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## How Did Ray Brown's Playing Evolve During His Tenure from 1951 to 1965 in the Oscar Peterson Trio?

Jason Crowe  
*University of Denver*

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## How Did Ray Brown's Playing Evolve During His Tenure from 1951 to 1965 in the Oscar Peterson Trio?

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**How did Ray Brown's playing evolve during his tenure from 1951 to 1965 in the Oscar**

**Peterson Trio?**

**Annotated Bibliography**

## **Abstract**

How Ray Brown's bass playing evolved during his tenure from 1951 to 1965 in the Oscar Peterson Trio. Compare and contrast Ray Brown's work during the 14 years he performed with the trio.

## Annotated Bibliography

1. Brown, Ray. *The Art of Playing the Bass*. Filmed in 1993 in Hollywood, CA. Produced by Masai Films and Rayben Production. 3 VHS cassettes.

In this 3-video cassette set, Ray Brown leads sessions of performing and interviewing other musicians in addition to critiquing student performers who also perform in the videos. All the musicians interviewed are jazz legends, including legendary bassist Milt Hinton, who played with Louis Armstrong, Billie Holiday, Frank Sinatra, and many other jazz musicians. Seeing and hearing Mr. Brown present his vision and approach to playing bass through his own words, examples, and conversations with musicians being interviewed make these videos required watching for anybody wanting to learn about Ray Brown.

2. Brown, Ray. *Ray Brown's Bass Method*. Hollywood, CA: Ray Brown Music Co., 1963.

Ray Brown was a member of the Oscar Peterson Trio and played with almost every significant jazz musician of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including Stan Getz, Ella Fitzgerald, Johnny Hodges, and Duke Ellington. A comprehensive jazz bass method book which is a fundamental part of the foundation of the pedagogy of jazz bass. Specifically, the material presented by Ray Brown covers the technique for the right and left hand and then provides examples of different scales, chords, and examples of basslines to play over those chords.

3. Clayton, John. *Big Band Bass*. Lebanon, IN: Studio P/R, 1978.

Author, bassist, and arranger, Mr. Clayton holds a degree from Indiana University and has won multiple Grammy awards. He is also the co-leader of the Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra and has won a GRAMMY. He presents an informative guide on improvisation basics, including creating walking basslines primarily geared for playing in a jazz band. The book provides excellent written-out bass lines over chord changes that are a great reference for bassists of any level working on developing and refining their improvised bass lines.

4. Crow, Bill. *Jazz Anecdotes*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Bill Crow is a well-known bassist and, during his 60-plus year career, played with many artists including Stan Getz, Gerry Mulligan and Zoot Simms. He is a published author of multiple books from Oxford University Press. The book is organized by topic in the first half and by artist in the second half and gives the reader insight into the lifestyle, especially about life on the road and on the stage for jazz musicians during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Ray Brown spent many years touring with many musicians in the jazz world, and these stories give us some insight into what those experiences were like for him.

5. Goldsby, John. *The Jazz Bass Book: Technique and Tradition*. San Francisco: Backbeat Books, 2002.

The author, John Goldsby, is a well-regarded bassist currently performing with the WDR Band in Germany and is a published author. This book covers the history of jazz bassists and the techniques and concepts of the jazz bass player. One of the historical sections is a chapter on Ray Brown. The chapter on Ray Brown is excellent, and the many transcriptions and analyses of them by the author make this a must-have book for anybody interested in jazz bass.

6. Hitt, Eric. "Connecting Ray Brown's Bass Method (1963) to *We Get Requests* (1964): A Comparative Analysis." DMA diss., University of North Texas, 2023. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

Eric Hitt is a professor of bass at a major university and holds a doctorate in jazz bass from the University of North Texas. Dr. Hitt analyzes Ray Brown's bass lines from transcriptions of his performance on *We Get Requests* and compares those to examples and concepts presented in his bass method book to show connections between the two. The connections drawn in this dissertation between Ray Brown's teaching in his book and his choices of basslines for this album's music make it a key source of information in the study of Ray Brown.

