

CHARLIE PARKER: HARMONY IN RHYTHM

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Abstract

Using an analytical model developed specifically for this research, this investigation aims to elucidate the unique properties of Charlie Parker's music. The model is designed to illustrate, within the score, the key features of Parker's musical gestalt, e.g., his musical proclivities and behaviours. Through the principles of harmonic and rhythmic consonance (the tonic and the 4/4 meter) and dissonance (deviations thereof), with the former serving as a referential point, observations and subsequent interpretations could be quantifiably measured. In this way, a methodical consistency was maintained throughout. The key areas addressed and illustrated within the model include the voice leading layers; gestural and physical behaviours; the blues; the ubiquitous role of the subdominant; blues-derived cadences; asymmetrical accented groupings; patterns of accents; and Parker's complex set of phrasing devices. By observing and interpreting these elements as they appear in the repeated instances of Parker's musical behaviours, hypotheses and subsequent theories were developed. This work presents a distilled exposition of these theories and offers a speculative conceptual explanation of how Parker's music moves and the relationships within it.

Dedication

For M and Bean.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my wife, Meredith, and my son, Sam, for their unwavering support, patience, and understanding throughout this lengthy endeavour. I am also grateful to my mother, who endured extensive proofreading. The wisdom and guidance of my mentor, Michael Coghlan, were indispensable to this work. Also, thank you to the committee, Noam Lemish, Sharon Hayashi, Peter Franck, Mike Cado, and Barry Elmes, for your valuable insights and helpful suggestions. I extend the deepest gratitude to my friend Matt Vander Woude, who believed in my ideas from the outset. To my close friend and colleague Lee Wallace, thank you for your time, dedication, and help in clarifying many complex issues. Lastly, to my friend of over thirty years, Fernando, as you know, Pops was right; it truly is a wonderful world.

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Preface

The content of this dissertation is based on methods of detailed analysis and complex transcription materials from music performed and recorded by jazz saxophonist Charlie Parker. To aid in the understanding of the materials, a comprehensive glossary of terms has been created. The reader will find this essential for grasping the full scope of the research materials.

Glossary

A–B

- **2-note (2N)** – when two notes are used either as a musical gesture or as a device to shift the phrasing and harmonic rhythm.
- **2&2** – Two groups of intervallic 2nds separated by a larger interval.
- **3&4** – when the voice leading moves between the melodic 3rd and 4th (can include other intervals i.e., 3&4&5 etc).
- **3-beat** – a phrase that is three beats long.
- **6-beat** – a phrase that is six beats long
- **12-beat** – a phrase that is 12 beats long
- **5/b5** – an octave displaced by a 5th and then a b5th (the 5th interval functions as a 7-3 voice leading motion).
- **Ascending Blues Cadence (ABC, ABCa)** – the harmonic motion that spells out the following patterns: I V7/IV IV #iv07 I or I ii7 #ii07 I.
- **Bada (ba-da)** – the abrupt shift from a high point to a note a step below.
- **Bebop Long (BBL)** – a two-note gesture that often concludes a phrase with a tie (can occur within a phrase).
- **Bebop Short (BBS)** – a two-note gesture that often concludes a phrase with a short final note (can occur within a phrase).
- **Blues Down (BD)** – the descending blues gestures
- **Blues Hang (BH)** – a suspended 3/4 figure based on the triplet and two groups of two eighths.

- **Blue's Neighbour (BN)** – the alternating figures comprised of three notes typical of the subdominant harmonic region.
- **Blues Up (BU)** – describes the ascending chromaticism between scalar degrees 2 and 5
- **Bourdon** – when Parker establishes a drone-like feature to move his crips and lines around, like a pedal point.

C–E

- **Charleston¹ (CH)** – a quarter that's on the beat, followed by an eighth rest and an articulated eighth note.
- **Clinch (CL)** – a crip on IV7 that is comprised of syncopated jabs and accents that produce a pugilistic feeling.
- **Convergence (C)** – when the two voice-leading layers converge.
- **Cram (CR)** – the rapid groupings of notes that are too many to account for.
- **Crips²** - schematic material used through Parker's improvisations.
- **Cross-phrase (CP, HT CP, 2x CP)** phrases played in 3/4, 6/4 and 3/8 over the 4/4 meter.
- **Cycles (e.g., 322C)** – a group of notes in a line or crip that begin and end on the same pitch.
- **Descending 7ths³ (7ths)** – the chromatic movement of 7ths down to the 3rd of the dominant, most typically on ii7 V7, e.g., on D-, the descending patterning is D, C#, C, B.

¹ Cecil Mack and James P. Johnson, "The Charleston," New York: Harms, Inc., 1923.

² Tommy Turrentine states: "[t]here may be a certain set of chord progressions that you find in different places in different tunes. If you know a crip that fits that chord progression, you can use it on different tunes. You can prove that if you listen to any record by Bird. He'd play crips all the time. He'd play a crips to a set of progressions on 'Night and Day' and then use it again on another tune like 'Embraceable You.'" (Paul Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz*, p. 174.)

³ Like Henry Purcell's pattern from "Dido's Lament," known as the "Lament Bass" (Latham, Alison, ed. "Lament Bass." In *The Oxford Companion to Music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

- **Descending Blues Cadence (DBC, DBC+ [augmented], DBCG [Gospel], DBCT [turnaround], DBCCH [chromatic], DBCSS [sideslip])** – the harmonically descending gestures that articulate the melodic voice leading layer endemic to I V7/IV IV iv I.
- **Drop-in (DI)** – an off-beat gesture that descends, functioning as a dynamic pick up to a line or a crip.
- **Drop-in Blues (DIB)** – The rapid falling gesture most typically using the i6 chord.
- **Enclosure (e.g., 342E)** – when a group of pitches from a range that encloses the first pitch of the following gesture.

G–H

- **Giddy-up (2:3GU, 3:2GU, GU16)** – triplets in groups of threes that at times are paired with twos, e.g., the 2:3 GU (two notes followed by three notes).
- **Hang Gesture (e.g., 322H)** – gestures that provide a reprieve from the forward driving momentum.
- **Halftime Swing (HTS)** – a pattern beginning on the beat, e.g., quarter, quarter rest, followed by a quarter and so on – typically occurring on beats one and three as articulated in Parker accenting.
- **Hemiola (H2, H3, etc.)** – patterns of accented dotted eighths or quarters embedded within the line or crip.
- **Hemiola Rest (HR)** – dotted sixteenth, eighth, quarter or half rest durations.

I–P

- **Intervals (324, 322, etc.)** – sequences of intervals that further describe the gestures.
- **Metrical Correction (MC)** – when a phrase deviation is reoriented to beat one or when an implied ternary meter is returned to the duple meter.

- **Mop-mop (MM, MM16)** – when two successive quarter notes are stressed.
- **Ool-Ya-Koo⁴ (OYK)** – sixteenth note triplet to an eighth ending on the next beat of any durational value.
- **Phrase-slip on 2/3/4 and the Backbeat (PS, PS on 2, BB PS etc.)** – The shift of the perceived down beat while retaining the 4/4 meter.
- **Poly-phrase 6 and 12 (PP6, PP12)** – phrases that occur in the poly-meter i.e., 6/4 and 12/8.
- **Pops 3 (Pops3)** – three successive quarter note accents hidden within the phrase or overtly accented.

R-S

- **Reverse Charleston (RCH)** – begins with an eighth rest, then an articulated note on the ‘and’, followed by a quarter rest, and then an articulated note on the beat.
- **Reverse Charleston Long (RCHL)** – occurs with an eighth rest, then an articulated eighth note or pickup on the ‘and’, followed by a half rest, and then an articulated note on the beat.
- **Rope-a-dope (RAD)** – the expression of sustained pitches, and the use of space and silence, to set up the forthcoming ideas.
- **Setup (SU)** – an ascending arpeggiated gesture that occurs at the beginning or within the phrase, often as a triplet or eighth or sixteenth note, triplet combination.
- **Shout b5/b3 (Sb5/b3)** – a blues gesture that sets up the gesture with a triplet figure and then leaps up to the b5 or b3.
- **Subdominant Minor (iv)** – when Parker plays the subdominant minor.

⁴ Dizzy Gillespie and Gil Fuller, “Ool-Ya-Koo,” 1947.

- **Sideslip⁵ (SS)** – crips that occur outside of the key (often a half step away).
- **Toni6 Blues (T6B)** – the major pentatonic scale with the minor third.
- **Tonic crips (T)** – crips that always revolve around the tonic using various traditional neighbour note features, typically concluded with a form of the bebop short/long gesture (often overlaps with the 3-beat phrase).

U–W

- **Ups (2ups, 3ups, etc.)** – a series of accented off-beats.
- **Upside-down (UD)** – an abrupt change of direction from a high point to a leap down.
- **Voice Leading, Upper and Lower (VL U, VL L)** – the layers of melodic voice leading within the lines and crips.
- **Whole Tone Chromatic (WHCH)** – a chromatic note, or sequence of, nestled within two scalar degrees.
- **Whole-tone 3–7/7–3 (WH 7-3, WH 3-7)** – expression of the whole tone region of the major scale, e.g., in the key of C: F, G, A, B (sometimes including the D# [Eb])

⁵ Carl Woideck, *Charlie Parker: His Music and Life*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996, pp. 15 and 183.

Introduction

[Charlie Parker] was the first out on the frontier and gave birth to all of us.⁶

Hampton Hawes

Improvised music is a processual human behaviour that manifests opposing yet coterminous realities, profound meaning and permanence that is yet untraceable and all but lost upon conclusion. Without documentation, there is no retrospective lens through which to observe and reflect upon what was played and how.⁷ Moreover, witnessing an improvisation, as it occurred, still does not provide us with the material necessary for further investigation. As such, our attempts to understand an improviser's musical behaviours and creative process are murky and constrained to perilously subjective reflection due to inaccurate recounts of the event.

Jazz and the improvisation endemic to it have been canonised through the advent of recording technology and its application in documenting important musical creations, such as those of Charlie Parker. Without this advent, the following research could not have been executed, jazz education would not exist in the way it does, and Charlie Parker's music would be a myth:⁸ he may or may not have been a key figure or even the progenitor of the bebop genre (a title which Parker wasn't the least bit interested in propagating).⁹ There are only a few

⁶ Hampton Hawes, *Raise Up Off Me*, Da Capo Press, 1974, p. 76.

⁷ Improvisations cannot be witnessed without the musical behaviour occurring in the time within which it happened: a score is an inaccurate representation of this.

⁸ His life and the lack of first-hand accounts present more fictional, unsubstantiated data than his musical contribution and creative process.

⁹ "It wasn't that we were dissatisfied with it, it was just that another conception came along, and this was just the way *we* thought it should go. But, during that time, this happened in 1938, just a little bit before '45." Parker then mentions that in his mind there were many contributors, "Dizzy Gillespie, Thelonious Monk, Kenny Clark, Charlie Christian in 1937... then there was Bud Powell, Don Byas, Ben Webster, yours truly..." - Carl Woideck, *The Charlie Parker Companion: Six Decades of Commentary*, New York: Schirmer Books, 1998, p. 113.

documented accounts of Parker's musical scores. The deposits in the Library of Congress comprise: one improvisation, "Bird of Paradise" (which was transcribed from recorded material and not from Parker's 'pen') based on Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein's 1939 composition "All the Things You Are" and several other actual compositions such as "Passport" (Parker 1949), "Billie's Bounce" (Parker, 1945), "Swedish Schnapps" (Parker, 1950), et al. However, these deposits represent a very limited snapshot of Parker's music. If this were all we had, Parker's impact would have been fleeting, and his mythic legacy mere apocryphal hearsay.

In other words, such a limited cross-section of data would be less than revelatory, as his improvisations possess highly complex and varied schematic material of which only a small portion appears on these deposits. Fortunately, we have an enormous amount of recorded documentation, which has facilitated the hundreds of transcriptions conducted for this research, making it possible to observe and interpret Charlie Parker's schematic musical process and behavioural proclivities. These transcriptions provide the repeated instances needed to observe, with greater accuracy, the facts essential to the development of cogent theories. Sans technology, Charlie Parker would've been the Buddy Bolden¹⁰ of bebop. To have a better understanding of Charlie Parker's music, I transcribed all the compositions and improvisations used for this work. Moreover, this process was key in the development of the analytical model used to illustrate Parker's musical gestalt.

We are fortunate that the advent of recording technology coincided with the rise of jazz (post-Buddy Bolden), confirming through empirical evidence and chronology that Parker was a seminal figure who permanently altered the trajectory of Western music. The recordings that

¹⁰ Buddy Bolden is an exemplar of the mythological status given to apocryphal figures: stories abound of his greatness, but we will never know how and what he played.

allow us to witness and observe his creative, improvisational process are something musicologists have long sought from European composers. In jazz, we possess a kind of ‘Holy Grail’ that provides the necessary materials for a lifetime of observational work, i.e., analysing the musical behaviours of key figures such as Charlie Parker.

Black American Music has had a profound impact, shaping countless forms of musical expression worldwide. Charlie Parker’s music is an exemplar of this: it was seminal and permanently altered the trajectory of Western music.

The following investigation addresses six key areas of Parker’s musical innovations:

1. gestural and physical properties;
2. blues-based folksy musical behaviours;
3. a fresh approach to tonal hierarchy that emphasised and exploited the subdominant tonic relationship;
4. groupings and patterns of accents;
5. phrasing devices;
6. crips.

Within this work, there are detailed discussions of each of these elements as they are revealed through the schematic¹¹ nature of Charlie Parker’s crips, including observations, analysis, interpretation, and subsequent categorisation. Through score-based illustrations of foreground gestures, voice leading, middle-ground accents, and background (sub-ground) phrasing layers, this research aims to uncover Parker’s underlying musical concept by answering two key questions about Parker’s music with as much precision as possible.

¹¹ Lawrence Gushee, “Lester Young’s ‘Shoe Shine Boy,’” in *A Lester Young Reader*, ed. Lewis Porter Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991, p. 237.

1. How does his music move?
2. What are the relationships that lie within it?

This work does not address Charlie Parker's life. It is not a biography and has little interest in salacious gossip, judging or celebrating Parker's life choices, or 'hearsay' events. There will be limited information or discussion about Charlie Parker as a man: many researchers on Charlie Parker have explored this topic extensively, should that be the primary interest, e.g., Carl Woideck, Brian Priestley, Chuck Haddix, Gary Giddins, Lawrence Koch, Ross Russell, and Stanley Crouch. The following discussion is predominantly theoretical, situated within two key referential points that provide a measurable framework for obtaining a more quantifiable interpretation of Charlie Parker's musical behaviours. These two referential points are as follows:

1. metrical order (in music, the bar line can represent an immovable entity to measure against: Parker seems to have only played in the 4/4 meter);
2. harmonic organisation (the functional interplay of the tonic, subdominant and dominant).

Through careful examination of empirical evidence, this research aims to organise and illustrate, using repeated instances and verifiable hypotheses, the data sets that constitute the distinctive characteristics of Charlie Parker's musical concept. The aim is to develop a more cogent theory of how his music moves and the relationships that lie within it. In his book *Religion and Science*, Bertrand Russell outlines the methodology for producing a theory, he writes:

Science starts, not from large assumptions, but from particular facts discovered by observation and experimentation. From a number of such facts a general rule is arrived at, of which, if it is true, the facts in question are instances... However many facts are found to fit the hypothesis, that does not make it certain, although in the end it may come to be thought in a high degree probable; in that case it is called a theory rather than a hypothesis.¹²

¹² Bertrand Russell, *Religion and Science*, Oxford University Press, 1935, p. 13.

Many assumptions have been made about Charlie Parker's music; this research strives to ground all observations in corroborative facts drawn from repeated "instances." Moreover, to use Parker's music not as a means to verify the efficacy of an existing theoretical model, e.g., Schenkerian analyses, but as a basis for the development of a cogent theory that can help interpret some of the defining characteristics of his musical behaviour.

Methodology and Brief Overview

Within a single-note musical idea in a homophonic context, there is a constant overlap among the attributes of phrase, rhythm, harmony, gestural/behavioural properties, and voice leading. To help eliminate confusion by simultaneously discussing and analysing such concomitant features, this research uses a methodology that parses the critical attributes, i.e., isolating specific feature(s) pertinent to a given discussion. In addition, as shown in the glossary, the creation of a set of new illustrative monikers that, when necessary, effectively aid in accounting for Parker's innovative musical behaviours.

Carefully isolating the distinguishable features is essential to a greater understanding of a given musical event or behaviour. This is particularly essential when these musical behaviours do not necessarily fit into existing theoretical models. The analytical model used for this research, at times in its entirety and in truncated forms, identifies the various layers relevant to a given discussion. Each example is shown in a score format that illustrates key aspects of these layers, which are as follows:

1. Chords, e.g., prescribed chordal framework;
2. Voice leading and Roman numeral analyses;
3. Foreground layer (Parker's crips), e.g., melodic gestures, intervallic clusters, and physical gestures;

4. Middle ground layer, e.g., asymmetrical patterns and accents
5. Background layer, e.g., phrasing, metrical displacement and cross-rhythms.

The aim of this work is two-fold: to offer fresh theories and interpretations, and to provide useful pedagogical material based on the musical concepts of Charlie Parker.

The following is an outline of each section in this work, intended to illustrate the order of events and the seven areas of focus.

- Part I discusses the interpretation of the text, using both the score and the audio source, and explains how these were used as the primary source material for all of this research.
- Part II investigates the foreground layer, which comprises melodic gestures, intervallic clusters, and physical gestures, specific to Parker's crips and musical improvisations.
- Part III addresses how many of Parker's musical behaviours are directly and indirectly influenced by the blues, in both its rural, folksy aspects and its more urban Kansas City roots. In addition, Parker's poly-meter phrasing is looked at in detail.
- Part IV explores some of the harmonic features of Charlie Parker's music. Moreover, it investigates Parker's expansion of the subdominant region (a key feature of the blues), which in his music often supersedes and at times conflates with the primacy of the dominant and tonic structures.

- Part V considers the descending and ascending blues cadences: the ubiquity of these structures fundamentally contributes to the always-perceivable yet difficult-to-quantify link between Parker's intricate harmonic expressions and the simplicity of the blues.
- Part VI examines the grouping of accents and rhythm, as seen in the middle-ground layer, through a variety of identifiable, often longer-duration, asymmetrical patterns. In addition to these broader-scale patterns, this section addresses the individual accented groups that were essential to Parker's rhythm and phrase expressions.
- Part VII explicates how Parker's phrasing was comprised of poly-metrical features, cross-rhythms, and the intentional misalignment of the harmonic rhythm within the 4/4 meter. In Parker's music, the paramount nature of phrase presents a significant paradigmatic shift and is critical to observing and accounting for Parker's musical behaviours.

These latter two sections, parts VI and VII, address Parker's accents and phrasing, arguably his most important contribution to jazz c. 1940. Moreover, the variations that arise from the complex expression of accented patterns do so from shifts in the rhythm and phrasing, rather than from melodic motivic development in the conventionally understood sense.

Discussions of the voice-leading layers are interspersed throughout this work, rather than confined to a designated section. In other words, they are integrated into relevant examples when essential for further elucidation of a given harmonic event.

Part I: The Text

Chapter 1: Hermeneutics and the Paramount Nature of Text

In artistic forms of expression, the text may be considered sacrosanct, but the underlying structures within remain for us to analyse, observe, and understand. For the development of theory, the simple representation of the text has limited value;¹³ rather, it is the extrapolation of conceptual principles that is essential. When examining the text of Charlie Parker's music, if our observations are guided by the fundamental parameters of subdominant (SD), tonic (T), and dominant (D) functions, coupled with the bar line as it is metrically organised in the 4/4 meter, then measurable analytical theories can be developed. Recognising that these parameters house the musical events (text) provides a measurable framework within which Parker's musical behaviours (lick schema) can be observed and interpreted. Furthermore, this provides a framework for testing hypotheses.

Without empirical evidence, the amassing of hundreds of transcriptions of Charlie Parker's recordings, and without the parameters that establish the framework for interpreting this evidence, reliance on highly speculative (unmeasured/untested) hypotheses would be necessary—a practice that seems to occur frequently in some streams of jazz pedagogy. Fortunately, with the available evidence and a set of precise parameters, it is possible to organise and categorise the text methodically, resulting in a more objective perspective.

There are no absolutes; when interpreting the musical text, only varying degrees of subjective interpretation can exist. However, subjectivity can be reduced by examining a thing

¹³ Countless transcription books depict, with varying degrees of accuracy, the moment-to-moment musical events of Charlie Parker.

from many perspectives and by avoiding the narrow focus often used to impose *a single* view on *many* things (a phenomenon that has occurred in musical analyses). Friedrich Nietzsche helps clarify this for us:

There is only a seeing from a perspective, only a ‘knowing’ from a perspective, and the *more* emotions we express over a thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes we train on the same thing, the more complete will be our ‘idea’ of that thing, our ‘objectivity.’¹⁴

This is the guiding principle behind this research and is essential if we wish to achieve the closest possible alignment of theories with the musical text. Leo Treitler observes that: “The claim for certainty is no more than a claim that one will have provided the most coherent context of thought that is consistent with all of the evidence.”¹⁵

If certainty is not the goal and getting close is (a guiding principle of this research), there is room to manoeuvre and greater flexibility for interpretation or the development of theoretical paradigms. When discussing the fundamental nature of text, Carl Dahlhaus writes extensively about interpreting historical data. For example, in a review of Dahlhaus’ *Foundations of Music History*, Keith Falconer writes: “although the material of history consists of documents and other artefacts from the past, these are not in themselves history. What is needed in addition, according to Dahlhaus, is an act of interpretation...”¹⁶ Jazz pedagogy has never been better positioned to develop theories based on the interpretation of available source data.

Moreover, this research argues that aspects of the processual musical ethos endemic to Charlie Parker’s improvisational approach may be revealed through measured (within set

¹⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, Third Essay, “What is the Meaning of Ascetic Ideals?” *The Genealogy of Morals*, Arcturus Publishing, 2022, p. 119.

¹⁵ Leo Treitler, “History, Criticism, and Beethoven’s Ninth,” *Nineteenth-Century Music* 3, no. 3, 1980: 208–209.

¹⁶ Keith Falconer, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 112, no. 1, 1986: 141–55. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/766262>, Accessed [January, 2022]. p. 142.

parameters) interpretation of the musical text; this historical data allows us not only to observe the historical artefact but to bear witness to his improvisational process. It is through the gestalt formed by Charlie Parker's musical text that we can witness some of this process based on patterned behaviours and the nuanced variation and repetition of these musical behaviours. However, at no point are claims made to *know* what Parker may be thinking [*italics mine*].

From a historical perspective, it must be recognised that Parker's music did not exist in isolation and that cultural and political forces influenced it. Nevertheless, quantifying such connections — such as the socio-political forces and their influence on Charlie Parker's music — is a highly challenging task, due to the lack of verifiable data and the randomness that may be involved in assigning literal or symbolic meanings (semiotics) to musical events. Therefore, discussions of this nature will only take place when deemed less speculative: free-form conjecture can lead to flawed (erroneous) conclusions. Moreover, this research argues that engagement with the musical text (both aurally and visually) can provide greater historical insight than mere suggestions of cultural and socio-political links. It is undeniable that such links exist; however, without lyric or first-hand testimony, we run aground.

Presuppositions by musicologists about the impact of external forces that establish a connection between disparate elements can be perilous. This research adheres to the universal principle in academia that this approach, which tends to be overly concerned with 'why' something exists, leads to inaccurate analytical results. This research takes a firm stance that theories must be grounded in measurable datasets and verifiable hypotheses.

Ideological preconceptions mislead us; even when theoretical data is developed through an understanding of the text, it falls short. The score, read attentively, can be more revealing than the critical apparatus constructed around it. In other words, it is the text that creates the construct;

this research aims to observe, identify, illustrate, formulate and test hypotheses, and finally interpret these key elements.

In his article “Adrift on Neurath’s Boat: The Case for a Naturalized Music Theory” Matthew G. Brown addresses the uncertainty in trying to obtain accurate readings and interpretations of data from a musical source. Quoting Suzanne G. Cusick he writes: “There can be no perfect reading of any text, be it archival, theoretical, or musical. ... the ‘new musicology’ ... requires that we confront the intellectual terrors of a world without definitive, authoritative readings.”¹⁷ However, due to the highly accurate documentation of musical processes, thought, and creation (the audio source), and the repeated instances of musical behaviour from individuals like Charlie Parker, we may be able to get close. Because of Parker’s highly patterned musical behaviour (he had a vast repository of riffs, which were essential to his schematic design), this research argues that conducting highly measured observations and interpretations of musical source materials containing such pronounced instances of repetition may yield more accurate outcomes. In composition, the stilted nature of the process can produce less repetitive musical ideas; therefore, composers can mask their musical process, possibly never revealing it.

In his essay “The Present as History,” Leo Treitler argues that studying the musical text can reveal new insights and may challenge existing assumptions if viewed afresh, unencumbered by immovable ties to existing paradigms. He states: “alternative models would need to take into account the interconnectedness of artworks from many different points of view, they would have to accommodate the idea that there is no *permanently* central connection, and they would have to be able to deal with continuities and discontinuities at once.”¹⁸ This underscores the limitations

¹⁷ Matthew G Brown, “Adrift on Neurath’s Boat”: The Case for a Naturalized Music Theory,” *Music Theory Online* 2, no. 2 (March 1996). Accessed [Sept. 2025]. <https://doi.org/10.30535/mto.2.2.1>.

¹⁸ Leo Treitler, “The Present as History,” *Perspectives of New Music* 7, no. 2, 1969, p. 17.

and perils of this research, but moreover, that of the European methodology used (or, at times, imposed) to analyse Charlie Parker's music, particularly the application of Schenkerian analysis by Thomas Owens, Henry Martin, and others. Because Parker's music was unprecedented, new theoretical understandings must be developed *from it*: first, referencing what he played and how he played it to form the basis for understanding. Music theory cannot exist a priori; instead, it develops from innovative musical behaviours that drive a paradigm shift. In this way, the theory directly emerges from the musical principles established by an individual such as Charlie Parker. If we aim to produce accurate music theory, the proverbial 'horse' must come before the proverbial 'cart'— the text must precede, inform, and guide the theoretical model.

Parker was adamant that his music was in no way based on the theoretical designs and traditions of European music. In one of his more vehement comments, during an interview with John McClellan (with whom Parker seems annoyed), for WHDH radio in Boston, circa June 1953 Parker unequivocally states:

...the thing that's going - happening now, known as progressive music or by the trade name bebop, not a bit of it was inspired or adapted by our predecessors: Bach, Brahms, Beethoven, Chopin, Ravel, Debussy, Shostakovich, Stravinsky, et cetera.¹⁹

Instead of recognising the specific qualities that make up Parker's music, existing analyses start with the assumption that if the music is tonal and metrical, it must follow the same principles or theoretical models developed over more than three centuries of European music theory: Parker clearly refutes this in his firm statement above. Furthermore, if the music is based on the blues and clearly exhibits highly unprecedented rhythm and phrase features, was it considered less 'refined' than European music? Existing European theoretical models tend to focus more on harmonic and motivic properties and, as such, may not possess the tools required

¹⁹Carl Woideck, *The Charlie Parker Companion: Six Decades of Commentary*, New York: Schirmer Books, 1998, p. 112.

for elucidating Charlie Parker's musical concept. Whether the misapplication of theoretical models on Parker's music, e.g., Schenkerian analyses, was unintentional, due to an incomplete understanding, or the result of naïve misuse of accepted methodologies, coupled with a reluctance to develop and adapt new models, remains unclear. In fairness, there is a shortage of terminology and categories for discussing elements such as syncopation, rhythm, and phrasing. However, it is beneficial to acknowledge that European theoretical methods may have fallen short. It may be that analysts have attempted to legitimise jazz by viewing it through a European lens, thereby imposing a valid but unfitting analytical methodology, which lacks the tools to account for the features of Charlie Parker's music.

In his book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Thomas Kuhn addresses the limitations and problems of working within a pre-existing paradigm for understanding the attributes of new phenomena. Kuhn states that:

A second class of phenomena consists of those whose nature is indicated by existing paradigms but whose details can be understood only through further theory articulation. These are the phenomena to which scientists direct their research much of the time, but that research aims at the articulation of existing paradigms rather than at the invention of new ones. Only when these types of articulations fail do scientists encounter the third type of phenomena, the recognized anomalies whose characteristic feature is the stubborn refusal to be assimilated to existing paradigms. This type alone gives rise to new theories.²⁰

The current paradigms do have fundamental structures that work and are used for this research; however, the hierarchies and taxonomies that underpin these existing theories might fall short when trying to elucidate the properties identified as Kuhn's "third type of phenomena," i.e., the elements of Parker's music gestalt that existing models cannot explain.

However, Parker himself seemed to show little concern about the irrational gravity and seriousness that we, as analysts, ascribe to such matters. When Paul Desmond (with whom

²⁰ Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 1970, p. 97.

Parker was not annoyed), inquired about his profound and innovative contribution to music, Parker responded in his much more typical nonchalant manner, effectively downplaying his monumental musical contributions. His somewhat self-effacing, laissez-faire reply was:

That's my first conception, that's the way I thought it should go, and I still do, I mean, of course it could stand much improvement...But I mean, ever since I've ever heard music, I thought it should be very clean, very precise, as clean as possible anyway, you know?²¹

²¹Carl Woideck, *The Charlie Parker Companion: Six Decades of Commentary*, p. 122.

Part II: Gestures, Whole Tones, Chromaticism, and Intervallic Clusters

Chapter 2: Melodic Gestures

The way Charlie Parker's music moves is partly determined by the various musical cells or fragments that form the lick schema (crips) and improvised ideas, all of which contribute to a gestalt, or a structural whole. "It has been said the whole is more than the sum of its parts. It is more correct to say that the whole is something else than the sum of its parts, because summing is a meaningless procedure, whereas the whole-part relationship is meaningful."²² Instead of defining these cells or fragments as fixed formulas, as previous analyses have done,²³ it is beneficial to categorise them more broadly, since many of Parker's gestures are schematic and highly adaptable. This provides us with a greater sense of the whole-part relationship within them. Moreover, as with Parker's enclosure patterns, there is often a musical purpose that extends beyond the motivic; for example, enclosures can be designed to vary in expressivity, ranging from rhythmic to gestural and harmonic. This section explores three prominent gestural behaviours by Parker that express his personal aesthetic and serve various musical functions.

The three types of gestures are as follows:

1. Enclosures (E)
2. Cycles (C)
3. Hang Gestures (H)

²² Kurt Koffka, *Principles of Gestalt Psychology*, Routledge, 1935, p. 136.

²³ Thomas Owens catalogued over one hundred motives but does not address the structural features, such as the harmonic, rhythmic, phrase, and gestural implications. This work aims to illustrate the concepts that underpin these motives, and as will be shown much later, their rhythm and phrase implications.

Figure 1. Enclosures, Cycles, Hang

Figure 1 displays three types of musical gestures, each with four examples on a single staff. The gestures are labeled on the left: 1. Enclosures, 2. Cycles, and 3. Hang Gestures. Each example is labeled with its intervallic sequence above the notes.

- 1. Enclosures:**
 - Example 1: 3E (Three notes: A, B, C, where B is an enclosure of A and C)
 - Example 2: 42E (Four notes: A, B, C, D, where B is an enclosure of A and C)
 - Example 3: 332E (Three notes: A, B, C, where B is an enclosure of A and C)
 - Example 4: 3223E (Four notes: A, B, C, D, where B is an enclosure of A and C)
- 2. Cycles:**
 - Example 1: 322C (Three notes: A, B, C, where B is a cycle of A and C)
 - Example 2: 322C (Three notes: A, B, C, where B is a cycle of A and C)
 - Example 3: 2222C (Four notes: A, B, C, D, where B is a cycle of A and C)
 - Example 4: 3223C (Four notes: A, B, C, D, where B is a cycle of A and C)
- 3. Hang Gestures:**
 - Example 1: 322H (Three notes: A, B, C, where B is a hang gesture of A and C)
 - Example 2: 222H (Three notes: A, B, C, where B is a hang gesture of A and C)
 - Example 3: 333H (Three notes: A, B, C, where B is a hang gesture of A and C)
 - Example 4: 224H (Four notes: A, B, C, D, where B is a hang gesture of A and C)

The score above illustrates, in general terms, the gesture type and the intervallic sequence (cluster) that comprise it. These gestures resemble the catalogue of formulas compiled by Thomas Owens; however, they are not classified using the same criteria. Instead of a motivic taxonomy, as Owens employs, this research views these from a structural perspective. There are two parts to the illustrative criterion: 1) the intervals played, e.g., 322 or 3223; 2) the type of gesture, e.g., Enclosure (E), Cycle (C), or hang (H).

Enclosures

The concept of an enclosure dates to Johannes Fux's Counterpoint treatise. It is derived from the term *cambiata*, which means ‘changed tone’ and describes a dissonant passing figure that ‘surrounds’ a consonance. Essentially, the *cambiata* is a note of transition which descends by a third from a dissonance and then ascends by step to a consonance. In Parker’s music, the rules of the enclosure pattern are loose and varied; other than that, melodic dissonances tend to be less prominently articulated on stressed beats (phrase deviations can change this, as will be shown). (Melodic chromaticism, which the enclosure gesture is not directly connected to, will be

discussed in the whole tone section.) The typical enclosure, espoused by much pedagogy in jazz today, is represented by Parker through one of his crips, as shown below.

Figure 2. 22 Enclosure

mm. 8-3

Constellation (Take 5)

This type of enclosure in jazz pedagogy²⁴ is quite typical, utilising diatonic and chromatic neighbour notes and the simple pattern of a 2nd above and below the chordal pitch in this case a C triad, C E G. However, the pervasive use of the enclosure in Charlie Parker's music is more complex and nuanced than what is illustrated above: the surrounding of a chord tone or individual pitch. As shown in the following example, the enclosure can be quite varied in its structure and may sometimes consist of a series of gestures, spanning four to five note sequences or even several bars. The following is a series of enclosures as played by Parker on take 2 of "Merry-Go-Round" (Parker, 1948).

Figure 3. Range and Enclosure

mm. B 1-5

Merry-Go-Round (Take 2)

²⁴ Jimmy Raney and Jon Raney, *The Jimmy Raney Book*, New Albany, IN: Jamey Aebersold Jazz, 1978, p.

The example above illustrates Parker's more typical use of the enclosure gesture identified by this research. We see in m. 1 that the range (R) is set between F and Eb ($R = F-Eb$), which encloses (E) the D ($E = D$): this pattern then continues. In m. 2, $R = D-Bb$, $E = C$; $R = Ab-C$, $E = G$; in m. 3, $R = G-A\#$, $E = B$; and so on. The pitches that fill in the range²⁵ are identified by the numbers above, which denote the intervals used, all of which express continuations of or new harmonic regions.

This more nuanced treatment of the enclosure is not merely about how individual pitches are surrounded by chromaticism or scale degrees, or due to "pivoting" (registral shifts when out of range) and other limitations of an alto saxophone, as is often observed. The enclosure gesture in Parker's music involves establishing a range within which a target pitch is then reached. As mentioned, the principles of dissonance and consonance do apply, but these patterns are often used to efficiently move the harmonic regions to where Parker desires without playing crude chordal outlines. Furthermore, successive groups of enclosures enable Parker to achieve musical autonomy: a set of pitches illustrate the harmonic colour, which encloses the target pitch of the next enclosure, ultimately leading to a point of resolution or continuation (sometimes the series will include a cycle or hang gesture, or collections of scale degrees, chromaticism, etc.). Through this process, structural unity and spontaneous architectural form arise.

Parker's musical autonomy is facilitated by these enclosure patterns and is achieved in the following manner: the enclosure often resembles a chordal voicing that outlines a harmonic region, which then guides the gesture towards a target: either a continuation of that region or a new harmonic destination. In other words, the enclosure functions as a tool to further contextualise a melodic event within a harmonic framework.

²⁵ Henry Martin, *Charlie Parker and Thematic Improvisation*, Scarecrow Press, 1996, p. 33.

Below is a broader-scale example of the enclosure gesture, which includes smaller subsets of enclosures within it (a hang is present at the cadence, discussed momentarily).

Figure 4. Longer Duration Enclosure

The subsets that constitute a similar expression of the enclosure as that last example are shown, e.g., 333E, 433E, 732E, 643E, and then the outlier 322H: the broader enclosure spans from mm. 9-11 and is defined by the range set between C and A (a range of a minor 10th). All the other subset enclosures and the single hang gesture reside within this broader scale enclosure. The third and fourth staff are included to reveal the crip (lick schema) with which Parker is working.

Cycles

The cycle gesture of Parker's is prominent in his broader vocabulary but most frequently appears in the opening figures of many of his heads, as shown below.

Figure 5. 322 Cycles

Figure 5 displays ten musical examples of 322 intervallic patterns, each on a single staff in 4/4 time. The patterns are labeled with titles and transposition information. Brackets above the staves indicate the specific 322 or 4222 patterns used.

- Transposed from Bb Anthropology: 322C
- Transposed from Bb Dexterity: 322C
- An Oscar For Treadwell: C, 322C
- Cool Blues: 322C, 4222C
- Perhaps: 322C
- Bongo Bop: 322C, 322C
- Passport (Blues): 322C
- Transposed from F Ah-Leu-Cha: 322C
- Transposed from F Au Privave: mm. 2-3, 322C
- Transposed from F Au Privave: mm. 8-9, 322C

The examples above show the cycle (C) in various 322 intervallic patterns (and with a 4222 pattern as seen in “Cool Blues” [Parker, 1947]). These gestures are capable of efficiently illustrating the harmonic region from which Charlie Parker will proceed. Parker uses each of the cycle gestures shown above as the departure point for the forthcoming material, as they are all opening gestures to eight of his heads (the last two examples are as indicated). In other words, the primary role of the cycle in Parker’s music is to establish the referential basis: an expression of the harmonic region which Parker will continue or deviate from. The example of “Ah-Leu-

Cha”²⁶ (Parker, 1948) is harmonically very misleading as Parker is setting up the subdominant harmony on the tonic: ii7 over I.

Parker also uses the inverse of this sequence - the 223 intervallic pattern - but with much less frequency. The function of the cycle gesture is the same despite the variation in the intervallic sequence. Three examples of the 223C shown below are also from the opening measure of each respective composition (the shifting of the gesture is critical to the broader conversation and will be addressed throughout this discussion).

Figure 6. 223 Cycle



These gestures appear throughout the Parker lexicon and are critical to the gestalt formed by Parker’s many nuanced and complex musical behaviours.

The cycles also occur throughout Parker’s music in the broader schematic design. Shown below are two excerpts from solos performed four years apart: first from “Tiny’s Tempo” (Grimes, 1944) and secondly from “The Hymn” (Parker, 1948). The lick schema is included to show the structural design further.

²⁶ “Ah-Leu-Cha” is a contrapuntal head that is the most modal-sounding piece in Parker's oeuvre. Moreover, the harmonic progression prescribed by the rhythm changes progression as played by the rhythm section does not align with the harmonic implications of this head (discussed further shortly).

Figure 7. Longer Duration Cycles

The figure displays a musical score with four staves. The first staff, labeled 'mm. 9-12 m. 1', shows a sequence of chords: Cm⁷, F⁷, B^b6, Cm⁷, F⁷, and B^b6. The second staff, labeled 'Cycles', shows a sequence of notes with brackets above them indicating cycles: 'C C' (cycle of C), 'C D' (cycle of D), and 'C D' (cycle of D). The third staff, labeled 'The Hymn (Take 1)', shows a sequence of notes with brackets above them indicating licks: '3333E', 'WHCH', '333E', '332E', '322C', 'BU 3', '332E', and 'T-lick'. Below this staff, brackets indicate the lick schema: 'iiVBb iv' and 'Folksy IV&I'. The fourth staff, labeled 'Tiny's Tempo (Take 2)', shows a sequence of notes with brackets above them indicating licks: '3333E', 'WHCH', '333E', '332E', '322C', 'BU 3', '332E', and 'T-lick'. Below this staff, brackets indicate the lick schema: 'iiVBb iv' and 'Folksy IV&I'.

Shown above are the longer cycles indicated as C C (cycle of C), which is followed by the two C D (cycles of D). The cycles are structured according to the lick schema shown (iiVBb iv and Folksy IV&I), which structurally bind these cycles together. This is also a musical feature that is connected to Parker's blues behaviours and his use of the bourdon, as will be shown in the blues examples. The same cycles appear in both excerpts because the schematic nature of the crips is virtually identical. These two events occurred three years apart, so there is no way they were a coincidence or a moment in time captured by the advent of technology; instead, events such as these are an intrinsic part of Parker's lick schema. The detail shown in the excerpt is only on take 1 of "The Hymn" (Parker, 1948), which illustrates the enclosures (E), whole-tone chromatic (WHCH), a subset cycle, blues up (BU), and the tonic lick (T-lick) (BU, WHCH, and T-lick will be addressed shortly).

Hang Gesture

The hang gesture is typically used as a brief, almost conversational gesture, or at the close (cadence) of a musical phrase; however, it can also appear within the phrase. When the

hang appears as the former, it expresses itself as a very colloquial musical phrase-ending (even as a small fragment). When the hang occurs as the latter, or within the phrase structure, it functions as a momentary reprieve, a brief pause from the intensity of forward motion generated by Parker's lick schema and propulsive rhythmic drive.

The examples below show how Parker uses the hang in another lick schema to open his solo outing on take 1 and 3 of a tune based on rhythm changes in F, "Chasin' the Bird" (Parker, 1948). The hang gestures begin and end both examples.

Figure 8. Hang Gesture

The figure displays musical notation for the song "Chasin' The Bird" in 4/4 time, based on the "Rhythm Changes" harmonic structure. The key signature is one flat (Bb).

Harmonic Progression: Gm⁷ C⁷ F⁹ Gm⁷ C⁷ Am D⁷

Take 1: The notation shows a hang gesture starting at the beginning of the first measure (marked "A m. 8" and "A mm. 1-3") and ending at the end of the third measure. The lick schema is labeled "2&2H" above the staff. The harmonic regions are labeled below the staff: Imaj7, IVmaj7, and Imaj7.

Take 3: The notation shows a hang gesture starting at the beginning of the first measure and ending at the end of the third measure. The lick schema is labeled "222H" above the staff. The harmonic regions are labeled below the staff: Imaj7, IVmaj7, and Imaj7.

The two examples above demonstrate how the hang functions both as an opening gesture, a phrase fragment, and as a closing gesture: the latter of which is a confirmation of the initial idea. Moreover, these lick schema instances comprise three fragments, each consisting of three beat-durational gestures spanning three measures (12 beats). (The significance of three will be a focal point throughout this work.) In take 1, both hang gestures appear as 2&2H, and in take 3, as 222H and 32H. The simple nature of the harmonic regions, expressed through Parker's folksy lick schema, is noteworthy; it appears in the melodic foreground and is shown as Imaj7 IVmaj7 Imaj7- with a deliberate absence of V7 (discussed further in the blues and subdominant

chapters). The 333E is an expression of SD or IVmaj7, a place in rhythm changes where V7 is the harmony of the prescribed progression.

The E, C, and H gestures are highly effective tools in the Parker lexicon. The categorisation of them into their structural (intervallic sequence/grouping) and gestural properties (physical aspects) is effective in accounting for a key part of Parker's recurrent foreground gestural material. Furthermore, categorising these fragments in this way allows for a greater degree of flexibility within the taxonomy: a methodology that aligns with the fluidity of Charlie Parker's musical ethos. It is important to note that Parker has preferences for specific intervallic clusters, such as the 233, 332, 234, 322, 3223, and its inversion the 622 among others. Additionally, there are instances where significant overlap occurs within the E, C, and H gestures, and as such, multiple interpretations can arise; however, because these are exceptions to the rule, they are not discussed in detail.²⁷ As Barry Harris said, "Art is not a science, my son."²⁸

²⁷ Exceptions to rules and contradictions of rules do not negate a rule; instead, they humanise the behaviour. Moreover, the allowance of contradiction inasmuch confirms a behavioural proclivity: the antithesis of a thing provides us with a more certain grasp of what the thing may be.

²⁸ Paul Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz*, Chicago University Press, 1994, p. 249.

Chapter 3: The Whole Tone and Chromatic Passing Tone

An iconic musical event in the jazz canon that exemplifies the use of the whole tone sequence can be heard in the introduction to Thelonious Monk's seminal 1947 composition, "Round Midnight"²⁹ Furthermore, due to the ubiquity of the whole tone structure within Monk's music, it has always been associated with the whole tone scale, Charlie Parker's music: less so. The use of the whole tone interval is shown in the example below.

Figure 9. Introduction to "Round Midnight"



The presence of the whole tone scale in Charlie Parker's music, as prominent and essential as it is, has not been a subject of investigation by those looking at Parker's music (Owens, Martin, Koch, Priestley). This is perhaps due to Parker's subtle and nuanced expressions of it. The following section demonstrates how Parker frequently used the whole tone pitch collection, and that the source of chromaticism (passing tones), as it appears in Parker's music, can be understood through the whole step interval.

The five key features that will be discussed are as follows:

1. Whole Tone 3-7 (WH 3-7)
2. Whole Tone 7-3 (WH 7-3)
3. Whole Tone 5 (WH5)
4. Whole Tone Chromatic (WHCH)

²⁹ Thelonious Monk, "Round Midnight," Recorded August 22, 1947. *Genius of Modern Music, Volume 1*, Blue Note, 1956.

