



McCoy Tyner, Modal Jazz, and the Dominant Chord



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EST 50

MUTRI DOCTORAL SCHOOL

SIBELIUS ACADEMY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS HELSINKI 2019

McCoy TYNER, MODAL JAZZ, AND THE DOMINANT CHORD

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EST 50

Sibelius Academy

University of the Arts Helsinki

Sibelius Academy of the University of the Arts Helsinki

MuTri Doctoral School

Arts Study Programme

Thesis

EST Publication Series 50

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Cover design: Jan Rosström

Printed by Unigrafia, Helsinki 2019

ISSN 1237-4229 (print)

ISSN 2489-7981 (PDF)

ISBN 978-952-329-143-0 (print)

ISBN 978-952-329-140-9 (PDF)

One of the characteristics of my style is that I can take a dominant chord and do a lot of different things with it, utilizing suspensions and moving around that particular sound and really just developing it.

-McCoy Tyner in an interview with Ben Sidran on September 23, 1985.

My music is an extension of bebop.

-McCoy Tyner in an interview with Len Lyons in 1975.

Abstract

Linna, Sami (2019). *McCoy Tyner, Modal Jazz, and the Dominant Chord*. Sibelius Academy of the University of the Arts Helsinki. EST Publication Series 50.

This thesis examines the significance of dominant seventh chords to jazz pianist McCoy Tyner's style during the 1960s. As a member of the John Coltrane Quartet, Tyner was at the forefront in the emergence of modal jazz. Consequently, scholarly writings and pedagogic materials have looked at Tyner through the modal jazz paradigm, emphasizing scales and quartal harmonies. However, Tyner himself has brought up the use of dominant seventh chords as one of the characteristics of his style, as well as his expression being rooted in bebop.

The source material for this analysis consists of audio recordings, audiovisual materials, books, scholarly articles and dissertations, magazine articles, and internet sources. The presented musical examples were chosen from the material transcribed by the author, including 29 complete and 34 partial transcriptions of McCoy Tyner's solos, along with transcriptions of Tyner's accompaniment and compositions. Melodic lines and chord voicings are analyzed in relationship to other similar examples from Tyner's recorded output and connections between Tyner's early style and his later recordings are brought out. In sections where they are most relevant, and in order to musically contextualize Tyner's piano parts, the contributions of his fellow musicians have been notated.

The findings show that McCoy Tyner's style evolved throughout the 1960s with new elements added continuously. Tyner achieves a wide variety of sounds by placing dominant chords over a primary bass pitch and by combining scale-based melodic ideas with free movement of parallel dominant chords. He frequently utilizes functional chord progressions to create movement and to resolve phrases in modal contexts. The independence between the left-hand harmonies and the right-hand melodies is a key factor in Tyner's way of dealing with tension and release. The musical examples transcribed from the recordings of the John Coltrane Quartet shed new light on the definitions of modal jazz itself.

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Preface

This work was motivated by problems that I felt I needed to solve to be able to grow as an artist and an educator. Ever since I became aware of the classic recordings by the John Coltrane Quartet, they have had a continuously increasing influence on me. From early on as a music student I have wanted to be able to produce at least something close to that sound, even though my instrument is a hollow body jazz guitar. But it has been really difficult to figure out how.

Just a few days before writing this preface, I saw a blog post by the jazz pianist Ethan Iverson in which he writes about McCoy Tyner: “As influential as he’s been, there’s something eternally mysterious about Tyner’s vocabulary. [...] After transcribing McCoy, the phrases just sit there, refusing to give up any secrets.”¹ This is exactly how I felt about the sound McCoy Tyner created. I had studied music and graduated with a master’s degree in jazz. I thought that I had a pretty clear idea on how to play chord changes and there was at least some pedagogic material available that made sense to me in relation to how the music sounds on the classic recordings from the 1940s and 1950s. But when it came to conceptualizing John Coltrane’s music with McCoy Tyner on the piano, I was lost. Of course there was an abundance of pedagogic material on “modal playing” as well, going through chord voicings built on fourths, pentatonic scales, side-slipping techniques, modal substitute scales and everything. I had lessons with great musicians who could show me examples on how to get closer to that sound. But somehow I just couldn’t make all of this connect with the sound I heard on those recordings. There was something missing for me: a bridge between the functional chord changes and modal jazz expression.

Artistically I felt the need to somehow react to what is around me. For the past couple of decades in much of the contemporary jazz, minor seventh and major seventh type chords have prevailed over the bluesy and dissonant dominant seventh sounds. Also, today’s pop music rarely relies on functional dominant-tonic movements, and very seldom is there anything that resembles the 12-bar blues form in a way that was typical for the early rock and roll music.² This notion of course highly depends on one’s personal background and surroundings.

When John Coltrane’s *One Down, One Up – Live at the Half Note* was released in 2005, it felt current and relevant to me. It sounded completely different from anything that was going on at the time. Paradoxically for some readers, I would assume, since McCoy Tyner is one of the most imitated musicians in the history of jazz, I turned to his playing in search for a more personal sound as a bandleader and guitarist today.

¹ Iverson 2018.

² Growing up, I used to listen to the English rock band the Rolling Stones’ records, through my father’s example, including a version of Rufus Thomas’ “Walking the Dog”, among others.

Acknowledgments

I want to thank my supervisor, Professor Jukkis Uotila, for believing in me from early on in my career, always helping and supporting me, and sharing his incredible musicianship, experience, and knowledge, including an entire library of rare recordings, books, and videos that are not out there on the internet. Without Jukkis continuously offering his insights, challenging my ideas, asking for clarifications, and providing a great example on what dedication to this music looks like, this thesis simply wouldn't exist. Through the years, I have learned so much from the many opportunities I've had to play and interact with such a remarkably versatile musician and educator.

Dr. Kaarina Kilpiö helped me a great deal in structuring my thesis by giving me valuable comments during the decisive part of the writing process. I also want to express my gratitude to Professor Erkki Huovinen for examining the thesis with the utmost care and pointing out many things that could be improved. Professor Huovinen's notions had an enormous influence on how the final version turned out. I am also thankful to David Hazeltine for his remarks.

The musicians featured on my recording "Sami Linna Quartet" are truly special people to me. Dr. Dana Hall has been a huge part of this project as a whole and I am extremely grateful to him for reviewing and correcting my written text in this thesis. Dana is one of the sharpest and most analytical people I have ever met, and the way he plays is pure feeling, expression, and energy. As a musician, he has immensely helped me in finding the sound I am looking for. It has also been an honor to have him contributing to my project with his compositions. Jussi Kannaste deserves a special mention because in addition to playing great, he has also been my superior as the head of the jazz department for the most of this process. He has been extremely supportive and understanding at times when there has been a deadline that I have had to meet. Dr. Mikko Helevä has been an important collaborator in many ways, and on top of his remarkable musicianship, he has also been great example on how to actually finish one's doctorate studies promptly.

I also want to thank all of the other musicians with whom I have had the chance to play for my doctoral concerts: Ville Herrala, Riitta Paakki, Jussi Lehtonen, Manuel Dunkel, Ville Pynssi, Georgios Kontrafouris, and Quincy Davis. Many of the ideas behind this thesis directly resulted from the way these great musicians played and approached the material.

I am genuinely appreciative of the insightful comments and questions I received throughout my artistic process from the jury consisting of (in addition to Jukkis Uotila) Teemu Viinikainen, Severi Pyysalo, Eero Koivistoinen, Ulf Wakenius, and the late Otto Donner. I want to especially thank Teemu Viinikainen for being such a great colleague, teacher, and inspiration on the guitar. Teemu has helped me with not only the music, but also in my search for the right guitars, amplifiers, reverb units, speakers, electron tubes, cables, etc. I also want to thank Dr. Jari Perkiömäki for pre-examining my doctoral concerts. Jari has been an

enormously significant teacher for me and over the years, I have learned tremendously from the opportunities to play and perform with him.

I owe a big thanks to Jim Beard for his encouragement and help with shaping my artistic vision and compositional choices. Dave Liebman has been an important figure for me as well, as his lectures, lessons, books, and writings have greatly influenced my thinking since I first saw him giving a master class at the Sibelius Academy in the 1990s.

The whole community of the jazz department of the Sibelius Academy is unbelievably inspiring, and I have already mentioned Professor Uotila and lecturers Kannaste, Helevä, and Lehtonen for their involvement in my project. Anne Etelätalo has always helped me with any questions that have come up – first, as an applicant, then as a student, teacher, lecturer, and finally, as the head of the department. Though I have singled these individuals out, in reality I have learned something from every single teacher, student, and staff member I have had the pleasure to work with. I sincerely thank vice deans Elina Laakso and Tanja Johansson for allowing me to flexibly navigate between work responsibilities and writing my thesis.

I am so grateful for the Sibelius Academy Foundation and the doctoral schools of the Sibelius Academy for providing financial support and other resources that enabled me to pursue this endeavor. The funding from the Jenny and Antti Wihuri Foundation allowed me to spend some time in New York as a part of my doctorate studies. These months were incredibly valuable in how the project turned out. Some of the many people that helped me in various ways during my stay there were Peter Bernstein, Mike Moreno, Carmen Staaf, Emma Larsson, Kaarina Ederma, Eila Kaarresalo-Kasari, and Sinikka Blanco.

I have been fortunate to be able to study music with some great teachers from early on, and I would never have been able to tackle anything like this without them. I have to mention my first guitar teacher Yrjö Putkinen, who made the lessons meaningful even though at the time I rarely practiced at all at home. I especially want to thank Antto Varilo for supporting me and showing me the right path when I started to get serious about music. After I got into jazz, Pekka Luukka was a really important teacher for me, and I studied with him for years. He undeniably showed me that everything I need to learn is there on the recordings. I will always remember coming home from his lessons amazed at someone actually being able to sound like the real thing. He is one of my favorite guitarists with such a beautiful sense of harmony.

I owe my parents for everything, but in relation to this thesis, I want to thank my father, Markku, for filling my early childhood with music. One of my fondest memories is him singing along with that radio cassette player blasting away great tunes. I wish to express my deepest gratitude to my mother, Leena, for always supporting me in everything I've done. On top of everything else, she has provided me with the emotional and financial security to be able to follow my heart and pursue a career in music. This is a rare privilege in this world. The support from my brother, Juha-Pekka, and sister, Outi, has also been important.

This project has truly changed my life. I met Ines on my first trip to New York and we have been together ever since. It means the world to me to have someone by my side who really understands me, and she has also helped me with pretty much everything in this thesis. Finally, I am most grateful for our son Konrad, who every day reminds me of the most important things in life.

1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the role of dominant seventh chords in jazz pianist McCoy Tyner's modal jazz expression. To my knowledge, Tyner's playing has not been researched from this point of view, even though Tyner has talked about his way of using dominant chords being one of the characteristics of his style.

To discover the different ways that McCoy Tyner utilizes dominant seventh chords, I transcribed and analyzed a considerable number of his solos, as well as accompaniment and compositions.³ In this thesis, I present examples from the transcribed material, arranged in a way that illustrates the connections between Tyner's early style and his expression in the later part of the 1960s. Because Tyner is one of the key musicians in the development of modal jazz, the characteristics of the style itself and the relationship between harmony and melody are discussed. Consequently, a secondary aspect of this work is to clarify the definition of *modal jazz* itself in relation to what *tonal jazz* is.

Tyner kept evolving and adding new features into his playing continuously throughout the 1960s, so I introduce different aspects of his playing in an approximate chronological order in which they become prominent in his recorded output. In order for the reader to be able to observe entire musical statements, several complete solos are analyzed. Most of the examples are from the recordings of the John Coltrane Quartet and also include remarks on the saxophonist's style. The reason for this is that Tyner's playing style developed in close contact with Coltrane.

The organization of the thesis is as follows: the analytical strategies and the artistic research process leading to my findings are explained in chapter 2, including an overview of the existing research on McCoy Tyner. The following chapters (3–10) deal with different aspects of McCoy Tyner's style.

I start by going through Tyner's typical left-hand voicings for functional chord progressions in major and minor keys, as well as the 12-bar blues form, as found on his early recordings. The transcriptions presented in chapter 3 are referred to later on in the text when similar chord voicings and melodic lines are found in modal contexts. Chapter 4 focuses on the modal vamps in the early recordings of the John Coltrane Quartet. The compositions and arrangements are inspected in relation to what the quartet used as a starting point for each performance. Examples of Tyner's accompaniment as well as solo lines are presented, analyzed, and put into perspective in relation to John Coltrane's expression. Again, the transcriptions in this chapter are used for reference and comparison in the following chapters. Chapter 5 shows McCoy Tyner moving towards more open sounds with the use of chord voicings based on the interval of fourth. Broadened harmonic palette immediately paves the way to increased freedom and new ideas appearing in Tyner's melodic lines. In chapter 6, examples of Tyner experimenting with adding movement over static solo sections are presented. The selected performances were all recorded live at the

³ The complete list of transcriptions is on page 280.

Village Vanguard in November 1961. "Impressions" and "Brasilia" feature melodic lines implying dominant chords flowing from one to another, while "Spiritual" combines functional chord progressions with modal sounds. Chapter 7 illustrates the increased variety in Tyner's chord voicings for dominant seventh chords during the mid-1960s, while the following chapter 8 introduces sounds achieved by combining static melodic material in the right hand with independent dominant chord movement in the left hand. In chapter 9, all of the techniques discussed in the previous chapters come together in an extended solo example from "My Favorite Things" recorded live at the Half Note club in 1965. A few examples demonstrating Tyner's revised melodic language from the late 1960s are included. Chapter 10 looks at Tyner's compositions and arrangements, drawing together different directions in which his dominant voicings typically move.

In the final chapter 11, I bring together the findings from the earlier chapters and try to see what it all means in relation to McCoy Tyner's style and the context of modal jazz.

In my work, the analysis of the musical examples is written as much into the chord symbols and notation as it is written into the text. My aim is to make the text and the notation alternate seamlessly and complement each other. For this reason, I do not use numbering for the musical examples as titles and numbers would interrupt the flow from one to another. The musical examples include notated parts by several other musicians in addition to McCoy Tyner. To allow an easy access to the individual examples, an alphabetical index by musician is included on page 269.

2. METHODOLOGY AND MATERIALS

ARTISTIC RESEARCH PROCESS

This thesis, as a part of an artistic doctoral degree, was preceded by four doctoral concerts and an album release. The artistic work addressed the problem of how to create melodic-harmonic movement in an improvised manner, with only a few predetermined chord progressions, if any, to guide the way. In jazz expression, this approach to improvisation was thoroughly explored during the 1960s, particularly by the small groups led by two influential figures in the development of modal jazz: Miles Davis and John Coltrane.⁴

McCoy Tyner, as the pianist of the John Coltrane Quartet, represents the most complete command of modal jazz expression for me. On the piano, he is able to provide both melodic lines as well as chordal accompaniment on his own, additionally functioning in the bass register with his strong left hand. Because Tyner is in charge of all these musical elements, I don't have to speculate whether the interconnections between them would be accidental or resulting from the accompanist's inability to understand what the soloist is doing. For this reason, I chose Tyner's expression as a model to thoroughly investigate in my artistic work.

DOCTORAL CONCERTS

The doctoral concerts served two primary functions. First, I wanted to get involved in diverse musical situations in which the different aspects of melodic-harmonic movement would be critical, both as a soloist and as an accompanist. Secondly, I wanted to get a broad knowledge of the material that McCoy Tyner worked with during the 1960s. The objective was to become familiar with the compositional ideas that potentially contributed to Tyner's growth as a musician.

In preparing for the concerts, I learned the tunes from the recordings and selected particularly interesting compositions to be rehearsed and performed with a band. I chose the accompanying musicians according to the material, my personal characteristics, and the musical attributes that I was working on. I also transcribed many of Tyner's solos to investigate how he approached the music. I spent a year in preparing for each of the doctoral concerts, which were given from 2009–2012.

For the first concert, I examined the two albums that McCoy Tyner recorded with the guitarist Grant Green: *Solid*⁵ and *Matador*⁶, both from 1964. The main point of interest here was about the pure sound of hollowbody jazz guitar in relation to how Tyner and Elvin Jones, who is on drums on both these records, play.

⁴ The importance of these musicians is discussed in the two great books by Ashley Kahn: *Kind of Blue: The Making of the Miles Davis Masterpiece* and *A Love Supreme: The Story of John Coltrane's Signature Album*.

⁵ Grant Green: *Solid*. Blue Note LT 990, 1979. Recorded on June 12, 1964.

⁶ Grant Green: *Matador*. Blue Note GXF-3053, 1979. Recorded on May 20, 1964.

For the second concert I focused on the early studio recordings of the John Coltrane Quartet from October 1960. While working on the material, I understood how revealing these sessions are in relation to both McCoy Tyner's personal style and John Coltrane's later work. Many of the questions and ideas leading to this thesis originated from going through Coltrane's music.

The third concert concentrated on all the different recordings that Tyner took part in as a sideman between 1963 and 1969, including sessions led by Joe Henderson, Blue Mitchell, Freddie Hubbard, Wayne Shorter, Lee Morgan, Stanley Turrentine, Hank Mobley, Donald Byrd, Bobby Hutcherson, Milt Jackson, and Lou Donaldson. Some of this music I also recorded in a separate studio session for the Finnish Broadcasting Company. Through this concert, I more comprehensively understood that many musicians experimented with similar improvisatory approaches during the 1960s, adding a personal touch to them.

The fourth concert was based on McCoy Tyner's original compositions and arrangements, particularly from the later part of the 1960s and early 1970s. Studying this material further illuminated Tyner's musical thinking and helped me to connect the harmonic movements found in his compositions to his improvisational style. This music was performed at two other concerts in Finland and recorded in studio as well, but the material has not been commercially released.

The final step for the artistic part was to publish a recording with my own quartet performing original material, based on the previous artistic work. The album *Sami Linna Quartet* was released in 2019 on Timmion Records.

Through the artistic process, I became aware of the importance of dominant chords in McCoy Tyner's expression. More than before, I began to see it as a central element to the John Coltrane Quartet's sound, as well as the jazz tradition generally. In addition to that, I found the concept of applying dominant movements helpful for me when improvising in modal contexts. I came up with more detailed thoughts centering around improvising on extended static vamps, as well as increased melodic freedom in playing over chord progressions.

THE THESIS COMPLEMENTING THE ARTISTIC WORK

The artistic work directed me to continue studying McCoy Tyner's playing in my thesis, particularly addressing his use of dominant chords. I had already transcribed many solos, but I had chosen them simply according to what sounded interesting or seemed important at the time. At this point, most of my transcriptions were from material that was recorded in 1964 or later, and it puzzled me why Tyner kept making subtle changes in his left-hand voicings in a seemingly random fashion. Also, I couldn't understand some of his melodic lines. It had become evident that Tyner's style had changed so much during the 1960s that his approach would be difficult to understand without thoroughly going through the steps leading to his mature style.

In the early stages of research for my thesis, I got stuck for a long time going through the origins and definitions of modal jazz as well as searching for McCoy Tyner's various influences. These turned out to be huge topics in themselves. Whatever I found as the first example of a particular innovation was soon followed by a discovery of an even earlier example. I went through periods of studying the music of Thelonious Monk, Bud Powell, Duke Ellington, Red Garland, Horace Silver, and Bill Evans, sporadically going back to the music of the John Coltrane Quartet from 1960 to 1965. In addition to that, I went further back in history to transcribe Fletcher Henderson, Louis Armstrong, and Art Tatum, as well as my old bop favorites Charlie Parker, Hank Mobley, Sonny Rollins, Sonny Stitt, and Barry Harris. Much of the material was also used for the courses I taught at the jazz department of the Sibelius Academy of the University of the Arts Helsinki.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Because the primary reason for me to study McCoy Tyner's expression was artistic and connected to my subjective conception of music, I wasn't initially too concerned on systematically going through the existing research on his style. It also has to be noted that there is so much insight that has never been written down but is just passed on from musician to musician, verbally and through musical examples. I feel that in terms of musical insight, my work is largely built upon the lessons, conversations, and playing opportunities I have had with Professor Jukkis Uotila, especially, as well as Dave Liebman, Jim Beard, Dana Hall, Tim Hagans, Quincy Davis, Michael Weiss, Peter Bernstein, Robert Hurst, Jack Wilkins, Mike Moreno, Steve Cardenas, Aaron Goldberg, Bruce Barth, Kendrick Scott, Jesse van Ruller, Jonathan Kreisberg, Walter Smith III, Seamus Blake, John Scofield, Mike Stern, Conrad Herwig, Gene Perla, Walt Weiskopf, Chico Pinheiro, Pasquale Grasso, and Obed Calvaire, along with many other incredible musicians.

In preparation for writing the thesis, I went through the existing research on McCoy Tyner, as well pedagogical material related to his style. There is still not that much academic research available, especially compared to how much research there is on John Coltrane. I found only one doctoral dissertation focusing solely on Tyner, by Alton Merrell II, *The Life And Music of McCoy Tyner: An Examination of the Sociocultural Influences on McCoy Tyner and His Music*.⁷ Merrell has taken on an enormous task by aiming to cover the historical and sociocultural influences as well as the analysis of McCoy Tyner's mature piano style. The musical analysis is based on Merrell's transcriptions of three McCoy Tyner's solos from 1967. Merrell's intent to study the tension–release movement and the interaction between Tyner's left and right hand is significant, but the material is not broad enough to yield new and far-reaching results.

Brian Levy goes through some accurate examples of both McCoy Tyner's accompaniment and solos in his exceptionally thorough doctoral dissertation *Harmonic and Rhythmic Interaction in the Music of John*

⁷ Merrell 2013.

Coltrane.⁸ Levy brings up excellent points on the quartet's interaction, but since Tyner's playing is just one part of the whole, not that many aspects of his style can be covered.

Some articles on McCoy Tyner's style can be found in scholarly journals. Benjamin Givan's *Apart Playing: McCoy Tyner and "Bessie's Blues"* is an extremely insightful article and respectable in its accuracy considering that it only examines one solo.⁹ However, through the knowledge gained by a more substantial volume of transcriptions, I hope to be able to give some complementary insight into Tyner's solo on "Bessie's Blues". Paul Rinzler's articles *McCoy Tyner: Style and Syntax* and *The Quartal and Pentatonic Harmony of McCoy Tyner* are pivotal as representing the early research on Tyner. However, their relevance today can be questioned, merely because of the vastly improved possibilities for accurate transcribing.¹⁰

In a dissertation from 2009, Poul Sejersen elaborates from the findings in Benjamin Givan's article, analyzing examples from four McCoy Tyner's solos, and pointing to the use of the dominant chord as a way of creating tension and release.¹¹ The dissertation is in Danish but a summary in English is included. Sejersen analyzes examples from four McCoy Tyner's solos and points to the use of the dominant chord as a way to create tension and release. Because of the limited research material, Sejersen relies on earlier research in assessing McCoy Tyner's style as a whole. Nevertheless, his findings offer an indication on the importance of dominant chords in Tyner's expression.

It is a shame that there are no published biographies or books devoted wholly to McCoy Tyner. However, Tyner's key role as a part of the John Coltrane Quartet is brought up in books about Coltrane and the respective authors have interviewed Tyner on many occasions. Lewis Porter's *John Coltrane: His Life and Music* contains many remarks on McCoy Tyner's playing, and in my thesis I aim to get to a more detailed level with some of Porter's comments.¹² I also referenced Cuthbert Simpkins', J.C. Thomas', Bill Cole's, and Brian Priestley's biographies on Coltrane.¹³ The published manuscripts of Coltrane's compositions in Simpkins' book were particularly valuable as a reference, as were some interesting quotes from Tyner in Priestley's book. I looked at some other books on Coltrane as well, but they concentrated more on subjective recollections of the music. In addition to the Coltrane biographies, I inspected two excellent books by Ashley Kahn, as they contain important historical information and interesting quotes from McCoy Tyner – *Kind of Blue: The Making of the Miles Davis Masterpiece* and *A Love Supreme: The Story of John Coltrane's Signature Album*.¹⁴

⁸ Levy 2012.

⁹ Givan 2007.

¹⁰ Rinzler 1981; 1999.

¹¹ Sejersen 2009. The dissertation is in Danish, but a summary in English is included.

¹² Porter 2001.

¹³ Simpkins 1989 [1975]; Thomas 1985 [1975]; Cole 1978; Priestley 1986.

¹⁴ Kahn 2002; 2003.

Many of the references above cite McCoy Tyner's interviews from different magazines. I made it my objective to acquire as many of the magazines in which Tyner is featured as I could. These included back issues of *Down Beat*, *JazzTimes*, *Keyboard*, *Clavier*, *Jazz Journal International*, *Cadence* and *The Black Scholar*. The most important interviews for this work were the audio interviews with Tyner from the National Public Radio: *Marian McPartland's Piano Jazz* and Ben Sidran's *Sidran on Record*.¹⁵ Both are available online and Sidran's interview has also been released on CD, which I used as my source. Both of the programs include musical examples performed by Tyner on piano.¹⁶

Accomplished jazz pianists such as Andy LaVerne, George Colligan, and Ethan Iverson have published blog posts and pedagogical articles on McCoy Tyner's style, along with assured mentions in comprehensive piano books like Mark Levine's *The Jazz Piano Book*.¹⁷ The pedagogic material typically concentrates on the same scale-based voicing aspects that Paul Rinzler's scholarly articles cover. Tyner's use of dominant chords and functional movements together with modal sounds is not featured.

I also looked at comprehensive books on jazz improvisation to see how McCoy Tyner's impact on the jazz tradition is portrayed. Probably the most extensive study on the different aspects of jazz improvisation, Paul F. Berliner's *Thinking in Jazz* features several references to Tyner's playing as a member of the John Coltrane Quartet.¹⁸ Berliner also compares the comping styles of Red Garland, McCoy Tyner, and Herbie Hancock, and a large score segment of the John Coltrane Quartet's version of "Softly, as in a Morning Sunrise" is included. However, the musical examples are generally short and they are chosen to highlight unified aspects and assumed interconnections of group interplay. To really capture the multilayered features of the John Coltrane Quartet and McCoy Tyner's style would have required more varied examples than such a broad overall compendium could include. Therefore, Tyner's expression gets portrayed in an overly simplified manner.

From my point of view, most of the existing research on McCoy Tyner is based on a very limited number of transcriptions. Consequently, it seems to me that the common understanding about Tyner's playing covers only the very surface – modal scales, fourth voicings, pentatonic scales, triad pairs, left-hand fifths, and side-slipping techniques. There is no denying the relevance of all of that, but in most cases the foundation on which everything is built is either taken for granted or just forgotten. In connection with that, it was surprising to find out how much Tyner actually has talked about his style in quite clear and particular musical terms. He has answered the same questions many times with almost identical phrases and metaphors, even though there has been years and years in between the interviews.

¹⁵ McPartland 2008 [1983]; Sidran 2006 [1985].

¹⁶ I ended up transcribing these interviews myself even though Benjamin Givan's article includes a partial transcription of the interview from the *Marian McPartland's Piano Jazz* and Ben Sidran released an edited version of his interview in the book *Talking Jazz: An Oral History*. (Givan 2007, 276-278; Sidran 1995.)

¹⁷ LaVerne 1997; 2018; Colligan 2010; 2011; 2012; Iverson 2018; Levine 1989.

¹⁸ Berliner 1994.

When talking to someone about my project, I was often faced with the question: "If you want to know how McCoy Tyner plays, why don't you just ask him?" But so far everything that I have found in his music has made perfect sense with what he has already said many times. Also, in writing this text I have had to, again and again, come to terms with the limitations of the level of musical detail that can be explained in words. I can only imagine how difficult and unnecessary it would feel for someone like McCoy Tyner to try to convey the intricate attributes of his music in words.

THE DEFINITION OF MODAL JAZZ

In his excellent book, *The Studio Recordings of the Miles Davis Quintet 1965-68*, Keith Waters brings out the complexity of the term modal jazz. He notes: "modal jazz stands for a network of musical features that may appear in some combination". Drawing from scholarly discussions of Miles Davis' and John Coltrane's music, Waters lists five common characteristics of modal jazz, to which he adds a sixth:

1. Modal scales for improvisation (or as a source for accompaniment)
2. Slow harmonic rhythm (single chord for 4, 8, 16 or more bars)
3. Pedal point harmonies (focal bass pitch or shifting harmonies over a primary bass pitch)
4. Absence or limited use of functional harmonic progressions (such as V-I or ii-V-I) in accompaniment or improvisation
5. Harmonic characteristic of jazz after 1959 (Suspended fourth—"sus"—chords, slash chords, harmonies named for modes; i.e., phrygian, aeolian harmonies)
6. Prominent use of melodic and/or harmonic perfect fourths"¹⁹

Waters also mentions the John Coltrane Quartet's recordings from 1960 to 1964 as representative modal jazz works, specifically naming "Acknowledgement", "Impressions", "India" and "My Favorite Things".²⁰ He doesn't explain the reason for excluding the recordings from 1965, but it must be because of the sound of the quartet becoming more and more chromatic.

In the following chapters, I will label particular musical features as representing *modal* or *tonal* sound. By modal sounds, I mean distinct colors achieved by bringing out the characteristic tones of a modal scale, such as Dorian or Lydian scale. Tonal, on the other hand, refers to the sound of major and minor keys and the conventions of jazz improvisation prior to the emergence of modal concepts in the late 1950s. After going through all of the material, I will come back to the modal jazz characteristics listed by Waters and see how the musical examples covered in this thesis relate to them.

TRANSCRIPTIONS

All of the material analyzed in this thesis was acquired by transcribing from audio recordings. Even though there are some published transcriptions of McCoy Tyner's solos available, as well as many more unofficial transcriptions being shared via the internet, I chose to transcribe everything myself. The main reason for that is the artistic approach of the work: as a jazz musician, my ability to hear is more important for my

¹⁹ Waters 2011, 46.

²⁰ Waters 2011, 41.

expertise than anything else. Relying on someone else's abilities and interpretations would have, in my opinion, compromised my own development. Since I am not a pianist myself, I consulted pianists during the research process, particularly about chord voicings. These musicians were Jukkis Uotila, Michael Weiss, and Mikko Helevä. But the more I transcribed, the more confident I became in my ability to hear even the two-handed piano voicings.

To be able to select the material and have a better understanding of McCoy Tyner's recorded output, I went through his discography from 1964 to 1969 (studio recordings and official live recordings, both as a sideman and leader) and made a separate digital file, in AIFF format, of every single solo from that period. I tagged and catalogued the files in a way that enabled me to listen to them chronologically or, for example, by harmonic framework such as the blues. Later on, as new questions directed my interests to the earlier period, I started to do the same for the recordings from 1959 to 1963. That work is yet to be completed with a few recordings from 1962-63 missing.

I felt that in order to find something new, I definitely should study material that others hadn't. So for a long time, I chose not to pick solos that were considered essential, such as "Passion Dance" or "Inception", and instead concentrate on other recordings. Eventually, I ended up transcribing those as well, because they did prove to be important.

Accuracy of the transcriptions is crucial to the relevance of any analysis let alone reliable conclusions. This is probably the greatest challenge to any research dealing with an analysis of jazz expression. For this reason, I have shamelessly exploited every possibility that the current technology offers. I used a MacBook Pro laptop computer and the software *Transcribe!* to slow the music down without it affecting the pitch. I could also loop short fractions of the track to isolate individual chords. Additionally, I took advantage of the possibility to examine the sounding frequencies visually. This turned out to be a very important feature in the software since I gradually learned to use it to discern what is actually played on the piano from the overtones of the bass or frequencies from the drums. For example, the root played by the bass at the same time with a chord by the piano makes it often really sound like the fifth of the chord would be included in the piano voicing – even though it isn't there. On those occasions the knowledge on how the piano overtones ring could be used to decide the case. Also, it is sometimes incredibly difficult to know in which octave register a certain note is played. Depending on the piano and the audio quality of the recording, the first overtone partial can sound very prominent while the pitch actually played might be barely audible.²¹ Still, my final decision was always dictated more by what I heard rather than what I saw in the frequency analysis. On those occasions where I couldn't decide whether a note is actually played on the keyboard or whether it results from an overtone resonance, I have notated it using a smaller notehead.

²¹ Paul Rinzier (1999, 84) discusses the same characteristics citing Steve Larson's dissertation from 1987. Today, the available computer software can contribute considerably to the accuracy of the transcriptions.

The piano is a rewarding instrument to transcribe in many respects. The pitches are defined and they correspond to the notation system so there is no need to interpret whether an out-of-pitch note would be closer to one or the other note. This is often the case when transcribing the bass or the saxophone. However, the equivalent of that on the piano are the situations where within a line that is clearly intended as a single note line there is an accidental double stop resulting from a slightly missed note. In these occasions, I have used a regular notehead for the note that I interpreted as the one more important for the analysis while the other note has been marked with an x-shaped notehead.

I went through the existing video sources from 1960s to compare the sounding frequencies to the visual information on Tyner's fingers hitting the keys. This elucidated the effect of the overtone resonances for me, as I could see that some of the clearly sounding frequencies were definitely not actually played on the keyboard. This led me to leave out notes from the voicings rather than to expect all of the sounding notes to be pressed down on the keyboard. The video sources also directed the notated division of voices to left and right hands, even though the videos also show Tyner varying his fingerings readily.

The most important means to achieve better accuracy in my case, as I don't have perfect pitch or any better ability to hear than an average jazz musician, was just the sheer amount of work. I ended up transcribing a considerable amount of solos, as well as Tyner's accompaniment and compositions, of which material only a part is included in this thesis. Many times, I thought that I would need to transcribe "just one more" solo in order to clarify questions that had arisen from analysis of the previous transcription. Also, it became clear that on many occasions, Tyner works with the same ideas through his solo, repeating them in the choruses that follow. In addition to contributing to the accuracy of the transcription itself, extra material helped my analysis tremendously. In many cases, an individual melodic line is open to at least a few possible interpretations. But when analyzed together with a few different versions of the same idea from another chorus or another solo from the same time period, the intention becomes clarified. For this reason, I have transcribed many complete solos instead of just concentrating on the essential bars. Most of my effort has been directed at the accuracy of McCoy Tyner's piano parts, while the other instruments are included for reference.

Regardless of all the work, some misprints and misinterpretations are bound to exist in the transcriptions. Even so, I am fairly confident that the possible inaccuracies do not have a significant effect on the relevance of the analysis. The complete list of my McCoy Tyner transcriptions is found on page 280.

NOTATION AND ANALYSIS

Because the main focus of this text is on harmony and melody, the limitations of the notation system in regards to jazz rhythm are not a major issue. It still has to be addressed that many of the rhythmic intricacies cannot be written out.

The eighth-note phrasing has generally not been notated or approximated as triplets for two reasons. First of all, the eighth notes are not actually played as consistent triplets, but varied in different ways. To really write out the phrasing accurately would make even the simplest melodic statements extremely difficult to read. A sense of how the rhythms are actually interpreted can only be achieved by listening to the original recordings. However, I have used triplets in two situations: 1) when an eighth-note phrase directly follows or precedes a triplet-based rhythm and 2) when the tempo of the tune is slow and the melodic motives use triplet-based rhythms along with eighth notes actually phrased as triplets (this is the case in John Coltrane's "Village Blues", for example). Quarter notes have been written generally with each instrument's typical phrasing in mind. In melodies and accompanying chords, the quarter notes are predominantly played short. Therefore, the quarter notes that, in fact, are played to their full value are marked separately. Because in walking bass lines the quarter notes are generally sustained to create a flowing line, I have made extra markings only if the bass note is phrased short. Rhythmic bass vamps (or ostinatos), on the other hand, follow the same phrasing conventions as melodies.

The exact note durations are compromised in many cases in order to make reading easier. This concerns especially the durations of Tyner's left-hand voicings, which I have often written to the next quarter note or to the next chord, even if they are not really sustained that long. Similarly, I have interpreted many voicings as a repetition of the previous or following voicing even if not all the notes are equally audible. In McCoy Tyner's expression, there is a considerable amount of variation on how loud each individual note in a chord is played. These subtle details are omitted from the transcriptions since the idea of the complete voicing is more important for the analysis than the occasional prominence of single voices within the chords.

Concerning harmony and melody, I have strived to represent the music in notation with as much detail as possible throughout this work. I have avoided using chord symbols to depict chord voicings, as the symbols can communicate only a very general idea about a particular sound. There is just one exception: I have not notated the big band brass voicings from Boyd Rayburn's version of "A Night in Tunisia" since I felt my approximation of them wouldn't be more accurate than what the chord symbols can convey. Otherwise, all the chord voicings have been written out.

I found chord symbols helpful for the purpose of analysis. With chord symbols markings, I have tried to connect the notated chord voicings and melodic motives to broader contexts in which McCoy Tyner typically uses them. In labeling an individual melodic motive as representing a certain chord color, I have considered: 1) the line itself and how the notes fall in relation to the underlying pulse, 2) the context in which the line is played, and 3) the contexts in which the same or similar lines are found in other recorded performances by McCoy Tyner. When the melodic line and the left-hand chords both have a clear individual identity, I have analyzed them separately. If a melodic gesture doesn't clearly define any harmonic color or if it just complements the left-hand harmony, I have not necessarily repeated the chord symbol already

stated for the left-hand voicing. For Roman numeral analysis symbols I use upper case Roman numerals only, so Dmi7-G7-C6 is simply II-V-I in the key of C major. I use lower case letters for note names in the text to distinguish them from chord symbols and tonal centers.

In many cases it is not straightforward to decide which chord symbol would be most informative on how the phrases are built. For instance, consider this phrase found in bars 25-26 of McCoy Tyner's solo on "Spiritual" (recorded on November 1, 1961):



The melodic line in itself seems clear, as it sounds like Cmi7-F7 and Bbmi7-Eb7 movements:



The left-hand voicings can only be labeled in relation to the context since Tyner doesn't include roots in his voicings here. The tonic chord during the melody is a sustained C minor, and during the solo vamp bassist Reggie Workman alternates between the notes c and f. Tyner typically uses the left-hand voicing in bar 25 equally as either Cmi6/9 or F13. Since the melody line seems to imply Cmi7-F7, the left-hand chord could well be labeled as F13. Also, during his solo and accompaniment, Tyner moves this voicing diatonically, bringing out the scale sound rather than an individual chord, so there is not much difference in whether the scale would be labeled as C Dorian or F Mixolydian. But since the note c has been established as the tonic during the melody statement, and Tyner frequently plays dominant movements leading to C minor, it makes most sense to label the voicing in bar 25 as Cmi6/9. That logic also clarifies the voicing found in bar 26, connecting it with the Ab13-G7(alt)-Cmi movement at the final phrase of Coltrane's melody statement before going to the solo vamp (not included in this analysis).

Next I look at the hands together:

Now, the current analysis of the melody line as Bbmi7–Eb7 in bar 26 doesn't seem logical when reviewed in relation to the context of the solo vamp and McCoy Tyner's style – regardless of the fact that one of the most intriguing characteristics of his expression is the independence between the melodic lines and accompanying chords.²² But would he imply Bbmi7–Eb7 over the Ab13 voicing in the left hand? Possibly he would, if the melodic line would continue its movement down to Abmi7–Db7 before resolving to C minor. But having seen him connect Ebmi7 and Ab7 sounds in various ways between the two hands and also often melodically employing the upper extensions of minor seventh chords²³, I think the most informed analysis would look like this:

The Ebmi11 could as well be identified as Ab13sus4 but interpreting it as the II chord highlights the idea of both the II and V (Ebmi7 and Ab7) being present in this phrase, just divided between the two hands.

Typically to Tyner, a similar melodic idea is repeated in bars 35-37 of the solo yielding more information on the G7 sound. Seeing the same lines again with some additional details increases confidence on the validity of the previous analysis.

²² This will be examined, for instance, when going through "Spiritual" (page 131) and "Lonnie's Lament" (page 165).

²³ See, for instance, example from Tyner's solo to "Impressions" on page 130.

35

PIANO

BASS

[Ebmi7 Ebmi11] [G7] [Cmi] [Cmi7 F7]

[Cmi6/9] [Ab13] [Cmi6/9] [G7(b9)]

Even though the challenges in interpreting Tyner's logic using chord symbols are evident, I found it still the most logical way to analyze Tyner's note choices. After all, jazz musicians are used to reading chord symbols and improvising on them, and for us they are probably the most common means for conceptualizing melodic and harmonic ideas. I'm sure that in many cases my choices can rightfully be questioned and revised, but it has been very interesting to approach the transcriptions with such detail.

The track times for the starting points of the examples are given, but I'm afraid there might be some differences between various releases of the same recordings. Another way to locate the examples is through bar numbers, which generally run from the beginning of the tune or from the beginning of the section under analysis (melody statement, for example, or the piano solo).

In many of the examples, the bass line is included as well as the melody part. While it would be ideal to include complete melodic and harmonic material of the performance in all of the examples, the amount of work it would have required was beyond the scope of this project. However, the existing bass and saxophone parts should give reasonable evidence on the degree of independence between the instruments. While the ability to react instantaneously and change one's expression accordingly is essential in jazz, the forthcoming examples display even greater importance in the coherence and integrity of the individual parts.

3

I was hearing different harmonically when I was very young. [...] I had the pleasure of meeting and hanging out with Bud Powell... [...] I used to just try to copy Bud, you know, and Thelonious Monk, too, as well.

-McCoy Tyner in an interview with Ben Sidran on September 23, 1985.²⁴

They used to call me Bud Monk...

-McCoy Tyner in an interview with Lee Underwood in 1975.²⁵

²⁴ Sidran 2006 [1985], 1:17, 1:59, 13:08.

²⁵ Underwood 1975, 12.

3. SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF MCCOY TYNER'S STYLE IN 1959-1960

In an interview with McCoy Tyner in 1985, Ben Sidran asked how Tyner developed his identifiable style and intervallic sense at such an early age, stating that Tyner already sounded different from all of the other piano players when he joined the John Coltrane Quartet. Tyner's answer is somewhat ambiguous, as he seems to try not to directly contradict Sidran's statement. Instead, Tyner talks about being drawn to some classical composers, but at the same time he emphasizes the importance of Bud Powell as his early influence. Later in the interview, Tyner clearly says that he "just tried to copy Bud" but Sidran left that out when releasing the interview in print as a part of the book *Talking Jazz: An Oral History*.²⁶ Tyner also implies that it was his time with John Coltrane that allowed him to develop his unique style.²⁷

Even though Tyner actually was just in the process of developing his intervallic concept in 1960 when joining John Coltrane's group, Tyner's early voicing strategies are important in understanding his later style. The three-note voicings he favors at the time serve as a basis for his modal vamps in Coltrane's quartet and continue to exist in his playing later on. While his voicings have many similarities with the style of Red Garland and Richie Powell, for instance, in addition to his main influences Bud Powell and Thelonious Monk, Tyner already seems to have a personal approach that draws from and combines many different influences. In the remark of "just trying to copy Bud", Tyner probably includes the whole process of getting the information and models from wherever he heard interesting things. In an interview with Peter Danson for *Coda Magazine*, Tyner mentions Duke Ellington as an influence right after Bud Powell and Thelonious Monk, and on the radio program with Marian McPartland he talks about Earl Hines, for example.²⁸ Some of Tyner's influences might not even be well know names, as Tyner mentions in the liner notes for his album *Extensions*: "There is a piano player in Philly who probably may never leave; however, his talents and directions had a great influence on my playing."²⁹

LEFT-HAND VOICINGS

On Tyner's early recordings he typically plays functional II-V-I progressions using chord voicings built by stacking thirds and in most cases omitting the root from the left hand:

The image shows a musical score for piano left hand and bass. The piano part is in the upper staff, and the bass part is in the lower staff. The piano part consists of four measures, each with a chord voicing. The chords are Fmi7, Bb9, Ebmaj7, and Eb6. The bass part consists of four measures, each with a single note. The notes are F, Bb, Eb, and Eb. The piano part uses a bass clef and a key signature of two flats. The bass part uses a bass clef and a key signature of two flats. The piano part uses a 5/4 time signature. The bass part uses a 5/4 time signature. The piano part uses a 5/4 time signature. The bass part uses a 5/4 time signature.

²⁶ Sidran 1995.

²⁷ Sidran 2006 [1985], 13:09.

²⁸ Danson 1981, 6; McPartland 2008 [1983], 12:57.

²⁹ Perry 1973.

Tyner mostly keeps his left-hand voicings as three-note voicings. The dominant ninth chord for the V degree provides the necessary tension and contributes to smooth voice leading in the II-V-I progression. Sometimes Tyner includes the root in these voicings for minor seventh and tonic chords, for example on ballads or in cases where the chords are played over a bass vamp. This can be verified from a later video recorded in Baden Baden, Germany on December 4, 1961.³⁰ Tyner's left hand is clearly visible during his solo to "Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye", where he includes the root in many of the minor and major seventh chord voicings. But the dominant chords (featuring minor seventh, ninth and third) are three-note voicings there, too.

"LAZY BIRD"

Here is an example of McCoy Tyner playing John Coltrane's composition "Lazy Bird"³¹, recorded on October 24, 1960 as a trio version during the same sessions that produced material for the John Coltrane albums *My Favorite Things*³², *Coltrane Plays the Blues*³³ and *Coltrane's Sound*³⁴. Because of the fast tempo of the tune, it is likely that Tyner would use the voicings that he is most comfortable with. This is the third chorus of Tyner's solo, bar numbers run from the beginning of the solo.

(AT 1:14)

♩ = 319 ⁶⁵ [SEE "LIKE SONNY" BARS 11-12]

PIANO

Chords: [Amⁱ7 D⁹] [C^mi7 F⁹] [F[#]mⁱ7 B⁹] [F^mi7 B^b9]

Chords: [E^bm^aj7] [A^mi7] [D⁹] [G^ma^j7] [G⁶] [A^bmⁱ7] [D^b7] [A^mi7]

³⁰ Jazz Icons DVD: John Coltrane, Live in '60, '61 & '65, Reelin' In The Years Productions, 2007.

³¹ Chick Corea – Herbie Hancock – Keith Jarrett – McCoy Tyner, Atlantic SD 1696, 1976.

³² John Coltrane: *My Favorite Things*, Atlantic SD 1361, 1961. Recorded in 1960.

³³ John Coltrane: *Coltrane Plays the Blues*, Atlantic SD 1382, 1962. Recorded in 1960.

³⁴ John Coltrane: *Coltrane's Sound*, Atlantic SD 1419, 1964. Recorded in 1960.

75 [F7]

PIANO

D⁹ Cmi⁷ F⁹ Fmi⁷ B^b⁹

77 [Ami⁷ D⁹]

PIANO

E^bmaj⁷ Ami⁷ D⁹ Gmaj⁷ G⁶ Gmaj⁷ Bmi⁷ 8^{va}

81 (8)

PIANO

Fmi⁷ B^b⁷ Bmi⁷ E⁷ A⁶ Amaj⁷ B^bmi⁷ E^b⁷ A⁷

85 [Abmaj7]

PIANO

Abmaj⁷ Ami⁷ D⁷ Gmaj⁷ G⁶ Abmi⁷ D^b⁷

89 [Ami⁷] [Bb^o7] [D⁷/A]

PIANO

Ami⁷ D⁹ Cmi⁷ F⁹ Fmi⁷ B^b⁹

93

PIANO

E^bmaj⁷ E^b⁶ Ami⁷ D⁹ Gmaj⁷ G⁶ Abmi⁷ D^b⁷ Ami⁷

During the B section (bars 17-24) as well as in bars 7-8 of the first and last A sections, Tyner also uses another voicing strategy that is commonly referred to as "Bud Powell voicings" today.³⁵

"BLUES TO ELVIN"

Tyner uses the three-note voicings in his left hand when soloing and also as a basis for larger two-handed voicings when accompanying other musicians. In a blues like "Blues to Elvin" (recorded on October 24, 1960)³⁶ he mostly uses the following voicings for dominant seventh chords.

PIANO L.H.

Chord 1: Eb⁹ (Notes: G³, B³, D⁴)

Chord 2: Ab⁹ (Notes: G³, B³, D⁴)

Chord 3: Bb⁹ (Notes: G³, B³, D⁴)

Rather than connecting these chords by smooth voice leading, Tyner frequently transposes the whole interval set for each dominant seventh chord of the blues form. This brings out the movement of this particular *sound* to another place. With this voicing, Tyner often employs the movement from suspended fourth to the third which, depending on the bass, essentially spells out II-V movement.

PIANO L.H.

BASS

Chord 1: Bb⁹(sus4) (Notes: Bb³, D⁴, F⁴)

Chord 2: Bb⁹ (Notes: Bb³, D⁴, F⁴)

Chord 3: Fmi⁷ (Notes: F³, Ab³, C⁴)

Chord 4: Bb⁹ (Notes: Bb³, D⁴, F⁴)

Here is an example of McCoy Tyner accompanying John Coltrane on "Blues to Elvin". This is the fourth full chorus of the tune's 12-bar blues form, here bar numbers run from the beginning of the tune.

(AT 2:00)

♩ = 74

37

PIANO

BASS

Chords: Eb⁹, E⁹, Ab⁹, A⁷, A⁰⁷

³⁵ Levine 1089, 162.

³⁶ John Coltrane: *Coltrane Plays the Blues*, Atlantic SD 1382, 1962. Recorded in 1960.

39 ⁹ ¹³

PIANO

BASS

Chord symbols: Eb⁹, E⁹, A⁹

41

PIANO

BASS

Chord symbols: A^{b9}, A⁷

43

PIANO

BASS

Chord symbols: Eb⁹, E⁹, D^{b9}, C⁹, B⁹

45 13 3 3 #11 13 13

PIANO

BASS

47 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

PIANO

BASS

Chord symbols: Bb^9 , Fmi^7 , Bb^9 , Fmi^7 , A^9 , $Ebmi^7$, Ab^9 , $A^{\circ 7}$, $Bb^{13}(\#11)$, $C7(\#9)$, $B7(\#9)$, $Bb7(\#9)$

Notice how in the previous example Tyner frequently moves the left-hand voicing up a half step and back, creating Eb9-E9-Eb9 movement. In bar 37 the half step movement in the left hand doesn't have time to resolve but continues directly to the fourth degree in bar 38 (Eb9-E9-Ab9). At the same time the right hand approaches Ab7 from a half step above, implying Eb7-A7-Ab7 movement (as well as the sound of the blues scale). In cases like this, where the right-hand melodies and the left-hand voicings follow their own independent logic, I have included a chord symbol analysis for both. There will be many more examples of such independence between the two hands later in this text. For the turnaround in bars 47-48, Tyner switches to full two-handed voicings.

It should be noted that Tyner also uses another three-note left-hand voicing for dominant seventh chords. It is constructed the same way as the minor seventh and major seventh voicings were constructed in the II-V-I progressions on "Lazy Bird" – by stacking thirds up from the 3rd of the chord. Because this voicing only includes the 3rd, 5th, and b7th of the chord, it doesn't have much color by itself and is mostly used as part of a two-handed voicing.³⁷ Here is an example from Tyner's accompaniment to John Coltrane's first solo chorus on "Blues to Elvin".

³⁷ Tyner uses similar voicing for E7 in the B section of "Liberia" on page 92.

(AT 0:40) $\text{Eb}^{13}(\sharp 11)$ Ab^{13} A°

♩ = 71

PIANO

BASS

15 $\text{Eb}^{13}(\sharp 11)$ $\text{E}^{13}(\sharp 11)$ $\text{Eb}^{13}(\sharp 11)$ B^9 Bb^9 A° Ab^9

THREE-NOTE VOICINGS IN MINOR KEYS

Here is how Tyner uses three-note voicings in the key of D minor, for example in bar 33 of the following "Blues de Funk" example. Here the II chord is $\text{Emi}7$ but of course he uses $\text{Emi}7(\text{b}5)$ as well.³⁸

$\text{Emi}7$ $\text{A}7(\text{b}9)$ Dmi^6

PIANO L.H.

BASS

Actually, in a minor key he frequently substitutes the II chord with a tritone substituted dominant chord:

Bb^9 $\text{A}7(\text{b}9)$ Dmi^6

PIANO L.H.

The next example, "Blues de Funk", illustrates how Tyner uses these voicings and also the way he approaches the minor blues form.

³⁸ See for example bar 7 of Tyner's solo to "Liberia" on page 91.

"BLUES DE FUNK"

"Blues de Funk" is a minor blues from McCoy Tyner's first studio recording on December 17, 1959. He had just turned 21. The session was led by the trombonist Curtis Fuller and released on the album *Imagination*.³⁹ On the bass was Jimmy Garrison, a fellow Philadelphian, who was to complete the John Coltrane Quartet's legendary lineup a few years later.

(AT 6:31) 1 ♩ = 119

PIANO

BASS

PIANO

BASS

PIANO

BASS

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for a 4/4 minor blues piece. It consists of three systems, each with a piano part (treble and bass clefs) and a bass part (bass clef).
 - **System 1 (Measures 1-2):** Measure 1 is a whole rest for piano and a quarter note G2 for bass. Measure 2 has piano chords Dmi6 and Ab9, and a bass line with notes G2, F2, E2, D2.
 - **System 2 (Measures 3-4):** Measure 3 has piano chords Dmi6 and Ab9, and a bass line with notes G2, F2, E2, D2. Measure 4 has piano chords D7, Ab7, and D7, and a bass line with notes G2, F2, E2, D2.
 - **System 3 (Measures 5):** Measure 5 has piano chords Gmi6, Gmi7, C7, Bbmi7, and Eb7, and a bass line with notes G2, F2, E2, D2.

³⁹ Curtis Fuller: *Imagination*, Savoy MG 12144, 1960. Recorded on December 17, 1959.

7 [Dmi⁶] [D MINOR PENTATONIC/BLUES SCALE]

PIANO

BASS

9 [D MINOR PENTATONIC/BLUES SCALE]

PIANO

BASS

11 [Dmi⁶] [Bb⁹] [A7(b⁹)] [Dmi⁶] 8^{va}.....

PIANO

BASS

2 [D MINOR PENTATONIC/BLUES SCALE]

13 [Bb⁹] [A7(b⁹)] [Dmi⁶] [Gmi] 8^{va}.....

PIANO

BASS

17

PIANO

BASS

19

PIANO

BASS

21

PIANO

BASS

23

PIANO

BASS

8va
25 3

PIANO

BASS

Chords: Dmi^6 , Bb^9 , $A7(b^9)$, Dmi^6 , Ab^9

(8)

29

PIANO

BASS

Chords: Gmi , $A7(b^9)$

(8)

31

PIANO

BASS

Chords: Dmi^6 , Bb^9

33

PIANO

BASS

Chords: Fmi^7 , (Bb^7) , $A7(b^9)$, Emi^7 , $A7(b^9)$, Dmi^6

The image shows a musical score for piano and bass. The piano part is in the upper staff, and the bass part is in the lower staff. The score begins at measure 35. The piano part features a complex melodic line with triplets and chromatic movement. The bass part provides a steady accompaniment. Chord markings above the piano staff include [Dmi], [Gmi7 C7], [Bbmi7 Eb7], and [Dmi].

To bring out the consistency in McCoy Tyner's voicings throughout the whole solo, I have included all three choruses. Note that Tyner plays the tonic minor chord as a minor sixth chord and the fourth degree minor chord as a minor triad. Note also that the voicing for the tonic minor Dmi6 is exactly the same as the voicing Tyner would use for a G9 chord.

The minor chord in bar 7 is different, because it is no longer acting as a tonic minor. On occasion, there might be movement leading to the Bb7 chord in the ninth bar, so the chords in bars 7-8 could be Dmi7-G7-Cmi7-F7. Tyner does not play this whole sequence, but instead plays only Dmi7-G7, which implies that the C minor chord in bar 7 is not a point of resolution anymore, but represents movement.⁴⁰ The same thing occurs with the G minor chord changing into Gmi7 in bar 5 of the first chorus. There the line is on the move back towards the tonic.

At the end of the first chorus and in the beginning of the second chorus there is an essential jazz sound: right-hand melodies bringing out the sound of the blues over functionally moving harmonies in the left hand. The vertical relationship of the melody notes in relation to the chords is not important, as both elements create a clear sound of their own. This horizontal aspect of separate elements working together will later be fundamentally important in the way modal colors are used in a similar manner as the blues color here.

I have included the bass line in the transcription to illustrate the independence between the instruments. Notice how in the second bar of each chorus Garrison consistently implies G minor chord while Tyner plays Bb7 and A7 (to lead back to D minor). Another clear difference can be found in the way these musicians approach bars 9-10 of the 12-bar form. While Tyner clearly plays Bb7-A7 here as well, Garrison plays Emi7-A7. When Tyner interprets the Bb7 as Fmi7-Bb7 he is consistently a half step away from Garrison's Emi7, for instance in bar 21 of the transcription. One can speculate on how intentional these differences are but they are frequent on the recordings from this era. It is an integral part of the sound of this music and one can observe such independence between the two hands of the pianist even.

⁴⁰ Tyner could also be thinking of Bmi7(b5) here, as he often replaces a half diminished chord with a minor chord a minor third up. The same exact thing happens in Tyner's melodic lines in bar 6, where the arrival into Gmi6 is followed by Gmi7-C7 movement in place of Emi7(b5) chord.

"Mox Nix"

Here is another example of D minor blues, this time in a faster tempo. "Mox Nix" by the Art Farmer & Benny Golson Jazztet was recorded on February 6, 1960.⁴¹ While on "Blues de Funk" McCoy Tyner played the fourth degree minor chords as just triads, here he plays them as minor 6th chords. These are the second and third choruses of Tyner's solo. Addison Farmer's bass line is also included.

(AT 3:06) ♩ = 232

2

13

PIANO

BASS

15

PIANO

BASS

17

PIANO

BASS

Chords and markings in the score:

- Measure 13: D_{mi} , $A7(b9)$, D_{mi6} , $Bb9$, $A7(b9)$, D_{mi6}
- Measure 15: $D7(b9)$, $Ab9$
- Measure 17: G_{mi} , G_{mi6} , $Bbm7$, $Eb7$, $A7(alt.)$, D_{mi6}

⁴¹ Art Farmer & Benny Golson: *Meet the Jazztet*. Argo LP 664, 1960. Recorded on February 6, 9 & 10, 1960.

19 [Dmi⁶] [Dmi⁷] [G⁷]

PIANO

BASS

21 [Fmi⁷] [Bb⁷] [D MINOR PENTATONIC/BLUES SCALE]

PIANO

BASS

23

PIANO

BASS

25 [3] C MAJOR TRIAD OVER Dmi6 C MAJOR TRIAD OVER Dmi6

PIANO

BASS

The musical score consists of two systems, each with a piano and bass part. The first system (measures 29-30) features a piano part with arpeggiated chords labeled 'C MAJOR TRIAD OVER Gmi6' and 'C MAJOR TRIAD OVER Dmi6'. The bass part plays a simple melodic line. The second system (measures 33-35) features a piano part with arpeggiated chords labeled 'Fmi7', '#9', 'C9', 'Bb13(#11)', and 'A7ALT.'. The bass part continues with a melodic line.

One interesting feature of this solo is the independent melodic riff beginning the third chorus of Tyner’s solo. The arpeggiated C major triad in the block chord lead comes out as a melodic element; it does not radically alter the Dmi6 sound since it is placed in such a high register. Because of the physics of sound and the way overtones ring, the note c is already included in the sonic spectrum at that high register, so it doesn’t change the harmonic *color* into what would sound like a Dorian scale in modal tunes. Tyner’s idea here is just a melodic bluesy riff not too concerned with harmony. As if to confirm this, Tyner keeps exactly the same notes in his right hand over the fourth degree minor chord (Gmi6) in bars 29-30. The inclusion of b-natural in the voicing over G minor chord would theoretically be a completely wrong note, but it doesn’t jump out as such in the higher register. The consistency of the intervallic structure is the most important factor here.

Tyner, as well as the other musicians of the Jazztet, were of course already aware of the modal Dorian sounds at the time. But as a bluesy element, the minor seventh interval has probably always been used *in the melody*, without any implication towards Dorian scale sound. The color of the tonic chord in “Mox Nix” is unmistakably defined as Dmi6 in the middle register. In the next chapter, I will go through examples from the early recordings of the John Coltrane’s quartet, in which the minor seventh chord and the sound of the Dorian scale replaces the tonic minor chord.

4

Kind of Blue was a major influence on the music, spearheading the modal playing. Everybody wanted to play those songs. I was into doing it all. You don't take away, you add on to it – playing the multiple changes and the modal thing, trying to incorporate what was historically in the music with what was going on at the time.

It was such an organic situation—it grew like a plant.

-McCoy Tyner in an interview with Ashley Kahn on November 10, 1999.⁴²

⁴² Kahn 2002, 72; 2003, 45.

4. THE EARLY RECORDINGS OF THE JOHN COLTRANE QUARTET

Before forming his own quartet, John Coltrane was a part of two immensely influential albums in 1959: Miles Davis' *Kind of Blue* (recorded on March 2 and April 22, 1959) and Coltrane's own *Giant Steps* (recorded on May 4, May 5 and December 2, 1959). These albums are often seen as representing the two extremes; the former as pioneering the scale-based modal approach and the latter as taking the functional harmonies and chordal movements to the extreme.⁴³ Prior to these recordings, Coltrane had already worked on both approaches for at least a couple of years.⁴⁴ McCoy Tyner, on the other hand, knew what Coltrane was working on, as he used to spend time with Coltrane while the saxophonist was back home in Philadelphia visiting his mother.⁴⁵

When Coltrane formed his quartet in 1960, he was clearly looking for ways to combine these approaches. He explains this process in the *Down Beat* article "Coltrane on Coltrane" which was based on the discussions with Don DeMicheal during the first two weeks of August 1960. At that point, McCoy Tyner had been in the group for about two months, but Elvin Jones hadn't yet joined.⁴⁶ The quartet was already working on much of the material that would be recorded in October 1960. In the article, Coltrane describes the two different directions in his playing as: "playing chordally (vertically) or melodically (horizontally)".⁴⁷ These are the same terms that George Russell uses in the television program *The Subject is Jazz: The Future of Jazz* from 1958.⁴⁸

As far as I can see, McCoy Tyner's role in this development has not been examined in enough detail. Tyner really understood that Coltrane's approach was not about abandoning chords but rather allowing them to move in a flexible way. Tyner's remark is fascinating: "I was into doing it all. You don't take away, you add on to it – playing the multiple changes and the modal thing..." So nothing is taken away, new sounds are added to what is already there.

Manuscripts of Coltrane's some compositions like "Naima" and "Mr. Syms" have chord voicings written out, but on the other hand "Equinox" and "Like Sonny" use just chord symbols.⁴⁹ It seems like Coltrane didn't have a clear idea on the direction the accompanying harmonies should take at this point. This was something that Tyner had to work out himself. Sometimes it would mean not playing at all, strolling, and "allowing John and Elvin and... or Jimmy to do whatever they had to do to develop something."⁵⁰ In an interview with Ralph Gleason from May 1961, Coltrane says about Tyner:

⁴³ Porter 2001, 165-166.

⁴⁴ I think that Coltrane is definitely using horizontal scale-based approach in 1956. This is discussed on page 37.

⁴⁵ Priestley 1987, 33.

⁴⁶ Porter 2001, 176.

⁴⁷ DeVito 2010, 68.

⁴⁸ Kennedy Center Education Digital Learning 2018.

⁴⁹ Porter 2001, 189; Simpkins 1989 [1975], 280, 283.

⁵⁰ Sidran 2006 [1985], 3:20.

There's so many things that he does and I don't tell him to do. I couldn't tell him because when I hear it I say, man, that's just like I would want it, I would have done it myself if I'd have thought of it. [...] All the songs that we play, the whole sound of the thing is the way his voicings are because he picks his own voicings.⁵¹

In 1960, Tyner was at the beginning stages of his development, but he eventually would find a way of dealing with the two directions simultaneously, in a manner that is supportive and complementary yet original and slightly different from Coltrane's approach. Subsequently, Coltrane didn't hire anyone at the piano if Tyner's wasn't available.⁵² There were a few bass players that Coltrane could use and Roy Haynes was there when Elvin Jones wasn't. But between Tyner joining the group (around the end of May 1960) and leaving (in December 1965), there was nobody else at the piano accompanying Coltrane. The only exception, of course, is Duke Ellington for the two recording sessions that yielded the album *Duke Ellington & John Coltrane*.⁵³

Going through the first recordings of the John Coltrane Quartet is all-important in understanding the later development of the group. In 1960, the elements that would later be merged in an improvisatory manner exist in set forms and can be pointed out individually. For the rhythm section accompaniment, modal expression was not about completely abandoning chords either. As Tyner told to Brian Priestley: "That's what is unique about this music – that sometimes if you really listen to it, you can hear that it actually was an outgrowth from previous music."⁵⁴

MODAL MINOR BLUES: "EQUINOX"

"Equinox" was recorded on October 26, 1960 and it was released on *Coltrane's Sound* almost four years later.⁵⁵ The quartet had played it live already prior to the recordings and at least one rejected take was taped on October 21, 1960.⁵⁶ A later live recording from the Sutherland Lounge also exists.⁵⁷ Some discographies list "Equinox" as a rejected take in Coltrane's session as early as December 2, 1959 with Wynton Kelly, Paul Chambers and Jimmy Cobb.⁵⁸

A transcription of Coltrane's solo is published in Lewis Porter's book *John Coltrane: His Life and Music* along with analysis of how Coltrane develops his solo.⁵⁹ A reasonably accurate lead sheet with some of the

⁵¹ Gleason 2016, 19.

⁵² Wild 1979, 18.

⁵³ Duke Ellington & John Coltrane: *Duke Ellington & John Coltrane*. Impulse! A-30, 1963. Recorded on September 26, 1962.

⁵⁴ Priestley 1987, 42.

⁵⁵ John Coltrane: *Coltrane's Sound*. Atlantic SD 1419, 1964. Recorded on October 24 and 26, 1960.

⁵⁶ Porter 2001, 174.

⁵⁷ John Coltrane: *Complete Live At The Sutherland Lounge 1961*. RLR Records RLR 88668, 2012. Recorded on March 1 1961.

⁵⁸ Jazz Discography Project 2019.

⁵⁹ Porter 2001, 184-188.

piano voicings notated can be found in *The New Real Book Volume Two*.⁶⁰ The lead sheet is written in the key of C# minor, but Coltrane's manuscript is written using five flats in the key signature (avoiding the use of f-flat, c-flat, and double-flat b). Porter has written his transcription in Coltrane's preferred manner. I thought that I should keep the key center as Db minor because that is how Coltrane perceived it, but I opted to omit the key signature and write everything using accidentals. In order to maintain the interval structures logical when dealing with McCoy Tyner's chord voicings, I couldn't avoid using f-flat, c-flat and even double-flat b. However, I chose not to use double flats as the roots in chord symbols, as that would have been just too confusing. Alternatively I ended up using A13 instead of Bbb13.

THE ACCOMPANIMENT VAMP BEHIND COLTRANE'S SOLO ON "EQUINOX"

The solo section is a modal version of minor blues. Coltrane's manuscript of the tune has been published in the biography by Cuthbert Simpkins.⁶¹ The manuscript specifies the harmony only by chord symbols Dbmi7, Gbmi7, A7 and Ab7. This is how Tyner and Steve Davis on the bass accompany Coltrane's first solo chorus.

(AT 1:17)

♩=117 1 [Dbmi7 DORIAN]

The score is written for piano and bass in 4/4 time. It consists of two systems of music. The first system (measures 1-4) features a piano part with complex chord voicings in the right hand and simpler voicings in the left hand, and a bass line with a steady eighth-note pattern. The second system (measures 5-8) features a piano part with similar voicings and a bass line that continues the eighth-note pattern. Chord symbols are provided above the piano part: [Dbmi7 DORIAN] for measures 1-4 and 7-8, and [Gbmi7 DORIAN] for measures 5-6. A key signature of five flats is indicated at the beginning of the first system.

PIANO

BASS

5 [Gbmi7 DORIAN] [Dbmi7 DORIAN]

⁶⁰ Sher 1991, 85-86.

⁶¹ Simpkins 1989 [1975], 283.

11 13 b9
9 9 #11 13

PIANO
Emi7/A
Ab7(b9)
[Dbmi7 DORIAN]

BASS

In his left hand, Tyner utilizes the same three-note voicing he used in the previous examples for a minor seventh chord. This time, he just moves the voicing two steps up the Dorian scale and back. The difference with the earlier minor blues examples is quite clear, there are no minor 6th chords here, neither frequent dominant-tonic movement. Instead of walking bass line, both the piano and bass keep the vamp rhythm throughout. Lewis Porter writes about Tyner continuously varying his voicings:

Throughout of the improvised choruses, Tyner plays a chordal version of the original ostinato. Although Tyner is tied to this rhythm, he creates a great variety through his chord voicings, providing new voicing for each chorus and building the sequence of voicings so that they beautifully support the increasing tension of Coltrane's improvisation.⁶²

Indeed, while keeping the rhythm consistent to achieve the desired hypnotic feel, Tyner makes it sound like each chorus goes to a new place. But it is only the right hand that changes; the left hand plays the same vamp throughout Coltrane's solo. For example, to start the second chorus the right hand goes to octaves:

(AT 1:42)

13

PIANO
[Dbmi7 DORIAN]

BASS

In the next chorus, Tyner goes to a higher register and adds a moving note:

⁶² Porter 2001, 184.

(AT 2:06)

25

PIANO

BASS

Dbm7 DORIAN

In the fourth chorus, Tyner returns to the original vamp with some variation over the fourth degree. Again, a new variation is heard in the beginning of the fifth chorus:

(AT 2:55)

49

PIANO

BASS

Dbm7 DORIAN

And also in the seventh chorus:

(AT 3:44)

73

PIANO

BASS

Dbm7 DORIAN

COLTRANE'S USE OF SUBSTITUTE SCALES OVER MINOR SEVENTH CHORDS ON "EQUINOX"

Before going on to Tyner's solo on "Equinox", I want to discuss one detail in Coltrane's solo that Porter doesn't point out. At 4:11, Coltrane plays a c-note after a sustained b-flat note. He uses both of these notes as colors of their own rather than passing tones or tensions resolving to the tonic triad. Clearly the idea here is to create tension between the melody and accompaniment and to introduce another scale sound on

top of the vamp. It is important to notice that Tyner's vamp accompaniment does not change in any way when Coltrane introduces the dissonant note c against the Db Dorian scale sound.

(AT 4:10)

The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Tenor Sax, Piano, and Bass. The Tenor Sax part is written in treble clef and begins at measure 85. The Piano part is written in grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and provides accompaniment with chords labeled 'Dbmi7 DORIAN'. The Bass part is written in bass clef and provides a steady rhythmic accompaniment. The score shows four measures of music.

For McCoy Tyner, it seems that keeping the vamp static and hypnotic is the whole idea of the tune.⁶³ Above is an example of Coltrane bringing out a contrasting sound against it by introducing the major seventh interval. Nowadays, jazz musicians would probably be talking about Db melodic minor scale being used here, since that scale concept is commonly featured in jazz theory books.⁶⁴ Coltrane's use of this scale in 1960 could be connected to George Russell's theories. Russell's parent scale for Db minor seventh chord would be Fb Lydian scale. The first substitute scale according to Russell's system would be Fb Lydian augmented, and this introduces the note c instead of the c-flat found in Db Dorian scale.⁶⁵ Actually, as an unmistakable scale pattern, Coltrane brings in this sound already earlier in the solo, in bars 50-51, but from there the dissonant note might not be as easily noticed.⁶⁶

Later on I will present other instances in which Coltrane alternates between these scale types. But there is also a much earlier example of him introducing scale colors in a sequential manner on "Airegin", from Miles Davis' recording *Cookin' with the Miles Davis Quintet*, recorded on October 26, 1956.⁶⁷ Over a Spanish-tinged vamp accompaniment, Coltrane plays a long sustained g-note in his first solo chorus, evidently disregarding the harmony moving to the Gb major chord. He then continues with lines that lean

⁶³ The later version of "Equinox" (John Coltrane: *Complete Live At The Sutherland Lounge 1961*, RLR Records RLR 88668, 2012.) has the same vamp while many of the other tunes already have harmonies based on fourths.

⁶⁴ Levine 1995, 57.

⁶⁵ Russell 1959, 18.

⁶⁶ One could argue that these melody notes could as well refer to the sound of tonic minor chord itself, as one can hear, for example, Dizzy Gillespie accent the same intervals on the version of "Birk's Works" on album *The Champ* from March 1, 1951. But in that case also the accompanying chord is a tonic minor chord (mi6). Situation here is different since the piano accompaniment defines the Dorian sound so undoubtedly, and the dissonant major seventh interval is played intentionally against it. If Coltrane wanted to imply the sound of the tonal minor key, he would have played Ab7(b9) to Dbmi6.

⁶⁷ Miles Davis: *Cookin' with the Miles Davis Quintet*. Prestige PRLP 7094, 1957. Recorded on October 26, 1956.

towards the Dorian scale color or Fmi9 chord. However, this is somewhat ambiguous because here he avoids the potentially dissonant note d-natural, the defining 6th scale degree:

(AT 2:38)

♩ = 287

TENOR SAX

(8vb THROUGHOUT)

RHYTHM

5

TENOR SAX

RHYTHM

In his next chorus, Coltrane clearly imposes the F melodic minor scale (or according to Russell's system, Ab Lydian augmented scale) scale over the same passage, using stepwise movement and melodic triads derived from the scale with an added chromatic approach note from a half step below.

(AT 3:08)

9

TENOR SAX

RHYTHM

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Airegin". It consists of two staves: "TENOR SAX" and "RHYTHM". The Tenor Saxophone part begins at measure 13 and features a melodic line in the melodic minor scale. The Rhythm section provides accompaniment with chords Fmi and Gb. The score is written in 4/4 time and includes a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb).

"Airegin" is an example of Coltrane clearly using a scale that does not strive to match the accompaniment, but is instead based on the concept of imposing a contrasting scale sound over the accompaniment. Another, and very famous, example of Coltrane using a corresponding substitute scale over Dmi7 would be his solo on "So What", during the last A section of the first chorus, for instance.⁶⁸

It could be argued that since the scale Coltrane uses here is the melodic minor scale, it is not a modal scale, but something that was included in the concept of a tonal minor key. This would require much more research than possible within this thesis, but I have the feeling that using this scale for both ascending and descending melodies, similarly to what Coltrane plays here, was not common in the jazz expression before the mid-1950s. Tonal minor melodies generally use different scale steps depending on the direction of the line and that is where the concept of the melodic minor scale in classical music comes from.

McCoy TYNER'S SOLO ON "EQUINOX"

McCoy Tyner's approach for his solo on "Equinox" is quite different from the two tonal minor blues examples presented earlier, "Blues de Funk" on page 23 and "Mox Nix" on page 28. Of course, those were in the key of D minor, and since there are no other examples of Tyner playing minor blues in the key of Db, one can only speculate on how the uncommon key affects the performance. I think the differences between the two approaches are more about the tune than the key. At most, Coltrane probably chose the uncommon key of "Equinox" in order to help not to play the same things that he was used to playing on a tonal minor blues. If Coltrane had chosen the key of Db minor just as a challenge in itself, he would have practiced it as long as needed to master it. The same certainly applies to McCoy Tyner as well.

I also have to underline that with the differences between Tyner's playing in these examples, I am trying to demonstrate the different approaches that the tunes call for. These examples don't tell much about the evolution of Tyner's playing style, since he was already familiar with modal approaches by the time his earliest recordings were made.

In "Blues de Funk" and "Mox Nix", the sound of the minor key was defined by Dmi6 tonic in the piano and constant dominant-tonic movement (Bb9 to A7(b9) to Dmi6). Also, the movement to the fourth degree

⁶⁸ Miles Davis: *Kind of Blue*. Columbia CL 1355, 1959. Recorded on March 2 and April 22, 1959.

(G minor triad of Gmi6) was frequently marked with a dominant seventh chord (D7 or Ab7). Compared to this, the approach on "Equinox" is notably different: neither Coltrane nor Tyner plays any dominant sounds leading to the fourth degree. During his solo, Tyner accompanies himself with the same left-hand voicings he uses behind Coltrane but interprets the vamp rhythm more freely.

For melodic material, Tyner starts his solo just emphasizing the characteristic note of the Db Dorian scale, b-flat. The inclusion of c-flat in the left hand vamp makes the overall sound essentially Dorian.

(AT 4:58) 1 [3 13]

♩=117

PIANO

Dbmi7 DORIAN

BASS

3 [13]

PIANO

Dbmi7 DORIAN

BASS

5 [3 11]

PIANO

Gbmi7 DORIAN

BASS

7 [3 13]

PIANO

Dbmi⁷ DORIAN

BASS

9 [3] TOP OF A13 VOICING, SEE BARS 29-32 [D MINOR TRIAD]

PIANO

E[#]mi⁷ Ab⁷(b9)

BASS

11 [3 13]

PIANO

Dbmi⁷ DORIAN

BASS

13 [2]

PIANO

Dbmi⁷ DORIAN

BASS

15

PIANO

BASS

13

Dbmi7 DORIAN

17

PIANO

BASS

Gbmi7 DORIAN

19

PIANO

BASS

ACCOMPANIMENT VAMP

Dbmi7 DORIAN

21

PIANO

BASS

D MAJOR TRIAD. SEE "MY FAVORITE THINGS" VAMP

D MINOR TRIAD

E7mi7 Ab7(b9)

23 [ACCOMPANIMENT VAMP]

PIANO

Dbmi7

BASS

(AT 5:47) 25 3 9 13

PIANO

Dbmi7 DORIAN

BASS

27

PIANO

Dbmi7 DORIAN

BASS

29

PIANO

Gbmi7 DORIAN

Cb13 VOICING

BASS

31 [G^b13 VOICING]

PIANO

Dbmi⁷ DORIAN

BASS

33 [A⁷] [Ami⁷] [D⁷]

PIANO

E^bmi⁷ Ab⁷(^b9)

BASS

35 [Dbmi⁷] [G^b7]

PIANO

Dbmi⁷ DORIAN

BASS

37 [4] [Dbmi⁷ DORIAN SCALE MOVEMENT] [G^b13 VOICING]

PIANO

Dbmi⁷ DORIAN

BASS

39

PIANO

Dbmi7 DORIAN

Gb13 VOICING

BASS

41

PIANO

Gbmi7 DORIAN

Dbmi7 DORIAN

BASS

45

PIANO

E mi13

A mi9

E mi13 E DORIAN / A MIXOLYDIAN SCALE STACKED IN THIRDS

Ab9(b5)

(A mi)

Ab9(b5)

A mi / Ab

(B mi)

OPPOSITE ALTERNATION OF TWO DOMINANT SOUNDS

BASS

47

PIANO

Dbmi7 DORIAN

BASS

ACCOMPANIMENT VAMP

49 5 3 11 9 3 3

PIANO

Dbmi7 DORIAN

BASS

51 3 3 11 9 3 3

PIANO

Dbmi7 DORIAN

BASS

53 3 3 3 13 11 9 3 3 3

PIANO

Gbmi7 DORIAN

BASS

57 9 3 3 13 3 3 9

PIANO

E mi7 *Ab7(b9)*

BASS

Note again the subtle differences between the right-hand melodies and left-hand chords. In bar 33, the melodic line's emphasis on c-sharp makes it sound like A7 chord while the left hand stays on Emi7 (or A9sus4 the bass taken into account). In bar 34, the right-hand melody line clearly implies Ami7–D7 movement.

Bars 35-40 display the way Tyner constructs melodic lines over the Dorian tonic. Essentially he is implying movement from Dbmi7 to Gb7 as if playing II-V progression in the key of Cb (or B) major. The half step from c-flat to b-flat is important in Db Dorian scale because it generates the movement that McCoy Tyner and his contemporaries were used to hearing. From a musician's perspective this is, in all its simplicity, the fundamental difference between playing a Dorian scale and arriving to a tonal minor tonic, as the Dorian scale still sounds like it is going somewhere. The most efficient way to bring out the characteristic intervals of the Dorian scale is to approach the 6th from a half step above, and this produces the guide tones that these musicians were used to playing on II-V progressions.

"LIKE SONNY"

To clear out all the speculation on whether it would be the uncommon key that influenced McCoy Tyner's approach to the solo on "Equinox", I will go through "Like Sonny" which also has Dbmi7 areas. This version was recorded on September 10, 1960 with Steve Davis on bass and Billy Higgins on drums.⁶⁹ In this composition, minor seventh chords are used as a moving element before resolving to a tonic major chord. Coltrane's manuscript is released in Simpkins' book and according to that, Coltrane has identified the harmony as chord symbols only (Dmi7 – Fmi7 – Abmi7-Bb7–Ebmaj7).⁷⁰

In McCoy Tyner's playing at the time, there is hardly any difference in his approach whether he is playing a minor seventh chord (Dmi7) or the corresponding dominant chord (G7). Both of the two include the other as well, so that in his lines and left-hand voicings, Tyner is implying II-V movement anyway. Throughout his solo on "Like Sonny", Tyner adds movement by implying the dominant chords that the minor sevenths would be leading to. I have included the whole transcription to display a variety of Tyner's

⁶⁹ John Coltrane: *Like Sonny*. Roulette Jazz CDP 7939012, 1990. Recorded on September 8, 1960.

⁷⁰ Simpkins 1989 [1975], 280.

melodic lines for II-V movements. Later examples will show Tyner generating movement using similar melodic material over improvisations based on just one static sound.

(AT 1:52)

♩ = 150

1 [CHORD EXTENSIONS: 9 11 9 11 11]

PIANO

3 [9 9 b 11 9] TRIADS IN THE RIGHT HAND RESEMBLE THE VAMP OF "MY FAVORITE THINGS".

5 [b 9 b 11 9] Ebmaj7

7 [Ebmaj7] DIATONIC MOVEMENT (Fmi7)

9 [D7 Ami7]

11 [Fmi7 SEE "LAZY BIRD" BARS 68-69. Bb7 (Ebmaj7)] C7

13 [Dbmi7 Gb7 Dbmi7 Gb7 Dbmi7 Gb7]

PIANO

15 8maj7 Ab9

SEE "THE NIGHT HAS A THOUSAND EYES" BAR 8.

PIANO

17 8va. C7

PIANO

19 Fmi7 Bb7

PIANO

21 Abmi7 Db7 Bmi7 E7 SEE "BRASILIA" BAR 48. Ebmaj7

Bb7(b9) or E7

PIANO

23 8va. Ebmaj7 Ebmi7 Ab7 Ab9

PIANO

25 2 [11 13 9 11 9]

PIANO

Dmi^7 DIATONIC MOVEMENT ($E mi^7$)

27 [$F mi^9$ ($G mi^7$) $F mi^7$ Bb^7] [$Ebmaj^7$]

PIANO

$F mi^7$ Bb^7 $F mi^7$ Bb^7

29 [$Ab mi^7$ Db^7] [$B mi^7$ E^7 SEE "BRASILIA" BARS 10 & 50.] [$Ebmaj^7$]

PIANO

$Ab mi^7$ Db^7

31 (F/Eb) SEE RIGHT HAND VOICINGS IN "BLUES TO ELVIN" BAR 13.

PIANO

$Ebmaj^7$ Eb^6

33 [$A mi^7$ D^9 $A mi^7$ D^9] [$F mi^7$]

PIANO

$A mi^7$ D^9 $A mi^7$ D^9 $F mi^7$

35 (B^7)

PIANO

Bb^9 $F mi^7$ Bb^9

37 [Dbmi7]

39 [Gmaj7] [Ebmi7] [Ab7]

41 [Dmi7]

43 [Fmi7]

45 [Abmi7] [Db9] [Ami7 D7] [Bmi7 E7] [Ebmaj7]

47 [Bb7(b9)] [Ebmaj7]

Essentially two types of melodic ideas can be found from Tyner’s solo on “Like Sonny”. There are ideas derived from the stacked thirds that Tyner would play in his accompaniment, emphasizing the extensions of minor seventh chords (9ths, 11ths and 13ths). Then there are ideas that melodically imply II-V movement

(for instance Dmi7-G7). But there are no recognizable melodic sequences that would bring out the concept of the Dorian scale. Considering this, it seems like Tyner would rather think of extending the chord by stacking thirds, eventually using all the notes of the scale (like on “Blues to Elvin” or “Liberia”), but not that much as a source of melodic material. Neither on “Equinox” nor “Like Sonny” does he play melodic sequences like Coltrane played as early as 1956 on “Airegin” (scale-derived triads with an approach note). There is one short melodic scale sequence in Tyner’s solo on “Equinox”, in bar 37, but even that seems to directly result from the chordal movements he plays with his left hand. The considerably more active approach on “Like Sonny” might result from the minor seventh chords representing movement whereas on “Equinox” they take the place of a tonic minor chord.

MODAL BLUES

To clearly bring out the modal nature of the Coltrane Quartet’s blues performances, I first have to briefly clarify certain characteristics on how the blues was approached by bebop musicians. Unfortunately, I can’t go through everything with transcribed examples here, and as a whole, the topic is too large to be thoroughly examined within this work.