7. Hennessey, Mike. Jazz Journal, "First Bass – Ray Brown Interviewed." *Jazz Journal* 75 (July 1982): 1.

Mike Hennessey is a jazz pianist and English musical journalist for jazz magazines in Europe and North America. and worked for 27 years as a correspondent and international editor for the US magazine *Billboard*, before retiring in 1994. This interview is part 1 of a two-series interview with Ray Brown. In this interview, Ray discusses the night Oscar Peterson invited Ray Brown and Danish bassist Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen (NHOP), who was Ray Brown's replacement in the Oscar Peterson Trio when he left the trio, to both join him on stage at the Montreux Jazz Festival. This concert is well-known to jazz bassists, and hearing Ray Brown tell the story of how it came together and about the concert itself makes this a bedrock source for any discussion about Ray Brown.

8. Hennessey, Mike. Jazz Journal, "First Bass – Ray Brown Interviewed/2." *Jazz Journal* 75 (August 1982): 7.

Mike Hennessey is a jazz pianist and English musical journalist for jazz magazines in Europe and North America. and worked for 27 years as a correspondent and international editor for the US magazine *Billboard*, before retiring in 1994. This interview is part 2 of a two-series interview with Ray Brown. It is an excellent source of information about Ray Brown, including Mr. Brown sharing his thoughts on everything from dealing with the music industry to playing bass unamplified before the invention of bass amps and piezo pick-ups.

9. Mok, Lucille Y. "Glenn Gould, Oscar Peterson, and New World Virtuositities." PhD diss., Harvard University, 2014. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

Lucille Mok received her PhD from Harvard University and currently teaches at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the University of Illinois in Chicago. Mr. Mok compares pianists Glen Gould and Oscar Peterson from Canada in this dissertation. The study also touches on the different cultural and societal issues both performers faced in the second half of the twentieth century. Chapter 2 on Oscar Peterson focuses on his role as leader of the Oscar Peterson Trio and some of the challenges he and the group faced concerning jazz critics and how they navigated artistic desires versus popularity and growing their audience base.

10. Peterson, Oscar and Richard Palmer. *A Jazz Odyssey: The Life of Oscar Peterson*. London: Continuum, 2002.

This autobiography, edited by Richard Palmer, begins chronologically covering Peterson's life growing up and then covers individual musicians Oscar worked with and musical issues and situations, along with stories from his many years of touring. In the book, Oscar discusses the musicians he performed with and his insights on what he thought of Ray Brown as a musician and what it was like performing together, making this a great source for anybody wanting to learn more about Ray Brown.

11. Peterson, Oscar. *Oscar Peterson Note for Note: Transcriptions of Classic Recordings*. Transcribed by Miles Black. Victoria, B.C.: PG Music Inc., 1999.

Miles Black is a highly respected performer based in Vancouver, BC, and has performed with many A-list musicians over the years, including Lee Konitz, Max Roach, and Maynard Ferguson. In this book, Mr. Miles Black presents his transcriptions of 18 of Oscar Peterson's solos divided into two sections. The first contains 8 of his well-known original compositions, and the second section contains ten selections based on the blues form. The transcriptions are well-written and provide a detailed glimpse into Mr. Peterson's playing, which is key to understanding Ray Brown's role in the ensemble and the sound textures when he was creating basslines within.

12. Rybicki, Mathew. *Ray Brown: Legendary Jazz Bassist*. Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Publishing, 2015.

Mr. Rybicki holds a graduate degree from the Julliard School of Music (2004) and is a published author. Mr. Rybacki presents 18 of his transcriptions of Ray Brown performances and then analyzes those bass lines. The transcriptions are accurate, and their analysis is very insightful and an important source when discussing or analyzing Ray Brown's playing. Some highlights include the forward by bassist Christian McBride and the chapter on Transcribing Tools, where Mr. Rybacki shares the process and the technology, he uses in the transcription process. All the analyses are well done, but the one on *Easy Does It*, performed by the Oscar Peterson Trio, is especially insightful and essential to the conversation of Ray Brown and his influence on that group.