

The Structural, Harmonic and Rhythmic Pursuit of the Expansion of Jazz Improvisational Language

This paper has come about as a result of the study of the development of a player in terms of the vocabulary¹ they employ and the grammar² they construct not only within phrases, but also in the larger context of the solos as a whole. I have developed devices which I could vertically deploy and in doing so interrogate approaches to control tension and resolution and to explore application of thematic devices within a solo.

I have developed methods of creating and resolving tension within a phrase by vertically implementing³ a number of identifiable harmonic and rhythmic devices that can be altered and personalised to become an original and identifying quality for an improviser.

Jazz grammar is a term I use to describe the connectivity between good prose and fluent jazz improvisation, sentence construction in speech and jazz phrasing, syllables in word structure and the patterns we associate with the grouping of musical notes. It refers to the commonality between rules employed by linguists and improvisers who use concepts to structure their orations or solos.

1 Vocabulary – options for musical note selection

2 Grammar – placement of that note selection within a phrase in relation to subdivision of the beat and orientation of rests

3 Vertically implementing – imposing musical devices instantaneously within a musical phrase as entities within the restraints of the harmonic environment

In his book, 'The Lydian Chromatic Concept of Tonal Organisation' (1953), George Russell identifies the two standard ways to improvise: vertically in which each chord is improvised over as it appears in sequence often limiting players to as little as one or two beats per chord, or horizontally, in which the focus is mainly on the melodic line and approximate tonal key-centres of the moment suggested by functional chord progressions. This second methodology gives beginning improvisers more space to develop their approach to note placement and thus an opportunity to employ devices to promote better phrasing.

In his 'Approach to Phrase Rhythm in Jazz', Stefan Love (2012) describes a phrase as a segment or set of segments that corresponds to a metric time-span. Any analysis will not represent the only hearing, but a particular way of hearing the phrase rhythm. He goes on to say that the listener knows that within the jazz style, metric structure is fixed in advance and will be repeated from chorus to chorus. The solo choruses of a jazz performance may modify the surface harmonies of the theme but they preserve the deeper tonal structure – key areas and cadences.

Andy Middleton's 'Melodic Improvising' (2005) considers the nature of melody and its construction and identifies melodic traits⁴, explaining them as concepts and shows how they can be employed in melodic construction.

4 Melodic traits – stylistic approach to constructing phrases or parts of phrases using identifiable melodic patterns that are harmonically or rhythmically based, or both.

In Hal Galper's 'Forward Motion: From Bach to Bebop' (2004), he references Douglas Hofstadter and his book, 'Gödel, Escher, Bach' (1979) suggesting that the ear hears in a linear (horizontal) fashion, from line to line, idea to idea; that when trying to hear the sum of four parts played at the same time, the ear can only perceive the total as an aural colour. So, advanced ear players, of which I feel I am one, develop an ability to hear chord tones intuitively as not just say a b3, but as the colour of a b3.

Improvisation is always environment led; it might be influenced by the volume or complexity of the playing by the rhythm section, the nature, style or phrasing employed by the previous soloist, the dynamic created by the audience, but always the security towards the relationship to the melody and how it has been phrased. This security comes about through an instinctive internalisation of the harmonic form with relation to where the melody is at any particular place in the form and the transitions that occur between sections such as A and B. This in turn provides a familiar aural map which helps to select appropriate places for the end or start of phrases, rests between statements and target downbeats where key chord tones or notes can be placed that specifically reference the melody at that place in the form.

From this I devised an approach, which allowed me to apply grammatical concepts in relation to note placement, jazz phrasing and overall improvisational structure. If the solo is equated to a conversation, or a written paragraph, then solos can follow a

pattern, which the listener can consciously or subconsciously keep track of. If the rules of a well constructed paragraph can be applied to an improvised solo so that I can pre-ordain a structure that employs good 'jazz grammar', then this should serve as an operational tool, which can partner harmonic learning and the development of motivic approaches.

In this paper, I provide evidence of the deployment of harmonic and rhythmical devices that I use during my own improvisations and that have crystallised in my own playing after years of developing these concepts. Accompanying this report are my submission 'In Transition', the CD album I released in 2014 on LYTE Records, and the transcriptions of the solos I played on it.

In general the lines I play seldom start on beat 1 of a bar or end on beat 4; instead there is a flow with my phrasing that would more regularly end on the downbeat of a bar rather than start on it. This produces two choices:

- 1.** Playing on the harmony of the chord of the moment.
- 2.** Anticipating the harmony of the next chord which in some cases would cause dissonance depending on how the rhythm section was stressing the chord of the moment or how the chord of the moment relates to the anticipated chord. The tension of this anticipation is released with the sounding of the New Harmony as the chord changes.

