

A Cohesive Practice Approach and Method
in Jazz Transcription and Comprehension for Applied Saxophone Educators

by

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ABSTRACT

This paper highlights a method for jazz transcription, comprehension, and practice to be implemented primarily in applied saxophone instruction with undergraduate students. The purpose is to identify and mend the divide between jazz and classical that appears in academia. This divide is one that came about by necessity in the saxophone's relative youth in the academic world as it found solid footing in conservatories around the world. A literature review establishes the current state of dialogue between both jazz and classical in the academic saxophone community, including the current state of crossover scholarship that discusses the interaction between multiple genres. This review investigates what serves as pedagogical material in an aural discipline like jazz. A thorough approach to transcription is crucial change to the standard practice of jazz transcription typically employed in applied saxophone studios. This approach takes the focus away from the product and places it on the process. This process is demonstrated through a transcription and deconstruction of Charlie Parker's "Cheryl." Though this approach is presented through the perspective of a saxophonist, this process can be applied to any number of instrumental disciplines seeking to understand jazz transcription and improvisation more fully.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF FIGURES.....	iv
PREFACE	v
CHAPTER	
1 OVERVIEW	1
2 FUNDAMENTALS	4
3 COMPOSITION AND IMPROVISATION	8
4 CROSSOVER WORKS	10
5 THE TRANSCRIPTION PROCESS	14
6 CHARLIE PARKER'S "CHERYL"	19
7 EXCERPTS	25
Dominant Vocabulary	26
Short ii-V Vocabulary	28
Long ii-V Vocabulary	30
Minor ii-V Vocabulary.....	32
8 APPLICATION	35
9 CONCLUSION	39
REFERENCES	43
APPENDIX	
A TRANSCRIPTION SAMPLE LIST	45

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Head of Charlie Parker's "Cheryl"	20
2. Chorus 1 of Charlie Parker's "Cheryl"	21
3. Chorus 2 of Charlie Parker's "Cheryl"	22
4. Chorus 3 of Charlie Parker's "Cheryl"	23
5. Simple Blues Progression	25
6. "Cheryl" Blues Progression	25
7. Dominant Vocabulary from Chorus 1 of "Cheryl"	27
8. Short ii-V Vocabulary from Chorus 1 of "Cheryl"	29
9. Long ii-V Vocabulary from Chorus 3 of "Cheryl"	31
10. Minor ii-V Vocabulary found in Chorus 3 of "Cheryl"	33
11. Sample Solo over Chord Changes of "Cheryl"	36
12. Bird Blues Changes.....	37
13. Sample Solo over Bird Blues Changes.....	38

PREFACE

Growing up, I thought every saxophone player that wanted to be great did both classical and jazz. It didn't even occur to me that a saxophone player would neglect playing jazz, a genre so deeply rooted in the instrument's history and success that I viewed them as inextricable. Every lesson I had was split evenly down the middle, 30 minutes classical, 30 minutes jazz and improvisation. Yet there was always something missing from the latter half of those lessons. I had been playing jazz for years before I heard what a ii-V was, and by that point I was so scared and intimidated I never asked what it was. I was simply observing jazz rather than understanding it.

As I began my collegiate career, the disparity grew even stronger. In some cases, the only jazz some of my peers would attempt was the jazz transcription assignment to check off the box and proceed with their classical repertoire. Most often, they didn't do this from a decision of taste, but rather one of intimidation, much like I felt anytime I looked at chord symbols in a lead sheet. The dense information combined with the aural nature of the tradition ended up discouraging many young saxophonists from pursuing jazz as fervently as they did classical. While there was always an initial effort to study the music, I witnessed some of the greatest classical saxophonists I've ever listened to shy away from jazz, entirely.

Historically, saxophonists were heavily discouraged, and in some cases, asked to leave practice rooms if they were caught practicing jazz. While the situation is presently nowhere near this dire, its effects are long lasting and prevalent in the stylistic divide of many young saxophonists. Now, they put themselves at a distinct disadvantage if they are not familiar with a wide range of styles and a versatility that is often associated with jazz

and improvisation. The skills learned from the process of jazz transcription familiarize musicians with jazz vocabulary through focused and purposeful repetition. When students have these skills at their disposal, they are only limited by their own curiosity and exploration.

This paper will offer a teaching plan for educators who are searching for a way to help their students move forward in a style in which they might not feel adequately equipped to teach. I intend to present a method that can be implemented without compromising the aural tradition of jazz while providing students a framework that will allow them to apply this method to any transcription in any style.

CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW

The saxophone, as a relatively young instrument, is still in the process of solidifying its identity in the academic world. While saxophonists are still clamoring for a seat in the orchestra, the saxophone proved itself as pivotal in the pioneering years of jazz. Today, a saxophonist is just as likely to be heard on a pop album released within the last year as in a jazz record. Because saxophonists wanted to avoid being labeled as “jacks of all trades and masters of none,” their lives in academia had often been dedicated to the pursuit of validation in the eyes of conservatory- style institutions. In the process, academic saxophone has evolved to be synonymous with contemporary recitals or concert music, leaving jazz saxophone secondary in the academic setting. Jazz education in general had been on the outside looking in to academia, and even its introduction into music schools drew questions from jazz musicians about the authenticity of the practices used within the walls of conservatories. As the landscape of saxophone performance and pedagogy is rapidly changing with an increasing emphasis on creativity and innovation, it is time for saxophone educators to refocus and treat the instrument’s versatility as a primary asset, particularly where jazz is concerned.

The main purpose for a cohesive curriculum is to call attention to a responsibility that saxophone educators have. While a performer can and should identify their own specific voice and vision as an artist, an educator is in a powerful position to facilitate the content a student will receive. A teacher’s lack of knowledge should not be a prohibiting factor to a student exploring their creative opportunities. Investigating just one of these genres is virtually infinite, making the scope of this task monumental. However, even if

an educator specializes in one area, they should be able to identify quality sources of information to allow authentic investigation in the other. This is a major difficulty in saxophone academia. One of the defining characteristics of the saxophone community is their ability to push the medium at every opportunity through expanded technique and commissioning new works. With a massive increase in the technical abilities of saxophonists, often the priority in collegiate programs is placed on mastering and demonstrating extended techniques, leaving little time for a meaningful exploration of jazz saxophone and improvisation. While the focus on virtuosity and expression is overwhelmingly positive for the artform, it risks neglecting jazz's important history and creative benefit young players can experience by being immersed in its aural practices. In this literature review, I will identify the ways in which classical and jazz saxophone pedagogy interact, the depth of transcription and improvisation, and the exciting possibilities that expanded musical fluency can yield for the individual, and the broader medium of saxophone performance.

