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Zhang Qi

Kharkiv I. P. Kotlyarevsky National University of Arts,
postgraduate student, Department of Interpretology and Analysis of Music

e-mail: 925726588@qq.com

ORCID iD:0000-0003-3844-6043

Grover Washington Jr.'s style of improvisation on the saxophone

Statement of the problem. Creativity of Gr. Washington Jr. studied, although he was a very popular performer and improviser. The official site provides the most detailed material on the heritage of Gr. Washington Jr., a section is not well of A. West's dissertation (Aaron J. West) is devoted to the method of his improvisation, Gr. Washington Jr. is mentioned in studies on the theory and history of jazz (Aebersold, 1992; Ellenberger, 2005; Levine, 1995) as well as in a research essay on "smooth" jazz (Flynn, 2014; Mader, 2012). **The purpose of the article** is to outline the main features of Grover Washington Jr's improvisation on saxophone.

The research methodology combines several sources: works on the theory of improvisation (Ferand, 1957; Bailey, 1993; Stetsiuk, 2020; Zotov, 2018), works on performance style and interpretation as communication (Adorno, 2002, Nikolaevska, 2020). Based on a combination of methods, the article defines "style of improvisation" as a system of four dimensions: the phenomenological considers improvisation as a method of music-making based on the instantaneous transmission of what appears in empirical time; pragmatic – explores improvisation as a set of elements that are formed in the language of an individual musician and objectified "here and now" according to certain laws of form; personal – interprets improvisation from the standpoint of the psychological and spiritual qualities of a musician-improviser; communicative – studies improvisation from the point of communication between the musician(s) in the group and the musician(s) with the audience. The study uses this proposed definition to analyse Gr. Washington Jr's works. **Scientific novelty** is declared by the analysis of "style of improvisation" as a system of four dimensions (phenomenological, pragmatic, personal and communicative).

Conclusions and results of the study. *The article revealed the features of Gr. Washington's style of improvisation on the example of his albums "Inner City Blues" (1971), "Mister Magic" (1975) and "Winelight" (1980), which belonged to the crossover music of the 1970s and established musical and cultural paradigms of the smooth jazz in the 1980s. The pragmatic dimension of the style is evident in the saxophone timbre ("multi-timbre" instrument); modal harmony (an evolution from a "two-chord vamp" to richer harmonic thinking, from smooth jazz to fusion); predominantly "horizontal" melodic thinking; tendency to build short phrases. The communicative dimension is expressed in the predominance of the declamatory (recitative) style of jazz improvisation, which returned jazz to the traditions of the swing era, phenomenally manifesting itself in the work of Washington and influencing the further development of jazz.*

Key words: *smooth jazz; saxophone style of improvisation; Grover Washington Jr.; timbre; principle of "two-chord vamp"; declamatory (recitative) style of jazz improvisation.*

Statement of the problem. Grover Washington Jr. (1943–1999) is one of the most interesting figures in the history of jazz. Gr. Washington Jr. is a hereditary saxophonist and mastered the instrument at the age of 12. His own style was developed while working in groups of New York and Philadelphia, and from 1971 (when the album "Inner City Blues" was released) he established himself as a significant figure in jazz music. His next albums were nominated for and won a Grammy Award. The audience was especially fascinated by the rather unusual, original, as if lightened, elegant and unique sound of his saxophone. The multi-instrumentalist, who possessed all kinds of saxophones and brilliantly improvised on each of them, changed the view of jazz performance on the saxophone, the attitude to jazz idioms, and inspired future generations of musicians. Therefore, the study of his creative work is appropriate from several points of view: improvisation as a form of musical life, performing style (style of music making), and actually in terms of awareness of the phenomenon of "improvisation style", which is the basis of jazz science and jazz trend within performing interpretology.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Creativity of Gr. Washington Jr. is not well studied, although he was a very popular

performer and improviser. Currently, the most detailed material on his legacy is available on the official website, with small essays in other studies. A separate section of Aaron J. West's dissertation research is devoted to the method of improvisation of Gr. Washington Jr. Studies in the theory and history of jazz (Aebersold, 1992; Ellenberger, 2005; Levine, 1995) mention the name of Gr. Washington Jr., as well as relevant research essays on "smooth" jazz (Flynn, 2014; Mader, 2012).