5. Blues Up (BU)

Figure 10. Whole Tone 3-7, 7-3, 5, Chromatic, and Blues Up

Figure 10 displays five melodic patterns in treble clef, spanning two measures each. The key signature is one flat (Bb). The patterns are labeled as follows:

- Harmonic Region:** Marked with C and G7. The first measure contains four eighth notes (C4, D4, E4, F4) and the second measure contains four eighth notes (G4, A4, Bb4, C5).
- 1. Whole Tone 3-7:** Labeled WH 3-7. The first measure contains four eighth notes (C4, D4, E4, F4) and the second measure contains four eighth notes (G4, A4, Bb4, C5).
- 2. Whole Tone 7-3:** Labeled WH 7-3. The first measure contains four eighth notes (Bb4, C5, D5, E5) and the second measure contains four eighth notes (F5, G5, A5, Bb5).
- 3. Whole Tone 5:** Labeled WH5. The first measure contains four eighth notes (C4, D4, E4, F4) and the second measure contains four eighth notes (G4, A4, Bb4, C5).
- 4. Whole Tone Chromatic:** Labeled WHCH. The first measure contains four eighth notes (C4, D4, E4, F4) and the second measure contains four eighth notes (G4, A4, Bb4, C5).
- 5. Blues Up:** Labeled BU. The first measure contains four eighth notes (C4, D4, E4, F4) and the second measure contains four eighth notes (G4, A4, Bb4, C5).

1. Whole Tone 3-7 (WH 3-7)

The melodic whole tone 3-7 figure is familiar to Parker's opening blues gestures and is repeatedly expressed as a mildly dissonant cadence on mm. 3-4 of the blues. For this crip, Parker uses material from a part of the whole tone scale: that which is germane to the dominant 7th structure. The gestures use the 3rd to the b7 in a descending manner, e.g., in the key of C, E D C Bb (the order can be fluid, but the arrival on b7 is a defining characteristic). Below are four examples of the WH 3-7.

Figure 11. Whole Tone 3-7

mm. 2-3

Perhaps (Take 2)

Cheryl (RR 2-04)

Transposed from Bb Mohawk (Master)

Transposed from Bb Bird Feathers

WH 3-7

WH 3-7

WH 3-7

WH 3-7

WH 3-7

E C D Bb

E C Bb D Bb

E C³ D Bb

E C D Bb

This musical behaviour of Parker's is specific to his style and to this region of the blues; as such, the whole tone may be linked to his blues ethos. The gestures shown above, which are somewhat distinctive from one another, taken from material that spans three years, 1947-50, clearly share the same schematic design: they are similar expressions of the same fragment of the whole tone scale loosely organised into broken 3rds.

2. Whole Tone (WH 7-3)

The ascending version or whole tone 7-3, which is almost always played with scale degrees organised as b7 1 2 3, is shown in the examples below.

Figure 12. Whole Tone 7-3

The figure displays three musical staves. The top staff is a C7 chord in 4/4 time, represented by four diagonal slashes. The middle staff, labeled 'Perhaps (Take 6)', shows a melodic line with a bracketed 'WH 7-3' pattern. The bottom staff, labeled 'Klactoveesedstene (Take 1)', shows a more complex melodic line, also with a bracketed 'WH 7-3' pattern. All staves are in 4/4 time.

This pattern of the whole tone gesture from 7-3 is present in the Thelonious Monk example at the opening of the section. It is also a key part of the schematic nature of Parker's crips, which will be illustrated throughout this work. The similarity to the Thelonious Monk introduction to "Round Midnight" is important because the -7b5 chord and the dominant structure shown in the Parker examples are closely related. Monk's -7b5 chords and the whole tone crip that he plays on them are the same as what Parker is playing. However, the Parker examples, which are over a C7, could easily be expressions of a -7b5 or E-7b5, a chord that, as related to C7, resides between the D and SD function, e.g., C7 and G-7. Interestingly, on minor ii-V progressions, Parker would often not play the b5 on the ii7b5; yet, he essentially does so on the dominant structure – a kind of subdominant expansion of the dominant. Further to the pluralism and ambiguity, Dizzy Gillespie remembers: "Monk was the first to use E-minor seventh with a flatted fifth, or as some call it, an E half-diminished. Monk just called it a G minor sixth with an E in the bass."³⁰ The importance of this chord in the jazz lexicon is significant; however, in the Parker oeuvre, it is most often found within the dominant structure.

³⁰ Dizzy Gillespie and Gene Lees, "The Years with Yard," *Down Beat*, May 25, 1961, p. 22.

3. Whole Tone 5 (WH5)

When approaching IV (m. 5) during Parker's improvisations on the harmonic progression of rhythm changes,³¹ he again displays a proclivity for the 3-7 voice leading motion. However, in these instances, the #5 is included. The examples below illustrate this.

Figure 13. Whole Tone 5 3-7 +

Figure 13 displays musical notation for the Whole Tone 5 3-7 + progression. The notation is organized into five staves, each representing a different musical context or variation of the 52nd St Theme.

- RC mm. 4-5:** The top staff shows the harmonic progression for measures 4-5 of Rhythm Changes, with chords Gm7, C7, and F6 indicated above the staff.
- 52nd St Theme (DB 5-07):** The second staff shows the 52nd St Theme (DB 5-07) variation. A bracket labeled "WH5 3-7 +" spans the notes E, C, D, Bb, and G#.
- 52nd St Theme (DB 5-11):** The third staff shows the 52nd St Theme (DB 5-11) variation. A bracket labeled "WH5 3-7 +" spans the notes E, C, D, Bb, and G#.
- 52nd St Theme (Perfect Col. 1):** The fourth staff shows the 52nd St Theme (Perfect Col. 1) variation. A bracket labeled "WH5 3-7 +" spans the notes E, C, D, Bb, and G#.
- 52nd St Theme (Perfect Col. 2):** The fifth staff shows the 52nd St Theme (Perfect Col. 2) variation. A bracket labeled "WH5 3-7 +" spans the notes E, C, D, Bb, and G#.

The notes E, C, D, Bb, and G# are consistently written below the staves, indicating the specific pitch collection for the WH5 3-7 + progression.

The following crip from the Parker lexicon is one of the clearer expressions of the whole tone pitch collection (that is, like the previous examples, only one note away from completion).³² This crip, known as WH5 3rds, which retains the 3-7 broken 3rds pattern seen earlier, essentially expanding on it, most typically appears as V7/IV and is used by Parker throughout his blues playing.

³¹ Parker treats mm. 5-7 of rhythm changes in the same manner as mm. 4-6 of the blues, using many of the same crips.

³² The flatted 5th remains excluded.

Figure 14. Whole Tone 5 3rds

Both examples shown above have been transposed from Bb to C. The pitch collection of Bb C D E G# is the whole tone scale on C7, all except for the #4 (its absence seems to be deliberate and is discussed further in the blues section).

The next crip of Parker's, WH5 PV,³³ using the same pitch collection as WH5 3rds, is arguably his most preferred augmented gesture (countless beboppers copied it). In the following instance, the crip occurs in m. 2 of the blues form. However, more typically, this crip appears, like WH5 3rds, before the modulation to IV7. The inclusion of the peripheral events is to begin to illustrate Parker's broader schematic behaviour within these more isolated discussions: in this case, as it appears in the opening seven measures of a blues in F.

³³ PV is an abbreviation for "Peanut Vendor" (Moises Simons, 1930), explained further in the asymmetrical accents chapter.

Figure 15. Whole Tone 5 “Peanut Vendor”

The expanded pitch collection that includes the #5 of C7 (in this case, in place of the Bb7 in m. 2) has widespread implications in Parker’s music and to his blues-based behaviours both melodically and harmonically. As will be shown in the blues cadence section, this pitch, #5/b6, is a critical pitch within Parker’s musical concept. Again, the omission of the flattened fifth is significant; on occasion, Parker seems to touch on it when playing the WH5 PV, but it is rare. The opening gestures in m. 1 of the examples above demonstrate folksy musical gestures that are highly varied and are immediately followed by the WH5 PV. In the first two examples, in mm. 3-4, Parker uses elements of the 3-7 WH to arrive at the b7th of V7/IV, e.g., A to Eb. After which, in the latter four examples, Parker’s blues down (BD) gesture to the major 3rd (M3) is executed (discussed in detail in the blues section). The sameness of these events is not a coincidence, as “Barbados” (Parker, 1948) wasn’t recorded until three years after “Billie’s Bounce” (Parker, 1945) and “Now’s The Time” (Parker, 1945). There was clearly a schematic plan from which Parker operated.

4. Whole Tone Chromatic (WHCH)

Chromaticism can occur in Parker's music in two ways. Firstly, on a tonic C chord any scale degree (consonant) has a chromatic pitch below that can be used as a lower neighbour e.g., A G# A or as a pick-up note G# A; secondly any scale degree separated by a whole tone can use the chromatic in between e.g., on C, E Eb D Db C, on G7, B Bb A Ab G F# F or again on C, D D# E F F# G or C C# D. The whole tone and the chromatic in between is the subject of the following discussion.

The whole tone chromatic (WHCH) is defined as follows: a chromatic pitch that is situated between two scale degrees, a whole step apart, within a given harmonic region: typically expressed as a consonance-dissonance-consonance (the general rule of the passing tone in music theory). When the WHCH appears outside of the key, the consonance/dissonance relationship coheres with the new harmonic region. In other words, the whole tone chromatics used by Parker align with the harmony he is playing, and not the prescribed harmony or that which is played by the rhythm section.

The example below illustrates the WHCH as played by Parker. This first instance shows that the whole tone pattern associated with the harmony aligns with each beat unit, and the chromaticism is always on the 'and.'

Figure 16. Whole Tone Chromatic a

The figure displays three musical staves in 4/4 time. The top staff, labeled 'mm. 3-4', shows a sequence of chords: F⁶, C^{m7}, and F⁷. The middle staff, labeled 'Whole Tone', shows a whole tone scale pattern with brackets labeled 'WH' and 'WH 3-7'. The bottom staff, labeled 'Barbados (RR 2-14)', shows a chromatic pattern with brackets labeled 'WHCH' and 'WHCH'.

This example from Parker's live recording at the Royal Roost of "Barbados" (Parker, 1948) clearly demonstrates how the chromaticism is connected to and derived from the whole tone pattern. This is further evidenced by the diatonic half step: the only place where Parker breaks from the chromaticism. Without this, the scale degrees and diatonic whole steps would not align with the beat units and the harmony would be obscured. This approach to the chromatic passing tone, which essentially deems all diatonic pitches of the harmonic region to be a kind of 'consonance,' is essential for understanding how the rule of the WHCH manifests in Parker's music.

Below is another example of the WHCH, also from the Royal Roost, on mm. 3-7 of the A section in Parker's solo over "Salt Peanuts" (Gillespie, 1945).

Figure 17. Whole Tone Chromatic b

The figure displays three musical staves. The top staff, labeled 'A mm. 3-7', shows a sequence of chords: Am⁷, D⁷, Gm⁷, C⁷, Cm⁷, F⁷, B^bmaj⁷, B^ø7, and Fmaj⁷. The middle staff, labeled 'Whole Tone', shows a sequence of notes with brackets indicating 'WH 3-7', 'WH 3-7 & #5', and 'WH'. The bottom staff, labeled 'Salt Peanuts (RR 2-15)', shows a melodic line with triplets and brackets indicating 'WHCH'.

Lastly, this section will show the whole tone chromatic features as they appear in an ascending form. These ascending passing tones follow the same basic rule as the WHCH, but when in alignment with an ascending blues cadence (discussed shortly), they can be called a blues up (BU) gesture. The second example has overlapping enclosure features, as indicated; however, as these enclosures express a hemiola pattern, or ternary grouping, the chromatic is unable to remain on the 'and' in the 4/4 meter but does so if the beat unit is a dotted quarter.

The example below, from the studio recording of “Crazeology” (Parker, 1947) and “Cool Blues” (Parker, 1947), from a live recording at Birdland, demonstrates WHCH in the ascending form.

Figure 18. Whole Tone Chromatic c

The musical notation for Figure 18 is as follows:

- Piano Introduction:** A staff in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains two measures of eighth-note chords: F#4, A4, C5, and E5 in the first measure, and F#4, A4, C5, and E5 in the second measure.
- Crazeology (Take D):** A staff in 4/4 time. It begins with a whole rest. In the second measure, there is a triplet of eighth notes: G4, A4, and B4. This is followed by a triplet of eighth notes: C5, D5, and E5. A bracket labeled 'BU' spans the triplet C5-D5-E5. Below the staff, the label 'WHCH' is written with a line pointing to the triplet C5-D5-E5.
- Cool Blues (Birdland, 1950):** A staff in 4/4 time. It begins with a whole rest. In the second measure, there is a triplet of eighth notes: G4, A4, and B4. This is followed by a triplet of eighth notes: C5, D5, and E5. A bracket labeled '732E' spans the triplet G4-A4-B4, and a bracket labeled '32E' spans the triplet C5-D5-E5. Below the staff, the label 'WHCH' is written with a line pointing to the triplet C5-D5-E5, and another 'WHCH' is written with a line pointing to the triplet G4-A4-B4.
- Middle Ground:** A staff in 4/4 time. It begins with a whole rest. In the second measure, there is a triplet of eighth notes: G4, A4, and B4. This is followed by a triplet of eighth notes: C5, D5, and E5. Below the staff, the label 'WHCH' is written with a line pointing to the triplet C5-D5-E5, and another 'WHCH' is written with a line pointing to the triplet G4-A4-B4.

The first example illustrates the WHCH between scalar degrees 2 and 5, which is also indicated by a BU gesture, as noted earlier. The second example shows the WHCH between degrees 2 and 3, and 1 and 2, respectively. The hemiolas confirm the rule that the chromatic is most often aligned, in this case, with what Parker is expressing rhythmically.

It is beneficial to understand the passing tone in this reductionistic manner. In Parker’s music, the chromatic is simply an entity that connects two diatonic whole steps. This approach to the chromatic passing tone expands the possibilities and facilitates greater ease of use and application. Moreover, it all but eliminates such artificial constructs as the bebop scale, which can be conceptually shackling and limiting in the potential for reinvention. The fact is, the bebop scale was a device that Parker played with much less frequency than many might assert, despite the claims that it originates from his music: Parker played many other chromatics that are far more nuanced and expressive. Below are two examples of such nuanced chromaticism.

Figure 19. Whole Tone Chromatic d

Now's The Time (DB, 2-27) C⁶ Gm⁷ C⁷ F⁷
WHCH WHCH WHCH

Merry-Go-round (Take 2) D-7 Ab7
3 WHCH

To represent Parker's music as comprehensively as possible, included below is a possible derivation from the 3-7 whole-tone pattern. The alteration is Parker's lowering the 9th of V7 (the 6th of I), e.g., on a C7, the pattern becomes E Db C Bb instead of E D C Bb. This is categorised as diminished 3-7 (Dim. 3-7) as it invokes the parallel harmonic minor and more specifically vii07, e.g., E (G) Bb Db. The example below illustrates the Dim. 7-3 pattern on a dominant seventh cycle used frequently by Parker in various configurations.

Figure 20. Diminished 3-7

ARC mm. 1-5 Cm⁷ F⁷ [A] B^b6 Cm⁷ F⁷ Dm⁷ Dbm⁷ Cm⁷ F⁷ Fm⁷ B^b7

VL WH 3-7 Dim 3-7 Dim 3-7 Dim 3-7 Dim 3-7 Dim 3-7
3 - 7-3 7-3 7-3 7-3 7-3
#IV7 VII7 III7 VI7 II7 V7 1

Anthropology (RR 3-12) 333E 333C 332E 223C 322C 333E
WHCH

The cycle shown above from a live recording of “Anthropology” (Parker, 1945) begins on E7 (#IV07) and cycles through in fifths until the tonic of Bb is reached. Parker begins the cycle with the WH 3-7, using the WHCH (mm. 1-2 of the excerpt), but then moves to a sequence of five clearly articulated Dim. 3-7 patterns.³⁴

³⁴ Another way to look at this sequence is to view these scale degrees as connected to the parallel harmonic minor.

Chapter 4: Intervallic Clusters

There are specific intervallic clusters and fragments within Charlie Parker's musical vocabulary that contribute to and define his musical concept. These intervallic clusters illustrate key aspects of Parker's melodic vocabulary, at times even more so than the aligned or misaligned harmonic region within which he is operating. The three types of intervallic clusters discussed in this section are as follows:

1. 324
2. 4ths
3. 2&2

Figure 21. Intervallic Clusters 324, 44, 2&2



1. 324

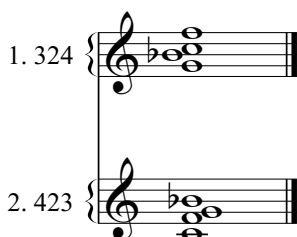
There is nothing inherently unusual about the intervallic cluster of a 3rd, 2nd and 4th, and the many possible variations of these (with rhythmic differences and shifts in register, the options become extensive). However, these clusters are highly significant and relevant to Parker's music; moreover, they form a key musical gesture that may have blues-based origins and broader harmonic implications (such as Parker's expression of the Ger6, discussed later in this work).

When examining these intervals from a purely harmonic standpoint, this intervallic group forms two essential voicings. These voicings have become foundational in much left-hand piano comping (Ahmad Jamal, Red Garland, Bill Evans, et al.), i.e., the 6/9 voicing, the flexibility of which is pronounced. Harmonically, the intervals that produce these two voicings are as follows:

1. 324

2. 423

Figure 22. 324 and 423 Voicings



These intervals, when applied as a voicing, are the reorganisation of the same four pitches, i.e., G, Bb, C, F, or C, F, G, Bb, which in the key of C can be seen as being derived from IV7 (SD). Additionally, both voicings are 6/9 chords in the keys of Bb, Eb, and Ab, which move increasingly farther into the SD harmonic region. This subject is far-reaching and the basis for an entire dissertation; however, for now, it suffices to say that in jazz (especially Parker's music), these harmonic structures, which become melodic devices, are ubiquitous and often appear as a blues gesture or some form of enclosure pattern or both.

Shown below as a chordal voicing, we observe the 423 not in its folksy 6/9 position but now as a dominant seventh structure, as I7 and IV7 as heard in the introduction to Parker's 1945 blues in F "Now's The Time."

Figure 23. “Now’s The Time” Piano Introduction

The musical score for "Now's The Time" Piano Introduction consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It shows a piano introduction with chords F7, Bb7, and F7. The bottom staff is labeled "Middle Ground" and shows a rhythmic pattern with "x" marks and "2:3" groupings.

The two voicings shown above are the inverted intervallic cluster of 324, (423), e.g., as an F7, A D Eb G and as a Bb7, D G Ab C. The additional phrasing information is included above in the middle ground layer to illustrate the asymmetrical accent groupings. These features within the middle ground layer and the correlating accent patterns will be discussed later; however, as can be seen in the above example, there are two 2:3 accent groups to this figure that are very much like the ride cymbal pattern. The figure may be played by pianist Argonne Thornton, aka Sadik Hakim (however, some sources suggest Dizzy Gillespie as he was switching between trumpet and piano on this session): “Parker also asked pianist Argonne Thornton to join the session...the fact that the shifting piano and trumpet rolls caused a nightmare for discography hours that lasted for years is of no importance to the success or failure of the music period.”³⁵

The following examples are by no means exhaustive but are intended to illustrate a cross-section of Parker’s use of this intervallic cluster. Each of the events below appears on the tonic chord of C.

³⁵ Carl Woideck, *Charlie Parker: His Music and Life*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996, p.

Figure 24. 324, 423, 243, 342, 234, 432 Clusters

Transposed from Bb
Big Foot (Perfect Col.)

Back Home Blues (Take 1)

Bongo Beep (Take B)

Cool Blues

Perhaps (Take 5)

Perhaps (Take 6)

Perhaps (Take 6)

Past Due (Take E)

Each of the intervallic clusters is indicated numerically and is coupled with its gestural properties: - enclosure (E), cycle (C), and a hang (H) gesture. Events such as these reveal key fragments of the highly flexible design within which he was operating. The first example is a melodic expression of the voicing described earlier. It possesses a deep connection to the blues through its expression of SD, a foundational element of this intervallic cluster (discussed further in the blues examples), as well as a source for the 4th intervals discussed next (to some degree, as is the third example but with the unusual major 7). In establishing the type of intervallic cluster when a triplet or three groups appear within the pattern, as in the fifth and sixth examples,

it is the first note of the triplet that typically fulfils the criteria for the establishment of the interval, i.e., they are often in alignment with the beaming.³⁶

2. 4ths

There are two important reasons to look at Parker's proclivity for the 4th interval: 1) it remains absent from the discussion around Parker's music; 2) the 4th interval is key to the blues and became a harmonic symbol of modernity (even still today, ternary voicings are often considered antiquated while quartal harmony continues to enjoy a somewhat elevated status: a symbol of modernity). Moreover, there is a connection to the voicings discussed earlier in this section: when these are opened, they form quartal voicings of the IV7 (SD region) of C and the same upper structures (6/9) of Bb, Eb, and Ab. Shown below is the quartal reorganisation of the two voicings demonstrated at the beginning of this section. The 324 or 423 cluster is now in an open position; there is only one option (no inversion) in the open quartal position.

Figure 25. Quartal Voicing



Below is a cross-section of quartal events as they appear in Parker's music in fragmentary form. The first list shows a variation on the 324 crip discussed above. The examples below, taken from blues in Bb, Ab and F, show the same gesture with slightly different gestural feel and purpose. The figure is shown as a 424 intervallic sequence, which can be further understood as originating from the 324 blues gesture, as its gestural properties are almost identical, and the

³⁶ There is notable overlap with the categorisation of clusters when Parker's phrases are misaligned with the established metrical order.

arrival point is the major 3rd. These are highly original gestures and perhaps only resemble some of Coleman Hawkins' gestural lexicon, albeit using the blues pitch collections.

Figure 26. 4th Enclosures

Transposed from Bb
Slim Slam Blues (Take 2)

Transposed from Ab
Dizzy's Boogie (Master)

Transposed from F
Perhaps (Take 5)

The following examples, which show Parker's use of the 4th interval, are selected from his compositions. To stress the frequency of this quartal melodic device in the excerpts below, only the 4th interval is highlighted in each occurrence and not all the intervallic features and gestural type.

Figure 27. 4th Intervals

Transposed from Bb
Mohawk

Transposed from Ab
Chi Chi

Past Due

The 4th interval has been bracketed to illustrate its occurrence more clearly. As can be seen/heard, there are both instances of the 4th appearing as a singular unit and in a three-note cluster. The melodic/harmonic 4th is a key element in the blues, as will be shown, and, again, as a melodic interval, it is not typically associated with the music of Charlie Parker.

The examples below, from the introduction to “Klactoveesedstene” (Parker, 1947), and an excerpt from “Ko-Ko” (Parker, 1945) are included to illustrate his use of the harmonic 4th (Ha4).

Figure 28. Introduction to “Klactoveesedstene”



Figure 29. Measures 17-20, Ko-Ko



3. 2&2

This intervallic cluster is specific to Parker’s music in that it is a gestural staple that occurs frequently. The attributes that comprise the 2&2 are two 2nds separated by a larger interval of any size: the groups of 2nds can move in any direction. There is a direct connection to the previously discussed voicings in this section; the 2&2 is yet another expression, albeit reorganised, of the 324 intervallic cluster.

Figure 30. 324, 444, 2&2 Voicings

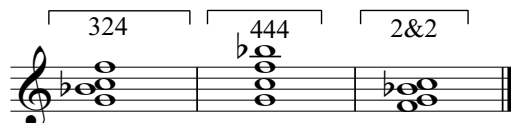


Figure 32. 2&2 Intervallic Clusters b

Figure 32 displays six musical staves, each representing a different tune by Charlie Parker. Each staff is in 4/4 time and features a bracketed 2&2 intervallic cluster. The tunes and their corresponding clusters are:

- Cheryl:** Features a 2&2 intervallic cluster.
- Past Due:** Features a 2&2E intervallic cluster.
- Perhaps:** Features a 2&2E intervallic cluster.
- Visa:** Features a 2&2E intervallic cluster.
- Transposed from Bb Big Foot:** Features a 2&2 intervallic cluster.
- Transposed from Bb Bloomdido:** Features a 2&2 intervallic cluster.

It is important to clarify that many of Parker's intervallic clusters are not exclusive to him and are features found in various parts of Western music; however, the characteristics of these clusters, i.e., their gestural properties, highly flexible design, contextual occurrence, and the frequency with which he uses them are crucial. Additionally, these intervallic clusters are part of what forms the foreground layer, helping to explain how the fragmentary structures impact the way Charlie Parker's music moves—not from a motivic or formulaic viewpoint, but from a perspective that accounts for the physical attributes rather than motivic properties.

The following section further explores the physical aspects endemic to Charlie Parker's music.

Chapter 5: Physical Gestures

Physical gestures are a vital part of all music. Many of these gestures represent defining stylistic elements: the musical behaviours essential to the identity of a particular style. The physical aspect of musical expression plays a crucial role in shaping the characteristics that define Charlie Parker's music. Moreover, it is the differences in the distinctness of these physical movements, as demonstrated through musical behaviours, that reflect the overt and nuanced differences between musics. This section concentrates on the specific physical gestures in Charlie Parker's music: expressive features that became key defining, elements of the broader bebop genre.

Charlie Parker's gestural behaviours show that his style was highly physical. The origins of these gestural behaviours might be linked to the physical manifestation of music in dance and movement. These gestural behaviours may further suggest that there can be an inseparability between music and dance. Some of Parker's gestures, which possess highly physical properties, have no easily identifiable links to Western music or dance; therefore, it may be that they are linked to an African sensibility (discussed further in the phrasing section). This broad-sweeping observation is certainly not a new idea. Still, to my knowledge, there is no list of gestures published that helps account for and describe the highly physical nature of Charlie Parker's music.

The following list comprises physical gestures that vary in character and purpose; some are almost exclusively physical, others are more rhythmically based, and some possess harmonic implications. The twelve physical gestures identified in Parker's music that are central to the forthcoming discussion are as follows:

1. Setup (SU)
2. Giddy-up (GU 2:3/3:2)
3. Giddy-up 16
4. Ool-Ya-Koo (OYK)
5. 2-note (2N)
6. Drop-in (DI)
7. Cram (CR)
8. Steps (STP)
9. Upside-down (UD)
10. Upside-down 5-b5 (5-b5)
11. Clinch (CL)
12. Rope-a-dope (RAD)

Figure 33. List of Physical Gestures

Salt Peanuts (RR)
1. Set-up
SU

Cheers (Take A)
2. Giddy-up
GU 2:3 GU 3:2 GU 2:3

Cheers (Take B)
3. Giddy-up 16
GU16 GU16

Visa (Birdland)
4. OOL-YA-KOO
OYK OYK

Billie's Bounce (HD)
5. 2-Note
2N

Big Foot (Per. Col.)
6. Drop-in
DI

Bong Beep (Take B)
7. Cram
CR

Barbados
8. Steps
STP

Blues Fast (Take 8)
9. Upside-down
UD UD

Bb Blues (NJ)
10. Upside-down b5
5-b5

The Hymn (Take 1)
11. Clinch
CL

Lester Leaps In (Rockland, 52)
12. Rope-a-dope
RAD

The following presents a detailed illustration and discussion of each of these physical gestures as they appear in Parker's music.

1. Setup (SU)

The setup (SU) is a definitive bebop gesture that typically opens a phrase using a chordal outline. However, it can also occur within a phrase to mark and establish the new harmony. This gesture most frequently appears as an ascending arpeggio, often with a propulsive rhythm, e.g., a triplet or a group of sixteenths (or a combination thereof), which intensifies the gesture's energy and flow. The secondary characteristic of the SU is to establish the existing or new harmonic context; this tool further enables Parker's musical autonomy. In many respects, the setup is like a voicing played by a chordal instrument that establishes the harmony, which Parker can then expound further within or deviate from.

Thomas Owens catalogues the SU as M1 and identifies eighteen variants, which, according to his methodology, are distinct motives. Considering the physical nature of this musical behaviour, this research primarily treats the SU as a single entity and a crucial part of Parker's crips, despite its many variations. The examples below, from a blues, "Au Privave" (Parker, 1951), and a rhythm changes outing, "Salt Peanuts" (Gillespie, 1945), illustrate the setup gesture.

Figure 34. The Setup

The figure displays two musical staves illustrating the Setup (SU) gesture. The top staff, labeled "Au Privave (Master)" with a tempo marking of "mm. 5-9", shows a sequence of notes with a bracket and "3" indicating a triplet. Above the staff, chords are marked: Bb7, F#9, Am7, D7, and Gm7. The bottom staff, labeled "Salt Peanuts (RR 2-11)" with a tempo marking of "A mm. 3-7", also shows a triplet setup gesture. Chords marked above this staff include Am7, D7, Gm7, C7, Cm7, F7, Bbmaj7, Bbm6, and Fmaj7. Both staves use a 4/4 time signature and treble clef.

These examples demonstrate that Parker's use of the setup establishes both the existing and new harmonic region, some of which align with the changes and the bar lines and some of

which do not (this metrical displacement will be discussed in detail shortly). In the first example, the SU opens the crip in m. 6 of the form and in m. 9 (the continuation of the latter is not shown). In m. 7, the SU is situated within the phrase. The second example shows the SU as the opening, a feature within the phrase (m. 5) and then as a gestural cadence in m. 7.

2. Giddy-up (GU)

The giddy-up (GU) is an ironically used moniker that shows solidarity with a similarly pejorative term, ‘bebop.’ Moreover, it is a nod to Parker’s apparent love of Country and Western films, as well as the music of Hank Williams: a favourite musical quote of Parker’s was the country music hit by Jay Livingston and Ray Evans, “Buttons and Bows.” On this subject of Hank Williams, Ken Burns comments on a story apparently told by Dizzy Gillespie: “...much to his fellow musicians’ shock, they found him feeding nickels into the jukebox playing country music songs. ‘Bird,’ they asked, using his famous nickname, ‘how can you play that music?’ Parker replied, ‘Listen to the stories.’”³⁷

The term giddy-up describes the use of 3- and 2-group patterns that intensify the forward momentum, resulting in increased phrase propulsion. Quite often Parker will execute this in a setup or within a phrase where the 3 group uses the upper neighbour articulating the subdominant on the tonic (arguably a blues behaviour). The examples below illustrate Parker’s preferred placement of this gesture, which typically involves the tonic-subdominant relationship, as seen in the opening phrase of “Ornithology” (Harris, 1946), possibly originating from the crips of Lester Young.³⁸

³⁷ Daniel Gewertz, “Ken Burns’ ‘Country Music’ — Superb Cinematic Storytelling.” *The Arts Fuse*, September 22, 2019. Accessed October 23, 2025. <https://artsfuse.org/188755/music-commentary/ken-burns-country-music-superb-cinematic-storytelling>

³⁸ Carl Woideck, *Charlie Parker: His Music and Life*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996, p. 91-92.

Figure 35. The Giddy-up a

The figure displays three staves of musical notation for the piece "Billie's Bounce (HD)". Each staff is in 4/4 time and features a different harmonic region and a corresponding giddy-up (GU) figure. The first staff is labeled with an F#9 chord and a GU 3:2 figure. The second staff is labeled with a G-7 chord and a GU 2:3 figure. The third staff is labeled with a Bb7 chord and a GU 2:3 figure. Each staff shows a short musical phrase with a bracket indicating the specific GU figure being played.

Each of the examples shown above is from Parker's solo on a rare bootleg of "Billie's Bounce" (Parker, 1945) recorded at the Hotel Diplomat in the early 1950s. The giddy-up (GU) figure, as played by Parker in these instances above, occurs without concern for the harmony. In this form, Parker plays this crip in all three harmonic regions of the blues I, V (in m. 9 of the blues ii7 can be interchangeable with V7), and IV, respectively. On this solo, Parker plays this figure a total of nine times, and every time it feels and sounds slightly different, resulting from the harmonic region, the entrance and exit, and the phrase [dis]placement.

There is a standout moment where Parker plays with the GU figure shown above on take 4 of "Billie's Bounce" (Parker, 1945). This crip often includes the typical BU approach, which, as will be shown, was often connected to his expression of the GU, particularly when centred around scalar degree 4 (SD) but can occur anywhere within his lexicon.

Figure 36. The Giddy-up b

mm. 1-3

Billies Bounce (Take 4)

3:2GU 3:2GU 2:3GU

3. Giddy-up 16 (GU16)

The giddy-up 16 figure is something that this research discovered after thousands of hours of poring over Parker's music: listening, learning, and writing out transcriptions. It is a very subtle feature that Parker uses sparingly, but when he does so, it is highly effective. The propulsion and forward drive that this physical feature can infuse into the rhythmic feel is significant. It is almost like an exaggerated skip beat, a rhythmic key to the swing feel (there are instances where it feels like [parts] of this figure are embedded into his eighth-note swing feel). It is possible that this may be, in part, linked to Parker's affinity for country and western music, i.e., Gioachino Rossini's finale to his opera, *Guillaume Tell* (1829), which was the theme song for *The Lone Ranger* radio show, first broadcast on January 31, 1933. The articulation of the vocable, giddy-up, seamlessly aligns with the rhythmic 'hook' in this epic finale.

Below are two examples of this rhythmic articulation, albeit from outside the primary repertoire sources selected for this research, "Cheers" (McGhee, 1947) and "Ko-Ko" (Parker, 1945).

Figure 37. The Giddy-up 16ths

The musical score for 'The Giddy-up 16ths' is presented in three staves. The top staff, labeled 'Chords', shows a sequence of chords: Fm⁷, Bb⁷, Ebmaj⁷, and a final chord marked with a double bar line and a slash. The middle staff, labeled 'Cheers (Take B)', features a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes, followed by eighth-note pairs and a quarter note, with intervallic clusters labeled 226E, 233E, and 325E. The bottom staff, labeled 'Ko Ko (Master)', shows a similar melodic line with intervallic clusters labeled 3223, 233E, and 2&2H. Both the middle and bottom staves include 'GU' (Giddy-up) markings: 'GU16_ GU16_' for the Cheers staff and 'GU 3:2_ GU16_ GU16_' for the Ko Ko staff.

Included in the examples above are the previously discussed E and H gestures shown with their corresponding intervallic cluster. The GU is wonderfully present in these combined expressions of Parker's crips. The subtlety of the GU is arguably its most significant feature as it goes virtually unnoticed upon many listens, but once it appears, it's impossible to 'un-hear' it.

4. Ool-Ya-Koo (OYK)

This, another vocable, authored by Dizzy Gillespie,³⁹ is an essential part of the scat singing tradition. Nevertheless, it arguably derives its origins from the African tradition of expressing rhythm through vocal sounds. In his 1959 book *Studies in African Music, Volumes I and II*, the Reverend Arthur Morris Jones offers further insight into the possibility that scat singing in jazz may have origins in African music. Below is a brief excerpt from the vocables that his colleague and guide, Mr. Tay wrote down to use as his compositional/performance aid:

azegi gazegleegi
azeglezegi, gitegi tegite
tegi, tegi, tegi, tegi
tegi tegi tegi
ga ga te te te te te te

³⁹ Dizzy Gillespie and Gil Fuller, "Ool-Ya-Koo." New York: Gillespie Music Inc., 1947.

gaga te te, gitegi gaga gi⁴⁰

This brief excerpt from Jones' seminal work demonstrates how the rhythmic patterns expressed through vocables are similar to those heard in jazz scat singing.

The figure in question in Charlie Parker's music is the 16th-note triplet and eighth-note combination. This is essential to the bebop vernacular; however, Parker used this device much more sparingly than some others, such as Dizzy Gillespie. The illustration shown below, which illustrates the "Ool-Ya-Koo" (OYK), is from a Parker blues, "Another Hairdo" (1948).

Figure 38. Ool-Ya-Koo



Within an oral musical tradition, the Ool-Ya-Koo vocable is arguably the most effective way to articulate this rhythmic grouping.

5. 2-note (2N)

The primary function of the 2-note (2N) gesture is to displace the meter. The most typical location of this figure is on the strongest beats in the measure, beats 1 and 3. Many of the displaced phrases within the Parker lexicon employ the 2N figure, so much so that it is often built into the structure of his crips. Below are two examples that show the 2N figure and its primary locale: beats one and three (the latter being less common).⁴¹ The broader implications of

⁴⁰ Arthur Morris Jones, *Studies in African Music Volumes I & II*, Oxford University Press, 1978, p. 184.

⁴¹ The 2-note gestures can occur on any of the beats, particularly when a phrase is displaced for a lengthy duration (shown in the phrasing chapters)

the metrical displacement incurred by these 2-note figures will be addressed in the phrasing section.

Figure 39. The 2-note Gesture

Figure 39 displays musical notation for four staves, illustrating the 2-note gesture and its relationship to harmonic changes. The staves are labeled as follows:

- Staff 1 (Harmonic):** Am⁷, D⁷, Gm⁷, C⁷, Cm⁷, F⁷, B^bmaj⁷, B^ø⁷, Fmaj⁷.
- Staff 2 (Salt Peanuts (RR 2-15)):** Shows a 2-note figure (2N) and a setup gesture (SU) with a 2:3GU overlap. The 2N figure is on beat one, except for m. 5 where it is on beat three.
- Staff 3 (Harmonic):** B^b6, Fmaj⁷, Am⁷, D⁷, Gm⁷.
- Staff 4 (Billie's Bounce (HD)):** Shows a 2-note figure (2N) and a setup gesture (SU) with a 2:3GU overlap. The 2N figure is on beat one, except for m. 5 where it is on beat three.

The examples above show the 2-note figure and how, in these instances, it is consistently followed by Parker's setup gesture. Additionally, the 2:3GU overlaps the gesture as a part of the layered braiding woven by Parker. This 2N and the SU combination of gestures confirms the new harmonic region, albeit displaced by one beat. In the examples above, the 2N figure is on beat one in every instance except for m. 5 of "Salt Peanuts" (Gillespie, 1945), where it is on the 'other beat one:' beat three! Another feature of the 2N figure is that it exhibits the voice-leading movement of the chord changes Parker articulates, from the 7th to the 3rd, e.g., 7th of V7/X to the 3rd of X, a key aspect of the 2-note gesture. This enables Parker to establish the metrical displacement of the new harmonic region, with the SU then further confirming the displacement.

6. Drop-in (DI)

The drop-in gesture is familiar in the bebop vernacular and is a highly physical move where Parker drops in like a high diver jumping off a platform to perform a series of acrobatic

moves. It is prevalent in Parker's music and is primarily used as a syncopated entry point for initiating a phrase. Moreover, like the 2-note figure, it enables Parker to displace a crips metrical location, surprising the listener even when familiar with the crips and musical events. Unlike the subtlety of the 2-note gesture, the drop-in is an overt move. As there aren't dynamics in the traditional sense: crescendos, louds and softs, legato and staccato, and vibrato is used sparingly, therefore, physical moves like the DI could be seen as such.

Below are two examples that show how the drop-in (DI) appears as the beginning of Parker's classic ii7 V7 I crip in C (iiVC).

Figure 40. The Drop-in

The figure displays a musical score for three staves. The top staff is the piano accompaniment, showing chords Dm7, G7, and C6. The middle and bottom staves are vocal lines, both labeled 'Perhaps (Take 1)'. The middle staff features a 'iiVC' crip pattern with annotations: 'DI' (Drop-in) on the first beat, '334E' on the second, '327E' on the third, 'HR' (Hemiola rest) on the fourth, and '423E' on the fifth. The bottom staff also features a 'iiVC' crip pattern with annotations: 'HR' on the first beat, 'DI' on the second, '7-3' on the third, and '3-1' on the fourth. The score is in 4/4 time and includes various musical notations such as rests, notes, and fingerings.

In the instances shown above, there is much to discuss; the three enclosures and the 7-3 and 3-1 VL illustrate further how Parker shifts his iiVC crip over by one beat using the phrase-shift. Then, towards the end of the crip, Parker breaks up the phrase using the hemiola rest (quarter-eighth rest), which is also the precursor to the entry point in the second example (the HR can be crucial for the phrase displacements). The examples above can also be seen as large-scale enclosures, e.g., R = E-A (12th), then in m. 11, of the form on beat 1 and 2, respectively, E = C.

7. Cram (CR)

Cramming (CR) is a way of trying to fit too many notes into a sequence in as short a duration as possible. When discussing the cram, in what looks to be a staged ‘in conversation’ moment in *To Be or Not...to Bop* (the statements are connected, but it is not apparent that they are speaking to each other), Miles Davis (MD) and Dizzy Gillespie (DG) discuss Parker’s (Bird’s) use of cramming.

MD: "But they played the same chords, the same chords. Dizzy and Bird played the same thing. They used to play lines together just like each other. You couldn't tell the difference. But naturally being a saxophonist, Bird was fast. Bird was a fast muthafucka. He used to do some shit, boy, you couldn't believe."⁴²

DG: "Remember when he used to 'cram?' He'd be at a tempo way up there and he'd 'cram' something. And that means triple the tempo that he was already playing. Muthafucka'd be way up at a high tempo, and then he'd cram, right in the middle of that, '... a waddlle-laddlela.' Boy! Oooo, shit."⁴³

Below is an example of Parker cramming his favourite ii7 V7 I crip in the key of F (iiVF)⁴⁴ on mm. 4-5 of his blues in C “Bongo Beep” (Parker, 1947).

Figure 41. Cramming

The figure displays two musical staves. The top staff, labeled 'mm. 4-5', shows a sequence of chords: Gm⁷, C⁷, and F⁷. The bottom staff, labeled 'Bongo Beep (Take B)', shows a melodic line in 4/4 time. A bracket labeled 'CR' (cram) is placed under a triplet of notes in measure 4, specifically under the notes G4, A4, and B4. Below the 'CR' bracket, the text 'iiVF CR' is written, indicating the harmonic context of the cram.

⁴² Dizzy Gillespie with Al Fraser. *To Be, or Not... to Bop*, University of Minnesota Press, 2009, p. 233.

⁴³ Dizzy Gillespie with Al Fraser. *To Be, or Not... to Bop*, p. 233.

⁴⁴ Thomas Owens calls part of this M5C, but the example above shows a more complete representation of the crip, hence the new moniker.

This version of one of Parker's most-played crips, the iiVF, cannot be precisely notated; however, since the crip is well known to this research, the notes and rhythmic values are predictable. But on this occasion, iiVF was executed as a 'cram' gesture and was "fast as a muthafucka." The double-time tempo at which this crip is played far exceeds 400 bpm, making the crip sound wild, unleashed, and wonderfully fresh (there may even be some 'wiggling of the fingers' happening) in this instance that exemplifies Parker's cram gesture.

8. Steps (STP)

Parker's most frequent use of what this research calls the steps gesture (STP) primarily appears within his compositions. The attributes of this gesture are highly original and, again, closely resemble a dance move, such as tap dancing. The features of this physical move are defined by the ascending motion, which is broken up by a contrary descending interval placed between each ascending interval, giving the physical impression of climbing steps.

Figure 42. Steps

mm. 5-6
Barbados

STP

mm. 11-12
Si Si

STP

Transposed from Bb
mm. 7-8
Moose The Mooche

STP

mm. 6-7
Billie's Bounce

STP

Transposed from Bb
mm. 6-1
Passport (RC)

STP

The examples shown above are from five of Parker's compositions on blues and rhythm changes, all occurring in different parts of the form, so the chords have been omitted, and all in the key of F (the measures are indicated, and the harmony is not required to illustrate the STP gesture accurately). The first three examples begin differently but share the same 243 intervallic cluster to close. "Billie's Bounce" (Parker, 1945) illustrates a very similar gesture to the first three examples but uses a 324 cluster instead of the 243. "Passport" (Parker, 1949) is the structural outlier; however, it employs yet another intervallic cluster from the same family, the 423. The primary features of the STP gesture are accounted for, albeit in a more varied form.

9. Upside-down (UD)

An abrupt change of direction at the apex of a gesture defines the upside-down (UD) gesture. This gesture is a hallmark of the bebop lexicon, characterised by its highly physical properties. The UD also has dance-like properties reminiscent of a flip or rapid change in direction that a dancer might use, particularly when dancing with a partner who initiates an

abrupt change in direction. This musical behaviour was an essential part of Charlie Parker's musical lexicon and a mainstay of Bud Powell's music. It is important to reiterate that Charlie Parker's musical concept heavily influenced Bud Powell and all the musicians of that epoch. Sonny Rollins, another “disciple of Bird,”⁴⁵ remembers: “I realised this guy has got something going here, and I began to become a devotee of Charlie Parker.”⁴⁶ The Sonny Rollins tune “Pent-Up House” (1956) is built entirely on the (Pent) upside-down gesture.

Below is a series of upside-down gestures as played by Parker on a Bb blues. The abrupt change in direction at the end of each chordal outline (a setup gesture) is the upside-down figure. Moreover, the repeated arpeggiated gestures make these upside-down examples inherently harmonic.

Figure 43. Upside-down Gesture

The figure displays five musical staves, each representing a different tune or set of chords. Above the staves, the chords G⁷, C^{m7}, F⁷, B^{b6}, C^{m7}, and F⁷ are indicated. The staves are labeled on the left as follows:

- mm. 8-12: A staff with rhythmic notation (slashes) corresponding to the chords.
- Blues Fast (Take 8): Shows arpeggiated figures labeled 'SU' (Setup Gesture) and 'UD' (Upside-down Gesture).
- Big Foot (RR 1-04): Shows arpeggiated figures labeled 'SU' and 'UD', with some triplets indicated by a '3'.
- Parker's Mood (Take 2): Shows arpeggiated figures labeled 'SU' and 'UD'.
- Bb Blues (NJ): Shows arpeggiated figures labeled 'SU' and 'UD', with a quintuplet indicated by a '5'.