In the analyses, the grammar employed to construct the individual phrases, the integrity of those phrases in relation to segments and how those segments developed into motifs which cemented the harmony together, and the overall contour of the solo with respect to lines, rests, high points and intervallic spread are examined. For the integrity of this process to remain intact, the method of improvising in which my ear leads me through an improvised solo by adhering to the musical principles I have developed, is always central to how I wish to grow as a player. This overview of my improvising can be summed up as follows:

- Adhering to a paragraph structure comprising musical sentences of different lengths
- Employing a variety of note lengths, with notes used in varying density
- Using rests of different lengths to separate phrases and musical clauses
- Performing with a full awareness of the rhythm section so as to be open to interactions and ideas from the surrounding musical environment
- Using rhythmic and harmonic devices to heighten tension before resolving

- Playing lyrically with a respect for the original melody and the ethos of the tune

The concepts and devices I used serve to provide a trigger to alert the listener's ear that something significant has happened. I have attempted to develop a fluency that is brought about by the accuracy of deployment of these ideas and a familiarity that references the entire solo not just to the melody of the form at any point in the tune, but to the motifs which themselves gain credence through development, extension and redeployment.

In some phrases, there is a combination of these devices occurring simultaneously. Where this occurs, they will all be identified and a case made for their inclusion in this analysis. Below I have highlighted transcriptions from my solos on 'In Transition' to demonstrate use of these harmonic and rhythmic devices.

Harmonic anticipation can be described as predicting the harmony of the next chord change before the rhythm-section plays it, iterating this harmonic change before it happens, then having it endorsed when the rhythm-section actually makes the change. The ear has had to develop as an arbiter for accepting short-term harmonic dissonance trusting that the resolution is imminent. This has come about as a result of superimposing the grammar over the vocabulary. The process of 'hiding the fence line' leads to phrases

stopping in advance of a harmonic centre change. Starting the next phrase before that fence line leads to the new harmonic choice at the start of that phrase belonging to the upcoming harmony. This is reinforced by the chord tone usually on downbeat 1 of the first bar of that New Harmony. The ear as a result hears ahead to the upcoming (new) harmony and anticipates it, having this New Harmony reinforced when its chord tones are used on subsequent strong beats.

Each harmonic anticipation eventually results in the resolution to a target note either at the end of the phrase or the end of the anticipation. Hal Galper (2004) explained that before approaching a target note, the player should be able to hear it in advance.

Fig. 1.1 *Dinner at 8* bar 43-45 CD4 'In Transition'

In bar 44 of my solo on *Dinner at 8*, the musical sentence starts on the second triplet quaver of beat 2 with the target note of that phrase being the E on the downbeat 1 of bar 45, the 5 of the A9sus chord. The harmony of bar 44 then, which anticipates this harmony is a 3 5 13 3 in the new harmony, with the phrase moving rhythmically until the 5 target note is reached in 45 and no

significant emphasis on any of the notes in the anticipating phrase, as is standard in almost all of these examples; the harmony being placed in appropriate rhythmic patterns so that the downbeat or target note of the harmony is the most significant note in the phrase to that point



Fig. 1.2 *Anthem* bar 55-57 CD4 'In Transition'

This is another example of completely bypassing the harmony of a chord in order to anticipate the harmony of the next chord. In this case there is no significant phrasing, which categorises the downbeat 1 as a target note. Considering the note selection on all three chords: the E minor supports the 9 11 b3 and Root, demonstrating inside harmony. The rest that follows is significant because it means the next phrase is starting on the offbeat of 1 but with the harmony of the E minor continuing, the 8th note delay adding energy and forward motion. The harmony changes on the chord, but not to that of the C#7, rather the harmony of the Cmaj7,

with 5 #11 3 and 9 passing on to the 7 on the downbeat of the next bar.

Hal Galper (2004) described practising as an external behaviour that affects internal processes that in turn affect external behaviour, i.e. performance. The three functions therefore interact. When analysing these transcriptions, certain things have been discovered that have happened reflexively as a result of familiarity with vocabulary and its role or grammar and its significance. The next example of anticipated harmony I would like to illustrate occurred at the start of an improvisation, in the very first bar.

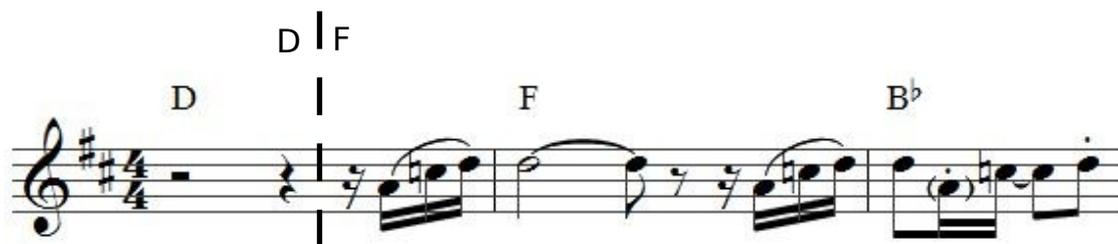


Fig. 1.3 *Origin* bars 1-3 CD4 'In Transition'

There are a few things happening in the lines that comprise the first three bars of the improvisation over *Origin*, although the significant one for this subsection is the anticipation. Briefly considering rhythmic aspects to be covered in the next chapter, the improvisation starts with an indentation, then there is phrase redeployment from the three semiquavers at the end of bar 1 to the three semiquavers at the end of bar 2, serving as repetition and change of function, each passing to the D on the downbeat 1 of

each bar. There is also augmentation from the 3-semiquaver pattern to the semiquaver - quaver pattern in bar 3. When these devices combine it tends to cement and endorse the harmonic alterations. The 3 semiquavers at the end of bar 1 are certainly derived from the harmony of the F major in bar 2 which are further endorsed by the fact they approach the downbeat 1 of the next bar, the D minim tied to a quaver which is the 13 of the chord. The exact 3-semiquaver



phrase happens again at the end of bar 2, once again

rhythmically resolving onto the D on the downbeat 1 of the next bar, this time a quaver which is the 3 of the Bb chord. Additionally, the A C D is common to both the F chord and the Bb chord: 3 5 13 in F and 7 9 and 3 in Bb, tones common to both harmonies.