When playing the blues, Bud Powell typically voices the tonic chords as major 6th or major 7th chords, especially in bars 7 and 11 of the 12-bar blues form. When he introduces the dominant seventh sound on the tonic chord, its function is usually to create movement towards the fourth degree. Additionally, the major scale is an evident source of melodic material in Bud Powell’s blues solos, for example on “Blue ‘N’ Boogie” from the live recording at Birdland with Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker on March 31, 1951.⁷¹ It should be noted especially that Charlie Parker’s blues melodies typically feature the specific sound of a major key tonality, as heard on “Au Privave”, “Bloomdido”, “Big Foot”, “Cheryl”, “Perhaps”, “Cool Blues” and so on. And the same goes for Thelonious Monk’s “Misterioso”, for example. Monk often played the 12-bar blues choruses using exclusively dominant chords, as can be heard in his accompaniment to Milt Jackson’s solo on “Misterioso” from July 2, 1948.⁷² But still, Monk typically has at least some reference point to the major key sound in his blues performances.

The most persuasive examples of tonal major sound on the blues can be found in the playing of Red Garland. He frequently features major 7th chord as the tonic (in addition to the more typical major 6th), which I think could contribute to McCoy Tyner describing Garland as having “a very happy sound”.⁷³ For

⁷¹ Charlie Parker: *Summit Meeting At Birdland*. Columbia JC 34831. 1977. Recorded in 1951 and 1953.

⁷² Thelonious Monk: *Genius of Modern Music Volume 1*. Blue Note BLP 1510, 1956. “Misterioso” recorded on July 2, 1948. I think it is likely that Thelonious Monk influenced McCoy Tyner’s approach on the blues. Likewise to monk, Tyner often transposes the same chord voicing to each of the dominant chords, as seen in chapter 3 on “Blues to Elvin”.

⁷³ Musto, 2007.

example, here are the first two choruses of Garland's solo on "C Jam Blues" with Paul Chambers on the bass.⁷⁴

♩ = 170 (AT 0:33)

PIANO

BASS

1

3

PIANO

BASS

5

PIANO

BASS

Chords: Cmaj9, F13, C9, F13, C9, Ebomaj7

⁷⁴ Red Garland: *Groovy*. Prestige PRLP 7113, 1957. "C Jam Blues" recorded on August 9, 1957.

9

PIANO

BASS

Chords: Dmi7, G7(b9), Cmaj9, Dmi7, G13(b9)

13 2

PIANO

BASS

Chords: Cmaj9, F13, C%#, Gmi7, C7(b9), Fmaj7

17

PIANO

BASS

Chords: F9, Cmaj9 (or E7mi7), Ebmi7

21

PIANO

BASS

Chords: Dmi7, G13(b9), Cmaj9, Ebmaj7, Dmi7, G13(b9), Cmaj9

The simultaneous existence of blues melodies on top of tonal harmonies comes through clearly in bars 12-19 of the above example, just as observed in McCoy Tyner's minor blues solos on "Mox Nix" and "Blues de

Funk". In Red Garland's case, the contrast is quite pronounced because of the dissonance created by the minor third and minor seventh intervals over the major 9th chord in the left hand.

The main point here is the sound of the blues, *the blue notes*, being infused with the sound of the tonal major key. The blue notes find their way into the melodic vocabulary as well as the chord voicings, in some cases, but the important thing to understand is that the sound of the major key is present as well. Here is Red Garland's rendition of the classic slow blues "See See Rider" in the key of F major, in which Garland features dominant seventh chords more prominently than in the previous example.⁷⁵ However, the resolution to the tonic chord of the major key is undoubtedly evident in bars 7 and 11-12.

(AT 0:00)

♩ = 64

PIANO

BASS

3

5

3

⁷⁵ Red Garland: *Red in Blues-ville*. Prestige PRLP 7157, 1959. Recorded on April 17, 1959.

7

PIANO

BASS

9

PIANO

BASS

11

PIANO

BASS

It is surprisingly difficult to find anything written about this quite substantial detail of tonal jazz language in the blues from literature or pedagogic material. Many of the transcriptions that I have seen over the years are inexact in this respect, as the blues harmony is probably just assumed to always have been about dominant seventh chords. Paul Berliner's *Thinking in Jazz* features a full score transcription of Miles Davis' "Blues by Five" in which some of Red Garland's voicings are accurately portrayed. But Berliner interprets all major 7th and 6th chords as just creating occasional variety against the prevailing dominant chord.⁷⁶ However, there is no mention of the variety actually resulting from the functional tonal harmony and the melodic inflections of the blues being merged together in the jazz expression.

⁷⁶ Berliner 1994, 728.

When playing the Charlie Parker composition “Chi Chi” with Julian Priestster in 1960, McCoy Tyner also made several references to the major key tonic in bar 7 of the 12-bar blues form.⁷⁷ This is the first chorus of Tyner’s solo:

The musical score is a 12-bar blues form in E-flat major, divided into three systems of four bars each. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 215. The first system (bars 1-4) features a melodic line in the right hand and piano accompaniment in the left hand. Above the first system, a box labeled '1' is present. Chord markings above the piano part include Eb9, Ab9, Eb9 (Bbmi7), and A9. Above the bass part, a box labeled 'E♭ MINOR PENTATONIC/BLUES SCALE' is shown with a triplet of notes. The second system (bars 5-8) continues the melodic and harmonic development. Chord markings above the piano part include Ebmi7, Ab7, Eb9, and C7(b9). Above the bass part, a box labeled 'E♭ MAJOR BEBOP SCALE' is shown. The third system (bars 9-12) concludes the solo. Chord markings above the piano part include Fmi7, Bb9, Bmi7, E7, and Eb. Above the bass part, a box labeled 'E♭' is shown. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and dynamic markings.

Notice how bars 7-8 above feature a clear melodic reference to the major key, even though the chord that Tyner plays in his left hand is Eb9. In the second chorus the Eb major tonic is implied both in bars 7 and 11 of the 12-bar form (bars 19 and 23 of the solo).

⁷⁷ Julian Priestster: *Spiritsville*. Jazzland JLP 25, 1960. Recorded on July 12, 1960.

13 2 [$Bbmi^7$ Eb^7] [$Ebmi^7$ Ab^7] [$A^{\circ 7}$]

PIANO

BASS

15 [$Bbmi^7$ Eb^7] [Emi^7 A^7]

PIANO

BASS

17 [Ab^6 ($Bbmi^7$ $B^{\circ 7}$) Ab^6] [$A^{\circ 7}$]

PIANO

BASS

19 [Eb] [$F\#mi^7$ B^7]

PIANO

BASS

The third chorus features the exact same melodic motive for Eb as bar 19 above. In the fourth and the last chorus of the solo, it even sounds like Tyner would play Ebma7 chord in his left hand but the voicing is not outspokenly audible. Here are bars 5-8 of the form from the last chorus (bars 41-44 of the solo). Notice how the same melodic line for Eb is repeated similarly to the previous two choruses.

What McCoy Tyner plays on the following modal blues examples with John Coltrane is distinctly different from the way Bud Powell, Red Garland, and other bebop musicians approached the blues. The difference between the blues in tonal major key and modal major blues, such as Miles Davis' "All Blues" and the John Coltrane compositions "Mr. Day", "Village Blues" or "Blues to Elvin", is equivalent to the differences observed between "Blues de Funk" and "Equinox". A vamp based on the Mixolydian scale, for instance, now replaces the tonic major chord. Many of Coltrane's blues compositions also avoid using the functional dominant chord resolving to the tonic, and this further emphasizes the deviation from the tonal major sound. Examples of such tunes are "Some Other Blues", "Blues to Elvin", and "Village Blues" (all using V7-IV7-I7 in bars 9-12), as well as "Cousin Mary" (bV7-IV7-I7) and "Mr. Day" (IV7-bIII7-I7).

"VILLAGE BLUES"

This is the first recording of Coltrane's quartet with Elvin Jones on drums, recorded on October 21 at the same session with "My Favorite Things". It wasn't released until January 1961 on the album *Coltrane Jazz*.⁷⁸ This is an example of the group combining blues form with a static bass vamp.⁷⁹ Later examples of similar idea include "Dahomey Dance"⁸⁰ and alternate takes of "Tunji".⁸¹

On the third beat of the first bar, Tyner lands on a fourth voicing divided between both hands. This voicing includes all the notes of G minor pentatonic scale, but it is also just a logical result of the voices moving. Nevertheless, this is an early example of Tyner using this sound, and it creates a scalar effect because together with a C9 voicing it completes the vamp with all the notes of a C Mixolydian scale. The same exact vamp is transposed to the fourth (F7) and the fifth degree (G7). During the melody and Coltrane's solo, the bassist keeps the one-bar vamp through bars 1-10 and walks during last two bars of the form, where Tyner also creates movement through the use of functional dominants. During the piano solo, the bass walks.

⁷⁸ John Coltrane: *Coltrane Jazz*. Atlantic SD 1354, 1961. Recorded on November 24 and December 2, 1959.

⁷⁹ The transcription is not an exact representation of the actual sounding notes during the first chorus but rather an interpretation of what the idea of the voicings is. McCoy Tyner does not necessarily play all the notes of the moving voicings every time and in bar six one can hear some other notes that are probably just accidental.

⁸⁰ John Coltrane: *Olé Coltrane*. Atlantic SD 1373, 1961. "Dahomey Dance" recorded on May 25, 1961.

⁸¹ John Coltrane: *Coltrane (Deluxe Edition)*. Impulse! 589 567-2, 2002. "Tunji" recorded on June 20, 1962.

(AT 0:00)

♩=109

[C⁹ MIXOLYDIAN]

PIANO

BASS

(G MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE IN FOURTHS)

5 [F⁹ MIXOLYDIAN] [C⁹ MIXOLYDIAN]

PIANO

BASS

9 [G⁹ MIXOLYDIAN] [F⁹ MIXOLYDIAN] [C⁹ MIXOLYDIAN]

PIANO

BASS

13 #9 #5

[A^b9] [G7^b9]

"MR. DAY"

The repeated two-bar piano vamp on "Mr. Day" is basically the same as on "Equinox", but another tonic stated by the bass changes the modal sound to F# Mixolydian (or Gb Mixolydian).⁸² The following example shows the accompaniment to Coltrane's melody statement. Again, it was difficult to decide whether to notate this using sharps or flats. For the sake of consistency with "Equinox", this could have been written in Gb, but because "Mr. Day" features both B7 and A7 chords, I ended up notating it in F#.

⁸² John Coltrane: *Coltrane Plays the Blues*. Atlantic SD 1382, 1962. Recorded on October 24, 1960.

♩=225 (AT 0:26)

TENOR SAX

PIANO

BASS

F# MIXOLYDIAN SCALE MOVEMENT

3

TENOR SAX

PIANO

BASS

F# MIXOLYDIAN SCALE MOVEMENT

5

TENOR SAX

PIANO

BASS

B MIXOLYDIAN SCALE MOVEMENT

7

TENOR SAX

PIANO

BASS

F# MIXOLYDIAN SCALE MOVEMENT

9

TENOR SAX

PIANO

BASS

STACKED THIRDS (F#MI TRIAD ON TOP)

13 11 13 11 9 13 11 9

8b9 Emi7 Emi7 A9

11

TENOR SAX

PIANO

BASS

F# MIXOLYDIAN SCALE MOVEMENT

Notice that the bass walks during bars 9-10 to emphasize the contrast between the dominants that represent movement from the static areas within the 12-bar form. On the other hand, the functional dominant chord of the key (C#7) is avoided here.

"MY FAVORITE THINGS": TONAL HARMONIES PLACED OVER A PEDAL POINT

The John Coltrane Quartet's famous version of Richard Rodgers' and Oscar Hammerstein's "My Favorite Things" is a monumental performance.⁸³ It was a huge commercial success and the tune became very important in the development of the quartet as they performed it more or less every night.⁸⁴ Even after McCoy Tyner and Elvin Jones had left the group, Coltrane carried on playing "My Favorite Things" until the very end.⁸⁵ It must be one of the most well known examples of modal jazz.

Quite a bit has been written about Coltrane's arrangement of the tune. Lewis Porter, of course, goes through it in his Coltrane biography and Ingrid Monson further elaborates on the rhythmic details and overall form of the performance in relation to the Broadway version.⁸⁶ However, I haven't seen anyone compare Coltrane's arrangement with the published sheet music of the tune, even though according to several sources, the music sheet was what the group started from.⁸⁷

From a musician's perspective, the prospect of looking at the same exact information that McCoy Tyner had as a starting point for "My Favorite Things" is incredibly interesting. I was able to find the original music sheet from 1959 through eBay, just to make sure that the later versions haven't been changed. I suspect that more recent publications are readily available in libraries all over the world. Here is the intro from the original lead sheet published in 1959.⁸⁸

"The Sound Of Music"
2

My Favorite Things

Words by
OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN 2nd

Music by
RICHARD RODGERS

Allegro animato

Piano

The image shows a musical score for the piano introduction of "My Favorite Things". It is written for piano and consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked "Allegro animato". The music starts with a piano (p) dynamic and a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. The treble staff features a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes, while the bass staff provides a steady accompaniment with quarter and eighth notes. The score is presented in a clean, black-and-white format.

Here is what McCoy Tyner and Steve Davis on the bass play as the intro for "My Favorite Things":

⁸³ John Coltrane: *My Favorite Things*. Atlantic SD 1361, 1961. "My Favorite Things" recorded on October 21, 1960.

⁸⁴ Kahn 2003, 50, 77.

⁸⁵ There is an interesting version in Coltrane's last concert recording *The Olatunji Concert* from April 23, 1967, where Coltrane can be heard citing Clifford Brown's "Joy Spring" as if to remind about his music still being connected to the bebop language, no matter how abstract it became.

⁸⁶ Porter 2001, 180-184; Monson 2014 [1997], 106-121.

⁸⁷ Gleason 2016, 9; Thomas 1985 [1975], 133.

⁸⁸ Rodgers & Hammerstein 1959.

(AT 0:00)

♩=171

PIANO

BASS

5

The melody is basically the same but Tyner plays it in octaves and varies the rhythm. The left hand stays with the interval of the fifth. If one reads the first bar of the music sheet disregarding the G-clef in the left hand, that is pretty much what Tyner plays.

THE MODAL VAMP FOR “MY FAVORITE THINGS”

The original music sheet goes directly from the intro to the melody but in Coltrane’s version the rhythm section repeats the intro and goes into the vamp that later serves as an accompaniment for the solos.

(AT 0:09) 9

PIANO

BASS

E_{mi}^{11} $F\#_{mi}^{11}$ E_{mi}^{11} $F\#_{mi}^{11}$

As a whole, the vamp cannot be considered to be based on a single scale since McCoy Tyner alternates between E_{mi}^{11} and $F\#_{mi}^{11}$ chords over the E pedal. This includes also a g-sharp note, which obviously doesn’t belong to any E minor scale. Nevertheless, the melodic material both Coltrane and Tyner use in

their solos indicate that they approach the vamp as representing just modal E minor. It is tempting to speculate on how Tyner might have ended up with this vamp featuring parallel chord movement.

The original sheet music does have two extra bars of E minor chord in between the A sections, and there the minor triad is just repeated in another inversion. It seems that the quartet has just extended the idea of resting on the tonic chord for a while. Note again the fifth in the left hand, here actually written in bass clef.



The quartet's vamp with its parallel movement a whole step up reminds me of the original version of another tune from their repertoire at the time: "Summertime", which the group played at the Jazz Gallery in May and recorded a couple of days after "My Favorite Things" on October 24.⁸⁹ George Gershwin's original orchestral arrangement of "Summertime" (in the key of B minor) has the characteristic sound of two minor 6th chords alternating in the strings.⁹⁰ The next example is a transcription from the 1940 recording featuring Anne Brown (recorded on May 15, 1940)⁹¹:

(AT 1:23)

VOCALS

SUM - MER - TIME AN' THE LIV - IN' IS EAS - Y. FISH ARE

STRINGS

Bmi^b C#mi^b Bmi^b C#mi^b Bmi^b C#mi^b Bmi^b C#mi^b Bmi^b

⁸⁹ Porter 2001, 173.

⁹⁰ In the published music sheet for Summertime, written in A-minor, the movement has been replaced by Ami6 and E7 chords, probably because that way it might be considered easier to play.

⁹¹ Anne Brown: *Overture and Summertime*. Decca 29067A, (Decca Presents Selections from George Gershwin's Folk Opera Porgy and Bess), 1940.

However, Coltrane's arrangement of "Summertime"⁹² (in the key of D minor) replaces Gershwin's parallel minor chords with a vamp based on an A whole tone scale.⁹³

♩=161 (AT 0:00)

The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Tenor Sax, Piano, and Bass. The music is in 4/4 time and has a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked as ♩=161. The score begins at 0:00. The Tenor Sax part has a melodic line. The Piano part features a vamp based on the A whole tone scale, with annotations for 'A7(#5) WHOLE TONE SCALE' and 'Dmi13 DORIAN SCALE'. The Bass part provides a simple harmonic accompaniment.

Maybe omitting such a characteristic sound from "Summertime" left the vamp looking for new outlet to come out. Coincidentally, both Frank Sinatra and Louis Armstrong sang "Summertime" in the key of E minor.⁹⁴

The vamp that Tyner comes up with for Richard Rodgers' "My Favorite Things" could be kind of a modal sounding variation of the Gershwin's "Summertime" vamp – replacing the minor 6th chords with minor 11th chords. Now it still has the feel of tonic-dominant movement, but neither the tonic nor the dominant sound like they used to. I am not suggesting that Gershwin's original arrangement of "Summertime" would necessarily have influenced the way McCoy Tyner moves his voicings in the vamp of "My Favorite Things". There is just an interesting similarity between those. Of course, one does not have to go far to find whole step movement of minor chords in the work of others, including the use of minor seventh chords: Miles Davis' "So What" certainly was an influence on Tyner. Also, John Coltrane's version of "Impressions", which the quartet had played prior to these recordings, is based on one section of Morton Gould's "Pavanne".⁹⁵ Gould's composition features Gmi7 and Ami7 chords alternating, a movement which also Ahmad Jamal's version retains.⁹⁶ Regardless of its origins, the parallel whole step movement becomes a significant feature in McCoy Tyner's style.⁹⁷

⁹² John Coltrane: *My Favorite Things*. Atlantic SD 1361, 1961. "Summertime" recorded on October 24, 1960.

⁹³ Gershwin's orchestral arrangement of "Summertime" also implies the whole tone scale sound as well as minor seventh interval over the tonic minor chord, creating a bluesy sound.

⁹⁴ Ella Fitzgerald & Louis Armstrong: *Porgy & Bess*. Verve MGV 4011-2, 1958; Frank Sinatra: *Sinatra Sings Gershwin*, Columbia 2-507878, 2003. "Summertime" is from a radio show that aired June 4, 1947.

⁹⁵ Porter 2001, 173; Priestley 1987, 67.

⁹⁶ Ahmad Jamal: *The Piano Scene of Ahmad Jamal*. Epic LN 3631, 1959. "Pavanne" recorded in October 1955.

⁹⁷ Additionally, the trio version of "In Your Own Sweet Way" from October 24, 1960 features Fmi11 and Ebmi11 alternating over Bb pedal in the intro.

ACCOMPANIMENT TO THE MELODY OF “MY FAVORITE THINGS”

The most important feature of the arrangement of “My Favorite Things” that I want to bring out is that the quartet didn’t leave out any of the functional harmonies that are represented in the sheet music that they learned the tune from. On the contrary, McCoy Tyner added some melodic movement to his chord voicings compared to both the original notated voicings as well as the chord symbols. But because all of this is placed over the static E pedal continuously stated by the piano and the bass, the overall sound is completely different – it sounds “modal” because the pedal dissembles the functional sound.⁹⁸ In the following examples, the chord symbols above the melody line represent what is written in the 1959 music sheet.

(AT 0:18)

17 **A1** E_{mi} (THESE CHORD SYMBOLS ARE TAKEN FROM THE ORIGINAL 1959 MUSIC SHEET.)

The musical score consists of three systems of staves. The first system (measures 17-20) features a Soprano Saxophone melody line, a Piano accompaniment with chord voicings, and a Bass line. The second system (measures 21-24) continues the same instrumentation. Chord symbols are placed above the piano staff in brackets. The Soprano Saxophone part includes various rhythmic patterns and accidentals. The Bass part provides a steady accompaniment.

21 C_{maj7}

⁹⁸ Pedal on the fifth of a major key wouldn’t necessarily have the same effect because that is a part of tonal tradition – we are used to hearing it in tonal music. That is why Coltrane’s arrangement of “Ev’ry Time We Say Goodbye” doesn’t sound particularly modal.

25 A_{mi}^7 D^7 G C^*

SOPRANO SAX

PIANO

BASS

[A_{mi}^9] [$D^{13}(\flat 9)$] [G^{maj9}] [F]

(WRITTEN NOTATION IN THE ORIGINAL SHEET SPECIFIES A_{mi} TRIAD WITH $F\#$ IN BASS)

29 G^* C A_{mi}^6 B^7

SOPRANO SAX

PIANO

BASS

[C^{maj7}] [C^6] [A_{mi}] [$B^7(\flat 9)$]

[$F\#mi^7(\flat 5)$ B^7]

For comparison, here are the last bars of the A section as written in the 1959 music sheet:

G C G C A_{mi}^6 B^7

tied up with strings, These are a few of my fa-vor-ite things.

In Tyner's right-hand accompaniment to the melody, there are only two major differences in relation to the original music sheet chord symbols, both marked with an asterisk above. The reason is obvious in bar 28 – the original C major triad would lack tension against the E pedal. The following chord in bar 29, on the other

hand, has probably been changed just to balance the movement back towards the tonic chord after the tension created by that F/E chord.

It is especially interesting to note that both the bass and the piano deviate from the pedal to play a clear-cut B7 chord at the end of each A section. The original music sheet specifies F#mi7-5 to B7 movement in written notation, but the chord symbol is stated as Ami6. Tyner chooses to play just A minor triad in the right hand, which is consistent to both his typical voicing strategies for F#mi7-5 and the notation in the 1959 sheet. This just goes to show that, for the quartet, the dominant-tonic resolution is still important in defining the form and movement between the sections. I would say that it carries even more weight, since there is less movement otherwise. This is the only spot where the bass clearly deviates from the E pedal.

Note also that in bars 25-26 Tyner's voicings are clearly independent of the diatonic scale that the melody implies. If analyzed vertically with the pedal included, the chord in bar 26 might be theoretically thought of as B7(b9) with 11 or sus4 added. But undoubtedly there are three independent elements here: the melody, the pedal and the moving harmony.

For the section in major, Tyner just plays Ema7-F#mi7 and Ama7-Bmi7 movements instead of the original major triads. The last eight bars of the section are exactly the same as in the minor sections.

(AT 1:26)

81 **B** E

SOPRANO SAX

PIANO

BASS

[Ema7] [F#mi7] [Ema7] [F#mi7]

85 A

SOPRANO SAX

PIANO

BASS

[Amaj7] [Bmi7] [Amaj7] [Bmi7]

89 Ami7 D7 G C*

SOPRANO SAX

PIANO

BASS

[Ami9] [D13(b9)] [Gmaj9] [F]

93 G* C Ami6 87

SOPRANO SAX

PIANO

BASS

[Cmaj7] [C6] [Ami] [87(b9)]

[F#mi7(b9) 87]

As Lewis Porter has noted, the last melody part comes only after the solos.⁹⁹ Again, the original harmonies are placed over the pedal. The chord symbols above the melody represent what is written in the original 1959 music sheet.

(AT 12:33)

753 **C** E mi A mi⁶ 87

SOPRANO SAX

PIANO

BASS

757 E mi C

SOPRANO SAX

PIANO

BASS

⁹⁹ Porter 2001, 182.

741 C A7

SOPRANO SAX

PIANO

BASS

745 G C * D7(b9) D7

SOPRANO SAX

PIANO

BASS

749 G (ORIGINALLY TWO BARS) C (ORIGINALLY TWO BARS) (COLTRANE VAMPS ON THESE LAST TWO CHORDS)

SOPRANO SAX

PIANO

BASS

753

SOPRANO SAX

PIANO

BASS

[Gmaj9] [Cmaj7] [Gmaj9] [Cmaj7]

Lewis Porter has interpreted the ending vamp as staying in E minor instead of ending the tune in G major like the original does.¹⁰⁰ But this version doesn't really end with the tonic minor sixth chord like jazz performances typically did at the time, nor does it sound like the E minor vamp the quartet started with. I think McCoy Tyner in fact goes to G major here, but over the E pedal his voicings create Aeolian scale sound, which is considerably darker than what the quartet started with in the opening vamp.

The key ingredient of these "modal" sounding harmonies is just placing moving harmonies over a pedal rather than any scale concept. By 1960 Coltrane had already experimented with this approach many times, for instance on the A sections of "Fifth House"¹⁰¹, where only the melodic lines implied the harmonic movement, and "Naima" (on *Giant Steps*, also recorded on December 2, 1959).¹⁰² Coltrane's description of "Naima" in the liner notes to *Giant Steps*¹⁰³ offers an interesting point of view: "The tune is built on suspended chords over an Eb pedal on the outside. On the inside – the channel – chords are suspended over a Bb pedal tone."¹⁰⁴ Coltrane is talking about the A sections (outside) and the B section (inside) of the tune. By *suspended* he is not referring to chords with a suspended fourth (sus4 chords), but instead describing the technique of placing (hanging, suspending) chords over the pedal.

Coltrane's handwritten manuscript of "Naima" has been circulating on the internet ever since it appeared in the catalog of 2005 Guernsey's Jazz Auction. The manuscript clearly states the harmonies of the A section as major 7th chords moving over the pedal. The modal colors are a result of maj7 chord voicings placed over an Eb pedal (Dbma7 to Gbma7 and Ama7 Gma7 to Abma7). Also, in an interview on November 18, 1961 in Paris by François Postif, Coltrane talks about how they "stretched the two [minor and major] harmonies through the whole piece" on "My Favorite Things", adding that "We did the same

¹⁰⁰ Porter 2001, 182.

¹⁰¹ John Coltrane: *Coltrane Jazz*. Atlantic SD 1354, 1961. Recorded on November 24 and December 2, 1959.

¹⁰² This same session also has "Equinox" and "The Night Has a Thousand Eyes" listed as rejected takes in www.jazzdisco.org.

¹⁰³ John Coltrane: *Giant Steps*. Atlantic SD 1311, 1960. Recorded on May 4–5 and December 2, 1959.

¹⁰⁴ Hentoff, 1960.

thing with another piece, 'Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye.'" The common feature to these arrangements is the use of a pedal under moving harmonies, so Coltrane seems to consider the pedal as being the essential idea behind both these arrangements.¹⁰⁵

All in all, from early on in the John Coltrane Quartet's expression, one key ingredient of the sound has been "suspended chords", meaning chords placed over a pedal. Also Coltrane's blues-based compositions, such as "Village Blues"¹⁰⁶ (October 21, 1960), "Dahomey Dance"¹⁰⁷ (recorded May 25, 1961), "Tunji"¹⁰⁸ (June 20, 1962, alternate takes) experiment with the idea of a static bass pedal together with chord movement.

"LIBERIA"

From all of the vamps that McCoy Tyner played as a member of the John Coltrane Quartet in October 1960, "Liberia" features the clearest indication towards the future sound of Tyner's voicings: Now there is a distinct vamp with voicings built using the interval of fourth.¹⁰⁹ The tune itself is Coltrane's reworking of Dizzy Gillespie's "A Night in Tunisia", also called "Interlude". Coltrane played "A Night in Tunisia" while he was working with Dizzy and, in fact, a recording exists from Birdland on January 6, 1951.¹¹⁰

Coltrane's version basically kept the original changes for the A sections of the tune but there is one important difference: Whereas the original "A Night in Tunisia" clearly features the functional harmonies in the key of D minor (dominant seventh resolving to the tonic minor chord), Liberia uses the sound of the D Dorian scale in the place of the tonic chord. Again, the difference is quite subtle, but it is a plain example on how Coltrane and Tyner worked with the modal ideas at the time. To illustrate how Coltrane treated the harmonic framework of "A Night in Tunisia", I will go through the A sections of a few different versions. All of the versions feature: 1) a minor 6th or minor major 7th chord as the tonic chord and 2) the sixth of the tonic chord melodically approached from a half step above.

EXAMPLES OF DIZZY GILLESPIE'S "INTERLUDE (A NIGHT IN TUNISIA)"

One of the earliest must be Sarah Vaughan's recording under the title "Interlude" with the Dizzy Gillespie Orchestra, from December 31, 1944.¹¹¹ I have included the intro as well, because of the ascending dom7(#9) sounds that resemble some things that McCoy Tyner does with dominant chords later on. But

¹⁰⁵ DeVito 2010, 133.

¹⁰⁶ Coltrane: *Coltrane Jazz*. Atlantic SD 1354, 1961. Recorded on November 24 and December 2, 1959 and October 21, 1961.

¹⁰⁷ John Coltrane: *Olé Coltrane*. Atlantic SD 1373, 1961. Recorded on May 25, 1961.

¹⁰⁸ John Coltrane: *Coltrane (Deluxe Edition)*. Impulse! 589 567-2, 2002. Recorded in 1962.

¹⁰⁹ John Coltrane: *Coltrane's Sound*. Atlantic SD 1419, 1964. Recorded on October 24 and 26 ("Liberia"), 1960.

¹¹⁰ John Coltrane: *Trane's First Ride 1951 Vol. 2*. Broadcast Tributes BT 009, release date unknown. The final chord for "A Night in Tunisia" on this recording is G7, which resembles the way McCoy Tyner approaches the tonic chord of "Liberia" as Dmi7-G7 movement.

¹¹¹ Sarah Vaughan: *Interlude (1944-1947)*. Naxos Jazz Legends, 2001.

similar sounds certainly were an innate part of the jazz music from early on. The piano part has been omitted from this transcription, because there is no harmonic material, only one melodic fill during the first A section.

(AT 0:00)

♩ = 99

[Bb7(b9) Bb7(#9) Bb7(b9)] [C#7(b9) C#7(#9) C#7(b9)] [E7(b9) E7(#9) E7(b9)] [G7(b9) G7(#9)]

TRUMPET
CLARINET
TENOR SAX

BASS

5

VOCALS

TRUMPET
CLARINET
TENOR SAX

CLARINET w/ SAX 8vb ----- TRUMPET ----- CLARINET w/ SAX 8vb -----

A

VOCALS

LIVED IN A DREAM FOR A MO - MENT WE'D

TRUMPET
CLARINET
TENOR SAX

GUITAR

BASS

[Db9] [Cmi6]

(SOUNDS 8vb)

3

VOCALS

LOVED IN A MID - NIGHT SOL - I - TUDE BUT

TRUMPET
CLARINET
TENOR SAX

GUITAR

BASS

[Db9] [Cmi6]

The image shows two systems of musical notation. The first system, starting at measure 5, includes staves for Vocals, Trumpet/Clarinet/Tenor Sax, Guitar, and Bass. The vocal line has the lyrics "NEV - ER KNEW AT THE MO - MENT". The guitar part shows chords Db9 and Cmi6. The second system, starting at measure 7, includes staves for Vocals, Trumpet/Clarinet/Tenor Sax, Guitar, and Bass. The vocal line has the lyrics "LOVE WAS JUST AN IN - TER - LUDE". The guitar part shows chords Dmi7, Db9, and Cmi6.

During the A sections, Chuck Wayne on the guitar plays the tonic chord clearly as Cmi6. Note that the background melody on the horns (in bars 2, 4 and 6) features the sixth of the tonic chord approached from a half step above (b-flat to a). This bluesy sound is included in the following samples of "A Night in Tunisia" as well and it seems to be an integral part of the original composition.

The next example is Dizzy Gillespie's arrangement of "Interlude" for Boyd Raeburn and His Orchestra, recorded in January 1945.¹¹² Now the key is D minor and the saxophones play the tonic chord as Dmi(maj9). Notice again the bluesy approach to the sixth of the tonic minor chord in bars 2 and 4, now in the brass section (the notes c to b). The final chord of the A section is a Dmi6 approached from a half step above.

¹¹² Boyd Raeburn And His Orchestra: *Boyd Meets Stravinski*. Savoy MG-12040, 1955.

(AT 0:12) **A**

♩=154

TROMBONE

BRASS

SAXES

BASS

(AS IS. WITH BARITONE SAX. TUBA)

5

TROMBONE

BRASS

SAXES

BASS

E_b7
 $D_{mi}(maj9)$
 E_b7
 $D_{mi}(maj9)$

E_b7
 $D_{mi}(maj9)$
 $E_{mi}7$
 $A7(\sharp9)$

E_bmi^6
 Dmi^6
 E_bmi^6
 Dmi^6
 E_bmi^6
 Dmi^6

(TOP NOTE OF THE BRASS VOICING)

It is no wonder that the small group version by Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker adapts features from the big band arrangement. The following recording from the Town Hall in New York, on June 22, 1945, features Al Haig, Curly Russell and Max Roach in the rhythm section.¹¹³ Haig plays the same $D_{mi}(maj9)$ voicing for the tonic chord and in bar 8 the horns echo Raeburn's brass section approaching the final $D_{mi}6$ chord from a half step above. While Gillespie lands on the fifth, Parker targets the sixth of the chord from a half step above, reminiscing the background line of the big band brass (the notes c to b) as well.

¹¹³ Dizzy Gillespie & Charlie Parker: *Town Hall, New York City, June 22, 1945*. Uptown Records UPCD 27.51, 2005.

(AT 0:19)

♩=176 **A**

TRUMPET

ALTO SAX

PIANO

BASS

5

6 b7 6 b7 6 b7 6

[Eb⁹] [Dmi(maj⁹)] [Eb⁹] [Dmi(maj⁹)]

[Eb⁹] [Dmi(maj⁹)] [Emi⁷] [Eb⁹] [Dmi⁶]

Also Bud Powell's version from *The Amazing Bud Powell Vol. 1* (recorded on May 1, 1951) includes some of the melodic fills that seem to originate from Gillespie's arrangement for Boyd Raeburn.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ Bud Powell: *The Amazing Bud Powell Vol. 1*. Blue Note BLP 1503, 1955. "A Night in Tunisia" recorded on May 1, 1951.

(AT 0:17)

♩=177 **A**

The previous four examples of "A Night in Tunisia" all feature Dmi6 or Dmi(maj9) chord (Cmi6 for Sarah Vaughan in the key of C minor) as the tonic chord, towards which the Eb7 is acting as a tritone substituted dominant. They also have a background line approaching the minor sixth interval of the tonic chord from a half step above, creating a bluesy sound.¹¹⁵ Nowadays, it might be easy to confuse this with an idea of the Dorian scale, because if the note c would be thought of something that is added to the Dmi6 chord, D Dorian scale would be the scale accommodating both. However, in Dizzy Gillespie's big band arrangement, the note c was used over Dmi(maj9), so the idea clearly is not scale-based. Having said that, Bud Powell uses the melodic movement from c to b so prominently in bar 8 that it starts to resemble Dmi7-G7 movement. This might have influenced McCoy Tyner, as the following examples show him eventually using Dmi7-G7 movement as a source of melodic material in his solo on "Liberia".

SCALE-BASED HARMONIES IN THE ACCOMPANIMENT TO "LIBERIA"

Coltrane's studio recording of "Liberia" starts in rubato. Again, McCoy Tyner is using the similar left-hand voicings as seen on "Equinox" on page 34. The right hand completes the sound of the Dorian scale by stacking thirds on top and creating contrary motion against the left hand. Because of the slow rubato

¹¹⁵ There are many examples of similar approach used on a tonic minor chord, for instance on Duke Ellington's "The Mooche" (1930) and Clifford Brown's version of "Delilah" (1954).

tempo, there is enough time for the Dorian scale sound to come through distinctly. This is a clear deviation from the tonic minor chords heard on different versions of "A Night in Tunisia".

(AT 0:00)

RUBATO

A1

TENOR SAX

PIANO

BASS

5

TENOR SAX

PIANO

BASS

A2

TENOR SAX

PIANO

BASS

In Dizzy Gillespie's "A Night in Tunisia", the B section creates contrasting movement against the more static A sections. Notwithstanding, the studio version of Coltrane's "Liberia" has a static B section with a dominant diminished scale sound and the length is doubled to 16 bars.¹¹⁶ McCoy Tyner's piano voicings are again built by stacking up thirds from the 3rd of the E13(b9) chord. The first voicing features seven out of eight notes of the diminished scale. Interestingly enough, Coltrane's melody line features the note b-sharp instead of b-natural. This is the B section:

¹¹⁶ It seems that later on Coltrane actually went back to playing the original B section harmony of "A Night in Tunisia" instead of the static dominant vamp. This can be heard on the recording John Coltrane: *Live at the Sutherland Lounge 1961*. I think Coltrane abandoned the static B section because the form required some movement as a contrast to the static A sections.

21

TENOR SAX

PIANO

BASS

$E^{13}(\sharp 11)$

25

TENOR SAX

PIANO

BASS

$E^{13}(\sharp 11)$

29

TENOR SAX

PIANO

BASS

$E^{13}(\sharp 11)$

To me, the last A section is actually the most characteristic part of the tune and the only part, in addition to the interlude after it, which is still intact in the live version from the Sutherland Lounge in 1961.¹¹⁷ After the full seven-note chord voicings in the B section and the first two A sections, a completely different sound is presented by the pianist.¹¹⁸

(AT 0:48)

33 **A3**

TENOR SAX

PIANO

BASS

37

TENOR SAX

PIANO

BASS

[Emi7(b5)] [A7(b9)] [Dmi]

Here is an example of a vamp with voicings built on fourths, over the pedal A in the bass that is reinforced by Tyner's left hand. I didn't mark any chord symbols for these voicings, as the interval structure is essential. The voicings are still close to the original Eb7 to Dmi6 movement but there are subtle yet important differences. The chord in bar 33 is almost A7(#5#9) but the third is missing. The next chord would be a clear tonic Dmi6/9 if there would be the tonic D present in the bass. This vamp creates a modal

¹¹⁷ John Coltrane: *Complete Live At The Sutherland Lounge 1961*. RLR Records RLR 88668, 2012. (The recording doesn't include the first melody statement.)

¹¹⁸ One of the chords is not anticipated on the recording during the first head in bars 33-38 but during the final melody statement all of the chords are anticipated, so that is the way I have notated them.

sound because of the pedal and the omission of the third from the dominant chord. By eliminating both V-Im movement in the bass and the leading tone resolution in the harmony, the quartet achieves more ambiguous and open color. This is the way all the A sections are played after the solos.

The following interlude leads the way into the solos and also features a sound that subsequently turns up many times in McCoy Tyner's playing: descending dominant chords over a static pedal.¹¹⁹

(AT 0:50)

41 C

TENOR SAX

PIANO

BASS

G PEDAL

45

TENOR SAX

PIANO

BASS

G PEDAL CONTINUES

¹¹⁹ See "Tunji" and "Brasilia" for instance.

49

TENOR SAX

PIANO

BASS

E¹³] [E^b/A] [E^b9

G PEDAL CONTINUES

All in all, “Liberia” features two clear scale-based sounds. The D Dorian scale is presented through full voicings in the rubato A sections and open quartal sounds when in tempo. The E dominant diminished scale functions as the basis for Tyner’s chord voicings in the B section. In between them are functional harmonies leading to D minor, Eb7 and Emi7(b5)–A7, as well as dominant chord movement over a pedal point (interlude). Altogether, the composition combines different dominant sounds with a Dorian minor tonic.

EXAMPLES FROM JOHN COLTRANE’S SOLOS ON “LIBERIA”

The sound of the D Dorian scale is not as evident during the solos on “Liberia” as it is during the melody statement. The factors contributing to this are the medium-up tempo, in which a bar of the tonic chord only lasts for about a second, and Steve Davis playing walking bass lines during the A sections. To come through in such a short time frame, the scale color would require a static reference point in the bass. Now the attention is directed to the functional dominant chord movements stated by Tyner. As a result, the overall sound resembles the earlier D minor blues examples “Blues de Funk” and “Mox Nix” in chapter 3, even though there are some details in both Davis’ and Tyner’s playing that support the Dorian scale concept. Coltrane, on the other hand, evidently approaches the A sections horizontally on many occasions, applying both scalar approaches and added rapid chord movements.

The live recording from the Jazz Gallery, taped in June 1960, exhibits Coltrane going through a multitude of devices during his 16-minute solo.¹²⁰ Noteworthy is also the consistency of Tyner’s approach in accompanying the solo.¹²¹ Here, Coltrane imposes the D Dorian scale sound over the A section:

¹²⁰ John Coltrane: *Live at the Jazz Gallery 1960*. RLR Records RLR 88662, 2011. Recorded on June 10 or June 27, 1960.

¹²¹ The piano voicings are quite difficult to hear exactly because of the low quality recording. The notated voicings are partly based on what Tyner plays on the studio recording of “Liberia”.

(AT 9:27)

♩ = 275

561

TENOR SAX

PIANO

D DORIAN SCALE SEQUENCE

565

TENOR SAX

PIANO

569

TENOR SAX

PIANO

573

TENOR SAX

PIANO

Notice also the melodic movement from the note c to b in bars 571-576. Similarly to his solo on “Equinox”, Coltrane uses F Lydian augmented scale (D melodic minor scale) as a substitute scale for D Dorian on

“Liberia”. This sound comes through several times during the solo, most intelligibly at the very end. These are the final eight bars of the solo:

(AT 17:03)
1081 [D MELODIC MINOR/F LYDIAN AUGMENTED SCALE]

TENOR SAX

PIANO

[Eb¹³(#11)] [Dmi⁹] [Eb⁹] [Dmi⁹]

1085

TENOR SAX

PIANO

[A¹³(b9)] [Dmi⁶] [Emi⁷(b9)] [A⁷(b9)] [Dmi]

The vertical (chordal) approach is present in Coltrane’s solo lines as well. The first of the following examples starts with a line almost identical to what Coltrane plays in his solo break to “Summertime”¹²², as well as several phrases beginning and ending the same way on “Countdown” from Coltrane’s album *Giant Steps*.¹²³

(AT 8:16)
♩=276 481 [Emi⁷] [F⁷] [Bb] [Db⁷] [Gb] [A⁷] [Dmi]

TENOR SAX

PIANO

[Eb⁹(#11)] [Dmi⁹] [Eb⁹(#11)] [Dmi⁹]

¹²² John Coltrane: *My Favorite Things*. Atlantic SD 1361, 1961. Recorded on October 21, 24 & 26, 1960.

¹²³ John Coltrane: *Giant Steps*. Atlantic SD 1311, 1960. Recorded on May 4–5 and December 2, 1959.