These examples illustrate various incarnations of the UD gesture and the SU that precedes each. As mentioned, the Sonny Rollins tune may have been derived from this physical

⁴⁵ Charles Mingus identifies himself as a disciple of Charlie Parker's, along with Miles Davis, in an open letter to Miles, which was published in *Down Beat* on November 30, 1955.

⁴⁶ Aidan Levy, *Saxophone Colossus: The Life and Music of Sonny Rollins*, New York: Hachette Books, 2022. E-book edition, Ch. 6, para. 2.

behaviour of Parker's: in "Pent-Up House," the UD gesture is also preceded by a lengthy pick-up; however, instead of a chordal outline, it is scalar. Moreover, the harmony is identical to that in mm. 9-10 of the first two examples, e.g., the move from D to C# (9th of ii7 to the #5 of V+7).⁴⁷

10. Upside-down 5-b5

This gesture is closely related to the upside-down gesture and is also both a harmonic feature and a physical gesture. Below are four examples that appear on Parker's slow blues recordings in the key of Bb.

Figure 44. Upside-down 5-b5 a

mm. 8-9

Dm7 G7 Cm7

5-b5

Parker's Mood (Take 2)

3 OYK

5-b5

Parker's Mood (Take 4)

3 SU

5-b5

Parker's Mood (Take 5)

2N SU 3

5-b5

Bb Blues (NJ)

3 SU BU

The above examples illustrate four instances where Parker overtly uses the melodic b5, which, as will be shown further, is very unusual within his broader musical lexicon. This is a

⁴⁷ This can also be understood as 13 to b13 as it relates to V7.

physical move that Bud Powell also frequently used, as heard in the introduction to “Bouncin’ with Bud” (Powell, 1949). Although Powell employs another harmonic principle, in this case the harmonic tritone, the gestural properties are shared. That this crip somehow retains its melodic tunefulness despite the intensely angular nature of the leaps and the abrupt change in direction is remarkable. Parker possessed a profound ability to make even the most astringent physical gestures sound and appear playful, melodic and always tuneful. Again, each 5-b5 is preceded by the SU gesture.

To further illustrate Parker’s crips, the example below presents two recordings that occurred over a three-year period, during which Parker incorporates the 5-b5 gesture. The inclusion of the WH5 PV (played loosely by Parker in the first example), the 243E, and the SU gesture further completes parts of the gestalt with which this section is focused.

Figure 45. Upside-down 5-b5 b

The musical score for Figure 45, titled "Upside-down 5-b5 b", is presented in three staves. The top staff shows the piano accompaniment with chords: C⁶, Gm⁷, C⁷, F⁷, C⁶, and A⁷. The middle staff is a saxophone solo by Cheryl (Master), and the bottom staff is a saxophone solo by C Blues (PB 1-01). Both solos feature a "crip" consisting of a series of eighth notes, a triplet of eighth notes, and a 5-b5 interval. The solos are annotated with various musical gestures: WH5 PV, 2N, SU, WH 7-3, 243E, 3334E, and 5-b5. The C Blues solo also includes DI, SU, 3:2GU, and C Bb.

11. Clinch (CL)

The clinch (CL) is a highly physical move found in boxing in which the two opponents lock together and exchange close-range body shots. In Charlie Parker’s music, the clinch is heard when Parker stays in the lower registral area of the horn and plays through the IV⁷ using a crip comprised of syncopated jabs and accents that produce this pugilistic feeling. Harmonically, these events are designed to further articulate and express the subdominant region. Parker

typically concludes with an arpeggiated gesture on I major 7, using the setup combined with the giddy-up gesture to exit the crip (as shown in the first two examples below). The clinch occurs in m. 2 and mm. 5-6 of the blues and in m. 6 of rhythm changes; occurrences of the clinch outside of the SD harmonic region are unusual. Below are four examples that show the clinch in mm. 5-7 of a Bb blues with a few gestural variations (as indicated).

Figure 46. Clinch

Figure 46 displays five musical examples of the Clinch (CL) gesture in Bb blues, measures 5-7. The notation is in 4/4 time, with a key signature of two flats (Bb). The examples are labeled as follows:

- mm. 5-7:** Shows the harmonic structure with Eb7 in measures 5-6 and Bb6 in measure 7. A double bar line is present between measures 6 and 7.
- Buzzy (Take 1):** Features a 6-beat C G gesture (measures 5-6) and a 3-beat C G gesture (measure 7). The CL gesture is indicated by a bracket over measures 5-6. Other gestures include 3223E, 243E, 233E, and 333E.
- Blues Fast (Take 9):** Features a 3-beat C G gesture (measure 5) and a 3-beat C G gesture (measure 7). The CL gesture is indicated by a bracket over measures 5-6. Other gestures include 322H, 223C, and 3.
- The Hymn (Take 1):** Features a 3-beat C G gesture (measure 5) and a 3-beat C G gesture (measure 7). The CL gesture is indicated by a bracket over measures 5-6. Other gestures include T-lick and 3223E.
- Big Foot (DB # 215):** Features a 3-beat C G gesture (measure 5) and a 3-beat C G gesture (measure 7). The CL gesture is indicated by a bracket over measures 5-6. Other gestures include 2x CL, 3223E, 243E, and 233E.

The above examples illustrate the main features of the clinch (CL). It is a ternary crip that spans six beats (6-beat) in 4/4 time or three beats (3-beat) in the double time. A key attribute of the clinch is that it articulates a cycle based on the 3rd of IV7 (C G). The other features shown above are the enclosures (E), Cycles (C), and Hang (H) gestures (only variants of the version shown on “Buzzy” (Parker, 1948) are indicated in the other three examples). The

features within this crib show many of Parker's preferred melodic, harmonic, physical, and phrase behaviours. (The T-lick is discussed further in the 3, 6, 12-beat phrase section.)

12. Rope-a-dope (RAD)

Throughout the many discussions on Charlie Parker's music, long-sustained notes and his use of space remain markedly absent. Arguably, the most pronounced use of sustain, silence and space in Parker's music occurs in a move this research calls the rope-a-dope: another boxing move in which a fighter feigns being trapped against the ropes, goading their opponent to throw ineffective punches. In other words, when Parker uses this physical move, the expression of sustained pitches, and the use of space and silence, to set up his forthcoming ideas, there is the musical impression that he is 'flailing' or tired. This, of course, is not the case; rather, this move creates suspense and heightens the listener's expectation. Below are six examples of Parker using the rope-a-dope (RAD) in the A section of rhythm changes in Bb.

Figure 47. Rope-a-dope

Figure 47 displays six musical examples of the Rope-a-dope (RAD) technique in Charlie Parker's A sections of rhythm changes in Bb. The examples are arranged vertically, each with a title and a corresponding musical score. Above the staves, a sequence of chords is listed: Bb⁶, Cm⁷, F⁷, Dm⁷, Dbm⁷, Cm⁷, F⁷, Fm⁷, Bb⁷, Eb⁶, E^{o7}, Bb⁶, Cm⁷, F⁷. Each staff has a bracket labeled 'RAD' indicating the specific technique used. The staves are: 1. Bb RC, A; 2. Bird's Nest (Take A); 3. Wee (DB, 4-08); 4. Wee (DB, 4-08); 5. Lester Leaps In (Rockland, 52); 6. Anthropology (Howard Theatre, 52); 7. Lester Leaps In (Rockland, 52).

The RAD, as illustrated above, is similar to the hang gesture in that it is a reprieve from the intense forward momentum generated by Parker's music. Moreover, the various

(dis)placements by Parker, the entries and re-entries, imply various reorganisations of the strong beats within the measure (a principle discussed in the phrase-slip chapter).

This section presents a shift in focus from more traditional notions of melodic motives to concepts of melodic gestures, intervallic clusters, and the intrinsically physical gestures, thereby allowing for a more holistic view of Charlie Parker's musical behaviours. This further enables the isolation of the various structural properties that comprise his musical concept and style. Moreover, using this form of categorisation is useful from a pedagogical standpoint. Isolating the various foreground parts and layers can help jazz students assimilate, allowing for enhanced flexibility in generating or developing new ideas. In other words, instead of a motivic category, musical behaviours and attributes are categorised in a more flexible, fluid manner, offering greater potential for reinvention, reinterpretation, and usefulness from a pedagogical standpoint.

Part III: Blues

Chapter 6: Charlie Parker Played the Blues

Charlie Parker personified the blues idiom. When he played the blues, he was a real blueser. You forget about changes when you play the blues, but every now and then you put a little lick in there to let 'em know, "Here's where I'm at, really." Bebop is a highly sophisticated form of music; the blues is very simple, in form.⁴⁸

Dizzy Gillespie

Through Charlie Parker's extensive discography, both live and in studio recordings, it becomes evident that he played the blues more frequently than any other musical form, with the harmonic structure of "I Got Rhythm" (Gershwin, 1928) being the second most common. The vast quantity of Parker's recorded output indicates that the number of choruses played on these forms must be in the thousands. When considering the many undocumented dates, the actual number would have been far greater. Due to the prominence of the blues and rhythm changes, and the broader conceptual implications of the former, this research analysed Parker's playing on these progressions from over three hundred recordings, primarily in the keys of C, F, and Bb. Material from other keys and harmonic progressions was used if the patterns and corroborative data were absent from the three main keys of blues and rhythm changes. This work draws on material from the over 300 transcriptions produced by this research.

The two harmonic vehicles mentioned above were an effective means for the execution of Parker's harmonic concept, for they both employ the tonic "bourdon" and prominently feature the subdominant region. Regarding the former point, Parker compositions, such as the A section of "Passport (Rhythm)" (Parker, 1949), do not articulate a single chord change; instead, they are

⁴⁸ Dizzy Gillespie and Al Fraser, *To Be, or Not... to Bop*, University of Minnesota Press, 2009, p. 371.

melodic/rhythmic forays in the tonic key: a type of modal approach that uses the bourdon, typically the tonic or V. To the latter point, Parker often found a “path”⁴⁹ to target the subdominant, whether as a destination, interpolation, a passing harmonic gesture or as a point of ‘resolution.’

I first encountered the idea of the bourdon in the blues through Gerhard Kubik. In an article titled “Bourdon, Blue Notes, and Pentatonism in the Blues: An Africanist Perspective.” In this article, Kubik, along with his friend, African guitarist Moya Aliya Malamusi, reflect on having just listened to blues musician Robert Belfour. Interjecting his own ideas and Moya’s observations of Belfour’s music, Kubik writes.

Unlike some western musicians, Moya was not distracted by any search for “chords,” “vertical harmony” and other conceptual gimmicks characteristic of a European music theory approach. In his perception he had hit with one calculated stroke at the nerve centre of Belfour’s tonal-harmonic world and by implication that shared with many others in the “Delta” or “Deep South” blue style. He had verbalised what indeed seems to be a central criterion distinguishing some of these artists...the tendency to organize many of their songs over a *virtual bourdon* and with a powerful central tonal gravity. The use of “riffs” and short repeated melodic rhythmic figures as songs underlying building blocks is interrelated with this primary concept.⁵⁰

As will be shown throughout this work, this description above is surprisingly fitting when thinking of and/or describing Parker’s music. Parker often articulates a bourdon or melodic drone that establishes a tonal gravity, from which he then plays his blues licks (riffs).

⁴⁹ Steve Coleman, “The Dozens: Steve Coleman on Charlie Parker,” Edited by Ted Panken & Steve Coleman. M-Base. Accessed March 28, 2020

⁵⁰ Gerhard Kubik, “Bourdon, Blue Notes, and Pentatonism in the Blues: An Africanist Perspective.” In *Ramblin’ on My Mind: New Perspectives on the Blues*, edited by David Evans, 11-48, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008, p. 14.

An Overview

Charlie Parker's musical concept was steeped in the blues. In a time when musicians were moving away from traditional expressions of blues, c. 1940, Parker re-emboldened the highly florid, descending blues-style gestures, its folksy⁵¹ aesthetic, the bemoaning vocal cries and shouts, the country simplicity, and the polyrhythmic phrasing.

The following discussion focuses on the core elements of Parker's blues-based musical concept and behaviours, the aim of which is to illustrate how the blues is expressed in Charlie Parker's music. Broader investigations into the blues, exploring its cultural aspects and possible origins —i.e., its possible African roots (as shown above) —have been conducted by many musicologists and ethnomusicologists (Alan Lomax, Gerhard Kubic, Jeff Titon). However, this research is primarily interested in how Parker expressed the musical behaviours endemic to the blues as a manifest element in his music. As previously stated, there are only speculations of a cursory nature as to why certain sociological elements or comparative consistencies are present when looking at Parker's music. In other words, Parker's blues behaviour was highly original and, in many respects, revealed itself. By categorising the behaviours and gestures, this research endeavours to illustrate the juxtaposition between Parker's folksy manner of musical expression and his highly complex schematic designs.

As mentioned, the data used for this research primarily comes from Parker's blues and rhythm changes outings, where the musical links to a blues aesthetic can be more firmly established. Interestingly, many of Charlie Parker's compositions of blues and rhythm changes ('A' sections) possess less of the more obvious blues behaviours seen in his improvisations but still retain the essence of the blues ("Another Hairdo" (1947), "Now's The Time" (1945), and

⁵¹ The term folksy denotes that, despite all the virtuosity in Parker's music, it always retained an earthiness and a penchant for the blues. The connection to the latter is further elucidated in the summary of this part.

“Billie’s Bounce” (1945) are notable exceptions to this). This research will demonstrate how Parker’s more subtle and nuanced musical behaviours have identifiable structures within them that evoke this blues feeling without the use of blues licks. In other words, the blues is a clear element in Parker’s music that extends far beyond his more overt blues licks, of which he had many; however, it is not the ‘blues scale’ that makes it the blues. All too often, the blues is experienced as and described in an ephemeral sense: something inexplicable yet highly recognisable. As Stanley Crouch wrote in his novel of historical fiction, *Kansas City Lightning*, “blues was the lubricant that opened up the music. It let you get the feeling in.”⁵² Sentiments like this, true but incomplete, tend to be typical of discussions central to the blues genre, but also when discussing Parker’s music.

A more comprehensive view reveals that, within Charlie Parker’s music, the expression of the blues encompasses a diverse range of musical behaviours. There are structures and physical characteristics that go beyond the obvious. This research explores and demonstrates how, in Charlie Parker’s music, much of the blues feeling can be understood through identifiable musical behaviours such as physical gestures, licks, metrical organisation and harmonic proclivities. In other words, the blues feeling results from discernible musical structures. The gestural properties, subdominant harmonic regions, and poly-metrical phrasing that Parker exhibits are not just feelings but quantifiable musical entities. Additionally, there are, of course, other elements—such as his frequent ‘scoops’ of scale degree 3, the music simmering without

⁵² Stanley Crouch, *Kansas City Lightning: The Rise and Times of Charlie Parker*, E-book edition. New York: HarperCollins, 2013, Ch. 6, para. 32.

any clear trajectory towards a climactic high point⁵³, and the musical continuum or narrative “stories”⁵⁴ that Parker could weave.

In art and music, there will always be an element of the enigmatic, the inexplicable, where music speaks for itself. During a live TV performance with Dizzy Gillespie in 1952, where Parker and Dizzy were both receiving awards from Downbeat, presented by Leonard Feather, for outstanding instrumentalist of the year, when asked to comment, Parker (annoyed with Feather’s cohort and host, Earl Wilson) responds with irritation and obfuscation, “We feel that music speaks louder than words, so we would rather voice our opinion that way if you don’t mind.”⁵⁵

Charlie Parker and Folk Music

Charlie Parker’s music was influenced by many musicians, including Lester Young, Coleman Hawkins, Buster Smith, Louis Armstrong, Ben Webster, Chu Berry, and others. However, this research has concluded that, while Parker’s individual influences were significant - many licks were copied directly from them - it was his foundation in the blues that was more fundamental in underpinning his musical concept. The blues did not merely serve as an influence, but rather as a wellspring from which it seems he could endlessly draw. Moreover, it may be that Charlie Parker’s music was universal and accessible because he had such deep roots in the blues. In short, Parker’s music emerged from folk music traditions and, as such, retained a humanity essential to its appeal and widespread musical influence.

⁵³ There is no raucous climax that so many associate with blues; instead, there is a simmering that was more indicative of the blues in Parker’s era and in his music, but not all blues possessed this coolness.

⁵⁴ Carl Woideck, *The Charlie Parker Companion: Six Decades of Commentary*, New York: Schirmer Books, 1998, p. 122.

⁵⁵ Earl Wilson, Host “Stage Entrance” Episode aired February 24, 1952 – Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, DuMont Television Network. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PiKHAecEvM>

The blues were, in many respects, a key to the conceptual foundation of jazz from the 1920s to the 1930s, particularly in Kansas City, Parker's place of origin, where the blues were paramount. Thomas Owens, Henry Martin, Lawrence Koch, Brian Priestley, Ross Russell, Steve Larson, and others have all acknowledged that the blues is manifest in Parker's music (it is undeniable); however, the investigations into Parker's blues roots are cursory at best. To achieve a more comprehensive understanding of Parker's musical concept, the blues must be a central focus of the discussion.

The impact of folk music on innovative artistic achievements extends well beyond the link between the blues and Charlie Parker's music: it is also apparent in much European art music (though from different folk music traditions). Bruno Nettl states: "What we call 'art music' and 'folk music' are not entirely separate universes; rather, the former has consistently drawn upon the melodic, rhythmic, and modal resources of the latter."⁵⁶ Nettl further elaborates: "The dichotomy between folk and art music is misleading; throughout history, cultivated music has continually drawn on the idioms of folk tradition."⁵⁷

In Western classical music, seminal composers such as Béla Bartók, Ralph Vaughn Williams, and Aaron Copland were well known for their use of folk music not only for inspiration but also to establish a work's musical identity; elements this research describes as defined by specific musical behaviours. In the words of Bartók: "The right type of peasant music is most varied and perfect in its forms. Its expressive power is amazing, and at the same time it is devoid of all sentimentality and superfluous ornaments."⁵⁸ This humanistic perspective resonates

⁵⁶ Bruno Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-One Issues and Concepts*, new edition, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005, p. 20.

⁵⁷ Bruno Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-One Issues and Concepts*, p. 20.

⁵⁸ Béla Bartók, "The Influence of Peasant Music on Modern Music," *Tempo* 14 (Autumn–Winter 1949), p. 19.

with Charlie Parker's music, as he always retained the folksy blues aesthetic even during his most harmonically and rhythmically complex musical outings.

Ralph Vaughan Williams shares his views on borrowing directly from folk sources, stating: "There is no reason why a composer should not borrow his tunes ready-made from folk-song, provided he knows how to make them his own."⁵⁹ In a similar vein, Copland, who incorporated much of the American country music aesthetic into his compositions, tells us that: "a hymn tune represents a certain order of feeling: simplicity, plainness, sincerity, directness. It is the reflection of those qualities in a stylistically appropriate setting, imaginative and unconventional and not mere quotation, that gives the use of folk tunes reality and importance. In the same way, to transcribe the cowboy tune so that its essential quality is preserved is a task for the imaginative composer with a professional grasp of the problem."⁶⁰ I do not believe Parker grappled with the folk music origins from which he drew, as his expression was less formal by nature; however, such behaviours were endemic to the ethos of key figures in Western music, and this warrants acknowledgement.

The lack of firsthand testimonials about the influence of folk music on jazz and Charlie Parker's music makes it more challenging to identify which influences were at play and how conscious the incorporation of folk music (blues) was. However, records such as *Coltrane Plays the Blues* (1962), an event that occurred during John Coltrane's most advanced harmonic period, demonstrate a strong connection. Coltrane adopts a very traditional blues approach to his playing on this session (recorded in 1962, long after musical forays like "Giant Steps"). On this recording, Coltrane employs many traditional blues gestures (many of which were developed and

9. ⁵⁹ Ralph Vaughan Williams, *National Music and Other Essays*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987, p.

⁶⁰ Aaron Copland, *Music and Imagination*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952, p. 104.

reintroduced by Charlie Parker in the 1940s) and incorporates simple harmonic features such as the V7 IV7 I turnaround in measures 9-11. This ‘folksy progression’, replacing the common ii7 V7 I, appears several years earlier on Sonny Rollins' recording of “Blue Seven” (Rollins, 1956). The progression in mm. 9-11, ii7 V7 I (often preceded by V7/ii7), has been a mainstay in jazz since the 1920s. The reintroduction of such folk-inspired harmonic patterns by Coltrane and Rollins partly demonstrates the enduring influence that the blues continued to exert after Charlie Parker’s blues renaissance brought it back into prominence. An early example of the V7 IV7 I turnaround in the blues can be heard on Pete Johnson’s recording of “Blues on the Downbeat” (Johnson, 1940).

Charlie Parker’s Iconoclasm and Blues Renaissance

During Charlie Parker’s era, many of his contemporaries, especially in New York and other urban centres, were moving away from the more traditional approach to the blues. It is of sociological interest that Parker’s music was becoming increasingly infused with it. The traditional style of blues, exemplified by artists from the 1930s, such as T-Bone Walker, Pete Johnson, and Mary Lou Williams, to which Parker would have been exposed, was for many ambitious young musicians directly associated with a problematic past and was often admonished. In other words, the bebop generation appeared to detach itself from such elements in pursuit of progress, modernity, and artistic sophistication. Gillespie remembers “the bebop musicians wanted to show their virtuosity. They'd play the twelve-bar outline of the blues, but they wouldn't blues it up like the older guys they considered unsophisticated. They busied themselves making changes, a thousand changes in one bar.”⁶¹ Moreover, they viewed Parker as

⁶¹ Dizzy Gillespie and Al Fraser, *To Be, or Not... to Bop*, p. 371.

a symbol of modernity. Quoting Sonny Rollins in his book *Saxophone Colossus*, Aidan Levy writes:

Bird played progressive music both aesthetically and politically. “If you saw him in performance, he was very dignified so he was going against the grain,” Sonny said. “Highly intricate, involved, complicated intellectual... he had to be recognised as not just great music but as a person that was an artist, not an entertainer, and that was very important for us because we were coming up after the war. A lot of people wanted to be treated a little better in the American mainstream. Charlie Parker to us represented that.”⁶²

Yet, Parker’s music was steeped in a representation of the very thing that many of the younger bebop generation wanted to distance themselves from. Few recordings from the bebop period, aside from those by Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie, feature blues in the traditional, folksy sense. This avoidance of many of the licks and gestures commonly associated with traditional blues can be observed in the work of Coleman Hawkins, Bud Powell, Sonny Stitt, Miles Davis (c. 1945), and others. Miles Davis’s solo on Charlie Parker’s blues from 1945, “Now’s The Time,” exemplifies this. To be clear, this research does not suggest that Parker was politically motivated; rather, it suggests that his aesthetic values and musical expression were without category or clear boundary.

In his book, *The Birth of Bebop: A Social and Musical History*, Scott DeVeaux explores the complex relationship between bebop musicians and the blues. He confirms that many beboppers, including Dizzy Gillespie, had a nuanced relationship with some of the sociological stereotypes surrounding the blues. This sentiment originates from the blues’ association with a perceived primitivism—of the entertainer and showman—and with a rural sensibility that upwardly mobile African American musicians aimed to distance themselves from. Moreover, it is possible that for some, the disconnection from the blues, as demonstrated by musicians from the

⁶² Aidan Levy, *Saxophone Colossus: The Life and Music of Sonny Rollins*, New York: Hachette Books, 2022. E-book edition Ch. 6, para. 16.

bebop and late swing era, reflected the struggle and desire to rail against life in an intensely hostile and racist white society. A world in which they were constantly torn asunder, living and negotiating the irreconcilable double consciousness. In his book, DeVeaux writes:

As brash New Yorkers with an attitude, they were keenly aware that the blues embodied a certain social inertia, a rural passivity, that they were determined to overcome. They also knew that the white-controlled culture industry was only too happy to stereotype them as blues musicians as an excuse for restricting their sphere of influence to the “race market” (siphoning off the lion’s share of the profits in the process). For the bop generation, the blues was both opportunity and obstacle.⁶³

In the early 2000s, I had a personal conversation with a highly accomplished jazz musician in New York City who, at that time, viewed the use of blues-based licks as the musical equivalent of “swearing.” He claimed that such musical expressions lacked sophistication, were unrefined, and exhibited coarseness. Evidence that the blues is perceived as having a vulgarity and baseness to it, which unfortunately (and erroneously) continues to pervade the sensibility of many established jazz musicians today.

In his Book *To Be or Not...to Bop*, Dizzy Gillespie recalls that “People wanted to hear the beat and the blues, but the bebop musicians didn't like to play the blues. They were ashamed. The media had made it shameful. Blues artists at that time hardly ever played before white people, and we played mostly for white audiences. When I'd play a blues, guys would say, "Man, you're playing that?"⁶⁴

Many streams of contemporary jazz have again moved away from many elements of the blues. Moreover, this (intentional) omission has, in some respects, become a hallmark of what

⁶³ Scott DeVeaux, *The Birth of Bebop: A Social and Musical History*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997, p. 346.

⁶⁴ Dizzy Gillespie and Al Fraser, *To Be, or Not... to Bop*, p. 371.

constitutes modern jazz and a key feature of what makes something seem progressive. Like the beboppers in the 1940s, contemporary jazz c. 2025 is often tacitly praised for the very absence of blues.

In practice, Charlie Parker did not seem to share his contemporaries' aversion to being associated with the more traditional expressions and gestures endemic to the blues. Based on the evidence, Parker employed his ornate, blues-inspired licks in unprecedented ways during many solo performances. His affinity for and musical proclivity towards the blues are beyond doubt: his music was deeply connected to it. Charlie Parker may have single-handedly redefined the primitive concept of the blues more than any other jazz musician of his era, embracing this folksy musical dialect: expressing it in a highly original, unabashed manner, without apology or deference. Moreover, there are documented instances where Parker constructs entire choruses using only his blues-based phrasing and licks—reminiscent of the florid, ornate style of blues playing most typical of boogie-woogie pianists like Pete Johnson. Parker's expression of the blues set him apart from his contemporaries, who were clearly headed in a different direction (as evidenced on countless recordings). Ironically, many of those moving away from the traditional expression of blues had acquired their style and musical concept from Charlie Parker.

When examining the prevalence of the blues in his analysis of the two takes of Charlie Parker's solo on "Red Cross," (Parker, 1945) Scott Deveaux states:

...Parker begins each solo with a pungent blues gesture...what follows has a different feeling a long phrase without the blues markers, that cleanly articulates the chromatic voice-leading implied by the chord progression (I7, IV, flat IV, I)...the commercially issued second take begins with another succinct blues gesture, answered a measure later by an offhand flurry of sixteenth notes – as if Charlie Parker were both blues singer and virtuoso accompanist."⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Scott Deveaux, *The Birth of Bebop, a Social and Musical History*, p. 374.

Jay McShann, a Kansas City pianist and bandleader who employed Parker in the early 1940s, further recalls Parker's penchant for the blues. When asked about him during an interview for *Cadence Magazine* with Bart Becker in October 1979, McShann remembered that:

I was always telling guys that, you know, we have Charlie Parker. Ask me what did he do, I tell them he played the blues. And if you listen closely, anything that Bird played...if it was a ballad he gave you the ballad sound, but bird played the blues. Bird was one of the greatest blues musicians in the world. And he learned that from me and some of the others up on 12th street (Kansas City).⁶⁶

The degree to which the blues informed and shaped Parker's musical concept will always be unquantifiable, but suffice to say, profound. Moreover, he did not use it merely as a 12-bar form for musical creation, but as something far greater: a musical foundation and means for maintaining the folksy aesthetic in his complex musical ideas. Throughout this discussion, this research provides examples, accompanying theories, and explanations that connect the blues to Charlie Parker's broader musical concept and to his folksy harmonic gestures.

An Outline of Parker's Blues Harmony

In Charlie Parker's music, the blues is characterised by the 12-bar form and the following harmonic rhythm: I IV7 I V7/IV IV7 IV7 I V7/ii7 ii-7 V7 I I. The pitch collection used by Parker, which is most closely associated with the blues, is only partially derived from the hexatonic scale commonly known as the blues scale, which appears to have been codified in this format in jazz pedagogy by Jamey Abersold circa 1967, as shown below.

⁶⁶ Bart Becker, "Jay McShann," *Cadence: The Independent Journal of Creative Improvised Music* 5, nos. 9–10 (Sept./Oct. 1979). Reprinted in Carl Woideck, *The Charlie Parker Companion: Six Decades of Commentary*, 139–42. New York: Schirmer, 1998. P. 139.

Figure 48. Common Blues Scale



Parker does use elements of this scale, as do many others, pre- and post-Charlie Parker; however, the more frequently used blues scale by Parker was observed by Sergeant Winthrop in 1938 in the broader context of jazz, in his culturally offensive book, *Jazz, Hot and Hybrid*. Winthrop may have been the one who actually coined the term ‘blues scale,’ but it was a different pitch collection, one that shows greater similarity with Parker’s blues expressions and gestures. Winthrop wrote, “[f]or convenience, and because it is associated with the performance of the blues as well as with hot jazz proper, we will call it the blues scale.”⁶⁷

Figure 49. Sergeant Winthrop’s Blues Scale



Except for the natural 7th, which was used by Parker as shown earlier in his Folksier IV and I lick schema, this scale is very much represented within many of Parker’s blues gestures. The absence of the #4/b5 in Winthrop’s scale is important, despite many preconceptions that the #4/b5 was essential to bebop and the blues, Parker used the flat fifth sparingly: he had specific crips designated for this, as he did with most things. Moreover, it was often not central to many of his blues gestures and was certainly not common in his broader musical approach. Thomas Owens observes this as well:

⁶⁷ Sergeant Winthrop, *Jazz: Hot and Hybrid*, New York: E. P. Dutton, 1959, p. 160.

The famous "flatted fifth" of bebop played a relatively small role in Parker's playing; many solos contain not a single instance of it. But when he did use it he usually called attention to it in a striking way...⁶⁸

In alignment with Owens' observation, it would be false to say that Parker did not use the #4/b5 (as will be shown, he did), but that it was employed purposefully and sparingly. It was not an essential part of many of his musical behaviours, in contrast to the use of the #4/b5 by Thelonious Monk, Bud Powell, Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis, et al., which was highly prevalent and possibly often not blues-based, as it tended to be with Parker.

The scale Winthrop observes as the blues scale is derived from the IV7 (SD) structure. Unlike in much European-based music, the subdominant structure in Charlie Parker's music is not only the essential harmonic building block of his blues-based lick schema but also a fundamental part of his broader harmonic concept. Moreover, the origins of #4 are a part of the SD harmonic region resultant from #iv07, the key to the ascending blues cadence (I I7 IV #iv07 I). However, there may be another way to systematically account for this enigmatic #4 when it is understood as the b5. The basis for the commonly represented 'blues scale' is the minor pentatonic, e.g., in C, C Eb F G Bb, a minor mode that is germane to Bb, Eb, and Ab (keys that move deeper in the SD harmonic region). However, within these keys, there is still no Gb (b5). When moving even deeper still into the SD region, the b5 (Gb) appears through the progressive addition of flats at the 'harmonic threshold' of Ab7 (bVI of C and V7 of Db). However, one more step down into the ever-darkening SD direction, and there is an intersection with the tritone sub of C, Db7, through the addition of Cb (the enharmonic equivalent of B, the leading tone of C). This forms the dominant structure, marking the end of the journey through the SD region: a

⁶⁸ Thomas Owens, *Bebop: The Music and Its Players*, Oxford University Press, 1993, p. 33.

'harmonic threshold' has been crossed. In this way, the b5 (Gb) represents the darkest corner of SD over the tonic.

When expressing the ornately intricate downward gestures that snake and wind, Charlie Parker typically articulated not just the blues scale with the #4/b5, as discussed above, but perhaps with more frequency the pitch collection derived from IV7, which is more closely aligned with Winthrop's blues scale. Parker's downward gestures are often housed within his poly-metrical phrasing (known to this research as the poly-phrase), which becomes equally crucial to the pitches themselves. The poly-phrase infuses Parker's blues-based lick schema with a potent rhythmic elasticity: a physical characteristic that adds further complexity to his highly expressive blues aesthetic (discussed further in the swing chapter). Parker's blues playing conveyed an emboldened conviction, using gestures of declamation, proclamation, field holler, shout, down-home country blues, lamenting melancholic (deep purple) hues, and folksy melismatic qualities: attributes of the blues that were an integral part of Charlie Parker's musical language.

The blues is not simply a collection of notes, as it is so often erroneously taught. Instead, it encompasses complex, nuanced musical behaviours. For blues to be connected to tradition, it requires not only the appropriate pitch collections but also the gestural, phrase, and rhythmic qualities that link it back to the folksy origins of the genre. Any scale, when studied academically and played without understanding its contextual realisation, can reveal a form of musical ignorance. However, due to the access provided by recordings from c. 1920-1960, which have documented jazz and blues culture, such folly can be corrected (but not without sacrifice and cultural humility). The aesthetic values inherent in a musical language reveal culture through narratives and human expression. Furthermore, the recordings offer insights and teachings that

can only be truly understood through immersion, assimilation, and application. No number of written words, scale exercises, or idle music theory can teach someone how to create music from oral traditions. The true aesthetic value of Charlie Parker's music, or that of any seminal music resultant from an oral tradition, can only be fully understood through sonic immersion.

In summary, Charlie Parker played the blues in a manner that was unprecedented, seminal and innovative. Moreover, he did so at a time when many of his contemporaries were moving away from many aspects of the blues, particularly the overt “shout” style downward gestures that blues singers and instrumentalists had been using since the early 1920s (Ma Rainey, Bessie Smith, Mary-Lou Williams, T-Bone Walker, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Pete Johnson, and Louis Jordan).

The following section outlines many of the defining features characteristic of the gestures that comprise key aspects of Parker’s blues behaviours.

Chapter 7: Blues Licks

Before discussing the prominent features of Charlie Parker's more apparent blues behaviours, we will briefly examine how nearly all of what this research has observed about Parker's overt blues playing appeared in a seminal musical event in 1928. The similarity between Parker's blues behaviours and those heard or seen in the excerpt shown below - that Parker knew (as he frequently quotes it), from Louis Armstrong's (Pops) muscular solo break that is the opening for "West End Blues" (Armstrong, 1928) - is remarkable.

Figure 50. "West End Blues"

The musical score for "West End Blues" is presented in three staves: Voice Leading (VL), Pops (Pops), and Background (BG). The score is in 4/4 time and features various blues licks and patterns labeled with abbreviations. The VL staff shows a melodic line with licks labeled T6B, BD, and M3. The Pops staff shows a more complex melodic line with licks labeled IV7, BN, BU, and 432. The BG staff shows a bass line with licks labeled PP6, PP12, HTS, CP, and HTS. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and dynamic markings.

The key elements of this excerpt as they relate to Charlie Parker's blues gestures, which are indicated, are prescient e.g., the phrasing in the opening two measures of the background layer (BG) Poly-phrase (PP) 6 and 12; the blues neighbour notes (BN), blues up (BU), and 432 patterns⁶⁹ shown in the melodic layer; in addition to the tonic blues (T6B) and the blues down (BD) gesture to the major 3rd (M3) as demonstrated in the voice-leading (VL) layer. All of these, along with four additional features (not listed above but present elsewhere in Parker's blues licks, two of which are from another key influence, Buster Smith), will be discussed below. The CP is the cross-phrase, and the HTS indicates halt-time swing (explained in full momentarily).

⁶⁹ The 432 can be viewed as an extension of the 324 blues (an invertible intervallic cluster), which will be discussed throughout this section.

A point of conjecture: this research has observed that it appears Parker was able to take the seed of a highly fertile idea, such as the musical gestures shown above (and the data embedded within), by Armstrong, steal it, and then, through assimilation and originality of musical thought and concept, develop the seed—via a highly intuitive and rapid artistic germination—into a larger conceptual whole. Perhaps he did so with aspects of this excerpt of Armstrong's.

The attributes used in the excerpt above are listed below and discussed throughout this section. The only four features discussed below that are missing from the Armstrong excerpt are the shout on b5 and b3, which serendipitously appear to have yet another possible point of origin, the drop-in blues, and the blues hang.

The following discussion comprises a significant part of Charlie Parker's more overt blues behaviours and is divided into three subsections:

1. Blues gestures
2. Poly-phrase
3. Blues licks

Blues Gestures

Within Charlie Parker's music, there are essentially six recognisable gestures that are linked to his blues behaviours.

1. Shout b5 (Sb5)
2. Shout b3 (Sb3)
3. Upper (or lower) blues neighbour (BN)
4. 324 blues (typically appearing as an enclosure, e.g., 324E)

5. Blues down (BD) to the major 3rd (M3)

6. Drop-in blues (DIB)

7. Toni6 blues (T6B)

8. Blues up (BU)

9. Blues hang (BH)

Figure 51. List of Blues Gestures

Figure 51 displays nine musical examples of blues gestures, each with a name and a corresponding musical notation. The gestures are:

- 1. Shout b5** (Visa (Birdland, 1950)): A melodic line starting with a whole note, followed by a triplet of eighth notes, and then a triplet of quarter notes. The label "Sb5" is above the triplet of quarter notes.
- 2. Shout b3** (Slim Slam Blues): A melodic line starting with a whole note, followed by a triplet of eighth notes, and then a triplet of quarter notes. The label "Sb3" is above the triplet of quarter notes.
- 3. Blues Neighbour** (KC Blues): A melodic line starting with a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a triplet of quarter notes, and then a triplet of eighth notes. The label "BN" is above the first triplet of eighth notes.
- 4. 324 Blues** (Tiny's tempo (Take 1)): A melodic line starting with a whole note, followed by a triplet of eighth notes, and then a triplet of quarter notes. The label "324E" is above the triplet of quarter notes.
- 5. Blues Down** (Barbados (Take 1)): A melodic line starting with a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a triplet of quarter notes, and then a triplet of eighth notes. The label "BD" is above the first triplet of eighth notes.
- 6. Drop-in Blues** (Triflin' Woman Blues): A melodic line starting with a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a triplet of quarter notes, and then a triplet of eighth notes. The label "DIB" is above the first triplet of eighth notes.
- 7. Toni6 Blues** (Cosmic Rays (Master)): A melodic line starting with a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a triplet of quarter notes, and then a triplet of eighth notes. The label "T6B" is above the first triplet of eighth notes.
- 8. Blues Up** (Crazeology): A melodic line starting with a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a triplet of quarter notes, and then a triplet of eighth notes. The label "BU" is above the first triplet of eighth notes.
- 9. Blues Hang** (Billie's Bounce (HD)): A melodic line starting with a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a triplet of quarter notes, and then a triplet of eighth notes. The label "BH" is above the first triplet of eighth notes.

1. Shout b5 (Sb5)

Parker's shout b5 (Sb5) gesture is most often preceded by a 16th (or 32nd) note triplet 8th combination to set up the intervallic leap that targets b5. The following observations are based on the significance of the tonic bourdon: the moniker, Sb5, describes the interval and scale degree relative to the tonic, not the broader harmonic implications. Suffice it to say, however, that all harmonic implications point to the SD region, regardless of the harmony played by the rhythm section.

The shout b5 gesture represents Parker's one of the most explicit uses of the flatted 5th and is clearly demonstrated in the excerpt shown below.

Figure 52. The Shout b5

This example, from a live recording at Birdland in 1950 of “Visa” (Parker, 1950), vividly illustrates Parker's shout-style blues playing—where he consistently establishes the flatted 5th with a set-up from the sixteenth-note triplet figure: many instances of this can be found throughout his body of work. This gesture is typical of Parker's style but may have been inspired by Buster Smith. Smith performs the same physical gesture on mm. 9-10 at the end of his second chorus on “Baby, Look at You” (Johnson, Turner, 1939) with Pete Johnson & His Boogie Woogie Boys (recorded in New York, June 30, 1939). However, in Smith's version, the gesture consists of a consonant set of pitches (instead of b5-4, Smith plays 4-3). It is also highly probable that this gesture was part of the Kansas City blues vernacular. As mentioned, the Sb5 represents Parker's

most common expression of b5, but there are many solos, both blues-based and otherwise, where b5 is not used as anything but a WHICH passing tone, enclosure, or pick-up note.

2. Shout b3 (Sb3)

The Shout b3 (Sb3) is the identical gesture as the Sb5, but now the target pitch is the melodic b3. However, as shown in the example below, Parker clearly indicates the interpolation of IV7 on I.

Figure 53. The Shout b3

The figure displays three musical staves in 4/4 time. The top staff, labeled 'm. 1', shows a whole rest followed by a measure with a $B\flat^6$ chord symbol. The middle staff, labeled 'Slim Slam Blues (Take 1)', shows a melodic line with a 'Sb3' bracket over a triplet of eighth notes. The bottom staff, labeled 'Another Harido (Take 4)', shows a similar melodic line with a 'Sb3' bracket over a triplet of eighth notes.

When these gestures, Sb5 and Sb3 are placed within different harmonic regions, they convey varying harmonic implications. The harmonic implications of the shout b5 are: on I, it functions as the b5; on IV7, but it can be a part of the Ger6, making it the #4 or the b7 of bVI7 (another expression of the Ger6) or an allusion to #iv07 where it is the root (F#); and on V7, it may imply the 3rd of V7/V or II7 (again F#). The harmonic implications of the b3 shout are: on I, it functions as b3; on IV7, it is b7; and on V7, it can imply the 5th of the Ger6 or bVI7. Many confluences can arise within the ambiguous harmonic elements of the blues because the subdominant harmonic region is essential to the harmonic foundation for many of Parker's blues gestures.

3. Blues Neighbour (BN)

The blues neighbour (BN) is characterised by an alternation between the upper neighbour note (most typical) or a lower neighbour note, often a whole step apart. The way Parker employs the BN and its frequency within his blues licks, alongside the whole step interval, serves as the basis for this new categorisation of neighbour note (which is already recognised in Western music theory). These phrases, like many of Parker's blues gestures, carry harmonic implications but often exemplify IV7. In other words, the harmony is once again defined by the tonic bourdon, similar to a modal style: Parker is not 'running the changes', but rather playing a pitch collection derived from IV7, very similar to the Armstrong example of "West End Blues" at the beginning of this section where instead of the whole step, Armstrong uses an interval of a 3rd for the blues neighbour. The BN is a gesture that Miles Davis also adopted and used on many occasions during his years with Parker – it was a defining feature of Miles' style c. 1945: almost a musical affectation when used by Miles, for it lacked the folksy musical elements that Parker's music exuded.

Figure 54. Blues Neighbour Note

The figure displays four musical staves in 4/4 time, illustrating the Blues Neighbour (BN) note concept. The top staff, labeled 'mm. 1-3', shows a harmonic progression of C⁶, F⁷, and C⁶ with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The second staff, 'Cool Blues (Birdland, 1950)', features a melodic line with BN notes (marked with brackets and 'BN') and a bass line with a C-G dyad (marked 'C G'). The third staff, 'Past Due (DB 3-01)', shows a similar melodic line with BN notes and a C-G dyad. The fourth staff, another 'Cool Blues (Birdland, 1950)', shows a melodic line with BN notes and a C-C dyad (marked 'C C').

The blues neighbour (BN) is a crucial part of Parker's more elaborate descending blues gestures, as shown. The pitch alternation has a distinctly guitaristic/pianistic character, reminiscent of the fingerpicking/sliding style of early ragtime and guitar blues, in which the left hand alternates between the note on the fretboard and the note above (or below), or the whole-step mordent as played by the right hand on the piano.

The markers in the score example above demonstrate how Parker begins and ends the phrases (except for the third example) on the same pitches, creating a bourdon and harmonic unity indicated by the C (cycle). In these examples, this occurs on I (C) and V (G), a bourdon placement consistent with many upcoming examples (in this work, the longer-span cycle is replaced by a lower-voice leading layer that illustrates the bourdon-like feature). The cycle that evokes the bourdon is a musical behaviour that further enhances Parker's autonomy as an improviser, as it provides an effective way to establish the harmonic region from which he is improvising, rendering the accompaniment almost obsolete. In this way, Parker can, without any support, express the contrast between his lick and the tonal basis from which he is deviating: the interpolation of SD over T or D consistently introduces a warm, folksy dissonance that is essential to Parker's music and is vital to his blues style.

4. 324 Blues (324E)

The 324 grouping of numbers indicates the intervallic clusters that form this lick (as described in the interval clusters chapter). In Parker's blues playing, it often appears as an enclosure pattern (E) where the subsequent target pitch that completes the four-note enclosure falls within the established 7th range. When this occurs, it is marked by the letter E (this and many other examples of this pattern, in various configurations, can be found in the section on intervals). The inclusion of the intervallic discussion here, and further discussion on the matter,

aims to emphasise that this sequence was deeply embedded in Parker's blues style, particularly this intervallic grouping. Paul Berliner points to this exact phrase, but instead of focusing on the gestural properties, he is only interested in Parker's "cadential extensions,"⁷⁰ i.e., the variants of how Parker exits the gesture, which this research accounts for as M3, the move to the major 3rd of I (discussed momentarily), regardless of how many variants come after.

Five examples of the 324 blues lick (324E) are shown below in the key of Bb.

Figure 55. Blues 324 a

The figure displays five musical staves in the key of Bb. The first staff shows a harmonic progression: Cm7, F7, Bb6, Eb7, Bb6. The subsequent staves illustrate the 324 blues lick (324E) in different contexts. The staves are labeled: 'm. 12 mm. 1-3', 'Tiny's Tempo (Take 1)', 'Bloomdido (Hotel Diplomat)', 'Big Foot (DB #215)', 'Big Foot (Perfect Col.)', and 'Buzzy (Take 3)'. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and brackets indicating specific intervals or groups of notes. The 324E lick is highlighted with brackets and labels like 'BN' and 'M3'.