In a 2018 dissertation exploring the pedagogical benefits of jazz related skills in a classical clarinet curriculum, Lilly Haley suggests that “gaps that sometimes occur in traditional classical training are central to the success of jazz musicians.”¹ Haley identifies these skills as aural skills, harmonic awareness and application, and improvisation. These skills help students become well-rounded and more adaptable musicians in an ever-changing environment of music making. I do, however, want to draw attention to her use of the word “supplement,” used frequently in crossover

¹ Lilly Haley, "Using Jazz Pedagogy to Supplement the Undergraduate Classical Lesson Setting." (DMA diss., The Florida State University, 2018).

scholarship when one genre is used to support another. When jazz is seen as a supplement to fill in the gaps of a classical curriculum, the notion is that one is primary and the other is secondary. Both genres stem from the same set of fundamentals and principles of musical practice. These genres cannot be thought of as two diverging pathways an artist must choose, especially because the versatility of the saxophone is far beyond the binary distinction of jazz and classical. By identifying the variety of ways information is presented in different musical traditions, they can be more effectively integrated into one plan of study.

CHAPTER 2

FUNDAMENTALS

Fundamentals are viewed as universally important to any musical endeavor, while being nearly unlimited in their scope and variety. To establish a functional definition moving forward, I consider fundamentals as the skills necessary to participate at an increasingly high level. There are fundamentals specific to the saxophone and fundamentals specific to the genre. This distinction is perhaps the single greatest barrier for entry for a classical saxophonist interested in jazz. The fundamentals prioritized for success at a high level in classical saxophone are well-defined and technical in nature, but the fundamentals required for fluency in jazz and bebop are often implied and conceptual in nature.

The most significant unifying factor of saxophone fundamentals is the discussion of tone. As with most fundamentals, tone is written about broadly in Larry Teal's seminal treatise, *The Art of Saxophone Playing*², and written about more specifically in works by Sigurd Rascher³ and Donald Sinta⁴, all three avid performers as well as pedagogues. A primary vehicle for unlocking the true depth of the saxophone's tone is the use of overtone exercises, something that is common between both groups of saxophonists. In a 2018 dissertation, Emily Loboda⁵ comments in her literature review that none of the

² Larry Teal, *The Art of Saxophone Playing*, (N.J: Summy-Birchard, September 1, 1977).

³ Sigurd Rascher, *Top-tones for the Saxophone: Daily Embouchure Drills and Four-Octave Studies*, (New York: Carl Fischer, 1941).

⁴ Donald Sinta, *Voicing: An Approach to the Saxophone's Third Register* (Blaris Publications, 2008).

⁵ Emily Laboda, "An Analysis of Overtone Production Techniques in Saxophone Teaching Methods." (DMA diss., The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2018).

commonly used books (mentioned previously) are actually about overtone production but using the overtones to achieve the altissimo register of the saxophone. The development of these concepts correlates with the emergence of extended range in classical repertoire because the men writing these books were also commissioning works that became standards in the repertoire. The synthesis and application of jazz concepts happened in a very similar way but can be admittedly overwhelming to navigate without a great deal of preliminary understanding of progressions and contexts found commonly in jazz standards.

Knowledge of bebop style is fundamental to jazz comprehension. Many “lineal traditions,” as labeled by Marian Jago, begin with Charlie Parker.⁶ Not only was the saxophone crucial in the development of the bebop foundations of modern jazz, but alto saxophonist Charlie Parker is often attributed as the innovator that began the bebop movement in the 1930s that still serve as the building blocks of modern jazz composition and improvisation. There is a distinct difference between materials attributed to Parker and materials attributed to his classical saxophone counterparts. Performer-educators like Larry Teal, Sigurd Rascher, and Donald Sinta wrote materials thoroughly detailing the content and providing context wherein it would be applied. On the other hand, Charlie Parker innovated the vocabulary over existing standards, but did not create a treatise to break down the process. Here, the saxophone community must reevaluate how we approach a pedagogical material as it relates to the delivery of each style. The precedent

⁶ Marian Jago, "Musical Koryu - Lineal Traditions in Jazz: Lennie Tristano/Lee Konitz." *MUSICultures* 38 (2011): 205-221.

for this has already been established with the *Charlie Parker Omnibook*⁷. The *Omnibook* is a great collection of transcribed Charlie Parker solos, but it can fall short as a pedagogical material without guidance, mostly because the material within is not pedagogical in nature, but performative. This resource has a plethora of content, but lacks the critical explanation of its context and application. It comes with an unspoken requirement that the practitioner must decode the melodic and harmonic material before being able to comfortably employ it in their own playing. Without that, it is understandable that dialogic application of this material is nearly impossible.

Another barrier as one attempts to categorize these materials as pedagogical texts like the contributions of Teal, Rascher, and Sinta. A jazz transcription is not a concrete representation of a performance, but an interpretation. This was demonstrated in a fascinating article by Rena Rusch, Keith Salley, and Chris Stover.⁸ The three authors each transcribed the same solo by Sonny Rollins and ended with very different, though no less correct, results, showing the likelihood of deviation when transcribing depending on the transcribers intent, indicating that transcription is a form of interpretation and performance on its own. Performing educators like Teal, Sinta, and Rascher all distilled the fundamentals to isolate the skill before using it in a practical context. Andrew Dahlke provides strategies in which a student in an applied studio can begin to approach jazz concepts more systematically, through collecting melodic material categorized by

⁷ Charlie Parker, Ken Slone, and Jamey Aebersold, *Charlie Parker Omnibook* (Milwaukee, WI. Criterion Music Corp., 1978).

⁸ Rena Rusch, Keith Salley, and Chris Stover. "Capturing the Ineffable: Three Transcriptions of a Jazz Solo by Sonny Rollins." *Music Theory Online* 22, no. 3 (Sept. 2016).

harmonic context.⁹ This process outlined by Dahlke is an elaboration on the core practice of transcribing, as it provides a plan and framework for students to distill applicable concepts from content. Dahlke's approach, paired with Carl Knox's call to return to a more traditional framework of "reorganization" provides a thorough procedure to recontextualize and personalize material.¹⁰ While this practice is idiomatic in jazz, it is a practice that was also used in classical cadenzas before written cadenzas became more common¹¹. As an educator, one needs to guide a student more systematically towards material to collect using Dahlke's approach, at least initially.

Developing a repertoire of jazz standards is a foundational approach described clearly by Paul Berliner. He describes that a knowledge of jazz standards is fundamental to the growth of a young student, as well as their ability to interact with jazz musicians of an older generation. In this sense, a student is learning what questions to ask by becoming familiar with the common jazz language being spoken both musically and verbally. Information that will otherwise be lost in translation. Berliner crucially highlights the importance of the recording as educational resource in favor of written material. "Finally, if students rely upon publications rather than recordings as sources, they deprive themselves of the rigorous ear training that traditionally has been integral to the improviser's development."¹² Through the rest of his work, he demonstrates how the

⁹ Dahlke, Andrew. "The Jazz Notebook Method: Teaching Improvisation in the Applied Studio." *Jazz Education Journal* 40, no. 3 (Oct 2007): 53.