485 [Dmi7] [Eb7] [Ab] [B7] [A7] [Dmi]

TENOR SAX

PIANO

Em11(b5) A13(b9) Dmi9 [Emi7(b5)] [A7(b9)] [Dmi(maj9)] [Dmi9]

(AT 10:10)
609 [Fmi7] [F#7] [B] [D7]

TENOR SAX

PIANO

A13(b9) [Dmi]

611 [G] [Bb7] [Eb] [Dmi]

TENOR SAX

PIANO

Eb9 [Dmi(maj9)] [Dmi9]

Notice how freely Coltrane applies harmonic motion over Tyner's accompaniment. Coltrane uses his chord formula starting from Dmi7 as if he would be substituting Dmi7-G7 with it, just like in the tune "Countdown". But he also uses Emi7 and Fmi7 as starting points, targeting both the Dmi and Eb chords that the accompaniment alternates between. The individuality of Coltrane's solo lines and Tyner's accompaniment is undeniable. Of course, Tyner hadn't yet found the way to get out of the chord changes like he does a couple of years later. Still, the horizontal coherence is a much more significant factor than the vertical dissonance in the quartet's expression, in which similar multilayered sound continues to exist in the years that follow.

EXAMPLES FROM MCCOY TYNER'S SOLOS ON "LIBERIA"

Tyner's solo lines in the A sections of the studio version are very close to those of "Mox Nix" & "Blues de Funk" but there are certain lines that hint towards a Dmi7–G7 sound. There is also a little bit more emphasis on the note b-natural in "Liberia" compared to the use of b-flat when returning to the tonic D minor chord in the earlier examples.¹²⁴ But just like in all of the previous examples, there are no scale-based sequences the same way as seen in Coltrane's solo. The B section, on the other hand, features the E dominant diminished scale distinctly.

This is McCoy Tyner's first solo chorus from the studio recording.¹²⁵ Tyner plays the tonic chord as Dmi6 most of the time but there are a few Dmi7–G7 implications in the left hand. The walking bass lines are also included here. Even though Steve Davis' bass lines kind of imply movement from A7 to Dmi, they are considerably more scalar than Jimmy Garrison's lines on "Blues de Funk", for instance. In bars 33-40, Davis is essentially using the tones from the D Dorian scale.

The image displays a musical score for McCoy Tyner's solo on "Liberia". It is divided into two systems. The first system, starting at 4:09, shows a piano part in 4/4 time with a tempo of 237. The piano part features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Chord annotations include A7, Dmi7, Eb7, and a section labeled "DOMINANT DIMINISHED SCALE". A "SOLO BREAK" is indicated in the first measure. The second system, starting at measure 1, shows a piano part with a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Chord annotations include Eb9, Dmi7, G9, Eb9, Dmi6, and E7(b9). The bass part shows a walking bass line.

¹²⁴ Compare bars 3, 12 and 34 of "Liberia" to bars 3, 7 and 22 of "Blues de Funk".

¹²⁵ John Coltrane: *Coltrane's Sound*. Atlantic SD 1419, 1964. Recorded on October 24 and 26, 1960.

5 (DOMINANT DIMINISHED SCALE) [Dmi^{b9}]

PIANO

BASS

A7(b9) Dmi⁷ G⁹

7 [E^{mi}7] [A7(b9)] [Dmi^{b9}]

PIANO

BASS

E^{mi}7(b9) A7(b9) Dmi^b

9 [B^bmi⁷ Eb7] [Dmi]

PIANO

BASS

E^b9 Dmi^b

8va

11 [B^bmi⁷ Eb7] [Dmi] (Dmi⁷ G7)

PIANO

BASS

Dmi^b E^{mi}7(b9)

SEE "LIKE SONNY" BAR 1
"IMPRESSIONS" BAR 129

13 [E \flat mi⁷ A7(\flat 9)] [Dmi]

PIANO

BASS

15

PIANO

BASS

17 [E DOMINANT DIMINISHED SCALE THROUGHOUT]

PIANO

BASS

19

PIANO

BASS

21

PIANO

BASS

25

PIANO

BASS

3

3

(TYNER'S VOICE)

27

PIANO

BASS

29

PIANO

BASS

3

31 ? (TEMPORARILY SOUNDS LIKE G7 GOING TO CMI BECAUSE OF THE NOTE Eb)

33 [Bbmi7 Eb7] [Dmi (Dmi7 G7)] [Bbmi7 Eb7]

37 Eb9] [Dmi7 G7] [E7mi7(b9) A7(b9)] [Dmi6]

It is the earlier live recording from the Jazz Gallery that contains an unquestionable example of Tyner stating the Dmi7-G7 movement during the A section.¹²⁶ Notice how the left-hand harmony moves persistently, and again a contrasting static element is merged with functionally moving harmony. The pronounced melodic movement from the note c to b that existed in the early versions of “A Night in Tunisia” has now become a manifest of the Dorian scale sound.

¹²⁶ John Coltrane: *Live at the Jazz Gallery 1960*. RLR Records RLR 88662, 2011. Recorded on June 10 or June 27, 1960.

(AT 22:04) $\text{♩} = 274$

321 [Dmi⁷] [G⁷] [Dmi⁷] [G⁷]

PIANO [E^b9] [Dmi⁶] [E^b9] [Dmi⁶]

325 [Dmi⁷] [G⁷] [Dmi⁷] [G⁷]

PIANO [E^b9] [E^b9]

329 [Dmi⁷] [G⁷] [Dmi⁷] [G⁷]

PIANO [Dmi⁷] [E^b9] [Dmi⁷] [Dmi⁷]

333 [Dmi⁷] [G⁷] [Dmi⁷] [G⁷]

PIANO [E^b9] [Dmi⁷] [E^b9] [E^b9]

One year later, McCoy Tyner is using II-V movements for both tonic and dominant chords during the A sections of "Liberia", along with added dominant chords. This example is from the Sutherland Lounge, probably recorded on March 1, 1961.¹²⁷

(AT 6:45) $\text{♩} = 274$

193 [E^b7] [Dmi⁷ G⁷] [B^bmi⁷] [Dmi⁷ G⁷] ↔

PIANO [B^bmi⁷ E^b9] [Dmi⁶] [B^bmi⁷] [E^b9] [Dmi⁶]

¹²⁷ John Coltrane: *Complete Live At The Sutherland Lounge 1961*. RLR Records RLR 88668, 2012. Recorded on March 1 1961.

Even though the melody of “Liberia” features the accompaniment vamp using chord voicings built on the interval of fourth, Tyner doesn’t yet use that sound when accompanying Coltrane or during his own solo. While Coltrane explores both scale sounds as well as his rapidly moving chord formulas, Tyner is using the functional dominant–tonic resolutions in order to create movement during the A sections. In order to bring out the Dorian scale sound for the tonic chord, Tyner just utilizes melodic lines outlining Dmi7–G7 chord movement.

It is really interesting to think of the direction that McCoy Tyner takes at this point. He is well aware of the chord cycles that Coltrane uses, having discussed and rehearsed them with Coltrane as early as 1957.¹²⁸ He had also recorded compositions and arrangements like “26-2”, “But Not for Me”, “Exotica”, and “Body and Soul” which all use these chord formulas, so it is obvious that Tyner is able to play them. In search for ways to generate movement, as well as ways to evoke modal sounds, it would seem like a logical choice to just follow Coltrane’s lead and begin to utilize all of the same techniques. But that is not what McCoy Tyner does. In an interview with Peter Danson for *Coda Magazine* in December 1980, McCoy Tyner describes his relationship with Coltrane as “a very close relationship, but close in the sense that there was enough distance between us so that I didn’t become his shadow; we supported each other and he became an inspiration for me.”¹²⁹

¹²⁸ Priestley 1987, 33.

¹²⁹ Danson 1981, 6.

The next chapter explores the open voicings that Tyner starts to employ more and more, and the ways that his individual approach complements Coltrane's approach in the quartet's expression.

5

You're allowing yourself to do a lot of things with sound when you leave your voicings open. A long time ago all the piano players used to close everything up and play all the notes in the chord. They left no space. But I'm finding that space between the intervals is just as important, or more important sometimes, than filling the chords up and playing every note in the chord.

-McCoy Tyner in an interview with Ben Sidran on September 23, 1985.¹³⁰

What you don't play is sometimes as important as what you do play.

-McCoy Tyner in an interview with Marian McPartland on May 4, 1983.¹³¹

¹³⁰ Sidran 2006 [1985], 8:26.

¹³¹ McPartland 2008 [1983], 24:17.

5. THE OPEN SOUND

In this chapter, I will go through examples of McCoy Tyner's vamps from the 1960s that feature more space between the intervals. The vamps also deal with melodic-harmonic movement, being either the static element or providing harmonic motion against static melodic elements.

"AFRICA"

Even though there were some open sounds already present in the October 1960 sessions, most of the vamps employed piano voicings built by stacking thirds to eventually include all the seven notes of a diatonic scale.¹³² During 1961, voicings built on fourths became more and more frequent in McCoy Tyner's playing. Now, many of the modal vamps employ voicings similar to those that Bill Evans played on the tune "So What" on the classic Miles Davis recording *Kind of Blue*.¹³³

(AT 0:33)

♩=133

PIANO

BASS

1 ["SO WHAT" VOICINGS]

The musical score shows a piano accompaniment for the piece "Africa". It is written in 4/4 time with a tempo of 133. The piano part consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) with stacked chords. The bass part consists of a single staff with a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. A box labeled "1" indicates the start of the "SO WHAT" voicings section.

Early recorded examples of McCoy Tyner using these voicings include "Africa", as well as certain passages in "Song of the Underground Railroad" and "Greensleeves". As a whole, the album *Africa/Brass* brings Tyner's evolving harmonic thinking to the forefront.¹³⁴ The arrangements originally credited to Eric Dolphy alone were in fact orchestrations of the voicings that Tyner envisioned and played on the piano.¹³⁵

The issued version of "Africa" was recorded on June 4, 1961. The tune features a sustained vamp over an E pedal. There is a fair amount of variation in the way McCoy Tyner plays the vamp, but in terms of hypnotic continuity it is still quite close to the vamps from the 1960 sessions. Here is an example of the accompaniment vamp behind Coltrane's melody statement. The bass fills have been omitted from the transcription as well as the accompanying horn parts. The bar numbers run from the beginning of Coltrane's statement.

¹³² Tunes featuring open sounds include "Liberia" (A sections in tempo), "Mr. Knight" (intro) and "Equinox" (melody).

¹³³ Miles Davis: *Kind of Blue*. Columbia CL 1355, 1959. "So What" recorded on March 2, 1959.

¹³⁴ John Coltrane: *The Complete Africa/Brass Sessions*. Impulse! IMP 21682, 1996. Recorded on May 23 and June 4, 1961.

¹³⁵ DeVito 2012 178; Gleason 2016, 12; Primack 1996, 32.

(AT 1:20)

♩=181

25 [Dmi]

TENOR SAX

PIANO

BASS

29 [D MINOR PENTATONIC/BLUES SCALE]

TENOR SAX

PIANO

BASS

[G MIXOLYDIAN/D DORIAN OVER E G¹³/E or Dmi⁹/E]

33 [E mi]

TENOR SAX

PIANO

BASS

[G MIXOLYDIAN/D DORIAN OVER E G¹³/E or Dmi⁹/E]

37 [E MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE]

TENOR SAX

(WITH HORNS)
G MIXOLYDIAN/D DORIAN OVER E G¹³/E or Dmi⁷/E

PIANO

BASS

The melody of "Africa" implies both D minor and E minor sounds over the E pedal and together with McCoy Tyner's voicings the overall modal color is E Phrygian. To me, Tyner's voicings suggest a G13 sound over the E pedal.¹³⁶ With D minor triad in the melody, there's an element of II-V (Dmi7–G7) movement being placed on top of, or suspended over, the E pedal.

I wasn't able to include a transcription of Coltrane's solo here, but he explores material based on both D minor and E minor chords during his solo. He establishes D Dorian and E Dorian scale sounds as well as their substitute scales D melodic minor (F Lydian augmented) and briefly even E melodic minor (G Lydian augmented). Lines implying rapid chordal movement are present too, so all in all Coltrane uses the devices seen already in his solos on "Liberia".

During Coltrane's solo, Tyner embellishes the vamp with the inclusion of the note c-sharp, as seen next in an example from the vamp leading up to Tyner's own solo. On top of the E pedal this creates an interesting sound by adding the major sixth interval to the Phrygian color. This could be seen as the second mode of the melodic minor scale, but I think it is rather just a result of extending the G13 chord with #11.

¹³⁶ Perhaps partly because of the same key, Tyner's sustained cluster voicing (bars 25-28) reminds me of what Bill Evans plays in the beginning of "All Blues" (on Miles Davis' *Kind of Blue*), even though the notes are not exactly the same.

(AT 5:48)

231 ["SO WHAT" VOICING G¹³(#11)]

PIANO

BASS

E PEDAL

235 [G¹³(#11)]

PIANO

BASS

E PEDAL

McCoy Tyner's solo is interesting because, first of all, it features an open sound in the left hand which doesn't define the same E Phrygian color that prevailed in the vamp for Coltrane's solo. Instead, Tyner leaves out the note f altogether from his left hand. Compare the following left-hand voicings, taken from Tyner's solo, to the voicings in bars 233-234 of the previous example.

PIANO L.H.

This must be one of the first recordings in which Tyner accompanies his own solo lines with a quartal chord.¹³⁷ When soloing over these hypnotically repeated voicings, Tyner works with some ideas that are not present in the examples that I have examined in the earlier chapters. His reference point for melodic material seems to be E minor pentatonic scale and A7 chord, at first represented only with the note c-sharp. He doesn't use full seven-note scales. The resulting overall color is considerably brighter than what Coltrane's improvisation conveyed. The next example is from the first recorded take of "Africa" from May 23, 1961. Tyner starts his solo by emphasizing the note c-sharp, connecting it with E minor pentatonic scale.

¹³⁷ There are some unreleased live recordings that I haven't heard, so I can't be certain at this point.

(AT 5:15) E MINOR PENTATONIC WITH C# ADDED

♩=198

PIANO

5 E MINOR PENTATONIC

PIANO

The next phrase features a structure that Tyner uses as a left-hand voicing for A9 or Emi6 chord, used here as a source for melodic material.

9 A⁹ E MINOR PENTATONIC

PIANO

11 A⁹ E MINOR PENTATONIC

PIANO

13 E MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE CONTINUES

PIANO

The next phrase (bars 17–20) seems to be derived from the parallel movement of triads or even F#mi7–B7 going into Emi7–A7. Because of the limited melodic material the interpretation is uncertain.

17 (AT 5:34) [B] [A] [B] [A] [B] [A] [B] [C]

PIANO

19 [B] [A] [B] [A] [B] [A] [B] []

PIANO

21 E MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE

PIANO

25 E MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE WITH C# ADDED

PIANO

After the E minor pentatonic scale with added note c-sharp again in bars 21–32, Tyner introduces melodic fourths used as a chromatic approach in bars 32–37.

29 [E MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE] [CHROMATIC APPROACH]

PIANO

33 E MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE [CHROMATIC APPROACH] [CHROMATIC APPROACH]

PIANO

37 [CHROMATIC APPROACH] E MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE

In bars 41–45, Tyner evidently alternates between triads.

(AT 6:03) 41 [A] [G] [A] [G] [A] [G] [A] [G]

43 [A] [G] [A] [G] [A] [B \flat] [A] [G]

45 [A] [G] [A] [G] [E MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE]

The next bars feature some more chromatic approaches, as well as the only brief reference to the E Phrygian sound and the note f in this solo (bar 52).

47 [CHROMATIC APPROACH] E MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE [CHROMATIC APPROACH]

Alongside the open sounding fourths in the left-hand vamp, Tyner’s melodic vocabulary features interesting new elements in this solo on “Africa”. The E minor pentatonic scale seems to be the main reference point into which the triad pairs and chromatic ideas resolve to.

Tyner’s solo on another take of “Africa” (recorded 12 days later on June 4, 1961 and released as an alternate take) includes some more chromatic ideas that Tyner might have been working on in between the sessions.¹³⁸ Tyner starts out similarly to the earlier take, emphasizing E minor pentatonic and the note c-sharp. In bars 17–19, he embellishes the pentatonic scale tones, falling on the beat, with two chromatic notes added as triplets in between.

Nicolas Slonimsky’s *Thesaurus of Melodic Scales and Patterns* could have influenced this approach. There are many reports stating that Coltrane used to carry that book around and McCoy Tyner has confirmed this as well, according to Lewis Porter.¹³⁹ In an interview with Len Lyons, Herbie Hancock also talks about both Coltrane and Tyner having practiced out of that book.¹⁴⁰ Even though Slonimsky does not feature this exact melodic figure, there are many that utilize added notes in a similar fashion. In fact, Slonimsky uses the term *interpolation* for the technique of “insertion of one or more notes between the principal tones”.¹⁴¹ The

¹³⁸ John Coltrane: *The Complete Africa/Brass Sessions*. Impulse! IMP 21682, 1996. Recorded on May 23 and June 4, 1961.

¹³⁹ Porter 2001, 149.

¹⁴⁰ Lyons 1983, 281.

¹⁴¹ Slonimsky 1986, vii.

notes of the E minor pentatonic scale seem to act as the principal tones in the above phrase by McCoy Tyner.

In contrast to the chromatic material, Tyner starts to gradually bring out the sound of A7 chord more and more clearly, as seen in the following passage. The fast melodic lines in bar 28 reveal the Emi7–A7 progression that probably has been one of Tyner’s reference points all along. The E minor pentatonic and G triad have represented Emi7 and the full sound of the A7 has been avoided prior to this.

21

PIANO

E MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE WITH C# ADDED

(AT 6:52) 25

PIANO

Emi A7

29

PIANO

A7

Next, Tyner introduces another chromatic idea resembling Slonimsky’s patterns. In this one he seems to add one chromatic note in between two notes from the E minor pentatonic scale, even though in the upper octave (bar 33) he plays the note f instead of e.

(AT 6:57) 33

PIANO

35

PIANO

37

PIANO

In this take of “Africa”, Tyner does not play the triad pairs that he experimented with ten days earlier. Instead, he concentrates on melodic patterns with chromatic notes and states the Em7–A7 movement more clearly than in the earlier take, as seen in the next passage.

39

PIANO

41

PIANO

45

E MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE

PIANO

49

(G) E MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE

PIANO

Up until this point, all was performed over the pedal E in the bass. When Tyner starts to play full chords at the end of his solo, the bass moves to G pedal, indicating that the vamp was actually conceived as G13 over an E pedal.¹⁴²

¹⁴² There are two bass players on the recordings of "Africa", Art Davis in the session on June 4 and Paul Chambers in the earlier session on May 23.

(AT 7:45) 65 [G¹³]

PIANO

BASS

G PEDAL

69 [G¹³] (G¹³(#11))]

PIANO

BASS

The whole construction of “Africa” is really interesting. The melodic material that Coltrane uses seems to be derived from Dmi7 and Emi7 chords. The harmonic material for Tyner’s accompaniment vamp seems to be derived from the idea of placing G13 chord over the E pedal. The melodic material in Tyner’s solo seems to be derived from A7 chord, but he goes for much more open sounds than Coltrane. All of this is placed on the pedal E in the bass.

”GREENSLEEVES”

According to Tyner, “Greensleeves” on the album *Africa/Brass* was his arrangement.¹⁴³ The next example is included to display the subtle variety in which Tyner approaches each composition. Now Tyner utilizes functional dominant tonic–movement and highlights the effect by using the voicings based on thirds, while the bass plays a repeating melodic figure. Here is the vamp from the studio version that was released on *Africa/Brass* and recorded on May 23, 1961.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ Primack 1996, 32.

¹⁴⁴ John Coltrane. *The Complete Africa/Brass Sessions*. Impulse! IMP 21682, 1996. Recorded in 1961.

(AT 0:11)

♩=142

PIANO

BASS

9 9 #5 #9 9 #5 #9

13 11 11

9 b5 9 b5

Next is an example of the vamp for "Greensleeves" as recorded live at the Village Vanguard on November 2, 1961. Tyner's chord extensions in the right hand are different from the earlier studio recording. By alternating between the thirteen (f-sharp) and raised fifth (f) in his A7 voicings, Tyner achieves sound that is less associated with tonal D minor sound.

(AT 0:05)

♩=150

PIANO

BASS

5 11 13 11

9 9 #5 #9 9 #5 #9

9 [G]
 13
 11 9
 #5

PIANO
 [Dmi⁶] [A7(b⁹)] [Dmi⁶] [A7(b⁹)]

BASS

Here is an example of the vamp between the melody statements from the same performance on November 2, 1961. Coltrane approaches this vamp horizontally, as he doesn't imply the V-I mi movement in his melodic lines at all. I have included 32 bars here to show the consistency of the contrasting approaches throughout the example. Coltrane's melodies are static pentatonic or blues scale phrases while Tyner's accompaniment states the functional V-I mi movement keeping the vamp rhythm throughout. Reggie Workman on the bass plays either the vamp or utilizes pedal points, such as the A pedal in bars 1-8 and the brief G pedal in bars 19-20. Later in the performance, Workman introduces also a B pedal point (at 2:03, not notated here).

(AT 0:30)
 ♩ = 163 [D MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE]

9 #5 #5 11 9 [Dmi] #9 #5

SOPRANO SAX
 3 3

PIANO
 [Dmi⁶] [A7(b⁹)] [Dmi⁶] [E mi⁷] [A7(b⁹)]

BASS

5 [D MINOR PENTATONIC/BLUES SCALE]

SOPRANO SAX

PIANO

BASS

9 [D MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE]

SOPRANO SAX

PIANO

BASS

13 [D MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE]

SOPRANO SAX

PIANO

BASS

17 [D MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE]

SOPRANO SAX

PIANO

BASS

9 9 6 11 9 #9 #5

[Dmi^{b6}] [A7(b9)] [Dmi^{b6}] [A7(b9)]

21 [D MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE]

SOPRANO SAX

PIANO

BASS

9 #9 #5 11 (G) #5 3

[Dmi^{b6}] [A7(b9)] [Dmi^{b6}] [A7(b9)]

25 [D MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE]

SOPRANO SAX

PIANO

BASS

11 9 11 9 #5 #9 11 9 #5 b5 3

[Dmi^{b6}] [A7(b9)] [Dmi^{b6}] [A7(b9)]

29 [D MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE]

SOPRANO SAX

PIANO

BASS

32

There are both modal and tonal elements present in this vamp, simultaneously placed on top of each other. Tyner's chord movement is clearly functional, but neither Coltrane's melodic lines nor Workman's bass figures go with that but rather choose to create their own static element. As a result, the overall sound comes through as modal. In the course of the full performance, Workman goes through various possibilities for pedal points, including A pedal, B pedal, and G pedal utilized. All in all, Tyner provides motion for the vamp section of "Greensleeves", while Coltrane and Workman contribute static elements. In the following years, Tyner begins to increasingly use the concept of dividing static and moving elements between his left and right hand.

"OUT OF THIS WORLD"

The John Coltrane Quartet's version of "Out of This World", by Harold Arlen and Johnny Mercer, was recorded on June 19, 1962.¹⁴⁵ I wanted to include McCoy Tyner's vamp for this tune as an example of how

¹⁴⁵ John Coltrane: *Coltrane (Deluxe Edition)*. Impulse! 589 567-2, 2002. Recorded in 1962.

each of his modal vamps from this period has an individual character. Subtle details that most listeners wouldn't even notice differentiate one Dorian vamp from another. Tyner's voicings here sound very similar to the "So What" voicings but what would be the top note is dropped down an octave here, inverting the triad formed by the three highest notes. Tyner seems to often divide "So What" voicings so that the left hand plays the interval of a fourth at the bottom and the triad at the top is played by the right hand. Taking this into account, it is quite logical that the triad would end up being inverted. Tyner's use of this voicing type can be visually confirmed through the 1963 video performance of "Afro Blue" from Ralph Gleason's *Jazz Casual*.¹⁴⁶ Here is the intro vamp for "Out of This World":

(AT 0:09)

♩=172 ⁹ [E^b DORIAN SCALE] Ab⁹

PIANO

BASS

PIANO

BASS

Tyner essentially keeps the vamp during Coltrane's solo, with some variation in voicings as well as rhythm, eventually always coming back to the original idea.

"TUNJI"

"Tunji" is another example of the John Coltrane Quartet experimenting with the balance between a static open vamp and moving harmonies. The quartet recorded several takes of "Tunji" on June 20, 1962 of which the takes 1, 4, 5 and 7 have been released as alternate takes. The originally issued take was recorded in another session on June 29, 1962.¹⁴⁷ Comparing the earlier takes with the version chosen for the album is

¹⁴⁶ Ralph Gleason's *Jazz Casual: John Coltrane*. Rhino Home Video, 2003. Original air date January 4, 1964.

¹⁴⁷ John Coltrane: *Coltrane (Deluxe Edition)*. Impulse! 589 567-2, 2002. Recorded in 1962.

very interesting. The quartet went through a few different approaches, particularly dealing with McCoy Tyner's and Jimmy Garrison's role in the performance.

The issued take of "Tunji" (from June 29, 1962) represents modal harmony at its most static state in the quartet's recorded output.¹⁴⁸ McCoy Tyner keeps the two-bar piano vamp precisely the same throughout Coltrane's solo, and there is not much variation in the bass part either.

♩=107 (AT 0:06)

The image shows a musical score for piano and bass. The tempo is marked as ♩=107 and the time signature is 4/4. The score is for two staves: Piano (top) and Bass (bottom). The piano part consists of two measures of a static vamp, with notes in the right hand being mostly sustained chords and moving lines in the left hand. The bass part consists of two measures of a static vamp, with notes in the right hand being mostly sustained chords and moving lines in the left hand. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

Tyner uses very open voicings that are far from tonal functional harmony, as they include neither the third nor the seventh. Additionally, Coltrane introduces melodic material sparingly in his solo. He starts by using only B minor pentatonic scale with some blues inflections added. Next, he introduces the ninth (c-sharp) and gradually moves towards the notes of F# minor pentatonic scale over the static vamp accompaniment. Only after sustaining the ninth (c-sharp) again, Coltrane introduces the thirteenth (g-sharp). Presenting new intervals gradually over the static background highlights the color of the individual melody notes. The piano solo that follows Coltrane's statement provides contrast by bringing in a completely different modal approach. Tyner employs a 24-bar blues form in the key of B with Garrison supporting him through the chord changes. On "Tunji" the quartet ended up with such organization of a static vamp and contrasting motion through first trying out different approaches in the earlier sessions on June 20.

In the first take the tempo is considerably faster than in the issued take. The first take features Garrison in a very free and independent role throughout. Tyner lays out completely during Coltrane's solo and melody statement, while Garrison accompanies Coltrane with quite a bit of melodic-harmonic movement implied, including some chromatic ideas. Tyner comes in only for the piano solo, based on the blues form similarly to the issued take. But Garrison carries on his free role during the piano solo, mostly disregarding Tyner's chord changes. Additionally, Tyner only plays a few chord voicings behind Coltrane at the very end of the performance.

Take 4 features a more static approach from the quartet as a whole. Jimmy Garrison plays a repeating bass figure and Tyner comes up with the static piano vamp to accompany Coltrane. The approach is similar in take 5, but the tempo is taken down a bit. Garrison keeps the bass vamp quite static throughout and the

¹⁴⁸ Originally released on John Coltrane: *Coltrane*. Impulse! A-21, 1962.

chord changes during Tyner's solo result in various modal sounding colors over the pedal B. Here is the second chorus of Tyner's piano solo from take 5 of "Tunji", recorded on June 20, 1962.

(AT 3:44)
♩ = 149

25 [B7]

PIANO

BASS

27 [E7]

PIANO

BASS

29 [F#mi11] [Gmi11] [C7]

PIANO

BASS

31 [B7] [Cmi7] [F7]

PIANO

BASS

33

PIANO

BASS

E7

E13

35

PIANO

BASS

Bmi7

E7

E13

37

PIANO

BASS

B13

B7

39

PIANO

BASS

(?) SEE BAR 44!

Emi7

(A7)

B7

B9

41 [F#7]

PIANO

F#13

BASS

43 [E7] 8 MINOR PENTATONIC/BLUES SCALE

PIANO

E13

BASS

45 [B7]

PIANO

B13

A7

A13

BASS

47 [G7]

PIANO

G13

C7

C9

BASS

Bars 45-48 feature similar descending dominant chords over a pedal point as encountered in the interlude of “Liberia”. They will appear again in an improvised manner in McCoy Tyner’s melodic lines on “Brasilia” in chapter 6.

The tempo is even slower in the final take 7 from June 20, settling to what will be the tempo for the later issued take. Garrison still maintains the static vamp in take 7, but interprets it more freely during Tyner’s solo than in the takes 4 and 5.

Eventually the quartet discarded the idea of continuing the bass pedal throughout the piano solo on the issued take of “Tunji”, recorded on June 29, 1962. Instead, Garrison states the dominant chord motion with Tyner. This creates more contrast against the static accompaniment during Coltrane’s solo. The quartet’s experiments with varying degrees of movement in the alternate takes of “Tunji” are interesting as they are concurrent with the development of McCoy Tyner’s personal style.¹⁴⁹ Later on, Tyner utilizes equivalent approaches in balancing static elements with dominant chord motion in his solos.

¹⁴⁹ Of course the quartet (with Steve Davis on bass instead of Jimmy Garrison) used the pedal approach already on “Village Blues” as seen on page 60.

6

I don't close my sound in, and that allows me to play other things superimposed on the chord, since there is a lot of space between the intervals.

-McCoy Tyner in an interview with Bob Doerschuk in 1981.¹⁵⁰

I would leave space, which wouldn't identify the chord so definitely to the point where it inhibited your other voicings, all the things that you would use as substitutions.

-McCoy Tyner in an interview with Marian McPartland on May 4, 1983.¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ Doerschuk 1981, 37.

¹⁵¹ McPartland 2008 [1983], 24:21.

6. CREATING MOVEMENT

"IMPRESSIONS"

In the case of the John Coltrane tune "Impressions", the connection of McCoy Tyner's voicings to those played by Bill Evans is obvious since the harmonic framework is derived from "So What".¹⁵² The quartet played the tune from the very beginning, as it was in the book already prior to Tyner joining the group.¹⁵³ According to the liner notes by Ashley Kahn to the recently released John Coltrane session *Both Directions at Once*, Coltrane labeled the tape box of 1963 recording of "Impressions" still as "So What".¹⁵⁴

Here is the first A section of "Impressions" as recorded live at the Village Vanguard on November 2, 1961.¹⁵⁵

$\text{♩} = 265$ (AT 0:00)

TENOR SAX

PIANO

BASS

5

TENOR SAX

PIANO

BASS

¹⁵² See page 100.

¹⁵³ Porter 2001, 173.

¹⁵⁴ Kahn 2018.

¹⁵⁵ John Coltrane: *The Complete 1961 Village Vanguard Recordings*. MCA Records, 1997. Recorded on November 1–3 and 5, 1961.

There is some room for interpretation on whether the A sections of "Impressions" are actually based on the D Dorian or G Mixolydian mode. Both *The New Real Book Volume Two* by Chuck Sher and Jamey Aebersold *Play-A-Long Volume 28* list the scales/chords of the tune as Dmi7 and Ebmi7 (B section).¹⁵⁶ The melody does emphasize the note d as the tonic and it also ends by outlining a D minor triad. But Jimmy Garrison on bass clearly states g as the tonic. And ultimately, it is the bass that defines the difference between D Dorian and G Mixolydian. So, it would have to be the Mixolydian if I had to pick just one. Moreover, the lead melody of McCoy Tyner's voicings essentially implies Dmi7 to G7 movement.¹⁵⁷ So all in all, putting the melody and the bass and the harmony together, one could say that the A sections of "Impressions" are about both D Dorian and G Mixolydian at the same time.

Here is the second chorus of McCoy Tyner's solo on "Impressions", recorded live at the Village Vanguard on November 1, 1961.

¹⁵⁶ Sher 1991, 154; Aebersold 1983, 2.

¹⁵⁷ The lead melody of Tyner's voicings is similar to that found in Morton Gould's orchestral arrangement of "Pavanne", which was Coltrane's inspiration for the melody (Priestley 1987, 67).

49 [Ab7] [Ebmi7 Ab7]

PIANO

Ab9 Ebmi7 Ab9 [Ab13] [Ab9 Ebmi7 Ab9] [Ebmi7 Ab9]

53 [Ebmi7 Ab7]

PIANO

Ab9 Ebmi7 Ab9

55

PIANO

Ebmi7 Ab9

57 [Dmi7] [G7]

PIANO

G13 MIXOLYDIAN SCALE MOVEMENT

61

PIANO

G9 G13

Tyner’s melodic lines on “Impressions” imply II-V movement back and forth (Dmi7-G7) so frequently that instead of labeling every single implication, I decided to label those as unified II-V areas. Sometimes Tyner starts from the V chord and ends on the II chord, sometimes the opposite, but I have marked only II-V either way. Because of the clear emphasis on the chord tones of the II-V and chromatic approach notes leading to these chord tones, as well as absence of scale sequences for the most part, I think it is more accurate to interpret these as chordal movements rather than just Dorian or Mixolydian scales. This is an example of how I hear the exact movements between Dmi7 and G7:

44

[Dmi7] [G7] [Dmi7] [G7]

Here is another example from the third solo chorus:

69

[G7] [Dmi7] [G7] [Dmi7]

Tyner's melodic lines for the B sections clearly imply Ebmi7-Ab7 movements. Here is a line from the second chorus:

55

Over an Ab7 background, the line sounds like it starts on the third of the Ab7 chord and uses the note g as a chromatic approach to g-flat, then implying Ebmi7 chord.

55

[Ab7] [Ebmi7] [Ab7 (BLUES SOUND)] [Ebmi7]

But there is also another melodic implication in this movement, which is a whole step movement of minor seventh chords. There will be more examples of McCoy Tyner developing his lines into this direction later this chapter in the analysis of "Brasilia".

55

[Fmi7] [Ebmi7] [Ab7 (BLUES SOUND)] [Ebmi7]

The melodic lines on "Impressions" are actually constructed quite similarly to those on "Like Sonny" from 1960 (see page 47). Tyner can even be observed using the exact same melodic idea in both of the following excerpts, implying movement from C7 to Fmi7. Compare this example from Tyner's solo on "Like Sonny":

(AT 2:17) 17

PIANO [Dmi7] [G9] [Dmi7] [G9] [C7]

to the beginning of the previous example from “Impressions”:

However, there is a clear difference in Tyner’s left-hand voicings in comparison with “Like Sonny”. During the A sections of “Impressions”, he doesn’t seem to imply Dmi7 chord at all in his left hand, even though the melodic lines clearly outline Dmi7-G7 motion.

Tyner retains the closed position voicing for G9 on “Impressions”, but instead of the functionally inclined Dmi7 to go with it, he introduces two quartal voicings that represent scale-based G Mixolydian tonic. These are exactly the same voicings Tyner used in accompanying the melody of “Liberia” in October 1960. Now, they just have moved from the right hand to the left hand.

Additionally, Tyner uses a G major triad as a bridge between the two different voicings types: G9 (closed position) and G13 (fourths with scale movement). It seems to me that at this point, Tyner uses the two voicing types as two clearly distinct elements, with scale movement underlining the modal character of the A sections. For the B sections, on the other hand, Tyner frequently brings out Ebmi7 to Ab9 movement with both hands. This highlights the B section as being somewhat more functional in nature, harmonically acting as a tritone substitute dominant towards the modal tonic of the A sections. In some cases going back to the closed position voicings also seems to have to do with the range of the right-hand melodies. When the line descends to the area of the quartal voicing, the left hand goes out of the way to the more compact voicing.

For Tyner, the space between the intervals in the left-hand voicing seems to make a very important difference, and it does create a substantially different sound. Concurrently with the appearance of voicings built on fourths, Tyner's right-hand melodies begin to move more freely and also suggest non-functional chord movements. During his solo on "Impressions", Tyner evidently implies parallel movement from G7 to A7 and even to B7 in his melodic lines. The lines for B7 are not completely explicit, but that seems likely to be the source of the movement, considering the fact that Tyner's composition "Effendi" from the album *Inception* (recorded on January 10, 1962) explores the movement from Dmi7–G7 to F#mi7-B7.¹⁵⁸

Here are the first 16 bars of the third solo chorus on "Impressions" from the November 1, 1961 recording from the Village Vanguard:

The image shows a piano score for the first 16 bars of the third solo chorus on "Impressions". The score is written for piano and consists of two systems of music. The first system starts at bar 65 and ends at bar 68. The second system starts at bar 69 and ends at bar 72. The right hand plays a melodic line, and the left hand plays a bass line. Chord voicings are indicated above the notes. A box with the number 3 is placed above the first bar of the first system. The score includes various chord voicings such as G13, Dmi11, A7, A13, Dmi7, G7, G13, and G9.

¹⁵⁸ McCoy Tyner: *Inception*. Impulse! A-18, 1962. Recorded on January 10–11, 1962. According to the album liner notes "Effendi" is "based on two changes – D minor in the opening eight and the out section and F# minor in the bridge." Ascending whole tone movement starting from G7 was later used by Tyner in his composition "Four By Five", which will be featured in chapter 10. Of course the parallel movement in whole tones was already evident in October 1960 in the vamp of "My Favorite Things" and the intro to "In Your Own Sweet Way", for example.

75 [Dmi7 G7] [Emi7 A7] [B7] [A7]
 PIANO
 G¹³
 77 [Dmi7 G7]
 PIANO
 G⁹
 G¹³

Next is an example from the fifth and last solo chorus in which Tyner utilizes the extensions of Dmi11 and Emi11 chords. This sound resembles his accompaniment to "My Favorite Things".

(AT 7:34) 129 [Dmi¹¹] [Emi¹¹] [Dmi¹¹] [B7]
 PIANO
 G¹³
 133 [G7] [A7] [Dmi7] [A7]
 PIANO
 G⁹

In addition to Ebmi7-Ab7 and Ebmi7-Fmi7 during the B sections, Tyner also implies also F#mi7-B7 to Emi7-A7 movements.¹⁵⁹ Here is an example from the fourth solo chorus:

(AT 7:20) 113 [Ab7] [Ab¹³] [Ab⁹] [Ebmi7] [Ab⁹] [Ebmi7] [Ab⁷ (Fmi⁷)] [Ab⁹]
 PIANO

¹⁵⁹ This movement results from functional harmonies, as Tyner uses these particular chords on "Blues to Elvin" (John Coltrane: *Coltrane plays the Blues*) to approach Ab7 in the fifth bar of the Eb blues form. The same movement is notated in Chapter 7 in an example from "Bessie's Blues".

”SPIRITUAL”

Whereas ”Impressions” already had movement written in its AABA solo form, in 1961 more and more of Coltrane’s music used just a single modal center as the basis for improvisation. ”Spiritual” is an interesting example of how the quartet started to weave functional chord changes and modal sounds together, combining the two approaches in an improvised manner.

The first recordings of ”Spiritual” are from the Village Vanguard on November 1961. Lewis Porter has pointed out that the melody of the tune is most likely based on a rare version of the ”Nobody Knows de Trouble I See” published in *The Book of American Negro Spirituals* from 1925, edited by James Weldon Johnson.¹⁶⁰ After stating the melody in rubato, the quartet goes to a vamp in tempo. In addition to the same time signature and a single modal center for solos, ”Spiritual” is similar to ”My Favorite Things” also in the sense that the solo vamps alternate between minor and major sounds, in this case C Dorian and C Mixolydian modes.¹⁶¹ In all of the four versions recorded at the Village Vanguard on November 1961, Coltrane solos over the Dorian vamp, Eric Dolphy over Mixolydian and McCoy Tyner again over Dorian.

Both Jamey Aebersold Play-A-Long Vol. 27 and Lewis Porter have included only the Dorian vamp in their lead sheets, and interpreted it as alternation between two chords, Cmi7 and F7.¹⁶² The bass clearly moves from c to f during the vamp but Tyner’s voicings seem rather to be derived from the idea of C Dorian scale than the two chords. Here is how ”Spiritual” went to tempo at the Village Vanguard on November 5, 1961.¹⁶³ I have omitted the contrabassoon from the transcription after the first long tonic note since the few notes Garvin Bushell plays later on create only a rhythmic effect.

¹⁶⁰ Porter 2001, 206.

¹⁶¹ On the album *Coltrane plays the Blues*, the quartet used similar idea for ”Mr. Syms” as well.

¹⁶² Porter 2001, 208; Aebersold 1983, 5.

¹⁶³ John Coltrane: *The Complete 1961 Village Vanguard Recordings*. Impulse! IMPD4-232, 1997. Recorded on November 1–3 and 5, 1961.

♩=101 (AT 1:02)

TENOR SAX

BASS CLARINET

PIANO

BASS

CONTRA-BASSOON

5

TENOR SAX

BASS CLARINET

PIANO

BASS

Cmi

Fmi

9

TENOR SAX

BASS CLARINET

PIANO

BASS

C DORIAN VOICINGS

8^{vb}

13

TENOR SAX

PIANO

BASS

C DORIAN VOICINGS

17

TENOR SAX

PIANO

BASS

C DORIAN VOICINGS

Ab¹³ G7(#9)

There is admittedly an element of Cmi going to F here, but in that case, the minor chord could not be labeled as Cmi7 but Cmi6/9. Also, the F chord doesn't have a seventh in it. In fact, Tyner's voicings are similar to those found on "Africa" but in another key and in the opposite order.

An interesting deviation from the scale sound occurs in bar 20 above. Tyner plays the functional dominant movement of Ab13 and G7#5#9 leading back to C minor. Again, because neither bass nor saxophone plays this movement, these chords do not jump out of the modal character of the vamp. But this creates a strong feeling of finishing one section and advancing to the next. In this way, Tyner achieves some movement to balance the static vamp.

Here is another example of this from an earlier performance of "Spiritual" at the Village Vanguard, recorded on November 1, 1961. This is the eight-bar transition from Eric Dolphy's solo (over the C Mixolydian vamp) into the beginning of McCoy Tyner's solo on the C Dorian vamp.

(AT 6:25) [C MIXOLYDIAN VOICINGS]

♩=113

PIANO

BASS

5 [C MIXOLYDIAN VOICINGS] [Ab13] [G7(#5#9)]

Tyner again marks the arrival to the next section using functional dominant-tonic movement. During his solo that follows Dolphy's solo, Tyner uses similar movements both in his melodic lines and accompanying chord voicings, often independent of each other to maintain the modal character. Quartal left-hand voicings move up two scale steps in a similar manner as Tyner moved the triads for his vamps in 1960, for instance on "Equinox".