Fig. 1.4 *Song for Pav* bar 24-5 CD4 'In Transition'

In this last example of harmonic anticipation, again the power of the rhythmic nature of the line helps to reinforce and endorse the harmonic change. The triplet pattern, which is exactly repeated, moves the target note of the phrase to the B crotchet at the end of the phrase, the b7. The anticipated phrase in bar 24 which connects

to the triplet commencing on the downbeat 1 of bar 25 is the b3 9 b3 11 5 7 of the C# minor harmony.

Harmonic anticipation is a quality which I now feel naturally and hear moments in advance of using. Anticipation can be one semi quaver long or can start a full bar before the chord change is due to sound, or of course somewhere in between. The length of the anticipation is usually grammar led. By this, I mean that the end of the previous phrase is designed to stop so that the next musical phrase can start before the next harmony is due to begin in order to make the phrases conversational rather than adhering to 2-bar and 4-bar blocks. The term anticipation suggests the element of surprise and that feels appropriate as I ally it to the shape of the musical sentences that form my improvisation, which are of varied length and multi-syllabic. Rests separate the musical clauses that disguise the structural form of the tune I am improvising on. These musical sentences anticipate the bar line just as the harmony of the chord is anticipated.

Other harmonic devices include the Superimposition of the Blues Scale, which provides a nuance reminiscent of previous jazz styles, especially those embedded in the minds of an army of listeners.

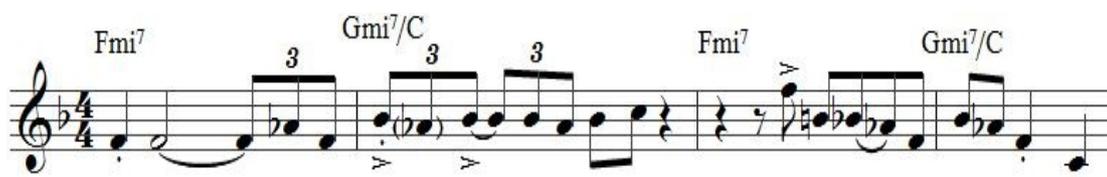


Fig. 1.5 *I Didn't Know What Time It Was* bar 1-4 CD4 'In Transition'

Fig. 1.5 is a transcription of a four-bar break I used to introduce my improvisation over the form of *I Didn't Know What Time It Was*. It is a good example of a superimposition of a blues over a set of minor chord changes, the previous two examples being over major or dominant chords. The b3 is already present in both Fmin7 bars and the latter Gmin7 bar, but further evidence suggests the b9 of the Gmin7 is an overview approach to substituting the individual chord changes for the blues scale options.

Sometimes after a period of departure from the harmony, a clear resolving return to the original harmony can be highly effective.

Bar 3 and 4 - F harmony superimposed resolved at the end of bar 4



Fig. 1.6 *I Didn't Know What Time It Was* bar 1-6 CD4 'In Transition'

As detailed earlier, the first four bars are a turnaround where I superimposed a blues scale over an entire sequence, which sidelined the harmonic choices of the individual chords. Bars 5 and 6 are the first two bars of the form of the tune with the last quaver of bar 4 belonging to the tied minim of the Emin7 in bar 1 of the form, which is the 11 of E minor, my strongest note choice over a minor. The A quaver at the end of bar 5 is an anticipation of the harmony of the Dmin7 in bar 6 and the Root played on downbeat 1 moving to the F minim which is the b3 of the chord and also tying over the G7 as the b7 common tone. These harmonic choices could not be

stronger in rooting the harmony after the superimposition of the blues scale and although the improvisation has just started, creates a powerful start to the solo.



Fig. 1.7 *I Didn't Know What Time It Was* bar 25 – 29 CD4 'In Transition'

This section of transcription highlights two phrases with motivic repetition occurring immediately one after the other. First, in bar 25 and 26, the crotchet to two quavers pattern gives rise to a contrary linear motion quaver pattern, then in bars 28 and 29, the quaver triplet to quaver pattern is augmented at the end of the phrase.

With the exception of the chromatic passing note on the upbeat of beat 2, bar 25 consists of a 3 Root 9 then bar 26, a 5 3 7 root 3 5 to bar 27, 9 b3 root 5 of the Dmin7 and root of the G7 which becomes the 11 of the Gmin7. Later in bar 28 over the C7 a 13 b7 root and b7 of the C7 and the 11 b3 13 and 11 of the Emin7 becoming the root of A7, as strong an inside harmonic choice that could be made.