¹⁰ Knox, Carl W. "Jazz Improvisation Through Reorganization: A Return to a Traditional Learning Process." *Jazz Education Journal* 37, no. 3 (Dec 2004): 42-44.

¹¹ Badura-Skoda, E., Jones, A., & Drabkin, W. Cadenza. *Grove Music Online*. Retrieved 8 Oct. 2022, from <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu>

¹² Berliner, Paul F., *Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994)

recordings are a culturally important pedagogical material throughout the jazz community, and therefore critical to the exploration of a transcription.

CHAPTER 3

COMPOSITION AND IMPROVISATION

One of the difficulties with identifying factors of either of these genres are the broad definitions which are often applied to them. “Jazz” is often used as a general term for instrumental music written after the 1920s with syncopation and/or improvisation. Likewise, the term “classical saxophone” itself is a conundrum considering that the instrument was not invented until the 1840s, well into the Romantic Era. Due to the meteoric rise in popularity of the saxophone in the first half of the 20th Century, in part because of vaudeville and jazz, it is easy to forget that the instrument was originally intended by Adolphe Sax to be in the orchestra. However, it was never invited permanently. Typically, the saxophone is employed sparingly as a bridge between timbres in the orchestra. These occur in prominent, albeit extremely brief, solo passages in pieces by Rachmaninoff, Prokofiev, and Bizet to name a few. It is no wonder, then, that performers sought to commission large-scale works by serious composers, as evidenced by the feverish networking done by Sigurd Rascher, his contemporary Marcel Mule, and other patrons like Elise Hall. This passion has continued, leading some, like Michael Rene Torres, to label saxophonists as “ambassadors and champions of contemporary music.”¹³ Torres goes on to write about the importance of introducing composition into applied saxophone studio instruction. This feverish advocacy for new music since the saxophone’s infancy has proven to be one of the community’s defining characteristics and shows no signs of slowing down.

¹³ Torres, Michael Rene. “Incorporating Composition into the Applied Saxophone Pedagogy in Higher Education.” *College Music Symposium* 57 (2017).

While classical musicians are well known for commissioning composers, jazz continues a tradition of performers writing their own music, something also born from necessity. Melodies were increasingly complicated, highlighting the virtuosic and exploratory nature of the music. Additionally, in order to avoid issues with copyright claims, bebop musicians would write new melodies over existing chords, or a contrafact. Additionally, melodies were increasingly complicated, highlighting the virtuosic and exploratory nature of the music. A clear example of this practice is an alternate take of “Koko”, a Charlie Parker contrafact¹⁴. In this track, Charlie Parker and Miles Davis play one chorus of “Koko” before launching into melody of Ray Noble’s “Cherokee”. At this point they are abruptly stopped to avoid copyright issues.

While students in a saxophone studio will not be avoiding copyright claims, composition is a creative method for students to take ownership of the material that they have acquired, once again supporting Knox’s method of reorganization.¹⁵ This may even yield interesting interactions of styles, especially if they study multiple genres deeply. As students become more familiar with the practice of transcribing, the exercise can shift from prescriptive to descriptive leading them to experiment more with the concepts and shapes gained from transcribing and more importantly, the style in which they are performed. This purpose of transcribing is inspired by the work of Charles Seeger in his exploration into the practice of “music-writing”. He goes even further to explain the crux of *Omnibook* dilemma mentioned above.

¹⁴ Parker, Charlie, saxophonist. “Koko- Short Take 1.” *The Charlie Parker Story*. Spotify. Japan: Savoy Jazz, 1992.

¹⁵ Knox, “Jazz Improvisation Through Reorganization,” 2004

“... We expect the resulting notation to be read by people who *do not carry the tradition of the other* music. The result, as read, can only be a conglomeration of structures part European, part non-European, connected by a movement 100% European.”¹⁶

Seeger speaks directly to the difficulty of navigating the ineffable of an aural tradition, including elements such as articulation, pitch bends, time, and tone. This demonstrates why a student must go further beyond the process of simply producing a written transcription. He identifies the ways in which written notation falls short in conveying musical intention while highlighting the myriad benefits it has performatively and analytically. If a classically focused musician was handed the *Omnibook* without any context, they would never be able to authentically replicate Charlie Parker’s style when compared to someone familiar with the recordings from which those transcriptions originate. The written product can be a great asset but falls well short as an accurate replication of the recording without extensive listening. This reinforces Berliner’s stance of the recording being a critical resource in jazz education. The recording is pivotal for informing musicians how to make the most of existing publications, as well as

¹⁶ Seeger, Charles. “Prescriptive and Descriptive Music-Writing.” *The Musical Quarterly* 44, no. 2 (April 1958): 186-187. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/740450>

developing an understanding that manuscript, while useful, is often missing elements of style and interpretation.

CHAPTER 4

CROSSOVER WORKS

The term most commonly used to describe music that incorporates elements of jazz into classical compositions is “crossover.” In a 2017 dissertation by Ian Cruz, he defines crossover as “a term used to describe the fusion of popular music styles in a classical setting.”¹⁷ Cruz goes on to lay out how a crossover degree might look, focusing on providing classes that will help students address the skills needed to perform works of that nature. While I agree with much of Cruz’s approach, particularly the detail with which he plans a four-year performance degree, it is still a Eurocentric, classical approach that seeks to fill in gaps with jazz courses. This approach, much like Haley’s supplemental approach in the clarinet community, avoids placing classical and jazz on an even playing field.¹⁸ This approach fails to directly address two types of musicians: a saxophonist from a jazz background seeking to learn more about the classical genre, or a saxophonist with equal experience in both genres seeking to grow in both areas simultaneously. Cruz makes an excellent conclusion, but the foundation of the “crossover degree” requires revision to fully address how saxophonists can authentically incorporate music from a variety of cultures.

As the strong connection between composition and improvisation has been revealed, an important distinction arises. While improvisation is a defining feature of bebop, the presence of improvisation does not make something jazz. Improvisation is a

¹⁷ Cruz, Ian M. “Redefining the Performance Degree Curriculum for the Crossover Saxophonist.” DMA diss., University of Kentucky, 2017.

¹⁸ Halley, “Using Jazz Pedagogy,” 2018

compositional tool being utilized in more new works for saxophone, either as a primary component or connective material. Simply adding space for improvisation does not make a piece of music jazz. There are complex cultural contexts at play in regards to improvisation and the many forms it takes. Improvisation is an irremovable component of jazz, but it is also a defining trait of some non-western musical traditions that are then replicated in classical pieces.

A composer to note in this regard is Ryo Noda, a Japanese saxophonist and composer lauded for his unaccompanied works for solo saxophone. Noda draws inspiration from the improvisational language of traditional Shakuhachi music in some of his pieces, like *Mai*.¹⁹ While on the surface, improvisation connects these styles, the cultural literacy needed to be fluent in either style is rather disparate.