Methods. The methodology of the proposed study combines several sources. First, we single out the study of improvisation itself. The main ones are: T. Adorno's message (Adorno, 2002) about improvisation as a kind of "speech"; E. Ferand (Ferand, 1957), who distinguishes among the criteria for classification of improvisation its means, performing content, texture coordinates of "horizontal" and "vertical", which, in turn, is related to the technique of the performance, scale and form of implementation; D. Bailey (Bailey, 1993), who studies the laws of idiomatic and non-idiomatic improvisation; B. Stetsiuk (Stetsiuk, 2020), whose study, while continuing the classification of E. Ferrand, systematizes the types of musical improvisation "taking into account different approaches to this phenomenon" (Stetsiuk, 2020: 178), supplementing the existing classification by stratum principle, and pointing to interaction in the contemporary jazz creativity of "such fundamental principles of musical thinking as improvisation and composition" (Stetsiuk, 2020: 178). The connection between improvisation and thought processes is also pointed out by other researchers (in particular, D. Zotov (2018: 113): "The phenomenon of improvisation is closely related to the characteristics of the musical thinking of an individual").

It is important for the research to develop interpretology in relation to the positions of "performing style". We shall focus on the work of Yu. Nikolaievska (2020), who proposes to study the performing style by a three-level system: the physical level which is associated in particular with the psychological characteristics of the performer; the artistic one presents manifestations of artistic energy and the formation of the performing thesaurus; the spiritual level reflects a certain life experience and communicative vector. The latter is important when calculating the situation of improvisation, because it (especially in the collective version) always reflects a certain communicative situation.

Thus, based on some experience of scientific research, we shall propose our own definition of “improvisation style” as a system of four dimensions:

– *phenomenological* – reflecting the essence of improvisation as a method of music making based on instantaneous transmission, as a way of expression that appears in empirical time;

– *pragmatic* – as a set of elements that are formed in the speech of an individual musician and objectified “here-and-now” by virtue of a specific law of form;

– *personal* – related to the psychological and spiritual qualities of the musician-improviser;

– *communicative* – reflecting the situation of communication between the musician(s) in the band and the musician with the audience.

The proposed definition will be used as a working one in the analysis of the creative work of Gr. Washington Jr.

The purpose of the article is to identify the main parameters of the style of improvisation on the saxophone of Grover Washington Jr.

Presentation of basic research material. The analysis of the creative work of Gr. Washington Jr. is impossible without understanding the basics of smooth jazz. Its history spans a series of events that have taken place since the 1960s with the emergence of the genre called jazz fusion, through the 1970s, when numerous jazz performers performed pop melodies more frequently, until the 1980s when Kenny G and others were more successful than any jazz musician at any time before, and finally in the 1990s, when the format was firmly entrenched in FM radio positions.

W. Mader (2012) emphasizes that the incredible success of this trend indicates the conclusion that this music has found an audience that surpasses the audience for almost any other jazz trend. This success is often explained by the intense use of elements that are commonly associated with rock and R&B (rhythm and blues) music. This includes instruments (electric guitars/keys instruments/bass instead of acoustic), the inclusion of vocalists on tracks, the inclusion of simple melodies in simple metre of 2/4 or 4/4 and a limited amount of improvisation. Some listeners often describe smooth jazz music as an “easy listening” or a “relaxing” music. The presence of a vocal part with a text component has become

a characteristic feature of the smooth jazz trend, which is, in fact, between jazz and pop music. Its formation began decades before the “branding” of the music genre became widely known and sold as smooth jazz. W. Flynn (2014) connects the spread of smooth jazz with the uniqueness of urban cultures, in particular, finds in this music a demonstration of the greatest affinity with the image of New York, Manhattan, with many references to Midtown, Central Park, Harlem and Soho. Several compositions try to depict the images of the city late at night, when it is the calmest. “Washington Bridge” by Bonnie James, “Hudson River Nights” by Kim Waters and “Midnight in Manhattan” by Peter White are vivid examples of Grover Washington’s nightly melancholic lyrics of saxophone solos. Thus, all the three compositions contain casual saxophone melodies, combined with the programming of electronic drums, the beats of which are amplified on the background of the compositions, in order to create an additional urban groove. It was in this culture that Grover Washington Jr.’s performing style was being built.