Fig. 1.8 *Origin* bar 14 – 16 CD4 'In Transition'

Fig. 1.9 *Dinner at 8* bar 15-16 CD4 'In Transition'

In this example in *Dinner at 8*, the intervallic pattern again happens with inside harmony of 9 5 9 5 9, on crotchet triplet which with diminution becomes a quaver triplet pattern on intervals $\square 4$, $\square 5$, $\square 4$ and $\square 4$

Intervals of 6ths

Fig. 1.10 *Anthem* bar 15-18 CD4 'In Transition'

In Fig. 1.10 the rhythmic phrase is consistent with the intervallic change, with a jump of a 6th from C to A in bar 15 (root to 6) and a jump also of a 6th from D to B in bar 17 (5 to 3) and strong inside harmony reinforcing the pattern.

Investigation of vocabulary that generates dissonance led to my discovery that when pentatonics are used over a dominant 7, the upper extensions are emphasised.

Major pentatonics of all twelve notes of the C chromatic scale can be applied to a C7, each implying a different harmony and varying in terms of how 'inside' or 'outside' they are by the number of chord tones that are present within the scale.

Informed by Baker (1989), I devised permutations of pentatonics in all twelve keys creating ascending, descending and ascending-descending patterns. Because the pentatonic patterns have such instantly recognisable sounds, interesting motivic development devices can be applied to them to make thematic statements, which become key signatures an improvisation.

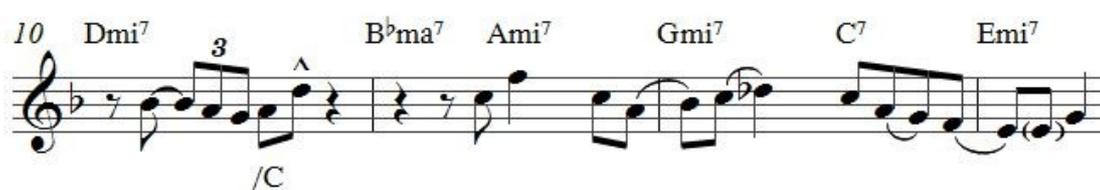


Fig. 1.11 *I Didn't Know What Time It Was* bar 10-13 CD4 'In Transition'

In this excerpt from my improvisation on *I Didn't Know What Time It Was*, there are two pieces of pentatonic material deployed. Firstly in bar 10, over the Dmin7, the note selection from a G minor pentatonic comprising a short phrase which ends in two rising quavers, a trait which shall be detailed in the next chapter. At the end of bar 12 a falling F pentatonic is starting on the 5 which is the common tone root of the chord of the harmony C7, F being the tonic harmony of the II V Gmin7 C7.



Fig. 1.12 *Origin* bar 1-4 CD4 'In Transition'

In Fig. 1.12 the improvisation starts with an anticipation of the F harmony at the end of bar 1 and an F pentatonic pattern that is disguised without the root and superimposed over the first 4 bars, the main vocabulary being the 3 5 13 of the F pentatonic.



Fig. 1.13 *Origin* bar 5 - 7 CD4 'In Transition'

In the next 4 bars of the solo the theme is continued with the superimposition of the F pentatonic once again from bar 6-8, the note choices for bar 6 being the 3 9 R 13 5 3 9 5 3. The next bar, which has a Bb chord for its duration also sees a superimposition of the F pentatonic but with a deliberate avoidance of the root of the chord, which is not available over F pentatonic.

One key aspect of my voice that I have developed is the use of the 11 over a minor7 chord and the particular sound that stressing it provides as a result of its relation to the b3 and 5 of the scale, being both a tone above the b3 and a tone below the 5. It is also a perfect 4th above the root and below the b7. When improvising over minor chords, I sometimes make a stylistic choice to use melodic minor scale material to create tension by playing a major 7 over the minor 7 and then resolving it to the b7. Of the other tensions, the 9 is considered very safe and close to the root, the 13 can sound dissonant while the 11 strikes the right balance being half way between the two.



Fig. 1.14 *I Didn't Know What Time It Was* bar 51-52 CD4 'In Transition'

In my solo on *I Didn't Know What Time It Was* which was recorded on my most recent album 'In Transition', in bar 51 and 52 I start both bars on the 11; in bar 51 with an anticipation of the strong crotchet downbeat 1 of the bar and in bar 52 with the first two crotchets of a crotchet triplet pattern on the down beat 1 of the bar.

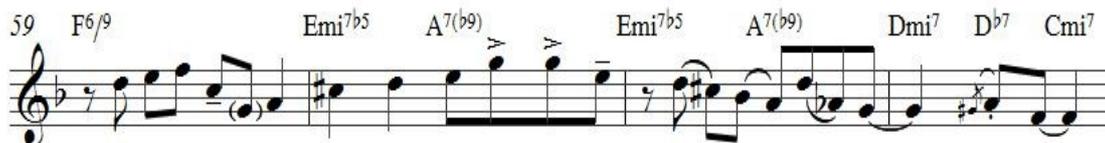


Fig. 1.15 *I Didn't Know What Time It Was* bar 59 - 62 CD4 'In Transition'

Similarly in Fig. 1.15, later on in the solo, the anticipated quaver at the end of bar 61 which ties to a crotchet on the downbeat of bar 62 is the 11 of Dmin7 and the anticipated quaver on the upbeat of beat 2 of the same bar that ties to a crotchet on beat 3 is the 11 of Cmin7.