With the surge of popularity regarding improvisation in contemporary works comes a responsibility to learn specific defining characteristics of a style. It is easier for listeners to discern between broader distinctions common in the academic world, like “Classical and Jazz”, yet often descriptive language within these identifiers is reduced to vague terms like “jazzy” or “bluesy”. By using general terms, a jazz-influenced classical work risks unintentionally appropriating the work of bebop artists that were creating music that deliberately resisted casual imitation. Through the intentional practice of transcription of listening, a deeper understanding of a crossover piece’s source material will lead to more knowledgeable and impactful music making.

¹⁹ Noda, Ryo. *Mai pour Saxophone Alto Seul*. Paris: Alphonse Leduc, 2010.

This is not to say that music of different cultures or classifications need to remain separate. On the contrary, the purpose is to identify ways in which saxophonists can more authentically create diverse music that respects the sources it pulls from as they continue to champion new music. In fact, several artists have recently created milestone recordings that blend classical and jazz aesthetics to an extent where the individual components blend together seamlessly. In Miguel Zenón's 2018 collaboration with Spektral Quartet, *Yo Soy La Tradición*, he creates an album that melds extended improvisation over a repeatable form as in bebop, combined with chamber musicianship that is impeccable.²⁰ These two styles exist atop a foundation of folk music from Zenón's home, Puerto Rico. This album is a perfect example of the synthesis of styles and performers from different domains creating music that is greater than the sum of its parts, due in large part to the fact that one element does not appear to be greater than the other and each source is treated with equal respect.

The saxophone community has grown noticeably more conscious of perceptions and expectations of styles. As saxophonists found a place in academia, cultural pressures drove apart the two styles critical to their success. While there are tenets specific to each genre, profound versatility is a fairly unique trait of saxophonists, shared by few other instruments. By investigating some of the available materials at the center of these styles of saxophone, it demonstrates where this disparity might have begun, and most importantly some of the work that has been done to rectify this separation. This work

²⁰ Miguel Zenón (saxophone), Clara Lyon (violin), Maeve Feinberg (violin), Doyle Armbrust (viola), and Russell Rolen (cello). *Yo soy la tradición*. Spotify: Miel Music, 2018.

done in recent years, mostly in dissertations, shows the trend is moving towards a diversification of saxophone pedagogy. The trait throughout these examples, however, is beginning from a classical conservatory perspective inherently implies jazz to be a secondary skill. Moving forward, I hope to consolidate this information to create a cohesive method of saxophone pedagogy that recognizes the equal contributions and potentials of classical and jazz. While the saxophone is a perfect vehicle for this process, I hope that it serves as a model to diversify the content that is considered canon in a musical institution of higher learning. The next section of this paper will demonstrate how to be purposeful with the practice of transcribing, and how vocabulary can be applied in a variety of contexts. Once this initial barrier is overcome, the teaching and practice of improvisation will become far less intimidating and will ultimately result in far more fruitful explorations of the jazz idiom by student saxophonists.

CHAPTER 5

THE TRANSCRIPTION PROCESS

The acquisition of jazz vocabulary is done largely through the act of transcription. There is a wide range of definitions that could be attached to transcription, often referring to the act of writing down music. For the purposes of this document, transcription refers to the practice of close aural study and replication of a piece of music traditionally used in jazz pedagogy. Like other forms of practicing, the act of transcription must be purposeful and patient. While many classically focused saxophone studios do feature a small transcription component, it is often extremely open ended. While the component of choice is a major variable in a student's interest in their workload for a semester, too much freedom without guidance can be antithetical to the intended outcome of transcription. Transcriptions of musicians like Michael Brecker and Chris Potter have their benefits, but the purpose quickly becomes about practicing the solo as a technical exercise and focuses on the final product. It is like learning to recite a monologue in Italian without learning its meaning. Much like vocal majors are expected to understand all their diction and translation, saxophonists should strive to more fully understand the dialect of jazz. While the following section of the paper will be using a specific solo by Charlie Parker, the goal is to emphasize the process. Like any practice routine, this process will become easier over time and can be applied, in part or in whole, across a wide variety of contexts. This process is demonstrated using only one jazz standard herein, a selection of recordings will be listed in Appendix A that will provide a similar experiences of exploration through the process of transcription.

When approaching jazz transcription and improvisation, there is a colloquial nature that comes with fluency of melodic and harmonic vocabulary that can serve as a significant barrier to the unfamiliar, and the casual way some of these terms are used can further alienate those with an interest to investigate but without a knowledge of where to start. A majority of these terms refer to harmonic structures and progressions commonly found in jazz standards. These structurally prominent and fluid harmonies are at the core of what makes jazz standards the universal foundation of expression in jazz, and will serve as the main focus of this paper's discussion of transcription.

The notation of a transcription in this instance should be used for no other reason than to maintain a record of work done after a longer period. The process of notating a transcription is great for organization and categorizing vocabulary, but when the goal of a transcription is to accurately notate it, the focus shifts away from the aural information that is gleaned regarding style. This style includes a musician's time feel, their tone, and their articulation. While the main premise of this approach is to begin developing a functional bebop vocabulary, an overarching goal of transcribing should be mimicking the subject as closely as possible. The more this is done, a saxophonist will begin to assimilate many sound sources into one, defining their own sound through a variety of inspiration.

The example used to demonstrate this process is "Cheryl" by Charlie Parker, a 12-bar blues in C. Transcribing as a saxophonist means learning the melodic content of a given portion of music, but in jazz the information is incomplete without knowing the harmony that accompanies the melody. "Cheryl" is an ideal standard to demonstrate this process for its brevity, its harmony, and its variety of melodic contour. Within the head

(statement of the written melody) and three improvised choruses, there are clear moments of the harmony being outlined in ways that can be excerpted and transposed to be used in any context. Before deconstructing this standard, it is crucial to restate that transcription is an interpretive process. There are elements that are objectively correct or incorrect, but there are many instances where multiple listenings could yield slightly different results. Different musical phrases might stand out to different musicians, and this individualism in this process is to be highlighted. It could even be an interesting experiment to have multiple students in one studio work on the same transcription and exchange notes to see the number of ways one solo can be perceived.

The harmony found in “Cheryl” can be found in an overwhelming number of jazz standards, and it stands to reason that this process of transcribing and deconstruction can apply to any jazz standard. The caveat is that the recording used to learn the solo should be relatively clear in recording quality and approachability. Solos from the bebop era are a great option for beginners, as many early solos from musicians like Charlie Parker, Sonny Stitt, and Jimmy Heath clearly define the style without pushing the boundaries of harmony to the extreme.

