

# FORMS



HEIN VAN DE GEYN

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# Forms in Standard Tunes

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Hein Van de Geyn / Forms

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# 1

## The main forms in standard tunes

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There are two main forms we encounter in the American songbook tradition, a tradition that lies at the root of much of the tunes found in a typical jazz musician's repertoire book, containing standards, standard jazz tunes and standard Brazilian tunes.

1) A - A - B - A (32 bars)

2) A<sup>1</sup> - A<sup>2</sup> (32 bars)

Another form that remained strong throughout the history of American music is:

3) Blues (12 bars)

These three forms are the backbone of the repertoire that is shared by many jazz musicians and improvisors all over the world.

The sense of form is very important for the improvisor. It will create shape underneath his improvisations; it will make him take the right decisions about starting and stopping the improvised story, since it adheres to the logic of the composed story. It will be helpful in creating arrangements and instant arrangements by the realisation of the fact that there are a few clear-cut

moments within a song where the form can be broken. It is very common for example to have soloists share the whole form on a ballad, and have the melody come in at the Bridge after the solo's. It is absolutely not musically logical to come in with the melody after 8 bars in an A<sup>1</sup> - A<sup>2</sup> song. This underlines the personal reservation I have to mark these forms as: A-B-A-C. To my musical intuition this feels like a misrepresentation of the true form of the song.

The understandable desire by the writers of real books to have tunes fit on one page often forced them to into notating the form of songs in a somewhat confusing way. The use of the Coda sign is often incorrect. A Coda implies a final ending. Although in terms of the song itself the use of the Coda sign might be proper, in terms of the song being a vehicle for improvisation, the use of the Coda sign is creating a false and confusing image of the form. It is often used instead of a 2<sup>nd</sup> ending (in the case of a A<sup>1</sup> - A<sup>2</sup> song) or a 3<sup>rd</sup> ending (in the case of an A-A-B-A song).

Form awareness is extremely important for drummers and bassists. From it come decisions to change cymbal, to go into a 4/4 feel from a 2-beat, change from brushes to sticks. Form awareness leads to a coherent approach to dynamics in rhythm sections as well.

## I) A - A - B - A ( 32 bars )

Many songs follow this form in the most literal way. The small variations are mostly found within the last two bars of the A-sections where the melody and harmony will either lead back to the first chord (1<sup>st</sup> ending), lead towards the bridge (2<sup>nd</sup> ending) or finish the song (3<sup>rd</sup> ending - often the same as the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> ending). The Bridge (sometimes named “The Channel” or “The Middle Section”) mostly will present new and somewhat contrasting melodic and/or harmonic material.

A few clear and well known examples of the A-A-B-A song:

- **Misty**
- **Body And Soul**
- **My Old Flame**
- **Angel Eyes**
- **Caravan**
- **The Way You Look Tonight** (sections are simply doubled in length: 16 bars per section)
- **I'll Remember April** (sections simply doubled in length: 16 bars per section)

A very common variation on the A-A-B-A form is the addition of an extra 4 bars at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> A-section. An extra turn-around or repetition of the last phrase lies at the base of this variation often.

Some clear examples:

- **Star Eyes** (a straight ahead addition of 4 bars)
- **I Remember You** (through composed to create an extra 4 bars)
- **My Funny Valentine** (fascinating for its melodic variation on the A-sections)

Here are some variations:

- **All The Things You Are** (modulating A-sections) (extended last A with 4 bars)
- **I Loves You Porgy** (with an extended bridge of 10 bars)
- **Alone Together** (the first two A-sections have 14 bars)
- **You Go To My Head** (a through composed ending of an extra 8 bars form an integral part with the A-A-B-A song)
- **Moonlight In Vermont** (with the first two A-sections being 6 bars)
- **Moonlight Serenade** (with the first two A-sections being 12 bars)

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- **Stormy Weather** (the repetition of phrases leads to a 10-bar 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> A-section)
- **Invitation** (second A-section a minor third up; a long 16 bar Bridge; an extended 3<sup>rd</sup> A-section)
- **My Ship** (a long 6-bar extension on the 3<sup>rd</sup> A-section)
- **A Nightingale Sang In Berkeley Square** (with A-sections of 10 bars)
- **Stablemates** (with A-sections of 14 bars)
- **Joy Spring** (2<sup>nd</sup> A-section is half a step higher than the 1<sup>st</sup>; Bridge half a step higher again)
- **Epistrophy** (1<sup>st</sup> A-section uses an ascending motive; 2<sup>nd</sup> A-section descends, the 3<sup>rd</sup> A-section descends as well)

Some more and fascinating variations are:

- **God Bless The Child** (with a 10-bar A-section)
- **Goodbye** (with a 12-bar A-section)
- **Lush Life** (with a verse that cannot be omitted; A-sections and a Bridge of 4 bars and a real through composed last A-section of 14 bars)
- **Mood Indigo** (sections of 4 bars plus a second composed line on a variation of the harmony)

## Forms In Standard Tunes

# 2

## Verses, Intros, Int

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# 3

## In Practise

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## Forms In Standard Tunes

## Forms In Standard Tunes

*about the author:*

HEIN VAN DE GEYN (The Netherlands - 1956) has played Jazz professionally ever since he finished his studies at the conservatories of Tilburg and Rotterdam. He lived in the US for several years, working with John Abercrombie, Larry Schneider, Tony Bennett, Larry Vuckovich and many others.