Fig. 1.16 *Joan Capetown Flower* bar 12 - 13 CD4 'In Transition'

In the solo on *Joan Capetown Flower*, the intricate rhythmic pattern of crotchet to quaver in a triplet is an anticipation of the harmony of bar 13, the Amin7 with a b13 in bar 12 the only note outside the harmony with chord tones prevalent throughout the phrase and the end of the phrase landing strongly on downbeat 3 of bar 13 with a minim tied to a quaver.

Upper tensions and triads provide harmonic tension devices that can be superimposed not just over dominants but other chord types successfully also.

I use upper tensions and triads primarily to build patterns on the tensions of the chord, or simply to be part of a pattern comprising intervals mostly less than a third that creates a dissonance for the listener even though in most cases that harmony is all inside the available scale tones of the chord.

They were looked at together as a way of providing dissonant sounding phrases that either were constructed of inside harmony or offered a methodical way to apply outside harmony before resolving it.

The musical notation shows a melodic line in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. The notation is divided into three measures. The first measure (bar 15) contains a half note G4 and a quarter note A4. The second measure (bar 16) contains a quarter rest, followed by a triplet of eighth notes: G4, A4, B4. The third measure (bar 17) contains a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note A4. Above the staff, the following chords are indicated: Emi7, A7(b9), Dmi7, G7, Fma, Gmi7, C7, and Fma. The triplet in bar 16 is marked with a '3' and a bracket. The quarter note C5 in bar 17 is marked with a '3' and a bracket, indicating it is part of a triplet with the following notes.

Fig. 1.17 *I Didn't Know What Time It Was* bar 15 - 17

Fig. 1.19 *Anthem* bar 13 - 17 CD4 'In Transition'

In bars 15 - 17 of the solo in *Anthem*, a similar shape sequence occurs, the b (major 7) approaching the root on downbeat 3 then jumping to a quaver to a minim A, the 13 of Cmaj7. The sequence happens with the D (5) approaching the dotted crotchet D (5 of G) and rising to a quaver tied to a dotted crotchet B (3 of G) in the new harmony.

The next set of sequence examples are related through the alteration of motifs by extension or some other modification.

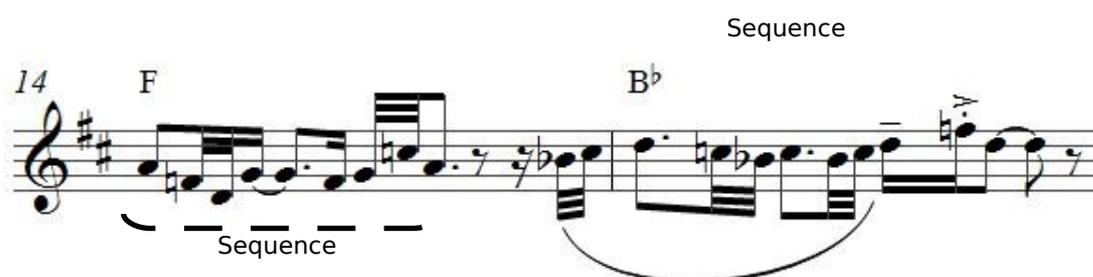


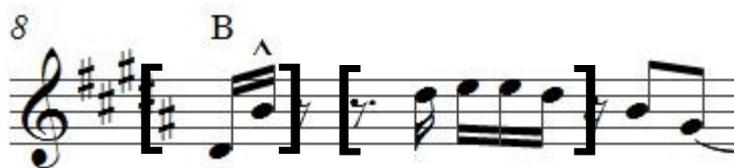
Fig. 1.20 *Origin* bar 14 - 15 CD4 'In Transition'

In the excerpt from my solo on *Origin* bar 14 and 15, the motivic phrase in bar 14 over the F is repeated using the new harmony of Bb and the shape moved up a 4th. The phrase in bar 15 is not an exact repetition of bar 14 but the shape maintenance in the new key warrants recognition as a change of mode.

I have also looked at examples of the development and reworking of short segment motifs and extending or reshaping them for immediate reuse. In this subsection, I want to draw attention to the significance of creating a theme by redeploying a phrase once it has been established. This may be a short segment, motif or a longer

sequence, but it will have been played reflexively, heard and memorised by the performer and then redeployed for effect later in the solo.

In all of my improvisations, I desperately tried to avoid cliché. I tried to improvise freely, to respond to the musical environment created by the rhythm section, to be true to the melodic sense of the tune and to play lines and shapes that were not pulled from a learned library of licks, but were created instantaneously using harmonic vocabulary and rhythmic grammar. Horizontally I improvised harmonically and vertically I improvised rhythmically, applying musical devices in both realms and building themes and messages into jazz paragraphs that construct my emotional connection to the tune. Significantly, the phrases or parts of phrases, which I have redeployed in the solos are seldom stock phrases and hence the process of memorising and recalling segments and phrases that



were created in the moment during these

improvisations warrants special attention in this chapter. A measure of this technique development is the space within the solo between the redeployment of the phrase, sometimes a whole pass of the form occurs before the phrase emerges again. This is not only a demonstration of the patience I am now using in my solo construction, but also my relationship with melodic referencing which was once reserved for the melodic fragments from my interpretation of the tune, but now is applied to significant segments that I use in my improvisations.