The importance of taking a highlighted lick through 12 keys is critical for its long-term application. A concept coined by Dr. David Stambler that perfectly describes this importance is “imminent use.” Imminent use applies to the practice of materials and techniques that will be commonly employed in future contexts. The most obvious examples of this include major scales, tuning, and altissimo to name a few. Treating melodic licks that clearly outline harmony as imminently useful pieces of technique like a major or minor scale will drastically change one’s perception and approach to

improvisation. Not only does the technical practice of a fragment help develop familiarity, but the way in which a player progresses through those keys can aurally prepare a saxophonist to experience a chord progression. For example, practicing the ii-V licks around the circle of fourths can simulate the cyclical nature of a ii-V progression. However, sometimes ii-V progressions can resolve chromatically or by minor thirds. There is endless variation in how to approach these exercises and introducing this element of arrangement and creativity into a practice session can engage a saxophonist in ways that will make them more comfortable responding spontaneously in a live performance setting.

As the catalogue of collected melodic fragments grows, so too can the repertoire of exercises created from them. Perhaps as a warm-up, instead of playing a major scale in all 12 keys, one could decide to play a bebop lick in all 12 keys around the circle of fourths. If a student is working on harmonic minor scales, they could find a lick used over a minor ii-V and work that through 12 keys, giving them incredible flexibility of the scale and tonality in a way that simply playing the scale ascending and descending will not be able to provide on its own. This practice of purposeful transcription draws a clear connection between the technique that saxophonists are working to master and the flexibility with which they can deploy it in increasingly creative contexts. With this flexibility comes a demystification of improvisation, making the process more accessible.

This process begins with transcribing the head and solos from the recording. This is typically where a semester transcription assignment begins and ends, but for the purpose of in-depth deconstruction, it is the very beginning. Typically, a head and two choruses are a good amount to transcribe, as it includes the main melody and two times

through the form of whatever solo is chosen. In a 32-bar form, a head and two choruses are about two minutes and thirty seconds. In “Cheryl”, however, Charlie Parker plays a head and three choruses for about one minute and thirty seconds, making this a digestible amount of music to transcribe and deconstruct. There are many ideas about the “correct” way to transcribe. Some believe the track should always stay at full speed, so the articulations and phrasings do not get distorted. Others tout the use of various methods to slow down and loop passages. While there are many approaches to the role of writing a transcription, it is recommended that this remains a primarily aural exercise. This highlights both the technical ability to play the vocabulary as well as recognize their harmonic contexts by ear in real time.

CHAPTER 6

CHARLIE PARKER'S "CHERYL"

Through focused repetition, the same clarity and technical execution can occur with the aural exercise, but often the ineffable style of articulation, swing-feel, and phrasing can be lost when a player simply reads the notes from the page. This will inherently require more back tracking between each practice session, but as the student repeats this process and their aural skills rapidly improve, so too will their recall of the solo between practice sessions. At most, a student could notate a section as they complete it. In this instance, every 12 bars of the 12-bar blues form as notated below by a double bar.

Figure 1. Head of Charlie Parker's "Cheryl"

The musical notation for the head of Charlie Parker's "Cheryl" is presented in three staves of music, each representing a 4-measure segment of a 12-bar blues form. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 4/4. The notation includes various ornaments such as grace notes and slurs, and is accompanied by chord symbols: A7, E-, D7, C#-, F#7, B-, E7, and B-.

The head of "Cheryl" is a rhythmically quirky melody over a 12-bar blues form. The pick-up measure beginning on an upbeat can be difficult to hear initially. To understand that the melody begins on the upbeat, working backwards from the downbeat of measure one can help find the rhythmic context. The melody is representative of the bebop era in its use of ornamentation with non-chord tones to highlight and approach

chord tones. For each example, the chord changes are a combination of the chords used in the *Charlie Parker Omnibook*²¹ and the application iRealPro. For myriad reasons, chord changes can be the most intimidating element of approaching a transcription and as a result, can often be overlooked in lieu of just the melody on its own. Figuring out the chord changes by ear is ideal, but there are many resources, like those stated above, that can provide students with a starting place for harmonic context in their transcription. Identifying how the melody relates to the chord changes and vice versa solidifies that the two components are complimentary to each other and can inform one another. This reinforces the importance of chord tones and chord tone embellishment that will be prominently displayed in the improvisation that follows in the next three choruses.

Figure 2. Chorus 1 of Charlie Parker’s “Cheryl”

The rhythmic and melodic strength of this first chorus is an excellent opening to an improvisation. Every embellishment precedes a distinct landing point, like the E in measure 15, the A in measure 16, and the E in measure 19. Notice that they arrive on a

²¹ Charlie Parker, Ken Slone, and Jamey Aebersold, *Charlie Parker Omnibook* (Milwaukee, WI. Criterion Music Corp., 1978).

chord tone on the beat. Charlie Parker’s clarity came not only from his melodic and harmonic specificity, but also his rhythmic mastery. This solo also demonstrates the execution of purposeful chromaticism, seen beginning in measure 21. The gesture begins on the minor 3rd, D natural, and chromatically approaches the flat 7th on beat four. The resolution to the F# on the downbeat of measure 22 highlights the importance of the 9th scale degree. In beginning improvisation, the 3rd and 7th scale degrees are identified as important chord tones for identifying harmony. This treatment extends to the 9th scale degree as well, as will be demonstrated throughout these choruses and the 12-key exercises to follow.

Figure 3. Chorus 2 of Charlie Parker’s “Cheryl”

The image shows a musical score for Chorus 2 of Charlie Parker's "Cheryl" in the key of D major (two sharps). The score is written in treble clef and consists of three staves of music. The first staff (measures 25-28) features chords A7, D7, A7, and A7. The second staff (measures 29-32) features chords D7, A, and A7, with triplets and slurs. The third staff (measures 33-36) features chords B-, E7, A7, B-, and E7, also with triplets and slurs.

Chorus 2 demonstrates how these choices of chord tones and arrival points can be leveraged for phrasing. The simple but effective two measures in the beginning exemplify very clear phrasing that does not ramble on. These types of short melodic fragments are ideal to extract and learn in 12-keys as they can be very effective at clearly signaling harmony in a short amount of time. The extended phrase beginning in measure 29 perfectly outlines the D7 harmony by embellishing chord tones, but softens the ending

by ending on the fifth in measure 31. Contrast this with the extended melodic passage beginning in measure 33 that uses B minor to approach E7, and ends on the root in measure 35, sounding complete. These melodic elements and strength of phrasing are elements that are covered in a conventional music theory course, yet to someone investigating a transcription in this manner for the first time, these seemingly obvious elements are obfuscated by the characteristic ornamentation found in bebop. This chorus further exemplifies that each chorus of this solo stands alone as an excellent expression of a 12-bar blues form. This allows for a student to approach each chorus individually to notice factors that stand out, then compare them between each chorus for similarities. Additionally, they could also compare one chorus of this solo to a chorus of another, similar solo and see how nearly identical harmonies are approached in different performances.