After his return to Europe he has been establishing himself as one of the most sought after bass players in Europe. Hein's playing can be heard on some 100 recordings. He has been the bass player with Philip Catherine since 1985 and recorded 9 CD's with him. In 1987 he toured and recorded in Japan with Chet Baker. Hein was also the bassist on the last concert of Chet Baker in Rotterdam in 1988. This was also the year Hein started to play with, and arrange for Dee Dee Bridgewater, with whom he has been performing at most of the important festivals and stages in Europe (Montreux, Antibes, Vienne, Berlin, Northsea, London ...) as well as in the USA (Carnegie Hall, Village Vanguard, Montreal, Newport Festival...) and Japan (Keystone Corner, Blue Note). After three albums and numerous tours and performances Hein and Dee Dee's paths separated in 1996 since Hein wanted to pursue his own career as a leader and producer.

In July 1990 Hein made the first album under his own name, a duo with Lee Konitz. Several tours followed. In 1994 he created his group BASELINE with John Abercrombie and Joe LaBarbara. This group recorded several albums and toured all over Europe.

1994 was also the year in which Hein co-founded the jazz label Challenge Records, for which he produced a number of successful recordings. Four of them received an Edison (Dutch Grammy) for best Jazz recording of the year.

In 1996 Hein became the head of the bass section in the Jazz department of the royal conservatory in The Hague. In this year he also was awarded the prestigious Prins Bernhard Foundation Music Prize. He received this prize for his importance in the development of European Jazz as well as for his stimulating role as mentor and producer of many young musicians in Holland.

In 1998 Hein received the Bird Award of the Northsea Jazz Festival. In this year he was also elected as "Best European Acoustic Bass Player" by a referendum of the Belgian radios RTBF and VRT.

During a sabbatical period spent in South Africa in 2001/2002 Hein started writing his "Comprehensive Bass Method". This extensive method on bass playing (950 pages) became available in 2007 and is slowly becoming the standard work for the double bass worldwide.

From 2008 to 2010 Hein was the artistic manager of the Rotterdam Jazz Academy and was leading this internationally orientated school with great flair and enthusiasm.

In 2010 Hein decided to basically stop his travelling career as a performing bassist and moved with his family to South Africa to run a guest house, and dedicate his life to writing and education. He is a lecturer at the university of Cape Town (UCT).

Hein has performed with many artists over the years. To name a few: Chet Baker - Freddie Hubbard - Roy Hargrove - Woody Shaw - Kenny Wheeler - Tom Harrell - Nat Adderley - Abbey Lincoln - Meredith d'Ambrosio - Marlana Shaw - Tony Bennett - Mark Murphy - Jack DeJohnette - Ed Thigpen - Joe Labarbera - Elliot Zigmund - Peter Erskine - Idris Muhammad - Billy Hart - John Abercrombie - Tal Farlow - Larry Coryell - Dave Pike - Toots Thielemans - Hank Jones - Tommy Flanagan - Michel Petrucciani - Enrico Pieranunzi - Barry Harris - Horace Silver - Junior Mance - Walter Davis Jr. - Tete Montoliu - Horace Parlan - Jacki Byard - Slide Hampton - Bob Brookmeyer - Joe Lovano - Lee Konitz - Johnny Griffin - Benny Golson - Red Holloway - Charlie Rouse - Bobby Watson - Lew Tabackin - Gary Bartz - Archie Shepp - Rick Margitza - Charlie Mariano...

*all the subjects in this series are covered in “Comprehensive Bass Method”  
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# FORMS



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# MOLL DUR



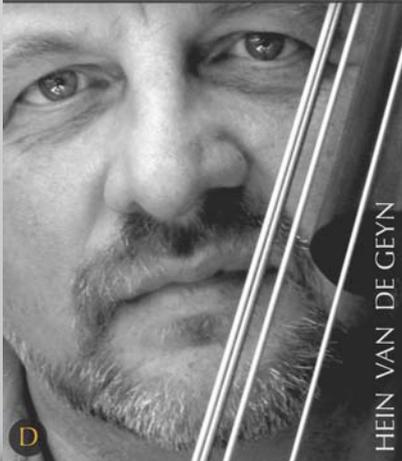
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# ODD METERS



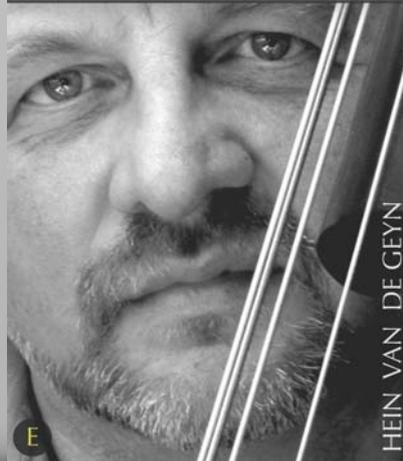
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# PRACTISING



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# IN-OUT THUMB



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# WORK ON A TUNE



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