Fig. 1.21 *Origin* bar 8 CD4 'In Transition'

In *Origin* from my latest album 'In Transition', a rising quintuplet run of 7 R 3 5 7 with a semiquaver rest to the 9 and the target note the 5 of F on beat 3 of bar 8 is redeployed later in the solo in bar 19 as shown in Fig. 1.22.

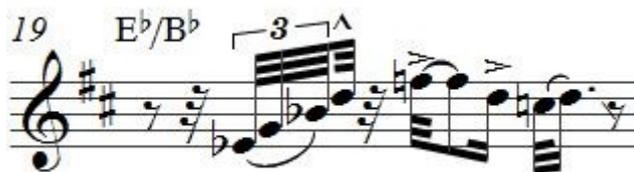


Fig. 1.22 *Origin* bar 19 CD4 'In Transition'

This phrase in bar 19 also rises to the F and passes through the previous target note C of the phrase on bar 8.

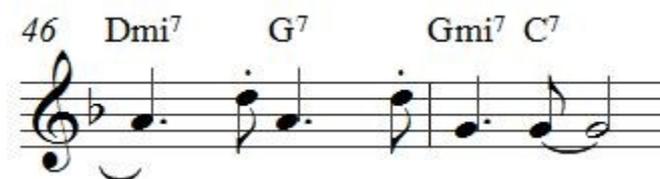


Fig. 1.23 *I Didn't Know What Time It Was* bar 46 CD4 'In Transition'

The dotted crotchet to quaver repeated pattern A to D, the 5 R of Dmin7 to 9 5 of G7 is redeployed in bar 67 as shown below in a different part of the form of the tune and over a different chord sequence.



Fig. 1.24 *I Didn't Know What Time It Was* bar 67 CD4 'In Transition'

The dotted crotchet on the downbeat 1 of bar 67 is the 11 of E_{mi}⁷ and the quaver is an anticipated approach to the next chord the A^{7b9}, the #9 to the dotted crotchet on the root and the b7 quaver ending the segment.

I have considered contrary linear motion with relation to a single line that ascends then descends or descends then ascends. I have considered how playing a segment from a pitch that ascends or descends to a higher or lower pitch and then returns to approximately the starting pitch can create tension and resolution within a phrase. This is a device that can be short form or longer form, can use entirely inside harmony, or reinforce outside harmony that resolves to inside harmony by the end of the harmonic motion.

Exercises were built on scalar and arpeggiated patterns, rising and falling. The introduction of contrary linear motion into my playing has been a gradual one, but more recently I have consciously adopted a vertical approach to its implementation aware that I can thematically reintroduce it within a solo later on.



Fig. 1.25 *Anthem* bar 69 -70 CD4 'In Transition'

In *Anthem*, bar 69 and 70, a quaver triplet phrase exhibits contrary linear motion with an ascending -descending line which clearly voices the harmony; the root 3 5 7 9 7 5 of the Cmaj7 moves to the F# on downbeat 1 of bar 70, the #11 of the major 7 before settling on the strong 3 chord tone.

Augmentation and diminution are significant ways to highlight and develop a phrase segment by altering it on repetition by lengthening or shortening the note values. They require the performer to remember the phrase they have just played, and then redeploy it usually immediately but with the note lengths altered, say crotchets to quavers in the case of diminution or quavers to crotchet triplets in the case of augmentation.

The augmentation or diminution processes applied to a set phrase is seldom thematic, rather performed once but used as an aural trigger to create a deployment of aural significance. Whether it

could be considered a tension and release device is debatable, but the restatement of the original segment or phrase in this rhythmically altered state will present a musical statement or message that will emphasise the original harmonic pattern and as such, is a device which is worthy of noting in terms of analysis, and worthy of deployment as an improvisatory device.

Phrase Diminution Diminution

5 Emi⁷ A^{7(b9)} Dmi⁷ G⁷ Emi⁷ A^{7(b9)} Dmi⁷ G⁷

Fig. 1.26 *I Didn't Know What Time It Was* bar 5 – 8 CD4 'In Transition'

In this excerpt from the solo on *I Didn't Know What Time It Was*, staccato crotchet to minim root to b3 of the Dmin7 through diminution becomes a crotchet 5 of G7 to b3 of Emin7 quaver passing to the F and onto the G minim. This in turn through diminution moves through a semiquaver to quaver pattern involving the same notes with additional notes added in, eventually ending with the same D to F pattern that started the phrase, this time though a 5 to b7 quaver to quaver tied to a crotchet, rather than a root b3 crotchet to minim, a direct diminution from the first notes of the phrase to the last segment of the phrase.

Phrase Diminution

15 A⁹

Fig. 1.27 *Dinner at 8* bar 15 - 16 CD4 'In Transition'

This excerpt from the solo on *Dinner at 8* shows a subtle diminution expressed over an octave jump, with the crotchet triplet B to E, the 9 and 5 of A7, becoming the 9 and 5 up the octave as a quaver triplet to crotchet segment.