Figure 4. Chorus 3 of Charlie Parker’s “Cheryl”

The musical score for Chorus 3 of Charlie Parker's "Cheryl" is presented in three staves of music, all in the key of D major (two sharps). The first staff (measures 37-40) features chords A7, B-, E7, A7, E-, and A7. The second staff (measures 41-44) features chords D7, A7, C#ø7, and F#7b9. The third staff (measures 45-48) features chords B-, E7, A7, B-, E7, and A7. The notation includes various bebop ornaments such as grace notes, slurs, and triplets.

The third chorus is the culmination of melodic and rhythmic elements highlighting the harmony. The clear example being the rhythm tied over the barlines to anticipate the harmony, seen in the D natural in measure 39 anticipating the E minor in measure 40. This is also the first instance there is a clear indication of a minor ii-V progression, seen in measure 44, indicated by a half-diminished chord followed by a dominant chord with a b9. This harmony passes by quickly, but its application outside of this solo is endless and will be discussed in a later section.

This transcription is typically the product expected at the end of a semester assignment. As stated previously, the technical aspects of this solo are not demanding when compared to the classical literature that an undergraduate would typically be playing, but the nuanced stylistic demands are not represented by the notation in this paper. However, Charlie Parker's style may slowly be internalized through focused, thoughtful repetition, particularly when focusing on tone and articulation. The same pillars of intonation and solid core of sound are present in each classical and jazz. Practicing a variety of tones through jazz transcription will promote flexibility of embouchure and tone color that will expand the palate available to a saxophonist.

CHAPTER 7

EXCERPTS

In each chorus of Parker's solo, there were many instances of strong phrasing, evidenced by clear melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic choices. While the melody of "Cheryl" is unique, the 12-bar blues form is incredibly common. The harmony of "Cheryl" is more complex than a standard blues, normally containing only I⁷, IV⁷, and V⁷.

Figure 5. Simple Blues Progression

Figure 5 shows a 12-bar blues progression in A major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first line (bars 1-4) is labeled A7. The second line (bars 5-8) is labeled D7 and A7. The third line (bars 9-12) is labeled E7, D7, and A7.

Figure 6. "Cheryl" Blues Progression

Figure 6 shows a 12-bar blues progression in A major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first line (bars 1-4) is labeled A7, E-, and A7. The second line (bars 5-8) is labeled D7, A7, C#ø7, and F#7b9. The third line (bars 9-12) is labeled B-, E7, A7, B-, and E7.

The harmony of “Cheryl” substitutes measures of extended dominant harmony with several ii-V progressions, both major and minor, that make it more harmonically interesting to listen to. This in turn influences that melody and improvisation that occurs over the harmony to add more motion through the changes, if the melody observes the chord changes by playing passages that outline the chord tones. This is where the collection of licks plays a pivotal role in navigating increasingly difficult changes. In this section, a representative of four different harmonic contexts found within “Cheryl” will be identified and explored using an excerpt from Parker’s solo. In general, the lick was chosen for its rhythmic stability, its harmonic information, and its ability to stand alone as a fragmented idea. In each instance, the selected melodic fragment will be shown in all 12 keys, separated by a double barline. Every fragment is merely an example but is by no means the primary or sole example that can be extracted from the transcription. They are simply being used to exemplify a strong process of exploration that could be employed to study this or any jazz solo.

Dominant Vocabulary

Dominant vocabulary is the backbone of an overwhelming majority of jazz vocabulary. The reason for this is found when looking at the simple progression of the blues. An entire form of a jazz tune could be harmonized using only dominant harmonies. While a simple blues form with a long period of dominant harmony can appear to be accessible to improvise and comprehend, it often proves to be difficult to differentiate in interesting ways, as four measures without any significant harmonic change can feel like an eternity. That makes this harmony an ideal place to start, as it is most often what a

student is most familiar with, and it can be easier to identify in a blues as it happens more frequently than the more active harmonic pillars.

Figure 7. Dominant Vocabulary from Chorus of “Cheryl”



The numerical composition of this lick is 9 1 5 3 6 b7. This fragment is an excellent example of outlining the harmony as it is comprised almost entirely of chord tones. A descending arpeggiated shape, particularly beginning on the ninth, is a great tool for hearing the harmony for a melodic instrument like the saxophone, as it clearly demonstrates the chord tones and allows the saxophonist to experience the harmony more closely to what a piano player might experience. Saxophonists often attempt to highlight harmony horizontally with scales like the mixolydian scale or a bebop scale (containing both the natural and lowered 7th), which will be seen in later excerpts. It is still important for melodic instruments to experience the vertical nature of harmony as closely as they can before adding in passing notes and chromaticism. One of the things that Parker does so effectively is purposeful chromaticism highlighting important chord tones. Without the knowledge of what those chord tones are, however, a half-baked attempt at this same feat will sound muddled and might unintentionally generalize the harmony. Taking a short and effective fragment like this through all 12 keys is a great way to see how one shape

can lead into the next, particularly moving through the circle of 4ths as it foreshadows the next harmonic context.

Short ii-V Vocabulary

A “short” ii-V indicates that this progression takes place in one measure. It is also important to note that a ii-V is labeled as such in reference to the I chord it implies it will resolve to, whether it eventually does or not. It is not called a ii-V simply as a reference to the home key of the tune. For example, there is a long ii-V in measures 3 and 4 in “Cheryl” consisting of E minor and A7 resolving to D7, or a ii-V in D, even though the key of the tune is A. This may seem obvious to some, but the importance of foregrounding this information for students cannot be overstated. This harmonic relationship is arguably the most important to understand in the jazz idiom. Making this clear and experiencing it through all 12 keys is a massive investment in the long-term understanding of improvisation.

Figure 8. Short ii-V Vocabulary from Chorus 1 of “Cheryl”

The image displays four staves of musical notation, each containing a four-measure lick. The first staff is in C major and features the following chords: D- (D minor), G7 (G dominant 7), G- (G minor), C7 (C dominant 7), C- (C minor), and F7 (F dominant 7). The second staff continues the chromatic descent with: F- (F minor), Bb7 (Bb dominant 7), Bb- (Bb minor), Eb7 (Eb dominant 7), Eb- (Eb minor), and Ab7 (Ab dominant 7). The third staff continues with: Ab- (Ab minor), Db7 (Db dominant 7), C#- (C# minor), F#7 (F# dominant 7), F#- (F# minor), and B7 (B dominant 7). The fourth staff concludes with: B- (B minor), E7 (E dominant 7), E- (E minor), A7 (A dominant 7), A- (A minor), and D7 (D dominant 7). Each lick begins with a non-chord tone enclosure on the second beat, followed by a descending line on the dominant chord that includes a lowered 6th scale degree (b13).