9

PIANO

BASS

Cmi⁷_{b9}

13

PIANO

BASS

Cmi⁷_{b9}

17

PIANO

BASS

Cmi⁷_{b9}

Gradually, Tyner starts to imply more movement in his melodic lines:

21

PIANO

BASS

Cmi⁷ F⁷ Fmi⁷ B^b7

Cmi⁷ F⁷

Notice that in bar 24, Reggie Workman seems to be reacting to Tyner's left-hand dominant chord by playing the notes d and g. The tension between Tyner's left-hand voicing and right-hand melody line is exactly the same as earlier in bar 6.

During the next passage, Tyner introduces a new dominant sound, G13, and with its reference to C major, makes the modal sound more ambiguous. Peculiarly enough, the e-natural note is even included in Tyner's melodic turn in bar 29, but that must be more about the technical execution than the sound of the major key.

29

PIANO

BASS

[Cmi⁶] [Fmi⁷] [G⁷]

[G¹³]

31

PIANO

BASS

[Cmi^{6/9}] [G¹³]

33

PIANO

BASS

[Cmi^{6/9}] SCALE MOVEMENT

35

PIANO

BASS

[Cmi^{6/9}] [Ebmi⁷] [Ebmi¹¹] [G⁷]

[Ab¹³]

37 [Cmi] [Cmi⁷ F⁷] [Cmi] [G⁷(b⁹)] DOMINANT DIMINISHED SCALE

PIANO

BASS

41

PIANO

BASS

45 [Ebmi⁷ Ab⁷] [G⁷]

PIANO

BASS

47 [Cmi] [Cmi⁷] [Fmi⁷] [G⁷]

PIANO

BASS

49 [Cmi7 F7] [Cmi7 F7] [G7(b9)]

PIANO

Cmi7/9 3 G13 Cmi7/9 G13

BASS

55

PIANO

Cmi7/9 G7(b9) Cmi6 Cmi7/9

BASS

57

PIANO

Cmi7/9 G7(b9)

BASS

61

PIANO

Cmi7/9

BASS

Even though the solo vamp for "Spiritual" is essentially based on just a C Dorian scale, with the bass line implying Cmi7–F7 movement, McCoy Tyner frequently implies dominant–tonic movement leading to C

minor. But he does this in such a subtle way that the music still maintains its modal quality. Often times the left hand and the right hand imply separate functions and follow their own logic. In an interview for *Keyboard* magazine, McCoy Tyner explained:

“It’s almost like they are independent of each other, with the left fellow accompanying the right fellow. Some people listen to the left hand and hear something there, and someone else may prefer to listen to what’s going on top. I like to challenge myself by thinking of them almost as if they were two people. Sometimes you get interplay between them that’s almost like counterpoint.”¹⁶⁴

”BRASILIA”

In the same interview for *Keyboard* magazine in 1981, Bob Doerschuk asked Tyner about his solos involving “very fast, almost random playing, with flurries of notes up and down the keys.” Tyner explained:

Yeah, that’s what it is. You say random, but I’d call it intuitive. You can’t think about every note; that would be impossible. You reach a point where conscious awareness of every note becomes more of an automatic thing. In playing with some really great people, I’ve come to realize that each note is important, but not in the conscious sense, because it helps to set up colors or moods. So ultimately you look for a sound, and the notes only serve the purpose of contributing to that sound.¹⁶⁵

At that point, Tyner had already gone much further with the “flurries of notes” than illustrated in this next example. I present “Brasilia” (recorded live at the Village Vanguard on November 2, 1961) here as an interesting early instance of McCoy Tyner creating rapid movement with his melodic lines.¹⁶⁶ The solo is based on a static Ab7 chord (or Ab Mixolydian mode), but Tyner lets his lines flow freely to other dominant chords, often connecting movements with common tones functioning as a pivot (marked in the transcription with arrow signs). Analyzing these lines seemed difficult at first because of some ambiguity in how the lines are connected. Sometimes Tyner seems to advance to the next chord directly from the chromatic approach notes that would be leading to the previous chord. To be able to understand the underlying logic behind these movements, I have compared Tyner’s melodic lines on “Brasilia” to the similar lines appearing in his solos on “Impressions”, “Inception”, “Like Sonny”, “Lazy Bird”, and “Arietas”.¹⁶⁷ Some of the most frequent connections between the lines are:

- Ebmi7 to Fmi7 (as seen on “Impressions” on page 127 as well)
- Ebmi7–Ab7 to Emi7–A7 (for instance in bars 19-20)
- Ebmi7–Ab7 to Bmi7–E7 (tritone substitution leading to Ebmi7, for instance in bars 9-12)
- Ebmi7–Ab7 to Dbmi7–Gb7 to Bmi7–E7 (for instance in bars 93-100)
- F#mi7–B7 to Emi7–A7 to Ebmi7–Ab7 (in bars 72-73, see also “Bessie’s Blues” on page 157)

¹⁶⁴ Doerschuk 1981, 32.

¹⁶⁵ Doerschuk 1981, 32.

¹⁶⁶ John Coltrane: *The Complete 1961 Village Vanguard Recordings*. 1997, IMPD4-232. Recorded on November 1–3 and 5, 1961.

¹⁶⁷ See page 280 for the complete list of transcriptions.

I have included the complete solo to illustrate how Tyner repeatedly works with similar ideas, experimenting with movement, and returning back to Ab7. One feature of Tyner's expression at this point is that the motion relies heavily on the melodic lines, while the left hand follows or takes the initiative only occasionally.

Tyner starts his solo with melodic motives that might be derived from pentatonic scales, alternating between F minor pentatonic (=Ab major pentatonic) and Eb minor pentatonic. These melodic ideas also resemble the chord voicings that Tyner uses, for instance in bar 141 of the solo.

(AT 9:59) [Ab⁶ (Ab MAJOR/F MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE)]

♩=149

PIANO

1 [Ebmi⁷] [Ab⁷] [Ab¹³]

Next, he clearly defines the Ab7 sound with similar lines as found in the B section of "Impressions" (for example in bars 49-56).

5 [Ebmi⁷] [Ab⁷] [Ebmi⁷ Ab⁷ (Fmi⁷)]

PIANO

7 [Ebmi⁷] [Ab⁷]

After establishing the base color of the solo section, Tyner starts to experiment with melodies moving away from it. At first he paces the alteration between moving and static melodies in 4-bar intervals, as seen in the next 16 bars. The lines frequently flow from one place to another through a common tone acting as a pivot.

(AT 10:19)₉

[Ebmi⁷ Ab⁷] [E^{mi} A⁷] [Ebmi⁷] ↔ [Bmi⁷ E⁷] Bmi⁷ E⁷ Bmi⁷

PIANO

11 E⁷ ↔ [Ebmi⁷] [Fmi⁷]

PIANO

13 [Ab⁷]

PIANO

15 [Ab⁷]

PIANO

(AT 10:32)

17 [Ebmi⁷ Ab⁷] ↔ [Fmi⁷] [Ebmi⁷] Ab⁷ Ebmi⁷ [E^{mi}] ↔ [Bmi⁷] E⁷

PIANO

"IMPRESSIONS" BAR 74
"EQUINOX" BAR 33

19 E⁷ ↔ [Ebmi¹¹] Ab⁷ [E^{mi} A⁷] ↔ [Bmi⁷] E⁷

PIANO

21 [Ab7]
 PIANO [Ab13] [Ab9] [Ab13] [Ab13]

Some of the above analysis certainly seems debatable, but as the solo continues, similar movements occur repeatedly and delineate the logic behind these melodic lines. The right-hand melodies dominate in driving the music away from Ab7, but during the next phrase, the left-hand chord voicing also expresses E13 chord.

25 [Ebmi7 Ab7] ↔ [Fmi7 Bb7] [Dbmi7 Gb7] ↔ [Bmi7 E7 Bmi7 E7]
 PIANO [E13]

27 Ebmi7 Ab7
 PIANO [Ab9]

Overall, the left hand doesn't really get involved in the movement. In bar 28 above, the Ab triad in the left hand is probably a result from Tyner's habit of connecting his two voicing types (thirds/fourths) through a triad, as seen on "Impressions" and later in this solo in bar 76. Tyner rests on Ab7 a little bit more during the next bars, as if to gain momentum to extend his forthcoming explorations. He is increasingly utilizing the passage descending from Ebmi7-Ab7 to Dbmi7-Gb7 to Bmi7-E7.

29 SCALE MOVEMENT
 PIANO [Ebmi7] [Ab7] [Dbmi7] [Gb7] [Bmi7] [E7]

31 (B)
 PIANO [Ebmi11] [Ab7]

33 (8)-----7] [Ebmi7 Ab7] [Bmi7 E7]

PIANO

SCALE MOVEMENT

37 [Ab7]

PIANO

39 [Ab7] [Dbmi7 Gb7] [Bmi7 E7]

PIANO

41 [Ebmi11 Ab7] [Dbmi7 Gb7] [Bmi7 E7]

PIANO

SEE "ARIETIS" BARS 6-8.
14, 29-30, 41-42

43 [Gmi7] (C7) [Fmi7 Bb7] [Bmi7 E7]

PIANO

BASS

A PEDAL

I have added the bass part for the next passage, which shows also Reggie Workman creating tension through the use of a pedal point A. Tyner continues applying his melodic movements over the pedal until both musicians resolve to Ab7 in bar 51.

45

PIANO

BASS

A PEDAL CONTINUES

$Ebmi^{11}$ $Fmi^7 Bb^7$ ↔ Gmi^7 $Bmi^7 E^7$ ↔

47

PIANO

BASS

A PEDAL CONTINUES

Fmi^7 $Ebmi^7$ ↔ Fmi^7 Bmi^7 E^7

49

PIANO

BASS

A PEDAL CONTINUES

$Ebmi^7$ $(Fmi^7) Ab^7$ ↔ Bmi^7 E^7 Bmi^7 E^7

51

PIANO

BASS

$Ebmi^7 Ab^7$ ↔ $Dbmi^7$ Gb^7 Bmi^7 E^7

53 ^{8va} [Ab7]

PIANO

BASS

55

PIANO

BASS

57

PIANO

BASS

59

PIANO

BASS

The motives in bars 63-64 above resemble the way Tyner approached E minor pentatonic scale chromatically on the May 23, 1961 recording of "Africa". The motif in bar 66 is somewhat ambiguous, because the line similar to the one that seemed to imply Emi7-A7 earlier in bars 19-20 now continues through the note c to Bmi7. A similar situation also occurs later in bar 73, this time connected to another line typically used for A7 by Tyner. As a result, these lines also have a feeling of C7 resolving to Bmi7. But Tyner doesn't typically play such lines on C7 at this point, so in terms of analysis this note choice remains somewhat of a mystery to me. However, he does play a similar melodic line over C7 on the June 20, 1962 recording of "Tunji" as seen on page 119. In bars 66-77, Tyner displays a melodic motive descending in parallel minor thirds.

Tyner also utilizes the same movements that were evident in the B sections of his solo on "Impressions", including F#mi7-B7 to Emi7-A7 during bars 73-75.

69 [Ab7 Ebmi7 Ab7] ↔ [Fmi7 Bb7] [Ab7]

PIANO

71 [Ebmi7] [F#mi7 B7] [Emi7 A7]

PIANO

SEE "IMPRESSIONS" BARS 117-120

73 [Ebmi7 Ab7] [A7] [B13] [G13] [A13]

PIANO

SEE BAR 66.
ALSO "AFRICA" (JUNE 4, 1961) BAR 54

SEE "IMPRESSIONS" BARS 75 AND 118

75 [F7] [Ebmi7 Ab7]

PIANO

77 [Ab7] [Dbmi7 Gb7] ↔ [E7]

PIANO

79 [Ebmi7 Ab7] [Gb7] [E7]

PIANO

The rest of the solo shows Tyner working with essentially the same material. Bars 86 and 90 exhibit one more variation in which the left-hand chords take initiative to create tension. The idea seems similar to what the right-hand line did in bar 64, implying an open voicing for Ebmi7 moving a half step up. In bar 88 however, similar voicing is clearly a part of Mixolydian scale movement for E13.

91

PIANO

Ab⁹ Eb^{mi}7 Ab¹³

95

PIANO

Ab⁷ Gb⁷ E⁷ Ab⁷

97

PIANO

Ab⁹ E¹³ Ab¹³

101

PIANO

Ab⁹ E¹³

103

PIANO

F^{mi}7 Bb⁷ E⁷ F^{mi}7 Bb⁷ B^{mi}7 E⁷

105

PIANO

Eb^{mi}7 B^{mi}7 Eb^{mi}7 Ab⁷ E⁷ B^{mi}7

107 [Bmi7 E7] [Ebmi7] [Dbmi7] [Bmi7 E7]

PIANO

109 [Ab MIXOLYDIAN VOICINGS]

PIANO

The next chordal passage involves Tyner playing “So What” voicings ascending in whole steps. Considering how Tyner combined “So What” voicings with Dmi7-G7 melodies on “Impressions”, these could be based on the movements that the melodic lines implied earlier in this solo, combining Bmi7-E7 into Ebmi7-A7 with Ebmi7-Ab7 into Emi7-A7.

113 [Bmi7 E7] [Ebmi7 Ab7] [Emi7 A7] [Ab MIXOLYDIAN VOICINGS]

PIANO

117 [Ab MIXOLYDIAN VOICINGS]

PIANO

The rest of the solo concentrates on returning to the static Ab Mixolydian. Tyner adds some final melodic movements in bars 125-132 before gradually settling into two-handed modal voicings to end his solo.

121 [Ab MIXOLYDIAN VOICINGS]

PIANO

125 $[Ebmi^7]$ $[Ab^7]$

PIANO

127 $[Ab^7]$ $[Gb^7]$ $[E^7]$

PIANO

129 $[Ab^7]$ $[Dbmi^7]$ $[Gb^7]$ $[Bmi^7]$ $[E^7]$

PIANO

131 $[Ebmi^7]$ $[Fmi^7]$ $(F\#mi^7)$ $[Bb^7]$ $[Bmi^7]$ $[E^7]$ $[Ebmi^7]$

PIANO

133 $[Ab^7]$ $[Ab^9]$ $[Ebmi^7]$

PIANO

137 $[Ab^9]$

PIANO

139

PIANO

Ab⁹ Ebmi⁷ Ab⁹

141

PIANO

Ab MIXOLYDIAN VOICINGS

145

PIANO

Ab MIXOLYDIAN VOICINGS

149

PIANO

Ab MIXOLYDIAN VOICINGS

153

PIANO

Ab MIXOLYDIAN VOICINGS

157

PIANO

Ab MIXOLYDIAN VOICINGS

7

I'm finding that space, and the space between the intervals are just as important, or more important sometimes, than filling the chords up.

-McCoy Tyner in an interview with Ben Sidran on September 23, 1985.¹⁶⁸

You can move diatonically or in terms of skipping notes and using thirds and fourths and mixing them up like that.

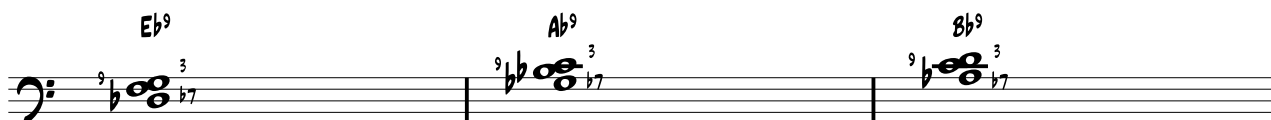
-McCoy Tyner in an interview with Marian McPartland on May 4, 1983.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ Sidran 2006 [1985], 8:41.

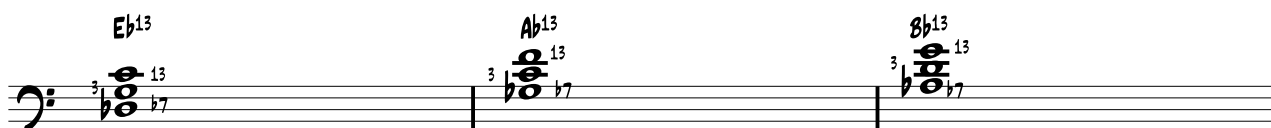
¹⁶⁹ McPartland 2008 [1983], 25:49.

7. MCCOY TYNER'S DOMINANT SEVENTH VOICINGS DURING THE MID-1960S

The previous examples have shown how Tyner's modal vamps utilizing diatonically moving triads and stacked thirds changed into one's utilizing more open sounding voicings built on fourths. At the same time, his preferred left-hand voicing for dominant seventh chords underwent similar development. As discussed earlier on page 19, in 1960 on "Blues to Elvin", Tyner primarily used these voicings:



But on a later blues in the same key, "Bessie's Blues" (John Coltrane: Crescent, recorded June 1, 1964), most of Tyner's left-hand voicings are based on fourths and include the seventh, third, and thirteenth of the chord.



Comparing these with the previous voicings, one can definitely see more space between the intervals. Actually, similar fourth-based voicings on a blues⁹ existed already in Tyner's solo on "Tunji" from 1962 (see page 118). Tyner still uses the earlier voicing type as well, combining those two by "using thirds and fourths and mixing them up".¹⁷⁰ For example, here is the third chorus of Tyner's solo on "Bessie's Blues", recorded on June 1, 1964.¹⁷¹

(AT 1:03)
♩ = 181

¹⁷⁰ McPartland 2008 [1983], 25:55.

¹⁷¹ John Coltrane: *Crescent*. Impulse A-66, 1964. Recorded on April 27 and June 1, 1964; Benjamin Givan has analyzed this solo in his insightful article *Apart Playing: McCoy Tyner and "Bessie's Blues"*. However, I have interpreted some details in Tyner's playing in a little bit different way.

E \flat MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE

PIANO

For Tyner, the earlier closed position voicing seems to represent a more defined sound connected to the functional harmonies. He continues to use it whenever he wants to associate the dominant chord with its corresponding minor seventh chord and functional movement. On the other hand, Tyner seems to connect the more open sound of the fourth-based voicing with modal scale sounds. This is the voicing that starts to move in a non-functional way, both in scale steps (diatonically) and "in any direction", which will be examined in detail in the next chapter and chapter 10.¹⁷² The beginning of Tyner's fourth chorus on "Bessie's Blues" is a perfect example of this: Tyner first connects an E \flat minor pentatonic scale in the right hand with independently moving dominant voicings in the left (bars 37-38 in the following example). Right after that, he brings out F \sharp mi7-B7 and E \flat mi7-A7 movements (bars 39-40) leading to A \flat 13, using the thirds-based voicing.

E \flat MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE CONTINUES

PIANO

¹⁷² The use of A13 and B13 chord symbols for analysis of the left-hand voicings in bars 37-38 will be clarified in the next chapter.

45
PIANO
Bb⁹ Ab¹³ Eb¹³

This fourth-based voicing for dominant seventh chords did, in fact, exist in Tyner's playing from early on, but he had yet to use it as a left-hand voicing. Here is a passage from his accompaniment to the melody statement of "Equinox" (recorded on October 26, 1960) featuring this voicing in the right hand for A13 chord.¹⁷³

(AT 0:44)
♩=117
PIANO
A¹³ Ab7(b⁹) Ami/Ab

When placed over another root a tritone away, the same intervals form a dominant seventh chord with the raised ninth. So if this voicing for A13 is played over Eb in the bass, it becomes Eb7(#9).¹⁷⁴

A¹³ Eb7(b⁹)

The sonority of this particular interval combination (an augmented fourth with a perfect fourth) has a particularly strong character. It is rich and it has body to it, but it also has a somewhat piercing clarity that cuts through the other sounds. It has definitely bluesy properties, as well as the temperament of a dominant chord. Here is an example of McCoy Tyner using this voicing as Eb7(#9)¹⁷⁵ while accompanying John Coltrane's solo on "Blues to Elvin".¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³ John Coltrane: *Coltrane's Sound*. Atlantic SD 1419, 1964. Recorded on October 24 and 26, 1960.

¹⁷⁴ It also has to be noted here that this voicing was by no means anomalous in jazz expression in 1960. To me, it seems that it was actually very prominent during the 1950s (especially as dom7(#9) chord), for example in the music of Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Ahmad Jamal, Red Garland, Bill Evans etc.

¹⁷⁵ These transcribed voicings are among the ones that I'm most insecure about. How the Eb7(#9) is divided between hands and whether the root is included in Tyner's left hand is really difficult to be certain of. The way I finally chose to interpret this has been somewhat influenced by how Bill Evans plays the same voicing on "All Blues" as well as how Kenny Drew and Tommy Flanagan play the same voicing with Coltrane.

¹⁷⁶ John Coltrane: *Coltrane Plays the Blues*. Atlantic SD 1382, 1962. Recorded on October 24, 1960.

A little later in the mid-1960s, Tyner adds a third option to his left-hand voicings. This could be seen as a combination of the two previous voicing types:

This voicing is actually similar to the left-hand voicings typically played by Red Garland, Bill Evans, and Wynton Kelly, among others.¹⁷⁷ In McCoy Tyner's style, this fuller voicing seems to fill the same function as the earlier closed position voicing. Just like the three-note voicing, it connects to the II chord as well, like in this case representing Cmi9–F13 movement:

Around the same time when Tyner incorporated this option into his array of defined chord voicings, he expanded his selection of the open sounding structures as well. For example, these quartal voicings for F7 were earlier used in the context of scalar movement:

But gradually they start to represent the dominant seventh sound independently in Tyner's expression.¹⁷⁸ To demonstrate these sounds, here are three examples from Tyner's solo on "Utopia" (McCoy Tyner: *Tender Moments*, recorded on December 1, 1967. The first is from the beginning of the solo:

¹⁷⁷ Levine 1989, 41.

¹⁷⁸ This interval combination of perfect fourths is, due to its ambiguous nature, used for other chord types as well.

(AT 3:48)

♩=133

[F7]

PIANO

F(SUS2)

3

[F7]

PIANO

F(SUS2)

3

I eventually decided to label the above voicing with a chord symbol Fsus2, even though the interval structure is the important feature here. Perfect fourths create an open sound and this voicing doesn't include either of the character tones (3, b7) of the F7 chord. The other open sounding option for F7, again just perfect fourths, is introduced in bars 25-28. For this one, I use the chord symbol F7sus4. Since neither of these voicings defines the third of the chord, they appear in modal minor environments as well.

(AT 4:31)

25

[F7]

PIANO

F7(SUS4)

27

F7

PIANO

F7(SUS4)

3

In between these two open sounding options, Tyner also features the more defined sound for the F7 area of the tune, bringing out Cmi9–F13 movement. Here are bars 9-12:

(AT 4:03)

9

[F7]

PIANO

F13(9)

SCALE MOVEMENT

[F7]

Cmi9

The image shows a musical score for piano, measures 11 through 14. The right hand (treble clef) contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including some accidentals. The left hand (bass clef) provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and scalar movement. A 'PIANO' dynamic marking is present. A chord symbol 'F13(9)' is written above the final chord in measure 14.

It is really interesting how Tyner combines and balances these different voicing possibilities during the latter part of the 1960s. The left-hand voicing selection expanded to a much more open direction with more and more perfect fourths used together with scalar movement. The functionally inclined voicings attained more defined character by the inclusion of one more chord extension, the ninth. As a result, the spectrum of sounds developed in both directions. But still, throughout the 1960s, it is the three-note dominant voicing built using fourths (dom13 type) that seems to represent the middle ground in between functional movement and modal sounds. In the next chapter, I will present examples on how the parallel motion of this voicing is merged together with scalar melodies in the right hand.

One of the characteristics of my style is that I can take a dominant chord and do a lot of different things with it, utilizing suspensions and moving around that particular sound and really just developing it.

-McCoy Tyner in an interview with Ben Sidran on September 23, 1985.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁹ Sidran 2006 [1985], 4:22.

8. COMBINING DOMINANT CHORD MOVEMENT WITH A STATIC MELODIC ELEMENT

There are two great audio interviews available in which McCoy Tyner talks about his style and also plays musical examples on the piano. Originating from broadcasts by the National Public Radio in the United States, the episodes of *Marian McPartland's Piano Jazz* and *Sidran on Record* with Tyner were taped just a couple of years apart in the mid-1980s.

When Ben Sidran asks Tyner to explain "the intervallic things that you do that make up your sound", it is not the pentatonic scales or quartal harmonies that Tyner starts to elaborate on.¹⁸⁰ Instead, he talks about the dominant chord, utilizing suspensions and moving around that sound. The composition that Tyner chooses to play, describing it as having "sort of a modal sound to it", is based on dominant chords as well.¹⁸¹ The word "suspensions" is very interesting here. As discussed on page 74, John Coltrane used the expression "suspended chords over an Eb pedal tone" when describing the A section of his composition "Naima".¹⁸² While the dominant seventh chords simply containing the suspended fourth interval are certainly included in Tyner's thought, it is possible that he is using the word in the same meaning as Coltrane.

To describe the technique of placing harmonies over a static pedal, the use of the word "suspended" is not a part of jazz musicians' common language today, as far as I know. Maybe it was never common or at least well known. In an early interview published in *Down Beat* magazine on October 24, 1963, Stanley Dance quotes McCoy Tyner as saying: "I know that when I used to listen to Max Roach's band, I was impressed by the harmonies Richard Powell used to play and by his use of the sustaining pedal on chords. In fact, one of the strong points of his playing was his beautiful harmonic conception." In the next paragraph Tyner continues, according to Dance: "You can almost subconsciously acquire technical devices, of course, like Richard Powell's way of sustaining chords."¹⁸³

Talking about the use of the sustain pedal and beautiful harmonic conception together doesn't completely seem to make sense, even though as a technical device the pedal affects on how the harmonies ring. But in relation to McCoy Tyner's style, I would consider the possibility of him actually having said: "use of suspended chords on a pedal" and "Richard Powell's way of suspending chords". Not capturing exactly what Tyner meant, Stanley Dance could have just interpreted it wrong. This seems likely also considering such musical examples as Richie Powell's intro to "Delilah" from the album Clifford Brown & Max Roach,

¹⁸⁰ Sidran 2006 [1985], 4:10.

¹⁸¹ Sidran 2006 [1985], 5:27.

¹⁸² Hentoff 1960.

¹⁸³ Dance 1963, 19.

recorded on August 2, 1954.¹⁸⁴ The intro features George Morrow stating the pedal over which Powell plays major triads moving in parallel motion.¹⁸⁵

(AT 0:00)

♩=139

PIANO

BASS

F# PEDAL THROUGHOUT

5 [F#] [E] [A] [Ab] [G]

PIANO

BASS

9 [Db] [C] [B] [Bb] [A]

PIANO

BASS

In this chapter, I will go through different examples in which Tyner incorporates parallel dominant movement together with a static melodic element.

”LONNIE’S LAMENT”

With John Coltrane only stating the melody, McCoy Tyner and Jimmy Garrison are featured as soloists on “Lonnie’s Lament”. The track was recorded on April 27, 1964 and released as a part of the quartet’s album *Crescent*.¹⁸⁶ Tyner’s solo section is based on C Dorian minor and it features many of the elements found in the earlier example of “Spiritual”. Here is how Tyner and Garrison set up the tempo and mood for the piano solo:

¹⁸⁴ Brown, Clifford & Max Roach: *Clifford Brown & Max Roach*. EmArcy MG 26043, 1954. Recorded on August 2–3 & 6, 1954.

¹⁸⁵ A recording of McCoy Tyner playing “Delilah” with John Coltrane also exists (John Coltrane: *Complete 1961 Copenhagen Concert*. Gambit Records 69328, 2009). During the melody, Tyner plays the same accompanying figure as Richie Powell, but there is no intro.

¹⁸⁶ John Coltrane: *Crescent*. Impulse! AS-66, 1964. Recorded on April 27 and June 1, 1964.

(AT 1:48)

♩ = 110

[Cmi⁶/9] [C DORIAN VOICINGS]

PIANO

BASS

3 [C DORIAN VOICINGS]

PIANO

BASS

5 [C DORIAN VOICINGS]

PIANO

BASS

The image shows a musical score for Piano and Bass. The Piano part consists of two staves (treble and bass clef). The Bass part consists of one staff (bass clef). The score shows a sequence of chords and voicings: $A\flat 13$, $G7(\sharp 5)$, and $D\flat 9$. There are also markings for 13, $\sharp 11$, 9, and 13. The bass line features a triplet of eighth notes.

Above, Tyner uses fourth voicings, “So What” voicings, and “Out of This World” voicings¹⁸⁷ to bring out the C Dorian sound. But at the end of the eight-bar phrase, he clearly marks the beginning of his solo with functional dominant chord movement ($A\flat 13 \sharp 11$ to $G7 \sharp 5 \sharp 9$ or $D\flat 13 \sharp 11$ in bars 7-8), which leads back to the modal tonic at the beginning of the next phrase. I have really questioned whether I hear the left-hand voicings in bar 8 correctly, since there is such a minor distinction between the last two voicings.¹⁸⁸ However, the same combination appears a few times during Tyner’s solo and it is possible that for him, the difference is about the latter voicing type ($D\flat 9$) being more functionally inclined. The arrival into the tonic is marked with Tyner’s open sound, just root and the fifth, which became increasingly prominent in his playing during 1963. Garrison’s bass figures emphasize the notes of $Cm7$ chord.

Right from the start of his solo, Tyner uses fourth voicings to convey the C Dorian scale sound, but he takes advantage of functional movements as well, mixing his different voicing types. In bars 6-8 and 11-15 of the next example (new bar numbers starting from the beginning of the solo), he combines functional harmonies in the left hand with static pentatonic melodies in the right hand. Garrison, on the other hand, plays his own interpretation of the modal minor with some implied dominant–tonic movements as well, in bars 24 and 28 for instance. Together they create a polyphonic mix of static modal elements with moving functional harmonies. These elements primarily function independently as a means to create form, even though Garrison reacts right away if the movement away from the Dorian sound needs to be complemented with corresponding logic in the bass line.

¹⁸⁷ See page 117.

¹⁸⁸ Tyner clearly uses the voicing marked here as $G7(\sharp 5)$ before $Cm6/9$ in his solo on “Inception”.

(AT 2:07)

1

PIANO

BASS

F7

8va

3

3

3

3

Cmi^{6/9} DORIAN SCALE MOVEMENT

3

PIANO

BASS

Cmi

Abmi⁷ Db⁷

8va

3

3

Cmi^{6/9}

Ab⁹

G7(#5)

Cmi^{6/9}

5

PIANO

BASS

C MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE

(8)

7

C MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE

3

Ab¹³

Cmi^{6/9}

7

PIANO

BASS

C MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE CONTINUES

Ab⁹

G7(b9)

9

L.H. VOICING
ARPEGGIATED

Ab7 8va

[Dmi7 G7 (Fmi)] ←→

PIANO

BASS

11

C MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE

Cmi9/5

Ab13

Cmi9/5

PIANO

BASS

13

C MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE CONTINUES

Cmi6

Ab9

G7(b9)

Cmi6

PIANO

BASS

15

C MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE CONTINUES

Ab9

G7(#5)

Db9

PIANO

BASS

During the next passage, Tyner introduces the combination of a static melodic element in the right hand (C minor pentatonic or blues scale) with parallel dominant chord movement in the left hand. The effect is really powerful here, and it is especially interesting because the elements are combined in a manner of block chords. Vertical analysis of the right-hand melody together with the left-hand chords is not really relevant here because of the independent logic of both. It should still be noted that even from the vertical point of view, the dominant voicing that Tyner uses is extremely versatile, as only two notes out of the possible 12 would create incoherently dissonant intervals (maj7 and 11) against it. Also, the overall dissonance stays at a consistent level with this voicing, which would not be the case if it were a major triad that was moving. It is not coincidental that this interval combination lends itself well to this approach.

(AT 2:42)

17 [C MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE]

PIANO

BASS

19 [C MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE]

PIANO

BASS

21 [C MINOR PENTATONIC/BLUES SCALE]

PIANO

BASS

23 [C MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE] ↔ [G⁷]

PIANO [B^b13] [B¹³] [B^b13] [A^b13] [G¹³]

BASS

25 [C MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE] ↔

PIANO [F¹³(b⁹)] [E¹³] [A^b13] [A¹³] [B^b13] ↔

BASS

27 [C MINOR PENTATONIC/BLUES SCALE]

PIANO [F¹³(b⁹)] [E¹³] [A^b13] [A¹³] [B^b13] [G¹³]

BASS

The use of functional movements creates a feeling of form, since both Tyner and Garrison frequently mark the arrival to the next phrase with dominant chords (Ab⁹ to G⁷(b⁹) in Tyner's case), before resolving to the modal tonic.

In an earlier live recording of "Lonnie's Lament" (recorded in Berlin on November 2, 1963), free chromatic movement of dominant chords doesn't exist.¹⁸⁹ Instead, Tyner goes from C Dorian minor to Ab Mixolydian and stays there for 16 bars. He establishes Ab as the root by using octaves in his left hand. Here

¹⁸⁹ John Coltrane: *Live Trane – The European Tour*. Pablo Records 7PACD-4433-2, 2001. Recorded between 1961-1963.

is the passage starting from C Dorian minor and going to Ab13, the bar numbers run from the beginning of the solo.

(at 2:42)

♩ = 151

41 [C MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE]

PIANO [Cmi^{6/9}] [Ab¹³] [G7(b9)]

43 [C MINOR PENTATONIC/BLUES SCALE] [Cmi⁶] [Cmi^{6/9}] [DORIAN SCALE MOVEMENT]

45 [C MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE] [Cmi^{6/9}] [Ab¹³]

49 [Ab MIXOLYDIAN VOICINGS]

51 [Ab MIXOLYDIAN VOICINGS]

55 [A \flat MIXOLYDIAN VOICINGS]

PIANO

PIANO

"NIGHT DREAMER"

On Wayne Shorter's "Night Dreamer" (recorded on April 29, 1964), Tyner plays this chordal vamp for the intro and the first six bars of the melody.¹⁹⁰

(AT 0:23)

♩=127

7 [Gmaj7] [B \flat 13(SUS4)] [E \flat maj9] [D7(#9)]

PIANO

BASS

When accompanying solos, Tyner changes all chord qualities of the vamp into dominant chords. He uses the following voicings to accompany Shorter's solo, for example.¹⁹¹ The bass keeps the original figure, implying Fmi7–Bb7–Eb movement. The voicings are relatively clearly audible in the fifth and sixth bar of Shorter's solo:

¹⁹⁰ Wayne Shorter: *Night Dreamer*. Blue Note BST 84173, 1964. Recorded on April 29, 1964.

¹⁹¹ There is some variation in the voicings as Tyner also uses Eb9 instead of the Eb7(#9), for example.

(AT 1:17)
5

PIANO

BASS

[G¹³] [B^b13] [E^b7(#9)] [D7(#9)]

To accompany his own solo, Tyner achieves a similar sound with his left-hand voicings, representing the two different dominant qualities: dominant chord with the thirteenth and dominant chord with the raised ninth. To highlight the parallel motion of the voicings, I have identified them consistently as dominant thirteen chords.

PIANO L.H.

[G¹³] [B^b13] [A¹³ (E^b7(#9))] [A^b13 (D7(#9))]

At the beginning of his solo, Tyner combines this harmonic movement with melodic lines derived from the G blues scale, balancing the dominant chord movement with a static melodic element in the right hand. But immediately in bars 3-4, he starts to skip some of the left-hand voicings and move to unexpected direction, seemingly concentrating more on Bb13 sound than the tonic G. Notice that Reggie Workman on bass continues to outline the original changes (as in the intro and melody) throughout.

(AT 3:42)
1

♩=137

8va-----

[G BLUES SCALE]

PIANO

BASS

[B^b13] [A¹³] [A^b13]

3 (8)

G BLUES SCALE

PIANO

BASS

5 (8)

G7

G BLUES SCALE

PIANO

BASS

7

Ebm7

SCALE MOVEMENT

PIANO

BASS

9

E7

F7

E13 MIXOLYDIAN

F13 MIXOLYDIAN

PIANO

BASS

For the static areas of the solo form (bars 7-12), Tyner uses both of his voicing types (mixing thirds and fourths) and adds some scalar movement.

At the end of the first chorus and in the beginning of the second chorus, Tyner's left-hand voicings move further away from the tonic, again staying closer to Bb13 than G13. The parallel movement of the voicing creates a powerful effect against the bass, which continues stating the original vamp.

The musical score consists of three systems, each with a piano part and a bass part. The piano part is written in a grand staff (treble and bass clefs), and the bass part is written in a bass clef. The key signature is one flat (Bb). The time signature is 4/4. The score includes the following elements:

- System 1 (Bars 13-16):** Starts with a treble clef and a piano dynamic marking. The right hand plays a G Blues Scale with triplet markings. The left hand plays chords: G13, Bb13, A13, Ab13, Bb13, B13, Bb13, and Ab13. The bass part plays a vamp pattern: G2 - Bb2 - G2 - Bb2.
- System 2 (Bars 17-20):** Starts with a treble clef and a piano dynamic marking. The right hand continues the G Blues Scale. The left hand plays chords: Bb13, B13, A13, Ab13, G13, Bb13, A13, and Ab13. The bass part continues the vamp pattern.
- System 3 (Bars 21-24):** Starts with a treble clef and a piano dynamic marking. The right hand continues the G Blues Scale. The left hand plays chords: G13, Bb13, A13, and Ab13. The bass part continues the vamp pattern.

Tyner's Bb13 voicing over the note g in the bass creates a momentary Phrygian sound and the following B13 over e-flat in the bass could be interpreted as Eb Locrian (bars 1-2 of the second chorus), but it doesn't really make sense to analyze them in such a vertical manner. The logic of the movement does not come

from the idea of going from one scale to another, it is rather about one particular color moving and creating tension against the static melodic elements (Tyner’s right-hand melodies and the bass line). Certainly the fact that Tyner had worked with these modal colors (Phrygian, Locrian) intensively makes his ear gravitate towards these sounds, but thinking in terms of scales would be unnecessarily complicated.

In McCoy Tyner’s solo on “Night Dreamer”, the connection of freely moving dominant chords to functional harmony is evident. The functional dominant chord movement that Wayne Shorter’s composition suggests just starts to drift to the opposite direction in McCoy Tyner’s expression. Dominant chord voicings move further away from the tonic, creating movement underneath the static melodic element in the right hand.

”CHARCOAL BLUES”

By 1964, this particular sound is an integral part of McCoy Tyner’s expression. The next example is the intro for “Charcoal Blues” from the same album as the previous “Night Dreamer” example.¹⁹² Now, Tyner combines similar dominant chord movement with melodies derived from the F minor pentatonic scale (or F blues scale), again creating a static element against the left-hand movement. The underlying F major blues form dictates Reggie Workman’s bass lines more than what McCoy Tyner is playing – both are interpreting the blues form in their own way.

(At 0:00) [F⁶] ↔ [B^b7]

♩ = 130

PIANO

BASS

F MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE

F¹³ B^b1³ A¹³ B¹³ A¹³

¹⁹² Wayne Shorter: *Night Dreamer*. Blue Note BST 84173, 1964. Recorded on April 29, 1964.

5 [Bb7] [F MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE]

PIANO

BASS

7 F MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE [Ab7] [G7]

PIANO

BASS

9 [C7] [Bb7]

PIANO

BASS

11 F MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE [F7] [F MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE]

PIANO

BASS

Also during his solo on "Charcoal Blues", Tyner frequently utilizes this sound. The next example is from the beginning of his fourth solo chorus. Tyner's right-hand melodies, again using an F minor pentatonic or blues scale, are independent from the left-hand movement.

(AT 5:09)

35 [F7]

PIANO

BASS

37 [4] F MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE

PIANO

BASS

39 F MINOR PENTATONIC/BLUES SCALE CONTINUES

PIANO

BASS

F MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE CONTINUES

On the blues form, the beginnings of this approach can be pinpointed all the way to Tyner's solo on "Blues to Elvin" from October 1960.¹⁹³ His second solo chorus starts with an Eb minor pentatonic melody combined with Eb9 and E9 chords in the left hand.

(AT 3:57) 2

♩ = 73

Eb MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE

Another early example featuring ascending dominant chords is found in McCoy Tyner's solo on "Blue Train" recorded live at the Sutherland Lounge in March 1961.¹⁹⁴ There are some dropouts in the original tape during Tyner's solo, so bar numbers couldn't be given from the beginning of the solo.

(AT 11:58) [Eb7(#9)] [E7(#9)] [Eb7(#9)] [E7(#9)] [F7(#9)] [E7(#9)]

♩ = 143

PIANO

¹⁹³ John Coltrane: *Coltrane Plays the Blues*. Atlantic SD 1382, 1962. Recorded on October 24, 1960.

¹⁹⁴ John Coltrane: *Complete Live At The Sutherland Lounge 1961*. RLR Records RLR 88668, 2012. Recorded on March 1 1961.

Musical score for piano accompaniment of "Transition". The score is in 4/4 time and consists of two systems of staves. The first system (measures 5-6) features a melodic line in the right hand with a trill on the first measure and a triplet of eighth notes in the second measure. The left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords: Ab9, Ab9, A9, Ab9, Ab9, and A°. The second system (measures 7-9) continues the melodic line with a trill on the final measure. The left hand accompaniment includes chords: Eb7(#9), E7(#9), Eb7(#9), Db9, C7(#9), and Bb9.

"TRANSITION"

Tyner uses similar ideas accompanying John Coltrane's solos as well. Here is an example of Tyner accompanying John Coltrane's first solo on "Transition", recorded on June 10, 1965.¹⁹⁵ Notice how the dominant voicings ascend chromatically, resembling the previous "Blue Train" example from 1961, while the added note at the top uses diatonic scale movement.

(AT 1:09)

♩ = 208

Musical score for "Transition" featuring Tenor Sax, Piano, and Bass. The score is in 4/4 time and starts at measure 25. The Tenor Sax part features a melodic line with a trill on the final measure. The Piano part provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords: D7(#9), Eb7(#9), E7(#9), F7(#9), F#7(#9), and G7(#9). The Bass part provides a simple harmonic accompaniment. A note above the piano staff indicates "TOP NOTE ASCENDING DIATONICALLY D PHRYGIAN SCALE".

¹⁹⁵ John Coltrane: *Transition*. Impulse! AS-9195, 1970. Recorded on June 10, 1965.