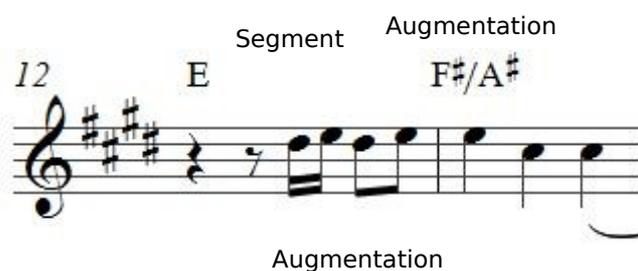


Fig. 1.28 *Song for Pav* bar

12 - 13 CD4 'In Transition'

In the solo on *Song for Pav*, there are two examples of immediate short-form augmentation and diminution that happen within a bar, firstly in bar 12 where the D# to E semiquaver segment (7 to root) augments to a quaver segment.

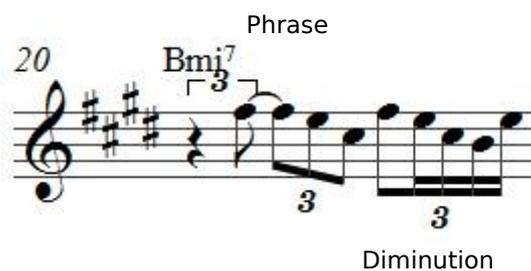


Fig. 1.29 *Song for Pav* bar 20 CD4

'In Transition'

In bar 20, the quaver triplet ties to the quaver triplet 5 of Bmin7 descends to two further triplet quavers E and C# (11 and 9).

Through diminution the same harmonic choices become a quaver

triplet to semiquaver triplets with additional notes root and 11 added to the end of the phrase to make it the same length. In the musical examples annotated above, there are many instances of me putting into practice the harmonic and rhythmic devices which were created by developing the concepts investigated during this research. The sheer number of examples presented could lead one to assume that musicality is the poor relation to theoretical planning, but this could not be further from the truth. The whole rationale for an approach which expands jazz vocabulary with improved grammar is geared to providing greater context for that language and a better chance of the message being communicated to the listener.

I play because I am passionate about playing and I want to make statements which leave an impact, so there is more to the evidence of musical improvement than merely successful implementation of devices. There is maturity in approach, finesse in the decision making process, subtlety and taste which will prevent the over-deployment of a device and instead restructure the whole approach of performing a musical language rather than preplanning a display of musical temerity.

By way of contrast I now present a section of my solo on Origin, an original piece on 'In Transition', my final recording in this portfolio made some three years after the recording that featured The Shadow of Your Smile.

Origin

$\text{♩} = 52$

Fig. 1.30 Origin bar 1 – 10 CD 4 ‘In Transition’

The description of the approach that seems most appropriate to the playing in this solo is patient and mature. The musical sentences are well placed with significant rests separating musical clauses separated by commas and musical sentences. There are instances of repetition and also augmentation, development of motifs with scale and chord tones on every downbeat 1, no sentences or clauses start on a downbeat and the harmony is clearly and accurately stated.

In bar 1, the improvisation does not commence until downbeat 4 with an anticipated rising semi-quaver run to the 13 of F on downbeat 1, the pattern clearly outlines the anticipated harmony of the F chord. This exact phrase is repeated once again into bar 2 over the harmony of Bb, with the 3 11 5 13 of F now being the 7 9 3 of Bb and the phrase immediately augmented to the semiquaver to quaver tie and quaver pattern from the 3 semiquaver pattern of the previous two bars.

This patience in developing themes that have been introduced, redeploying phrases and melodically referencing motifs is one of the key aspects I targeted to improve in my research.

Accurate harmony with clear use of strong harmony on the downbeats is also now inherent in my playing. The segment concluding the first musical sentence in bar 4 over the F chord is an inversion of the 3-semiquaver rising pattern which starts the solo; an inverted phrase redeployment.

The next sentence starting in bar 5 commences on the chord tone 3 with rising semiquaver to quaver pattern of chord tones 3 5 root to the target note 5 down to a 3 root, the only non-chord tone in the segment being the 9th.

The demisemiquaver gliss to the 3 on the downbeat 1 of bar 6 is anticipated harmony of the F chord with all the chord tones visited in the bar to announce the harmony very strongly and a rhythmic falling line in bar 6 a motivic development of the phrasing in bar 5. In bar 7, the new musical sentence starts on a falling pattern from the 13 to the chord tone 5, with the 13 serving as an approach to the chord tone. The falling segments are a subtle phrase redeployment and motivic development from the falling phrase in the previous bar. The theme of strong harmony continues with chord tones dominant in bars 8-10. The rising pattern in bar 9 is an offbeat phrase featuring augmentation as the pattern rises, with the sentence end in bar 11 over the B \flat chord, phrase redeployment from the segment at the end of bar 7.