The five examples above illustrate these 324 clusters, which is common in Parker's lexicon and one of his favourite blues licks or gestures occurring in all the keys he played blues. It is played in relative isolation as in "Big Foot" (Parker, 1947) from the Perfect Collection reissues, and Take 3 of "Buzzy" (Parker, 1948), but is also a feature that furthers the continuation of his blues lick schema. Harmonic analysis shows that this lick is again more closely related to

⁷⁰ Paul Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994, p. 568.

IV7. Additionally, all the examples, except for “Tiny’s Tempo” (Grimes, 1944) move from the 324E to the major 3rd (M3), a consistent gestural harmonic shift that occurs within and upon conclusion of Parker’s descending blues licks: a kind of lengthy interpolation of the plagal cadence, possibly from the influences of Gospel music on the blues.

Below are three more examples of the 324 in its primary form, along with some variants: these excerpts are chosen from blues choruses in the key of F.

Figure 56. Blues 324 b

mm. 4-8

Cm⁷ F⁷ Bb⁷ F⁶

Billie's Bounce (Take 4)

Billie's Bounce (Take 5)

Now's The Time (Take 3)

Once again, we observe that the 324E is a consistent intervallic cluster that appears in each example, as it was in Bb and in the examples above, and is expressed using the poly-phrase concept, a phrasing technique marked by the triplet groupings (discussed later in this section). The variations in examples one and three are not enclosures but use the same intervals, but in a different order; the 324, which may have originated in these blues gestures, has much broader implications in Parker’s music and can be seen throughout his musical lexicon.

The Sb3 and M3 features are also included: the former offering another possible interpretation of the Sb3, this time as the 4th of Bb7 (in Parker’s music, the harmonic redesignation of a pitch within a given region [chord] is a critical theoretical principle).

5. Blues Down (BD)

Almost all of Parker's longer span blues gestures move in a downward trajectory. The following descending gestures, blues down (BD), use the pitch collection from IV7, and the lick schema resolves to the major 3rd (M3) in every instance. The following blues gestures are also examples of Parker's BD licks: fluid variants that possess the same gestural properties, melodic design and shape, metrical placement, and pitch collections (derived from IV7).

Figure 57. Blues Down to the Major 3rd

The examples above illustrate the larger-span features that constitute the blues-down (BD) gesture, which also reveal Parker's highly schematic, lick-based approach to this type of blues playing, a style that was somewhat unprecedented. All the features shown above — the 342, Sb3, Sb5, BN, and M3 — have been previously discussed in this section and are indicated above. The 342E is only shown in the first example but appears throughout; the omission is intended to simplify the score.

The example below shows my rendering of the BD gesture in a simplified format. This rendering includes the two key voice-leading layers that have been alluded to in this discussion but not previously shown.

Figure 58. Blues Down to the Major 3rd (Simplified)

The upper voice leading layer (VL U) displays the IV7 pitch collection, which illustrates the BD followed by the quick M3, and then a swift but strongly implied V7 I, another quick M3, which concludes with the convergence between the VL layers (IV7 I (V7) I). In much of Parker's music, the BD descends, and the M3 ascends - down = inevitability, up = possibility. The lower VL layer (VL L) features the tonic bourdon, over which most of this blues lick occurs.

6. Drop-in Blues

The drop-in blues gesture is a physical move of Parkers, with a moniker derived from the drop-in discussed in the "Physical Gestures" chapter. Again, Parker uses the pitch collection from IV7, but in this case, he clearly articulates the I minor sixth chord (F-6), both in IV7 and I. The first example from "Triflin' Woman Blues" (Bernhardt, 1945) illustrates that the drop in Blues gesture is a part of Parker's 3/4 phrasing (as indicated by the CP [cross-phrase] in the background layer). This gesture was in Parker's oeuvre from as early as 1941.

Figure 59. Drop-in Blues

mm. 5-8

Triflin' Woman Blues (1945)

Background

Transposed from Eb
Hootie Blues (1941 and 42)

Now's The Time (Take 4, 1945)

SU

7. Toni6 Blues (T6B)

The minor sixth chord shown in the DIB examples may be the bridge between the pitch collection of IV7 and I. When the hexatonic scale of A C D Eb E G is employed, there is a hybrid tonality, that of major and minor, e.g., C6 and C-6. The usage of this is very common to the musical vernacular of Lester Young and Louis Armstrong, both of whom appear to be critical musical links for Parker. The expression of T6B is similar to the M3 feature in that it is often played in an ascending manner. However, the T6B also appears in the more casual hang style for which Parker was partial. The following examples illustrate the T6B gestures.⁷¹

⁷¹ The DIB is also found in Clifford Brown's 1954 blues "Sandu." It is possible Clifford Brown knew Parker's solo on "Hootie Blues" (McShann, 1941), where these blues licks appear. In fact, "Sandu" is comprised almost entirely of TB6, DIB, and BD gestures throughout.

Figure 60. Toni6 Blues

The musical score for "Toni6 Blues" consists of six staves, each representing a different recording or version of the piece. The staves are labeled on the left as follows:

- mm. 11-12
- mm. 1-2
- Cosmic Rays (Master)
- Cool Blues (Take C)
- Cheryl (RR 3-16)
- KC Blues
- Transposed from Eb
- Hootie Blues (1942)

Chord labels are placed above the staves:

- mm. 11-12: C⁶, Dm⁷, G⁷, C⁶, F⁷
- Cosmic Rays (Master): T6B
- Cool Blues (Take C): T6B
- Cheryl (RR 3-16): T6B, BD, M3
- KC Blues: I&IV, T6B, Sb5, BD, M3
- Transposed from Eb: WHCH, T6B, BD
- Hootie Blues (1942): T6B, BD

The notation includes various musical symbols such as treble clefs, 4/4 time signatures, and various note values (quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes). Some notes are grouped with brackets and the number 3, indicating triplets. The score is written in a single system, with each staff having its own set of bar lines.

8. Blues Up (BU)

The blues-up (BU) is an ascending chromatic sequence (as discussed briefly in the whole tone section) that appears throughout Parker's musical vocabulary but will only be shown in this section as it occurs in his blues playing and in "Cherokee" (Ray Noble, 1939), the A section only (which is a 16-bar form that primarily uses the harmonic regions of the tonic and subdominant).

Figure 61. Blues Up

Included among the three examples shown above is a favourite lick of Parker's, the blues up (BU), from a recently released (2024) recording of "Cherokee" from the private collection of Phil Baxter. The second two examples demonstrate that it is played three times, spans three beats, and is driven by triplets. In contrast, the first example, which features ascending chromaticism, specifically the Bb major scale degrees 2-5, implies the ascending blues cadence (see glossary).

For now, however, BU uses the WHCH rule, and expresses the ascending blues cadence. As it will be key to the discussion on rhythm and phrase, the multiple levels of threes: the triplets, and the three groups of three that span three beats each, is of critical importance—an exemplar of the ubiquity of ternary features within Charlie Parker's music.

9. Blues Hang (BH)

The blues hang (BH) gesture is used throughout Charlie Parker's wider improvisational and compositional sphere. Like the BU gesture above, it is primarily a means to express ternary groupings in the 4/4, which in this research is known as the cross-phrase (CP) and will be discussed in detail the phrasing section. Below are two examples of the blues hang gesture.

Figure 62. Blues Hang

Figure 62 displays two musical examples of the 'Blues Hang' lick, showing the relationship between the main melody and the background accompaniment.

Example 1: Bloomdido

- Main Melody:** Features a lick under an $F7$ chord, followed by a Bb^6 chord, and another lick under an $F7$ chord. The lick is marked with 'BH' (Blues Hang) and includes triplet markings (3).
- Middle Ground:** Shows a pattern of eighth notes and rests, marked with 'H5' (Hemiola 5).
- Background:** Shows a pattern of eighth notes and rests, marked with 'CP' (Compound Pulse).

Example 2: Billie's Bounce (HD)

- Main Melody:** Features a lick under a Bb^7 chord, followed by an F^6 chord, and another lick under an F^6 chord. The lick is marked with 'BH' and includes triplet markings (3).
- Middle Ground:** Shows a pattern of eighth notes and rests, marked with 'H3' (Hemiola 3).
- Background:** Shows a pattern of eighth notes and rests, marked with 'CP' (Compound Pulse).

Both the implied 3/4 meter and the Hemiola patterns are demonstrated in the examples above. In addition, the figure's invertibility is shown above as the lick's groupings are shifted over by one beat in the second example.

Poly-phrase

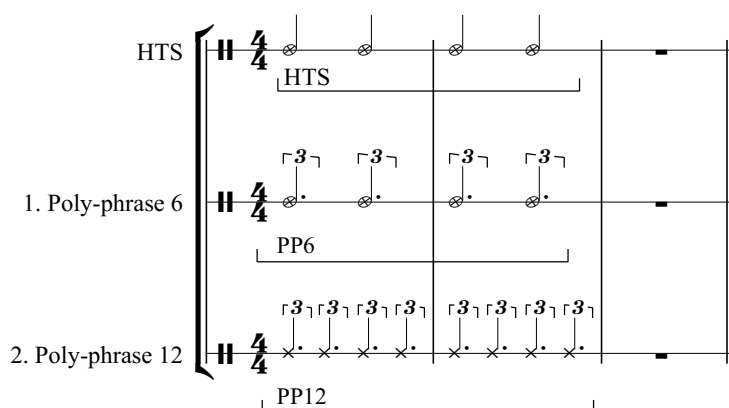
The poly-phrase (PP) is a metrical reorganisation that most typically occurs when Parker is playing his blues-based lick schema. That this metrical reorganisation is almost exclusively associated with his blues licks further links this phrasing device to his blues behaviour.

The poly-phrase can be understood as a metrical device that transforms the 4/4 meter either from its duple (2/2), the halftime swing feel (HTS), or from its quadruple (4/4) form. The two ternary meters, compound meters that occur within the simple meter, which Parker uses for

these transformative free-wheeling phrases, that present a soulful folksy swagger, are structured in the following way:

1. 6/4 meter (two dotted half notes or six quarter notes)
2. 12/8 meter (four dotted quarter notes or twelve eighth notes)

Figure 63. Poly-phrase 6 and Poly-phrase 12



The top staff in the score above illustrates Parker's typical expression of the 4/4 meter, the half-time swing (HTS), a duple expression within the 4/4 meter. The following two staves show the transformed beat units, with the numbers indicating the subdivision of the poly-phrase types: PP6 (two groups of three quarter notes) and PP12 (four groups of three eighth notes).

When Parker plays in the 4/4 meter, the beat unit is in duple form. Still, the primary subdivision is the eighth note: Parker's licks are usually expressed in groups of eighth notes when aligned with the 4/4 meter. Still, because this appears in Parker's phrasing as an expression of the duple meter (2/2), there is an implied subdivision of the subdivision, i.e the groupings are essentially felt as sixteenths. This behaviour extends to the poly-meter phrase, where the default subdivision is already compounded within the dotted value; however, instead of groups of two as in duple meter, it is now a group of three. Moreover, when Parker does so, he often still groups in duplets in the poly-meter, specifically PP6 into 3 groups of 2 and PP12 into 6 groups of 2, versus

2 groups of 3 and 4 groups of 3, respectively. This is exceedingly important to Parker's phrasing as he often retains the two-note subdivisions even within the compound meter. However, because of the beaming rules in 4/4 meter, the score presents the figures as ternary patterns. Many hours were spent attempting to notate the poly-phrase accurately; of all of Parker's rhythmic expressions, this is by far the most difficult to map onto the score (due to this, all rhythmic notation is a close approximation).

Below is a blues lick (transposed from Bb) that was prepared and executed by Parker identically on takes 1 and 2 of "Slam Slam Blues" (Gallaird, 1945).

Figure 64. Poly-phrase 12 "Slam Slam Blues"

The musical score for Figure 64, Poly-phrase 12 "Slam Slam Blues", is presented in six staves. The first staff, marked "mm. 2-3", shows a piano introduction with chords F7 and C6. The second staff, labeled "VL U", contains a complex melodic line with various musical notations including triplets, eighth notes, and chord symbols (BD, M3, IV7, I, V7/IV, IV7, I, C). The third staff, labeled "VL L", features a Bourdon line. The fourth staff, labeled "Slam Slam Blues (Take 1)", shows a complex melodic line with triplets and eighth notes, with chord symbols SU, BN, and BN. The fifth staff, labeled "Background", is in 4/4 time and shows a poly-phrase (PP12) with eighth notes. The sixth staff, labeled "Slam Slam Blues (Take 2)", is identical to Take 1.

The 12/8 poly-phrase (PP12) is shown in the background layer below take 1. This metrical subdivision, which essentially defines and houses this lick, shows a compound time

format; the beat unit is indicated as the dotted quarter: Parker reintroduces the 4/4 meter (quarter note beat unit) but only for the 4th beat of m. 2 and as beat 4 of m. 3. As stated, when executing the poly-phrase Parker often articulates the triplet patterns as 3 groups of 2 16th notes, rather than the more common phrasing where musicians stress the two groups of 3 or as it is beamed in the example above, as triplet figures. The expression of the triplet grid, the poly-phrase, into duplets allows Parker to retain the forward driving rhythmic feel as three groupings; triplet figures of this kind tend to feel ‘laid back.’⁷²

Below is a rewrite of Parker's lick schema, which is identical, but rewritten into the 12/8 compound meter.

Figure 65. Poly-phrase 12 “Slam Slam Blues” (Rewrite)

The figure displays a musical score for a 12/8 time signature. The upper staff, titled "Slam Slam Blues (Takes 1 and 2)", contains a melodic line with eighth notes and triplet markings (3, 3, 4). The lower staff, labeled "Background", shows a pulse line with 'x' marks and brackets labeled "PP12", indicating two 12-beat phrases.

This metrical rewrite of Parker’s lick schema more accurately illustrates how Parker arranges the 16ths within the compound meter into a duple pattern. Additionally, we observe that what previously seemed like a consonant four-note grouping is now a rhythmically dissonant passage within the 12/8 meter (4 against 3).

The following example shows how Parker’s reorganisation of the meter and pulse employs the implied 6/4 compound-meter: the poly-phrase 6 (PP6).

⁷² The interpolation of the ternary meter in Parker’s music is often perceived as a back-phrase element. However, it is more accurately described and understood as a kind of rhythmic elasticity that essentially expands the feeling/properties of the beat unit.

Figure 66. Poly-phrase 6/4 “Visa”

The musical score for Poly-phrase 6/4 "Visa" consists of five staves. The first staff, labeled "mm. 1-3", shows a treble clef with a 4/4 time signature and a key signature of one flat. It contains a series of slanted lines representing a melodic line, with chords C⁶, F⁷, and C⁶ indicated above. The second staff, labeled "VL U", shows a treble clef with a 4/4 time signature and a key signature of one flat. It contains a series of slanted lines representing a melodic line, with chords BD, IV⁷, M³, and C indicated above. The third staff, labeled "VL L", shows a treble clef with a 4/4 time signature and a key signature of one flat. It contains a series of slanted lines representing a melodic line, with the word "Bourdon" indicated above. The fourth staff, labeled "Visa (Birdland 1950)", shows a treble clef with a 4/4 time signature and a key signature of one flat. It contains a series of slanted lines representing a melodic line, with chords Sb⁵ and C indicated above. The fifth staff, labeled "Background", shows a bass clef with a 4/4 time signature and a key signature of one flat. It contains a series of slanted lines representing a melodic line, with the label "PP6" indicated below.

The background layer reveals the metrical organisation of the lick shown above, in two groups of three, or the 6/4 meter: the PP6. Additionally, the bourdon is present, as shown in the lower VL layer. In the upper VL layer, we observe the blues-down gesture and the pitch collection from IV⁷ ending in typical fashion on the major 3rd of C (again, all of which is essentially an extended Amen, plagal cadence as shown in the upper VL, IV⁷ I mm. 1-3). There are two convergent points, as shown between the upper and lower VL layers. In the melodic layer is Parker's use of the Sb⁵ as shown earlier.

A rewritten version of this excerpt in 6/4 meter is provided below to emphasise and again illustrate the way Parker often plays these figures: in groups of twos, and not in threes as the notation suggests.

Figure 67. Poly-phrase 6/4 “Visa” (Rewrite)

mm. 1-3

Visa (Birdland 1950)

Background

PP6

Due to the lack of beaming, the groupings are not clearly illustrated, but when referenced with the recording, the duple expression becomes apparent. The default notation of such events belies many of their highly complex oral attributes.

In summary, the poly-phrase is typically used by Parker when playing blues licks; however, on recordings such as *Bird at St. Nicks* (1950), from a similar time period to the excerpt above, Parker plays in ternary meters, even on standards. His phrasing on the 1939 Rodgers and Hart classic (albeit ironically titled considering the current metrically oriented discussion), “I Didn’t Know What Time It Was,” is a notable example.

Parker’s connection with the Armstrong excerpt from “West End Blues,” which begins the chapter, should now be much clearer.

Blues-based Lick Schema on Blues and Rhythm Changes

Throughout this section, key parts of Parker’s lick schema as they pertain to the blues have been shown; however, a critical example remains to be discussed.

As previously mentioned, Charlie Parker was known for his admiration of Hank Williams, a country music artist from the 1940s. This fondness for country music is evident in Parker’s playing, especially in the blues. The lick schema shown below, which is known to this

research as Parker's country blues lick, is likely inspired by something he encountered during his formative years in Kansas City, possibly from country music he would have heard. Conversely, it is possible he invented the lick, but it seems too country and too clichéd to be entirely from his own mind. Below are six examples of this, Parker's country blues lick.

Figure 68. The Country Blues

The figure displays six musical staves, each representing a different example of Parker's country blues lick. The first staff, labeled 'm. 12 mm. 1-5', shows the lick in its original form with chords C⁶, F⁷, C⁶, Gm⁷, C⁷, and F⁷. The subsequent staves show the lick transposed to different keys: Bongo Bop (Take A), Cheryl (RR3-16), Visa (Birdland, 1950), Transposed from F Now's The Time (Take 3), Transposed from Bb Big Foot (DB #215), and Transposed from Bb Another Hairdo (Take 4). Each staff includes a melodic line with triplets and slurs, illustrating the lick's structure across different keys and contexts.

The examples shown above of Parker's country blues lick occur primarily in three keys, C, F, and Bb, and clearly illustrate Parker's ability to metrically reorganise his lick schema. The poly-phrase features are shown in his shifting back and forth between metrical grids, and are executed with total freedom and fluidity, unlike what is more typical when jazz musicians shift the meter, where it is often done in a manner that makes the listener aware of the metrical shift. Moreover, because of this switching between the metrical grids, these examples are best viewed in the duple meter, where we can more clearly see the interpolation of the ternary and duple grids.

This lick schema of Parker's is unpretentious and folksy, which gives it an unassuming simplicity, despite the complex phrasing and rhythm elements (as indicated by the score notation). Thomas Owens refers to this lick as M19C and notates it in a manner that Parker never actually played. Nevertheless, the examples above clearly illustrate that this lick schema allowed Parker to interpolate the ternary poly-phrase with ease: the folksy melodic simplicity juxtaposed with rhythm and phrase intricacy.

Another longer durational span blues lick that originates from Parker's blues behaviour mainly appears in his rhythm changes performances. Due to Parker's use of what sounds like and amounts to an expression of the melodic minor mode, but is really just an expression of IV7, this lick has an Eastern quality to it and, as such, is named after the North African reed instrument: the zurma. Below are examples that again demonstrate Parker's schematic lick-based approach using his blues zurma (BZ). Included in the score example below is Parker's IVV3/4 lick (the last example shows a false start attempt before the completion of the lick; Parker is clearly not concerned with 'making the changes').

Figure 69. Blue Zurma

The musical score for Figure 69, titled "Blue Zurma", is presented in 4/4 time. The first staff displays a sequence of chords: B $\flat$ 6, C $\flat$ m7, F7, D $\flat$ m7, D $\flat$ m7, C $\flat$ m7, and F7. Below this, four staves illustrate the lick schema in different contexts:

- Anthropology (Perfcol.)**: Shows the "BZ" (Blues Zurma) lick starting with a rest, followed by a melodic line, and then the "IVV3/4" lick.
- Lester Leaps In (Rockland Palace, 52)**: Similar to the first example, showing the "BZ" and "IVV3/4" licks.
- Passport (Master)**: Shows the "BZ" and "IVV3/4" licks.
- Anthropology (Howard Theatre, 1952)**: Shows the "BZ" and "IVV3/4" licks, with a false start attempt before the completion of the lick.

The blues were a cornerstone of Charlie Parker's musical concept. Moreover, this folk-based music provided a wellspring from which Charlie Parker could endlessly draw.

To offer further clarification regarding the use of the term 'folksy' when referring to Parker's blues behaviours and its Kansas City roots, it is beneficial to recognise that Parker may have been exposed to many blues musicians who may have contributed to this tangibly folksy element in his music. In other words, it may not just be the more urban Kansas City blues style, but many aspects of the blues that could have been influential. However, this research's position is that the conflation between these categorically divided styles, urban versus rural (folksy), is such that the urban blues endemic to Kansas City and even New Orleans always retained the folksiness, aspects of which can arguably be heard in the "West End Blues" excerpt. In short, Parker's reintroduction of the ornate, florid style of blues was unprecedented and surprisingly fresh, considering its undesirably regressive connotations with which the blues were associated, particularly by Parker's generation. Lastly, the poly-meter phrases in 12 and 6 remain fairly exclusive to Parker's blues behaviours and provide much nuance and colour throughout his blues licks.

Part IV: Subdominant

Chapter 8: Subdominant

In the first case, where the lower tone of the 4th is at the same time the fundamental tone – that is in every instance when dealing with two voices – the 4th is considered a dissonance.⁷³

Johannes Fux

This investigation into Charlie Parker's harmonic language uses the tonic and its tonal consonance, or 'stability,' as it is expressed in his music, as the primary harmonic reference point. "We can assume that tonality is a function of the fundamental tone [tonic]: that is, everything that makes up tonality emanates from that tone and refers back to it."⁷⁴ However, when modulation occurs, the reference point (tonic) can temporarily change. This discussion focuses on the subdominant's role (both melodically and harmonically) and its relationship to the tonic. However, in the blues and rhythm changes progressions—around which much of this research is centred—the subdominant is often used to expand the tonic region, rather than a place of modulation or as a preparatory function to the dominant.

Within the conventions established by European harmonic principles, the dominant structure holds primary authority over the tonic, exemplified by V7 I motions, the primacy of the leading tone, the dissonance/consonance, e.g., resolution of the aug. 4 and dim. 5. Moreover, in much European music, the dominant harmonic region was the most typical target for modulation, as seen in sonata form, fugal expositions, and the B section of many hymns. Subconsciously, this upward modulation from the tonic to the dominant may have signified semiotic notions of hope, possibility, or concepts related to heaven. Conversely, the descent to the subdominant might be

⁷³ Johann Joseph Fux, *Gradus ad Parnassum*, New York: W.W. Norton, 1971, p. 20.

⁷⁴ Arnold Schoenberg, *Theory of Harmony*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978, p. 150.

perceived as an expression of the inevitable – akin to the unredeemed fall to hell and eternal damnation. In some respects, defining the subdominant through its relationship with the dominant loosens this sense of foreboding or inevitability—a semiotic form of peripheral ‘redemption by association.’ This does not imply the subdominant was not a harmonic destination, but rather that it was far less typical.

The opening quote in this section, from Johannes Fux, highlights the fundamental issue that the melodic 4th complicates the role of the dominant tonic relationship: the subdominant was and, for many, remains problematic because it is not considered a consonance against the bass, whereas the dominant above is (situated harmonically as the 5th of the major triad). In Johanne Joseph Fux’s treatise, this issue is resolved, both literally and figuratively, through the rules governing the management of dissonance, e.g., 4-3 suspensions, among other techniques (this remains so in jazz pedagogy even today).

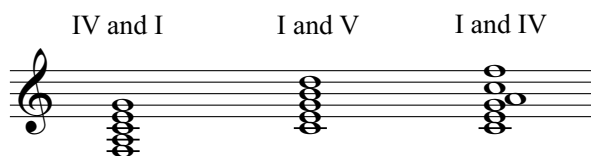
The harmonic functions of the tonic and the dominant are often relatively well-defined; however, the role of the subdominant, both melodically and harmonically, has either been lacking or, as many have argued, is problematic. Much jazz pedagogy defines the subdominant as a preparatory function to V, such as V/X, a clearly defined harmonic role and function, in this case as a secondary dominant. Pedagogues such as Barry Harris argue that there are no ii chords, only derivatives from V7 and V/V. This is valuable and efficient, but it only accounts for a part of the harmonic structures that comprise Charlie Parker’s music but not those that make his music so compelling and original.

When discussing jazz, and specifically the music of Charlie Parker, this theoretical principle and ideological stance have misguided and negatively influenced existing ideas. Moreover, virtually all jazz programs in North America have reinforced the misconception that

the subdominant, as implied by scale degree 4, should be ‘avoided’ or handled with care. This is based on presuppositions and outdated musical ideologies rather than on the events within Charlie Parker’s music, where scale degree 4 is highly potent; for example, it can express aspects of Parker’s blues behaviour in the absence of the broader pitch collection derived from IV7 (as shown in the blues chapter).

Contrary to traditional tenets still propagated by jazz pedagogy, within Parker’s music, there is a more egalitarian role of harmonic function in which the subdominant may be of equal (or perhaps greater) strength to the dominant, and as such, the dissonance/consonance relationship to the tonic is redefined. Arnold Schoenberg observes something similar; he identifies the functional chords V and IV simply as the “Oberdominante” (upper dominant) and “subdominante” (lower dominant): an accurate description of their geography within the cycle of fifths. Schoenberg further states that “the two chief representatives of their respective regions have the strongest mutual aversion and, relatively speaking, next to I, the strongest wills in the whole district.”⁷⁵ Highly incisive language written in 1922 that offers a differing perspective from ideas still propagated in music theory today, where the subdominant is still viewed and taught as a preparation for the dominant and is fundamentally problematic to the tonic. The example below further reveals the issue/feature.

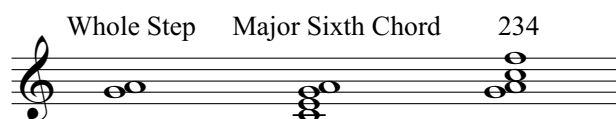
Figure 70. IV and I, I and V, I and IV



⁷⁵ Arnold Schoenberg, *Theory of Harmony*, pp. 150-151.

As shown above, when IV is below the tonic (IV and I), there is consonance; when V is above the tonic (I and V), there is consonance, but when IV is above the tonic (I and IV), there is a wonderfully rich and complex musical environment (resultant from the gestalt flip). Moreover, this harmonic ambiguity is where some of the blues-based aspects of Charlie Parker's harmonic expression appear to have been derived, i.e., where he often seemed to operate.⁷⁶ Interestingly, within this combined I and IV voicing, the whole step, sixth chord, and 234 intervallic cluster appear, all of which are harmonic cornerstones to Parker's harmonic language.

Figure 71. Whole Step, Major Sixth, and 234



This research will demonstrate how, in Charlie Parker's improvisations and compositions, the dissonance and consonance relationships are not primarily governed by the dominant function, both melodically and harmonically. Additionally, Parker uses the melodic accretions onto the subdominant (as shown momentarily in the chordal repository) as the basis for his harmonic intensifiers—further expressions of his nuanced relationship with SD, both inside and outside of the tonic region.

In 1953, George Russell used the subdominant as the basis for theories presented in his book, *The Lydian Chromatic Concept of Tonal Organization*.⁷⁷ Russell endeavours to devise a system that is all-encompassing and permissive by forging a graduated methodology that, from

⁷⁶ This is not to say that Charlie Parker did not use the dominant structure with frequency; however, outlining such things, common to all jazz musicians c. 1945, does not account for Parker's behavioural proclivities: the primary interest of this research.

⁷⁷ George Russell, *The Lydian Chromatic Concept of Tonal Organization*, Boston: Concept Publishing Company, 1953, p. 42.

the parent Lydian scale, derives all other scale types and eventually arrives at the chromatic scale. In basing his concepts around the Lydian scale, Russell inadvertently eliminates the ‘undesirable rub’ (dissonance) between the harmonic third (E) and the fourth (F): an unwanted solution to a desirable problem. This is extremely problematic when considering Parker’s music, as it eliminates a fundamental element that makes his concept so potent: the interpolation of SD and T, both from a harmonic and melodic perspective. This harmonic ‘rub’ is vital to the distinctive sound of Parker’s music and arguably what makes the blues in his music so harmonically ambiguous at times, thus making Parker’s harmonic concept even more compelling.

The creation of scales for modal improvisation may constitute a heavy-handed solution to the avoid note issue, and may be partly why jazz methods teach a scalar (modal) approach. The legitimisation of this idea, in jazz, may originate from the material developed for the seminal Miles Davis recording, *Kind of Blue* (Miles Davis, 1959). In this manner of improvising, i.e. the C major scale over D-7 (Dorian mode), there are no ‘avoid’ notes (arguably not a concern of Davis’ but the desire to eliminate problematic tonal areas is often the current motivation for teaching such things). In other words, a kind of melodic freedom becomes available. However, for Miles Davis, Bill Evans, and the like, who were already masters of harmonic language, this freedom meant something different. In much jazz pedagogy, this freedom may be a ruse, and instead constitutes the elimination of unwanted dissonance or worse, in a clumsy, underachieving fashion, provide a quick fix to a highly nuanced situation.

However, as early as 1948, in tunes like “Ah-Lue-Cha” (Parker, 1948), Charlie Parker wrote a line for Miles Davis that was in no way tied to or expressive of chord changes; in fact, that may be the earliest modal composition in jazz (using the Dorian mode: the first 4 bars are

SD over what is primarily T, i.e., G-7 on F). Many of Parker's other compositions share this harmonic simplicity and, in a similar way, do not clearly articulate the prescribed harmonic regions played by the rhythm section, but instead feature mild dissonances (extreme to some) and harmonic rubs that make them melodically compelling. Since Russell's concept emerged from the bebop ethos, its inclusion in this work seeks to demonstrate that the problematic nature of the subdominant has been perpetuated.

With the aid of Gerhard Wuensch⁷⁸, the following is a brief examination of the subdominant, tonic, and dominant through "Speculative and Practical theory"⁷⁹ as it is understood primarily through the ideology of Hugo Riemann, and how this relates to and is a key part of Charlie Parker's harmonic and melodic language.

The German music theorist and composer, Hugo Riemann, is well known for his theories of harmony, namely that "there are only three kinds of tonal functions (significance within the key), namely, tonic, dominant, and subdominant. In the change of these functions lies the essence of modulation."⁸⁰ Moritz Hauptmann, employing the Hegelian dialectic, articulated these paradigmatic ideas, albeit within a philosophical context: the tonic is "the thesis," the subdominant moving to the tonic is "the antithesis," and the dominant moving to the tonic is "the synthesis." To the multiplicity and omnipotence of the subdominant, Wuensch writes:

The C major chord becomes both the dominant of IV (C to F = dominant to tonic [retrospective]) and the subdominant of V (C to G = subdominant to tonic [prospective]) it therefore negates the postulate of the first tonic, hence is (also) the antithesis.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Gerhard Wuensch, "Hugo Riemann's Musical Theory," *Studies in Music from the University of Western Ontario*, pp. 112-124.

⁷⁹ Gerhard Wuensch, "Hugo Riemann's Musical Theory," p. 113.

⁸⁰ Hugo Riemann, *Hugo Riemann's Theory of Harmony*, University of Nebraska Press, 1977, p. 9.

⁸¹ Gerhard Wuensch, "Hugo Riemann's Musical Theory," pp. 113-114.

Further to this, the invertibility of the tonic is determined by the subdominant. Without harmonic abstraction, the tonic can become any of the three functions (tonic as T, D, or SD); the subdominant function defines the latter two. This is the antithetical significance of the subdominant: it negates the tonic's role by making it V7/IV, or as the tonic relates to the dominant, IV/V. In both ways, the subdominant function redefines the role of the tonic. The dialectical relationship between the tonic and dominant is much simpler, an expression of synthesis. In contrast, the antithetical harmonic value ascribed to the subdominant's role is yet another element that has historically problematized the role of the subdominant. Such ideas have served as the basis for and informed the theoretical leanings of key theorists such as Hugo Riemann, Heinrich Schenker, and, to a lesser degree, Arnold Schoenberg.

The evidence, as will be shown through repeated instances, suggests that in Charlie Parker's music, the subdominant played a key role in defining and coexisting with the tonic, functioning as a coterminous element and not just an antithetical property. Moreover, the dominant structure, which in jazz and Parker's music often constitutes a dominant seventh chord as the tonic incorporates the subdominant into its harmonic sphere, e.g., in C, V7/IV, C E G B $\flat$. The major 6 chord also does so, e.g., in C, C E G A. Both of which have subdominant [antithetical] implications. It may actually be that the dominant drew some of its power from the subdominant: a region that, as it appears in Parker's music, does not 'negate' the tonic but instead enriches it and gives it profound invertibility.

Gerhard Weunsch shows that Riemann draws important conclusions from the theoretical postulations of his predecessors. Riemann observes that a dualistic versus a monastic approach to harmony may offer a more cogent explanation for the origins of major and minor. He further postulates that the minor chord is in fact a mirror of the major chord if the intervals remain

constant but the prime (or what we call the root) is switched from the tonic to the fifth. In other words, a consecutive major third and a minor third inverted, quite neatly, forms the minor triad – iv i.e., C E G and when inverted becomes C Ab F. It is fair to say that some of these views are antiquated; however, as coincidental and ‘hocus pocus’ sounding as this may be, this inverse series or mirror image of the upper partials is perhaps further evidence that SD, in this case iv, may possess a kind of harmonic power over (or under) the tonic, albeit poetic.⁸² In this way, Riemann connects I and iv, the derivation of the minor subdominant from the tonic. The harmonic function of iv arguably plays one of the most critical roles in Charlie Parker’s harmonic concept i.e., the Ab on the G7 chord may not be a b9 but instead the b3 of SD.

Chan Parker speaks of his proclivity for the poetic and the interplay of invertible entities. As reprinted in Henry Martin’s book *Charlie Parker: Composer*, Chan remembers a poem of word play from Parker:

To play is to live and vice versa
 play to live and vice versa
 live play is vice perverse
 live verse is play
 to shun is to run
 running is shunning
 but to shun running
 is shining shunning of running.⁸³

⁸² In *Charlie Parker, Composer* Henry Martin discusses how Parker loved word play, a behaviour that is also evident in his titles, i.e., *Au Privave*, “Klaunstance,” “Klactoveesedteen,” “Ah-Leu-Cha.” Ross Russell acknowledges this as well when speaking to Robert Riesner he recounts: There are two takes of “Klactoveedsedstene,” which is the title that Charlie Parker gave me. He wrote it out on a piece of paper and gave it to me and said, “That’s it man.” I remember I asked a psychiatrist if he could read anything into it; he couldn’t. I found a man with a background in philology. I thought maybe he could come up with something; and he couldn’t. Then, I finally got around to asking some of the cats, and they said, “Why it’s just a sound man.” And that’s what it is (Robert Riesner, *Bird, The Legend of Charlie Parker*, 1974, p. 202).

⁸³ Henry Martin, *Charlie Parker, Composer*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020, Ch. 6, sect. 64, para. 1.

Dominant and Subdominant Conflation

When looking at the cycle of fifths motion and the equivalences⁸⁴ of harmonic functions through the relationship of the tritone interval and its basic voice leading propensities that resolve the dissonant tritone (3 and 7) to the root and 3rd of a consonant harmonic region, we see many options (as tritones are shared between two dominants and all dominants are related a minor 3rd apart). This produces a practical and highly effective harmonic equivalency through the dominant tonic relationship, e.g., one diminished 7th chord forms four dominant structures which preside over or govern a single tonic region (synthesis). In other words, all tonics are governed by only four dominant structures comprised of three diminished 7th chords. The interchangeability (equivalency) appears as follows: dominant structures, e.g., G7, Bb7, Db7, and E7, all resolve to any of the following major or minor keys: C, Eb, Gb, and A. This is made possible through the diminished that is housed within the dominant B, D, F, Ab (because each dominant shown above shares the same diminished 7th chord, the dissonance/consonance is therefore “equivalent”).⁸⁵ While this may be highly efficient and serve a purpose within Parker’s music, it does not appear to be the foundation of much of his harmonic approach.

Charlie Parker did have a use for and knowledge of the harmonic possibilities within the dominant structure. Parker’s application of this more efficient approach to the dominant cycles, his impeccable voice-leading (7-3), and his cyclical licks. However, the greater purpose for much of Parker’s employment of the dominant function, typically illustrated through voice leading (and chordal outlines), was often employed not just as an intensification of harmonic colour (dissonances) but as a critical part of his phraseology (discussed in the phrasing section).

⁸⁴ Erno Lendvai, “Tonal Principles: The Axis System,” in *Bela Bartok: An Analysis of his Music*, (London: Kahn and Averill, 2009), pp. 1-17.

⁸⁵ Erno Lendvai, *Bela Bartok: An Analysis of his Music*, pp. 1-17.

The evidence discovered by this research demonstrates that many of Parker's harmonic alterations may have originated from or been informed by the subdominant region (rather than the dominant), and that Parker's music was rooted in a folksier sensibility that maintained strong ties to the blues. The alterations employed by Parker, through manipulation of and allusion to the subdominant, eventually align with alterations typically understood and derived from the dominant function, i.e. there is a convergent point, albeit circuitous through the subdominant region to the tritone (a dominant function). The melodic accretions to the subdominant region that produce these folksy harmonic variances intentionally do not include the leading tone (the defining element of V7). The absence of the leading tone, particularly on V7/I structures, coupled with the clear articulation of the subdominant harmonic region, is critical.

The chordal repository following this section demonstrates how Charlie Parker's harmonic modifications can be achieved through the technique of "darkening" the harmony, or, as Michael Coghlan (my supervisor) has called it, "harmonic tinting." Within this research, this is referred to as melodic accretions. Essentially, it involves chromatically lowering or raising pitches from a given chord - in this case, chords that are derived from the subdominant region, such as ii7 or V7/V. Additionally, it is possible that Parker's preference for playing almost exclusively in major keys (there are few Parker compositions in the minor mode, "Segment" [Parker, 1949], the only known exception) was influenced by his proclivity for darkening or intensifying the harmonic colour. Since minor keys are often considered already intensified and darker, there are fewer opportunities for further intensification. Conversely, there are occasions where Parker employs his lick schema from major keys within minor sections and vice versa, for example, his licks in the C section of "Donna Lee" (Davis 47) when it modulates to F – (shown in the cross-phrase chapter) or his playing of "Ornithology" (Harris, 1946) where he plays the

parallel minor in m. 1.⁸⁶ This musical behaviour is highly unconventional and could be regarded by many as a mistake. I have had conversations with colleagues who subscribe to the notion that such events are just that, Parker faltering. Moreover, Thomas Owens cites instances such as these. He dismisses them, regarding them as mistakes, e.g., when Parker continues to play the “Honeysuckle Rose” B section instead of the rhythm changes B section on “Street Beat” (Thompson, 1945) on a live recording with Bud Powell and Fats Navarro at Birdland in 1950.

Parker's improvisation contradicts the precomposed chords of the bridge. Mistakes of this magnitude are almost unknown in his studio recordings. That he made a mistake in this initial performance is confirmed by an examination of later performances, where his melodies fit the chords played by the rhythm section.⁸⁷

Parker's refusal to play the correct bridge cannot be assumed to be a mistake as he repeats the behaviour on every chorus (the first B section is less clear), moving to the Dbmaj7 in mm. 3-4 (over the F7), further suggesting it may be intentional: iconoclastic behaviour was a part of the bebop ethos. Moreover, Parker begins the first three B sections with A7 over the C7 in the rhythm section. It is unlikely that Parker didn't notice what was happening! Parker is clearly playing the “Honeysuckle Rose” (Waller, Razaf, 1932) B section beginning with a sideslip.

When examining the subdominant on the tonic as a clear point of arrival, many might perceive this as a musical mistake or an unresolved suspension. However, I am not convinced that this is true of Parker's musical behaviour. The example below clearly illustrates Parker's use of SD as a clear point of arrival on T: the ‘resolution’ of his phrase is on the subdominant.

⁸⁶ Playing the minor on the major and the major on the minor – invertibility.

⁸⁷ Thomas Owens, *Charlie Parker - Techniques of Improvisation*, (1974), p. 57.

Figure 72. “Chasin’ the Bird” Subdominant

The figure displays a musical score for the piece "Chasin' the Bird". It consists of three staves. The top staff, labeled "A mm. 5-8", shows a sequence of chords: Cm7, F7, Bb9, B9, F9, and F9. The middle staff, labeled "VL", shows Roman numerals: II7/IV, V/IV, and IV, with voice leading numbers 7, 3, and 1 respectively. The bottom staff, labeled "Chasin' The Bird (DB 6-23)", shows the melody. The key signature is one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 4/4.

The VL layer in the above example displays the Roman numerals and voice leading that reflect Parker’s expression of the subdominant region. The chords in the top staff present the harmonic pattern in the rhythm section, which clearly shows the conflict between Parker’s sustained ‘resolution’ on IV and the tonic harmony. Parker appears to start on some form of V7/I or V7/IV, but because the leading tone of IV is prominent in m. 5 beat 4, all signs point to him suddenly shifting from V7/I to V7/IV, leading to IV. This shift is quite disorienting to listen to – the gestalt flip. Parker used and superimposed subdominant harmony like this capriciously, despite the harmonic abrasions and, in the example above, the deliberate obfuscation of the established harmonic progression—part of Parker’s broader blues ethos. Below are two more examples of the same behaviour within the cadential region of the A section to rhythm changes in F.

Figure 73. Subdominant Endings – Rhythm Changes in F

Figure 73 displays three musical excerpts with harmonic analysis. The top staff, labeled 'A mm. 5-8 A m. 1', shows a piano accompaniment with chords: Cm⁷, F⁷, B^b6, B[°]7, F⁶, Gm⁷, C⁷, and F⁶. The middle staff, labeled 'Ah-Leu-Cha (Take 2)', shows a melody with Roman numeral analysis: V⁷/IV, IV⁷, and IVmaj⁷. The bottom staff, labeled 'Chasin' The Bird (DB 6-04)', shows a melody with Roman numeral analysis: [IV bII/V, V⁷, I, IV], iv, and I.

In the example above, the expressions of the SD harmonic region over the tonic harmony are indicated by the Roman numerals below each excerpt.

Because Parker's music is comprised of single-note ideas, the extrapolation of harmonic function can sometimes be uncertain. However, if we follow the observations made by Johann Forkel we learn that:

...harmony and melody are as inseparable as truth of ideas from correctness of verbal expression. Language is the cloak of thought as melody is the cloak of harmony. In this respect one may call harmony the logic of music since it stands approximately in the same relationship to melody as logic of thought stands, in language, to expression. It defines and clarifies a melody in such a manner that it becomes a real truth for sensuous apperception.⁸⁸

Using Forkel's observation as a vantage point to examine how Parker's movement into harmonic regions, such as the subdominant on the tonic, reveals that, like in language, logic underpins thought and intention. When Parker's single note events are viewed through a lens that uses the tonic as the referential point, it is possible to observe and interpret, through the pitch collections expressed, the harmonic logic that underpins his musical gesture. To better

⁸⁸ Gerhard Weunsch, "Hugo Riemann's Musical Theory," p. 115, quoting Johann Nikolaus Forkel, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik*, Leipzig, 1788, vol. I, p. 24.

understand Charlie Parker's music, we must unveil the broader harmonic implications of his melodic gestures.

It is impossible to know or even speculate on what Parker's knowledge or understanding of the subdominant was. However, the harmonic markers that help guide the observations include the frequent absence of the leading tone (3rd of V7), targeting of and 'resolutions' to the subdominant (with the leading tone of SD, 3rd of V7/IV), coupled with clear chordal outlines, all of which indicate a possible derivation from the subdominant harmonic region (as shown in the chordal repository).

When examining and hypothesising about the hierarchy of harmonic structures in Charlie Parker's music, we should not attempt to redefine the existing paradigm of harmony (as Russell did) nor force it into existing theoretical models (as many others have). Instead, by accepting the features specific to Parker's music and basing hypotheses on them, we can avoid confusing and misleading assumptions. In Charlie Parker's music, the subdominant produces obfuscation and ambiguity, as uncomfortable as it may be for those who believe in avoid notes and the primacy of the dominant-tonic relationship. Moreover, it is Parker's expression of this through a rootsy, folksy, blues aesthetic that gives his music its expressive power, potency and warmth. The prominence of the subdominant in Parker's harmonic logic is evident in the examples that follow.

Chapter 9: Subdominant Crips

The following discussion presents an outline of Parker's use and interpolation of the subdominant (IV) and subdominant minor (iv) within his improvisations and heads from blues and rhythm changes excerpts. The examples discussed in this section focus on how Parker's lick schema, which employs scale degree 4 and b6 as a primary feature, can invoke the subdominant function (IV or iv) in the harmonic regions of I, V, and, of course, on IV. It is unique to Parker's music that he uses the subdominant function on I and V, a move that might be objected to by many, especially given the overt way he does so. In Parker's music, when scale degree 4 (the avoid note) and scale degree b6⁸⁹ are interpolated with the tonic and dominant harmonic region, they produce a mildly dissonant bitonality that may not only originate from the blues but also be expressive of, and integral to it.