29

TENOR SAX

PIANO

BASS

Also, right at the end of this passage in bar 32, there is a clear dominant chord movement towards the open D minor tonic, marked by Tyner's left-hand fifth only. He also suggests towards Fmi7–Bb7 by playing "So What" voicings in bar 31. Still, in 1965 when the music of the quartet involved all of this chromatic movement and the modal colors, Tyner brings out the functional dominant–tonic movement to mark the resolution and the arrival back to the tonic. Tyner explained his approach to creating form in an interview with Ben Sidran:

It's how you resolve things that matters. It's how you resolve them. It's not unlike just having a conversation, you know. I'm pretty sure that when you have your exclamation marks, your question marks, your periods, you know, all those things make up a good sentence. You don't just keep running on, you put periods, you put question marks, you know. And that's the same thing with music.¹⁹⁶

By being able to combine two layers, the static sounding scale and the movement of dominant chords, Tyner creates an effect of staying inside *and* going somewhere else at the same time. This results in a texture over which Coltrane is free to move anywhere or just explore static scale sounds. In 1983, Tyner mentioned to Marian McPartland that "working with him [John Coltrane] I had to move quite a bit 'cause he was constantly moving".¹⁹⁷ Tyner talked about this also in an interview with Alain Drouot for *Clavier* magazine in 2002:

I think Coltrane needed the freedom, especially as his compositions became more open. In playing with saxophonists, I try to listen to what they do and play what I believe will lead them to something else. I voice the harmonies on piano so that the leader can feel the freedom to improvise what he wants. Coltrane liked my approach to harmony because it left things open, not restricted. I thought bebop was beautiful, but something inside of me said I should do something to open up the music a bit.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁶ Sidran 2006 [1985], 7:41.

¹⁹⁷ McPartland 2008 [1983], 26:06.

¹⁹⁸ Drouot 2002, 14.

Being with John was a very helpful period for me. He was a musical master. He showed me how form can be flexible, how you can mold music. His music allowed us to use our own creativity and our own ideas as far as that molding was concerned. [...] When the group first started, we could play set forms, developing only certain things. But after awhile, the music became very flexible. We would shape it as we went. It wasn't a preconceived thing at all, just a concept we developed as we went along. You can't play like that with everybody.

-McCoy Tyner in an interview with Lee Underwood in 1975.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁹ Underwood 1975, 12.

9. MOLDING MUSIC

“MY FAVORITE THINGS” LIVE AT THE HALF NOTE, 1965

McCoy Tyner’s solo on “My Favorite Things” from the album John Coltrane: *One Down, One Up – Live at the Half Note*, was recorded on May 7, 1965.²⁰⁰ Tyner’s solo is radically different from the studio recording of the tune in October 1960 and illustrates how Tyner goes through many different combinations of static and moving elements in order to create form. The solo is 13 minutes long, but I will go through just the first part, the minor part, attempting to analyze it in as much detail as I can. Many of the musical gestures feature intentional ambiguity allowing different interpretations and, at this point, I cannot say that mine would always be the definitive. I think that through even more in-depth study of Tyner style during 1965, additional details would certainly unfold. Instead of just picking the spots that I’m confident of, I think it is important to see the full development of the solo, as this example brings together the most significant aspects of McCoy Tyner’s style discussed in the earlier chapters. I actually would be hesitant to label this as an example of Tyner’s mature style, since he has always kept on searching and evolving. But as far as being a part of the sound of the John Coltrane Quartet, this is the pinnacle. For me, this is the essence of McCoy Tyner’s expression. In an interview with Bob Doerschuk in 1981, Tyner reflects the thought process behind recording an album of Duke Ellington compositions in 1964, in relation to the music he played with Coltrane:

“That date happened while I was recording with John on the same label, and I thought, “Well, let me do something different.” I decided Duke’s music was another way. It’s funny, because during that time I wanted to do something that sounded different from the John Coltrane group, but what I was doing with John was me. I guess I thought I could depart from myself. I wasn’t trying to get a hit or anything like that; it’s just that I wanted to do something that I thought at the time was a change from all the heavy stuff I was doing with John. But you can’t escape the inevitable.”²⁰¹

Tyner starts his solo on “My Favorite Things” with a chordal vamp that resembles the vamp on “Africa” from 1961, with a G13 sound suspended over an E pedal, resulting in an overall E Phrygian scale sound. He reinforces the E pedal in every other bar using left-hand fifths and keeps the vamp static for the first minute and 30 seconds of his solo (through bars 1-96). During that time, he utilizes only small variations in rhythm and minor variations in the voicings (in bars 81 and 96). The variations don’t affect the prevailing E Phrygian scale color overall.

²⁰⁰ John Coltrane: *One Down, One Up – Live at the Half Note*. Impulse! 986 214-3, 2005. “My Favorite Things” recorded on May 7, 1965.

²⁰¹ Doerschuk 1981, 36.

The chordal vamp itself is a combination of a very open quartal voicing alternating with a modally characterizing G13 voicing over an E pedal.²⁰² Because the modal color is defined by the G13 voicing, it makes sense to think of the open voicing as a part of that scalar sound as well.

(AT 5:49) [G7 INCLUDING DM17-G7 MOVEMENT AND D DORIAN/G MIXOLYDIAN SCALE] [G7]

♩ = 200

PIANO

E PEDAL [(Emi7(sus4))] G13] E PEDAL [G13]

5] [G7] [G7]

PIANO

E PEDAL [G13] E PEDAL [G13]

After establishing the scale color (G Mixolydian over E = E Phrygian) with this chordal vamp, Tyner applies melodic movement between Ab7 (Ab Mixolydian) and G7 against the static background, reminiscing the relationship between the A and B sections of "Impressions". The common scale tones f and c are used as pivots when returning to G7:

9] [G7] [Ab7]

PIANO

E PEDAL [G13] E PEDAL [G13]

13 ↔ [G7] [Ab7] ↔ [G7] [Ab7]

PIANO

E PEDAL [G13] E PEDAL [G13]

²⁰² There is a similar sound also in McCoy Tyner's intro to "Old Devil Moon" over F pedal. (McCoy Tyner: *Reaching Fourth*. Impulse! A-33, 1963.)

After resting for a while on the E pedal tonic, Tyner introduces an exotic scale sound over the vamp (bars 40-44), possibly originating from Nicolas Slonimsky's *Thesaurus of Scales Melodic Patterns*.²⁰³ Next, he returns to the E Phrygian (G Mixolydian over E) sound for bars 45-52.

²⁰³ Slonimsky 1986, 153.

37

PIANO

E PEDAL

G¹³

E PEDAL

G¹³

41

(HEPTATONIC SCALE WITH TWO AUGMENTED SECONDS, SEE SLONIMSKY NO. 1082)

PIANO

E PEDAL

G¹³

E PEDAL

G¹³

45

PIANO

E PEDAL

G¹³

E PEDAL

G¹³

49

PIANO

E PEDAL

G¹³

E PEDAL

G¹³

So far, Tyner has used contrasting scale sounds to create tension against the vamp, then returning back to the overall E Phrygian sound (G13/E). Next, he bursts into fast phrases implying rapid harmonic movement over the static vamp. The lines flow from one to another in a similar manner as in Tyner's solo on "Brasilia" from 1961.²⁰⁴ Bars 53-68 are a brief flash of things that will follow later in the solo, and the analysis here takes into account the similar lines in bars 137-146.

(AT 6:37)

53

PIANO

E PEDAL

G¹³

E PEDAL

G¹³

G⁷

F⁷

²⁰⁴ See page 141.

57
PIANO
E PEDAL
G¹³
E PEDAL
G¹³
[G⁷] [A^b7]

61
PIANO
E PEDAL
A⁷ B⁷ (WHOLE TONE SCALE) ↔ G^b7
G¹³
F⁷

63
PIANO
E PEDAL
G¹³
E^b7 8va.....

65
PIANO
E PEDAL
G¹³
E PEDAL
G¹³

After the melodic motion, Tyner again returns to the E Phrygian (G13/E) scale color and stays there (bars 69-96) to balance out the movement. As noted before, there are two small variations in the left-hand voicings, in bars 82 and 96, predicting the upcoming departure from the vamp.

(AT 6:52) 69
PIANO
E PEDAL
G¹³
E PEDAL
G¹³

75

PIANO

E PEDAL

G¹³

E PEDAL

G¹³

3

3

3

Detailed description: This system contains measures 75 and 76. Measure 75 features a treble clef with a half note G4 and a whole note G3. The bass clef has a half note G2 and a whole note G1. Measure 76 has a treble clef with a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The bass clef has a half note G2 and a whole note G1. Pedal markings 'E PEDAL' are present in both measures. Chord symbols 'G¹³' are placed above the bass clef in measures 75 and 76. Trill ornaments are shown above the notes in measure 76.

77

PIANO

E PEDAL

G¹³

E PEDAL

G¹³

8va

3

3

3

3

3

3

Detailed description: This system contains measures 77, 78, 79, and 80. Measure 77 has a treble clef with a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The bass clef has a half note G2 and a whole note G1. Measure 78 has a treble clef with a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The bass clef has a half note G2 and a whole note G1. Measure 79 has a treble clef with a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The bass clef has a half note G2 and a whole note G1. Measure 80 has a treble clef with a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The bass clef has a half note G2 and a whole note G1. Pedal markings 'E PEDAL' are present in measures 77 and 79. Chord symbols 'G¹³' are placed above the bass clef in measures 77 and 79. Trill ornaments are shown above the notes in measures 77, 78, 79, and 80. An '8va' marking is above the treble clef in measure 78.

81

PIANO

E PEDAL

G¹³

3

3

3

3

3

3

Detailed description: This system contains measures 81 and 82. Measure 81 has a treble clef with a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The bass clef has a half note G2 and a whole note G1. Measure 82 has a treble clef with a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The bass clef has a half note G2 and a whole note G1. Pedal markings 'E PEDAL' are present in both measures. Chord symbols 'G¹³' are placed above the bass clef in both measures. Trill ornaments are shown above the notes in both measures.

83

PIANO

E PEDAL

G¹³

3

3

3

Detailed description: This system contains measures 83 and 84. Measure 83 has a treble clef with a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The bass clef has a half note G2 and a whole note G1. Measure 84 has a treble clef with a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The bass clef has a half note G2 and a whole note G1. Pedal markings 'E PEDAL' are present in both measures. Chord symbols 'G¹³' are placed above the bass clef in both measures. Trill ornaments are shown above the notes in both measures.

85

PIANO

E PEDAL

G¹³

E PEDAL

G¹³

3

3

3

Detailed description: This system contains measures 85, 86, 87, and 88. Measure 85 has a treble clef with a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The bass clef has a half note G2 and a whole note G1. Measure 86 has a treble clef with a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The bass clef has a half note G2 and a whole note G1. Measure 87 has a treble clef with a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The bass clef has a half note G2 and a whole note G1. Measure 88 has a treble clef with a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The bass clef has a half note G2 and a whole note G1. Pedal markings 'E PEDAL' are present in measures 85 and 87. Chord symbols 'G¹³' are placed above the bass clef in measures 85 and 87. Trill ornaments are shown above the notes in measures 85, 86, 87, and 88.

89

PIANO

E PEDAL

G¹³

E PEDAL

G¹³

3

3

3

3

3

3

Detailed description: This system contains measures 89, 90, 91, and 92. Measure 89 has a treble clef with a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The bass clef has a half note G2 and a whole note G1. Measure 90 has a treble clef with a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The bass clef has a half note G2 and a whole note G1. Measure 91 has a treble clef with a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The bass clef has a half note G2 and a whole note G1. Measure 92 has a treble clef with a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The bass clef has a half note G2 and a whole note G1. Pedal markings 'E PEDAL' are present in measures 89 and 91. Chord symbols 'G¹³' are placed above the bass clef in measures 89 and 91. Trill ornaments are shown above the notes in measures 89, 90, 91, and 92.

93

PIANO

E PEDAL

G¹³

Starting from bar 97, the right-hand melody assumes the static role reinforcing the E pedal, while the left-hand chords start to move. This is the same voicing that Tyner moved in parallel motion against the pentatonic melodies on "Lonnie's Lament".²⁰⁵ In addition to that, now he uses the thicker dominant voicing with the ninth included.

(AT 7:18) 97 [E PEDAL REINFORCED IN THE RIGHT HAND]

PIANO

E PEDAL

A¹³

B^{b13}

A^{b13}

E PEDAL

G^{b13}

E¹³

G¹³

101 [E PEDAL REINFORCED]

PIANO

E PEDAL

A¹³

B^{b13}

B¹³⁽⁹⁾

E PEDAL

A^{b13(9)}

G¹³⁽⁹⁾

A¹³

105 [E PEDAL REINFORCED]

PIANO

E PEDAL

B^{b13(9)}

B¹³⁽⁹⁾

A^{b13(9)}

E PEDAL

G^{b13(9)}

G¹³⁽⁹⁾

A^{b13(9)}

109 [E PEDAL REINFORCED]

PIANO

E PEDAL

B¹³

C¹³

A^{b13(9)}

E PEDAL

G^{b13(9)}

A^{b13(9)}

A¹³

In bar 113, at 1:43 into the solo, Tyner comes back to the Em7 chord for first time in his solo, referencing the characteristic beginning vamp of the tune that is used also between the solo sections. But again, this is only the first signal of going back to that vamp, since Tyner right away continues with the dominant

²⁰⁵ See page 165.

voicings suspended over the pedal. The right hand starts to employ E minor pentatonic scale as a static melodic element.

(AT 7:32) 113

E PEDAL REINFORCED

PIANO

117

E MINOR PENTATONIC

PIANO

121

E MINOR PENTATONIC

PIANO

125

F#mi⁹

87

PIANO

In bar 129, Tyner arrives to the Emi7-F#mi7 vamp and stays there for four brief bars, only waiting to advance to a new level by utilizing both melodic and harmonic motion at the same time from bar 133 onwards.

(AT 7:47) 129

A⁷

E MINOR PENTATONIC

PIANO

133

PIANO

[E mi] [G7] [Bb7]

[G13]

135 (F MINOR PENTATONIC) Bb7

PIANO

E PEDAL

[Bb13] [Bb13(9)] [Bb13(9)]

137 [B7] WHOLE TONE SCALE [G7] [Bb7]

PIANO

[A13] [B9] [G13] [A9] SEE BAR 146

139 F MINOR PENTATONIC [A7] [B7]

PIANO

[Ab13(9)] [A13] [B13]

141 [E mi] [G7] [Ab7] [A7] [B7]

PIANO

E PEDAL

[E mi7] [G13] [A13] [B13]

144 WHOLE TONE SCALE 5

PIANO

[C13] [A13]

145 [87 WHOLE TONE SCALE CONTINUES]

PIANO E PEDAL [Emi7] [G9 WHOLE TONE SCALE MOVEMENT] [A9]

147 [Ebmi7] [Ab7] [Fmi7] [Bb7] [B13(9)]

PIANO [Ab13] [Bb7] [B13(9)]

149 [87] [A13] [B13(9)]

PIANO [813(9)] [A13] [B13(9)]

151 [F#7] [87]

PIANO [A13] [G13] [87]

153 [G7] [3]

PIANO E PEDAL [Emi7(sus4)] [A13] [E PEDAL] [Emi7(sus4)] [Ebmi7(sus4)]

157 [E MINOR PENTATONIC]

PIANO E PEDAL [Dmi7(sus4)] [Ab13(add9)] [G13]

After returning to static E minor pentatonic melodies in bars 157-160, Tyner takes the solo to yet another level. Now he leaves the E pedal and introduces the root of an A13 chord with his left hand, evoking Emi7–A7 movement:

(AT 8:16) 161 [E MINOR PENTATONIC] [A⁷]

PIANO

A¹³

165 [E MINOR PENTATONIC] [A⁷]

PIANO

E PEDAL [Emi⁷] F#mi⁷ (E DORIAN SCALE) [A⁷]

E PEDAL [Emi⁷] F#mi⁷ Emi⁷

169 E MINOR PENTATONIC [A⁷] [E MINOR PENTATONIC]

PIANO

A¹³ SCALE MOVEMENT

8vb

After repeating the Emi7–A7 in bars 165–172, Tyler adds some melodic motion to get to another new dominant chord, Db9, in bar 199. Tyler implies Abmi7–Db9 movement in his left hand with his thirds-based voicings in bars 177–180.

173 [G⁷] [Bb⁷]

PIANO

E PEDAL [Dmi⁷(SUS4)]

175

PIANO

Ab¹³ Bb¹³

177

PIANO

In the next four bars, Tyner descends through B13 and A13 back to G13, again placed over the E pedal in bar 185.

181

PIANO

185

PIANO

In the next four bars (189-192), Tyner continues the descending movement to F13 before returning to G13 and an E pedal again.

189

PIANO

193

PIANO

During bars 205-212, Tyner once again combines moving dominant voicings with E minor pentatonic scale. Similarly to "Lonnie's Lament" in 1964, the dominant voicings ascend chromatically from Ab13.

The next bars feature a melodic pattern that once again resembles the patterns found in Nicolas Slonimsky's *Thesaurus*.²⁰⁶ I have marked this four-note melodic motif with dominant chord symbols in bars 218-223 but essentially this is just an intervallic pattern transposed several times. The overall sound is chromatic, due to the rapid movement in both left and right hands.

²⁰⁶ Slonimsky 1986.

213 (RESEMBLES PATTERNS FROM SLONIMSKY'S BOOK, SEE NO. 618)

PIANO

E PEDAL

Ab13 G13 Ab13 A13 Bb13 A13

217

PIANO

E PEDAL

Gb13 Ab13 A13 Bb13 Bb13 A13 Db13

221

PIANO

Gb13 Ab13 Gb13 Ab13

223

PIANO

Gb13 Ab MAJOR PENTATONIC 11:12

11:12

225

PIANO

E PEDAL

G7 Dmi7(SUS4) Bb7

227

PIANO

8va Fmi7(SUS4) F#mi7(SUS4) Bb7

During the previous area of motion, Tyner featured Ab13 with an increasing frequency, ultimately alternating between G13 and Ab13. In the beginning part of the solo, Tyner's melodic lines implied the same movement over a static vamp, but now Tyner states the Ab13 with his left hand as well, while keeping the E pedal at the bottom.

After having briefly referred to E minor in bar 245, Tyner states the Ab13 with a thicker voicing and extends his stay to 12 bars (249-260).

249 [Ab7]

PIANO

E PEDAL [Ab13(9)]

253 [Ab7]

PIANO

[Ab13(9)] [Ab13] [Ab13(9)]

257 [Ab7]

PIANO

E PEDAL [Ab13] [Gb13]

3 3

Now Ab13 over an E pedal is a dissonant sound and far away from E Dorian minor, the original reference point for the solo section, but Tyner has worked his way over there in a really logical and coherent manner. He keeps on building intensity, the two hands joining forces in ascending movement towards the next target, C13 over E pedal.

261 [Gb7] [Ab7] [Bb7] [C7]

PIANO

[Gb13] [Gb13(9)] [Ab13(9)] [Bb13(9)] [C13(9)]

265

PIANO

E PEDAL [C13(9)]

E PEDAL [C13(9)]

4 4

269 10:12

PIANO

E PEDAL [C13(9)]

E PEDAL [C13(9)]

273

PIANO

E PEDAL [Bb7]

D PEDAL [Bb13(9)]

277

PIANO

D PEDAL

RIGHT HAND ARPEGGIATES Bb13 VOICING

[Ab13(9)] [Bb13] [C13(9)] [D13(9)] [E13(9)] [Bb13]

After all of this elongated movement and tension, bar 281 marks the definitive resolution to Tyner’s original intro vamp of “My Favorite Things”. Traces of chromatic movement reoccur after the resolution in the left hand (bars 283-384), coupled with an E minor pentatonic melody. Tyner stays within the original vamp for 16 bars in total. By the time of the performance at the Half Note on May 7, 1965, the quartet had performed “My Favorite Things” for almost five years, but this vamp is still based on the same left-hand voicings as the original recording from October 21, 1960.

281 E MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE

PIANO

E PEDAL [Emi7] [F#mi7] [B13] [Ab13] [A13] [Ab13] [G13]

285

PIANO

E PEDAL [Emi] [F#mi (E DORIAN SCALE)] [Emi] [F#mi]

289

PIANO

E PEDAL [E mi F#mi] E PEDAL [E mi F#mi]

293

PIANO

E PEDAL [E mi F#mi] E PEDAL [E mi F#mi]

During the next 8 bars, Tyner reshapes the vamp towards the E Phrygian version (G Mixolydian over E) by first introducing G Mixolydian voicings and then passing by an F pedal on his way back to the E pedal.

297

["SO WHAT" VOICINGS]

PIANO

G PEDAL [G7 (G MIXOLYDIAN SCALE)] [G7 (G MIXOLYDIAN SCALE)] [G7 (G MIXOLYDIAN SCALE)] [G7 (G MIXOLYDIAN SCALE)]

301

PIANO

[G] [F] [G] [F]

F PEDAL [F PEDAL]

In bar 305, Tyner comes back to the E Phrygian mode that he started his solo with. This time, he uses another set of chord voicings, offering more evidence on the sound resulting from placing a G dominant seventh chord on top of an E pedal. Instead of quartal voicings, Tyner uses his thirds-based left-hand voicings for E mi7 and G9. He keeps stating the vamp for 24 bars (305-328), creating expectation for yet something to happen.

305

PIANO

E PEDAL [E mi7] [G9] E PEDAL [E mi7] [G9]

309

PIANO

E PEDAL [E^{mi}7] [G⁹] E PEDAL [E^{mi}] [G⁹]

313

PIANO

E PEDAL [E^{mi}] [G⁹] E PEDAL [E^{mi}] [G⁹]

317

PIANO

E PEDAL [E^{mi}] [G⁹] E PEDAL [E^{mi}] [G⁹]

321

PIANO

E PEDAL [E^{mi}] [G⁹] E PEDAL [E^{mi}] [G⁹]

325

PIANO

E PEDAL [E^{mi}] [G⁹ D^{mi}7] E PEDAL [E^{mi}] [G⁹ E^{mi}]

The next eight bars reinforce the excitement by bringing in dominant chord movement to the left hand again.

329

PIANO

E PEDAL [SCALE MOVEMENT] [G¹³] [E^b E^b]

333

In bar 337, Tyner launches into the last new component of his solo on the minor vamp of “My Favorite Things”. These two-handed dominant seventh voicings move in parallel fashion representing an outgrowth of a sound that John Coltrane featured already in his compositions “Cousin Mary” on the album *Giant Steps*²⁰⁷ and “Blue Train” on the album *Blue Train*.²⁰⁸ McCoy Tyner’s solo on the live version of “Blue Train” from 1961 already featured similar movement, as shown on page 181.

(AT 10:57) 337

341

345

349

²⁰⁷ John Coltrane: *Giant Steps*. Atlantic SD 1311, 1960. “Cousin Mary” was recorded on May 4, 1959.

²⁰⁸ John Coltrane: *Blue Train*. Blue Note BLP 1755, 1958. Recorded on September 15, 1957.

353 ["SO WHAT" VOICINGS] [E7(#9)]

PIANO E PEDAL [Ew7]

357 [QUARTAL VOICINGS] [D7(#9)] [Gb7(#9)] [F7(#9)] [Db7(#9)]

PIANO E PEDAL

361 [Eb7(#9)] [C7(#9)] [F#7(#9)] [F7(#9)] [Ab7(#9)] [G7(#9)] [Bb7(#9)]

PIANO E PEDAL

365 [B7(#9)] [Ab7(#9)] [Gb7(#9)] [G7(#9)] [E7(#9)] [Eb7(#9)] [C7(#9)] [Db7(#9)]

PIANO

369 [E7(#9)] [F#7(#9)] [G7(#9)]

PIANO E PEDAL

At this point the left and right hands start to drift apart, continuing in their own logic. The left hand soon switches from parallel major thirds back to dominant voicings. The remaining bars are just gradually moving towards the original vamp and into McCoy Tyner's melody statement to indicate the shift to the major vamp for the next solo section.

373 [E^{mi}] [F^{#mi}] [E^{mi}] [A⁷]

PIANO E PEDAL

PARALLEL MOVEMENT CONTINUES IN THE LEFT HAND

377 [E^{mi9}]

PIANO E PEDAL

381

PIANO E PEDAL

385 [B¹³] [A⁹] [G¹³] [F^{13(#11)}] [PARALLEL QUARTAL VOICINGS. SEE THE INTRO TO WAYNE SHORTER'S "LOST"]

PIANO E PEDAL

389

PIANO E PEDAL

393 [Ab^{13(b9)}] [A^{13(b9)}] [G^{13(b9)}] ["SO WHAT" VOICINGS]

PIANO E PEDAL

The previous 6 minutes and 20 seconds bring together everything that I have showcased in the earlier chapters. For me, looking at how this solo is constructed is absolutely amazing. The basic approach and the building blocks are very simple but the end result, in all its detailed subtlety and variety, is humbling. McCoy Tyner displays the control of both moving and static melodic and harmonic elements, the command over form and, above all, unparalleled rhythmic drive. All of this fortifies Tyner as an essential component in the John Coltrane Quartet's sound.

A lot of jazz musicians play fourth voicings and pentatonic scales, and some did so even before McCoy Tyner came along. But I cannot think of any other musician who would sound anything like this. This

multilayered sound with dominant chord movements balanced with static elements is the fundamental innovation of McCoy Tyner.

EXAMPLES OF MOVEMENT IN MCCOY TYNER'S MELODIC LINES FROM THE LATE 1960S

Up until the 1965 live version of "My Favorite Things", McCoy Tyner's melodic lines analyzed as representing chordal ideas have been quite clearly connected to the conventions of bebop. This is evident in my analysis of his solos on "Brasilia" and "Spiritual", for example. In contrast, Tyner has featured pentatonic scales predominantly as a static element as seen on "Africa" and "Lonnie's Lament". During the latter part of the 1960s, Tyner's melodic lines continue to evolve towards a more unique and distinctive direction, in which also rapid harmonic movement is implied with pentatonic sounding melodies. As a whole, his expression leans increasingly towards a scalar sound instead of melodies plainly outlining chord changes. This presents a problem for analysis because there are less and less clues that would help in understanding the logic behind the movement.

Next, I will go through some examples from McCoy Tyner's late 1960s recordings to illustrate how he continues to imply dominant chord movements, and II-V progressions within them, in his melodic lines. Just like in the earlier example of "Brasilia" in chapter 6, I don't suggest that Tyner would consciously think of these particular chords, or that my analysis would be the indisputable way of perceiving the movement. My objective is to point out the melodic lines typically representing dominant chords in Tyner's expression, and how they are combined to create movement over a static harmonic framework. Often times, the lines flow from one to another through a common tone used as a pivot. When analyzing these examples, I have compared the melodic material with similar lines from Tyner's solos on his original compositions "Utopia"²⁰⁹ and "Four by Five".²¹⁰ The solo sections of these compositions feature dominant seventh chord movements exclusively, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

"LITTLE MADIMBA"

"Little Madimba" was recorded on May 17, 1968.²¹¹ The intro of the tune features a static modal Eb minor vamp, over which Tyner utilizes an Eb minor pentatonic scale together with melodic lines bringing out Ebmi7–Ab7 motion as well as ascending dominant chord movements. The approach here appears to be an outgrowth of what was presented in the earlier examples from "Africa" (on page 100) and "Brasilia" (on page 141). The melodic language is different, with the sound of the pentatonic scales now fusing in with the modal (Mixolydian) scales, but similar logic behind the movement still seems to apply.

²⁰⁹ McCoy Tyner: *Tender Moments*. Blue Note BST 84275, 1968. Recorded on December 1, 1967.

²¹⁰ McCoy Tyner: *The Real McCoy*. Blue Note BST 84264, 1967. Recorded on April 21, 1967.

²¹¹ McCoy Tyner: *Time for Tyner*. Blue Note BST 84307, 1969. Recorded on May 17, 1968.

(AT 0:00)

♩=146

PIANO

E^b PEDAL

E^b MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE

3

E^b MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE

5

E^b MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE

Emi⁷ A⁷

PARALLEL CHROMATIC MOVEMENT

7 (Bmi⁷) E⁷ Ebmi⁷ Ab⁷

Ab¹³

Bb⁷

Just as I did in the analysis of “Impressions”, I have not labeled every single implication of movement between the II and V but rather identified them as unified II-V areas. Of course, these could also be just analyzed as Tyner playing Mixolydian scales, but I particularly want to point out the movement inside the scale. Throughout the examples that I have presented in this thesis, the II-V concurrence has been very important in Tyner’s expression, going all the way back to his solos on “Like Sonny” and “Liberia”, for example. For the sake of clarity, here is how I would point out the individual movements from the previous phrase (bars 5-8).

5

E^b MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE

A⁷

Emi⁷

A⁷

Emi⁷

7

(Bmi7 E7)

[[Ab7]]

[[Ebmi7]]

[[Ab7]]

[[Ebmi7]]

[[Ab7]]

[[Bb7]]

The beginning of bar 7 is interesting because Tyner is probably just extending Emi7 chord to include the 9th and 11th similar to how he extends the same chord in the opening vamp of “My Favorite Things”. The melodic use of these extensions can also be pointed out in many other Tyner solos. But the line also clearly spells out Bmi7-E7, which is one of the movements that Tyner definitely implied in his solo on “Brasilia”. Here is a comparison between the same phrase and a passage from “Brasilia”, recorded on November 2, 1961.

"LITTLE MADIMBA"
BARS 5-8

E♭ MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE

[[Emi7 A7]]

"BRASILIA"
BARS 9-12

[[Ebmi7 Ab7]]

[[Emi7 A7]]

[[Ebmi7]]

↔

[Bmi7 E7]

(Bmi7)

[[E7) Ebmi7 Ab7]]

[[Bb7]]

E7] ↔ [Ebmi7]

[[Fmi7]]

(Bb7)

The next phrase from “Little Madimba” employs chromatically ascending dominant sounds. Tyner returns to Eb minor through what seems to be a whole tone scale combination of C7 and Bb7. His composition “May Street” from the same album features a section based on the C whole tone scale.

(AT 0:13) 9

[[Ebmi7 Ab7]]

[[Emi7 A7]]

[[Fmi7 Bb7]]

PIANO

E♭ PEDAL

b7
4

PARALLEL CHROMATIC MOVEMENT

11 [F#mi7 B7] [Gmi7 C7 INTO Bb7 WHOLE TONE SCALE] [Ebmi7 Ab7]

"VISION"

McCoy Tyner's composition "Vision" from the album *Expansions* features modal Eb minor tonic as well, this time used as a basis for the solos.²¹² The recording is from August 23, 1968 so there are only a couple of months between "Little Madimba" and "Vision". The left-hand voicings utilize ambiguous ascending chromaticism the same way as seen in the previous examples.

(AT 1:45) 25 ♩=273 [E7] [Eb MINOR PENTATONIC] [Bmi7 E7 (B MINOR PENTATONIC)]

29 [Cmi7] [Bmi7 E7] [Ebmi7 Ab7] [Emi7 A7] [Ebmi7]

The Eb minor pentatonic scale seems to be the main reference point for the solo section, as the phrases move away from and return back to it. In the next passage (bars 49-56 of the solo) Tyner goes to Ami7-D7, again utilizing the upper extensions of the minor seventh chord.

(AT 2:05) 49 ♩=278 [Eb MINOR PENTATONIC] [Ami7] [D7]

²¹² McCoy Tyner: *Expansions*. Blue Note BST 84338, 1969. Recorded on August 23, 1968.

53 Ebmi7 Ab7] [Emi7 A7] [Ab7 Eb MINOR PENTATONIC]

Bars 105-112 make a feature of imposing C7 over the open Eb minor. The connection between these two seems remote, but is easier to understand when thinking of the parallel major third relationship between Ebmi7-Ab7 and Gmi7-C7. Essentially the same movement (C7 and Ab7 alternating) is found in the B section of Tyner's composition "Search for Peace", which will be included in the next chapter. Bars 117-119 here are similar to bars 7-8 in the intro of "Little Madimba".

(AT 2:55) 105 ♩ = 294

Eb PEDAL

[C7] [Ebmi] [C7]

109 [Ebmi] [C7] [Ebmi] [C7] [Ebmi] [C7]

113] ↔ [Emi7 A7] [Eb MINOR PENTATONIC] [Emi7 A7]

117 (Bmi7) [E7] Ebmi7 Ab7] [Emi7 A7 3]

“UTOPIA”

Examples of static F dominant sections from McCoy Tyner’s solos on “Utopia” were included in chapter 7. The composition utilizes static sections alternating with descending dominant movements, and Tyner’s melodic lines mostly follow the same logic. However, in one of the static sections Tyner makes use of ascending dominant sounds over F7sus4.²¹³

The image displays two systems of piano accompaniment for the piece "Utopia". The first system begins at measure 57, marked with a tempo of quarter note = 140 and a rehearsal mark (AT 5:28). The melody in the right hand consists of eighth-note runs. The bass line in the left hand features a sequence of chords: F7, Ab7, B7, F#mi7, Ami7, and D7. Double-headed arrows indicate the chromatic movement between these chords. A note in the bass line is marked with a "4" and a "1", indicating a four-measure rest. The second system starts at measure 59. The right hand continues with eighth-note runs. The left hand chords are: F#mi7 (B7), Cmi7 F7, Cmi7, Cmi9, F9, and Cmi7. The text "PARALLEL CHROMATIC MOVEMENT" is written above the second system.

Coming up with these harmonies in the analysis might seem to require a fair amount of imagination, but the minor third relationships here are similar to those found in Tyner’s composition “The High Priest” from the same album. Tyner’s approach to these movements seems purely intuitive and certainly he is just relying on his ear when playing them. But from looking at the steps leading to this, through the recorded examples all the way from 1959, it is obvious that his expression has developed through consistent conscious work and serious attention to detail. In the next chapter, I will show how Tyner employs dominant chord movements in his compositions and arrangements.

²¹³ McCoy Tyner: *Tender Moments*. Blue Note BST 84275, 1968. Recorded on December 1, 1967.

By the way I voice the chord I can move, generally, in any direction.

-McCoy Tyner in an interview with Marian McPartland on May 4, 1983.²¹⁴

Most of my compositions are melodically very simple. But I think the harmonic movement is what makes it interesting. You know, the fact that underneath there are a lot of different things happening.

-McCoy Tyner in an interview with Ben Sidran on September 23, 1985.²¹⁵

My music is an extension of bebop.

-McCoy Tyner in an interview with Len Lyons in 1975.²¹⁶

²¹⁴ McPartland 2008 [1983], 24:05.

²¹⁵ Sidran 2006 [1985], 5:33.

²¹⁶ Lyons 1983, 240.

10. MOVING IN ANY DIRECTION

In the previous chapters, I have shown McCoy Tyner applying dominant chord movements freely in his improvised solos, both in his melodic lines and the accompanying left-hand voicings. Next, I bring together the concepts and interval relationships from which the movements are typically based upon. For this I have picked examples from Tyner's own compositions and arrangements, as they illustrate him systematically exploring different possibilities of dominant chord movement. The compositions often mix various movements, just like Tyner's improvisations, but there are many passages that clearly feature a particular *direction* of movement.

FUNCTIONAL DOMINANT CHORD CYCLES AND TRITONE SUBSTITUTIONS

Many of the progressions that McCoy Tyner utilizes seem to naturally emerge from functional chord progressions within the tonal jazz tradition. Dominant chord cycles and tritone substitutions were commonly employed by bebop musicians to increase harmonic motion on the standard chord progressions.²¹⁷ Particularly the music of Thelonious Monk, one of Tyner's main influences, frequently highlights chains of dominant chords and chromatically descending II-V's. Monk's compositions such as "Ask Me Now", "Humph" and "Skippy", as well as his arrangement of the standard "Sweet And Lovely" are clear examples of this. Here is an instance of Monk applying a dominant chord cycle in an improvised fashion as an inevitable part of his solos on "Rhythm-a-Ning", taken from the 1957 recording with Gerry Mulligan.²¹⁸

The musical score is for the piece "Rhythm-a-Ning" by Thelonious Monk, featuring Gerry Mulligan. It is in 4/4 time with a tempo of 302. The score is divided into three systems. The first system starts at measure 57 and includes the following dominant chords: F#7, B7, E7, A7, D7, G7, C7, and F7. The piano part features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the bass line provides a steady accompaniment. The baritone saxophone part consists of sustained notes corresponding to the chord changes.

Similar progressions were of course integral to the style of Bud Powell, Duke Ellington, Art Tatum and the jazz expression in general. As a result of smooth voice leading, a cycle of dominants naturally lends itself

²¹⁷ David Baker has listed several recorded examples of the use of cycle in bebop in his instruction book *How to Play Bebop, Vol. 2* (Baker 1987, 44).

²¹⁸ Thelonious Monk & Gerry Mulligan: *Mulligan Meets Monk*. Riverside RLP 12-247, 1957. Recorded on August 12-13, 1957.

into chromatically descending chord voicings. It is the bass that defines whether the tonal functions would be analyzed as a chain of dominants or tritone substitutions. The voicings advance similarly either way. The following two composition examples shed light on how Tyner utilizes dominant chord cycles and tritone substitutions.

“THE BELIEVER”

An indication of McCoy Tyner’s interest in dominant chord movements can be found even some time prior to his earliest recording sessions in 1959. John Coltrane recorded Tyner’s composition “The Believer” in January 1958 with Red Garland on piano, Paul Chambers on bass and Louis Hayes on drums.²¹⁹ The tune is loosely based on the blues form and features dominant seventh sounds exclusively, some combined with their respective II chords. As the composer, Tyner approaches the Bb9 chord with a tritone substituted II-V (F#mi9-B9) to contrast the repetitive figure in the melody.²²⁰

♩=168 (AT 0:25)

TRUMPET, SAX & VTR

PIANO

BASS

Chord voicings shown in piano part: [Bb⁹], [F#mi⁹ B⁹], [Bb⁹], [F#mi⁹ B⁹]

²¹⁹ John Coltrane: *The Believer*. Prestige PRLP 7292, 1964. “The Believer” Recorded on January 10, 1958.

²²⁰ The transcription of the melody is not an exact representation of the actual sounding notes on the recording, but rather an interpretation of what the idea of the melody is, taking also the following choruses into account.

5

TRUMPET.
SAX 8V8

PIANO

BASS

[B \flat 9] [F \sharp mi9 B9] [B \flat 9] [Fmi11 E9(#11)]

The same harmonic idea is repeated for the fourth degree Eb9 chord in bars 9-12. It is worth noting that Bmi9-E7 of bar 12 advances directly to Bb9 in the next bar.

9

TRUMPET.
SAX 8V8

PIANO

BASS

[E \flat 9] [Bmi9 E9] [E \flat 9] [Bmi9 E9]

13

TRUMPET.
SAX 8V8

PIANO

BASS

[B \flat 9] [F \sharp mi9 B9] [B \flat 9] [Bmi7 E7]

Tyner's composition avoids functional resolution to Bb9 tonic similarly in bars 17-19, resembling the way John Coltrane sidesteps the dominant-tonic resolution in his compositions "Cousin Mary" and "Mr. Day".

The image displays two systems of musical notation for the piece "The Believer".

System 1 (Bars 17-19):

- Trumpet, Sax & Vib:** Melodic line with eighth-note patterns and rests.
- Piano:** Chordal accompaniment. Chords indicated above the staff are C#mi7, F#7, Bmi7, and E7.
- Bass:** Bass line with eighth-note patterns.

System 2 (Bar 21):

- Trumpet, Sax & Vib:** Melodic line with eighth-note patterns and rests.
- Piano:** Chordal accompaniment. Chords indicated above the staff are Bb9, G#mi9, C#9, F#mi9, and B9.
- Bass:** Bass line with eighth-note patterns.

"The Believer" is an early example of Tyner combining dominant seventh chords and II-V's. Adding tritone substitutions creates movement, but dominants do not always resolve in the expected manner.

"INCEPTION"

Tyner combines minor pentatonic melodies with moving dominant sounds in his composition "Inception", recorded on January 10, 1962.²²¹ The bass notes define chord voicings as representing both dom13 and dom7(#9) types. Here are the 12 first bars of the melody statement. The accidentals have been chosen according to the logic of the melodic line, even though it results in some inconsistencies in the vertical interval structures.

²²¹ McCoy Tyner: *Inception*. Impulse! A-18, 1962. "Inception" recorded on January 10, 1962.

♩=286 (AT 0:02) 1

PIANO

BASS

3

PIANO

BASS

5

PIANO

BASS

9

PIANO

BASS

Tyner’s fourth-based dominant voicing descends chromatically in between the bass and melody, with the exception of B9 appearing before E7(#9) (in bar 2), as well as the minor third movement from E7(#9) to Db7(#9) (in bar 3). Bars 9-12 feature an F minor pentatonic melody combined with the dominant cycle all the way from F7(#9) to C7(#9), ultimately resolving to F minor.

ASCENDING CHROMATIC MOVEMENT

Many of the examples from Tyner’s improvised solos presented in chapter 8 featured chromatically ascending left-hand voicings against independent melodies in the right hand. “Night Dreamer” (on page 173), in particular, seemed to suggest this movement resulting from taking the functional chords to the opposite direction, further away from the tonic. Looking at how Tyner’s chord voicings descend in the previous example from “Inception”, it only feels natural that the same voicings would begin to move in the opposite direction as well. The following examples from Tyner’s arrangements of standard tunes support this reasoning.

“GOODBYE”

Ascending dominant chord movement against an independent melody in the key of C minor can be found in McCoy Tyner’s arrangement of Gordon Jenkins’ composition “Goodbye” from the album *Reaching Fourth*, recorded on November 14, 1962.²²² Henry Grimes on the bass states the ascending movement with Tyner, so in this case, identifying the voicings as dominant 13 chords is straightforward. These are the first two bars of the last A section of the melody:

(AT 1:56)

MELODY IN C MINOR

♩ = 55

PIANO

BASS

Chord voicings: A^b13 || A^{13} || B^b13 || B^{13} || C^{13} || D^b13 || D^{13}

“IT DON’T MEAN A THING (IF YOU AIN’T GOT THAT SWING)”

McCoy Tyner’s arrangement of Duke Ellington’s “It Don’t Mean a Thing” is another example of Tyner employing chromatically ascending dominant chords.²²³ The A sections feature modal G Dorian tonic,

²²² McCoy Tyner: *Reaching Fourth*. Impulse! A-33, 1963. Recorded on November 14, 1962.

²²³ McCoy Tyner: *McCoy Tyner Plays Ellington*. Impulse! IMP 12162, 1997. “It Don’t Mean a Thing” recorded on December 2, 1964

represented by Gmi7 and Ami7 voicings in the left hand. In bar 3 of the first A section, Tyner plays Eb7(#9) and E7(#9) to create movement away from the tonic.

(AT 0:15)

♩=267

PIANO

BASS

Chords: Gmi7, Eb7(#9), E7(#9), Gmi7 DORIAN SCALE

He repeats the same voicings in the second A section, this time also adding D7(#9) before them.