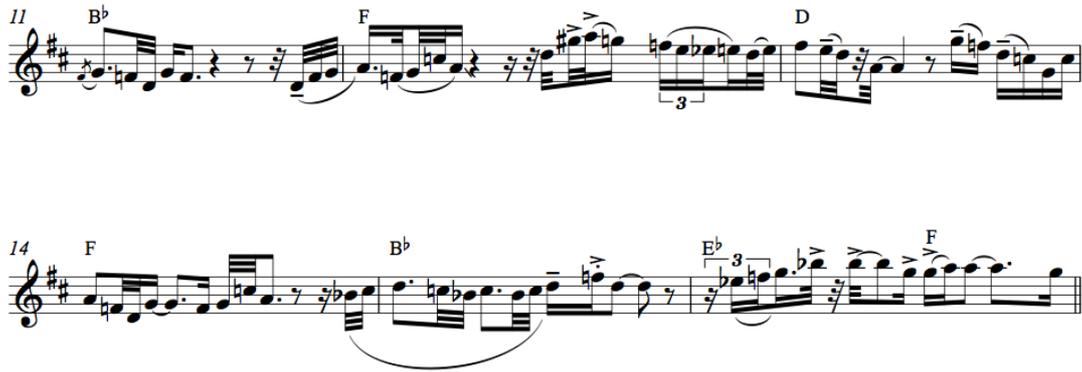


Fig. 1.31 Origin bar 11-16 CD4 'In Transition'

In bar 12, the first real instance of a controlled introduction of a non-scale tone comes from the use of the #9, G#, but unlike the examples shown earlier, this is resolved strongly within the bar to the 9.

Immediately following this, a chromatic pattern introduced again immediately resolves to the chord tone 7, the last two semiquavers of bar 12 being a short anticipation of the D harmony of the next bar into a strong harmonic phrase over the D in bar 13 which itself is evidence of melodic referencing from the tune.

This motif in the first half of bar 13 is immediately developed into an extension in the next half of the bar to the target note 3 of the F chord in bar 14 on downbeat 1. The last two semiquavers of bar 14 are anticipations into the Bb harmony of bar 15 where similarly structured segments create a motif based around the 3 of the chord in an alliterative manner. The sentence in bar 16 starts with a rising pentatonic pattern from the root and the use of the upper register combined with deliberately articulated accents reinforces the

message of the new phrase later in the bar starting on the pivot note of both harmonies Bb (the 5 of Eb and the 11 of F).

At the stage when I recorded *The Shadow of Your Smile*, the concepts of paragraph and sentence construction in musical terms was starting to crystallise and the attempts to play musical phrases of mixed note length separated by punctuation was certainly taking shape. The effort it took to phrase this new way in real time meant that the shape of the solos was forming well, but the content, although full of ideas which I was practising and deliberately deploying, still required time to accurately formulate as part of my reflexive approach.

Attempts to create tension by deploying non-chord tones on downbeats and playing for example a 3 or 7 on downbeat 1 or 3 of a minor 7 or dominant 7 chord, were implying poor harmonic judgment even though it was actually a sign that I was not yet accurately resolving within the bar. I was beginning to deploy the harmonic and rhythmic devices I was creating in practice, but was moving too quickly to some new idea; this was pleasing to be able to do, but there were few signs of controlled development of the ideas into something more meaningful.

My playing on *Origin* however demonstrates the security of the harmony and how to deploy it, the announcement of chord tones on downbeats and the subtle approach to chromaticism or carefully selected outside harmony which resolves within the harmonic timeframe of the segment or phrase. It demonstrates the use of

harmonic and rhythmic devices in a controlled way, each being redeployed, further developed or linked to a new idea, but ultimately reinforced by the use of strong harmony on the downbeats.

The structure of the musical sentences is more advanced with my approach of not starting a phrase on a downbeat being evident in the phrasing of almost all of the solos I currently play. The motifs that I am playing are redeployed or developed, becoming thematic and the melodic referencing is a target for a phrase, just as a message within a paragraph would be. The articulations that I use now are naturally employed within the solos but not overused so that their intent is lost.

The solo in Origin demonstrates patience in developing ideas and each note played now seems to be more significant and connected to the notes around it. I am very pleased with the progress I am making in developing and applying my expanded language, vocabulary and grammar, and look forward to transcribing solos in the future which will show further signs of development of all these facets of my playing.

I have constructed original methods by which a player with a largely horizontal approach can vertically apply devices in real time within harmonic and rhythmic constraints associated with playing on changes. This allows improvisers to deploy devices that create a

spike of tension, an incident of aural significance within a phrase, while aurally lineating⁵ musical ideas.

These methods facilitate creation of new melodic pathways through the progression of the chords, with a system which aurally references the constraints of rhythmic patterns within musical sentences comprising musical subclauses. The harmonic and rhythmic devices I have explored can become part of a musician's reflexive vocabulary and are grammatically deployed so as to maintain the integrity of the phrasing and the lyrical nature of the improvising. They can be altered and personalised to become characteristic of an improviser and help develop the originality of that improviser's voice.

These actions are performed similarly to how one speaks, using a vocabulary of notes and phrases and a form of grammar to place rests strategically, using accents to highlight key notes, and constructing the overall architecture of solos in paragraphs with messages tied together by contextual phrases.

5 'Lineating' - putting musical ideas into sentences or clauses