A. West (2008) rightly points out that the style of Gr. Washington Jr. combines the subtle timbre of the instrument with the soulful repertoire, which is a mixture of covers and original compositions. This communicative orientation of the compositions is carried out by a wealth of interpretations of wonderful melodies, plus the typical timbre of the instrument and rhythmic ingenuity. The albums of Washington, “Inner City Blues” (1971), “Mister Magic” (1975) and “Winelight” (1980) are typical for the crossover music of the 1970s and set musical and cultural paradigms for the smooth jazz of the 1980s. They have unforgettable versions of popular and original melodies, exquisite arrangements of many compositions of legendary jazz performers. These three albums embody the diversity of Washington’s personal improvisational style.

Thus, in the musical accompaniment to the lyrics of “Inner City Blues” on the piano there is a calm, melodic and somewhat friendly musical background. This musical accompaniment contrasts directly with the tension expressed in the lyrics. In fact, the musical design of these intense texts is so consonant and melodic that the listener may not realize the true meaning of the text. In Washington’s version, the electric bass is highlighted at the beginning of the melody. The bass played by Ron Carter

provides an *ostinato* that not only outlines harmony but is a counterpoint to Washington's melody. In addition to Carter's melodic bass line, Eric Gale alternates guitar accompaniment with help of a pedal that transforms the sound into a "wow-wow" effect with timbre instability. Gale's composition is aggressive and impulsive, which adds a modern sound to the introduction. Even before Washington's entry, the bass counterpoint and guitar accompaniment created a compelling and energetic pattern.

Washington's timbre is reminiscent of Gale's voice. Like Gale's guitar sound, the timbre of Washington's alto saxophone is light and airy, and the soloist prefers to use the upper register of the instrument. Unlike Gale, Washington is aggressive about the melody. Gale may offer an understanding, but Washington uses this melody as a basis for large-scale improvisations.

According to A. West (2008), Washington's solo style can be described in two musical contexts. In the first context, the author believes, Washington improvises on a repetitive two-chord harmonic sequence that requires him to control the general musical direction with large improvisations. In the second context, Washington performs a long composition that leaves no room for solo, but requires a special sensitivity to melodic improvisation. The examples of these two musical contexts are "Mister Magic" and "In the Name of Love". These melodies show that Washington could use different types of improvisation according to the musical environment in which he played.

Let us note. When jazz musicians criticize smooth jazz (and crossover), it often happens through such a means of expression as two-chord vamp, that is, building the foundation of a composition with help of harmony of only two chords. In the mainstream of jazz, harmony is a vital element of improvisation, which facilitates the interaction between a soloist and a pianist, a guitarist or a bassist. The more refined the harmonious palette, the more options the soloist has. Harmonious complexity and sophistication are the hallmarks of jazz mainstream. The "two-chord vamp", although simplified according to the jazz standards, is an important element of another approach to jazz improvisation. Although having only two chords for improvisation may seem superfluous or boring, the lack of ever-changing harmonies gives the concert-master and soloist special freedom. Complex

harmonic progression can actually limit the soloist, perhaps by limiting him or her to a rigid set of patterns. A simpler harmonious foundation can provide more options for a soloist. Performers in the crossover genre have also shown the flexibility of harmonious simplicity.

In fact, really, one of Washington's most popular tunes, "Mister Magic", is mostly based on just two chords. The album "Mister Magic" was released in 1975 and was immediately successful in sales. This success can be largely explained by the success of the single "Mister Magic". There are only three other compositions on the album disc: the orchestrated version of "Passion Flower" and two originals, "Black Frost" and "Earth Tones". Although these other compositions are noteworthy, "Mister Magic" is the composition that has interested the public and still interests it today.

The composition "Mister Magic" demonstrates an example of Gr. Washington's improvisation on a two-chord melody. It starts with a rhythm section that alternates 12-stroke between C min7 and F7. "Mister Magic" is built as an 8-measure verse and a 6-measure chorus. The first section (A) is based on the alternation in C minor/F7, and the second section (B) is going to Eb major. A melody written by Gr. Washington's percussionist Ralph MacDonald, has all the features of text music, but does not contain text. A. West (2008) writes that this sense of "question and answer" largely explains why "Mister Magic" is so favourable to a wide audience, and also has the inherent potential to create a textual component in this composition.

