

MY MUSICAL MEMORY PALACE

By Karl Arnold Belser
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I am a self-taught piano player after the method by John Mehegan given in JAZZ IMPROVIZATION Volume I 1959 published by Watson-Guption Publications, New York. I am also visually impaired, which means that I cannot read music. Hence, I have arranged and memorized all of the songs I know using the Mehegan arrangement style.

The arrangements splits the chords into either 1 and 5 or 1 and 7th notes in the left hand and 3 and 7 or 3 and 5 respectively in the right hand, while some fingers in the right hand play the melody. The chord progressions, like around the circle of 5ths, and are easily executed using a minimal motion of the hands. Further the progression patterns are like words that one uses over and over in different songs, which makes memorization easier. I have learned most of the patterns in every key.

I can play about 50 songs by memory using this method in which a lot of the chord patterns have become habitual.

Up until the summer of 2012 I used a list of songs to remind me what song I know how to play. I read an article (actually listened to an article on the recording for the blind) that described how memory masters memorized things. The method is called THE MEMORY PALACE or THE METHOD OF LOCI as described in the following Wikipedia article.

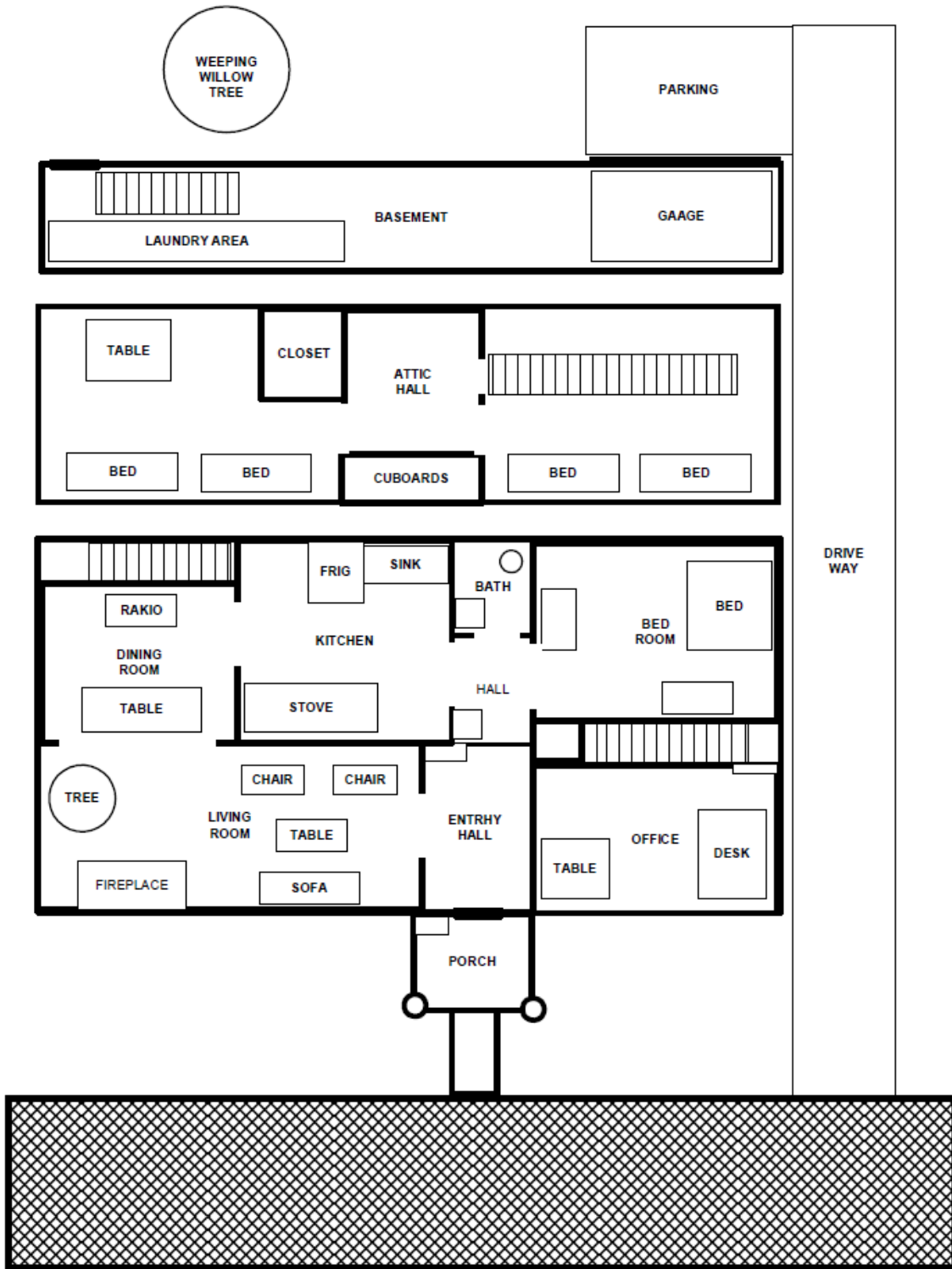
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Memory_palace

By the way I read or rather listen to any written article using a text to speech converter.