(AT 0:22)

PIANO

BASS

Chords: Gmi7, D7(#9), Eb7(#9), E7(#9), Gmi7 DORIAN SCALE

The tonal origin of these chords is evident because in the opposite order, they would produce functional dominant chord cycle resolving to the tonic. Tyner's commitment to, instead, move away from the functional dominant-tonic resolution (D7 to Gmi) underscores the modal nature of the arrangement, while still providing movement. It surely is not accidental that right at the end of the recorded performance of "It Don't Mean a Thing", Tyner eventually takes these dominant chords to their expected resolution as shown in next example from the last A section of the performance.

(AT 3:04)

PIANO

BASS

Chords: Gmi7, Eb7(#9), D7(#9), Gmi7 DORIAN SCALE

This creates a more pronounced feeling of arrival, appropriate for leaving the song form to go into the outro vamp to end the performance.

MOVEMENT IN WHOLE STEPS

As early as 1960, McCoy Tyner utilized parallel whole step movement for the intro and solo vamp of “My Favorite Things” and the interlude of “Liberia” featured dominant chords descending in whole steps, as discussed in chapter 4. Both ascending and descending whole step movements get diversely highlighted in Tyner’s compositions.

”FOUR BY FIVE”

“Four by Five” from the album *The Real McCoy* again features dominant seventh chords exclusively throughout its 16-bar AABA form.²²⁴ The A section alternates between E13 and F#13 sounds, while the B section presents a string of dominant chords ascending in whole steps. Here is the melody statement from the second A section followed by the B section in 5/4 meter.

(AT 0:04)
♩=272 5

The musical score is written for Tenor Sax, Piano, and Bass in 5/4 meter. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The tempo is marked as quarter note = 272. The score is divided into two sections: the A section (measures 1-4) and the B section (measures 5-8). The A section alternates between E13 and F#13 chords. The B section features a string of dominant chords ascending in whole steps. The Tenor Sax part has a melody line with slurs and accents. The Piano part has a chordal accompaniment with slurs and accents. The Bass part has a simple bass line with slurs and accents.

²²⁴ McCoy Tyner: *The Real McCoy*. Blue Note BST 84264, 1967. Recorded on April 21, 1967.

(AT 4:10)

The image shows a musical score for piano and bass. The piano part is written in treble clef, and the bass part is in bass clef. The score is divided into two systems. The first system starts at measure 13 and ends at measure 14. The piano part has a melodic line with eighth notes and rests. Chords are indicated above the piano staff: Bb7, Ab7, and Gb7. The bass part has a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The second system starts at measure 15 and ends at measure 16. The piano part has a melodic line with eighth notes and rests. Chords are indicated above the piano staff: Dbmi9, E7, D7, Gmi7, and C9. The bass part has a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The score is labeled 'PIANO' and 'BASS' on the left side of each system.

“REACHING FOURTH”

The next example is the title track from an earlier album, *Reaching Fourth*, recorded on November 14, 1962.²²⁶ The intro presents melodic perfect fourths ascending in whole steps (using B whole tone scale as a base), and then minor ninth chords ascend in whole steps during the 8-bar head. Again, Tyner’s concept seems to include the idea of both II and V within each of these chords. He actually plays the V chord (B13 with 9 included) instead of the II chord (F#mi9) during the first melody statement, making this one more example of the concurrence of II and V in Tyner’s approach. I have written the transcription to represent what I think is the basic idea of the composition, bringing out the parallel movement of voicings in whole steps.

²²⁶ McCoy Tyner: *Reaching Fourth*. Impulse! A-33, 1963. Recorded on November 14, 1962.

(AT 0:01)

♩=292 [8 WHOLE TONE SCALE HARMONIZED IN PERFECT FOURTHS]

PIANO

BASS

6 [Emi⁹] [F#mi⁹]* [Emi⁹] [F#mi⁹] [Emi⁹] A¹³

10 [Ebmi⁹] [Fmi⁹] [Fmi⁹] [Gmi⁹]

* TYNER ACTUALLY PLAYS B13 INSTEAD OF F#M19 IN THE FIRST MELODY STATEMENT.
 BUT THE FINAL CHORUS FEATURES F#M19.

SEND-OFF TO TRADING ON "INCEPTION"

Tyner utilizes "So What" voicings in ascending whole steps for the send-off to trading after his piano solo on "Inception".²²⁷

²²⁷ McCoy Tyner: *Inception*. Impulse! A-18, 1962. "Inception" recorded on January 10, 1962.

(AT 2:39) ["SO WHAT VOICINGS" ASCENDING IN WHOLE STEPS]

♩=280

PIANO

BASS

8va.

MOVEMENT IN MINOR THIRDS

John Coltrane used minor seventh chords ascending in minor thirds in his composition “Like Sonny”, and McCoy Tyner turned those minor sevenths into II-V’s by including the related dominant seventh chords as presented in chapter 4 from page 47 on. Many musicians were experimenting with similar harmonic concepts in the 1960s, and Tyner frequently encountered corresponding progressions in recording sessions for his peers, including compositions such as “Isotope” by Joe Henderson, “Black Circle” and “Blues Mind Matter” by Bobby Hutcherson as well as “Arietas” by Freddie Hubbard.²²⁸ Tyner gives prominence to parallel minor third movements in his own compositions as well.

“INCEPTION” INTRO

This composition has been mentioned already twice because of employing both parallel chromatic and whole tone movement. The intro features dominant seventh chords descending in minor thirds.

♩=286 (AT 0:00)

PIANO

BASS

8va.

$D^{\flat}7(\sharp 9)$ $B^{\flat}7(\sharp 9)$ $G7(\sharp 9)$ $E7(\sharp 9)$ $D^{\flat}7(\sharp 9)$

²²⁸ Bobby Hutcherson: Stick-Up!. Blue Note BST 84244, 1968. Recorded on July 14, 1966; Joe Henderson: Inner Urge. Blue Note BST 84189, 1966. Recorded on November 30, 1964; Freddie Hubbard: Ready for Freddie. Blue Note BST 84085, 1962. Recorded on August 21, 1961.

"THE HIGH PRIEST"

"The High Priest" from the album *Tender Moments* is McCoy Tyner's tribute to Thelonious Monk according to the album liner notes.²²⁹ The 11-bar form consists of dominant chords moving in minor thirds. Tyner also makes prominent use of minor and major second intervals in his voicings as dissonant chord extensions. Here is how Tyner starts the tune by stating the melody in a piano trio format before the horns come in:

(AT 0:00)

♩ = 141

PIANO

BASS

3 [Eb7] [C13(#11)]

3 [Eb7] [C13(#11)]

5 [B13(#11)] [Ab13(#11)] [B13(#11)]

GLISS.

²²⁹ McCoy Tyner: *Tender Moments*. Blue Note BST 84275, 1968. Recorded on December 1, 1967.

7 [Eb7] [C7] [Ab7] [D7]

PIANO

BASS

9 [B7] [Ab7] [F7] [D7]

PIANO

BASS

The composition first features Eb7 and C7 chords alternating, and then similar movement is repeated between B7 and Ab7 together with B7 finally ascending to D7 at the end. It seems to me that the latter part of the tune (bars 5-11) is actually based on a full sequence of dominant chords descending in minor thirds: B7 to Ab7 to F7 to D7, but the bass movement goes against this with an ascending line at the end, B7 to Ab7 to F7/B to D7. Using alternative bass notes under dominant chords (or *utilizing suspensions*, see page 164) to create different colors and less predictable movement is a distinctive feature in many of Tyner's compositions.²³⁰ In this case, the F7 is revealed in Tyner's melodic lines and left-hand voicings during his solo. Here is the third solo chorus as an example:

(AT 1:34) 23 [Eb7] [C7]

♩ = 141

PIANO

BASS

[Eb13] [Gmi9] [C13]

²³⁰ Tyner uses similar idea in the compositions "Mode to John" and "Utopia" on the same album, for example.

25 [Eb7] [C7]

PIANO

BASS

Chord voicings: Eb13(9), Bbm9, C9

27 [B7 #11 13 #11 9] [Ab7 13 9 #11]

PIANO

BASS

Chord voicings: B7 (BUD POWELL VOICINGS), Ab7 (BUD POWELL VOICINGS)

29 [F7] [(Bb7) Ab7]

PIANO

BASS

Chord voicings: B7, F13(9)/B, Ab13(9)

31 [CHORD VOICING FROM THE MELODY]

PIANO

BASS

Chord voicings: F13(9)/B, D7

Notice how Tyner combines various left-hand voicing types in the above example. The chord extensions used in the melody statement carry on to some of the melodic lines, in which Tyner uses scalar approaches featuring both Mixolydian and overtone (Lydian dominant) scales. The Mixolydian scale approach still makes use of implied II-V movements in bars 25 and 30, as displayed also in the left-hand voicings in bars 23-25.

MOVEMENT IN MAJOR THIRDS

The final interval direction that I want to point out is the movement in parallel major thirds. Of course the key centers in the John Coltrane composition “Giant Steps” move in major thirds and McCoy Tyner was aware of the tune already from early on in his career.²³¹ But just as parallel movement alone, major thirds are getting quite angular and don’t appear consecutively in Tyner’s style similarly to the smaller interval directions discussed earlier. It seems that Tyner rather advances in whole steps instead of leaping directly to a major third. However, Tyner definitely uses major third relationships in his compositions.²³² In chapter 6, I mentioned “Effendi” from the album *Inception* alternating between Dmi7–G7 (A sections) and F#mi7-B7 (B sections).²³³ Another instance is found in Tyner’s composition “Search for Peace”.²³⁴

“SEARCH FOR PEACE”

This example from the B section of the tune features parallel C13 and Ab13 voicings alternating over a C pedal. The bar numbers run from the beginning of Tyner’s solo, written in double time.

The musical score shows a piano and bass arrangement. The piano part is in the upper register, with a C pedal point in the left hand and a melodic line in the right hand. The bass part is in the lower register, with a C pedal point in the left hand and a melodic line in the right hand. The score is in double time and starts at bar 33. The piano part features a C pedal point and alternating C13 and Ab13 chords. The bass part features a C pedal point and a melodic line. The score is in double time and starts at bar 33.

²³¹ See page 32.

²³² Again, many musicians experimented with similar approaches at the time. At least the Wayne Shorter composition “Lost”, which Tyner recorded with Shorter for the album *The Soothsayer* in 1965, utilizes minor seventh chords ascending in major thirds. But the voicings written for the horns do not move in parallel fashion and it seems like Tyner’s reference points for the solo are rather the triads that the horns play than parallel chord movement. It seems possible that Shorter didn’t write any chord symbols for the solos.

²³³ McCoy Tyner: *Inception*. Impulse! A-18, 1962. “Effendi” recorded on January 10, 1962.

²³⁴ McCoy Tyner: *The Real McCoy*. Blue Note BST 84264, 1967. Recorded on April 21, 1967.

37

PIANO

BASS

C PEDAL CONTINUES

Chords: C13(9), Ab13(9)

39

PIANO

BASS

Chords: Ami7, Ab13, A13, Bb13, B13, A13, D7

41

PIANO

BASS

G PEDAL

Chords: Gmi9, Gmi7(SUS4), Fmi9, Fmi7(SUS4)

43

PIANO

BASS

G PEDAL CONTINUES

Chords: Gmi9, Gmi7(SUS4), Fmi9

45 [Gmi⁹] [Fmi⁹] [Dmi⁹] [G13(9)]

PIANO
 G PEDAL [Gmi⁷(SUS4)] [Fmi⁷(SUS4)]
 G PEDAL CONTINUES

BASS
 [3] [3] [3]

The progression from C7 to Ab7 actually resembles Ebmi7-Ab7 to Bmi7-E7 movement dictated by Tyner's melodic lines in his solo on "Brasilia", with E7 having a substitute dominant relationship to Ebmi7, as discussed on page 141. "Search for Peace" eventually advances to Gmi9 chord in bar 41, so in that sense the dominant function of Ab7 to G minor is evident here as well. However, in the above example, Tyner again chooses more ambiguous movement (in bar 40) by first utilizing chromatically ascending motion and then skipping notes to advance directly from B13 and A13 to Gmi9. One interesting detail in the recording is that both Joe Henderson and McCoy Tyner feature the mutual whole tone scale to connect C7 with Ab7.

MC COY TYNER'S DOMINANT CHORD MOVEMENTS AS AN EXTENSION OF BEBOP

NON-FUNCTIONAL MOVEMENTS IN BEBOP

Taking into account the fact that McCoy Tyner has described his music as "an extension of bebop"²³⁵, I have to stress that numerous examples of comparable freedom of intervallic movement could be pointed out from the jazz recordings made before the 1960s. To start with, Dizzy Gillespie's intro for "Interlude (A Night in Tunisia)" from the 1944 recording with Sarah Vaughan featured parallel dominant chord voicings ascending in minor thirds, as seen on page 75.

Thelonious Monk's music features many unexpected dominant chord movements, in addition to the functional dominant chord cycles seen earlier. For example, in the 1951 recording of "Criss Cross" he combines dominant seventh chords and minor seventh chords in a manner that somewhat resembles McCoy Tyner's way of combining dominant chord movements with modal scale sounds.²³⁶ The saxophone and vibraphone parts have been omitted from the transcriptions since they only double the melody.

²³⁵ Lyons 1983, 240.

²³⁶ Milt Jackson & Thelonious Monk: *Milt Jackson and the Thelonious Monk Quintet*. Blue Note BLP 1509, 1956. "Criss Cross" recorded on July 23, 1951.

(AT 0:05) $\text{♩} = 191$

[Gmi^7] [$Gb7(\#9)$] [Bb^{13}]

PIANO

BASS

5 [Dmi^7] [$G7(b9)$] [Gb^7]

Bud Powell's 1949 version of the bebop theme "52nd Street Theme", credited to Thelonious Monk, features Powell answering the melody phrase from contrasting key centers ascending in minor thirds (from Gb to A to C).²³⁷

(AT 0:24) $\text{♩} = 281$ 25

TRUMPET
TENOR SAX 8vb

PIANO

BASS

[C^6] [C^6] [Gb^6] [A^6]

(TRUMPET)

²³⁷ Bud Powell: *The Amazing Bud Powell Vol. 1*. Blue Note BLP 1503, 1955. "52nd Street Theme" recorded on August 8, 1949.

Hank Mobley's version of "52nd Street Theme" from 1956 has a short interlude between solos in which the melody phrase along with a major triad is taken up chromatically over a pedal point in the bass.²³⁸

²³⁸ Hank Mobley: *Mobley's Message*. Prestige PRLP 7061, 1956. Recorded on July 20, 1956.

Jimmy Heath’s composition “C.T.A.,” which was recorded by Miles Davis on April 20, 1953, makes use of dominant chords descending in whole steps.²³⁹ I have omitted the piano part from the transcription since the piano is not sufficiently audible and the composer’s intention of the chord colors comes through indisputably in the arrangement of the horn parts.

(AT 1:52)

♩=221

TRUMPET
TENOR SAX

TROMBONE

BASS

The score shows four staves: Trumpet/Tenor Sax, Trombone, and Bass. Above the staves are dominant chords: Bb7, Ab7, Gb7, F7, Eb7, Ab7, Gb7, F7, Eb7. The music is in 4/4 time with a tempo of 221. The horn parts feature descending eighth-note patterns, while the bass line provides a steady accompaniment.

Since McCoy Tyner has brought up Richie Powell’s harmonic approach in a few interviews, I will include a lengthy example in which Powell moves dominant chords over a static pedal.²⁴⁰ This is the intro of “What is This Thing Called Love” from the 1956 recording with Clifford Brown and Max Roach.²⁴¹

(AT 0:04)

♩=262

TRUMPET

PIANO

BASS

The score shows three staves: Trumpet, Piano, and Bass. Above the Piano staff is a C7(9) chord. The music is in 4/4 time with a tempo of 262. The piano part features a static pedal point in the left hand while the right hand plays chords. The bass line has a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure.

²³⁹ Miles Davis: *Volume 2*. Blue Note BLP 5022, 1953. Recorded on April 20, 1953.

²⁴⁰ Dance 1963, 19; Wild 1979, 48.

²⁴¹ Clifford Brown & Max Roach: *Clifford Brown and Max Roach at Basin Street*. EmArcy MG 36070, 1956. “What Is This Thing Called Love” recorded on February 16, 1956.

9

TRUMPET

TENOR SAX & VB

PIANO

BASS

Chord symbols: $C7(\sharp 9)$, $D7(\sharp 9)$, $D\flat 7(\sharp 9)$

13

TRUMPET

TENOR SAX & VB

PIANO

BASS

Chord symbols: $C7(\sharp 9)$, B/C

17

TRUMPET

TENOR SAX & BASS

PIANO

BASS

TOP NOTE STAYS. BOTTOM DESCENDS CHROMATICALLY

C7(#9)

C7(#9)

21

TRUMPET

TENOR SAX & BASS

PIANO

BASS

25

TRUMPET

TENOR SAX & BASS

PIANO

BASS

C7(#9)

29

33

These examples are not meant to portray direct influences on McCoy Tyner, but rather to represent a broader picture of what was going on in jazz music at the time when Tyner was coming up. In reference to having written so much about Tyner's dominant chord voicings moving independently from the melody, I should also bring out this example from Bill Evans. This is Evans' interpretation of the melody of "You And the Night And the Music" in the beginning of the B section.²⁴²

²⁴² Bill Evans: *Peace Piece And Other Pieces*. Milestone M-47024, 1975. "You And the Night And the Music" recorded on January 19, 1959.

♩=167 (AT 0:33)

PIANO

BASS

Of course, Duke Ellington's music should definitely be mentioned here as well, with compositions such as "Rumpus in Richmond",²⁴³ "Sophisticated Lady",²⁴⁴ and "Prelude to a Kiss"²⁴⁵ featuring diverse dominant chord sounds and movements. As a whole, it seems to me that dominant chord movements, and freedom of movement in general, were such an important part of jazz expression at the time that it is no wonder McCoy Tyner carries on employing them as a part of his modal style.

NICOLAS SLONIMSKY'S *THE SAURUS OF MELODIC SCALES AND PATTERNS*

One quite interesting detail to consider when thinking of the possible influences on McCoy Tyner's dominant chord movements, is found in Nicolas Slonimsky's book *Thesaurus of Melodic Scales And Patterns*. There are definitely some melodic ideas in Tyner's solos that seem influenced by Slonimsky's patterns, as discussed in chapter 5 and pointed out in the 1965 solo on "My Favorite Things" in chapter 9. But in addition to the melodic patterns, Slonimsky offers suggestions for harmonies to accompany the patterns with. And thinking of the situation on the road with Coltrane carrying the book around and practicing from it, it would seem pretty logical that at some point Coltrane would want to try out the harmonization possibilities with his pianist. And remember, Herbie Hancock said in the interview with Len Lyons that John Coltrane *and* McCoy Tyner used to practice from that book.²⁴⁶

One of Slonimsky's two approaches to the accompanying harmonies is based solely on dominant seventh chords. Here is an excerpt from the preface of the book explaining this harmonization principle:²⁴⁷

²⁴³ Duke Ellington: *The Duke Ellington Centennial Edition: The Complete RCA Victor Recordings (1927-1973)*. RCA Victor 09026-63386-2, 1999. "Rumpus in Richmond" recorded on July 22, 1940.

²⁴⁴ Duke Ellington: *Duke Ellington And The Buck Clayton All Stars At Newport*. Columbia CL 933, 1956. "Sophisticated Lady" recorded on July 7, 1956.

²⁴⁵ Duke Ellington: *Ellington Indigos*. Columbia CL 1085, 1958. "Prelude to a Kiss" recorded on October 1, 1957.

²⁴⁶ Lyons 1983, 281.

²⁴⁷ Slonimsky 1986, V.

The second type of harmonization is effected by means of Master Chords. These Master Chords are dominant-seventh chords with the fifth omitted. In combination with melodic elements of a given scale or pattern, these chords form harmonic structures of the type of seventh-chords, ninth-chords, or whole-tone chords. The Master Chords are indicated for ascending scales and patterns in the sections Tritone Progression, Ditone Progression and Sesquitone Progression by figures within circles, as ③, and are used to harmonize an entire rhythmic group in a given progression. In the Tritone and Sesquitone Progressions it is also possible to harmonize the entire octave range with a single Master Chord. Furthermore, any Master Chord suitable for harmonization of a given progression may be transposed a tritone up or down with satisfactory results.

Harmonization with Master Chords

At the end of the book, Slonimsky has written out chromatically ascending dominant chords to illustrate line note possibilities as different extensions in relation to the underlying chords. For example, in the case of “Whole-Tone Chords” the first melody note of a rhythmic group becomes the flatted fifth of the dominant seventh chord.

Melody Line

Whole-Tone Chords

Slonimsky goes similarly through “Major-Ninth Chords” (the line note becomes the ninth of the dominant chord), “Minor-Ninth Chords” (flatted ninth), along with another set of “Whole-Tone Chords” (raised fifth) and “Dominant Seventh-Chords” (perfect fifth).²⁴⁸ Interestingly enough, only two of the typical extensions for dominant chords are left out from Slonimsky’s examples: the raised ninth (#9) and the thirteenth (13), which both are important to jazz harmony in general and especially to McCoy Tyner’s style. These are the extensions that Tyner uses in his moving dominants, which often ascend in intervals similarly to Slonimsky’s written examples. It seems possible that the book might have contributed to the idea of dominant chord

²⁴⁸ Slonimsky 1986, 241.

movement being fused together with intervallic melodic material, but Tyner has chosen the chord voicings according to what he was used to hearing in jazz expression at the time.

Simplicity: that's the foundation. You don't build a house out of just a combination of little bricks. You lay a foundation that's very simple. Complexity doesn't just exist alone; it grows from something.

-McCoy Tyner in an interview with Bob Doerschuk in 1981.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁹ Doerschuk 1981, 36.

11. DISCUSSION

McCoy TYNER'S STYLE

McCoy Tyner's expression presents considerable challenges for the researcher because throughout the 1960s, his style rapidly evolved in so many ways and continued to evolve in the 1970s and on. As a result, many general remarks on McCoy Tyner's style can be somewhat misleading when related to his individual recordings. For instance, creating an open sounding tonic by using just the root and the fifth in the left hand is considered an essential element to McCoy Tyner's style. But even though it can be traced back to the very beginning of Tyner's recorded career, it doesn't really come to the forefront in his expression until around 1963-1964. The same with chord voicings built using fourths: individual voicings already exist early on, but it takes some time before they really become prominent in Tyner's style.

On the other hand, looking at Tyner's recordings since 1967, the typical generalizations on his style might similarly prevent us from understanding the big picture. The left-hand fifths are important in 1967, but Tyner still also uses left-hand octaves to reinforce the tonic, just like he did in 1960. Fourth voicings are prominent, but Tyner never stopped using his other voicing types to convey functionally defined harmonic movements.

Modal scales and pentatonics did not replace functional movements and bebop-type lines completely, but rather added new possibilities. Generally during the 1960s, McCoy Tyner only adds more elements to his style and not much is really left out, resulting in an incredibly multifaceted expression. Through the recordings, it is possible to hear Tyner continuously working on new material, some of which gradually becomes a part of his style, some of which is only connected to the performances of a particular composition, and some of which is eventually discarded. Also, Tyner seems to have an innate ability to balance his command of different approaches with the musical environments that he is involved in. He does use many of the same sounds playing with Grant Green as playing with John Coltrane, but to completely different proportions.

To me, it was surprising to eventually realize that on the recordings of the John Coltrane Quartet, Tyner doesn't seem to come up with melodic material by actually utilizing modal scales and scale sequences. Instead, he achieves modal sounds by making use of dominant chords and II-V progressions from other keys.²⁵⁰ At first, he started by just outlining Dmi7-G7 in the A sections of "Liberia" (page 90) for Dorian scale sound. In 1965, to start his solo with Phrygian color on "My Favorite Things" (page 184), Tyner utilized Dmi7-G7 on an E pedal. And that was just a start. During the solo, he goes through multiple dominant chord movements in various combinations between the two hands. Later on in the 1960s, the melodic lines became more scale-oriented, but the logic behind the movement continues to be connected

²⁵⁰ Jukkis Uotila has actually been teaching this technique for years at the Sibelius Academy (of the University of the Arts Helsinki), but I didn't really connect it with McCoy Tyner's style comprehensibly until now.

to dominant chord motion. There is an interesting difference in the approaches by which Tyner and Coltrane create improvised movement. Coltrane’s harmonic formula is built on V-I resolutions through rapid key changes. Tyner, on the other hand, works from II-V progressions that flow from one to another.

One aspect of McCoy Tyner’s style that needs to be clarified is his innovative use of quartal harmonies. Too often his influence is simplified and almost reduced to just being the musician who introduced quartal harmonies to jazz. Even Alton Merrell states in his dissertation: “McCoy Tyner was the first jazz musician to use quartal harmonies in a way that the perfect fourth interval created within the harmony did not resolve to the third for long periods of time.”²⁵¹ These kinds of statements are misleading, as there are plenty of earlier jazz examples featuring distinct sounds created by using fourths.

Duke Ellington, for one, clearly features voicings built on perfect fourths in his many renditions of Juan Tizol’s “Caravan” to create stunning effects. Ellington uses the first chord presented here in the intro and the A sections of the tune on a recording from 1937.²⁵² The second voicing Ellington uses as the ending chord over F minor tonic on a recording from 1945.²⁵³

THE FIRST PIANO CHORD IN THE INTRO OF “CARAVAN”
AS RECORDED ON MAY 14, 1937 (AT 0:07)

THE FINAL PIANO CHORD AT THE END OF “CARAVAN”
AS RECORDED ON MAY 11, 1945 (AT 2:40)

Ellington also often arpeggiates fourths through several octaves representing some part of the underlying chord. Here he features the 3rd, 9th and 13th of Eb7 chord in the B section of “Caravan” from the May 11, 1945 recording.

²⁵¹ Merrell 2013, 103.

²⁵² Duke Ellington: *The Complete Duke Ellington Vol.8 – 1937*. CBS 88185, 1976. “Caravan” recorded on May 14, 1937.

²⁵³ Duke Ellington: *The Duke Ellington Centennial Edition: The Complete RCA Victor Recordings (1927-1973)*. RCA Victor 09026-63386-2, 1999. “Caravan” recorded on May 11, 1945.

Sun Ra mixes quartal voicings with triads over a static E pedal in his composition “India” from the album “Super-Sonic Jazz”, recorded in 1956.²⁵⁴ It is really difficult to hear exactly what is happening in the bass register, since the sound of the electric piano gets mixed up with the frequencies from the bass and timpani. In this transcription, the left-hand piano part along with the bass and timpani parts are educated guesses more than accurate transcriptions. The numerous percussion instruments on the recording have been omitted here as well. The overall sound of this tune resembles Coltrane’s “Africa” quite a bit at times, as frequencies resembling the notes f and c-sharp resonate from somewhere, most likely timpani and other percussion, and mix in with the electric piano vamp.

♩ = 95 (AT 0:21) [4THS] [E mi] [4THS] [F/E] [E mi] [Dmi/E] [E mi]

ELECTRIC PIANO

BASS

TIMPANI

Ellington’s use of fourths can be seen as sound effects against tonal rhythm section accompaniment as I will show when going through “Caravan” in more detail later in this chapter. Sun Ra’s fourth voicings play only a part in a mix with triads over an E pedal. But the way Bill Evans moves quartal voicings diatonically at the start of his solo on “All Blues” is noticeably similar to the manner in which Tyner started to move the same left-hand voicings around 1961, as seen on “Impressions” on page 128. Here are the first eight bars of Evans’ solo on “All Blues”:²⁵⁵

²⁵⁴ Sun Ra: *Super-Sonic Jazz*. Saturn Records SR-LP 0216, 1957. Recorded in 1956. The exact recording date is unknown, probably late 1956.

²⁵⁵ Miles Davis. *Kind of Blue*. Columbia CL 1355, 1959. “All Blues” recorded on April 22, 1959.

(AT 8:27)
♩ = 142

1

PIANO

G¹³ SCALE MOVEMENT

BASS

5

PIANO

BASS

In an interview with Tyner for *Down Beat* in 1979, David Wild brings up the similarities between the two pianists' approaches. Tyner comments:

Bill was out here before I was, so I think that a lot of people probably thought – because Bill writes as well – that he was the source. You do hear a similar thing. But it came to me so naturally, it wasn't a thing where I actually copied. You cannot develop anything you copy from somebody else, there is no way you can really do that. I had heard this sound a long time, when I was real young, and it just took me a while to develop it out.²⁵⁶

In terms of the interval of a fourth used as a basis for melodic material, Horace Silver springs to mind. Here is an example from a video I found on YouTube, with Silver's quintet performing "Señor Blues" in March 1959.²⁵⁷ Silver utilizes chromatically descending perfect fourths for almost a full chorus of minor blues.

(AT 4:38)
♩ = 105

13

PIANO

2

PERFECT 4THS

(IN UNISON WITH BASS)

²⁵⁶ Wild 1979, 48.

²⁵⁷ Casey 2009. The exact recording date is unclear, but most likely it was made in Laren, Holland on March 7, 1959. Horace Silver Quintet was on tour with the Sonny Rollins Trio and there is an official release of Rollins' performance in what looks like the same set. Horace Silver also plays similar lines using fourths in his solo on "Blowin' the Blues Away" which was recorded on August 29, 1959.

15

PIANO

17

PIANO

19

PIANO

8^{va}

21

PIANO

(8)

23

PIANO

(8)

$E_b m i^6$

Mark Levine has pointed out Bud Powell harmonizing the melody of “So Sorry Please” in fourths on a recording from February 1950.²⁵⁸ The intro of the tune features fourths as well, as shown here.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁸ Levine 1989, 105.

²⁵⁹ Bud Powell: *Jazz Giant*. Norgran Records MG N-1063, 1956. “So Sorry Please” recorded in February 1950.

(AT 0:05) [E⁹(#11)]

♩ = 183

5

On an instrument like guitar, with the top two strings tuned in fourths, harmonizing melodies in fourths falls naturally on the instrument in some cases. Guitarist Oscar Moore plays fourths in the intro to “I Like to Riff” on Nat “King” Cole’s 1941 recording of the tune.²⁶⁰

(AT 0:01)

♩ = 184

5

I am certain that there are many more similar examples, as I have come across these without even specifically looking for them in an organized manner. It seems like the sound of the fourths was definitely already present in jazz harmony before McCoy Tyner. What, of course, Alton Merrell and many jazz

²⁶⁰ Nat “King” Cole: In Chronology 1941-43. Complete Jazz Series, 1994. “I Like to Riff” recorded on July 16, 1941.

historians want to point out is that McCoy Tyner was the first jazz musician to really feature fourths extensively as a part of his style, and that *might* actually be the case. But the recordings that are available today only cover a fraction of the music that was happening. Many musicians never got recorded in the first place, but they still might have been influential to the ones that did get recorded.

After all the material I have gone through in my research, I want to somewhat question whether the important innovations in music are actually about “being the first” to use any particular musical device. I can’t really point to any feature in McCoy Tyner’s playing and confidently say that he was the first one to employ it. The more I know about the music and musicians that influenced Tyner, the more I see connections and similarities between them and Tyner’s individual expression. I don’t think the reason for Tyner’s style becoming so influential is the fact that he was using fourths or that he would have been the first to use fourths. Musicians started following and imitating him because what he was doing was powerful as a whole. The quartal harmony might just have been the most obvious thing to get a grasp on from Tyner’s expression.

In an interview for *Keyboard* magazine with McCoy Tyner, Bob Doerschuk brought up the fact that “Many pianists, in imitating your style, seem content to just pile fourths on top of one another.” Tyner answered:

“Well, there are other things involved. It’s not just a pile of fourths. I play a lot of fifths in my left hand, you know, and they do the same thing as fourths: They open up the sound. I don’t close my sound in, and that allows me to play other things superimposed on the chord, since there is a lot of space between the intervals. But there are thirds, seconds, octaves, and clusters there too. When I put clusters together, there may be fourths in there, but there are also seconds, thirds – it’s a mish-mash of a lot of different things.”²⁶¹

The way Tyner combined the building blocks of his expression and brought together “a lot of different things” is what made his style unique and influential. During the 1960s, he found a way to seamlessly merge the movement of bebop with static modal scale sounds. As a result, he was able to expand an idea of a single chord or scale to something completely different, as displayed in chapter 9 through the analysis of his 1965 solo on “My Favorite Things”.

It seems to me that McCoy Tyner’s expression has generally not been understood in its full magnitude. Even such a widely used jazz history textbook as Mark C. Gridley’s *Jazz Styles: History and Analysis* suggests that it was Coltrane who told Tyner what to play and that the concept of modal jazz is about limiting the selection of available notes. Gridley describes the harmony in the John Coltrane Quartet’s performance of “Afro Blue” by stating: “In order to explore this new style of [modal] jazz, Coltrane decided to place limitations on the collection of notes that the musicians could use for improvising.”²⁶² For his book *Thinking in Jazz*, Paul Berliner has chosen the following quote from Harold Ousley to describe Tyner’s modal

²⁶¹ Doerschuk 1981, 37.

²⁶² Gridley 2012 [1978], 299.

approach: “When players like McCoy Tyner use this [modal] approach, the whole song basically has the sound of that scale. There is a modal kind of sameness because they are working within the context of one or maybe two chords.”²⁶³ Only the few experts who really know what is going on in Tyner’s expression might be able to understand such statements in context from which they come. But for most of the readers, these words certainly are misleading and do not help in appreciating Tyner’s true innovations. Even to this day, I think that McCoy Tyner has not gotten the full credit he deserves for his impact on John Coltrane’s music and modal jazz.

MODAL JAZZ DEFINITIONS

On page 8, I brought up the modal jazz characteristics as listed by Keith Waters. They were:

1. Modal scales for improvisation (or as a source for accompaniment)
2. Slow harmonic rhythm (single chord for 4, 8, 16 or more bars)
3. Pedal point harmonies (focal bass pitch or shifting harmonies over a primary bass pitch)
4. Absence or limited use of functional harmonic progressions (such as V-I or ii-V-I) in accompaniment or improvisation
5. Harmonic characteristic of jazz after 1959 (Suspended fourth–“sus”–chords, slash chords, harmonies named for modes; i.e., phrygian, aeolian harmonies)
6. Prominent use of melodic and/or harmonic perfect fourths”²⁶⁴

The examples presented in the previous chapters illustrate really clearly why it is difficult to exactly define modal jazz. In most cases, there are several layers of sound, some of which still use tonal conventions.

The first of the modal jazz characteristics that Waters derived from the scholarly discussions is “modal scales for improvisation or as a source for accompaniment”. It seems quite obvious that modal jazz would involve using modal scales. But the real question is: How are the scales used? What are the factors that really bring out the modal sound? From looking at all the material I have gone through in this thesis, it seems to me that the rest of the characteristics listed above are relevant musical features that contribute to the modal scale sounds coming through, but they don’t really define modal jazz. None of them creates the modal sound by itself, not without some additional definitions at least.

Slow harmonic rhythm is definitely not required for the modal sound and it doesn’t create modal sound by itself, if the melodic and harmonic material is based only on the conventions of tonal major or minor key. Harmonies over focal bass pitch, or pedal point, do not necessarily create modal sound either. Pedal points can be effectively used to even transform functional harmonies into modal sounds, as seen on “My Favorite Things” (on page 64), but not just any note as a pedal will have that effect. Especially in tonal major key, the pedal on the dominant note was quite typical feature in earlier styles. Consequently, when the John Coltrane Quartet used a Bb pedal on “Ev’ry Time We Say Goodbye” in the key of Eb, the resulting

²⁶³ Berliner 1994, 224.

²⁶⁴ Waters 2011, 46.

sound did not come out modal in the same way as in “My Favorite Things” which used an E pedal (the sixth) in the key of G.

The bass is essential in defining modal color as seen on “Impressions” (page 124). This is the musical reason for the bass often remaining static in modal situations. If the harmonic rhythm is slow, like it is in “So What” and “Impressions”, the bass can walk while still allowing a particular modal color to come through. In such a case, to have enough distinction between the A and B sections, they have to be far apart harmonically. Walking bass all through wouldn’t work on the Miles Davis composition “Milestones” because of the two alternating modes being so close to each other in their selection of tones.²⁶⁵ None of the Miles Davis’ recordings of “Milestones” that I am aware of feature walking bass in the B section.

The absence or limited use of functional harmonic progressions is the most interesting characteristic to inspect in relation to the examples presented in this thesis. At the beginning stages of my research project, I thought that it is simply the dominant–tonic movement that defines the sound of the tonal major or minor key. I envisioned modal sounds as static scale-based colors which, in order to bring out their identity, rather avoided movement.

The dominant–tonic motion seems to indeed be the defining factor when comparing melodic lines in the bebop idiom with lines that bring forth modal colors. Illustrating the conceptual difference between playing in a tonal minor key and in Dorian minor, there is an interesting discussion in Ashley Kahn’s book *Kind of Blue: The Making of the Miles Davis Masterpiece*. In an interview with Kahn, Jimmy Heath recalls Miles Davis complaining about the way Sonny Stitt played on “So What”. According to Kahn, Heath cites Davis as saying: “You know, when Sonny Stitt was here, he was playing D minor 7 [instead of D minor] all the time on ‘So What’.” Kahn also adds a citation from Miles Davis himself, as published in Miles’ autobiography: “So I picked up Jimmy and we were riding around talking about music and shit and I probably was complaining to him about Sonny Stitt playing the wrong kind of shit on “So What”, because he would always fuck up on that tune and so I used to tell Jimmy this every time I’d see him.”²⁶⁶ Lewis Porter cites Jimmy Heath in the opposite way on the same topic:

Miles knows what to do, and he used to always tell me about the way Sonny Stitt didn’t play it the way he wanted it played. Sonny Stitt would play it like it was a D minor chord [emphasizing the notes D, F and A], and Miles didn’t want it to be like that. He wanted it to be all the white keys so that it could be C, F, it could be all kinds of other things happening.”²⁶⁷

The interpretations in brackets in both of the Jimmy Heath quotes above are in the original text by Kahn and Porter. To me, it seems that the precise reason for Davis’ complaint is the fact that Sonny Stitt played *in the key of D minor*, instead of bringing out the sound of the D Dorian scale (all white keys on the piano)

²⁶⁵ Miles Davis: *Milestones*. Columbia CL 1193, 1958. “Miles” recorded on February 4, 1958. The later recordings list this composition as “Milestones” and that is how musicians know it nowadays.

²⁶⁶ Kahn 2002, 170.

²⁶⁷ Porter 2001, 162.

associated with the D minor seventh chord. That is a clear conceptual difference between Sonny Stitt and all the other saxophonists – including Hank Mobley, John Coltrane, George Coleman, Sam Rivers and Wayne Shorter – who played with Miles in the 1960s.

The following example illustrates Sonny Stitt drawing melodic material from the D minor key in his solo on “So What”, recorded live in Paris on October 11, 1960.²⁶⁸ This is the beginning of Stitt’s fifth solo chorus, bar numbers run from the beginning of the solo.

(AT 5:18) 5

129 8/8 THROUGHOUT

133 [Dmi] [A7(b9)] [Dmi] [A7(b9)] [Dmi]

137 [A7(b9)] [Dmi] [A7(b9)] [Dmi]

141 [Dmi] [A7(b9)] (Dmi) [Dmi]

Detailed description: The image shows a musical score for a saxophone solo in 8/8 time. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff starts at bar 129 with a circled '5' indicating a fifth fingering. The second staff starts at bar 133 and features a sequence of chords: Dmi, A7(b9), Dmi, A7(b9), and Dmi. The third staff starts at bar 137 and includes chords A7(b9), Dmi, A7(b9), and Dmi, with a triplet of eighth notes. The fourth staff starts at bar 141 and includes chords Dmi, A7(b9), (Dmi), and Dmi, also with a triplet. The notation includes various note values, rests, and accidentals (b-flat and c-sharp).

The melodic lines in the above example feature rapid movement between D minor triad and A7(b9) chord. The notes b-flat and c-sharp distract from the sound of the Dorian scale (all white keys), and make the tune sound like a bebop tune in D minor key instead. I would assume that Miles Davis was not happy with Sonny Stitt’s playing on “So What” because, even though there is nothing wrong with the melodies in themselves, Stitt is playing the exact sound that Miles was trying to avoid at the time. Miles was trying to get away from bebop and play something different.

Instead of embracing the new sounds, Stitt played exactly the kind of lines Charlie Parker had played, for instance, on the Dizzy Gillespie composition “Bebop” (in F minor key). This line is found at the second A section of Parker’s first solo chorus, from the performance released on the album *Live at the Town Hall, June 22, 1945*.²⁶⁹

(AT 3:25)

9 [C7] [Fmi] [C7] [Fmi] [C7]

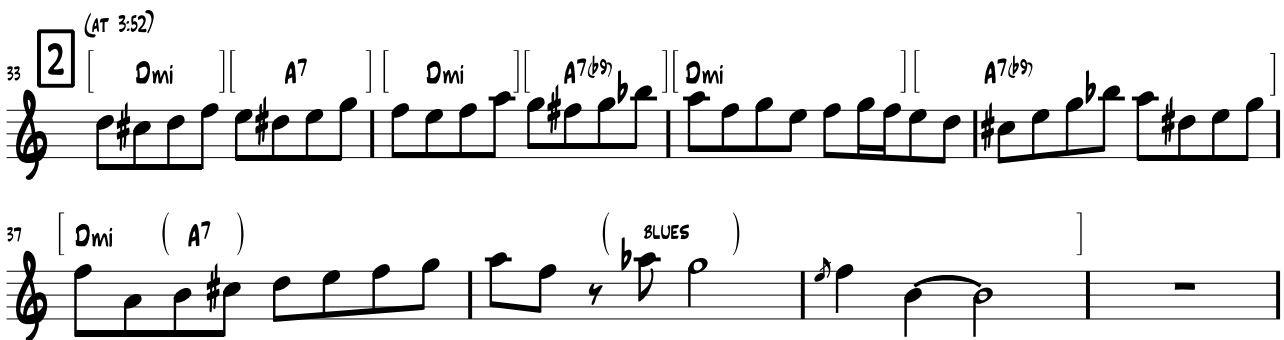
Detailed description: The image shows a musical score for a saxophone solo in 4/4 time. It consists of one staff of music starting at bar 9. Above the staff, a circled '5' indicates a fifth fingering. The staff features a sequence of chords: C7, Fmi, C7, Fmi, and C7. The notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and accidentals.

²⁶⁸ Miles Davis: *Olympia 1960*. Trema 710575, 1999. Recorded on March 21, 1960 and October 11, 1960.

²⁶⁹ Dizzy Gillespie & Charlie Parker: *Town Hall, New York City, June 22, 1945*. Uptown Records UPCD 27.51, 2005.