The guitar and saxophone improvisations are based on harmony and rhythm of introduction. Gr. Washington decides not to aggressively concentrate the listener's attention with scalar passages or harmonic overlays; after all, there are only two chords of harmony in the expressive arsenal, and it would be tempting to add complexity. Instead, he imitates the conversational style of the composition, creating a convincing and unforgettable solo. The solo of Gr. Washington on "Mr. Magic" contains short musical utterances followed by longer answers. As with the melody, Washington's improvisations are like a conversation, but in this case he is talking to himself and not to other musicians. Most of his solos consist of short musical utterances, which usually contain an interval jump and the answers to this initial utterance, as a rule, of a scalar passage based on the blues.

After the specified motif there is a pause which emphasizes the influence of the initial motif and prepares the listener for the following phrase. In measure 2, Gr. Washington “responds” to the original motif with a descending scalar pattern. The melodic content of this pattern is not directly related to the harmony of F7, as it is kept from C min7. The highest note, C, is followed by a blues scale that ends in C. This blues scale is clearly based on C, not F. These two measures are the first challenge and answer. The second set of templates of call and response occurs in measure 3. Measure 3 repeats the general harmonic-rhythmic outline of the motif in the first measure. As in measure 2, Washington adheres to this short motif with a descending passage, but this time the content is based on the harmony of F7. In measure 5, again, Washington mostly repeats his original motif and follows it with a descending melodic movement. Instead of repeating the process again to complete eight measures, Washington is expanding his response to the next measure. This extension goes from high G to C with help of the blues scale. This is a highly effective style of improvisation. Gr. Washington accumulates the entire section of wind instruments in one person. First, the performer plays a short, rhythmic motif (with a specific timbre that resembles the timbre of brass instruments, in particular, a trumpet), and then he himself corresponds by longer passages. This style is similar to the tradition of call and response, which is an important component of the African-American musical tradition. The call is short and concise, as if it were a short question; the response is a more “extended” answer to the question. Surprisingly, as far as I know, no scientific work focuses on Gr. Washington’s call and response. “In the Name of Love” is part of the album “Winelight” (1980), Washington’s most popular and influential album. Washington won a Grammy Award for Best Rhythm and Blues Song for “Just the Two of Us” and another Grammy for Best Jazz Fusion, Vocal or Instrumental Performance for “Winelight”¹.

“In the Name of Love”, one of his most recognizable compositions, consists of a series of refined harmonic and rhythmic elements and a melody

¹ «Winelight» was also nominated for “Record of the Year” and “Just the Two of Us” as “Song of the Year”. By 1981, more than a million copies of “Winelight” had been sold. Although “Just the Two of Us» was a popular single that helped make “Winelight” a success, other melodies of the album point more to Washington’s improvisational style.

of medium tempo (80), which emphasizes the lyrical improvisations of Washington. The improvisations are based on more complex harmonic and melodic constructions. Unlike “Inner City Blues” or “Mister Magic”, “In the Name of Love” consists of complex harmonies, several sections and harmonic modulations. The first part is in F major, the second part goes into D minor, but ends in F major. There is an eight-measure intermediate that modulates from F major to G flat major and sets another modulation for solo, which is G major. After the solo there is a modulating section, which ends with a repetition of the first half of the interlude and returns to the beginning of the melody. The solo part consists of a 4-measure pattern that moves from G | B7 (# 5) | C maj7 | A min7 G/B C D sus|. Throughout his solo, Washington plays short phrases followed by long pauses, allowing the accompaniment and harmonious progression to carry the energy of the melody. Although his statements are brief, Washington links them to specific notes. These “notes of purpose” provide a comprehensive structure that helps to connect his short musical utterances. For example, Gr. Washington emphasizes the note *B*, approaching it with an ascending scale. Washington further emphasizes *B* by pausing between pattern statements. The performer makes *B* the fulcrum of his thematic statement. Note *B* returns as the focal point in 4 more measures. Sound *B* is a good choice for Washington; it is one of the few notes shared by all the chords of the progression chosen by the performer. This is the third *G*, tonic *C*, major seventh *C*, and works well in ascending progression: *A minor – G – C – D sus*.