Subdominant Openings

In Parker's opening measures of the blues and rhythm changes, there are three ways in which Parker articulates and interpolates the subdominant.

1. SD and T (IV&I)
2. SD targets (SD tar.)
3. Interplay between scale degrees 3 and 4 (3&4)

Subdominant and Tonic (Folksy SD and T)

The lick schema Charlie Parker uses in the opening of many of his blues choruses often consists of various combinations of SD and T. When the antithetical properties of SD are merged with the stable consonance of T through Parker's lick schema, a compelling harmonic ambiguity

⁸⁹ In Parker's music, when the leading tone is absent, it is not entirely accurate to refer to the scalar b6 or the Ab as the b9 of G7. As will be shown, Parker may well be invoking iv (SD function).

arises, which is intrinsic to Parker’s blues style – a kind of bitonality between SD and T: the “major blues.”⁹⁰ The folksy quality evoked by these gestures is unassuming and plaintive. Furthermore, it is quite simple yet melodically rich, hopeful, and satisfying. A discussion on Parker’s blues playing would not be complete without examining this essential feature.

Below are five exemplar instances of the interpolation of SD and T as played by Parker on four blues excerpts in C and one in F (the leading tone is prevalent, not as an articulation of V7, but rather as a more traditional enclosure/neighbour note gesture surrounding the tonic).

Figure 74. The Folksy Subdominant and Tonic

Figure 74 displays five musical excerpts illustrating the 'Folksy SD&T' (Subdominant and Tonic) gesture. The excerpts are arranged vertically, each showing a melodic line in 4/4 time. The first excerpt, labeled 'mm. 1-3', shows a sequence of chords: C⁶, F⁷, and C⁶. The subsequent four excerpts are labeled 'Cool Blues (Take B)', 'Past Due (Take D)', 'Cool Blues (Take D)', and 'Cool Blues (Take C)'. The final excerpt is labeled 'Transposed from F Billie's Bounce (Take 2)'. Each excerpt features a melodic line with a bracket labeled 'Folksy SD&T' indicating the subdominant and tonic notes. The chords are labeled as IV&I, I, IV&I, V7/IV, and IV&I.

There are no ‘blue notes’ in the examples above, except for the B $\flat$ in m. 3 in the last three excerpts (typical of Parker’s opening three measures). Moreover, a highly fluid schema is at work that expresses the harmonic combinations of IV & I, completely disregarding the E $\flat$ in the

⁹⁰ A term a colleague used in 2022, which inspired me to rethink many of my own ideas about what constitutes a blues behaviour.

IV7 in m. 2 and the Bb that is all too often (erroneously) associated with m.1 of the blues. The chords on the top staff show a major 6 chord (which could be a Cmaj7), to account for this: in Parker's music, mm. 1 and 3 are often not expressed as a dominant seventh chord. The feeling of the blues, even in the absence of blue notes, is striking. The melodic material for this is very open and is derived from an interpolation of the tonic triad with scale degree 4, e.g., C E G and F. In much pedagogy, even today, such music behaviour might be considered problematic because of this 4th degree on the major tonic chord, perhaps less so in the first two examples, but most certainly in the final example from take 2 of "Billie's Bounce" (Parker, 1945). Parker's use of scale degree 4 within the tonic triad expresses a blues feeling that, as mentioned, is 'major' in its sonority but is still intrinsically blues-based, possessing a mild dissonance and harmonic ambiguity.

Other notable features in the above examples are the 'hanging' on scale degrees 3, 4, and 5, and 12-beat phrase length, except for the excerpt from "Past Due" (Parker, 1947), which continues. Lastly, Parker's preference for ending on the b7 of the tonic not only to prepare the IV7 change in m. 5 but to employ parts of the WH 3-7 gestures (as discussed in the whole tone chapter).

SD Targets (SD tar.)

Another key feature of Parker's use of SD on T is that, when scale degree 4 is targeted, it is often preceded by the leading tone of IV, which further strengthens the implied harmonic shift to the SD region, even on the tonic. Below are three examples that show this feature in the opening bars of the blues.

Figure 75. Subdominant Targets a

mm. 1-4

C⁶ F⁷ C⁶

Cosmic Rays (Alt. 5)

Cosmic Rays (Master)

Transposed from Eb
Bluebird (Take 3)

SD tar. 243C 243C WH 3-7

I IV 3 I 3 V7/IV

I IV 3 I V7/IV

I IV I V7 3 V7/IV

These examples demonstrate how Parker targets the 4th, clearly arriving at SD on T (SD tar.) in m. 1 of the blues. In addition, this is executed using the intervallic cluster 243C. There are numerous instances of Parker performing this lick schema in this manner. Still, these three are exemplary, and the excerpt from “Bluebird” (Parker, 1947) is from 3 years prior. In m. 1 of each example, Parker pivots off the C, which, as a result, functions as the tonic bourdon (the VL layers are not shown). All the examples conclude with the WH 3-7 (the final Bb in “Bluebird” is in m. 4 which is not shown).

The excerpt from “Bluebird” (originally in Eb) shows the same opening gesture as the first two examples but with a very different continuation. This event by Parker is the reverse of what is being discussed here, where in m. 2 he uses V7 on IV7, which is preceded by I (on IV7), e.g., I V7 I – somewhat atypical but similar to the WH5 PV crip (discussed in the whole tone chapter), where Parker plays V+7 over IV7, also in m. 2 of the blues. This unusual move by Parker provides further evidence that, in Parker's music, there was always a kind of harmonic invertibility, in this case, though, the obfuscation of SD through D, yet another gestalt flip.

Shown below is the same musical behaviour, targeting SD on T, in the opening three measures of rhythm changes (in the key of Bb): On these occasions, separated by three years, we see Parker's schematic design in full swing, where essentially the same melodic plan enables Parker to be somewhat relentless in his articulation and sustain of the subdominant over the tonic.

Figure 76. Subdominant Targets b

mm. 1-3

Bb⁶ Cm⁷ F⁷ Dm⁷ G⁷

Kim (Take 2)

SD tar.

I IV I IV I IV

Dexterity (Take 2)

SD tar.

IV I IV

Below are two examples of how the SD target now appears in a descending gesture in these opening measures of the blues form.

Figure 77. Subdominant Targets c

mm. 12-3

Cm⁷ F⁷ Bb⁶ Eb⁷ Bb⁶

Bird Feathers

SD tar.

IV (V7) IV (V7) IV

The Hymn (Take 2)

SD tar.

IV I

The first example begins with the conclusion of the head from “Bird Feathers” (Parker, 1947), which then serves as the lick fragment for the opening gesture. There is a brief allusion to

V7, but in m. 2 we see a clear articulation of IV (arguably even as IV/IV), and the resolution onto scalar degree 4 on the tonic harmonic region in m. 3 beat 1: more avoid note transgressions and aberrations!

The second example shows Parker opening his third chorus on take 2 of “The Hymn” (Parker, 1948)⁹¹ by entering on IV7 and then targeting scalar degree 4 on beat 4 of the tonic region. This is an exemplar of Parker playing SD on the tonic, an ambiguous and harmonically disorienting event. These are not mistakes, but intentional, blues-based behaviours. The phrasing in this example may be of even greater importance and is discussed in the phrase-slip chapter.

3&4

Further to the discussion on the interpolation of SD and T, there is a highly subtle and intriguing harmonic behaviour in Parker’s music where he interplays scale degrees 3 and 4 (3&4), occasionally including other degrees such as 2 or 5, along with chromatic elements, such as b3 #4. Parker employs this device in various ways, but for simplicity, two examples from his compositions — “Big Foot” (Parker, 1947) and “Past Due” (Parker, 1947) — were chosen as they demonstrate the 3&4 clearly. Below are the opening eight measures of “Big Foot,” a favourite blues of Parker’s in Bb, which he performed live on many occasions from 1947 onwards.

⁹¹ This head was originally “Wichita Blues” (McShann, 1942) and recycled by Parker for this recording.

Figure 78. 3&4 “Big Foot”

The musical score for Figure 78, titled "3&4 'Big Foot'", is presented in four staves. The first staff, labeled "mm. 1-9", shows a sequence of chords: Bb6, Eb7, Bb6, Fm7, Bb7, Eb7, followed by a double bar line, then Bb6, G7, and Cm7. The second staff, labeled "VL U", shows a melodic line with a 3&4 interplay pattern, with scale degrees 3, 4, and 5 indicated. The third staff, labeled "VL L", shows a Bourdon pattern. The fourth staff, labeled "Big Foot", shows a rhythmic pattern with a 3/4 interplay pattern.

The lower VL layer, as shown above, displays the tonic bourdon, which serves as the fundamental pivot point. The upper VL layer reveals the 3&4 interplay, using scale degrees 3 and 4 (with a brief appearance of 5 in m. 4). The placement of the 3&4 figure is, in order of appearance, on 4 in m. 2, on the ‘and’ of 2 in m. 3, and on 2 in m. 4. From there, still in the upper VL the duration changes (in m. 5 it can be seen in two ways, but it is the low Eb that’s indicated, despite the other possible reading where the 3&4 is again the high points or the ‘and’ of 3 in m. 5). Despite this the 3&4 continues until the convergence with the bourdon and the 3&4 figure in m. 9. The 3&4 interplay perpetuates the ambiguity felt between SD and T: another expression of the major blues, as there are once again no blue notes, no b3, b5, b7, and no other chromatics to speak of for the first seven measures. Despite this, the folksy major blues are felt and heard within this tuneful outing of Parker’s, due to the highly rhythmic interplay between the subdominant (4) and tonic (3).

Lastly, we will examine the 3&4 figure as it appears in “Past Due” (Parker, 1947), arguably the most obvious example in the Parker oeuvre. Interestingly, if one were to ‘correct’ the 4th degree in this lick to #4 in accordance with jazz pedagogy’s mandate to suggest the Lydian mode is a better option for a tonic chord, the blues would be all but omitted. Again, it is

the tonic triad with scalar degree 4 that very much defines the foreground melodic layer of this head of Parker's.

Figure 79. 3&4 "Past Due"

The musical score for "Past Due" is presented in four staves. The first staff, labeled "mm. 1-3", shows a treble clef and a key signature of one flat, with notes C⁶, F⁷, and C⁶. The second staff, labeled "VL U", shows a treble clef and a key signature of one flat, with a 3&4 time signature and notes C, G, IV&I. The third staff, labeled "VL L", shows a treble clef and a key signature of one flat, with a Bourdon time signature and notes C, G, IV&I. The fourth staff, labeled "Past Due", shows a treble clef and a key signature of one flat, with notes C, G, IV&I.

The 3&4 figure is illustrated in the upper VL layer. It is neatly enclosed by the cycle G (C G), which opens and closes the phrase as an implication of V: events that are juxtaposed with the bourdon I (C), as shown in the lower VL layer. The rhythmic pattern, established by the hemiola pattern as shown in mm. 2-3 of the upper VL, are integral to the 3&4 interpolation and to the phrase structure. The ambiguity of the key centre is very apparent in this well-known example that emphasises the subdominant region on the tonic.

Henry Martin explains: "Past Due" was not the original title issued for this head of Parker's.

... Parker's first through-composed Blues in C, "Relaxing at Camarillo", is a piece of considerable complexity. The title of the piece was apparently Ross Russell's and refers to Parker's recuperation at Camarillo State Hospital from July 1946 through January

1947. Parker himself wanted to call the piece “Past Due,” but it was apparently overruled by Russell.⁹²

This research uses Parker’s chosen title, “Past Due.”

Subdominant Ending

Parker often cadences or resolves a phrase to scalar degree 4 (the melodic implication of the subdominant). Another behaviour that transgresses much of the established pedagogy: tenets that are based not on musical examples of seminal musicians such as Charlie Parker, but instead on existing theoretical paradigms imposed on seminal musical concepts such as those of Charlie Parker. When analysing the use of scalar degree 4 on the ending to Parker’s “Bloomdido” (1950), Henry Martin suggests its harmonic implication may be that it is some form of suspension seeking a resolution that constitutes “the strong urge to return to the top may be one of the reasons why the tune launches solos so well.”⁹³ This may not entirely be the case.

The first example illustrating Parker’s ‘iconoclastic’ behaviour shows scalar degree 4 as a point of resolution on the tonic, suggesting the same bitonality of tonic and subdominant seen in the opening. However, this time, there is no consonant resolution, which is evident in the ending of Parker’s solo on the only take and recording of “Passport (Blues)” (Parker, 1950) known to this research.

⁹² Henry Martin, *Charlie Parker; Composer*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020, (ebook), Ch. 5, sect. 21, para. 1.

⁹³ Henry Martin, *Charlie Parker; Composer*, Ch. 6, sect. 64, para. 15.

Figure 80. Subdominant Ending a

mm. 11-2 1-2

C⁶ Dm⁷ G⁷ C⁶ F⁷

VL U

3&4

IV&I

VL L

Bourdon

Passport Blues

HR

HR

HR

Background

CP

CP

The figure, which may originate from a country blues lick Parker may have heard or even from the first movement of Maurice Ravel's *Piano Concerto in G major* (1931-32). There is a more complete version of this gesture that uses the fragment that makes up this crip, but instead of articulating SD, it moves it down triadically.⁹⁴ It is worthy of mention that, similar to the germination of a seed as discussed in the blues gestures section, Parker may also be an exemplar of the profound epithet that is often attributed to Pablo Picasso but was in fact written by T. S. Elliot:

Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal... bad poets deface what they take, and good poets make it into something better, or at least something different.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ See Parker's solo in 1946 on "Lady Be Good" (Gershwin, 1928) with Norman Granz's Jazz at the Philharmonic.

⁹⁵ T. S. Eliot, *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism*, London: Methuen, 1921, p. 114.

The 3&4 figure is again in the upper VL layer, and clearly shows the expression of I (3rd = E) and IV (4 = F), while the lower VL layer shows the bourdon, in the same manner as “Past Due” (Parker). That it carries through to the F7 (SD) of the next chorus could be grounds to suggest it is leading there; however, based on precedents set that show this same proclivity, the former argument stands: it is IV on I using scalar degree 4 and in this case, the 3&4 interplay. The background layer shows that this is also a 3/4 gesture, as indicated by CP (cross-phrase, discussed shortly), and yet again, there are three of them. Lastly, the hemiola rest (HR) is shown, which further expresses the continuation of the ternary features of this phrase.

The four examples below, which show the final ‘cadence’ to scalar degree 4 (IV), are selected from Parker’s Bb blues solos spanning a period of over four years.

Figure 81. Subdominant Ending b

mm. 9-12 m.1

Cm⁷ F⁷ B^b₆ F⁷(sus₄) B^b₆

Buzzy (Take 3)

Buzzy (Take 5)

Big Foot (take C)

Mohawk (Master)

iiVBb

Folksy IV&I

The harmonic discussion will be conducted on the first example, take 3 of “Buzzy” (Parker, 1947), momentarily. First, I will examine the two crips: iiVBb and Folksy IV&I are key in facilitating this ending on SD. Firstly, Parker’s classic, ii⁷ V⁷ in Bb, exhibits considerable variance in its metrical position but tends to remain consistent in structure (with the exception

that the first two examples do not have a pivot on the ii7). The second, a more malleable fragment of lick schema, another folksy IV&I, that uses both the leading tones of I and IV: when viewed as a set of harmonic intervals, these become two parallel 4ths, e.g., A and D, and Bb and Eb. This folksy IV&I, post the iiVBb, is the key to the SD ending in these examples, each of which appears in a ‘same but different’⁹⁶ form.

Below is a deeper look into just the upper and lower VL layers to help further reveal the structural events implied by Parker’s crips.

Figure 82. Subdominant Ending c

mm. 10-12 m.1

VL U

VL L

Buzzy (Take 3)

Chords: F7, Bb6, F7(sus4), Bb6

Figures: ii7, V7, I, IV&I, Bourdon, 7-3, 3

The upper VL layer shows the 3&4 figure again as the device which expresses this overlap and contributes to the ambiguity within this harmonic expression, which ‘resolves’ to IV on I! The lower VL begins with the 7-3 voice leading, which moves ii7 to V7, then on beat 3 of the 11th measure, Parker’s preferred bourdon appears. This bourdon helps to stabilise the

⁹⁶ As glib as such an observation/description may seem, it is precisely this which is essential to Parker’s modus operandi. The flexibility of specific lick schema was vital to its usefulness, i.e., if something can be structurally the same yet different due to its varied forms of expression, there is a freedom within structure.

precarious nature of events such as these, which introduce the wonderfully conflicting and mildly dissonant harmonic regions of IV and I.

Subdominant Minor (iv)

Further to this discussion of the subdominant throughout the blues and rhythm changes is the appearance of the subdominant minor (iv). In this section SD minor will be illustrated using examples from both Parker's blues and rhythm changes heads.

The first score is a mashup⁹⁷ taken from a collection of Parker's compositions that illustrates how iv appears throughout the blues form. As illustrated by the examples below iv occurs in every harmonic region of the blues: the SD regions of m. 2 and m. 6, the T region of m. 3 and the D regions of m. 10 and m. 12. Three of the excerpts are in the key of C, the remaining four have been transposed into the key of C.

⁹⁷ The mashups are collections of excerpts that have been placed in a fictitious order but are always situated in their original metrical and harmonic locale within the form.

Figure 83. iv on the Blues

C Blues

Passport Blues

Chi Chi

Mohawk

Bongo Bop

Perhaps

Au Privave

(Bongo Bop cont.)

Cheryl

7

C6 F7 C6 Gm7 C7 F7

iv 3 iv 3 iv 3

iv iv iv iv

The above examples, which illustrate iv as it appears throughout the three harmonic regions of the blues, demonstrate Parker's proclivity for this musical behaviour. The implications of this are not solely defined by the fragmentary instances as shown above, but constitute a key part of the broader features that define Parker's blues-based behaviours. It must be reiterated that in these examples, the absence of the leading tone, particularly in m. 10 (V7), is crucial.

The following examples (the first of which is a mashup), draw on material from Parker's rhythm changes heads and show how iv appears throughout the A sections of this harmonic

progression. The middle staff, beginning with “Dexterity” (Parker, 1947), is the mashup and displays a collection of events from three compositions, while the bottom staff is from a single source.

Figure 84. iv on Rhythm Changes

The figure shows a musical score with three staves. The top staff, labeled 'C Rhythm', contains a sequence of chords: C⁶, Dm⁷, G⁷, Em⁷, A⁷, Dm⁷, G⁷, Gm⁷, C⁷, F⁶, F^{#o7}, C⁶, Dm⁷, G⁷. The middle staff, labeled 'Parker', shows melodic lines for three pieces: 'Dexterity', 'Swedish Schnapps', and 'Anthropology'. Brackets above the staff indicate the use of the interval 'iv' (subdominant) in various harmonic regions. The bottom staff, labeled 'AOFT', shows a melodic line with similar 'iv' markings. A specific 'Aug6' (augmented sixth) interval is also marked in the Parker staff.

The score above illustrates Parker’s repeated use of iv in virtually every harmonic region of George Gershwin’s “I Got Rhythm” (1930). There are more details to discuss regarding the second example, AOFT, aka “An Oscar for Treadwell” (Parker, 1950), iv in m.8 can also be seen as V7/vi and will be discussed further shortly; however, at this juncture, the excerpt shows the repeated expressions of iv throughout this catchy head of Parker’s from 1950.

The pitch invoked through Parker’s use of iv in C is Ab, b3 of SD or b6 of I. Within Parker’s music, the implications of this harmonic device are far-reaching and therefore will be central to the harmonic discussion as this investigation progresses. For example, the F# and Ab, as seen in mm. 5-6 of “Anthropology” (Parker, 1945), may constitute the Aug6 (Ger6) and may be one of the key harmonic links between the subdominant and the blues.

Chapter 10: Charlie Parker's Chordal Repository

Parker's chromatic melodic accretions from or related to the subdominant region provide nuanced alterations – increased dissonance or intensification– to the chord in motion. These accretions can redefine the properties of a chord while retaining its harmonic function and relationship to the subdominant harmonic region. Dissonance in Charlie Parker's music can only be partly explained using a harmonic perspective based on the traditionally understood governing propensity of the dominant structure; what completes the picture are the many alterations made, through the chromatic melodic accretions, onto ii7 and V7/V (both SD functions).

In Parker's music, ii7 and V7/V establish the basis from which Parker can forge his newly formed dissonant harmonic devices. Within this, the tonic is the mainstay and functions as the stable consonance: the referential basis from which Charlie Parker's harmonic musical behaviours are observed and subsequently categorised. The conflation of I and IV in Charlie Parker's music and the blues fundamentally retains the primacy of the tonic even with all the divergent SD-based musical behaviour, as previously discussed. More importantly, the authentic V7 I cadence (perfect authentic cadence), as present as it is at times, e.g., Parker's expression of V+7 and vii07 may be secondary to the subdominant–tonic relationship. In Parker's music, it appears that the subdominant region, and not the dominant, is the primary source from which he draws to produce the complex pool of harmonic variants.

In other words, as the notes of a chord change to produce further dissonance, that is, typically moving to or withheld from a consonant destination, the notes that change redefine the chord's harmonic colour, but the harmonic function remains the same. In Parker's music, dissonant relationships are comprised of various expressions of SD through the intensification of ii7 and V7/V using chromatic melodic accretions. As Scott Deveaux observes, ...“the

subdominant harmony in that bar is perhaps the one irreducible element of blues harmony: a constant in nearly every variant harmonisation, no matter how encrusted with chromatic accretions.”⁹⁸

Charlie Parker’s harmonic behaviour, especially in relation to and resultant from the subdominant, is highly diverse. Nonetheless, constraining his harmonic behaviour solely within the context of SD is misguided. However, SD may have played a more significant role than the more typically understood harmonic variations derived from the dominant structure. The latter is more common in the canons of jazz pedagogy, as the dominant structure shares harmonic equivalents and is thus highly logical and teachable; however, the limitations of this are that the variants from the dominant lens ‘wash away’ the nuanced elements endemic to Parker’s music.

The outline below illustrates a cross-section of chords, all of which are found in Parker’s lexicon, which correspond to events associated with the subdominant function. The hypothesis is: many of Parker’s alterations have arisen from the process of melodic accretion and ornamentation rather than from harmonic theory. Furthermore, it is also possible that Parker arrived at the “tritone substitution” not through the shared tritone that highlights the equivalence of two dominant structures, but through this highly nuanced, almost folksy musical behaviour: the gradual process of altering various forms of SD through chromatic melodic accretion. In this way, there is still a path, albeit scenic, to the tritone, e.g., bII7, and the Ger6, as derived from ii7 and V7/V. The Fr6 and It6 occur with much less frequency.

To better illustrate this claim and the far-reaching implications of such a hypothesis, illustrations of the progressive chromatic melodic accretion that produces accidentals on the two SD regions, ii7 and V7/V, are provided, revealing newly formed chordal structures that retain the

⁹⁸ Scott Deveaux, *The Birth of Bebop: a Social and Musical History*, p. 374.

same harmonic function. The methodology used is guided *only* [italics mine] by what Parker played, rather than idle theoretical conjecture. Furthermore, the claim remains that all this stems from Parker's harmonic affinity with the blues and the frequent absence of the leading tone.

For a more complete look at Parker's chordal repository, the final section illustrates the chromatic accretions on the secondary dominant function as it precedes SD, e.g., V7/IV.

The following is divided into three groups:

1. SD variants from ii7
2. SD variants from V7/V
3. D variants from V7/IV

1. Charlie Parker's SD variants from ii7

Figure 85. Subdominant Variants From ii7

CP SD Variants From ii7

Chord Name	Functional Label
Dm7	ii7
Fmaj7	IVmaj7
F7	IV7
Fm(maj7)	ivmaj7
Fm7	iv7
E7	V7/vi
Bb7	iv
Fm6	bVII7
Dbmaj7	bII maj7
Abm6 / Db7	bvi
F07	bII7
F07	vii07
B07	vii07

Figure 86. Examples of Subdominant Variants From ii7

I'll Always Love You Just The Same
ii7 and bVII7

Another Hairdo (Take 4)
IVmaj7 and vii07

An Oscar For Treadwell
V7/vi

An Oscar For Treadwell
ivmaj7

Big Foot (Take D)
ii and bIIImaj7

Hot House DB (04-11)
IV7 and iv7

My Heart Tells Me
bvi7

Bongo Beep
bII7 and iv

2. Charlie Parker's SD variants from V7/V

Figure 87. Subdominant Variants from V7/V

CP SD Variants From V7/V

D7 F#ø7 F#ø7 D#ø7 B7 Cømaj7 D7(#11) D7(#11) Ab7 / D7 Ebm7 Ebm7 Cø7 / D7

V7/V vii7b5/V vii07/V #iv07 V7/iii vii07/iii V7/V V7/V bVI7 Ger6 bVI7 biii7 biii7 bII7/V bVI7 bVI (bII/V)

Figure 88. Examples of Subdominant Variants from V7/V

Perhaps (Take 5)
vii7b5/V

Perhaps (Take 5)
vii07/V

Red Cross (Take 2)
V7/V and (bII7/V)

Lester Leaps In (Rockland Palace, 52)
V7#11/V

Thriving on a Riff (Take 3)
V7#11/V a

Parker's Mood (Take 2)
V7/iii

Bongo Bop (Take C)
vii07/iii

Passport Blues
biii (bII7/V)

Cheers
bII7/V

Cheryl (Master)
bV7/V bVI7

3. Charlie Parker's D variants from V7/IV

Figure 89. Dominant Variants from V7/IV

CP D Variants: V7/IV

C^7 $E^{\circ 7}$ $E^{\circ 7}$ C^{+7} $C^{\# \circ 7}$ $B^b \circ \text{maj}^7$
 $V7/IV$ $V7/IV$ $vii07/IV$ $V+7/IV$ $vii07/ii$ $vii07/ii$

Figure 90. Examples of Dominant Variants From V7/IV

Billies Bounce (Finale Club) vii^b5/IV $(E-7^b5)$ C^7 F^7 vii^b5/IV
 Cheryl (RR 3-16) $vii07/IV$ $(E\text{dim}^7)$ F^7 $vii07/IV$
 Big Foot (Take D) $V7+/IV$ (C^7+) Gm^7 C^7 F^7 $V7+/IV$
 The Hymn (Take 2) $vii07/ii$ Em^7 $(C^{\#}\text{dim}^7)$ A^7 Dm^7 $vii07/ii$
 Past Due $vii07/ii$ A^7 $(B^b0\text{maj}^7)$ Dm^7 $vii07/ii$

The role of the subdominant in Charlie Parker's music was such that it contributed to both his melodic sensibility and the underpinnings of his greater harmonic concept. That Parker may have derived much of his harmonic dissonance from alterations and accretions using an expansion of the subdominant region offers a distinctly divergent perspective on how new harmonic structures can be generated. In other words, the harmonic alterations found by expanding the subdominant region not only harken to and evoke blues connotations but are far more subtle and less acute than the often-recognised approach more typically employed, which uses the tritone substitution as a basis for harmonic alterations.

Part V: Blues Cadence

Chapter 11: Blues Cadence

In Charlie Parker's music, the subdominant does not exclusively serve as the preparatory harmonic device that enhances the primacy of the dominant function, but rather has its own prominent role that takes precedence over the dominant structure. As a flexible harmonic region liberated from the dominant structure's governing role, the subdominant offers harmonic information that allows Parker to craft his melodic voice-leading devices in a way that consistently evokes blues over[under]tones. This free use of the dominant adds yet another layer to Parker's blues expression, and recognising it provides deeper insight into the folksy aesthetic and, at times, the unassuming character of his music.

Through his "superb voice leading,"⁹⁹ Parker often employs two harmonic progressions characteristic of the blues to facilitate his nuanced treatment of the subdominant region. The revelatory evidence for this claim, which comprises the core of the following discussion, is found within the voice-leading layers. Moreover, it is these events, as heard within his voice-leading layers, that harmonically bind much of the lick schema together.

The two harmonic progressions discussed in this section that possess and illustrate this voice-leading are as follows:

1. Descending blues cadence (DBC)
2. Ascending blues cadence (ABC)

⁹⁹ Henry Martin, *Charlie Parker and Thematic Improvisation*, Scarecrow Press, 1996, p. 17.

The Descending Blues Cadence

The descending blues cadence (DBC) has voice-leading properties that express or allude to the subdominant—a harmonic region with great flexibility—which may help explain the ubiquity of the DBC in its various incarnations throughout Charlie Parker's improvisations and compositions. Its simplicity and adaptability, especially when viewed through the voice-leading layers (Parker's primary way of illustrating harmonic movement), are key. The elasticity of the voice-leading within the DBC is essential to its usefulness, as it becomes a tool for crafting coherent musical ideas across many harmonic regions and progressions. Useful musical tools must be easily manageable, distilled, potent, and highly flexible. Not only does the descending blues cadence possess all these qualities, but it is also rooted in a folksy blues aesthetic.

This research has discovered that much of Charlie Parker's harmonic concept may have been influenced by this progression (which is defined by the subdominant harmonic region) and its implications.

There are six ways in which the descending blues cadence appears in Charlie Parker's music.

3. Descending blues cadence (DBC) I V7/IV IV iv I
4. Descending blues cadence augmented (DBC+) ii7/IV V7/IV V7+/IV IV
5. Descending blues cadence Gospel (DBCG) I V7/vi vi7
6. Descending blues cadence turnaround (DBCT) iii7 V7/ii ii-7 V7 I
7. Descending blues cadence chromatic (DBCCH) iii7 biii7 ii7 bIImaj7
8. Descending blues cadence sideslip (DBCSS) ii7/IV V7/IV bII/IV IV

Figure 91. List of Six Descending Blues Cadences

1. DBC

C⁶ C⁷/B^b F⁶/A F^m/A^b C⁶/G

I V⁷/IV IV iv I

2. DBC+

G^m7 C⁷ C⁷([#]5) F⁷

ii⁷/IV V⁷/IV V⁷+/IV IV⁷

3. DBCG

C^{maj}7 C⁶ E⁷ A^m7

I I V⁷/vi vi⁷

4. DBCT

E^m7 A⁷ D^m7 G⁷ C⁶

iii⁷ V⁷/ii ii⁷ vii⁰7 I

5. DBCCH

E^m7 E^bm⁷ D^m7 D^bmaj⁷ C^{maj}7

iii⁷ biii⁷ ii⁷ bII^{maj}7 Imaj⁷

6. DBCSS

C⁶ G^m7 C⁷ F[#]9 F⁹

I ii⁷/IV V⁷/IV bII/IV IV

This list is quite a comprehensive list and accounts for many of Parker's harmonic expressions. Before investigating this further, as the next chapter will do, it is essential to highlight the voice-leading features that are central to it. The voice leading that Parker uses to articulate this cadence occurs in six primary ways, whilst always retaining the key melodic voice-leading devices.

Figure 92. Voice Leading for the Six Descending Blues Cadences

1. DBC VL DBC
I V7/IV IV iv I

2. DBC+ VL DBC+
I ii7/IV_ V7/IV V7+/IV IV7

3. DBCG VL DBCg
I V7/vi vi

4. DBCT VL DBCT
iii7 V7/ii ii7 V7 I

5. DBCCH VL DBCCH
iii7 bii7 ii7 bII maj7 I

6. DBCSS VL DBCSS
I ii7/IV_ V7/IV bII7/IV IV

The six progressions above illustrate how Charlie Parker utilises the melodic voice-leading characteristics of the descending blues cadence in five distinct harmonic contexts within the blues. Parker successfully does this by repositioning the harmonic designations of the voice leading. In other words, the melodic voice leading that illustrates the DBC voice-leading

becomes assigned to different harmonic degrees, relative to the chord. Despite this, the downward trajectory, with the implication of the subdominant minor, is always retained within the voice-leading layer of this blues gesture. As shown in the score above in the key of C, the dissonance invoked by the $b6/\#5$ of the tonic, A_b or $G\#$, becomes the $b3$ of iv , the $\#5$ of $V7+/IV$, the 3rd of $V7/vi$, the $b7$ of $vii^{\circ}7/I$ ($b9$ of $G7$), and the 9th of bII/IV .

This $b6$ ($\#5$), as it relates to the tonic, is the chromatic note that, in many respects, defines the DBC motion; it is also an integral part of Barry Harris' "diminished 6th scale."¹⁰⁰ Scale degree 4, as shown two chapters prior, does not possess the same invertible power as the $b6/\#5$ – the former possesses melodic implications (and connotations with $V7$, e.g., the 7-3 motion) while the latter invokes the more structural harmonic regions. Still, both are points of convergence between the subdominant and the dominant, i.e., iv with $vii^{\circ}7$ (the latter being essential to Barry Harris's concept). The $A_b/G\#$ invokes an important link. In the key of C, A_b the 3rd of iv , and the leading tone, $G\#$, of the relative minor. These relationships to the minor modes are intrinsic to major and minor 6th chords and the pitch collection from $IV7$.

As a result, the $b6/\#5$ relationship to the tonic, is rich and unusual, as it can resolve in either direction, giving it an invertibility that propagates even greater harmonic elasticity and ambiguity: a kind of riddle (dissonance), if you will, possessing two possible solutions (consonance) that are both equally correct and invertible.

In other words, the $A_b/G\#$ can resolve down to G or up to A ; this is consistent with Barry Harris' theory, but instead of the A_b always being a part of $vii^{\circ}7$ and a function of $V7$, it is instead a function of SD and, as such, takes on many incarnations. For example, in the DBC+, when it is $V7+/IV$, the $\#5$ also has two potential half-step resolvent paths where the $G\#$, the $\#5$ of

¹⁰⁰ This is not exclusively a concept authored by Barry Harris, but the one on which much of his harmonic theories were based.

V7/IV leads to the 2nd or 3rd of IV— (in Parker’s music, the many repeated instances which show of the locale of the DBC+ suggest that it seems to be connected to the secondary dominant structure of IV). As well, this can occur in the context of the tonic harmonic region, but is no longer a part of DBC as the voice leading changes. In the key of C, the V+7 contains another invertible dissonance D# (also the b3, Eb and a ‘blue note’) and again can resolve in either direction to the 2nd or 3rd of I. In both cases, V7+ as related to IV and I have two resolvent paths that differ in their relationship to the tonic. This in no way suggests that a tonic region should somehow be understood as being a part of the SD region, i.e., the key of C is in fact the key of F, a construct that may have fueled some of George Russell’s ideas.

In private discussions with a colleague, a master musician, he eruditely points out that it is the repetition—in this case, the voice-leading structures of DBC throughout the harmonic progressions in the blues and elsewhere—that is key to its effectiveness. Moreover, it is this repetition, e.g., the cymbal pattern and the quarter note in the bass, that generates so much of the excitement and energy (arguably the most repetitive structures in jazz c. 1945). In other words, it is the many braided levels of musical behaviours, but more specifically imperceivable repetition, that coincide to produce much of the energy in Charlie Parker’s music. Parker came from Kansas City, where the riff was born, and where the riff was repeatedly played through a form like the 12-bar blues and rhythm changes, which generates musical excitement, no matter how incongruous it could be with the harmonic progression: “asynchrony is the norm.”¹⁰¹

The following section outlines the ascending blues cadence, which concludes with a discussion of the augmented sixth chord and its origins in SD through a secondary dominant function.

¹⁰¹ Arthur Morris Jones, *Studies in African Music*, 1953, p.193.

The Ascending Blues Cadence

The ascending blues cadence (ABC), DBC's counterpart, is another expression of the subdominant region. This harmonic progression occurs with less frequency than the descending blues cadence in Charlie Parker's music. The ABC, which was frequently used as a clichéd 'tag ending' by many blues-based jazz musicians such as Count Basie and Oscar Peterson. The ABC in Parker's music appears in two distinct forms.

1. Ascending blues cadence (ABC) I V7/IV IV #iv07 I
2. Ascending blues cadence a (ABCa) I ii7 #iv07 I

Figure 93. List of the Two Ascending Blues Cadences

1. ABC

2. ABCa

The melodic voice-leading properties articulated by Parker, which are central to the current discussion, are shown below.

Figure 94. Voice Leading for the Two Ascending Blues Cadences

1. ABC VL

2. ABCa VL

These progressions may have roots in Gospel music traditions, as they feature a rising pattern endemic to the Gospel musical ethos, exuding positivity and possibly symbolising hope. In contrast, the descending form expresses a more complex feeling with its downward motion and sense of inevitability but also comfort: “the devil you know.”

In Parker’s music, there is far less variance in the ascending blues cadence progression, and the redesignation of melodic voice leading pitches to different harmonic regions does not occur. Instead, the ABC is articulated as a self-contained harmonic progression, like the pitch collection Parker used for his blues licks. In other words, this progression remains singular despite its varied application across different harmonic regions of the blues and rhythm changes (as will be shown). The ABC seems to conflate the two progressions shown above, leaving it either incomplete or unclear which of the two it is, due to their similarity.

The broader application of the primary voice-leading motion endemic to both versions of the ABC, when articulated sequentially, could be seen as a basis for Parker’s blues up (BU) gestures, as it is a series of ascending whole tone chromatic sequences i.e., C D D# E F F# G (discussed previously in the whole tone and blues chapters).

The key element to this progression is the #iv07, which precedes the final I chord, which is over the 5th (C/G or I64). Moreover, #iv07 is a function of the secondary dominant, which is

inherently a subdominant function. When it does not move to the dominant, it becomes a subdominant function leading to the tonic, e.g., F#07 to C/G. This bypassing of the preparatory function of SD is the same as the DBC, now as an ascending sequence, instead of iv to I, it is #iv07 to I, with no leading tone and no dominant structure, e.g., V7/I (there are exceptions in Parker's music to everything, there are times where Parker does move SD to D in the folksiest manner). However, at this juncture, the stress is that V7/V can be understood as a function of the subdominant and can move either to V, making it a preparatory device or to I through the #iv07, the latter being pertinent to the current discussion.

The following examines the convergence and invertibility of the two cadences—the DBC and the ABC.

Arnold Schoenberg and the Blues Cadence

When the DBC and the ABC converge, the implications are compelling – we see invertibility, conflation, and an even greater harmonic ambiguity arises (all characteristics of Charlie Parker's blues behaviour).

The two cadences discussed —DBC and ABC — are mentioned (albeit not under the same pseudonyms!) and are examined in Arnold Schoenberg's 1922 book, *Theory of Harmony*. This is not to imply in any way that these are their origins or that Parker was aware of Schoenberg's book, as such progressions were also common in Kansas City blues c. 1930, but rather to highlight their universality. Furthermore, in the hands of individuals with different aesthetic sensibilities, the same information can yield different outcomes.

Schoenberg illustrates a point of convergence between these two expressions of the subdominant regions: a critical point where iv and #iv07 conflate — forming the augmented six

chord (Ger6)—which is often seen in jazz as $bVI7$ and is a fundamental harmonic attribute of Parker’s blues harmony.

Below is an excerpt from Schoenberg’s *Theory of Harmony*:¹⁰²

Figure 95. Schoenberg’s ‘Blues Cadence’

(Aug. 6)

C C⁷ F Ab⁷ C

I V⁷/IV IV II⁷ bVI⁷ I

(I V⁷/IV IV iv I)

Schoenberg Example

Schoenberg writes that the final C/G treats the cadential 6/4, which then leads to V and finally to I. This is omitted to further illustrate the key aspect of this progression and its relevance to the current matter, as well as to Charlie Parker’s music, e.g., SD to T with no final V I.

The combined DBC, in the lower voice, and ABC, in the upper voice, is revealing. The point of harmonic convergence between iv and $\#iv07$ is demonstrated in the formation of the augmented sixth chord (aug6 or Ger6). Within this context, what characterises the convergent point is the presence of these two expressions of dissonance within SD, the leading tone of V⁷/V ($\#iv07$), F $\sharp$, and the minor 3rd of iv, Ab, opposing dissonant forces that share the primary consonant resolution.

Shown below is the combined DBC and ABC, but with the ACB now situated in the bass.

¹⁰² Arnold Schoenberg, *Theory of Harmony*, 1978, p. 251.

Figure 96. Schoenberg Example Inverted

ABC and DCB inverted

(Aug. 6)
(Dim. 3)

C C7 F Ab7 C

I V7/IV IV iv bVI7 I

I V7/IV IV II7 I

bVI7

Arguably, it is the invertibility of this progression that gives it much of its power, making it an especially effective and potent harmonic device. The conflating elements, as demonstrated in these invertible combinations of the DBC and ABC harmonic progressions, reveal both harmonic agility and ambiguity: they are both expressions of the subdominant harmonic region. The DBC is the descending move from tonic to subdominant and back to tonic. The ABC, on the other hand, is the ascending move, which employs the secondary dominant function (SD), in this case, it is redefined and is not a preparatory device leading to the dominant, but an expression of the subdominant to tonic, i.e., V7/V and bVI (Ger6), leading to the tonic. In other words, the DBC and ABC are contrary musical expressions that are expressions of the subdominant region.

The Ger6 (bVI7)

Some of the examples below are found in the chordal repository; however, it is worth noting the importance of the bVI7 and the expressive quality of the Ger6 in Parker's music. Below are seven examples that show Parker using the Ger6 (bVI7) in mm. 5-7 of the blues form (within the SD region).

Figure 97. Examples of the Ger6

Figure 97 displays six musical examples of the Ger6 chord (augmented sixth chord) in various contexts, all in 4/4 time.

- mm. 5-7:** Shows a sequence of chords: F7, a double bar line, and C6.
- Cheryl:** Shows a Ger6 (bVI7) chord with an intervallic cluster of 423E above it.
- Cheryl (RR 4-02):** Shows a Ger6 (bVI7) chord with an intervallic cluster of 234E above it.
- Transposed from Bb Mohawk (Alt):** Shows a Ger6 (bVI7) chord with an intervallic cluster of 423E above it.
- Transposed from Bb Parker's Mood (Take 2):** Shows a Ger6 (bVI7) chord with an intervallic cluster of 423E above it, and a bII7 chord later in the staff.
- Transposed from Eb Bluebird (Take 3):** Shows a Ger6 (bVI7) chord with intervallic clusters of 2&2 and 342E above it.

The intervallic clusters of 423E and the 342E are shown above to reintroduce and illustrate that they are ubiquitous as enclosures and as key parts of Parker's blues concept. In addition, there is a 2&2 in the final example from "Bluebird" (Parker, 1947). Take 2 of "Parker's Mood" (Parker, 1948) shows the bVI7 moving to the bII7 (the tritone). Martin mentions the bVI7 or the Ger6 chord when discussing "Yardbird Suite" (Parker, 1946) in his book *Charlie Parker, Composer*. Martin sees the augmented sixth (Ger6) as a possible substitute for the Bb7 in m. 2. He writes: "[t]he Ab7 is also the augmented sixth chord of classical harmony, although it is not treated as a predominant; rather, it is akin to a common tone diminished 7th chord on I with a flatted sixth substituted for the diminished 7th interval."¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Henry Martin, *Charlie Parker, Composer*, Ch. 3, Para. 17.

Conflation – The Tritone as a Subdominant Function

Parker has what this research recognises as harmonic thresholds¹⁰⁴ where the programmatic, or schematic, behaviour displays a recognisable shift, e.g., on mm. 1-4, 5-7, and 8-11 of the blues or mm. 1-2, 3-4, and 5-7 of the A section to rhythm changes. Further to the point being made re the Ger6 chord and its SD function, but now as it relates to II7 in mm. 5-6 on the B section of rhythm changes in Bb, with II7 being possibly another of Parker's harmonic thresholds. The progression in the key of Bb is D7 G7 C7. If, within this harmonic framework, on mm. 1-2 of this B section, we use the backdoor dominant or SD function moving to VI7 in mm. 3-4 i.e., F7 to G7, or in relation to II7 (C7), the bVI (Ab7), we see further conflation between SD and D (to Martin's point regarding m. 2 of "Yardbird Suite.")

This discussion is intended to outline further the pluralistic nature of these harmonic elements in Parker's music and highlight the circuitous route that can be taken to arrive at the tritone substitution. This nuanced understanding highlights the subtlety and is vital to a fuller understanding of Parker's harmonic musical behaviours, based on these thresholds, and the subdominant's relationship to the often oversimplified (in jazz theory) tritone sub. Examples of Parker's lick schemata are shown below; as (by default), it is the tritone sub, the examples are indicated as bII7/V.

¹⁰⁴ Harmonic thresholds are events that show a clear shift in Parker's musical behaviours; in the instance discussed above a possible change in the way he views key events within the harmonic rhythm of a chord progression.

Figure 98. Examples of bII/V

The figure displays five musical staves in B-flat major (two flats) and 4/4 time, illustrating the bII/V chromatic movement. The first staff, labeled 'B mm. 1-3', shows a piano introduction with a D⁷ chord, a fermata, and a G⁷ chord. The subsequent four staves show the same melodic line from different recordings, each featuring a triplet of eighth notes on the bII/V movement. The recordings are: Anthropology (Birdland, 51), Lester Leaps In (Rockland Palace, 52), Anthropology (Howard Theatre, 52), and Anthropology (Percol.).

B mm. 1-3

Anthropology (Birdland, 51)

Lester Leaps In (Rockland Palace, 52)

Anthropology (Howard Theatre, 52)

Anthropology (Percol.)