Notice that the first key represented is a ii-V in C major and continues around the circle of fourths. When initially exploring ii-V licks, it can be helpful to play the root of the chord to which it should resolve to clearly identify where the harmonic shape is intended to land. Using this practice method on this specific lick is effective as it will sound with a clear 5-1 melodic resolution. This will not always be the case, as ii-Vs can be used in several different sequences but understanding them at their most basic function is crucial and is well demonstrated in this blues. The minor chord is clearly expressed beginning on beat two preceded by a shape called an enclosure, non-chord tones above and below the target pitch. The descending shape on the dominant chord features a lowered 6th scale degree, more commonly referred to as a b13. A player could also explore what this lick would sound like if it was a natural 5 instead of b13 in that descending shape. Breaking down the solo to these smaller chunks allows for more in-

depth questioning. The 5 would certainly work in this instance, but the b13 increases the harmonic tension and pulls harder into the resolution in the next measure.

Long ii-V Vocabulary

Long ii-V progressions are spread out over two measures. While they function harmonically the same as a short ii-V, they are slower and, much like the prolonged dominant harmony of a simple blues, can be more difficult to play interestingly. Simply stated, a short ii-V encourages a vertical and arpeggiated shape while a long ii-V encourages a horizontal and linear shape. The structural points of the harmony remain the same, highlighting chord tones to outline the harmony but with the need for chromatic embellishment to prolong the shape over twice the amount of time. It is important to be hyper-specific because it is often prolonged harmony that can lead to over-generalization of the harmony or misuse of chromaticism that obfuscates the harmony all together. In its most simple form, this takes the form of a bebop scale. A bebop scale is simply a scale with both the natural and lowered 7th scale degree, occurring chromatically. This scale is often played over dominant harmony as it is a clear and simple way to incorporate chromaticism, particularly descending from the root. The purpose of embellishment and chromaticism is to have chord tones land on the beat, making sure that harmony, melody, and rhythm all work together.

Figure 9. Long ii-V Vocabulary from Chorus 3 of “Cheryl”

The image displays a musical score for Figure 9, titled "Long ii-V Vocabulary from Chorus 3 of 'Cheryl'". It consists of 12 staves of music, each representing a different ii-V progression. Each staff begins with a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a quarter note, and then a half note. The chords are indicated above the notes. The progressions are as follows:

- Staff 1: D- (triplet), G7, C7
- Staff 2: G- (triplet), C7, F7
- Staff 3: C- (triplet), F7, Bb7
- Staff 4: F- (triplet), Bb7, Eb7
- Staff 5: Bb- (triplet), Eb7, Ab7
- Staff 6: Eb- (triplet), Ab7, Db7
- Staff 7: Ab- (triplet), Db7, Gb7
- Staff 8: C#- (triplet), F#7, B7
- Staff 9: F#- (triplet), B7, E7
- Staff 10: B- (triplet), E7, A7
- Staff 11: E- (triplet), A7, D7
- Staff 12: A- (triplet), D7, G7

This example found in the third chorus of “Cheryl” is a good combination of arpeggiated and linear shapes. It also demonstrates that using small melodic fragments in conjunction with each other can help navigate longer harmonic structures. This lick also demonstrates the effectiveness of large leaps that resolve in the opposite direction. Notice in the minor the leap of a major 7th that resolves down by step. This precedes the leap in the dominant measure that goes from the 3rd to the b9. The b9 has a strong tendency to resolve a half-step down, which in this instance is delayed by a chromatic approach, but the result is the same. When presented with an ornamented lick like this long ii-V, it can be a useful exercise to simplify. There is no specific way to do this, but often it involves removing neighbor tones and changing the subdivision.

Minor ii-V Vocabulary

The notation of a minor ii-V can be incredibly overwhelming. Its major counterpart is easier to explain to those unfamiliar with that kind of progression because most music students become familiar with the idea of modes early in a music theory curriculum. In a major ii-V, the ii chord is associated with the Dorian mode and the V with the mixolydian mode, but derived from the I, or Ionian. The biggest distinction of a minor ii-V in bebop is that it is not derived from the aeolian. The minor ii-V tonality is usually derived from the harmonic minor, even though the minor tonic typically is aeolian. Using this knowledge, the corresponding scales are derived much like the major modes. The second and fifth modes of the harmonic minor are used over the minor ii-V, respectively, and resolve to its corresponding minor. Once a player becomes familiar with these harmonic minor tones and their strong pull to resolve, that knowledge will immediately become evident in their playing over a minor ii-V.

Figure 10. Minor ii-V Vocabulary found in Chorus 3 of “Cheryl”

The musical score for Chorus 3 of "Cheryl" is presented in 11 staves, each containing a measure number and a chord label above the staff. The chords are as follows:

- Staff 1: Dø7, G7b9, C-
- Staff 2: Gø7, C7b9, F-
- Staff 3: Cø7, F7b9, Bb-
- Staff 4: Fø7, Bb7b9, Eb-
- Staff 5: Bbø7, Eb7b9, Ab-
- Staff 6: Ebø7, Ab7b9, Db-
- Staff 7: Abø7, Db7b9, Gb-
- Staff 8: C#ø7, F#7b9, B-
- Staff 9: F#ø7, B7b9, E-
- Staff 10: Bø7, E7b9, A-
- Staff 11: Eø7, A7b9, D-
- Staff 12: Aø7, D7b9, G-

This excerpt from the third chorus of “Cheryl” was manipulated slightly to reflect the function of the melody. Originally, the first measure of this example is harmonized with a dominant chord of the home key. The lick that begins on beat three, however, is an anticipation of the minor ii-V that comes in the second measure. To see how the phrase functions, harmony is shown here as a long ii-V resolving to the corresponding minor. This lick perfectly demonstrates the use of the harmonic minor of the resolution chord. The only two exceptions are simply non-chord passing and neighbor tones, both occurring on the second half of beat three in each measure. This is a great opportunity to debunk an overused adage, stating there are no wrong notes in jazz. It is true the natural third and lowered seventh do not belong in the harmonic minor. However, there are very clear functions and explanations for them being used here, as a passing tone and neighbor tone respectively. When these non-chord tones are understood they can be replicated in several different contexts. The importance of deconstructing an entire solo to these small phrases can reveal that notes that don’t belong to the key are most often used in very specific ways. Once a student recognizes this, they will be able to hear these idioms without needing to completely deconstruct a solo to hear how they occur.

CHAPTER 8

APPLICATION

After collecting and practicing this vocabulary, the next step is to reintroduce it into the creative process. In the same way people take newly acquired words and attempt using them in a variety of contexts, so to can a transcriber take their fresh vocabulary and seeing what new contexts where it may work. The most obvious place to jump in is typically improvisation, but be wary. There is a great deal of performance anxiety often associated with new improvisers if they have no prior experience. Composition, however, adds the safeguard of time and preparation with the opportunity to meticulously craft a solo before performing it in real time. Taking this intermediate step solidifies the connection of a player's ears to their technique, eventually making the leap to true improvisation a sequential step along the process and not a leap of faith.