At the beginning of the modulation section leading to the interlude, Washington is once again building a comprehensive structure of the goal. This time he focuses not only on one note, but on the descending scale. Washington’s model hangs behind the descending scale, starting with *B* and ending with *D sus*. This demonstrates that Washington’s solo has a basic structure. This structure contributes to the lyricism and logic of Washington’s improvisational style. This performance of the “note of purpose” is exactly the kind of improvisation for which popular jazz performers are credited. Unfortunately, Washington’s popularity and repertoire have prevented jazz historians from objectively evaluating his music. Such an analysis helps to identify the lyrical attributes of Washington’s improvisation.

He does not follow the typical parameters of a jazz soloist, but his improvisations are extremely tasty and enjoyable. These melodies always cause tapping of the toes. If one of the traditional axioms of a good jazz solo is “storytelling”, Washington should be highly respected. Washington’s improvisations, whether in a traditional two-chord vamp melody or a complex melodic melody, always convey a sense of conversation and lyrics. Washington’s solos may not have a high level of technical skill, but they have their own charm and logic.

Let us turn to the analysis of some compositions of the albums “**Mister Magic**” and “**Winelight**”.

The song “Earth Tones” (album “Mister Magic”) is performed in a funk style. This style is especially indicated by the part of drums and piano. The timbre of the instruments of the chamber string orchestra and brass ensemble is used as an accompaniment on the album. Washington uses several saxophones in one composition: soprano, alto, and tenor. Changing instruments (although they are from the same family) is not an easy task, because they have different tuning. After all, the soprano saxophone and tenor are in *B flat* style, and the alto saxophone is in *E flat* major. And although the soloist performs improvisation on these instruments, i.e. he does not need to transpose the musical text fixed in the notes, but with such changes in the instruments it is necessary to adapt the intonation and thinking in a different tonal plane. In addition, a certain skill when changing instruments is required in adapting the performer’s embouchure to the sound production. The sound of the saxophone (soprano) is specific, dense and compression. Its timbre is thin and sharp, it has no low-frequency overtones.

Gr. Washington’s solo is characterized by a special structure: there is a tendency to construct short phrases that are performed with intensity and consist of two or four sounds. Short phrases are separated from each other by pauses (also short) and alternate with longer passages. Long phrases usually begin and end with long sounds. This principle of music making gives grounds to draw a parallel between the performing style of Gr. Washington and the manner of guitarists’ playing – representatives of the fusion trend – John McLaughlin and Carlos Santana. The similarity between Gr. Washington’s play and J. McLaughlin’s play lies in the

variety and combination of rhythmic figures and patterns that always sound unpredictable, so it is difficult to identify stable patterns in rhythm. Gr. Washington is united with Santana's performing style by a special approach to melody, phrase construction, the use of consonant intervals, a tendency to natural and harmonic minor, while jazz and rock musicians usually rely on the blues basis. Gr. Washington also uses folk music harmony (modes), such as Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolidian and Dorian. At the same time, the performer does not strive for technical virtuosity, he does not use numerous passages that beat the harmony. Gr. Washington is not inherent in thinking "vertical", to a greater extent he focuses on the "horizontal" – the development of the melody. It is no coincidence that the performer added a soprano saxophone to his "instrumental arsenal", while jazz saxophonists usually used saxophone-alto and tenor. Looking ahead, we should note that when smooth jazz developed and culminated in the 1990s, the main representative of this trend saxophonist Kenny G (real name Kenneth Bruce Gorelick) made the soprano saxophone his main instrument for performing. The design and acoustic characteristics of the soprano saxophone are more similar to the symphony orchestra's academic instruments, such as the oboe and clarinet. Therefore, Gr. Washington intuitively reproduced the manner of playing these very instruments. That is, he interpreted the semantic role of the soprano-saxophone not only in the jazz context, as was the case with alto and tenor saxophones, but also outside the jazz sphere of music making. Gr. Washington expanded this role by adding lyrical, dramatic, and philosophical aspects to his solos.