D⁷ / G⁷

bII/V

bII/V

bII/V

bII/V

Chapter 12: Descending Blues Cadence

This section provides the supporting examples to illustrate the ubiquity of the DBC in Charlie Parker's music. As shown in the introduction, the descending blues cadence has six basic forms, which, to reiterate, are as follows:

1. Descending blues cadence (DBC) I V7/IV IV iv I
2. Descending blues cadence augmented (DBC+) ii7/IV V7/IV V7+/IV IV7
3. Descending blues cadence Gospel (DBCG) I V7/vi vi7
4. Descending blues cadence turnaround (DBCT) iii7 V7/ii ii-7 V7 I
5. Descending blues cadence chromatic (DBCCH) iii7 biii7 ii7 bIImaj7
6. Descending blues cadence sideslip (DBCSS) ii7/IV V7/IV bII7/IV IV

The following score illustrates the first four types of DBCs, utilising a mashup with excerpts from six different solos, displayed below in the key of C. Four of these examples have been transposed from a Bb blues; “Cool Blues” (Parker, 1947) and “Cheryl” (Parker, 1948) are originally in C.

Figure 99. Descending Blues Cadence: Mashup a

The musical score is divided into two systems. The first system (measures 1-6) is in C Blues. The second system (measures 7-12) is in Bb Blues. The score includes three staves: C Blues (top), VL (middle), and Parker (bottom). Above the staves are harmonic designations and labels for specific cadences. The VL staff shows a descending line with various harmonic labels. The Parker staff shows a descending line with various harmonic labels. The C Blues staff shows a descending line with various harmonic labels.

System 1 (Measures 1-6):

- Chords: C⁶, F⁷, C⁶, Gm⁷, C⁷, F⁷, /
- Labels: DBC, DBC+, DBC
- Harmonic Progression: I V7/IV IV iv I ii7/IV V7+/IV IV V7/IV IV iv I
- Labels: Bb Blues (DB 3-18), Bb Blues (NJ), Cool Blues (Take C)

System 2 (Measures 7-12):

- Chords: C⁶, A⁷, Dm⁷, G⁷, C⁶, Dm⁷, G⁷
- Labels: DBCG, DCBT, DBC
- Harmonic Progression: I V7/V17 iii7 iv V7/ii iimaj7 ii7 V7 I I V7/IV IV iv I
- Labels: Parker's Mood (Take 2), Cheryl (RR 3-11), Parker's Mood (Take 2)

The examples shown above illustrate the four primary types of the descending blues cadence across six separate locations within the blues form. This mash-up format, which displays repeated instances of the DBC, is provided for pedagogical purposes only. The method aims to demonstrate how Parker employs this blues behaviour throughout his blues improvisations across all harmonic regions of the blues. The opening figure, which spans the typical three measures, shows the DBC as seen in the voice-leading layer, substituting the I IV7 I progression for I V7/IV IV iv I. The second figure is part of Parker's preferred augmented lick (WH5 PV) in m. 4 as a part of the DBC+, assigning the pitches to new harmonic designations much higher in the chordal structure using the progression ii7/IV V7+/IV IV. The third example from "Cool Blues" reintroduces the classic DBC, which is now being applied over the subdominant harmonic region, mm. 5-6 and makes m. 6 iv instead of IV7. The fourth example demonstrates

the DBCG progression, where, again, the defining feature is a G# in its raised form, serving as the major 3rd of V7/vi—substituting V7/vi over I, in mm. 7-8: a less common occurrence in this location within the blues form as played by Parker. More typically, this would happen in m. 2 on a progression like that of “Blues for Alice” (Parker, 1950) or “Si Si” (Parker, 1950), which will be shown shortly. The fifth example in mm. 8-10, from a live recording of “Cheryl” (Parker, 1947) shows the DBCT very clearly with Parker’s accented high points adding an extra layer of affirmation to this the DBCT: as shown, the high points align with the voice leading layer: we see iii7 V7/ii ii7 vii07 (V7) I.¹⁰⁵ Finally, the classic version of the DBC in its typical cadential locale is shown in mm. 11-12, stylistically consistent with the more traditional blues; arguably, this is the most common (and clichéd) locale for this blues gesture within the blues form.

Below is a second collection of examples again using a mashup of lick schema and heads that express the DBC. The first excerpt from “Big Foot” (Parker, 1947), which includes the bIIImaj7 (discussed momentarily), comprises one of Parker’s most frequently used DBC crips. (All the examples are shown in C.)

¹⁰⁵ The discrepancy between the V7 and vii07 when assigning chordal degrees to the VL structure defaults to the vii07 despite the V7 being indicated in the score: V7 and vii07 are interchangeable.

Figure 100. Descending Blues Cadence: Mashup b

The musical score is divided into three systems. The first system (mm. 1-6) has a piano part with chords C⁶, F⁷, C⁶, Gm⁷, C⁷, and F⁷. The vocal line (VL) shows a descending blues cadence with DBC, DBC+, and DCB gestures. The piano part (Parker) includes 'Big Foot (Take B)', 'Blues Fast (Take 3)', and 'Passport Blues'. The second system (mm. 7-10) has a piano part with chords C⁶, A⁷, Dm⁷, G⁷, C⁶, Dm⁷, and G⁷. The vocal line shows DBCG, DCB, and DCB gestures. The piano part includes 'Perhaps' and 'Now's The Time (Take 3)'. The third system (mm. 11-12) continues the piano part with 'Now's The Time (Take 3)'.

The first DBC gesture, mm. 1-3, uses bII^{maj}7 in place of what would be iv, employing a variant progression of the DBC, e.g., I V⁷/IV ii⁷ bII^{maj}7. Then in mm. 4-5 there is the DBC+ from take 3 of “Blues Fast” (Parker, 1951), followed by another DBC on IV⁷ mm. 6-7 from “Passport Blues” (Parker, 1949). The excerpt from the head to “Perhaps” (Parker, 1947) which begins with the DBCG in mm. 7-8, and overlaps the following DBC. This penultimate DBC is indicated not as the DBCT because no data in Parker’s line illustrates it. Instead, we see the classic blues cadence played over the dominant region with no leading tone or V⁷ to speak of. Finally, in mm. 11-12 on “Now’s The Time” (Parker, 1945) there is a very unusual DBC, with three upside-down gestures, e.g., A to D, C to A, and C to G. This excerpt, originally in the key of F, is missing the V⁷/IV, but clearly illustrates the I IV iv I pattern. It is these subtle harmonic moves that continually express this strong downward propensity; the harmonic move to the subdominant that is essential to Parker’s blues behaviour.

Below are two examples demonstrating how the DBC functions as a prominent harmonic feature within two of Parker's rhythm change heads. The first example is from Parker's "Dexterity" (Parker, 1947) and is shown below.

Figure 101. Descending Blues Cadence: Dexterity

The musical score for "Dexterity" is presented in four staves. The top staff, labeled "Bb Rhythm", shows a sequence of chords: Bb⁶, Cm⁷, F⁷, Dm⁷, G⁷, Cm⁷, F⁷, Fm⁷, Bb⁷, Eb⁶, E^{o7}, Bb⁶, Cm⁷, and F⁷. The second staff, labeled "VL U", shows a melodic line with a bracket labeled "1&2&3 (4)". The third staff, labeled "VL L", shows a melodic line with brackets labeled "DBC", "DBCTi", "DBC+i", and "C DBC". The bottom staff, labeled "Dexterity", shows a melodic line with a bracket labeled "(Ger6)" and a triplet of eighth notes. Roman numerals are included below the VL L staff: I, ii⁷, iv, I, iii⁷, V⁷/ii⁷, ii⁷, I, V⁷+/IV, I, Imaj⁷, V⁷/IV, IV, iv.

In the example above, the DBC appears in three forms in the lower VL: the DBC, DBCTi (incomplete), DBC+i, and finally the DBC to close. The Roman numerals are again included to indicate what Parker's melodic information suggests (as is often the case with many Parker heads, the 'changes' are not clearly outlined in the tune). Parker alludes to a possible Ger6 in m. 3 (though there are takes where he plays the C in unison with Miles Davis). The melodic data in the upper VL layer shows a variant of the 3&4 and includes scale degrees 1 and 2, indicated as 1&2&3 (4). The two-note figure between C and Bb throughout, comprised of the 1&2, is a variant on the 3&4 gesture in that it continues to invoke the SD (C) and T (Bb) interplay, i.e., the harmonic implications of 2 and 1 are the same in this case as 4-3.

Below is the second example of the DBC as it appears in the 8-bar head with no bridge, "An Oscar for Treadwell" (Parker, 1950), indicated in the score as AOFT. Three voice-leading layers are shown below to account for the greater complexity of Parker's melodic structure.

However, this complexity is all connected and grounded through the folksy expression of the DBC throughout.

Figure 102. Descending Blues Cadence: “An Oscar for Treadwell”

In the events above, there are now three VL layers to account for the very distinct events that have occurred. The VL upper and lower layers are again variants of 3&4, with 3&4&5 in the lower and 1&2 in the upper (this time they are separated to show the VL detail more clearly). The DBC events appear in the middle VL layer. The DBC initiates the events in mm. 1-2 but does not articulate V7/IV and instead moves directly from Imaj7 to IV. This is followed by a classic version of the DBC that spans almost four measures,¹⁰⁶ from measures 4 to 7. The final DBC begins as a DBCT but concludes as an implied DBCgi (but is incomplete).

N.B. the incompleteness or inconsistency observed is not a reason to dismiss the ubiquity of the DBC; instead, it highlights its highly flexible nature—a manifestation of the dichotomy

¹⁰⁶ Parker's phrases often adhere to the anacrusis rule, where the final bar, in this case of the DBC, makes up for what was left out in the pick-up bar.

between stringent rules and human behaviour – the rules are not broken, instead they possess conceptual and expressive elasticity.

The DBCG has been shown in an unusual harmonic position within the blues, e.g., as V7/iv in measures 7-8; however, it is more typically heard in measures 1-3. The example below of the head to “Back Home Blues” (Parker, 1951) demonstrates this in addition to another series of descending blues cadences.

Figure 103. Descending Blues Cadence: “Back Home Blues”

The musical score for "Back Home Blues" is presented in four staves. The top staff, labeled "C Blues", shows a harmonic progression: C⁶, Bm⁷, E⁷, Am⁷, D⁷, Gm⁷, C⁷, F⁷, and a final measure with a double bar line. The second staff, labeled "VL U", shows a melodic line with a "3&2" triplet and a "b3" note. The third staff, labeled "VL L", shows a melodic line with a "DBCG" annotation and a "V7/iv" chord. The fourth staff, labeled "BHB", shows a melodic line with a "DBCG" annotation and a "V7/IV" chord. The score also includes a series of descending blues cadences: C⁶, A⁷, Dm⁷, G⁷, C⁶, Dm⁷, G⁷. The annotations "DBCG", "DBC+", "DBCi", and "DBC-" are used to indicate specific harmonic positions and cadences throughout the piece.

The opening harmonic progression in the first four measures of this blues is the same as “Blues for Alice” (Parker, 1951) and “Confirmation” (Parker, 1945). The example above from “Back Home Blues” shows in the lower VL layer the DBCG in its typical position, mm. 1-3, as well as the more atypical mm. 7-8. The overlap of the DBC+ in m. 3 is highly effective in

producing the seamless quality of this head. In mm. 8-11, the classic DBCi (sans leading tone) is articulated but deemed incomplete, as there is no resolution of the Ab. Finally, the closing lick is another DBCi, also incomplete, as it has the VL pattern but lacks the chromaticism integral to the DBC. This final gesture reflects the major blues discussed earlier (it is also nearly identical to the closing lick of the previous excerpt, “An Oscar for Treadwell”). The upper VL layer displays the 3&2 and 4&3 interplay, elements that bind this catchy little ditty together.

To explore the harmonic implications of the DBC further, we will now examine how Parker’s chromatically descending cycle, the DBCCH, uses two chromatic instances that would often be explained as tritone substitutions. For the tritone sub to exist, there must be dominant equivalents, e.g., the shared tritone. The two chords in question are biii7 and bIIImaj7. The key point is that the tendency tone is absent from the biii7, and the leading tone is missing from V7. Central to the following discussion is the possibility that both these harmonic devices (also illustrated in the chordal repository) may actually be derived from the subdominant function, despite their appearance as tritone substitutions. The crip, which is all transposed to the key of C, is shown below.

Figure 104. Descending Blues Cadence Chromatic: Examples

Figure 104 displays three examples of the Descending Blues Cadence Chromatic (DBCCH) in 4/4 time, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb).

- Example 1 (Top):** Transposed form G, mm. 4-7, Oh! Lady Be Good (1945). The melody features a descending chromatic line: G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (half). The harmony consists of Em7, Ebm7, Dm7, G7, and Cmaj7. The bass line is: G2 (quarter), F#2 (quarter), F2 (quarter), E2 (quarter), D2 (quarter), C2 (half). The chord sequence is: iii7, biii7, ii7, bIIImaj7, Imaj7.
- Example 2 (Middle):** Transposed from Ab, mm. 29-30, Donna Lee (Take 2). The melody features a descending chromatic line: G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (half). The harmony consists of Em7, A7, Dm7, G7, and Cmaj7. The bass line is: G2 (quarter), F#2 (quarter), F2 (quarter), E2 (quarter), D2 (quarter), C2 (half). The chord sequence is: iii7, biii7, ii7, bIIImaj7, Imaj7.
- Example 3 (Bottom):** Transposed from Bb, mm. 7-12, Blues Fast (Take 9). The melody features a descending chromatic line: G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (half). The harmony consists of Cmaj7, Em7, A7, Dm7, G7, and Cmaj7. The bass line is: G2 (quarter), F#2 (quarter), F2 (quarter), E2 (quarter), D2 (quarter), C2 (half). The chord sequence is: iii-7, biii7, ii-7, bIIImaj7, Imaj7.

These three examples illustrate Parker's crib as used for this chromatic turnaround. Additionally, this was one of Parker's preferred harmonic approaches for the descending parallel chromatic movement. As shown above, the progression is iii7 biii7 ii7 bIIImaj7 Imaj7.

The following score illustrates the two voice-leading layers that are characteristic of and may be endemic to the DBCCH pattern.

Figure 105. Descending Blues Cadence Chromatic: Voice Leading

The musical score for Figure 105 is written in 4/4 time and consists of four staves. The top staff is a piano accompaniment with chords C⁶, A⁷, Dm⁷, G⁷, C⁶, Dm⁷, and G⁷. The second staff is the upper voice leading (VL U) for the DBCCH pattern, showing a descending chromatic line with triplets and ties. The third staff is the lower voice leading (VL L) for the 7ths and Bourdon, showing a descending line with ties. The bottom staff is the Blues Fast (Take 9) solo, showing a descending chromatic line with triplets and ties. The progression is iii7 biii7 ii7 bIIImaj7 Imaj7.

This DBCCH lick that is endemic to Parker's lexicon uses three parallel minors iii7 biii7 ii7 followed by two parallel majors bIIImaj7 Imaj7, which forms a 3:2 asymmetrical ratio (the importance of which will be discussed shortly). Within Parker's music, both linear voice leading and vertical harmonic expression can be present, and at times, they overlap. The upper VL layer shows the voice leading of the DBCCH, while the lower VL layer shows the 7ths, which move till they arrive at the tonic bourdon. Parker then continues to pivot off the tonic for the duration of the excerpt. There are another two layers, but they account for foreground

information, e.g., the chordal outlines, and constitute the root and 3rd of each chord (foreground data is shown in Parker's crip).

Below is a further investigation into the harmonic basis for the chromatic chordal motion found to these examples. The chords in question are the biii7 (Eb-7) and bIIImaj7 (Dbmaj7). As mentioned, these are not tritone substitutions and, as such, can be better understood through their relationship to the subdominant.

Figure 106. biii7 and bIIImaj7: Analysis

The figure displays a musical analysis of chromatic chordal motion. It consists of two staves. The top staff shows a melodic line with four measures. Above the notes are brackets labeled $Ebm7$, $Dm7$, $Dbmaj7$, and $Cmaj7$. The bottom staff shows the corresponding chords in block format. Below the chords are labels: $bII7/V$ ($bIV7$), $biii7$, $ii7$, iv , $(N) Dbmaj7$, and $Imaj7$.

The $bII7/V$ is, in the simplest terms, the tritone of $V7/V$, which makes it another part of $bVI7$, as shown, $Ab7/G7$.¹⁰⁷ However, in the context of C, when the SD regions of both are considered, i.e., $Eb-7$ ($ii7$ of Db) and $D-7$ ($ii-7$ of C), it becomes apparent that $biii7$ is also a part of the bVI , as shown previously a subdominant function. This is often explained in the jazz vernacular as playing up a half step ($Eb-7$ $Ab7$ $D-7$ $G7$). Again, the heavy-handed chord symbol washes out some of the nuanced dissonance intrinsic to this harmonic device, as utilitarian as it may be as the events being discussed relate, in the broader contextual sense, to C. Furthermore, if it were the tritone sub in the jazz sense, the $biii7$ ($Eb-7$) would be a dominant structure, e.g., $bIII7$ ($Eb7$) or $bII7/II7$, in this manner, G and Db (the tritone) would be present. That it is a $biii7$

¹⁰⁷ There are no chord symbols that allow for harmonic spellings that produce the nuanced dissonances endemic to events that possess similarities to the $Ger6$ chord.

means it is arrived at, in part through the parallel voice-leading, but also the invocation of the subdominant region, e.g., V7/V or VI7 (as related to C).

When examining the harmonic function of the Dbmaj7, the absence of the leading tone is essential and fundamentally guides the following observations. The vantage point is that the Dbmaj7 has a relationship to iv; the relative major of iv (F-) is Ab, and the SD of Ab is Dbmaj7. Furthermore, the natural minor of F is defined by the Db or the bVI (the location of the Ger6 and a key feature of the DBC). However, in this case, the Dbmaj7 (or bIIImaj7) is not a Ger6 but can be recognised as originating from the same harmonic region, bVI of iv, all of which is a part of the minor subdominant. The constellation of subtle relationships created by these elements, when viewed as originating in the subdominant region, may seem inefficient; however, the nuance and detail are lost without such consideration.

Within the sixth DBC type, DBCSS, much of the same voice leading as the DBCG exists. This can be heard within one of Parker's favourite sideslip licks, iiVEb SS E7 using the chromatic alterations of this lick schema. The examples below illustrate this event as related to IV: this is most common to Parker's use of the DBCSS within the blues form. Below are examples of DBCSS on mm. 3-6 of the blues.

Parker's iiVAb SS Gb7 lick schema shows the same expression of the descending voice leading between scalar degrees 1 and 5. The example below is from take 4 of “Donna Lee” (Davis, 1948) and will be looked at in more detail in the cross-phrase chapter.

Figure 108. Descending Blues Cadence Sideslip b

[Typically Bbm7 Eb7 Abmaj7]
 iiV7Ab SS Gb7 Gm7(b5) C7 Fm6
 A 2 m. 8
 C m. 1
 VL U
 DBCSS
 I - V7/IV IV iv
 7 - 3
 VL L
 C
 7 - 3
 Donna Lee (Take 4)
 WHCH 423E 333E
 3
 2N SU
 2:3GU

The lick schema, iiVAb SS Gb7 appears most frequently in his improvisations on popular song forms. The DBCSS is illustrated in the upper VL layer and clearly demonstrates a classic form of the DBC, albeit as a DBCSS, as it is being used as a side-slip device, employed as a substitute for a iiV7 progression in F-. The progression, albeit brief, is outlined in the upper VL layer: both the upper and lower VL layers exhibit the 7-3 voice leading that helps propel and, in this case, through the use of the 2-note gesture, displace the harmonic progression.

The filling in of pitches between scalar degrees 1 and 5 in a descending manner is something Parker does with much of his crips and is the feature that the DBC is loosely defined by. Moreover, there is considerable flexibility with this voice leading; the six primary forms identified by this research represent only a part of this. There are instances where the voice

leading is incomplete or, as the iiVEb SS E7 shows, can constitute a circuitous expression of the DBC. Variants do not negate the taxonomy here; instead, they are an essential part of the fluid, malleable, schematic design with which Parker may have been working. However, in the pursuit of consistency, when the DBC is only partially articulated within the voice-leading layer, it is indicated as incomplete, i.e., DBCi.

Chapter 13: Ascending Blues Cadence

The ascending blues cadence has two forms as previously outlined. They are as follows:

1. Ascending blues cadence (ABC) I V7/IV IV #iv07 I
2. Ascending blues cadence a (ABCa) I ii7 #ii07 I

Once again, to effectively demonstrate the ABC and the prevalence of its two forms, the scores shown below are made up of mashups. The examples in the following score show the ABC and the ABCa in each harmonic region of the blues.

Figure 109. Ascending Blues Cadence: Mashup a

The musical score for Figure 109 is a mashup of various blues pieces. It is written in 4/4 time and consists of three systems. The first system is for 'C Blues' and includes a piano part with chords (C6, F7, C6, Gm7, C7, F7) and a vocal line with lyrics 'I IV #iv07 I ii7/IV #ii07/IV IV IV7 #iv07'. The second system is for 'Parker' and includes a piano part with chords (C6, A7, Dm7, G7, C6, Dm7, G7) and a vocal line with lyrics 'I #iv07 ii7 IV #iv07 I I #ii07 I'. The third system is for 'Visa (Birdland, 50)' and includes a piano part with chords (C6, A7, Dm7, G7, C6, Dm7, G7) and a vocal line with lyrics 'I #iv07 ii7 IV #iv07 I I #ii07 I'. The score also includes a 'Parker' section with a piano part and a vocal line with lyrics 'I #iv07 ii7 IV #iv07 I I #ii07 I'.

The opening gesture to the mashup above, taken from Parker's solo on take 6 of "Perhaps," (Parker, 1947) is one that was reused in its entirety on five separate occasions. It is arguably his clearest crip that expresses the ABC, where the tonic is clearly established and the

move from IV to #iv07 is without question. Following this, we see the ABCa (IV) from “Past Due” (Take D), but with the harmonic functions related to IV, i.e., G-7, G#07, and F/A. This has much similarity to DBC+; there is conflation here; however, musical context and repeated instances are used as identifying aids (in this case, the example from “Laird Baird” (Parker, 1951). The next ABC in mm. 5-7 comes from take C of “Bongo Bop,” (Parker, 1947) and is incomplete in its beginnings, as it starts right on IV, but is aligned with the chords showing IV7, #iv07, I as the pattern. The diminished lick that follows is a favourite of Parker’s and is most often situated here when used in the blues form, prolonging the SD harmonic region. This example comes from a live recording of “Visa” and is included to show Parker’s further expression of SD using the diminished—the #iv07 that is integral to the ABC structure. The next instance of the ABC comes from the only take and solo to exist on “Laird Baird,” an ‘on the spot’ spontaneous composition by Parker originally in Bb. Tommy Potter remembers these, he states:

On record dates he could compose right on the spot. The A. & R. man would be griping, wanting us to begin. Charlie would say, “It’ll just take a minute,” and he’d write out eight bars, usually just for the trumpet. He could transpose it for his alto without a score. The channel [bridge] of the tune could be ad libbed. The rhythm section was familiar with all the progressions of the tunes which were usually the basis of originals.¹⁰⁸

The ABC as seen in this excerpt from this ‘on the spot’ composition of Parker’s “Laird Baird” in mm. 9-11 of the mashup shown above, there is an ascending pattern similar to the ABCa we saw in m. 4, but oriented to I. Finally, the last gesture, from a live recording at The Royal Roost of “Cheryl” (Parker, 1948) demonstrates the ABCa as a dismount in a register that is reminiscent of Parker’s earlier days, when he spent more time in the horn’s lower register. Further to this example from “Cheryl”, there is a sixteenth gesture that alludes to iv (Bb Ab) but doesn’t fundamentally change the categorisation. Within the procedure of analysing human

¹⁰⁸ Robert Reisner, *Bird: The Legend of Charlie Parker*, Quartet Books, 1974, p. 183.

expression overlaps of this nature are a part of complex behaviour. The organisation of data sets into categories provides a synthetic context for viewing and relating the spectrums of sameness and difference.

To further illustrate the prevalence of the ABC and the ABCa, another mashup score is shown below.

Figure 110. Ascending Blues Cadence: Mashup b

The musical score for Figure 110, titled "Ascending Blues Cadence: Mashup b", is presented in three staves: C Blues, VL, and Parker. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 1 through 6. The C Blues staff shows a sequence of chords: C⁶, F⁷, C⁶, Gm⁷, C⁷, F⁷, and a final measure with a double bar line. The VL staff shows two melodic phrases: the first is labeled "ABCa" and the second is labeled "ABCi". The Parker staff shows two melodic phrases: the first is labeled "Billie's Bounce (Take 3)" and the second is labeled "Au Privave (Take 2)". The second system covers measures 7 through 12. The C Blues staff shows a sequence of chords: C⁶, A⁷, Dm⁷, G⁷, C⁶, Dm⁷, and G⁷. The VL staff shows two melodic phrases: the first is labeled "ABCa" and the second is labeled "ABCa". The Parker staff shows two melodic phrases: the first is labeled "Laird Baird" and the second is labeled "Barbados (Take 4)".

In pursuit of clarity and consistency, all the examples shown above have been transposed from their original keys to the key of C. The first example, taken from take 3 of “Billie's Bounce” (Parker, 1945), displays the ABCa in m. 2 of the form; it demonstrates the defining features that illustrate progression ii7 #ii07 I. The following example, taken from take 2 of “Au Privave” (Parker, 1951), illustrates an incomplete (i) ABCi because it lacks a definitive tonic beginning, but IV7 #iv07 I is clearly articulated. Beginning in m. 9, there is a complete ABCa

again from “Laird Baird.” The final gesture that shows the ABCa comes from a well-worn crip within the Parker Lexicon that appears on take 4 of “Barbados” (Parker, 1948).

The ABC is also a prevalent feature in Charlie Parker's rhythm changes outings. The aligned locale is in mm. 5-7, where the harmonic pattern typically played by the rhythm section articulates the progression on which the ABC is based. However, there are many examples of ABC appearing in mm. 1-4 of rhythm changes; the opening gesture from the first set of examples in this section is used in the opening for measures of his rhythm changes solo on another ‘on the spot’ composition, take 1 of “Kim” (Parker, 1952).

The example below illustrates the ABCa and the ABC in mm. 1-3 and 4-7.

Figure 111. Ascending Blues Cadence: “Kim”

The musical score for "Kim" is presented in three staves: Bb Rhythm, VL (Voice Leading), and Kim (Take 2). The key signature is Bb major (three flats). The Bb Rhythm staff shows a sequence of chords: Bb⁶, Cm⁷, F⁷, Dm⁷, G⁷, Cm⁷, F⁷, Fm⁷, Bb⁷, Eb⁶, E^{o7}, and Bb⁶. The VL staff shows two patterns: ABCa (measures 1-3) and ABC (measures 4-7). The ABCa pattern is annotated with I, ii⁷, #ii⁷, and I. The ABC pattern is annotated with I, IV, #iv⁰⁷, and I. The Kim (Take 2) staff shows two 12-beat phrases, each spanning measures 1-3 and 4-7 respectively. The first 12-beat phrase is annotated with I, ii⁷, #ii⁷, and I. The second 12-beat phrase is annotated with I, IV, #iv⁰⁷, and I.

The opening ABCa, which appears in the first three measures, is clearly demonstrated by Parker through his voice leading, as shown: I ii⁷ #ii⁷. The next instance is arguably a more subtle expression of the ABC, as it does not include #4 in the VL layer. Despite this, the movement in m. 6 from IV to #iv⁰⁷ is embedded within the diminished properties of beats 3 and 4, e.g., the upper three notes of #iv⁰⁷, E^{o7} = E G Bb Db. I have also included the 12-beat phrase lengths, which will be discussed further shortly. The reason for including this is that Parker has divided the 8-bar section into two groups of three, with a bar rest in between.

The descending and ascending blues cadence not only present the augmented 6 chord as an all-important and colourful subdominant function, but they also provide a bedrock or underpinning that links Charlie Parker's ideas to the blues, no matter how harmonically complex they become. Recognising this inextricable link allows for a more nuanced and detailed appreciation of what comprises the often reductively nominal 'blues feeling.'

Part VI: Accents

Chapter 14: Asymmetrical Accents

Well, it's all of the musics [from the African Diaspora] that have a rhythm that it's a combination of 4 and 3. They are related technically. It all comes from that kind of African mother clave, then our shuffle is added in.¹⁰⁹

Wynton Marsalis.

Identifying the presence of 3:2 and 2:3¹¹⁰ groupings of syncopated accented patterns within Charlie Parker's music can be subjective. However, through immersion, consideration of Parker's musical behaviours, the Kansas City musical tradition, the use of a visually generated audio file, and repeated cross-referencing of the audio, this research has endeavoured to be as objective as possible in identifying the specific patterns within Parker's rhythmic groupings.

One challenge this research faced was that after clearly identifying a few examples that aligned with the 3:2/2:3 model of organised syncopation patterns, there was a tendency to seek these patterns everywhere — the dreaded confirmation bias can take hold all too easily. To address this, a very careful approach was adopted, and only the most convincing examples were selected, some of which are presented here. Within this research, these patterns are shown as a part of the middle-ground layer of rhythmic analysis.

The 3:2 accent pattern has been a critical rhythmic element in shaping all music originating from African American culture, with Charlie Parker's music being no exception. It

¹⁰⁹ Ethan Iverson, "Interview with Wynton Marsalis (Part 1)." *Do the Math*, April 4, 2016. <https://ethaniverson.com/interviews/interview-with-wynton-marsalis-part-1/>, para. 2.

¹¹⁰ This work will not address 4:3 ratios; instead, they are categorised as 2:2:3 when necessary.

remains widespread in popular music to this day. The following examples demonstrate how this asymmetrical rhythmic figure appears in various areas of the popular music genre.

Figure 112. List of 3:2 Patterns in Popular Songs

Figure 112 displays four musical staves, each representing a different song. Each staff is in 4/4 time and contains a rhythmic pattern marked with 'x' for eighth notes and 'z' for sixteenth notes. A bracket above each staff indicates a 3:2 ratio, meaning the first three notes (three eighth notes) are grouped together, followed by two notes (two sixteenth notes). The songs are: 'Bo Diddley', 'You Gotta Have Faith', 'Who Let The Dogs Out (Call)', and 'Who Let The Dogs Out (Response)'.

These four examples offer further evidence of the omnipotence of these figures. Bo Diddley's eponymous hit, George Michael's 1987 song "Faith," and the two hooks from "Who Let The Dogs Out" (Anslem Douglas, 1998) illustrate this. It is interesting to note that all of these examples follow the 3:2 ratio. The first two, however, are a direct expression of the son clave figure, while the latter examples demonstrate the flexibility of this rhythmic organisation.

When examining Charlie Parker's accented rhythmic patterns, Steve Coleman states in his article "The Dozens" that "by far the most dramatic feature of Bird's musical language is the rhythmic aspect, in particular his phrasing and timing."¹¹¹ Coleman then highlights a key element central to this research on Parker. He notes that "In much West African music there is this constant interplay of 3 communing with 2, an intimate marriage of the ternary feel..." and that "the emphasis in the (Parker's) phrasing contains rhythmic figures very similar to various clave

¹¹¹ Steve Coleman, "The Dozens." Accessed June 25, 2019.

patterns.”¹¹² Coleman does not fully explore all the implications of this assertion (as true as something may be, it must be supported by substantive evidence through the illustration of “repeated instances.”¹¹³

In specific streams of music history, the ratios of 3:2 and 2:3 represent the poly-rhythmic code used to construct rhythmic patterns that can appear in both duple and ternary meters. Thus, these polyrhythmic patterns generated by these ratios could either be illustrated in 4/4 or 6/8 meter: the following discussion aligns with the former because Parker’s music always occurs within the 4/4 meter.

In his book, *What Makes a Good Rhythm Good*, mathematician Godfried Toussaint explores some of the rhythmic patterns derived from these ratios using geometric tools. He does so by employing polygons to illustrate the most common rhythmic 3:2 and 2:3 patterns used in non-European music: clave (Cuba), shiko (Nigeria), rhumba (Cuba), soukous (Central Africa), gahu (Ghana), and bossa nova (Brazil). These figures are shown below.

¹¹² Steve Coleman, “The Dozens.” Accessed June 25, 2019

¹¹³ Bertrand Russell, *Religion and Science*, Oxford University Press, 1935, p. 13

This research produced the score representation shown in the examples above. Using Toussaint's polygons to illustrate rhythmic patterns further highlights the asymmetrical qualities of these mildly dissonant patterns. Aided by visuals, it is easy to see the similarities. The examples above highlight a crucial point: subtle differences between patterns can affect how closely related patterns are subject to new classification. It is essential to recognise that a single change in the pattern introduces a new category. Similarly, European theory, for instance, does this for harmonic principles such as the major-minor relationship, where lowering the 3rd in the triad alters the entire tonality: in jazz and blues, there is often an overlap between major and both the relative and parallel minor, but the categorical shift is not clearly delineated. Recognising that a slight shift in rhythmic patterning can be as significant as a change in tonality—like the European view of the “change from major to minor”¹¹⁴—is vital for understanding the rhythmic aspects of Charlie Parker's music. In other words, to properly account for the rhythm and phrase elements in Parker's music, a suitable taxonomy must be developed.

The examples above aim to further illustrate possible origins of the 3:2 asymmetrical ratios. The origin of something suggests a potential connection, but not a confirmed link or *raison d'être*. Within Parker's music and the wider scope of music influenced by the African diaspora, there is an expression of rhythmic asymmetry (dissonance) that may well originate from the examples mentioned earlier.

The most common form of these 3:2 rhythmic patterns is arguably the son clave figure - in Spanish, the term *clave* means “key.” The first measure of the son clave pattern is also known as the *tresillo* (three) pattern and may have originated in Sub-Saharan Africa, but it has also been traced back to 1398, to parts of the Middle East, specifically to Baghdad.

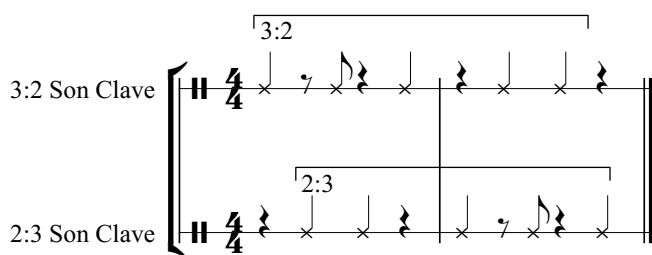
¹¹⁴ Cole Porter, “Every Time We Say Goodbye,” New York: Chappell & Co., Inc, 1944.

...it forms part of almost every music tradition throughout the world and dates back historically to the thirteenth-century Baghdad, where it was called *al-thakil-al-thani*. It is a traditional rhythm played on the banjo in bluegrass music. It was used extensively in the American rockabilly music of the 1950s for bass, saxophone, or piano. It is sometimes referred to as the *habanera* rhythm or the *tumbao* rhythm.¹¹⁵

Although the tresillo is prevalent in Parker's music and an apt term, this research refers to this figure as the hemiola 2 (H2). The primary reason it is referred to as a hemiola pattern is that in Parker's music, there are often longer durational spans where it appears not just as articulated groups of three but of as many as eight articulations that then constitute a hemiola 7 (H7) (discussed in the next section).

Below is the clave son clave pattern in its primary and invertible form, i.e., it can occur in either the traditional 3:2 or the 2:3 pattern.

Figure 114. The 3:2 Son Clave and the 2:3 Son Clave



To generate the second pattern, there is simply a reversal in order: the palindromic effect (the invertibility principle). The score, which is read from left to right like European-based languages, however, music in its aural form may not be nearly as linear or as directional from a visual perspective. Instead, it can resemble a helix or cyclical entity; for example, the circle of fifths can move clockwise or counter clockwise, producing related yet distinctly different effects. Rhythm functions similarly: there is not always a forward or backwards motion, only the

¹¹⁵ Godfried Toussaint, *The Geometry of Musical Rhythm: What Makes a Good Rhythm Good?* CRC Press LLC, 2013, pp. 14-15.

principles of dissonance and consonance as the events relate to a referential point (in this case, the 4/4 meter).

In North America, asymmetrical rhythmic patterns underpin much more than just Latin jazz or Cuban-influenced dance and folk music, as shown above. A feature of jazz is that, through its inherently iconoclastic musical behaviours, it has incorporated and redefined musical concepts from around the world. In other words, it is impossible to quantify the extent to which West African and European music influenced it, or what was gleaned from Latin-based music, for example in New Orleans, c 1900. In conversation with Alan Lomax, Jelly Roll Morton states, “of course you've got to have these little tinges of Spanish into it... In order to play real good jazz...I'll give you my idea...the idea of Spanish there is in the blues,”¹¹⁶ Morton then plays a blues in Bb with his left-hand articulating the tresillo figure throughout.

The intricate durational spans of asymmetrical syncopation in Parker's music are often housed within the highly varied expressions achievable through the rhythmic groupings of 2 and 3. Moreover, the significance of such rhythmic patterns was not only endemic to Parker's music but widespread.

To the subject of assimilation and inclusivity: there appears to be an elasticity in the minds of jazz innovators that is vital for shaping this American art form – an inherent malleability. For instance, Parker adopted, accepted, and quoted music, regardless of category or origin. One might argue that there are elements of postmodernism in this behaviour —a complex expression of irony and humour —or even an outright condemnation of the hegemony faced by African Americans. Charlie Parker was radically iconoclastic, both socially and musically; however, such polemical speculation far exceeds the scope of this paper.

¹¹⁶ Jelly Roll Morton, *The Complete Library of Congress Recordings*, Disc 2, Track 3.

The clave figure and the asymmetrical groups of accents were a key part of jazz that preceded Parker, serving as an unspoken code for phrase construction and accent grouping. The following six examples demonstrate how, particularly the 2:3 but also the 3:2 accented patterns, were widespread in figures used throughout the jazz lexicon both before and during Parker's era.

Figure 115. List of 2:3 and 3:2 Patterns in the Jazz Lexicon

Figure 115 displays six musical staves, each representing a different jazz rhythmic pattern. Each staff begins with a 4/4 time signature and a double bar line. The patterns are:

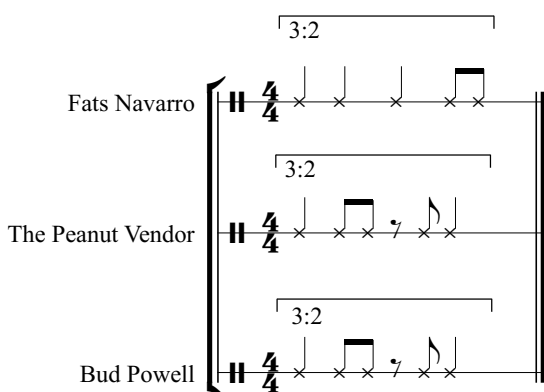
- Tag (Cliche):** A 2:3 pattern (two eighth notes followed by a quarter note).
- Drum (Cliche):** A 3:2 pattern (three eighth notes followed by a quarter note).
- Cherokee (BG):** A 2:3 pattern (two eighth notes followed by a quarter note).
- Blip Blip (Intro.):** A 2:3 pattern (two eighth notes followed by a quarter note).
- Blip Blip (Melody) Tag (Cliche):** A 2:3 pattern (two eighth notes followed by a quarter note).
- Hot and Anxious:** A 2:3 pattern (two eighth notes followed by a quarter note).

The six examples above come from a wide range of sources. The first is the rhythmic pattern for a generic ending (tag), which would conclude a tune without a scripted ending and is still used by melodic instruments today. The second is a common bebop drum cliché used by influential drummers like Max Roach and Kenny Clarke—the only 3:2 pattern among these examples. The figure is the rhythmic pattern played behind Charlie Parker's notable 1942 solo with the Jay McShann Orchestra on Ray Noble's "Cherokee" (1939). The examples from Duke Ellington's 1941 recording of "Blip Blip" (Ellington, Kuller, 1941) show two different patterns.

The first is the figure from the introduction, which matches the previous one, and the second is the latter part of the hook, a series of made-up words after Nance sings “Blip Blip,” in the melody. Lastly, originally from Wingy Manone’s “Tar Paper Stomp” (Manone, 1930), the riff that made “In the Mood” (Miller, 1939) had first been recycled by Fletcher Henderson on his 1931 recording of “Hot and Anxious” (Henderson, 1931).

The next three examples show the rhythmic diminution of the 3:2 grouping, now articulated within a 1-bar span.

Figure 116. List of One Bar Span 3:2 Patterns



The examples above now begin to focus on figures within the bebop style. The Fats Navarro figure is a figure he plays in many solos when ascending into the high register (possibly learned from Dizzy Gillespie, as it is a figure that aids in generating air compression to reach the upper register). The rhythmic pattern from the best-selling tune, “The Peanut Vendor” (Moises Simons, 1930), was adopted by many jazz musicians after Parker quoted it; Bud Powell also often plays it. This rhythmic cliché might be one of the most overused in jazz, even today: many recordings feature Miles Davis playing it throughout his career on mm. 5-6 (the SD region) of a blues in F. Miles did so to such an extent that the drummers in different eras (1956-1965) of his

band—such as “Philly” Joe Jones, Jimmy Cobb, or Tony Williams—would play it either in unison with him or they would complete the figure while Miles would tacet.

These examples further illustrate that the syncopated rhythmic patterns characteristic of Charlie Parker’s musical phrases were an existing part of the jazz lexicon. However, in Parker’s music, many of the 2:3 and 3:2 patterns were embedded into his musical phrases and not overtly articulated. Whether Parker intentionally played these patterns or expressed them intuitively remains uncertain. However, his preference for housing his melodic gestures within the asymmetrical structure formed by the 3:2 and 2:3 durational patterns is evident. The examples presented at the end of this section will demonstrate how Parker employed these ratios to craft engaging, asymmetrical, durational rhythmic patterns within his melodic framework. It is interesting to note that, despite the frequent recurrence of this pattern, it does not create a sense of repetition. In fact, it is quite the opposite; by incorporating these ratios into many of his phrases, Parker could vary the feeling and flow of his familiar material. Parker’s ability to vary the patterns of syncopation is another reason why, despite the use of his well-worn lick schema, his music retains a spontaneity. In other words, due to the many braided layers of musical behaviours, e.g., the asymmetrical groupings of accented patterns, the listening experience remains fresh, no matter how familiar the licks may be.

There are many examples of Parker clearly articulating the 2:3/3:2 asymmetrical accented patterns, but only a few that articulate the clave pattern verbatim.

The following excerpt is from Parker’s 1947 solo on take B of “Bongo Beep” (Parker, 1947).

Figure 117. The 3:2 Clave on “Bongo Beep”

As shown in the above example, the clave is clearly articulated; the conclusion of the phrase, which expresses a 3-group, is included, for it is the second half of the clave figure. In addition, this phrase is 12 beats in length: a phrasing behaviour of Parker's that is discussed shortly.

The inverted form of the clave is heard in Parker's iconic crip from the B section of the master take of his 24-measure introduction to “Cherokee” (Noble, 1939), Parker's “Ko-Ko” (1945). The excerpt is shown below.

Figure 118. The 2:3 Clave in the B Section of “Ko-Ko”

In the melodic layer of the example shown above are the upside-down (UD) gestures and the whole tone 7-3 (WH 7-3). The VL layer indicates the whole tone 5 (WH5), the commonly

added 'fifth note' from the whole tone pitch collection. However, the voice leading, central to the Cx (m. 2) and B# (m. 6) has many possible interpretations, e.g., on the F#7, it is the #5 (as indicated) but also the b13, the 9th of bII7 (C7), b7of iv7 (E-7), and the 5th of the Ger6 (G7). Evidently, this is a wonderfully open and rich harmonic tool, which on this occasion Parker couples with a group of middle-ground accents that articulate the 2:3 clave figure.

The following two examples demonstrate the “Peanut Vendor” figure. The first is an augmented lick that has been widely adopted and appears as a well-known cliché in the bebop vernacular known to this research as WH5 PV; the second comes from the tag ending to Parker’s “Bird Gets The Worm,” (BGTW) another ‘on the spot’ composition of Parker’s comprised of a tag lick at the end (one that Max Roach and Clifford Brown recycled for the ending of the epic trumpet performance of “Cherokee” (Noble, 1939).

Figure 119. The 3:2 Pattern in Parker’s WH5 PV Crip

The figure displays a musical score with three staves. The top staff, labeled 'mm. 3-5', shows a harmonic progression: B $\flat$ 6, Fm7, B $\flat$ 7, and E $\flat$ 7. The middle staff, labeled 'Big Foot (Take D)', shows a melodic line with various annotations: 'BU' above the first measure, '3-7' above the second, 'WH5 PV' above the third, '2&2' above the fourth, '422E' above the fifth, and '3' above the sixth. Below the melodic line, there are rhythmic annotations: '3:2GU' under the first measure, '3:2GU' under the second, and '2N' under the third. The bottom staff, labeled 'Middle Ground', shows a rhythmic pattern with accents and rests, corresponding to the 3:2 pattern in m. 4.

There are many more layers included in the example shown above; however, for the sake of brevity, the feature being illustrated is the 3:2 pattern in m. 4 of the excerpt.

Figure 120. Tag to “Bird Gets the Worm”

The musical score for Figure 120, Tag to “Bird Gets the Worm”, consists of three staves. The top staff, labeled “A3 mm. 13-14”, is in 4/4 time and key of Bb, featuring a whole note chord $A\flat 7$ followed by a double bar line. The middle staff, labeled “BGTW”, is in 4/4 time and key of Bb, showing a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure and a 3:2 ratio in the second measure. The bottom staff, labeled “Middle Ground”, is in 4/4 time and contains a rhythmic pattern with a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure and a 3:2 ratio in the second measure.