One place to arrange this newly acquired vocabulary would be back into the changes of "Cheryl". Considering that the excerpts taken from the solo are mostly from different choruses, or at the very least out of their intended order, mixing them around will yield a solo like Charlie Parker's.

Figure 11. Sample Solo over Chord Changes of “Cheryl”

An important variable is placement and rhythmic manipulation. The first lick used is the dominant shape that was previously shown in 12 keys. In that instance, it began on the down beat and was entirely eighth notes. When used at the beginning of a phrase, a different context from which it was pulled from Parker’s solo, it makes more musical sense to delay it and elongate it to last over two measures to get the sense of deliberate phrases. This places the end of that gesture in an ideal range to be followed up by the long ii-V collected from the third chorus of Parker’s solo, establishing an antecedent-consequent relationship with the first two licks. Notice that repetition is encouraged. This establishes a precedent for motivic development within an improvisation and can be established as quickly as a 12-bar form. Also take note of the amount of empty space. Saxophonists often feel the compulsion to fill every moment of improvisation or composition with sound, be it motion or held notes. The rests in this solo allow for rhythmic variety and time to set up the next phrase to begin in a purposely, creatively chosen spot, with the intention of making it more stylistically impactful.

Obviously, licks pulled from “Cheryl” should work over the changes of “Cheryl”. The 12 key exercises prove that every quality of chord and shape is defined by its function, not by the letter associated with the chord. The true test of this process’s application is to expand the context, or in this instance, make it more active. The blues form of “Cheryl” is a standard jazz blues used as a more interesting substitution to the simple blues form. As stated previously, it uses ii-V progressions at structural points to make each cadence more interesting. Charlie Parker, however, went one step further. Wherever there is a prolonged dominant chord, he began filling these in with short ii-Vs that do not resolve. First seen in Charlie Parker’s “Blues for Alice”, these changes became known as a “Bird Blues”.

Figure 12. Bird Blues Changes

The figure shows three staves of musical notation in G major, 4/4 time. Each staff contains four measures of chords, represented by a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The notes in the staves are replaced by diagonal slashes. Above each staff, the chord symbols are listed:

- Staff 1 (Measures 1-4): AMaj7, G#ø7, C#7, F#-, B7, E-, A7
- Staff 2 (Measures 5-8): D7, D-, G7, C#-, F#7, C-, F7
- Staff 3 (Measures 9-12): B-, E7, AMaj7, F#7, B-, E7

The only chord symbol in these changes that has not been represented yet in the collected vocabulary from “Cheryl” is the AMaj⁷, indicating a major arpeggio with a major 7th, which can be found in the first measure of the third chorus of “Cheryl”. Using the same process as Figure 11, a solo can be constructed even within these more active changes, despite the slower harmonic tempo of “Cheryl”.

Figure 13. Sample Solo over Bird Blues Changes

The musical score for Figure 13 is a 12-measure solo in 4/4 time, written in the key of A major (two sharps). The chords and melodic lines are as follows:

- Measure 1: AMaj7
- Measure 2: G#ø7
- Measure 3: C#7b9
- Measure 4: F#- (rest)
- Measure 5: D7
- Measure 6: D- (triplet)
- Measure 7: G7 (triplet)
- Measure 8: C#- (triplet)
- Measure 9: F#7 (triplet)
- Measure 10: C- (triplet)
- Measure 11: F7 (triplet)
- Measure 12: B- (triplet)

Only two of the licks in Figure 13 were not pulled from the excerpts analyzed above. The first measure is the aforementioned first measure from chorus three, and the final measure is the end of chorus three. Everything else is a lick pulled from the figures above, in some cases manipulated in small ways to provide space or make musical sense with the fragment that comes after it. In measure 3, the lick is stopped on beat 3 to make room for a rest, followed in measure 4 by the lick in its entirety in a new key. Beginning in measure 6, this is the minor side of the long ii-V lick in Figure 9. Beat 3 of the lick, however, was transposed down one octave to follow the shape of the line, which sets up for a rhythmic anticipation of the next measure and chord change. All these decisions, from rhythmic anticipations to simply which lick to insert in which measure, are all stylistic choices that come from process of elimination and trial and error. By starting with the basic framework of each gesture, small alterations can show new pathways between measures. While the 12-bar form is a larger structure determining phrasing and length, each chord change and measure is its own individual building block that can be used in an endless number of ways. It is crucial to move slowly and account for the key implied by the changes, considering that they change so rapidly in a bird blues.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

Once vocabulary is collected and practiced, it slowly becomes a part of a musician's own repertoire. Initially, it may feel like mindless repetition of short phrases from a transcription. Through purposeful repetition and investigation of unique characteristics, the licks become more natural in their execution and use. There is no absolute rule for selecting licks. Collecting material should begin by taking note of what piques interest as a listener. Beyond that, finding licks that fall into as many of the categories detailed herein will set up a musician for long-term success.

This process can feel tedious, but it does not need to be completed all in one sitting. In fact, taking time to listen and play a transcription over a long period of time allows for the deepest assimilation of material. Additionally, the transcription of a solo does not have to be completed in its entirety. Perhaps a lick grabs a saxophonist's attention, and they choose to investigate that specific melodic fragment. That turns into one lick they have gained, which can become 12 more. Transcribing should be an ongoing exercise in curiosity and ear-training. A musician's ability to audiate a musical idea and then play it is a skill that will benefit them in every musical genre or task. This process is one that is integral to jazz history and saxophone history. This ability to hear and even imply harmonic context from a simple melodic line can embolden a saxophonist to play unaccompanied with more clarity and confidence. In an ensemble setting, comfort with this ability may free the saxophonist from being so taxed by what they are playing, allowing them to more actively concentrate on the other musicians playing with them,

yielding more spontaneous interaction. In a classical setting, it can inspire more fluid musicianship between collaborators and more expressive attention to harmony and form.

The possibilities are limited only by the recordings studied, the transcriptions analyzed, and the licks practiced. Before long, the performer's ears will be the main musical motivator, and through diligent and thoughtful practice, they will have the technique to execute. It is another powerful tool in an ongoing effort to express oneself more seamlessly without the mechanics interrupting the creative process. In this goal, there is no delineation between genres. There is only expression and music.

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APPENDIX A
TRANSCRIPTION SAMPLE LIST

ALTO

- Cannonball Adderley- A Foggy Day
- Jackie McLean- I Remember You
- Art Pepper- You'd Be So Nice to Come Home To
- Sonny Stitt- Just Friends

TENOR

- John Coltrane- My Shining Hour
- Dexter Gordon- Three O'Clock In The Morning
- Benny Goulson- Alone Together
- Sonny Rollins- Moritat (Mack the Knife)

BARITONE

- Pepper Adams- Three and One
- Ronnie Cuber & Gary Smulyan- Well You Needn't
- Gerry Mulligan- Ornithology