The composition "Passion Flower" is performed in a lyrical mood, with the decoration with the timbres of string instruments. The sound and manner of playing the saxophone will later become the hallmark of smooth jazz trend.

The songs on the other side of the album – "Black Frost" and "Mister Magic" are presented in a funky style with elements of pop music. Let us recall that funk is a musical trend characterized by the presence of numerous rhythmic groups with short durations, between which there are many similarly short pauses, so the musical material becomes discrete and is perceived not as a continuous stream, but in separate "portions". The tempo of the composition is moderato, which is also an element of

funk, because the compositions of this trend are not performed at a fast or slow tempo.

Let us summarize that it was the album “Mister Magic” that opened the way for the performer to the most prestigious concert halls. During that time, Gr. Washington had a chance to play with jazz music legends Bob James, Randy Weston, Eric Gale, and many others.

“Winelight” album (1980). On the first track of the same name, the saxophone sounds soft, the track presents a developed melody, although the form of the composition is more inclined to the verse-chorus form of pop songs. Thus, the saxophone melody is played in 4 stanzas, then the material changes and the “chorus” of four stanzas sounds. There are also short solo improvisations with the saxophone, bass guitar.

“Just the Two of Us” composition features a vocal part performed by Bill Withers, and that is a rare phenomenon in jazz music. Female vocals are more common, and male is a rarity. As mentioned above, smooth jazz borrowed the male vocal parts from the music trend of “rhythm and blues”, which was popular in the 1940s and 1950s. The backing vocals in this composition consist of parts of female voices.

In the annotation to the “Winelight” album, S. Yanow commented that “a set of high-quality and dancing soul jazz is remembered”. Gr. Washington Jr. has long been one of the leaders in what could be called rhythm and jazz, essentially R&B-influenced jazz. “Winelight” is one of his best albums, and not primarily owing to Bill Withers’ hit “Just the Two of Us”. Five instrumental compositions are considered to be quite large-scale due to Gr. Washington’s long solos (the soloist performs the compositions of the album on various saxophone group instruments – soprano, alto and tenor). The duration of the songs does not fit into the radio format, so it is possible to assume that Gr. Washington did not focus on commercial potential during the recording of the album. Gr. Washington’s “horizontal” melodic thinking is more pronounced in this album, the melodies of the compositions are developed in detail and sometimes the soloist switches to a “vertical” approach –playing out the harmony.

The setting of the composition “Just the Two of Us” is approximately $A = 444.0$ Hz, as opposed to the standard setting of $A = 440$ Hz. It is possible that Gr. Washington tried to sharpen the sound of the instrument in this

way and add a high-frequency timbre. The song is performed in F minor. The main chord progression is D \flat major 7, C7, F minor, E \flat minor 7, A \flat 7. The song sounds at a tempo of about 96 beats per minute.

Conclusions. Unfortunately, Washington's popularity and repertoire have prevented jazz historians from objectively evaluating his music. The performed analysis helped to identify the following attributes of the musician's improvisation, which forms the style of his improvisation.

According to the methodology, we shall outline the following parameters.

The *pragmatics of the style* are primarily related to the timbre side of the saxophones. During his creative life he played soprano, alto, tenor and baritone saxophones, and in some compositions he used several varieties at once. Summarizing this position of style, we can say that he created a "multi-timbre" of the instrument.

The harmonious side of improvisations involves the principle of "two-chord vamp" and mostly "horizontal" melodic thinking. The features of evolution in the style of improvisation range from two-chord vamp to richer harmonious thinking, from smooth jazz to fusion.

The solos of Gr. Washington may not have a high level of technical skill, but they have their own charm and logic and are characterized by a special structure: the tendency to build short phrases that are performed with intensity and consist of two or four sounds. Short phrases are separated from each other by pauses (also short) and alternate with longer passages. Long phrases usually begin and end with long sounds.

Communicative side of the style. Gr. Washington has a more conversational (recitative) style of jazz improvisation. He does not seem to follow the typical parameters of a jazz soloist, but his improvisations are extremely pleasing to the ear and always provoke an emotional reaction from the listener. If one of the traditional axioms of jazz solo is "storytelling", then Washington is developing this idiom. Washington's improvisations, whether in a traditional two-chord vamp melody or a complex melodic melody, always convey a sense of conversation and lyrics.