In the first example from “Big Foot” (Take D), the 3:2 pattern is contained within two 3-group patterns; in the second example, “Bird Gets the Worm” (BGTW), the 3:2 figure is preceded by the 3-grouping.

The following three examples are from Charlie Parker compositions and demonstrate the 2:3 and 3:2 ratios, as heard in Parker’s accented patterns, where it is more deeply embedded within the melodic idea. The excerpt from “Ah-Leu-Cha” (Parker, 1948) shows that the ratios are built into Parker’s rhythmic vernacular, as it is Miles Davis who plays this line, and Parker plays the secondary accompanying contrapuntal line. Once again, the final two examples, “Past Due” (Parker, 1947) and “Back Home Blues” (Parker, 1952), reflect the 12-beat phrase duration.

Figure 121. 2:3 Ratios in "Ah-Leu-Cha"

Figure 121 shows the musical score for "Ah-Leu-Cha" in 4/4 time. The score consists of three staves: mm. 1-4, Ah-Leu-Cha, and Middle Ground. The mm. 1-4 staff shows a sequence of chords: F $\flat$ 9, D 7 , Gm 7 , C 7 , Am 7 , D 7 , Gm 7 , and C 7 . The Ah-Leu-Cha staff shows a melody line. The Middle Ground staff shows a rhythmic pattern with 2:3 ratios indicated by brackets over the first and second measures.

Figure 122. 3:2 and 2:3 Ratios in "Anthropology"

Figure 122 shows the musical score for "Anthropology" in 4/4 time. The score consists of three staves: mm. 1-4, Anthropology, and Middle Ground. The mm. 1-4 staff shows a sequence of chords: B $\flat$ 9, G 7 , Cm 7 , F 7 , Dm 7 , G 7 , Cm 7 , and F 7 . The Anthropology staff shows a melody line. The Middle Ground staff shows a rhythmic pattern with 3:2 and 2:3 ratios indicated by brackets over the first and second measures.

Figure 123. 2:3 and 3:2 Ratios in "Past Due"

Figure 123 shows the musical score for "Past Due" in 4/4 time. The score consists of three staves: mm. 1-3, Past Due, and Middle Ground. The mm. 1-3 staff shows a sequence of chords: C 6 , F 7 , and C 6 . The Past Due staff shows a melody line. The Middle Ground staff shows a rhythmic pattern with 2:3 and 3:2 ratios indicated by brackets over the first and second measures.

Figure 124. 2:3 and 3:2 Ratios in “Back Home Blues”

Figure 124 displays a musical score for the piece "Back Home Blues" in 4/4 time. The score is divided into three staves: "mm. 1-3", "Back Home Blues", and "Middle Ground". The "mm. 1-3" staff shows a sequence of chords: C⁶, Bm⁷(b5), E⁷, Am⁷, and D⁷. The "Back Home Blues" staff shows a melodic line with a 2:3 ratio indicated by a bracket over the first two measures. The "Middle Ground" staff shows a rhythmic pattern with a 3:2 ratio indicated by a bracket over the first two measures.

The final example of the 3:2 accented pattern, as it appears in Charlie Parker’s music, occurs within his iiVF crip,¹¹⁷ one of his most used and arguably most imitated. This excerpt was selected from a recording of “Anthropology” (Parker, 1945) in 1952 at the Howard Theatre in Washington, D.C (but virtually every solo with (G-7) C7 includes some version of this lick schema.

Figure 125. 3:2 pattern on iiVF

Figure 125 displays a musical score for the piece "Anthropology" in 4/4 time. The score is divided into three staves: "RC B mm. 5-6", "Anthropology (HT, 52)", and "Middle Ground". The "RC B mm. 5-6" staff shows a sequence of chords: Gm⁷ and C⁷. The "Anthropology (HT, 52)" staff shows a melodic line with a 3:2 ratio indicated by a bracket over the first two measures. The "Middle Ground" staff shows a rhythmic pattern with a 3:2 ratio indicated by a bracket over the first two measures.

¹¹⁷ This is the abbreviation for Parker’s most frequently used lick on ii7 V7 I in F.

The following section continues the discussion of Parker's accented patterns in the middle ground layer, offering a more detailed breakdown of the isolated events that occur inside and outside these broader asymmetrical 3:2 and 2:3 groupings.

Chapter 15: Peckin' Time

Charlie Parker bit off a *big* chunk—I'll tell you! Still, he had influences—Lester and those others. But he added to it. One thing he added was accent—the way of stressing certain notes.¹¹⁸

Dizzy Gillespie

During the 1990s, in a private discussion with a mentor, it was brought to my attention that accents in this music are also known as 'peckin' time.'¹¹⁹ A highly apt and descriptive term for the accents in Parker's music; however, for clarity, this research will use the term 'accent'.

The accents in Charlie Parker's music have primarily been identified as those that are situated on "the highest pitch at any given moment,"¹²⁰ an accurate statement, but incomplete. There are patterns and groupings of accents that make the musical thoughts coherent. Moreover, the patterns and repeated figures that are often housed within 3:2 ratios or more isolated groups of 3 provide a recognisable structure. Suggesting this is the result of "irrational rhythmic values"¹²¹ and the "highest pitch at any given moment" overlooks the paramount nature of Parker's rhythmic framework and brings us no closer to a cogent explanation of how Parker's music moves. Carl Woideck observes that:

Parker's most characteristic accentuations are found at melodic points of change of direction and most typically at those points of change are the high points (in terms of pitch) of melodic phrases. This usage of accentuation tended to give a whip-like snap to Parker's rapid lines. Parker was adept at creating syncopation often by creatively placing accents on unexpected parts of a subdivided beat.¹²²

¹¹⁸ Dizzy Gillespie with Gene Lees, "The Years with Yard," *Down Beat*, May 25, 1961, p. 61.

¹¹⁹ This is the title of a Hank Mobley and Lee Morgan album recorded in 1958 called *Peckin' Time*.

¹²⁰ Thomas Owens, *Charlie Parker- Techniques of Improvisation*, 1974, p. 11.

¹²¹ Thomas Owens, *Charlie Parker- Techniques of Improvisation*, 1974, p. 88.

¹²² Carl Woideck, *Charlie Parker: His Music and Life*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996, p.

There are varying degrees of accuracy in this statement, which will be answered throughout the following sections; however, to the current discussion, comments like these, again as true as they may be, are incomplete. They offer little to no insight as to whether there is a pattern to the syncopation in Parker's music or if, as many suggest (Owens, Martin, Koch, et al.), it is merely a series of unpredictable, irrational offbeats. To this point, from *The Geometry of Musical Rhythm: What Makes a Good Rhythm Good*, Godfried Toussaint makes an important observation that has fueled some of the impetus for the detailed categorisation of Parker's rhythmic patterns. Toussaint writes:

There must be more than 50 traditional definitions of syncopation adorning the pages of dictionaries, books, and Internet sites. Like the definitions offered here, most have their own particularities. However, to a mathematician, they all have one thing in common: vagueness.¹²³

When analysing rhythmically based music such as Charlie Parker's, this kind of "vagueness" is ultimately unhelpful. The consensus regarding Parker's syncopation, as accurate (but incomplete) as it may be, is also indicative of the "vagueness" that Toussaint is so rightfully frustrated with. General observations about accents that may or may not exhibit a syncopated pattern leave us no closer to understanding Parker's rhythm and phrase concept.

When comparing syncopation endemic to African music with the synchrony typical of the European music tradition, the Reverend Arthur Morris Jones writes: "the African also uses synchrony of pattern but in a much more, subtle way. His norm is the cross-rhythm and synchrony is derivative. The synchrony arises from the exploitation of its very opposite

¹²³ Godfried Toussaint, *The Geometry of Musical Rhythm: What Makes a Good Rhythm Good?* CRC Press LLC, 2013 p. 67. Toussaint adds that "The New Oxford American Dictionary defines a syncopated rhythm as one in which the "beats or accents" are displaced "so that strong beats become weak beats and vice versa... The Oxford Grove Music Online Dictionary defines syncopation as: "The regular shifting of each beat in a measured pattern by the same amount ahead of or behind its normal position in that pattern... The Harvard Dictionary of Music defines syncopation as "A momentary contradiction of the prevailing meter..."

principle.”¹²⁴ To attain this norm of syncopation Jones further explains how subdivisions of twelve are essential to African musical concepts. On this matter, Toussaint writes: “12 has the important property that it is a small number that contains many divisors other than one and 12, in particular two, three, four, and six...”¹²⁵ This line of investigation must conclude here, as the primary objective of this work is to illustrate what Parker did and not why there aren’t enough cogent explanations in extant research.

The patterns Parker generates through his accenting are nuanced expressions of the meter and are shown in the middle ground layer of analysis. These accents reorganise the metrical impulses and, as such, impact the perceived and intrinsic logic, feel, and forward propulsion of the phrase. This research has identified fourteen distinct unsyncopated and syncopated accented patterns in Charlie Parker’s music, as listed below.

1. Half-time swing (HTS)
2. Pops 3 (Pops3)
3. Charleston (CH)
4. Reverse Charleston (RCH)
5. Charleston Long (CHL)
6. Reverse Charleston Long (RCHL)
7. Ups Short (2up, 3up, etc.)
8. Ups Long (2upl, 3upl, etc.)
9. Mop-mop (MM)
10. Mop-mop 16th (MM16)

¹²⁴ Arthur Morris Jones, *Studies in African Music*, (1953), p. 193.

¹²⁵ Godfried Toussaint, *The Geometry of Musical Rhythm*, p. 51.

11. Hemiola (H2, H3, etc.)

12. Bada (Ba-da)

13. Bebop Long (BBL)

14. Bebop Short (BBS)

Figure 126. List of Accented Patterns

1. Half-time Swing
HTS

2. Pops 3
Pops3

3. Charleston
CH

4. Reverse Charleston
RCH

5. Charleston Long
CHL

6. 3up
3up

7. 3up Long
3upl

8. Mop-mop
MM

9. Mop-mop 16
MM16

10. Hemiola
H3

11. Bada
Bada

12. Bebop Long
BBL

13. Bebop Short
BBS

1. Half-Time Swing (HTS)

Many of Parker's accented sequences articulate a 2-beat pattern, implying the halftime; hence the moniker half-time swing (HTS). These, along with the Pops 3 pattern shown next, are

the most consonant within Parker's accented groupings. This highly predictable sequence may be used as a setup for the more dissonant accented patterns. The expectation is established and then thwarted through deviation, or, as Leonard B. Meyer suggests:

For the listener, affect or emotion in music arises when an expectation—a tendency to respond—activated by the musical stimulus situation is temporarily inhibited or permanently blocked.¹²⁶

Below is an example of the half-time swing pattern as played by Parker in a crib he recycled many times, but only in the channel (B section) of “Cherokee” (Noble, 1939), which establishes the setup through nine articulations of the half-time swing pattern. The expectation of the tenth HTS figure is “blocked” by the highly effective metrical shift initiated by the mop-mop (MM). There are two MM figures, in mm. 6-7; the latter is the only one shown in the excerpt below that aligns with its placement within the son clave pattern (discussed momentarily).

Figure 127. Half Time Swing: “Cherokee”

The figure displays a musical score for the song "Cherokee". It consists of four staves. The top staff, labeled "mm. B 1-7", shows a harmonic progression: C#m7, F#7, Bmaj7, a double bar line, Bm7, E7, and Amaj7. The second staff, labeled "Cherokee (1942)", shows a melodic line with two "2N_" markings. The third staff, labeled "Middle Ground", shows a rhythmic pattern with "HTS" (Half Time Swing) and "MM" (Mop-Mop) markings, and a "2:3" ratio indicated. The bottom staff, labeled "Background", shows a rhythmic pattern with "HTS", "CP" (Crisp), and "MC" (Mop-Mop) markings.

There is more to the location of the final mop-mop beyond the alignment with the son clave; beats 2 and 3 also appear in Parker's music when he moves from iii7-biii7. It is a means for him to express a new harmonic rhythm, manipulated by the 2-note gesture, which in this case

¹²⁶ Leonard B. Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961, p. 31.

facilitates a metrical shift into the 3/4 meter. This is called the cross-phrase (CP), as illustrated in the background layer, and is established by the accented patterns created by these 2-note gestures. The metrical correction (MC) is shown in m. 6. A phrase deviation is most effective when there is a setup-deviation-reorientation. (Both CP and MC are discussed further shortly).

2. Pops 3 (Pops3)

The prevalence of three successive, accented quarter notes is an integral part of Louis Armstrong's musical vernacular and a prominent feature in Parker's music and popular music of the last fifty years. Within Armstrong's music, the expression of three successive quarter notes is literally played as three-quarter notes; however, in Parker's music, it can be embedded into the crip (that may have varying foreground properties). The following example from "An Oscar for Treadwell" (Parker, 1950) (AOFT) illustrates Parker playing three groups of three successive quarter notes: this excerpt is also a favourite quote of Parker's, from the 1929 song by Louis Alter and Jo Trent, "My Kinda Love."

Figure 128. Pops3 a

The figure displays three layers of musical notation for the excerpt "Pops3 a".

- A m. 8 A2 mm. 1-2:** The top layer shows a treble clef staff with a 4/4 time signature. It contains three measures of music, each represented by a series of diagonal slashes. Above the staff, the chords Dm^7 , G^7 , and C^6 are indicated for the first two measures, and Dm^7 and G^7 for the third measure.
- AOFT (Incomplete):** The middle layer shows a treble clef staff with a 4/4 time signature. It contains three measures of music, each represented by a series of diagonal slashes. Below the staff, the labels $2N_-$ and $2N_-$ are placed under the first and second measures, respectively.
- Middle Ground:** The bottom layer shows a bass clef staff with a 4/4 time signature. It contains three measures of music, each represented by a series of diagonal slashes. Below the staff, the label $Pops3_$ is placed under each of the three measures.

The 2-note (2N) is shown again, but in this instance, it is not used for displacing the metrical location of the crip, but the reverse, affirming it, making it a rhythmically consonant feature (the invertibility of Parker's musical devices). Although it is accented in the 2nd measure of the excerpt, it is not included in the middle ground layer; instead, it is part of the attributes

within the melodic (foreground) layer. The accents shown in the middle ground layer of this phrase illustrate the three groupings of three quarter note pulses, the Pops3. This is also a rare and brief example of Parker developing a motive, albeit not his own.

More frequently, however, in Parker's musical lexicon —and not the musical quotations — the accents or, in this case, the Pops3, are more deeply embedded into the crip. Below is an example of the Pops3 pattern in a familiar crip of Parker's from take 2 of "Merry-Go-Round" (Parker, 1948). This example includes the 2:3 phrase grouping.

Figure 129. Pops3 b

The figure illustrates the Pops3 pattern in a 4/4 measure. The top staff shows the piano accompaniment with chords Cm7, F7, Fm7, and Bb7. The middle staff shows the melody for "Merry-Go-Round (Take 2)". The bottom staff, labeled "Middle Ground", shows a rhythmic diagram with a 4/4 time signature. It features two groups of three quarter notes each, labeled "HTS" and "Pops3". A bracket above the first group is labeled "2:3", indicating a 2:3 phrase grouping.

As illustrated above, the Pops3 pattern is preceded by the HTS figure, which together form the 2:3 grouping that houses both figures.

3. Charleston (CH)

The origins of the following figure are most certainly not from the 1928 James P. Johnson tune "The Charleston" and the dance craze that followed, spanning the late 1920s and early 30s. Despite this, the moniker will be used by this research to identify this figure, a nod to the tradition and the folksy, colloquial jazz vernacular. Instead, the figure's origins are most likely from the son clave, as shown below.

Figure 130. Charleston as Shown in the Son Clave



The Charleston figure appears in Parker's music with much less frequency than many of the other figures. Below is an example of Parker accenting the Charleston pattern using a well-worn crip.

Figure 131. Charleston a

The notation shows three staves. The top staff is labeled 'mm. 4-5' and contains chords Gm7, C7, and F7. The middle staff is labeled 'Perhaps (Take 1)' and contains a melodic line. The bottom staff is labeled 'Middle Ground' and contains a rhythmic pattern with a bracket labeled 'CH'.

The Charleston (CH) figure shown above, as played by Parker on Take 1 of his blues in C, "Perhaps," shows how he uses it within the line and as one of his most common rhythmic cadences.¹²⁷ Not shown but evident is the 6-beat span, or what is essentially a measure of 3/2 meter.

The following example shows the Charleston figure in mm. 5-6 of "Now's The Time" (Parker, 1945).

¹²⁷ Thomas Owen's calls this M10, but it's a fragment from a crip played by Ben Webster on the classic recording of "Cotton Tail" (Ellington, 1940).

Figure 132. Charleston b

The figure displays three musical staves. The top staff, labeled 'mm. 5-6', is in 4/4 time and features a Bb7 chord and a fermata. The middle staff, labeled 'Now's The Time', is in 4/4 time and shows a melody. The bottom staff, labeled 'Middle Ground', is in 4/4 time and shows a rhythmic pattern with 'CH' markings.

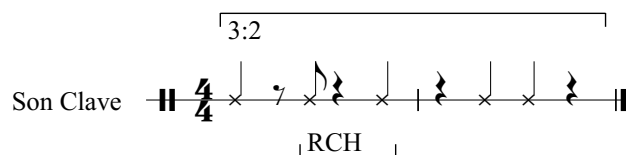
Arguably, there is another interpretation in which the F to Bb figure on beat 3 is perceived as both notes being accented; however, that would produce foreground-level data, simply showing what is being played. The middle ground layer, where embedded figures are identified, is one step removed from the foreground layer and aims to reveal part of the underlying structure. N.B. On “Now’s The Time” (1945) Parker always played the Bb in m 6, a very folksy move, whereas every other re-recorded version I know of has first the Bb in m. 5 and then the B natural in m. 6.

4. Reverse Charleston (RCH)

The sister figure to the Charleston is the reverse Charleston (RCH). Again, this isn’t a figure that is in and of itself unique to Parker’s music (Armstrong used it and it is the opening rhythmic gesture to Ellington’s “Concerto For Cootie” (1940)); however, the frequency and variation with which Parker uses this figure make it a defining feature of the accented patterns endemic to his crips. In addition, it is an integral feature of his enclosure patterns.

Like the Charleston, the reverse Charleston is also apparent in the latter part of the first measure of the clave, as shown below.

Figure 133. Reverse Charleston as shown in the Son Clave



Parker often uses the reverse Charleston as a syncopated rhythmic figure to begin his phrases, by entering with a stress on the end of any given beat, then accenting the pulse three eighths (or sixteenths, depending on the grid Parker is playing on) later. As it is with many of these syncopations, they can begin on any of the ‘ands’ within the 4-beat hyper-measure.

Figure 134. Reverse Charleston

The reverse Charleston (RCH) figure illustrated above forms the basis of many Charlie Parker crips — arguably Parker’s most common way to emphasise the start of a phrase. This RCH begins and ends the crip and is separated by a mop-mop (MM) and the Charleston long (CHL) figure, which will be examined next. The 3:2 pattern that houses these elements is shown in the middle ground layer.

5. Charleston Long (CHL)

The Charleston long CHL figure is a key part of many of Parker's phrases. The chosen moniker connects this to the previously discussed Charleston to demonstrate that the simple sequence of 'on and off' beat patterns can occur even when separated by a longer duration. The invertible 'on and off,' off and on' pattern is the defining feature of the Charleston (CH) and the reverse Charleston (RCH). Below are four examples of this lengthy crib taken from The Dean Benedetti bootleg recordings from 1947 of one of the many versions of Thelonious Monk's "52nd St. Theme" (1945): a tune Parker never recorded in the studio but used as a set closer on many occasions, typically at tempos well above the 400 bpm mark, where, possibly due to the tempo, often only he would take a solo.

Figure 135. Charleston Long

mm. A 3-7

Em⁷ A⁷ Dm⁷ G⁷ Gm⁷ C⁷ F⁶ F^{#7} C/G

52nd St Theme (DB 5-07)

Middle Ground

Background

52nd St Theme (DB 5-11)

52nd St Theme (Perfect Col. 1)

52nd St Theme (Perfect Col. 1)

Many other features are included in the example above to illustrate the gestalt formed by Parker's intricate braiding of the various layers. The 732E, of which there are three, is pertinent to this discussion of the CHL as it is not only a harmonic device but also a rhythmic one that articulates the RCH. In this excerpt, the Charleston long (CHL) appears three times in these crips of Parker's. The CHL is marked with smaller brackets, while the 3:2 accented pattern is indicated with larger brackets. The background layer shows a similar setup-deviation-reorientation procedure as the "Cherokee" example earlier, using the HTS, CP, MC pattern.

6. Reverse Charleston Long (RCHL)

Unlike the CHL, the RCHL often crosses the bar line and is defined through the increase, by one beat, in the durational span: between the 'on and off' beat. In the same way that this space is lengthened to produce the CHL, so it is with the RCHL. The example shown below will be illustrated further in the next section.

Figure 136. Reverse Charleston Long

The musical score for Figure 136, "Reverse Charleston Long", is presented in five staves. The top staff is a piano accompaniment in 4/4 time, marked "mm. 6-8", with chords F⁷, C⁶, and A⁷. The second staff is "C Blues (PB)" in 4/4 time, featuring a triplet of eighth notes. The third staff is "Middle Ground" in 4/4 time, showing a rhythmic pattern with a 2:3 bracket over the first three beats, labeled "RCHL", "HTS", and "BBS". The fourth staff is "Cool Blues (Percol.)" in 4/4 time, also featuring a triplet of eighth notes. The fifth staff is another "Middle Ground" in 4/4 time, identical to the third staff, with a 2:3 bracket and labels "RCHL", "HTS", and "BBS".

In these two examples of the RCHL, the HTS and the BBS follow it. All of which are housed within a 2:3 asymmetrical grouping.

7. Ups (2up, 3up, etc.)

The ups figure in Parker's music is another gesture often seen most overtly in his compositions; however, due to his highly pronounced accents in his swing feel, many of his eighth-note sequences incorporate elements of these ups patterns throughout. Below are examples of the ups patterns as seen in "Visa" (Parker, 1949).

Figure 137. Ups: "Visa"

The figure displays a musical score for the song "Visa" by Charlie Parker, specifically focusing on the "Ups" patterns. The score is organized into two systems, each with three staves: C Blues, Visa, and MG (Main Motive).

System 1 (Measures 1-7):

- C Blues:** Chords C⁶, F⁷, C⁶, Gm⁷, C⁷, F⁷, and a final measure with a double bar line.
- Visa:** Melodic line with eighth-note patterns. Annotations include "3up" (measures 2-3), "4up" (measures 4-5), "3up" (measures 6-7), and "3up" (measures 8-9).
- MG:** Main Motive line with eighth-note patterns. Annotations include "3up" (measures 2-3), "4up" (measures 4-5), "3up" (measures 6-7), and "3up" (measures 8-9).

System 2 (Measures 8-14):

- C Blues:** Chords C⁶, A⁷, Dm⁷, G⁷, C⁶, and G⁷.
- Visa:** Melodic line with eighth-note patterns. Annotations include "2up" (measures 9-10), "3up" (measures 11-12), and "3up" (measures 13-14).
- MG:** Main Motive line with eighth-note patterns. Annotations include "2up" (measures 9-10), "3up" (measures 11-12), and "3up" (measures 13-14).

In an analysis of Parker's "Visa" (1949), Henry Martin refers to these figures as extended MM (main motive) patterns, a term he adopted from Lawrence Koch. However, this research argues the primary function of this ups is not motivic but an intensification of the meter using the offbeat, hence the term, 'ups.' These offbeat figures are like those 'shouted' by the trumpet section on arrangements Parker would have heard of tunes like "Toby" (Moten, Barefield, 1932) by the Benny Moten Orchestra in 1932 (the origins of the Count Basie Orchestra). The ups

figures are in many respects the defining rhythmic feature of this entire blues head by Parker and are shown in isolation (there are other accents). The long sequences and repeated instances of 2, 3, and 4-ups comprise almost the entirety of the material used for “Visa”. The descending cliché in m. 2 is assigned the ups figure despite it being a continuous group of eighths because of the pronounced accenting of the offbeats by Kenny Dorham, Trummy Young, and Charlie Parker on the recording.

This research considers Parker’s anticipations, which are essentially what the ups are, not as a part of the previous beat, as illustrated and counted on the score. In other words, Parker’s anticipations are not the ‘and’ of the beat that they are theoretically a part of, but instead are a push of the beat to come: the next beat ‘comes’ early (there is no nomenclature to show this; all syncopations are measured by where they come from, not where they are going to). This makes these figures not motivic but almost exclusively gestural or physical: elements that give Parker’s crips propulsion and forward motion. These figures belong to the future (what’s to come) and not the past (from whence they came).¹²⁸

8. Ups long (2upl, 3upl, etc.)

The ups figure also appear in a sustained manner, ups long (upl). Below is an example showing the 2upl and 4upl figure in mm. 5-6 on take D of “Past Due” (Parker, 1947) and in the melody to “Mohawk” (Parker, 1950), respectively. “Mohawk” has been transposed into the key of C.

¹²⁸ Anticipations such as these are pivotal to all accompanying instruments in jazz and to the left-hand rhythms articulated by pianists.

Figure 138. Ups Long

The musical score for 'Ups Long' consists of five staves. The first staff, labeled 'mm. 5-6', is in 4/4 time and features a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a dynamic marking of F^7 . The second staff, labeled 'Past Due (Take D)', is also in 4/4 time and features a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a dynamic marking of F^7 . The third staff, labeled 'Middle Ground', is in 4/4 time and features a bass clef, a key signature of one flat, and a dynamic marking of F^7 . The fourth staff, labeled 'Mohawk', is in 4/4 time and features a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a dynamic marking of F^7 . The fifth staff, labeled 'Middle Ground', is in 4/4 time and features a bass clef, a key signature of one flat, and a dynamic marking of F^7 . The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like F^7 and $2upl$.

Parker employs the longer 'ups' more frequently in his improvisations, while the shorter 'ups' appear most often in his compositions. These simple off-beat syncopations add yet another layer of metrical interest to Charlie Parker's complex musical expressions.

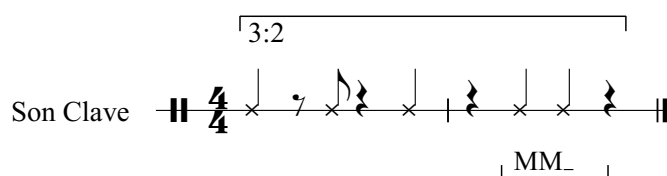
8. Mop-mop (MM)

The mop-mop figure is the only musical feature that Charlie Parker discusses in some detail during his radio interview with Marshall Stearns and John Maher, in New York City on May 1, 1950. Chan is also present during these conversations. The physicality of this gesture, both from a phrase perspective and a rhythmic one, offers another insight into the behavioural or physical aspects of Charlie Parker's music.

...that [the mop,mop] was just putting drum beats in there for the “bum, bum,” we’d just play, when we’d get to the channel {the songs B section}, you know, just play sometimes [sings a melody, then says] “bomp, bomp,” you know, just put them in.¹²⁹

The mop-mop figure comprises two accented beats: as per Parker’s description seen above, the “bomp, bomp,” is a figure found throughout the jazz vernacular. Physically, the figure has a ‘one-two punch’ feel, like in boxing.¹³⁰ However, this research posits that it is related to or may even originate from the son clave. As shown below, in m. 2 of the clave there is a two beat quarter note pattern articulated, albeit on beats 2 and 3 (similar to the example shown earlier on “Cherokee” in the HTS section).

Figure 139. The Mop-mop in the Son Clave



When Parker overtly articulates the mop-mop figure, the clear articulation of two quarters usually occurs on beats 1 and 2 or 3 and 4, and within this analysis, resides somewhere between the foreground (melodic) material and the middle ground layer where the figure is illustrated.

The mop-mop is an accented gesture that functions as a rhythmic device, establishing the perceived strong beat to be either aligned with the first or second beat of the figure. Parker often uses the mop-mop figure on beats 1 and 2; however, exceptions and contextual nuances complicate this. Four examples of the mop-mop are shown below.

¹²⁹ Interview: Charlie Parker, Marshall Stearns, John Maher, and Chan Parker, NYC May 1, 1950. Carl Woideck, *The Charlie Parker Companion: Six Decades of Commentary*, New York: Schirmer Books, 1998, p. 106.

¹³⁰ Boxing was a sport that played a similar role to jazz in elevating the positive image of African Americans in the 1940s. Music and boxing brought celebrity and positive public image to many African Americans: Miles Davis and Kenny Dorham were both avid boxers.

Figure 140. Mop-mop

The figure displays four musical staves, each representing a different example of the 'mop-mop' (MM) figure in 4/4 time. Each staff is labeled on the left and has a bracket above it indicating the measure numbers and the 'MM' figure. The notes are as follows:

- Au Privave (mm 7-8):** G4, A4, B4, C5.
- Bird Feathers (mm. 8-9):** G4, A4, B4, C5.
- Big Foot (mm. 5-6):** G4, A4, B4, C5.
- Swedish Schnapps (mm. 4-5):** G4, A4, B4, C5.

All the examples above are taken from Parker's compositions. The first three examples illustrate the mop-mop (MM) in its most common position within the hyper measure: beats 1 and 2. However, the stronger accent is consistently articulated on beat 2, indicating a basic expression of metrical displacement by emphasising the backbeat: in this case, beat 2. The last example shown above is from Parker's line on "Swedish Schnapps" (Parker, 1950), which demonstrates the mop-mop on beats 3 and 4, stressing beat 4 in this case. There is an invertibility to the mop-mop where the stressed beat can be placed deceptively: more palindromic features that reveal Parker's propensity for invertibility. As previously mentioned, a behaviour that may stem from his penchant for wordplay and random association, for which Parker was avid as shown earlier.

9. Mop-mop 16th (MM16)

The mop-mop 16th (MM16) appears within another crip as the previous example from "Cherokee" showed, where the MM figure was embedded into the eighth notes but defined by the high points. In the same manner, there is a specific gesture that also has the clearly defined

mop-mop attributes, or the “boom boom,” as Parker puts it, but not at the foreground level. This gesture is the mop-mop 16th (MM16) as shown below.

Figure 141. Mop-mop 16th

Figure 141 shows a musical score snippet with three staves. The top staff is labeled "mm. B 4" and contains a treble clef, a key signature of two flats, a 4/4 time signature, and a G⁷ chord symbol above the staff. The middle staff is labeled "Red Cross (Take 2)" and contains a treble clef, a key signature of two flats, a 4/4 time signature, and a triplet of eighth notes. The bottom staff is labeled "Middle Ground" and contains a 4/4 time signature and a bracketed section labeled "MM16" with a line underneath it.

This example appears on both takes of Parker’s solo on “Red Cross” (Parker, 1944), where Parker has clearly developed the long durational crips for the B section (also found in a live recording of “Shaw’ Nuff” (Gillespie, 1945). This isolated event within that is the descending four-sixteenth-to-quarter-note gesture, which emphasises the mop-mop figure, as shown in the middle-ground layer.

10. Hemiolas (H2, H3, etc.)

The hemiola is based on the 3:2 ratio, which involves the simultaneous expressions of duple and ternary meters and forms the foundation of much of Parker’s syncopation (and phrasing). “The term hemiola comes from the Greek word hemiolios, meaning containing one and a half or half as much again, in the ratio of one and a half to one (3:2), as in musical sounds.”¹³¹ In music history, the 3:2 ratio, which has been documented, may have originated with Pythagoras, who employed it as a mathematical concept to define the perfect fifth as it appears in

¹³¹ *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “hemiola,” 2nd ed., 1989.

the natural harmonic series. As a polyrhythmic device, the hemiola appeared across Western European musical traditions during the 17th and 18th centuries, most often in simple triple or compound meters —3, 6, or 9—where groups of two are played against groups of three. In this manner, the groups of two fit evenly into three because 3 divided by 2 is equal to 1.5 (possibly the origin of the principles of compound meter). These groupings were either inspired by or inspired dance forms like the Gigue, Courante, Sarabande, Waltz, Galliards, and others.

The rhythm of galliards is organized in groups of six beats, sometimes preceded by upbeats. The primary grouping is 3+3, but 2+2+2 hemiola rhythms are common. The associated dance steps follow a six-beat pattern consisting of four short steps and a leap on the fifth beat. Because of the dance function, the rhythms are strongly articulated in the music.¹³²

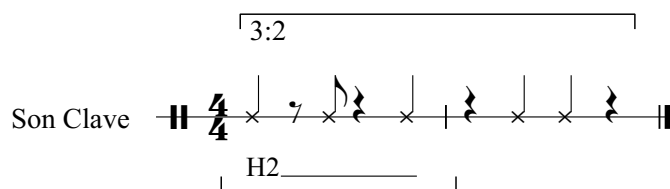
However, in the jazz idiom up until the mid 1950s, the hemiola typically occurred in 4/4 meter (rarely were triple or compound meters used, and in the case of Parker's music, there is no documentation of 3/4 or 6/8: in the context of the 4/4 meter the hemiola becomes 3 against 2 using the dotted quarter, which crosses the bar line until it corrects itself after three full measures or twelve beats; twelve again is the critical number. Moreover, the division of 2 by 3 creates an infinite number of sixes, i.e., .6666 and so on.

The hemiola pattern of accents is arguably the most common and, from a durational perspective, the most extended sequence of accented patterns in the Charlie Parker oeuvre. Like the Charleston, the Reverse Charleston, and the mop-mop figure, the hemiola pattern may again originate, in jazz, from the son clave. The hemiola pattern is essentially a combination of the Charleston and the reverse Charleston. This figure is also known as the 'tresillo' because it involves a grouping of three; however, Parker assigns many durational spans to this pattern. To confirm the pattern, there must be three impulses that create two hemiolas; otherwise, it is a

¹³² Ruth DeFord, *Tactus, Mensuration and Rhythm in Renaissance Music*, Cambridge University Press, 2015, p. 462.

consecutive Charleston or the reverse Charleston figure (or RCH, CH). Shown below is the son clave, which displays the hemiola pattern in m. 1 of the figure.

Figure 142. The Hemiola in the Son Clave



The first example of the hemiola, shown below, appears in the opening three bars of “Another Hairdo” (Parker, 1947), illustrating the hemiola pattern as H5. Moreover, this hemiola pattern produces a broader durational span of 3/4 phrasing (the cross-phrase [CP] discussed shortly). This catchy, and what was arguably another ‘on the spot’ composition, concludes with the bebop long (BBL) (examined later in this section).

Ex. 15.18 Hemiola a

Additionally, we observe the 12-beat phrase duration, along with the H5 and BBL, being housed within the extended asymmetrical accented grouping of 3:3:2.

This next is an example of the hemiola pattern from a live recording in 1953 at Birdland.

Figure 143. Hemiola b

mm. 3-8

Cool Blues (Birdland, 53)

Middle Ground

HTS CHL RCH H6

The excerpt above begins with the half-time swing figure, followed by a CHL and an RCH, which are included as they have already been discussed in this chapter. This is then followed by a lengthy H6, which lacks a definitive conclusion, as the excerpt is truncated. The enclosures shown are elaborate and show that the hemiola pattern is built into the crips. In other words, the crips may be intentionally designed as a means to articulate the hemiola pattern, in this case, on the high points of the phrase. Below are four more examples of the crip, which houses these hemiolas but in different parts of the blues form and on rhythm changes in C.

Figure 144. Hemiola b (Continued)

RC A mm. 5-8

52nd St Theme (RR 1-01)

52nd St Theme (RR 1-01)

Constellation (Take 3)

C Blues mm. 1-3
Bongo Bop (Take B)

11. Bada (Ba-da)

The ba-da gesture connects two high points within a phrase. The accented turn typically occurs on the final 16th note, followed by a quarter or an eighth note. This gesture is like the bebop gesture discussed next. Still, due to the change in subdivisions (16th to 8th), it articulates a distinctly different physical move. This moniker, like many in this work, is derived from the onomatopoetic tradition of assigning appropriate vocables to a musical gesture, particularly when inherently physical. The H2 and bebop long are included in the two examples shown below, and the RCH is seen as the opening for the second.

Figure 145. Ba-da

The musical score for Figure 145, titled "Ba-da", consists of five staves. The first staff, labeled "mm. 9-12", shows a harmonic progression with chords F7, Bb6, Cm7, and F7. The second staff, "Bird Feathers", contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The third staff, "Middle Ground", features a rhythmic pattern with labels "Ba da H2" and "BBL". The fourth staff, "Buzzy (Take 1)", shows a melodic line with a key signature change to one sharp. The fifth staff, another "Middle Ground", includes labels "RCH" and "Ba - da".

12. Bebop long (BBL)

The bebop-long (BBL) shown below is used interchangeably with the bebop short gesture (BBS). These gestures typically end the phrases. As a rhythmic cadence, the bebop long gesture evokes a feeling of continuation, like the ethereal ring from the sustain of a cymbal crash.

Figure 146. Bebop Long

This is the sister to the definitive bebop gesture discussed below.

13. Bebop short (BBS)

The classic bebop gesture, the bebop short (BBS), is again an onomatopoeic vocable that is a key part of Charlie Parker's accenting and rhythmic cadences. This, of course, minus the 'short', is the moniker which is responsible for the pejorative title for which the Parker style became known. The characteristic of the BBS is like that of the snap from the snare drum; tight, crisp and with finality, albeit on the anticipation of the next beat (not as a lugubriously lagging afterthought on the 'and' as it is notated) – the connection to the forward momentum is never lost in Parker's music.

Figure 147. Bebop Short

The musical score for 'Bebop Short' consists of four staves. The top staff, 'A m. 8. A mm. 7-11', shows a sequence of chords: Cm7, F7, Bb6, Cm7, F7, Dm7, Dbm7, Cm7, and F7. The second staff, 'Crazeology (Take D)', features melodic lines with triplets and specific rhythmic groupings labeled 'BU' and 'iii7bii7 i.' followed by 'ii6 3/4'. The third staff, 'Middle Ground', shows a series of rhythmic patterns labeled 'HTS' and 'BBS'. The bottom staff, 'Background', shows a series of rhythmic patterns labeled 'CP' and '3:2 CP'.

In the above example, we see the crips: blues-up (BU), iii7bii7 i., and ii6 3/4. However, the current discussion centres on the three BBS rhythmic cadences shown above. In addition to these accented gestures, an HTS precedes each BBS, which in the final 3:2 accent group in mm. 4-5 is preceded by the RCH. The above shows the most typical use of the BBS; however, it is also used as an isolated figure, such as the gesture that opens “Groovin’ High” (Gillespie, 1945). The example above shows another group of three phrases in 3/4 meter, as indicated by the cross-phrase (CP and CP 3:2) in the background layer (discussed in the cross-phrase chapter).

The various forms of accented groupings in Charlie Parker's music are arguably among the defining features of the bebop genre. Moreover, when familiar with Parker's music, it is possible to recognise when a musician who is trying to emulate him by using these accents and identifiable patterns is doing so without having assimilated key aspects of the Parker style; as such, the accents are without patterning and are formed somewhat arbitrarily. In many respects, these accents are a cornerstone of the language; therefore, when applied without familiarity with Parker's language and its vernacular, the expressions can present as ersatz imitations. In Charlie Parker's music, the patterning of accents is highly logical and deliberate. That these accents may

be derived from such things as the clave is somewhat speculative, and therefore merely an interpretation of a possible source.

Chapter 16: Swing

Charlie Parker could swing the eighth note in an unprecedented manner, never corny or stilted and always highly syncopated. The following is a brief discussion on the problem of defining and illustrating this nuanced rhythmic expression. This research argues that the ‘swing feel’ has both concrete features and, of course (like the blues), the exceedingly difficult-to-quantify, ephemeral properties. Parker’s accents and phrasing features can be notated with reasonable accuracy; however, the enigmatic properties that comprise his expressions of the swing feel defy visual nomenclature in score form. The Charleston, as will be shown, may inform the more quantifiable elements, but that may be a fraction of the data; the remainder may exist in a liminal metrical state somewhere between the expressions of 4/4 or 12/8 meter: highly accurate yet difficult to measure. Moreover, it may be that the swing feel is a phenomenon that occurs within the space provided by *The Big Beat* (Blakey, 1960): longer duration beat unit spans allow for rhythmic elasticity to flourish. In an interview with *Down Beat* magazine in 1949, Parker is quoted as saying “...the beat in a bop band is with the music, against it, behind it, it pushes it.”¹³³

Attempting to explain the propulsive, rollicking rhythmic quality that is the swing feel in Parker’s music using concepts such as Charles Keil’s “Participatory discrepancies”¹³⁴ (PD) may only further problematize the discussion: the issue is far more complex than Keil’s argument suggests (in fairness, Keil does not directly address Parker’s music, but he does look at jazz bass

¹³³ Carl Woideck, *The Charlie Parker Companion: Six Decades of Commentary*, p. 70.

¹³⁴ Charles Keil, “Participatory Discrepancies and the Power of Music,” *Cultural Anthropology* 2, no. 3, 1987, pp. 275-283.

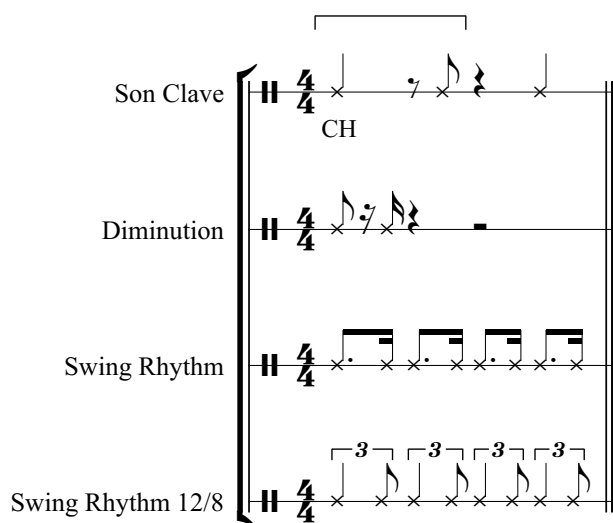
player and drummer combinations and the discrepancies that lie between them).¹³⁵ Moreover, the precision in a swing feel like that of Charlie Parker's or of many others that Keil does discuss is antithetical to such concepts: it is not that they are discrepant but that they are difficult to measure. In Parker's music, it is the accurate expression of meter and rhythm simultaneously in the duple and ternary form that defies these measurable categories. In other words, it is precisely because Parker's music is so accurate and not 'discrepant' that it swings. In addition, his solo performance of "Honeysuckle Rose" (Waller, Razaf, 1932) can't have PDs because there is nothing to be discrepant with or against.

Fundamentally, within Parker's music, the swing feel is an eighth-note pattern where the second "inter-onset duration"¹³⁶ can be situated somewhere between the last sixteenth of a quarter in 4/4 meter and the last triplet of the dotted quarter in 12/8 meter (when looking at the 'and', or the 'skip' part of the beat). From this vantage point, the pattern heard in the opening figure of the son clave may not only be the origin of the Charleston, as discussed, but also an integral part of the swing feel. The repeated expression of a diminution of this opening figure essentially produces the swing eighth note. If we rhythmically diminish and then repeat the opening 2-beats of the clave figure, both in duple and ternary meter, we see the following:

¹³⁵ Keil is looking more at the rhythm sections' forward drive, but I would equate that with what we as jazz musicians call the swing feel.

¹³⁶ Godfried Toussaint, *The Geometry of Musical Rhythm*, p. 112.

Figure 148. The Swing Rhythm



Shown above is the first measure of the clave, which in the first two beats opens with the Charleston. When this figure is diminished, it becomes the dotted eighth-sixteenth pattern, which, when repeated, may be a closer representation of many of Charlie Parker's eighth note phrases, even at tempos well above 400 bpm. In contrast to the way swing figures are more typically shown as derived from the triplet grid. The 12/8 metrical organisation over the 4/4 meter is included because the rhythmic pattern, when played by Parker, often resides within a region that may be best measured by data imaging, as it lies somewhere between the sixteenth and the triplet grids. This may constitute a key element: the liminal metrical locale of the enigmatic swing feel. This is not a discrepancy, but rather a shortfall in the nomenclature available on the score form.¹³⁷ There is a lack of tools and nomenclature in traditional notation, which this research is bound by, to reflect this highly complex expression of getting from “one

¹³⁷ The only way to truly explain and understand the swing rhythm is through aural means. However, until dissertations can be delivered orally, we remain bound by the constraints of tradition.

note to the next.”¹³⁸ When discussing Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie remarked that “how you get from one note to another really makes all the difference.”¹³⁹

Consistent with this region between the sixteenth and triplet subdivision, this research has found that the other, and possibly greater defining attribute of the swing pattern is the rhythm’s elasticity. This elasticity allows for the ebb and flow of the meter to be articulated, regardless of its adherence to a *specific* (italics mine) metrical division, all of which is housed within *The Big Beat*.

That it may be the elasticity of rhythm and meter that is essential to the swing feel is further evidenced in that, for something to swing in a general sense, it does not require the long-short combination typically associated with the traditional understanding of the swing pattern. For example, the evenly played quarter note can swing without any syncopation whatsoever: not because of its placement between the beat, e.g., the skip or ‘and,’ and not because it is discrepant with that of another instrument but because of its rhythmic elasticity.¹⁴⁰ An example of the swing feel sans eighth notes can be heard in Lester Young’s television appearance,¹⁴¹ where he plays twenty swinging quarter notes in a row, or Charlie Parker’s live performance in 1950 from a trip to Sweden playing “Body and Soul,” (Green, 1938) where, in a highly atypical way, he plays 17 repeated quarter notes in swinging succession. Both examples further reveal that swing may, in fact, be a kind of rhythmic elasticity that cannot be explained through stilted analysis or readings

¹³⁸ In a private conversation with a master musician who was teaching me about Sonny Rollins, back in my salad days.