In short, the method involves using special memory of some familiar place and associating items, in this case the names of songs, with different places. One may literally walk through this place, the memory palace, and recall items.

My memory palace is the house that I lived in from 1945 to 1950, 1636 Fairmont Blvd., Eugene Oregon. The house was basically a one-bedroom house with an attic, where my brothers and I lived, and a basement with a garage as shown in the figure on the next page. I visited this house in 2000 and the building has been enlarged and completely changed to convert it into a large two-story house.

My repertoire of songs is listed following the drawing of the house. I documented this memory palace so that I would not forget the associations. I rarely play my whole repertoire these days.



FRONT OF HOUSE

- 1) *My Theme Song* by Karl Belser – Sidewalk
- 2) *Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man* by Jerome Kern – Step to Porch
- 3) *As Time Goes By* by Herman Hupfeld – Front Parch
- 4) *The Way Yu Look Tonight* by Jerome Kern – Left Parch Pillar
- 5) *Lollypops and Roses* by Tony Valoma
- 6) *Yesterday* by Paul McCartney – Mailbox
- 7) *This Song Is You* by Jerome Kern – Front Door

ENTRY HALL

- 8) *I'll Be Seeing you* by Sammy Fain – Entry Hall
- 9) *Bye Bye Balckbird* by Ray Henderson – Wall Phone

LIVING ROOM

- 10) *Skylark* by Hoagy Charmichael – Living Room
- 11) *Misty* by Erroll Garner – Living Room Sofa
- 12) *Smoke Gets in Your Eyes* by Jerome Kern – Left Easy Chair
- 13) *Make Believe* by Jerome Kern – Right Easy Chair
- 14) *Penthouse Serenade* by Gordon Clofford – Coffee Table

CHRISTMAS

- 15) *Christmas Song* by Mel Tormé - Fireplace
- 16) *I'll Be Home For Christmas* by Walter Kent – Photo on Fireplace Mantel
- 17) *Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas* by Hugh Martin – Tree
- 18) *Silver Bells* by Jay Livingston – Tree Decorations
- 19) *My Favorite Things* by Richard Rogers – Presents Under Tree

DINING ROOM

- 20) *Like Someone in Love* by Jay Henderson – Dining Room
- 21) *Where is Love* by Lionel Bart – Radio
- 22) *Don't It Make Your Brown Eyes Blue* by Richard Leigh – Diningroom Table

BASEMENT

- 23) *John Mehegen's Theme* by John Mehegan – Stairs to Basement
- 24) *Autumn Leaves* by Joseph Kosma – Laundry Room
- 25) *Love is Blue* by André Popp - Garage
- 26) *Georgia* by Hoagy Carmichael – Parking Area

KITCHEN

- 27) *All The Way* by Jimmy Van Hausen – Kitchen
- 28) *Moonlight in Vermont* by Karl Suessdorf - Refrigerator
- 29) *An Afair to Remember* by Hugo Friedhofer - Stove
- 30) *When I Fall in Love* by victor Young - Sink

BATHROOM

- 31) *These Foolish Things Remind Me of You* by Jack Strachey - Bathroom
- 32) *My Funny Valentine* by Richard Rogers – Bathtub
- 33) *This Masquerade* by Leon Russel - Shower

HALL

- 34) *All The Things You Are* by Jerome Kern - Hallway
- 35) *Moon River* by Henri Mancini – Coat Closet

MAIN BEDROOM

- 36) *Our Love is Here to Stay* by George Gershwin - Bedroom
- 37) *Blue Moon* by Richard Rogers - Bed
- 38) *I Left My Heart in San Francisco* by George Cory – Man's Dresser
- 39) *You Belong to Me* by Chilton Price – Woman' Dresser

OFFICE

- 40) *My Romance* by Richard Rogers - Office
- 41) *Killing Me Softly With Your Song* by Charles Fox - Desk
- 42) *Angel Eyes* by Matt Dennis – Drafting Table
- 43) *I'll Never Stop Loving You* by Nicholas Brodsky – Stairs Up

ATTIC

- 44) *Heart and Soul* by Hoagy Carmichael – Attic Hall
- 45) *Stardust* by Hoagy Carmichael – Left Bedroom
- 46) *Who Can I Turn To* by Leslie Bricusse – Bed #1
- 47) *We'll Be Together Again* by Carl T. Fischer – Bed #2
- 48) *Don't Get Around Much Anymore* by Duke Ellington - Table
- 49) *Tenderly* by Walter Lloyd Gross - Closet
- 50) *Softly* by Hoagy Carmichael – Right Bedroom
- 51) *A Foggy Day in London Town* by George Gershwin – Bed #3
- 52) *Let's Fall in Love* by Buddy Rich – Bed #4

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