Thus, in summary, we shall note that G. Washington continues the tradition of jazz music of the swing era. The imitation of his performing style has its origins in music making of such saxophonists as Lester Young and Cannonball Edderley. He does not have a tradition of bop and post-bop

with fast virtuoso passages and “vertical” thinking, as Charles Parker did, or J. Coltrane’s experimental research. The phenomenon of Gr. Washington’s *improvisational style* is characterized by the fact that he took jazz music to a new level, having created more favourable conditions for a wide range of listeners and again, just like it was happening in the swing era, jazz compositions began to resonate not only among professionals.

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Чжан Чі

Харківський національний університет мистецтв імені І. П. Котляревського,
аспірант кафедри інтерпретології та аналізу музики

e-mail: 925726588@qq.com

ORCID iD: 0000-0003-3844-6043

Стиль імпровізації на саксофоні Гровера Вашингтона-молодшого

Творчість Гровера Вашингтона-молодшого (1943–1999) вивчена мало, хоча він був дуже популярним джазовим виконавцем. Найдокладніший матеріал про нього міститься на сайті, присвяченому музикантові; його метод імпровізації розглянуто в розділі дисертації А. Веста (West, 2008), він згадується в дослідженнях з теорії та історії джазу (Aebersold, 1992; Ellenberger, 2005; Levine, 1995), зокрема напрямку “м’якого джазу” (smooth-jazz) (Flynn, 2014; Mader, 2012). Для окреслення особливостей імпровізації артиста, що становить мету нашої роботи, були вивчені праці з теорії імпровізації (Феран, 1957; Бейлі, 1993; Стецюк, 2020; Зотов, 2018), стилю виконання та інтерпретації як комунікації (Адорно, 2002; Ніколаєвська, 2020). На цій основі поняття «стиль імпровізації» визначено як чотиривимірну систему: 1) феноменологічний вимір розглядає імпровізацію як спосіб музикування, заснований на миттєвій передачі того, що виникає в емпіричному часі; 2) прагматичний – досліджує імпровізацію як сукупність елементів, що формуються мовою окремого музиканта та об’єктивуються «тут і зараз» за певними законами форми; 3) особистісний – трактує імпровізацію з позицій психологічних і духовних якостей музиканта-імпровізатора; 4) комунікативний – вивчає імпровізацію з точки зору спілкування музиканта(ів) у групі та музиканта(ів)

з аудиторією. Запропоновані дефініції використані для аналізу творчості Г. Вашингтона-молодшого. Аналіз «стилю імпровізації» з системних позицій (як єдності феноменологічного, прагматичного, особистісного та комунікативного вимірів) складає елемент **наукової новизни** дослідження. Стель імпровізації Г. Вашингтона-молодшого розкрито на прикладі його альбомів «*Inner City Blues*» (1971), «*Mister Magic*» (1975) та «*Winelight*» (1980), які належали до кросоверної музики 1970-х і закріплювали музичні та культурні парадигми «smooth»-джазу у 1980-х роках.

Висновки. Згідно обраній методології, окреслено прагматичний та комунікативний параметри імпровізаційного стилю музиканта. Прагматичний вимір розкривається через такі характеристики, як тембр («багато-тембровість») саксофона; гармонія, що еволюціонує у творчості майстра від «двоакордового вампу» до багатшого гармонічного мислення, від «smooth»-джазу до «fusion»; спосіб композиції – переважно «горизонтальне» мелодичне мислення, схильність будувати короткі фрази. Комунікативний вимір виражається в переважанні декламаційного (речитативного) стилю джазової імпровізації, який повернув джаз до традицій епохи свінгу, яскраво проявившись у творчості Г. Вашингтона-молодшого і вплинувши на подальший розвиток джазу.

Ключові слова: м'який джаз (smooth-jazz); ф'юзн (fusion); стиль імпровізації на саксофоні; Гровер Вашингтон-молодший; тембр саксофона; принцип «двоакордового вампу»; розмовний (речитативний) стиль джазової імпровізації.

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