gang	Robert Bell	Electric bass			x	x																
	9 to 5	Dolly Parton	Leland Sklar	Electric bass	x		x					x											x	
	I Love A Rainy Night	Eddie Rabbitt	David Hungate	Electric bass	x		x	x	x															
March	Keep On Loving You	REO Speedwagon	Bruce Hall	Electric bass	x			x	x									x	x			x		
	Rapture	Blondie	Nigel Harrison	Electric bass	x		x																	
April	Kiss On My List	Daryl Hall and John Oates	John Siegler	Electric bass	x				x										x			x	x	
May	Morning Train (Nine to Five)	Sheena Easton		Synth bass	x			x	x					x				x	x			x		
	Bette Davis Eyes	Kim Carnes	Bryan Garofalo	Electric bass	x		x	x				x												
June	Medley: Intro Venus/Sugar Sugar/No Reply/I'll Be Back/Drive My Car/Do You Want To Know a Secret/We Can Work It Out/I Should Have Known Better/Nowhere Man/You're Going To Lose That Girl/Stars on 45	Stars on 45	Eddie Garr	Electric bass	x		x	x	x			x	x										x	
July	The One That You Love	Air Supply	David Green	Electric bass	x				x										x					
August	Jessie's Girl	Rick Springfield		Electric bass			x	x				x										x		
	Endless Love	Diana Ross and Lionel Richie	Nathan East?	Electric bass	x			x	x									x	x				x	
Oct	Arthur's Theme (Best That You Can Do)	Christopher Cross	David Hungate?	Electric bass	x			x	x									x	x					
Nov	Private Eyes	Daryl Hall and John Oates	John Siegler	Electric bass			x	x	x									x				x	x	
	Physical	Olivia Newton-John		Electric bass			x		x			x				x			x					
1982																								
Jan	I Can't Go For That (No Can Do)	Daryl Hall and John Oates		Synth bass			x																	
Feb	Centerfold	The J. Geils Band	Danny Klein	Electric bass			x			x								x	x		x			
March	I Love Rock'n Roll	Joan Jett and the Blackhearts	Gary Ryan	Electric bass			x																	
May	Chariots of Fire	Vangelis		Synth bass								x												
	Ebony and Ivory	Paul McCartney and Stevie Wonder	Paul McCartney	Electric bass	x				x	x								x					x	
July	Don't You Want Me	The Human League		Synth bass			x					x												
	Eye of the Tiger	Survivor	Stephan Ellis	Electric bass			x	x				x							x					
Sept	Abracadabra	Steve Miller Band	Gerald Johnson	Electric bass			x											x						
	Hard To Say I'm Sorry	Chicago		Synth bass	x			x	x									x						
Oct	Jack and Diane	John Cougar	George Perry	Electric bass	x												x	x						
	Who Can It Be Now?	Men at Work	John Rees	Electric bass								x												
Nov	Up Where We Belong	Joe Cocker and Jennifer Warnes		Electric bass	x				x					x			x	x						
	Truly	Lionel Richie	Nathan East?	Electric bass	x													x						
Dec	Mickey	Toni Basil		Electric bass			x										x	x				x		
	Maneater	Daryl Hall and John Oates	Tom Wolk	Electric bass			x	x											x					

Table 9.10 Billboard Hot 100 Jan 1980—Dec 1982.

Appendix C Bass Notation Legend

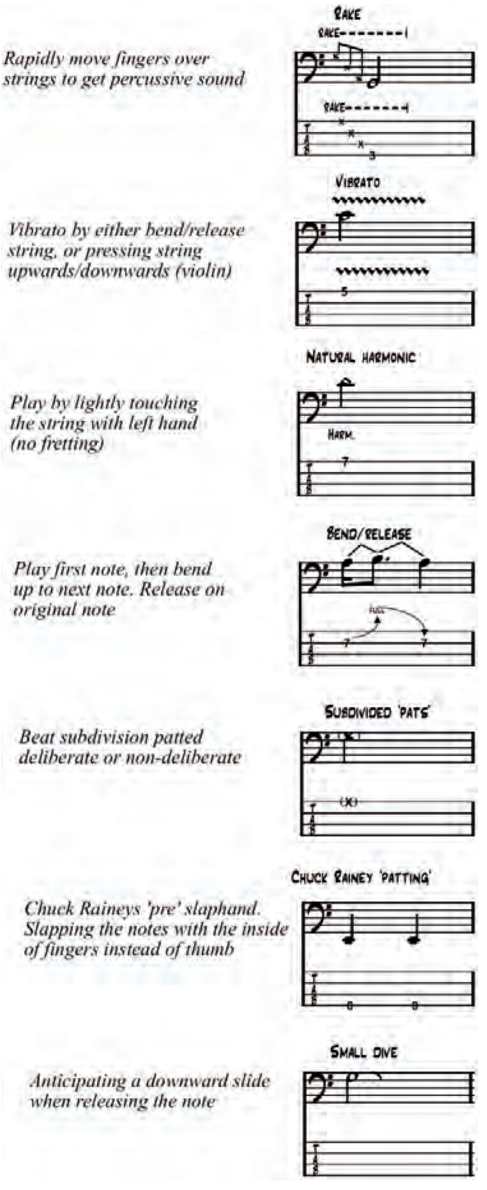

Figure 9.1 Bass notation legend