Charlie Parker's lines above go together with the classical model of F melodic minor scale, in which ascending melodic movement uses d-natural and e-natural to lead to the tonic note. I suppose this is just how the minor melodies generally functioned in the music these jazz musicians we used to hearing. Here is one more example of Sonny Stitt playing similarly on "So What". This is the beginning of Stitt's second solo chorus. The ascending melodic minor scale can be found in bar 37:



On a bebop tune, like the aforementioned "Bebop" by Dizzy Gillespie, also John Coltrane played similar melodic lines. The following example is recorded on January 15, 1959 with Milt Jackson and released on the album *Bags & Trane*.²⁷⁰ But Coltrane did not play this way with Miles Davis on "So What".



In the above examples, the melodic lines in the *key of D minor* are constructed by implying A7(b9) chord resolving to D minor triad. The scale-based modal approach to melodic lines is quite different and definitely doesn't bring out such movement, as seen in the examples from John Coltrane's solos on "Liberia" (page 86) and "Greensleeves" (page 111). In these examples Coltrane imposes a static modal scale on functional dominant-tonic progressions stated by McCoy Tyner on the piano.

The dominant-tonic chord progression is one of the most defining characteristics of major and minor tonality. That would be a reason for modal jazz harmony to avoid it just like the melodic lines do. The modal examples presented in this thesis generally involve fewer dominant-tonic progressions than found in "Lazy Bird", "Blues de Funk", and "Mox Nix". Therefore, the "limited use of functional harmonic progressions" seems accurate for harmonies as well. On the other hand, the dominant-tonic resolution still carries a particular importance in McCoy Tyner's and the John Coltrane Quartet's expression. For jazz musicians, the

²⁷⁰ Milt Jackson & John Coltrane: *Bags & Trane*. Atlantic, 1368. 1961. Recorded on January 15, 1959.

V-I cadence defines the end of a phrase and the beginning of a new one. This is probably why it was still retained in the 1960 arrangement of “My Favorite Things”, for example, as well as used in an improvised manner by Tyner to create form through the effect of arrival. The dominant–tonic resolutions were not necessarily written into the compositions or solo vamps anymore, but they were improvised. Also, the functional progressions were used in a more ambiguous manner, appearing against a scalar melody or bass pedal, like seen in the examples from “My Favorite Things,” “Spiritual” and “Lonnie’s Lament”.

Harmonically there are more options to convey modal sounds than melodically. A scalar color can basically be stated efficiently with a single chord. As a result, the most defining distinction between modal and tonal jazz harmony might exist in the structure of the tonic chord rather than the omission of the dominant chord leading to it. The tonal D minor examples “Blues de Funk” (on page 23) and “Mox Nix” (on page 28) as well as every single version of “A Night in Tunisia” (on page 75) used either D minor sixth or D minor major seventh chord as the tonic.²⁷¹ The rubato sections of “Liberia” (on page 80) used a D Dorian scale as the tonic, but retained A7 or Eb7 as the dominant. The modal minor blues “Equinox” (on page 34) used a Db Dorian scale as the tonic, but also retained Ab7(b9) as the dominant. The modal major blues examples like “Mr. Day” (on page 61) featured Mixolydian dominant seventh sounds as the tonic instead of the major sixth and major seventh chords that the bebop style blues compositions, such as Charlie Parker’s “Perhaps” or Thelonious Monk’s “Misterioso” embraced.

It would be erroneous to claim that a chord that simply includes the minor seventh interval would be a modal feature if it appeared as the tonic chord. Even though the minor sixth chord is the primary sound of the tonal minor tonic, the minor seventh does sometimes appear as a variation on classic recordings. As a melodic feature, the minor seventh interval has as a special meaning in jazz music as one of the blue notes, and sometimes the sound comes through in harmony as well. For example, Duke Ellington’s “Ko-Ko”, recorded on March 6, 1940, features the minor seventh sound in the brass during the seventh chorus of the minor blues.²⁷² But at the same time, Ellington himself plays a minor sixth chord on the piano and the melody lines do not offer any indication towards the Dorian scale.

Another medium for McCoy Tyner’s modal jazz harmony to deviate from the conventions of the tonal major and minor keys was through the use of open sounds. In an interview with Bob Doerschuk for the August 1981 issue of *Keyboard* magazine, Tyner explained: “I play a lot of fifths in my left hand, you know, and they do the same thing as fourths: They open up the sound.”²⁷³

The image shows a musical score for the piano left hand (L.H.) for the piece "UTOPIA". It consists of two bars. The first bar, labeled "UTOPIA" BAR 1, features a chord F(SUS2) with fingerings 1, 5, and 2. The second bar, labeled "UTOPIA" BAR 25, features a chord F7(SUS4) with fingerings b7, 4, and 1. The notation includes a bass clef, a key signature of one flat (Bb), and a common time signature (C).

²⁷¹ Sarah Vaughan’s version of “A Night on Tunisia” used of course Cmi6, since it was in the key of C minor.

²⁷² Duke Ellington: *The Blanton-Webster Band*. Bluebird/RCA/BMG 74321 13161 2, 1986. Recorded 1940-1942.

²⁷³ Doerschuk 1981, 37.

These voicings convey a modal sound even though they don't bring out the complete sound of a modal scale. Instead, they divert from the conventions of tonal major or minor key by being different from functionally resolving chords. This openness could be seen as one of the key attributes of modal harmony. Such harmonic ambiguity could be achieved through layering modal elements on top or below the functional harmonies like in Coltrane's arrangement of "My Favorite Things" or by using open sounding chord voicings.

On the other hand, it has to be pointed out that earlier jazz styles also employ plenty of ambiguous elements in the approach to harmony. There are several examples of open harmonies, suspended chords, slash chords, polychords, and chords featuring the characteristic notes of a modal scale, today called "Dorian", "Lydian", or "Phrygian" chords. During this work, I have come across several such occasions on recordings by the musicians that McCoy Tyner has mentioned as his influences. All of the following excerpts from Thelonious Monk, Bud Powell, Richie Powell and Duke Ellington were recorded between 1945 and 1956.

Here is an example of Thelonious Monk using open chord voicings in his solo on "Well You Needn't".²⁷⁴ For the parallel chromatic movement in the B section Monk actually plays just the interval of a fifth or a major seventh in his left hand. This creates an open sound on which the melodic line can be used to define the chord colors or just leave them ambiguous, as Monk does in the melody for the B section. This passage is from Monk's first solo chorus, the bar numbers run from the beginning of the solo.

The first chord Thelonious Monk plays when accompanying Milt Jackson's solo on "Criss Cross" sounds Dorian to me because it features the characteristic intervals (1, b3, b7 and 13) of G Dorian scale.²⁷⁵ "Monk's

²⁷⁴ Thelonious Monk: *Genius of Modern Music Volume 1*. Blue Note BLP 1510, 1956. "Well You Needn't" recorded on October 24, 1947.

²⁷⁵ Milt Jackson & Thelonious Monk: *Milt Jackson and the Thelonious Monk Quintet*. Blue Note BLP 1509, 1956. "Criss Cross" recorded on July 23, 1951.

Mood”, on the other hand, contains a Lydian sounding Dbmaj7 chord with #11 resolving to the third as well as some slash chords.²⁷⁶ The bar numbers shown here run from the beginning of the recorded performances.

THELONIOUS MONK ON "CRISS CROSS" AT 0:56: 37 [Gmi¹³]

THELONIOUS MONK ON "MONK'S MOOD" AT 0:13: 4 [Dbmaj7(#11)]

AT 2:07: 37 [Bb/C] [A/C]

Bud Powell’s “Un Poco Loco” highlights parallel movement of maj7#11 chords, which could well be labeled as Lydian chords.²⁷⁷

(AT 0:07)

♩=280

[Ebmaj7(#11)] [Dbmaj7(#11)] [Gbmaj7(#11)] [cmaj7(#11)]

Bud Powell’s “Glass Enclosure” features many dissonant polychords and often gets mentioned for its modern sounding harmonies, such as the Abmi(maj7b5) chords shown here.²⁷⁸

(AT 0:32)

♩=223

[Abm(maj7b5) (G / Ab(omit3))]

[Abm(maj7b5)] [Dbm(maj7b5)]

²⁷⁶ Thelonious Monk: *Genius of Modern Music Volume 1*. Blue Note BLP 1510, 1956. “Monk’s Mood” recorded on October 24, 1947.

²⁷⁷ Bud Powell: *The Amazing Bud Powell Vol. 1*. Blue Note BLP 1503, 1955. “Un Poco Loco” recorded on May 1, 1951.

²⁷⁸ Bud Powell: *The Amazing Bud Powell Vol. 2*. Blue Note BLP 1504, 1955. “Glass Enclosure” recorded on August 14, 1953.

DUKE ELLINGTON ON "MELANCHOLIA" AT 1:51:

It seems to me that many of these chords that could be interpreted as modal were actually well present in bebop and earlier jazz styles. The simple reason for this would be the fact that these sounds already existed in the music that jazz musicians were inherently exposed to, for instance European classical music, various folk music traditions and the music of American composers such as George Gershwin, Victor Young, and Morton Gould. But it doesn't look like musicians would have started to approach these sounds from a scalar perspective until around the mid-1950s. This conceptual difference is important in defining modal jazz as a style.

Duke Ellington's various performances of "Caravan" are great examples on how the musical characteristics that today could be considered "modal" were in fact at the time rather used to embellish minor and major key tonalities rather than to represent modal scales. Here is a representative case from the 1945 recording of "Caravan".²⁸³ This is the last A section of the tune. The melody is harmonized with a dominant seventh chord voicing (with b9) that moves in exact parallel fashion. In this case the actual melody note is the bottom note of the voicing. The parallel movement is the important factor instead of the individual chords, but I have still identified each voicing with a separate chord symbol to highlight the dissonance created against the accompaniment.

²⁸³ Duke Ellington: *The Duke Ellington Centennial Edition: The Complete RCA Victor Recordings (1927-1973)*. RCA Victor 09026-63386-2, 1999. "Caravan" recorded on May 11, 1945.

(PARALLEL MOVEMENT OF THE SAME VOICING)

3

C#7(b9) C7(b9) G7(b9) Bb7(b9) C7(b9) E7(b9) G7(b9)

MELODY

GUITAR 8VB

PIANO

BASS

5

Bb7(b9) C7(b9) Bb7(b9)

MELODY

GUITAR 8VB

PIANO

BASS

(PARALLEL MOVEMENT CONTINUES)

7

C7(b9) C#7(b9) C7(b9) C#7(b9) C7(b9) Bb7(b9) G7(b9)

MELODY

GUITAR 8VB

PIANO

BASS

9 $Bb7(b9)$ $C7(b9)$ $Bb7(b9)$]

MELODY

GUITAR 8V8

PIANO

BASS

(PARALLEL MOVEMENT CONTINUES)

11 [$C7(b9)$ $B7(b9)$ $Bb7(b9)$ $A7(b9)$ $Ab7(b9)$ $F#7(b9)$ $E7(b9)$]

MELODY

GUITAR 8V8

PIANO

BASS

13 [Fmi(add9)]

MELODY

GUITAR 8VB

PIANO

BASS

PERFECT FOURTHS STACKED

15

MELODY

GUITAR 8VB

PIANO

BASS

[Fmi] [C7] [Fmi] [C7] [Fmi]

b13
b3
b7

11
1
5

When thinking of the definitions of modal jazz, this performance is very interesting. It features a slow harmonic rhythm with a single C7(b9) chord clearly defined by the guitar and bass for 12 bars, while the harmonized melody creates shifting harmonies over the primary bass pitch. On the other hand, both the guitar and bass resolve clearly to the tonic minor chord (F minor) in bar 13, creating functional V-I_m resolution. The harmonized melody arrives at Fmi(add9) chord as well. The final six-note chord on the piano is quite prominent and built by stacking perfect fourths, resulting in intervals that theoretically could be associated with F Aeolian mode. During the 12 bars of C7(b9), the piano states somewhat dissonant flatted fifth interval against the perfect fifth in the bass and guitar.

For comparison, the next example is an excerpt from the John Coltrane Quartet’s interpretation of “Afro Blue” by Mongo Santamaria, recorded live at Birdland on October 8, 1963.²⁸⁴

(AT 0:42)
♩=203
49

55

The melody of “Afro Blue” features seven notes that can be identified as F Aeolian scale. Piano and bass define F pedal as the primary bass pitch, but bassist Jimmy Garrison plays scalar movements freely, staying inside the range of a fifth. The piano features a clear V-Im resolution (C7 to Fmi) similarly to “Caravan” but the harmonic rhythm is much faster. However, the bass doesn’t clearly state the dominant-tonic movement with the piano. McCoy Tyner utilizes different types of chord voicings ranging from open voicings to a full Dorian scale sound.

The harmony in both of these two examples features dominant-tonic movement, with C7 resolving to F minor. But the type of F minor tonic is strikingly different. In “Caravan”, all the instruments other than the piano clearly state F minor triad with a ninth added. Even with all the modern sounding ambiguous elements in the performance, there is really nothing that would bring out the concept of a modal scale – even taking Ellington’s final chord into account. The chord sounds like an intervallic effect and it definitely

²⁸⁴ John Coltrane: *Live at Birdland*. Impulse! AS-50, 1964. “Afro Blue” recorded on October 8, 1963.

isn't enough to override the minor key sound stated by all the other instruments. On the other hand, McCoy Tyner's chord of arrival spells out F Dorian scale, especially the second time. Together with the scalar melodic material from the other instruments, the overall sound is clearly modal.

The following quote from George Russell, from an interview with Eric Nisenson, illuminates the difference in the way musicians approached chords before the modal jazz revolution. With "Concept" Russell refers to his *Lydian Chromatic Concept of Tonal Organization*.

"One night Miles and I had dinner together, and we had a very serious discussion about modes. At the time, Miles was seriously looking for musicians to replace some of the guys in the band with substance-abuse problems. So we sat down at the piano and played chords. I played a chord for him, and he asked me where I got it. I tried to show him where the chord came from. And he got very interested because, by that time, I could translate any chord in terms of the Concept, and I could show Miles what its parent scale was; the scale formed a unity with the chord. Then Miles understood it. He saw that in the Concept there was an objective explanation for the chord. He saw that traditional music overlooked verticality and unity. Unity was not a factor. When musicians are talking about harmony, they mean progressional harmony. They were ignorant – and still are – about a vertical concept. The Lydian Concept is based on the unity of chord and scale. That night, when Miles saw how he could use the Concept, he said that if Bird were alive, this would kill him. And this was just what Miles needed for the direction his music was taking."²⁸⁵

It is quite difficult to imagine this today, but in the mid-1950s the idea of the unity between a chord and a scale was new and revolutionary, at least according to Russell. Before that "the unity was not a factor". The sounds were there, but they were not approached as scales.

The passage I brought up from Bud Powell's "Un Poco Loco" with maj7#11 chords could absolutely be from a modal jazz composition from the 1960s.²⁸⁶ For example, Joe Henderson's "Black Narcissus" utilizes quite similar chord voicings in parallel movement.²⁸⁷ But even though Powell features the note f-sharp over C pedal many times in his solo on "Un Poco Loco", there is no clear sign of the Lydian scale being stated melodically or any of the voicings moving in a scalar fashion. Instead, Powell actually relies on the melodic conventions of the tonal C major key for his solo, including the use of the blues scale and the movement from C major triad to Db major triad.

It seems to me that jazz harmony became modal when the concept of modal scales really came through as "the source for accompaniment" (as formulated by Keith Waters). Early on in McCoy Tyner's career his modal harmony involved stacking the scale vertically in thirds and moving triads through the scale, as seen on "Liberia" and "Equinox".

²⁸⁵ Nisenson 2001, 72.

²⁸⁶ Bud Powell: *The Amazing Bud Powell Vol. 1*. Blue Note BLP 1503, 1955. "Un Poco Loco" recorded on May 1, 1951.

²⁸⁷ Joe Henderson: *Power to the People*. Milestone MSP 9024, 1969. "Black Narcissus" recorded on May 29, 1969.

"LIBERIA"
INTRO BAR 4

"EQUINOX"
SOLO BAR 47

D DORIAN SCALE

D \flat DORIAN SCALE

The way Tyner utilized moving triads for modal sounds at this point actually resembles the triads in the horn parts of Miles Davis' "Milestones" (or "Miles"). Here is the first A section of "Miles", in which corresponding Bb, C and Dmi triads represent G Dorian scale.²⁸⁸ Notice how the bass line actually implies Gmi7-C7 resolving to F.

$\text{♩} = 250$ (AT 0:00)

TRUMPET
ALTO SAX
TENOR SAX

PIANO

BASS

5

Interestingly enough, going back to Miles Davis' comments on Sonny Stitt playing "So What" and listening to the recording from today's perspective, Stitt's bebop lines may even sound fresh in the modal context because the sound of the minor key has become rare in the jazz expression today. There are some

²⁸⁸ Miles Davis: *Milestones*. Columbia CL 1193, 1958. "Miles" recorded on February 4, 1958.

educators, most notably Barry Harris, who have worked for keeping the tonal minor sound alive. But mostly what is being heard everywhere today is the modal Dorian minor instead of the sound of the tonal minor key – even on tunes that actually would be tonal.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MELODY AND HARMONY, SOLOIST AND ACCOMPANIMENT

When analyzing the relationship between soloist's improvised melody line and the accompanying harmony improvised by the rhythm section, there is always the question of what is intended and what happens by chance. Often it makes sense to analyze the soloist's melodic line in relation to the harmonic framework of the tune using chord symbols rather than the actual accompanying piano voicings and bass lines. After all, the improvising musicians refer to the composition and its form first and then react to what everyone else is playing. But without studying what *is actually played* by the musicians, it is not possible to get into the specifics of the sound collectively created by the improvising musicians. It immediately became obvious in the minor blues examples "Mox Nix" (page 28) and "Blues de Funk" (page 23) that the individual harmonic choices of the musicians might differ considerably at times without anyone reacting to make them more unified.

One implication of the chord-scale theory, which is probably still the most widely used pedagogic model for jazz improvisation today, is that the scales used for improvisation and the accompanying chords *should be* the same. Everything is based on the *unity* between the chord and the scale. If the soloist is adding movement by playing substitute harmonies or by choosing to play a static modal scale instead, shouldn't the rhythm section follow and do the same? The melody and harmony always stating the exact same color didn't seem to be George Russell's original intention and definitely his music doesn't sound that way. The notion that extended chords end up having the same notes as the scales is important, and that is where the unity lies, but the soloist should not limit himself/herself to the notes of the parent scale. On the contrary, the soloist should be able to use all twelve tones creatively over any chord. In the title of the book it could be the word *chromatic* that is more important than the word *Lydian*. Different scale types offer ways to organize the twelve tones in a melodic way. To pianists Russell specifically notes:

When playing a scale against a minor chord, it is only necessary to play the tonic and minor 7th (or minor 6th) degrees of the chord in the left hand. The tonic and seventh degrees of a seventh chord too are all that is necessary. Avoid making chords too full. Let the scales do the coloring.²⁸⁹

So the harmony instrument should rather play open voicings and leave space for the melody to do the coloring.

For me, studying McCoy Tyner's playing ended up being a complete revelation in terms of the relationship between melody and harmony. When Tyner consistently outlines contrasting sounds with his left-hand harmonies and right-hand melodies, it must be intentional. It must be an integral part of the

²⁸⁹ Russell 1959, 19.

sound that he is going for. After understanding and hearing this in Tyner's expression, I began to hear it everywhere on the classic recordings.

Here is Bud Powell combining static left hand with moving right-hand melodies on "All God's Chillun Got Rhythm", recorded on December 11, 1949 in a session with Sonny Stitt, Curly Russell and Max Roach.²⁹⁰ The left-hand voicings are open and mostly use tonic and fifth, thus implying dominant-tonic movement of the key.

(AT 1:44)
♩ = 278

The musical score is divided into three systems, each with a piano and bass part. The piano part consists of a treble clef staff with a right-hand melody and a bass clef staff with a left-hand accompaniment. The bass part is a single bass clef staff. Chord voicings are indicated in brackets above the piano staff. The bass part features a consistent rhythmic pattern of quarter notes, with an 8va marking in the first system and a 67 marking in the second system. The piano part includes triplet markings (3) and implied chords (IMPLIED ONLY).

System 1 (Measures 17-18):
 Piano: Treble clef, right hand melody with triplet (3) in measure 17. Chords: [Ami7], [Abmi7], [Gmi7], [C7]. Bass clef, left hand accompaniment. Chord: [F].
 Bass: Bass clef, quarter notes. Chords: [F], [C7 (IMPLIED ONLY)].

System 2 (Measures 19-20):
 Piano: Treble clef, right hand melody. Chords: [F], [D7], [Gmi7], [C7]. Bass clef, left hand accompaniment. Chord: [F].
 Bass: Bass clef, quarter notes. Chords: [F], [Gb7 (IMPLIED ONLY)].

System 3 (Measures 21-24):
 Piano: Treble clef, right hand melody with triplet (3) in measure 23. Chords: [F6], [Cmi7], [F7]. Bass clef, left hand accompaniment. Chords: [F], [C7 (IMPLIED ONLY)], [Ami7(b5)], [D7].
 Bass: Bass clef, quarter notes. Chords: [F], [C7 (IMPLIED ONLY)], [Ami7(b5)], [D7].

²⁹⁰ Sonny Stitt & Bud Powell & J.J. Johnson: *Sonny Stitt/Bud Powell/J. J. Johnson*. Prestige PRLP 7024, 1957. "All God's Chillun Got Rhythm" recorded on December 11, 1949.

And here is Bud Powell combining dominant-tonic movements freely in his version of "A Night in Tunisia", recorded on May 1, 1951 with Curly Russell and Max Roach again.²⁹¹ These are the first eight bars of Powell's solo.

(AT 1:23)
♩=178

1

[Dmi] [Eb7] [Dmi^b]

PIANO

BASS

3

[Eb7] [Dmi^b]

PIANO

BASS

5

[A7(b9)] [Dmi]

PIANO

BASS

²⁹¹ Bud Powell: *The Amazing Bud Powell Vol. 1*. Blue Note BLP 1503, 1955. "A Night in Tunisia" recorded on May 1, 1951.

Bar 5 is particularly revealing because of the left hand stating Eb major sound and the melodic line implying A7(b9) resolving to D minor tonic. Of course Eb7 is commonly understood as the tritone substitution of A7, but these note choices in the melody wouldn't make sense if analyzed vertically in relation to Eb7. Obviously, the 'chord-scale unity' is not a decisive factor in Bud Powell's expression; it is more about the consistency of melodic and harmonic elements in themselves. Both create movement in relation to the key center, which is more than just anticipating chords or delaying resolutions.

Similarly in a modal context, by being able to produce static and moving musical elements both consecutively and simultaneously on top of each other, McCoy Tyner has the most amazing control of form. The same applies to rhythm. The rhythmic independence between Tyner's left and right hand is remarkable. But the most amazing thing is the sound that the four musicians of the John Coltrane Quartet create together. Each of them deals with balancing the static sounds against movement as well as tension and release. From the alternate takes one can observe situations when the balance of the movement loses its coherence and the resolution points get scattered in different directions. In an interview by De Sayles Grey on November 2, 1977, Reggie Workman shares an interesting story that tells of a conscious effort by Coltrane to achieve multilayered sound.

Then when I started working with Trane, I found myself being at the same matrix with Elvin Jones many times . . . Due to the similarity in feeling and concept, Elvin and I were together on many things. I thought that was phenomenal because it just happened, it was not intentional. It was there where things were happening. Then one day John called me aside and said, "You know, Reggie, ain't but four of us in this band. And if you're doing the same things--the band becomes a trio!" So I had to deal with that.' He was a man of few words; he did not talk much but most of the things he said were jewels. Of course, he meant that everybody has got to make a contribution. If four people are going to make this thing be as big and broad and as creative as it has to be, it is best that we all do something different. This will add to the color and add to the force of what is happening.²⁹²

McCoy Tyner has explained the growth of the quartet:

I loved playing with John because we listened to each other; it was intuitive. I wouldn't call it mind reading, but we moved together. In playing jazz you learn to respect the other musicians

²⁹² Grey 1985, 116.

on stage; it's not about the individual. You learn to deal with other people and understand that the group can make music collectively. The goal is to do things in an organized way and still bring individuality to the music without disrupting the collective sound. Everybody plays something different, but they play together.²⁹³

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Conceptualizing McCoy Tyner's way of creating modal colors and motion through the dominant chord movement makes a lot of sense for me and seems consistent with the way Tyner himself talks about his style. But this definitely requires more study and contrasting points of view, as well as material researched from the 1970s on. Also, the presented aspects of McCoy Tyner's left-hand voicings and their evolution deal with such a subtle level of sophistication, that still sometimes I doubt if I heard them correctly.

During this work, McCoy Tyner's recordings have consistently and continuously surprised me with something new and amazing always catching my attention. Without any time constraints in finishing my project, I would probably have just gone on exploring his music forever. For one thing, I wasn't able to include as thorough analysis of McCoy Tyner's compositions as I would have liked to, but I hope to be able to continue on that in the future. I think that his writing further illuminates and reinforces the points I have strived to bring up in this study.

Overall, I think that there are so many new possibilities for jazz research in the future. Most importantly, the accuracy of transcriptions can be vastly improved by the insightful use of new and developing digital tools. This makes it possible to in many cases find out the actual accompanying chord voicings instead of just resorting to the ambiguous use of chord symbols. As a result, the relationship between melody and harmony can be examined in much more detail than ever before. I expect the future research to move more and more away from the overly vertical analysis and concentrate more on the horizontal integrity of music and its individual parts. I wouldn't be at all surprised if this would eventually lead into considerable changes in how jazz improvisation is being taught and theoretically conceptualized.

²⁹³ Drouot 2002, 14.

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COMPLETE LIST OF MCCOY TYNER TRANSCRIPTIONS BY THE AUTHOR

(The transcriptions fully or partially featured in this thesis are in bold.)

Complete Solo Transcriptions (composition, recording date, album):

- "Blues de Funk"**, December 17, 1959 (Curtis Fuller: *Imagination*. Savoy)
- "Mox Nix"**, February 6, 1960 (Art Farmer & Benny Golson: *Meet the Jazztet*. Argo)
- "Chi Chi"**, July 12, 1960 (Julian Priester: *Spiritsville*. Jazzland)
- "Like Sonny"**, September 8, 1960 (John Coltrane: *Like Sonny*. Roulette Jazz)
- "Blues to Elvin" (take 3), October 24, 1960 (John Coltrane: *The Heavyweight Champion*. Rhino Records)
- "Blues to Elvin"**, October 24, 1960 (John Coltrane: *Coltrane Plays the Blues*. Atlantic)
- "Untitled Original" ("Exotica"), October 24, 1960 (John Coltrane: *The Heavyweight Champion*. Rhino Records)
- "Equinox"**, October 26, 1960 (John Coltrane: *Coltrane's Sound*. Atlantic)
- "The Night Has a Thousand Eyes", October 26, 1960 (John Coltrane: *Coltrane's Sound*. Atlantic)
- "Arietis", August 21, 1961 (Freddie Hubbard: *Ready for Freddie*. Blue Note)
- "Impressions"**, November 1, 1961 (John Coltrane: *The Complete 1961 Village Vanguard Recordings*. Impulse!)
- "Spiritual"**, November 1, 1961 (John Coltrane: *The Complete 1961 Village Vanguard Recordings*. Impulse!)
- "Brasilia"**, November 1, 1961 (John Coltrane: *The Complete 1961 Village Vanguard Recordings*. Impulse!)
- "Inception", January 10, 1962 (McCoy Tyner: *Inception / Nights Of Ballads & Blues*. Impulse!)
- "Monk's Blues", July 5, 1963 (McCoy Tyner: *Live at Newport*. Impulse!)
- "Afro Blue", December 7, 1963 (Count Basie, Dizzy Gillespie, John Coltrane – *Ralph Gleason's Jazz Casual*. Rhino Home Video)
- "Bessie's Blues"**, June 1, 1964 (John Coltrane: *Crescent*. Impulse!)
- "Charcoal Blues"**, April 29, 1964 (Wayne Shorter: *Night Dreamer*. Blue Note)
- "Minor League", June 12, 1964 (Grant Green: *Solid*. Blue Note)
- "It Don't Mean a Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)", December 2, 1964 (McCoy Tyner: *McCoy Tyner Plays Ellington*. Impulse!)
- "On Green Dolphin Street", 1965, (McCoy Tyner: *Live in Boston*. Not commercially released)
- "A Touch of the Blues", March 18, 1966 (Hank Mobley: *A Slice Of The Top*. Blue Note)
- "Passion Dance", April 21, 1967 (McCoy Tyner: *The Real McCoy*. Blue Note)
- "Four by Five", April 21, 1967 (McCoy Tyner: *The Real McCoy*. Blue Note)
- "The High Priest"**, December 1, 1967 (McCoy Tyner: *Tender Moments*. Blue Note)
- "Man from Tanganyika", December 1, 1967 (McCoy Tyner: *Tender Moments*. Blue Note)
- "Utopia"**, December 1, 1967 (McCoy Tyner: *Tender Moments*. Blue Note)
- "The Surrey with a Fringe on Top", May 17, 1968 (McCoy Tyner: *Time For Tyner*. Blue Note)
- "Vision"**, August 23, 1968 (McCoy Tyner: *Expansions*. Blue Note)

Incomplete Solo Transcriptions (composition, recording date, album, amount transcribed):

- "Liberia", June 10, 1960 (or possibly June 27) (John Coltrane: *Live at the Jazz Gallery 1960*. RLR Records) 16 bars
- "Lazzy Bird", October 24, 1960 (*Chick Corea – Herbie Hancock – Keith Jarrett – McCoy Tyner*. Atlantic) 128 bars
- "Summertime", October 24, 1960 (John Coltrane: *My Favorite Things*. Atlantic) 58 bars
- "26-2", October 26, 1960 (John Coltrane: *Coltrane's Sound*. Atlantic) 32 bars
- "Liberia", October 26, 1960 (John Coltrane: *Coltrane's Sound*. Atlantic) 44 bars
- "Blue Train", March 1 1961 (John Coltrane: *Complete Live At The Sutherland Lounge 1961*. RLR Records) 12 bars
- "Liberia", March 1 1961 (John Coltrane: *Complete Live At The Sutherland Lounge 1961*. RLR Records) 16 bars
- "Africa", (first version), May 23, 1961, (John Coltrane: *The Complete Africa/Brass Sessions*. Impulse!) 46 bars
- "Africa", (alternate take), June 7, 1961 (John Coltrane: *The Complete Africa/Brass Sessions*. Impulse!) 80 bars
- "Softly as in a Morning Sunrise", November 2, 1961 (John Coltrane: *The Complete 1961 Village Vanguard Recordings*. Impulse!) 16 bars
- "Miles' Mode", June 20, 1962 (John Coltrane: *Coltrane (Deluxe Edition)*. Impulse!) 18 bars
- "Tunji", June 20, 1962 (John Coltrane: *Coltrane (Deluxe Edition)*. Impulse!) 24 bars
- "Old Devil Moon" (intro), November 14, 1962 (McCoy Tyner: *Reaching Fourth*. Impulse!) 24 bars
- "Star Eyes", March 4, 1963 (McCoy Tyner: *Nights of Ballads & Blues*. Impulse!) 52 bars
- "Newport Romp", July 5, 1963 (McCoy Tyner: *Live at Newport*. Impulse!) 48 bars
- "Lonnie's Lament", November 2, 1963 (John Coltrane: *Live Trane – The European Tours*. Pablo Records) 16 bars
- "Lonnie's Lament", April 27, 1964 (John Coltrane: *Crescent*. Impulse!) 80 bars
- "Night Dreamer", April 29, 1964 (Wayner Shorter: *Night Dreamer*. Blue Note) 22 bars
- "Green Jeans", May 20, 1964 (Grand Green: *Matador*. Blue Note) 8 bars
- "Matador", May 20, 1964 (Grand Green: *Matador*. Blue Note) 28 bars
- "Bedouin", June 12, 1964 (Grant Green: *Solid*. Blue Note) 72 bars
- "Ezz-Thetic", June 12, 1964 (Grant Green: *Solid*. Blue Note) 64 bars
- "Pursuance", December 9, 1964 (John Coltrane: *A Love Supreme*. Impulse!) 60 bars
- "Jodo", February 26, 1965 (Freddie Hubbard: *Blue Spirits*. Blue Note) 32 bars
- "Resolution", July 26, 1965 (John Coltrane: *A Love Supreme/The Complete Masters – Super Deluxe Edition*. Impulse!) 160 bars
- "Transition", June 10, 1965 (John Coltrane: *Transition*. Impulse!) 48 bars
- "C minor blues", 1965 (McCoy Tyner: *Live in Boston*. Not commercially released) 264 bars
- "My Favorite Things", April 1, 1965 (Jazz Icons DVD: *John Coltrane, Live in '60, '61 & '65*. Reelin' In The Years Productions) 200 bars
- "My Favorite Things", May 7, 1965 (John Coltrane: *One Down, One Up – Live at the Half Note*. Impulse!) 384 bars
- "Blues Mind Matter", July 14, 1966 (Bobby Hutcherson: *Stick-Up!*. Blue Note) 24 bars
- "Search for Peace", April 21, 1967 (McCoy Tyner: *The Real McCoy*. Blue Note) 18 bars
- "All My Yesterdays", December 1, 1967 (McCoy Tyner: *Tender Moments*. Blue Note) 12 bars
- "Little Madimba", May 17, 1968 (McCoy Tyner: *Time For Tyner*. Blue Note) 46 bars
- "May Street", May 17, 1968 (McCoy Tyner: *Time For Tyner*. Blue Note) 40 bars

Accompaniment (composition, recording date, album):

- “**Liberia**”, June 10, 1960 (or June 27) (John Coltrane: *Live at the Jazz Gallery 1960*. RLR Records)
- “Chi Chi”, July 12, 1960 (Julian Priester: *Spiritsville*. Jazzland)
- “**My Favorite Things**”, October 21, 1960 (John Coltrane: *My Favorite Things*. Atlantic)
- “**Village Blues**”, October 21, 1960 (John Coltrane: *Coltrane Jazz*. Atlantic)
- “Blues to Elvin” (take 3), October 24, 1960 (John Coltrane: *The Heavyweight Champion*. Rhino Records)
- “**Blues to Elvin**”, October 24, 1960 (John Coltrane: *Coltrane Plays the Blues*. Atlantic)
- “**Mr. Day**”, October 24, 1960 (John Coltrane: *Coltrane Plays the Blues*. Atlantic)
- “Mr. Knight”, October 24, 1960 (John Coltrane: *Coltrane Plays the Blues*. Atlantic)
- “**Equinox**”, October 26, 1960 (John Coltrane: *Coltrane’s Sound*. Atlantic)
- “**Liberia**”, October 26, 1960 (John Coltrane: *Coltrane’s Sound*. Atlantic)
- “**Summertime**”, October 24, 1960 (John Coltrane: *My Favorite Things*. Atlantic)
- “**Liberia**”, March 1 1961 (John Coltrane: *Complete Live At The Sutherland Lounge 1961*. RLR Records)
- “Africa” (first version), May 23, 1961 (John Coltrane: *The Complete Africa/Brass Sessions*. Impulse!)
- “**Greensleeves**”, May 23, 1961 (John Coltrane: *The Complete Africa/Brass Sessions*. Impulse!)
- “Song Of The Underground Railroad”, May 23, 1961 (John Coltrane: *The Complete Africa/Brass Sessions*. Impulse!)
- “Olé”, May 25, 1961 (John Coltrane: *Olé Coltrane*. Atlantic)
- “**Africa**” (master take), June 7, 1961 (John Coltrane: *The Complete Africa/Brass Sessions*. Impulse!)
- “**Greensleeves**”, November 2, 1961 (John Coltrane: *The Complete 1961 Village Vanguard Recordings*. Impulse!)
- “**Impressions**”, November 2, 1961 (John Coltrane: *The Complete 1961 Village Vanguard Recordings*. Impulse!)
- “**Spiritual**”, November 5, 1961 (John Coltrane: *The Complete 1961 Village Vanguard Recordings*. Impulse!)
- “**Out of This World**”, June 19, 1962 (John Coltrane: *Coltrane*. Impulse!)
- “**Tunji**”, June 29, 1962 (John Coltrane: *Coltrane*. Impulse!)
- “Star Eyes”, March 4, 1963 (McCoy Tyner: *Nights of Ballads & Blues*. Impulse!)
- “**Afro Blue**”, October 8, 1963 (John Coltrane: *Live at Birdland*. Impulse!)
- “Afro Blue”, December 7, 1963 (Count Basie, Dizzy Gillespie, John Coltrane – *Ralph Gleason’s Jazz Casual*. Rhino Home Video)
- “**Lonnie’s Lament**”, April 27, 1964 (John Coltrane: *Crescent*. Impulse!)
- “**Night Dreamer**”, April 29, 1964 (Wayner Shorter: *Night Dreamer*. Blue Note)
- “Mahjong”, August 3, 1964 (Wayner Shorter: *JuJu*. Blue Note)
- “**Transition**”, June 10, 1965 (John Coltrane: *Transition*. Impulse!)

Compositions and Arrangements:

- "The Believer"**, January 10, 1958 (John Coltrane: *The Believer*. Prestige) (Tyner is not on the recording.)
- "Inception"**, January 10, 1962 (McCoy Tyner: *Inception*. Impulse!)
- "Reaching Fourth"**, November 14, 1962 (McCoy Tyner: *Reaching Fourth*. Impulse!)
- "Goodbye"**, November 14, 1962 (McCoy Tyner: *Reaching Fourth*. Impulse!)
- "It Don't Mean a Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)"**, December 2, 1964 (McCoy Tyner: *McCoy Tyner Plays Ellington*. Impulse!)
- "Spanish Fly"**, December 28, 1964 (Milt Jackson: *In a New Setting*. Limelight)
- "Four by Five"**, April 21, 1967 (McCoy Tyner: *The Real McCoy*. Blue Note)
- "The High Priest"**, December 1, 1967 (McCoy Tyner: *Tender Moments*. Blue Note)
- "Man from Tanganyika"**, December 1, 1967 (McCoy Tyner: *Tender Moments*. Blue Note)
- "All My Yesterdays"**, December 1, 1967 (McCoy Tyner: *Tender Moments*. Blue Note)
- "African Village"**, May 17, 1968 (McCoy Tyner: *Time For Tyner*. Blue Note)
- "Little Madimba"**, May 17, 1968 (McCoy Tyner: *Time For Tyner*. Blue Note)
- "May Street"**, May 17, 1968 (McCoy Tyner: *Time For Tyner*. Blue Note)
- "Vision"**, August 23, 1968 (McCoy Tyner: *Expansions*. Blue Note)
- "Smitty's Place"**, August 23, 1968 (McCoy Tyner: *Expansions*. Blue Note)
- "Song of Happiness"**, August 23, 1968 (McCoy Tyner: *Expansions*. Blue Note)
- "Song for My Lady"**, April 4, 1969 (McCoy Tyner: *Cosmos*. Blue Note)

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APPENDIX: DOCTORAL CONCERTS

First concert

Sami Linna Quintet: Grant!

Sibelius Academy, Chamber Music Hall

March 27, 2009 at 7pm

Sami Linna, guitar

Jussi Kannaste, saxophone

Riitta Paakki, piano

Ville Herrala, bass

Jussi Lehtonen, drums

PROGRAM

Matador (Grant Green)

Green Jeans (Grant Green)

Ezz-Thetic (George Russell)

Bedouin (Duke Pearson)

Solid (Sonny Rollins)

My Favorite Things (Richard Rodgers/Oscar Hammerstein II)

Grant's Tune (Grant Green)

The Kicker (Joe Henderson)

Second concert

Sami Linna Quartet: Coltrane's Sound
Sibelius Academy, Chamber Music Hall
March 17, 2010 at 7pm

Sami Linna, guitar
Manuel Dunkel, saxophone
Ville Herrala, bass
Ville Pynssi, drums

PROGRAM

Liberia (John Coltrane)
Blues to Elvin (trad)
Body And Soul (Edward Heyman, Robert Sour, Frank Eyton, Johnny Green)
Mr. Day (John Coltrane)
Everytime We Say Goodbye (Cole Porter)
Satellite (John Coltrane)

Third concert

Sami Linna Quartet

May 4, 2011 at 7pm

Sibelius Academy, Chamber Music Hall

Sami Linna, guitar

Jussi Kannaste, saxophone

Georgios Kontrafouris, Hammond organ

Quincy Davis, drums

PROGRAM

Armageddon (Wayne Shorter)

Superstar (Sami Linna)

Lost (Wayne Shorter)

In 'N Out (Joe Henderson)

Maybe September (Ray Evans/Percy Faith/Jay Livingston)

Just a Riff (Sami Linna)

Fourth concert

Sami Linna Quartet: Time for Tyner

Helsinki Music Centre, Black Box

March 9, 2012 at 7pm

Sami Linna, guitar

Jussi Kannaste, saxophone

Mikko Helevä, Hammond organ

Dana Hall, drums

PROGRAM

Man from Tanganyika (McCoy Tyner)

Little Madimba (McCoy Tyner)

Song for My Lady (McCoy Tyner)

The High Priest (McCoy Tyner)

May Street (McCoy Tyner)

Goodbye (Gordon Jenkins)

African Village (McCoy Tyner)

Fifth concert (substituted by a recording)

Sami Linna Quartet (Timmion Records TRLP-12008)

Side One

1. Black Mountain (Dana Hall)
2. Dreamsville (Henry Mancini)
3. Umoya (Dana Hall)

Side Two

1. Mode for Tomorrow (Sami Linna)
2. Clowns (Sami Linna)

Sami Linna, guitar

Jussi Kannaste, tenor saxophone

Mikko Helevä, Hammond organ

Dana Hall, drums

Recorded at the Centre for Music And Technology, University of the Arts Helsinki on October 26, 2014.

Recording: Miikka Huttunen and the students of the music technology department

Mixing and Mastering: Tommi "Master Fader" Vainikainen

Vinyl Mastering: Jukka Sarapää at Timmion Records Cutting Lab

Album Photography: Klaus Elfving

Sleeve Design: Graffi-TeX

Executive Producers: Sami Kantelinen, Jukka Sarapää



One of the characteristics of my style is that I can take a dominant chord and do a lot of different things with it, utilizing suspensions and moving around that particular sound and really just developing it.

My music is an extension of bebop.

- McCoy Tyner

PRINT

ISBN 978-952-329-143-0

ISSN 1237-4229

PDF

ISBN 978-952-329-140-9

ISSN 2489-7981

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ARTS STUDY PROGRAMME
MUTRI DOCTORAL SCHOOL