

# Homer and Jazz . . .

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**“Homer and Jazz: the song continues . . .”**

# ΙΛΙΑΔΟΣ Α

Albert Lord, "The  
Singer of Tales"

Μῆνιν ἄειδε, θεά, Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος

-----1

-----2-----3

οὐλομένην, ἣ μυρί' Ἀχαιοῖς ἄλγε' ἔθηκε,

-----4

-----5-----6

πολλὰς δ' ἰφθίμους ψυχὰς Ἀϊδι προΐαψεν

-----7

-----8-----9

ἠρώων, αὐτοὺς δὲ ἐλώρια τεῦχε κύνεσσιν<sup>10</sup>

-----11-----12

5 οἰωνοῖσί τε πᾶσι, Διὸς δ' ἐτελείετο βουλή,<sup>13</sup>

-----14-----15

ἔξ οὗ δὴ τὰ πρῶτα διαστήτην ἐρίσαντε

-----16

-----17-----18

Ἀτρεΐδης τε ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν καὶ δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς.

-----19

-----20-----21-----22

Τίς τ' ἄρ σφωε θεῶν ἑριδι ξυνέηκε μάχεσθαι;

-----23-----24

-----25

## Iliad Scroll 1.1-8

1 Anger [*mēnis*], goddess, sing it, of Achilles son of Peleus (7) –

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2 disastrous (3) [*oulomenē*] anger that made countless pains [*algea*] for the Achaeans,

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3 and many steadfast lives [*psūkhai*] it drove down to Hādēs,

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4 heroes' (5) lives, but their bodies it made prizes for dogs

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5 and for all birds, and the Will of Zeus was reaching its fulfillment [*telos*] –

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6 sing starting from the point where the two - I now see it - first had a falling out,

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engaging in strife [*eris*],

7 I mean, [Agamemnon] the son of Atreus (6), lord of men (22), and radiant Achilles (53).

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8 So, which one of the gods was it who impelled the two to fight with each other in strife

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[*eris*]?

## The Arming of Paris and Menelaus: 2 “versions”

First he (i.e. Paris) put the greaves around his legs,  
fine ones, fitted with silver ankle-pieces.  
Second he put on his breastplate about his chest,  
of his brother Lycaon; and fitted it to himself.  
And about his shoulders he threw his silver-studded sword  
of bronze, and then his shield great and sturdy.  
And upon his mighty head he put a well-made helmet  
with horse-hair crest; and terribly did the plume nod from  
above.  
And he took a stout spear, which fitted his hands.  
And likewise warlike Menelaus donned his battle gear.

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And upon his mighty head he put a well-made helmet  
with horse-hair crest; and terribly did the plume nod from  
above.  
And he took *two stout spears, tipped with bronze*.  
And likewise Menelaus donned his *warlike armor*,  
*His shield and shining helmet, and two spears*  
*And fine greaves fitted with ankle-pieces,*  
*And about his shoulders he threw his silver-studded sword.*

# “Degrees” of Improvisation

#1: embellishment or ornamentation: minor variations on the melody

#2: paraphrase: “a more subtle transformation [of precomposed material] in which original and additional notes blend into a new melody of homogeneous design.” “The performer passes from interpreter to composer . . .”

#3: “harmonic improvisation”: the improvised melody may not resemble the “original” melody, but it still follows the underlying harmonic structure. A listener with “good ears” can tell that the performer is “improvising over” Night and Day.

See Harvard Dictionary of Music; see also: Gregory Smith, *Homer, Gregory, and Bill Evans? The Theory of Formulaic Composition in the Context of Jazz Piano Improvisation*. Harvard Music PhD, 1983, chapter 2.

# Night and Day - Improv #1

**A1**

6

12

**A2**

17

23

27

30

“embellishment”

“paraphrase”

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is written on a single staff in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of 30 measures. Measure 1 is the start of section A1. Measures 1-5 contain a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes in measure 3. Measure 6 starts section A2. Measures 6-11 contain a melodic line with triplets in measures 7, 8, and 10. Measure 12 continues the melodic line with triplets in measures 12, 13, and 14. Measure 17 is the start of section A2. Measures 17-22 contain a melodic line with triplets in measures 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22. Measure 23 continues the melodic line with a triplet in measure 23. Measure 27 continues the melodic line with a triplet in measure 27. Measure 30 is the final measure of the piece, ending with a double bar line. Red arrows point to the triplet in measure 3, labeled “embellishment”, and the triplet in measure 10, labeled “paraphrase”.

“embellishment”



2  
33 **B**

“paraphrase”



38 **C**

“harmonic  
improvisation”



43



45