¹³⁹ Dizzy Gillespie and Al Fraser, *To Be, or Not... to Bop*, University of Minnesota Press, 2009, p. 177.

¹⁴⁰ Kenny Dorham’s straight eighth-note lines on the Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers album *Live at the Café Bohemia* are reflective of this: Dorham does not swing the eighths, yet the rhythm is entirely swinging.

¹⁴¹ *Art Ford’s Jazz Party*, Lester Young, “Mean to Me.” Broadcast September 25, 1958.

on a melograph or micro measurements of data from a computer. Moreover, for something to be swinging requires a virtuosity that participatory discrepancies may not account for.

This discussion is included because I have experienced much frustration with having no available tools (or solutions) to notate Parker's eighth note lines. The dilemma lies in the shortfall of a visually based approach to musical analysis: again according to Parker, "music speaks louder than words."¹⁴²

¹⁴² Earl Wilson, Host "Stage Entrance" Episode aired February 24, 1952 – Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, DuMont Television Network.

Part VII: Phrasing

Chapter 17: Charlie Parker's Phrasing

I think I was a little more advanced, harmonically, than he was. But rhythmically, he was quite advanced, with setting up the phrase and how you got from one note to another. How you get from one note to another really makes all the difference. Charlie Parker heard rhythm and rhythmic patterns differently, and after we started playing together, I began to play rhythmically more like him... The enunciation of the notes, I think belonged to Charlie Parker because the way he'd get from one note to another, I could never... That was just perfect for me... Charlie Parker definitely set the standard for phrasing our music.¹⁴³

Dizzy Gillespie

“Our propensity to impose a sense of accent of grouping on a series of identical tones or clicks has long been known as subjective rhythmization”¹⁴⁴ (Bolton, Meuman 1894). More recently, Justin London has revised this terminology in his book *Hearing in Time* (2007) with a new moniker, “subjective metricization.”¹⁴⁵ For this research, London’s term is more apropos. London suggests that “the degree of metrical accent is correlated with the relative strength and temporal focus of our entrained temporal expectancies.”¹⁴⁶ In other words, we, as listeners, have expectations and a need to establish a temporal order to the sounds we hear.

¹⁴³ Scott Deveau, *The Birth of Bebop, a social and Musical history*, University of California Press, 1997, p. 263.

¹⁴⁴ Justin London, *Hearing in Time: Psychological Aspects of Musical Meter*, Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 14.

¹⁴⁵ Justin London, *Hearing in Time*, p. 14.

¹⁴⁶ Justin London, *Hearing in Time*, p. 26.

Mathematician Godfreid Toussaint states that a simple rhythm, such as the uniform sounds that make up the repetitive ticking of a clock, “tick, tick, tick, tick,”¹⁴⁷ is reorganised through our auditory perceptions. Toussaint writes:

Music psychologists discovered more than a hundred years ago that if a human subject in a laboratory setting is presented with a sequence of identically sounding evenly spaced ticks such as tick, tick, tick, tick, tick, tick,..., the mind being so thirsty for patterns perceives the sequence as tick, tock, tick, tock, tick, tock... in other words the mind converts the repetition of single sound ticks into the repetition of 2 tone tick-tock patterns.¹⁴⁸

This phenomenon of “subjective metricization” or the “*perceptual centre*,”¹⁴⁹ can be further understood through the writings of Grosvenor Cooper and Leonard B. Meyer, who observe that “a series of unaccented beats will seem incomplete and give rise to expectations of completeness, expectations of an accent. Conversely, a series of accents will appear incomplete and give rise to expectations of return to an understandable relationship between accent and release.”¹⁵⁰ These insights into the dynamic and perceptual nature of rhythmic organisation help to explain our desire to create a musical ‘gestalt’; the need to arrange events in accordance with or in alignment with our biases and perceptions. Such behaviours cause the objective whole to be different from the sum of its parts, based on the subjectivism imposed through our cultural entrainment. The latter may be difficult to change. However, through diligent learning—including oral traditions (now made accessible to us through technology) and quantifiable

¹⁴⁷ Godfried Toussaint, *The Geometry of Musical Rhythm: What Makes a Good Rhythm Good?* Philadelphia, PA: CRC Press LLC, 2013, p. 10.

¹⁴⁸ Godfried T. Toussaint, *The Geometry of Musical Rhythm*, p. 9.

¹⁴⁹ Godfried T. Toussaint, *The Geometry of Musical Rhythm*, p. 9.

¹⁵⁰ Leonard B. Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning In Music*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961, pp. 143-44.

observations of empirical evidence analysed within consistent parameters—we may be able to achieve this.

When considering temporal expectancies from an African perspective, Arthur Morris Jones states that the “claps carry no accent whatever in the African mind. They serve as a yardstick, a kind of metronome which exists behind the music. Once the clap has started, you can never, on any pretext whatever, stretch or diminish the clap values. They remain constant and do not impart any rhythm to the melody itself.”¹⁵¹ Similar metrical values may have been intrinsic to Charlie Parker’s music, as his music was very much characterised by his unpredictable melodic reorganisation of the metrical framework, i.e., 4/4 measures are expressed in 3/4 meter; strong beats and rhythmic accents are shifted, Parker’s lick schema is displaced, and asymmetrical groups of 3:2 or 2:3 syncopated patterns are prevalent throughout.

When the orientation of the stressed beat is shifted through patterns of accents or the repositioning of the harmonic rhythm, listeners may experience a mild or strong sense of metrical disorientation. Furthermore, the strength of our internal sense of meter and familiarity with the musical style will determine whether we notice these deviations and, if we do, whether they disorient us in a pleasing or displeasing manner; again, our perceptions of rhythm and phrase dissonance can vary. Moreover, just as the acceptance of harmonic dissonance conflates with consonance, the same applies to rhythm and phrase.

When considering what makes Parker’s music so captivating, even after repeated listens, Thomas Owen notes in his dissertation, *Charlie Parker – Techniques of Improvisation* (1974), that “after spending many hundreds of hours listening carefully to his music, I still find his

¹⁵¹ Arthur Morris Jones, *Studies in African Music, Volume I and II*, 1953, p. 21.

improvisations to be surprising, full of variety and exciting.”¹⁵² This research concludes that much of the interest remains heightened when there is some form of subtle variation in the propagation of the dissonance/consonance relationship between rhythm and phrase, that is, when phrasing is altered, or an accented pattern is varied. Parker’s crips that are often identical and as such known intimately by the learned listener can become, or stay, fresh and new. In essence, the variation of rhythm and phrase is vital to what makes Parker’s music sound so lively and engaging even after multiple listens.

Parker uses his crips to misalign the harmonic rhythm. He does so through his highly effective dissonant phrasing and accent patterns. In other words, when a crip is repositioned, it can function as a means to reorient the metrical pulse by accent or phrase deviation, which shifts the harmonic rhythm. When this occurs, then the crip, no matter how familiar and well-worn, takes on an entirely new musical character and meaning.

Parker had a schematic design over lengthy durational spans that often consisted of various elements of his well-worn crips, which have many of the accented patterns and phrase devices built into them. It may be that Parker had forged tools (crips) with which to execute his rhythm and phrase variations. In other words, these were devices to primarily express his highly nuanced and complex repertoire of rhythm and phrase behaviours, with a secondary purpose of melodic expression. Arguably, one of Parker’s most profound contributions to music was the metrical reorganisation of the 4/4 meter. His familiar licks were dualistic, possessing on one hand a deceptive tuneful simplicity, while on the other acting like a ‘Trojan Horse:’ a highly calculated method to braid elaborate groups of asymmetrical accents and phrase patterns that could reorganise the harmonic rhythm.

¹⁵² Thomas Owens, *Charlie Parker - Techniques of Improvisation*, 1974, p. 35.

Thomas Owens observed that when Parker played at slower tempos, he had time to vary his lick schema and phrasing. In an analysis of “Parker’s Mood” (Parker, 1948), Owens writes: “The solo contains a number of his standard melodic figures, but the slow tempo gives him more time than usual to reshape and combine them, and to think of new phrases.”¹⁵³ Further to this point, Owens writes, “a great variety of melodic invention appears in the eight choruses in these three takes. Very little repetition occurs from one chorus or take to another.”¹⁵⁴ Because Owens did not really catalogue Parker’s blues licks, he may have heard these recordings and thought they possessed more new data than they actually do. The recordings examined in this research reveal that much of the material Parker used for the slow blues was, in some ways, specific to it, yet composed of lick schema, nonetheless. The evidence shows that Parker’s blues playing and concept not only informed his broader musical expression but also had its own vocabulary and musical behaviours, as previously shown. The poly-meter phrasing, as discussed earlier, must be what Owens meant when he speaks of the “irrational time values”¹⁵⁵

Variations in rhythm and phrase (such as the poly-meter phrase) that fundamentally alter Parker’s licks negate much of the criteria used for the establishment of what constitutes formula. In extant analyses of Parker’s music, the criteria for categorising fragments and/or licks into formulae (Owens) have been based more on the motivic (Martin) and harmonic properties, while being less concerned with the rhythm and phrase elements. A clear description of what formula is and its role in improvisation is provided by Barry Kernfeld.

He writes:

¹⁵³ Thomas Owens, *Bebop: The Music and Its Players*, Oxford University Press, 1993, p. 41.

¹⁵⁴ Thomas Owens, *Charlie Parker- Techniques of Improvisation*, 1974, p. 89.

¹⁵⁵ Thomas Owens, *Charlie Parker- Techniques of Improvisation*, 1974, p. 88.

...the principal manifestation of the fragmentary idea in jazz... a concept borrowed from epic poetry and western ecclesiastical chant...the formulas used do not call attention to themselves but are artfully hidden, through variation. The challenge presented with this kind of improvisation is to mold diverse fragments into a coherent whole.¹⁵⁶

This is the crux of the hierarchical debate of what has, within the research on Charlie Parker, been perceived to constitute musical formula (an investigation that goes beyond the scope of this work). However, this research postulates that a repeated musical idea when metrically displaced or altered by any of the three elements of music (harmony, melody, and rhythm) —can no longer be classified as formulaic¹⁵⁷ data.

While there is formulaic (fragmentary) material present there are two critical observations that this research has made; 1) The fragments identified seem to come from longer durational span material; 2) Parker's melodic motives, or what this research has been calling blues licks and crips, were a means to another end: braiding together subtle expressions of the blues, physical gestures, intervallic clusters, patterns of accents, misalignment of the phrase,¹⁵⁸ and metrical reorganization.

Steve Coleman offers some further insight into the possibility that Parker was not by all accounts a melodic improviser but a rhythmic one. He writes: “not a lot has been written about the rhythmic aspects of this language, and for good reason – there are no words and developed

¹⁵⁶ Barry Kernfeld, “Improvisation” from *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*, Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 318.

¹⁵⁷ “The fact that Parker systematically repeated himself is a basic insight that many jazz musicians long ago discovered for themselves...Melodic formulas are not evidence of faltering imagination, but reference points for a larger, if highly flexible, design.” Scott Deveau, *The Birth of Bebop, a social and Musical history*, University of California Press, 1997, p. 377.

¹⁵⁸ Again, the exception regarding Parker's compositions and his improvisations applies: Parker's compositions do possess phrase deviation; however, when it occurs, it is noticeable and moreover less frequent. The skillful way in which Parker's phrase deviations happen during his improvisations is deeply embedded within the unassuming lick schema from which Parker constantly draws.

descriptive concepts for it in most Western languages.”¹⁵⁹ Coleman further asserts that Parker’s phrase structure, rhetoric and style are essential to his musical vernacular. Coleman claims that “by far the most dramatic feature of Bird’s musical language is the rhythmic aspect, in particular his phrasing and timing.”¹⁶⁰ Dizzy Gillespie was adamant that Charlie Parker’s greatest contribution to music was his concept of rhythm and phrase. The phrasing techniques used by Parker have one key thing in common: by design, they are intended to thwart the entrained “tension of expectancy”¹⁶¹ anticipated by the listener. Paul Berliner speaks to this point when discussing features endemic to some African percussion: “They seem to begin and end at different points along their cycle...displaying a playful ambiguity.”¹⁶² This research on Charlie Parker’s music demonstrates that investigating his motivic skills highlights only a small portion of his overall musical conception. The following sections of this research illustrate how the rhythm and phrase elements of Parker’s music may have been even more important, forming the basis for his lick schema, whether in longer durational spans or in their singular form.

To reiterate, this research builds on the ideas presented in existing analyses of further exploring the concept of “irrational time values”¹⁶³, the “polyrhythmic”¹⁶⁴ aspects. The following sections that detail Parker’s phrasing attributes follow a key observation made by Brian Priestley” ...the rhythmic subtlety of the opening phrase of “Ko-Ko” (Parker, 1945) should lead

¹⁵⁹ Steve Coleman, “The Dozens.” Accessed June 25, 2019.

¹⁶⁰ Steve Coleman, “The Dozens.”

¹⁶¹ Leonard B. Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music*, The University of Chicago Press, 1961, p. 75.

¹⁶² Paul Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz, The Infinite Art of Jazz Improvisation*, 1994, p.148.

¹⁶³ Thomas Owens, *Charlie Parker- Techniques of Improvisation*, 1974, p. 88.

¹⁶⁴ Brian Priestley, *Chasin’ the Bird: The Life and Legacy of Charlie Parker*, Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 112.

to a far more sophisticated study of rhythmic practices throughout Parker's work...rather than harmonic aspects and their Schenkerian analysis, or isolating the treatment accorded to individual pitches.¹⁶⁵ Since harmony and rhythm are inseparable within Parker's music, a deeper look into his phrasing must include elements of the former. In the hands of Parker, the braiding of these two elements results in a mellifluous harmonic fluidity and a seemingly boundless metrical elasticity: harmony in rhythm.

¹⁶⁵ Brian Priestley, "Charlie Parker and Popular Music," *Annual Review of Jazz Studies*, (2009, p. 89-99. Accessed January 19, 2020.

Chapter 18: 3, 6, and 12 Beat Phrases

From the musical point of view, 12 has an important property that it is a small number that contains many (four) divisors other than 1 and 12, in particular, 2, 3, 4, and 6. ... The fact that 12 can be divided without remainder by both an even number (such as 2) and an odd number (such as 3) gives it the powerful distinction that it can be easily manipulated to feel like either a binary or ternary rhythm.¹⁶⁶

Godfried Toussaint

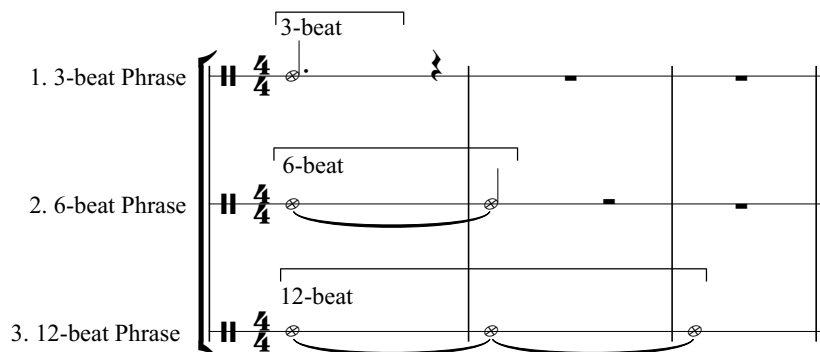
When viewed in relation to the typical 4, 8, and 16-measure phrase lengths, the blues form can be seen as a mildly dissonant phrase structure, consisting of three groups of four, creating an uneven, asymmetrical phrase pattern. The phrasing features of the 3, 6, and 12 beat patterns within the 4/4 meter further exhibit this mild dissonance, as Parker will often align them (loosely) with the bar line and hyper-measure (in the 4/4 meter). The progressive rhythmic diminution from the 12-bar blues structure links these phrase types together. In other words, the phrases discussed in this section may have inextricable links to the 12-bar blues structure and, as such, be another dimension of Parker's blues behaviour.

The three mildly dissonant ternary phrase types are as follows:

1. 3-beat phrase
2. 6-beat phrase
3. 12-beat phrase

¹⁶⁶ Godfried T. Toussaint, *The Geometry of Musical Rhythm*, p. 45.

Figure 149. 3, 6, and 12-beat Phrases



1. 3-beat Phrase

The 3-beat phrase is very common to Parker's phrase lexicon and possesses all the phrase properties that define the main motive of Thelonious Monk's "52nd Street Theme" (Monk, 1944). In Parker's music, the motive that expresses the 3-beat phrase with alacrity is a well-worn tonic lick of Parker's. This gesture is known in this research as the tonic crip (T), which comprises various reconfigurations of the neighbour surrounding the tonic. It may be that the primary form of this is housed within the 3-beat figure.¹⁶⁷ Shown below are examples taken from three separate instances in m. 7 of the A sections of take 2 of "Merry-Go-Round" (Parker, 1948).

¹⁶⁷ Like the Pops3 gesture discussed in the peckin' time chapter.

Figure 150. 3-beat Phrase a

The figure displays four musical staves in 4/4 time, all in the key of B-flat major. The top staff, labeled 'm. 7' and 'B(b6)', shows a 3-beat phrase consisting of a quarter note, an eighth note, and a sixteenth note, followed by a quarter rest. The three staves below, each labeled 'Merry-Go-Round (Take 2)', show the same 3-beat phrase repositioned within the 4-beat measure. The first staff shows the phrase starting on the first beat. The second and third staves show the phrase starting on the second beat. Each 3-beat phrase is marked with a bracket and '3-beat' and 'T'.

The following two examples of the 3-beat phrase are from one of Parker's spontaneous compositions, which he was doing 'on the spot,' "Blues Fast" (Parker, 1950). For takes 1-7, Parker again uses this tonic crip as the foundation.¹⁶⁸ The two excerpts below show the T being repositioned by Parker before he abandoned this initial idea on take 9, possibly due to his or Norman Granz's frustration with the matter (the master take uses an entirely different idea).

¹⁶⁸ The various takes of Parker trying to codify this well-worn lick schema into a composition are a lesson in phrase variation – repositioning the same 3-beat lick into different parts of the 4/4 meter to give it new musical purpose or meaning.

Figure 151. 3-beat Phrase b

The background and sub-ground layers are included to illustrate how the T lick and the sustained C after form two groupings of three that are used to articulate the cross-phrase (CP) and the back-beat phrase-slip (discussed further in the following chapters). The discussion here, however, shows how the 3-beat phrase suggests a 3/4 metrical pattern within the 4/4 meter. In the first example, Parker begins the 3-beat phrase on beat 3: the backbeat of the half-time (discussed in the phrase-slip chapter); here, not only is the orientation of the downbeat misaligned, but it is overlapped by the implied 3/4 meter.

2. 6-beat phrase

The 6-beat phrase can be seen as a derivative of the poly-meter, i.e., groups of 6 or 12 in the 4/4 meter, an augmentation of the groupings of 3 shown above. It is a fragment like the tonic crip that spans six beats. The following examples that show Parker's use of the 6-beat phrase show a kind of 'corny' sounding rhyming sequence that harkens back to the early Dixieland phrasing from which many beboppers were trying to distance themselves. It may be that the following 'rhyming' type sequence, endemic to the following, was a musical behaviour performed with ironic intent.

Figure 152. 6-beat Phrase

The musical score for Figure 152, titled "6-beat Phrase", consists of five staves. The first staff, labeled "mm. 1-6", shows a sequence of chords: C⁶, F⁷, C⁶, Gm⁷, C⁷, F⁷, and a double bar line. The second staff, "Passport Blues", and the third staff, "Cheryl (RR 3-11)", both show a 6-beat phrase structure. The phrase is divided into three 2-beat segments (labeled "2N") and a final 2-beat segment (labeled "2N"). The fourth staff, "Middle Ground", shows a 6-beat phrase structure with a 3:2 ratio. The fifth staff, "Background", shows a 6-beat phrase structure with a 3:2 ratio. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and bar lines, and is labeled with "mm. 1-6" and "Passport Blues".

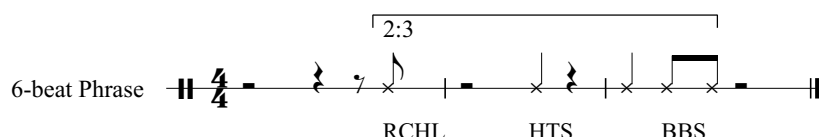
These two examples, separated by a year, on a C blues, are from "Cheryl" (Parker, 1948) and "Passport Blues" (Parker, 1949). Both are comprised of three 6-beat phrases that span six measures, further accentuating the mildly dissonant phrase structure. The 2-note swing figure that precedes each of the 6-beat figures is like the skip beat heard in the ride cymbal pattern, and in this case, sets the phrase up, unlike its more typical purpose, which is to displace the phrasing. This figure could arguably be seen as the 7th beat; however, it is consistent with Parker's

anticipations (in the ups section) in that it functions as a pick-up in the same way that many of his anticipations do i.e., the ‘and’ of 4 is beat 1 ‘come early’ and therefore the 2-note figure as seen above are not a part of the actual phrase length. There is a kind of rhyming sequence to these 6-beat figures that is prescient of much of the phrasing one hears in rhymes produced by hip-hop artists today, which at times can be predictable, despite the music’s rhythmic and aesthetic potency.

The middle ground layer shows the accent patterns of a Pops3 followed by a Charleston figure. All of this is housed within a 3:2 grouping. The background layer reaffirms the 6-beat pattern and the half-time swing.

The following examples demonstrate a schematic phrasing plan that employs the 6-beat phrase length as its basis. This figure Parker uses repeats this basic 2:3 pattern.

Figure 153. 2:3 Ratio in a 6-beat Phrase



Parker varies this accent pattern significantly throughout the following examples; nevertheless, this rhythmic basis remains consistent for each 6-beat figure shown below. Included in these examples are the accented patterns in the middle ground layer and their respective 3:2 asymmetrical grouping when applicable. The hemiola rest (HR) is illustrated here because of its pivotal role in establishing this 6-beat phrase and the accented patterns. There is a great deal more to discuss in the instances shown below so I have included the accents and the 3:2 and 2:3 asymmetrical groupings as they are essential to the formation of the musical gestalt; therefore, it would be an omission not to include them.

Figure 154. 6-beat Phrase and the Hemiola Rest

The musical score for Figure 154 is written for five staves, each representing a different instrument or vocal part. The top staff is the Piano (mm. 1-10), showing a sequence of chords: C⁶, F⁷, C⁶, Gm⁷, C⁷, F⁷, C⁶, A⁷, Dm⁷, and G⁷. The second staff is C Blues (PB), featuring a 6-beat phrase and a hemiola rest (HR). The third staff is Middle Ground, showing a 2:3 ratio and a 6-beat phrase. The fourth staff is Visa (St Nicks), featuring a 6-beat phrase and a hemiola rest. The fifth staff is Cool Blues (Percol.), showing a 6-beat phrase and a hemiola rest. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and ratios (e.g., 2:3, 3:2, 3:3).

3. 12-beat phrase

Parker's preferred phrase length is illustrated very clearly in the opening measures of a blues: a 12-beat phrase typically occurring within the four-measure framework. In other words, the crip that typically occupies the first four measures of the blues is articulated as a 3-bar (12-beat) figure, as shown below.

Figure 155. 12-beat Phrase

mm. 12-3

Cm⁷ F⁷ B^b6 E^b7 B^b6

12-beat

Buzzy (Take 3)

3

Middle Ground

RCH HTS MM BBL

3:2

Background

PS on 3 HTS MC

12-beat

Buzzy (Take 1)

HTS

In these two examples from Parker's only studio recording with Bud Powell of the Bb blues "Buzzy" (Parker, 1947) takes 1 and 3, we hear Parker use the same crip, but on take 3, he begins the phrase on beat 3 of m. 12 creating a phrase-slip on 3 (discussed further shortly), which is followed by the half-time swing pattern and a metrical correction (MC) on beat 1 of m. 2. Included are the features from the middle ground layer, which have an RCH, HTS, and MM: the phrase concludes with a BBL. There is also a 3:2 pattern of accents that houses the final five accents. The 12-beat phrase length can be seen as an augmentation of the 6-beat phrase, or as mentioned, a subtle phrase dissonance or expression of 3 against 4, a ternary event within the duple framework.

The following three examples, shown below, afford us a window into many of the unique features found in Parker's music, many of which have been discussed; however, to remain within the scope of the current discussion, these three musical events, from dates that were over 4 years apart, demonstrate Parker's 12-beat phrasing design. In the following example, there are three

successive 12-beat phrases throughout a 12-bar blues in F. Parker's 'improvisations' were far more composed than many have previously thought, with precomposed material often appearing over lengthy durational spans, as in the example below.

Figure 156. F Blues Crips: 12-beat Phrase

The examples above show a chorus of blues from two separate takes of “Billie’s Bounce” (Parker, 1945), the first of which is take 5 from the studio session in New York on November 25, 1945 (BB [T5]), the second from Live at the Finale Club in Los Angeles on March 5, 1946 (BB [FC]), while the third example is a blues from a jam session in 1949. These three instances illustrate Parker’s affinity for the 12-beat phrase within the 4-bar span. The difference in the second two examples in mm. 8-11 can be accounted for in that the first and third instances are part of Parker’s iiVF repository, and the second example is a solo ‘dismount’ of Parker’s. The HTS discrepancy or overlap in m. 8 of the form is due to Parker’s phrase interruption and the need to account for three slightly varying instances in one staff.

It is possible that early blues (and jazz) musicians heard and reconstituted the eight and sixteen-measure spans in the folk songs, popular songs, and hymns they would have been exposed to, as phrase groups of 3, 6, and 12. Moreover, musicians such as Robert Johnson and Lightnin’ Hopkins displayed a freedom from the metrical order that the symmetrical phrase

durations and bar lines can impose. Perhaps the final codification of the blues form was 12, but there are many instances of other durational spans of this form.

Chapter 19: Phrase-slip

...I would say that my major contribution was in the field of harmonics and rhythm. Charlie Parker's was phrasing which I think was the most important part of the music, anyway. When you phrase something like someone, you are copying at them, whether you're playing the same notes or not... We've been playing a lot of things we [the New York experimentalists] had all our rhythm and harmonies already, and then Charlie Parker came on the scene, demonstrating *how* it could be done. And then all of us fell in behind that.¹⁶⁹

Dizzy Gillespie

The technique of shifting the perceived downbeat (or stressed beat) of a given measure was not a new musical device during Charlie Parker's era. However, its frequent use and structural significance within Parker's music necessitated the development of terminology to describe and explain this musical behaviour. Furthermore, Parker's ability to shift the perceived downbeat with subtlety and, at times, imperceptibility, is significant, as the melodic structures often do not overtly reveal the deceptive or dissonant characteristics. The term developed to describe this shift that fundamentally alters the musical gestalt by moving the perceived downbeat is called the phrase-slip (PS). Carl Woideck observes this in Parker's music, writing; "Parker just took an extra beat to express an idea, thus displacing that idea slightly. In fact, the last two phrases of that solo could be said to be displaced by one beat."¹⁷⁰ However, Woideck acknowledges this in a similar way to Owens, Martin, and Priestley, where they do not investigate whether there are patterns to such musical behaviour.

The phrase-slip device confounds expectations, relocates, and displaces the harmonic rhythm, creating phrase dissonance that enhances the complexity and intensifies the rhythmic buoyancy of Parker's music. It can also be essential in making his well-worn lick schema appear

¹⁶⁹ Brian Priestley, *Chasin' the Bird: The Life and Legacy of Charlie Parker*, Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 36.

¹⁷⁰ Carl Woideck, *Charlie Parker: His Music and Life*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996, p. 184.

fresh again. The phrase-slip is a specific phrasing device that differs from the cross-phrase (discussed next) and the poly-phrase because it maintains the duplet subdivision throughout its duration.

The shifting of the perceived downbeat is something that Parker became highly adept at doing; furthermore, much of Parker's lick schema is used to reorient the stressed beat as it appears within the 4/4 hyper-measure: when this is done without a lengthy durational span, it is referred to as the phrase-shift (shown in the final section). The breakdown of the phrase-slip is as follows: a musical behaviour that reorients the perceived downbeat (beat 1 in the 4/4 meter) to one of the other 3 beats within the measure, making beat one feel like it has been moved to another beat within the measure i.e., implying that beat one has been relocated to beat 2, 3, or 4. Since Parker only ever played in the 4/4 meter, there are only three other possibilities, except for when Parker executes the phrase-slip in double or triple time or by using the poly-phrase (variables that aren't addressed here despite their occurrence).

This device is partially responsible for accounting for Parker's phrasing 'across the bar line.' Historically, the bar line, as we understand it today, is a European construct circa 1600, originating from the organisation of different metrical groups into categories, indicated in the musical score using an early form of our current notational system. However, musicians who played the blues c. 1900—the foundational folk music that influenced Parker's melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic ideas—seem to have regarded the bar line as a highly flexible entity (possibly due to the lack of awareness that it even existed!). Notwithstanding this, the bar line is crucial for setting parameters and acts as an essential reference point for accurately analysing Charlie Parker's phrasing. Furthermore, the bar line and the subsequent metrical reorganisation it facilitates are arguably sacrosanct to Parker's music. In other words, the bar line gives Parker

something to abstract from and provides us with a measure against which to compare. These parameters are illustrated by the harmonic rhythm and metrical spans played by the rhythm section. According to Miles Davis:

I remember how at times he used to turn the rhythm section around like we'd be playing the Blues and bird would start on the 11th bar and as the rhythm section stayed where they were and bird played where he was it sounded like the rhythm section was on one in three instead of two and four. Every time that would happen Max Roach used to scream at Duke Jordan not to follow bird, but to stay where he was. Then eventually it came round as bird had planned and we were together again.¹⁷¹

Parker speaks to this, perhaps reflecting on how we, as listeners, need a referential point to understand how he juxtaposes his phrases against the existing metrical organisation. When asked about who he was playing with, Parker curtly replied, “What’s the difference? The only reason I use a rhythm section is so that *you* can hear me.”¹⁷²

Without the constancy of the rhythm section outlining the 4/4 meter, often without any abstraction, Parker’s subtle shifts in the phrase may have been less effective. Moreover, many of Parker’s phrase displacements possess such a melodic sweetness that they often go unnoticed. In other words, the phrase-slip and other devices used by Parker may be experienced by the listener at a subconscious level, despite their dissonant phrasing effects.

A key element that Arthur Morris Jones discovered about African music during his time spent with his musical informant, Dr Tao, was that the pulse in African music was viewed as a single movable entity. The pulse was constant, but the mapping or positioning—such as downbeat, upbeat, strong beat, and weak beat hierarchy, was without designation. Only that the

¹⁷¹ Carl Woideck, *Charlie Parker: His Music and Life*, p. 212.

¹⁷² Robert Reisner, *Bird, The Legend of Charlie Parker*, Quartet books, 1974, p. 75.

patterns would repeat as an autonomous metrical structure, allowing for concurrent polyrhythmic patterns to emerge when played together. He states that:

The claps carry no accent whatever in the African mind. They serve as a yard-stick, a kind of metronome which exists behind the music. Once the clap has started, you can never, on any pretext whatever, stretch or diminish the clap-values. They remain constant, and they do not impart any rhythm to the melody itself.¹⁷³

This concept of the pulse being essentially a part of a continuum may be a key to Parker's rhythm and phrase concept: by combining this musical tenet with the European metrical organisation that does impart rhythm to the melody itself, Parker effectively operates in a form of hybrid cultural assimilation. In a sense, he may have fused elements of African and European musical sensibilities, with both contributing to the ethos that informed his musical concepts.

Criteria For Establishing the Phrase-slip

The primary requirement for identifying the presence of the phrase-slip is through an apparent change in the harmonic rhythm. In Charlie Parker's music, the harmonic rhythm is determined by the bar lines and the number of measures in which a given harmonic sequence occurs. The monophonic instrument has limited tools at its disposal for illustrating and articulating the harmony; as such, other physical elements contribute to the establishment of the phrase-slip. In total there are four criteria used for determining where Parker employs the phrase-slip:

1. Voice leading, i.e., 7-3.
2. High points
3. Entries, re-entries, and rhythmic cadences

¹⁷³ Arthur Morris Jones, *Studies in African Music*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959, p. 54.

4. Chordal outlines

There are, of course, many layers of voice leading that can be discussed and have been widely explored, as illustrated by Owens, Martin, and Larson, who employ Schenkerian analytical methods. However, based on the evidence, extant research has largely limited itself to the motivic features and the layers of voice-leading properties, rather than the broader blues implications (as discussed) or the metrical shifts incurred by the voice-leading lines (as illustrated in this section). Where the harmony is articulated through Parker's voice leading, the high points of the phrase, entries and re-entries, and where chordal outlines appear, are of critical importance to the phrase-slip. Many observations confirm something is going on, like the following thoughts from Henry Martin: "Parker's line is further enhanced through irregular phrasing and through its large-scale syncopation with respect to the eight-bar symmetries and customary harmonic rhythms of the song forms."¹⁷⁴ However, even with key observations such as this, there has been minimal investigation beyond that, such as establishing criteria to determine what Parker may be doing and how he may be doing it.

Parker's use of chordal outlines is ubiquitous and has many purposes and functions. When used as a part of the phrase-slip, it is a harmonic tool that can either begin the phrase-slip or set it up: shifting the stressed beat to either the outline or the apex of the outline. In other words, when the setup coincides with a chordal outline, the harmonic rhythm can either be identified by the entry point of the outline or the high point of the gesture (the criterion that is fulfilled is most often determined by the events that immediately follow).

The four phrase-slip categories are as follows:

1. Phrase-slip on 2 (PS on 2)

¹⁷⁴ Henry Martin, *Charlie Parker and Thematic Improvisation*, Scarecrow Press, 1996, p. 86.

2. Backbeat phrase-slip (BB PS)

3. Phrase-slip on 3 (PS on 3)

4. Phrase-slip on 4 (PS on 4)

Figure 157. List of Phrase-slip Types

1. Phrase-slip on 2

2. Back-beat Phrase-slip

3. Phrase-slip on 3

4. Phrase-slip on 4

Metrical Correction

PS on 2

BB PS

PS on 3

PS on 4

MC

The final feature, metrical correction (MC), is included without numerical indexing, as it is a generic feature that accounts for Parker's reorientation of his dissonant metrical behaviours. It is a phrasing behaviour that applies not just to that of the phrase-slip but to all of Parker's dissonant phrase devices.

1. Phrase-slip on 2 (PS on 2)

The phrase-slip on 2 occurs when Parker shifts the perceived downbeat to beat 2 of the measure. Based on frequency of occurrence, this is one of the more atypical phrase-slip devices in the Charlie Parker phrase oeuvre. The example chosen to illustrate the phrase-slip on 2 comes

from one of Parker's solos that wasn't released until well after 1945: take 3 of "Now's The Time" (NTT) (Parker, 1945). This solo is a complete study in Parkerisms and exemplifies his inventive capacity as both an improviser and a master of phrase and harmonic/rhythmic displacement.

Figure 158. Phrase-slip on 2 a

The musical score for Figure 158, "Phrase-slip on 2 a", is presented in five staves. The top staff, labeled "mm. 3-9", shows a sequence of chords: F⁶, C^{m7}, F⁷, B^{b7}, B^{b7}, F⁶, A^{m7}, D⁷, and G^{m7}. The second staff, "VL U", contains melodic lines with annotations "DBC" and "DBCT" above specific measures. The third staff, "VL L", shows a melodic line with a "3&b3" annotation. The fourth staff, "NTT (Take 3)", displays a complex melodic line with numerous triplets and slurs. The bottom staff, "Background", shows a bass line with a "PS on 2" (Phrase Slip on 2) annotation spanning measures 4 through 9, and a "MC" (Metrical Correction) annotation at the end of measure 9.

The PS on 2 is shown in the background layer. It spans a full six measures, including the rest, and is concluded using the metrical correction on m. 9. The schema used to execute PS on 2 is his 'country blues' lick (as shown in the blues section). This lengthy PS on 2 is further enriched by Parker's interpolation of the poly-phrase, which Parker moves mellifluously in and out of, throughout. Accurate rhythmic notation of this event is difficult to achieve, but the rendering above is close.

The lower VL layer shows another of Parker's devices, a variant of the 3&4, that uses the interplay between 3 and b3 (3&b3), which can also be understood harmonically as 3 of I and b7 of IV⁷. This motion is crucial for establishing the PS on 2, in mm. 4 and 8. The upper VL layer confirms the events being on beat 2 in measures 5 and 7 and is responsible for the MC in m. 9. This voice also has the DBC moving to SD in m.5 but also as a truncated portion of the DBCT

(indicated as the 7-3 in the upper VL: the continuation not shown completes the DBCT). Lastly, the entry and re-entry points further establish the PS on 2 in mm. 3 and 7.

In the next example of PS on 2, we see that it is often the invertibility of a gesture's rhythmic and phrasing properties that make it an effective tool for Parker to execute the phrase-slip on 2. Such is the case with the mop-mop (MM) figure, which is inherently invertible. As previously mentioned, when the MM appears on beats 1 and 2, depending on how it is accented, it suggests either a consonant expression of the downbeat, aligned, or a phrase-slip on 2, where beat 1 now functions as the pickup (misaligned).

In the following blues chorus, Parker uses the mop-mop in its invertible form to express the PS on 2. This event occurs on “Billie’s Bounce” (Parker, 1945) from a live recording at the Hotel Diplomat in 1951. (Many layers are shown, but only the elements pertinent to the PS on 2 as shown on the score will be addressed.)

Figure 159. Phrase-slip on 2 b

The musical score for Figure 159, "Phrase-slip on 2 b", is a multi-layered blues chorus. It consists of six staves: F Blues, VL U, VL L, BB (HD, 1951), Middle Ground, and Background. The F Blues staff shows a sequence of chords: F⁶, B^b7, F⁶, C^m7, F⁷, B^b7, F⁶, D⁷, G^m7, C⁷, F⁶, G^m7, C⁷. The VL U staff shows melodic lines with annotations like 'MI', '3&4', and 'Bourdon'. The VL L staff shows a 'DBC' (Downbeat Chord) and 'Bourdon' sections. The BB (HD, 1951) staff shows a 12-beat structure with annotations like '3E', '322C', '332E', '333E', 'WHCH', '322C', '332E'. The Middle Ground staff shows a 3:2 structure with annotations like 'BBS', 'MM', 'Pops3', 'RCH', 'Pops3', 'MM'. The Background staff shows a 4:4 structure with annotations like 'HTS', 'PS on 2', and 'PS on 3'.

This blues chorus, which shows the PS on 2 beginning in m. 4, revolves around three mop-mop (MM) figures in their inverted form, but if “synchrony is not the norm,” then this may

actually be the mop-mop's primary metrical position. The effectiveness of the MM can be seen in the background layer of phrasing, which demonstrates how the MM in the middle ground layer establishes the PS on 2, by Parker's accenting and sustain of the second note in the MM figure: this further establishes the stress of beat 2. The two phrases that break up these three MM gestures also establish the PS on 2, as the entry point is on beat 2: in m. 5 and in m. 8; the latter has a pickup to beat 2 (2 comes early). The larger-scale phrase format reveals that Parker phrases in his preferred 12-beat durations, creating another layer of mild dissonance beyond the PS on 2.

The VL layers are not intrinsic to the phrase pattern but do show Parker's playful sensibility, the melodic interplay between 3(b3)&4, and of course, the sustained 9th that is reiterated throughout using the MM. The lower voice is comprised of the bourdon situated on V and includes a brief WHCH, which is also the VL for the DBC, as indicated (an overlap worthy of mention). The VL layers do not contribute to the establishment of PS on 2. Still, due to the unusual nature of this chorus (it appears nowhere else in Parker's recordings, to my knowledge), they have been included.

2. Backbeat Phrase-slip (BB PS)

The BB PS occurs when Parker uses both beats 2 and 4 to reorient the strong beats of the measure (beats 1 and 3), thereby shifting the halftime swing (HTS). On the drums, this is the high-hat pattern and, in many respects, a key part of the buoyancy and lift that make the rhythm 'swing' (not just in jazz, but also in polkas, bluegrass, and gospel music).

The most obvious appearance of the backbeat phrase-slip (BB PS) appears on "Constellation" (Parker, 1948), a 'send-off' style lick, which may have been another 'on the spot' composition. This tune is based on Thelonious Monk's "52nd St. Theme."

Figure 160. Backbeat Phrase-slip a

mm. 1-4

VL U

VL L

Constellation

Middle Ground

Background

Chords: Cmaj7, Dm7, G7, Em7, A7, Dm7, G7

Annotations: 3&4, IV, Bourdon, 3:2, 3, HTS, CH, Pops3, BB PS, MC

As shown above in the background layer, we see the first two measures as a BB PS, something remarkably prescient to the pedal points that followed, where the pedal point figure is situated on beats 2 and 4, and disorienting phrase moments like the introduction to “Walkin” (Carpenter, 1954). The trickiness of this device may be why, even a Bird “disciple”¹⁷⁵ in 1957, on the album *A Garland of Red*, played the figure on beats 1 and 3 (or it may have been misremembered).

The BB PS is expressed by the interplay between the upper VL layer, which shows the 3&4, and the lower VL layer, which shows the bourdon. The figure is metrically corrected in m. 3 with the Pops3 as illustrated in the middle ground layer. This layer also reveals the unassuming

¹⁷⁵ Charles Mingus, “An Open Letter to Miles Davis,” *Down Beat* (September 30, 1955).

HTS figure, beginning on beat 4 (as a ‘turned around’ HTS), followed by the Charleston figure which concludes with the Pops3. These two events are housed within a 3:2 grouping as shown. The harmony is straightforward with no clear dominant structure: as indicated in the upper VL, SD (ii7) is the harmonic region for this ‘on the spot’ composition.

The second example of the BB PS is taken from outside Parker’s blues and rhythm changes performances, which this research has focused on. This BB PS is an exemplar appearing on Parker’s only take of “Cardboard” (1949), recorded with Kenny Dorham and, surprisingly, the trombonist Trummy Young.

Figure 161. Backbeat Phrase-slip b

The musical score for Figure 161, Backbeat Phrase-slip b, is presented in a multi-staff format. The top staff, labeled 'A mm. 3-7', shows a series of chords: $A\flat^7$, G^7 , $A\flat^7$, G^7 , and $C^{\flat 6}$. Below this, the 'VL U' staff contains a melodic line with annotations: $bV7/V$, $7 - 1$, $ii7$, $7 - 3$, 1 , $bV7/V$, $7 - 1$, $ii7$, $7 - 3$, 1 . The 'VL L' staff features a 'Bourdon' section and a triplet of eighth notes. The 'Cardboard' staff shows a complex melodic line with various annotations: $233E$, $234E$, $334E$, $423E$, $234E$, $234E$, and $3362E$. The 'Middle Ground' staff includes a 2:3 and 3:2 grouping, with annotations: RCH, HTS, CHL, Ba, da, CH. The 'Background' staff shows a BB PS (Backbeat Phrase-slip) and MC (Measure Change).

This example of Parker’s phrasing demonstrates how deftly he can take a simple gestural fragment and, through this dissonant metrical reorganisation using the BB PS, he redefines the simplicity of this gesture, creating a much more compelling musical idea. The alignment of the high point and the harmonic voice leading is not always present when evaluating Parker’s phrase

variants. However, when the melodic device, harmony, and the high points of the phrase are aligned, the musical effect is even more certain and impactful, as is the case with much of the above.

The BB PS, as illustrated in the background layer, is another example of Parker pivoting off a bourdon, in this case the 5th of biii7 and ii7 respectively (as typical in jazz practice Eb-7 and Ab7 are inextricably linked as are D-7 and G7; the ambiguity of which is illustrated in the upper VL, which adds richness, as shown, the bVI7 or Ger6, spelt using the leading tone of V, F#. In essence, by playing ii7 on the dominant structure, Parker is expressing the subdominant region. Moreover, at no point in this phrase does Parker play the leading tone of C: the absence of this defining element of the dominant region (V7) further confirms that these are subdominant functions.

The upper VL layer also shows Parker's allusion to a tonic resolution (7-3) in m. 4 of the excerpt, further confirming the BB PS. The middle ground layer shows the RCH and the HTS on the backbeat, followed by the RCHL, ba-da, and with the CH to close as part of the MC. All these middle ground events are housed within the 2:3 and 3:2 phrase groups.

Lastly, in the discussion of the BB PS, we will examine one of Parker's most frequently used DBC motives, in this instance, as it appears on "Big Foot," (Parker, 1947) which illustrates how Parker transforms this phrase into his backbeat phrase-slip (this can also be classified as a phrase-shift as he is simply moving a crip over by one beat). As mentioned, this crip was an absolute favourite of Parker's and is also used in his handling of m. 5-8 of his rhythm changes outings, but only ever in the key of Bb.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁶ Thomas Owens catalogues the licks by key, but upon deeper inspection, there are licks that crossover, and there are those that Owens rightly observes are key-specific: this one is only in Bb.

Figure 162. Backbeat Phrase-slip c

The shifting of this DBC crip allows Parker to execute his BB PS phrasing by moving the entire lick over by one beat. Parker's proclivity for moving his stock phrases to other parts of the bar is essential to his phrasing concept. This again reintroduces a critical question about what constitutes variation. A metrical shift such as this, which creates the backbeat phrase-slip, is a metrical variation, not a motivic one, which shifts the harmonic rhythm, meaning, and feeling of the crip.

The entry point and the 7-3 shown in the upper VL layer confirm the beginnings of the BB PS. The high point in m. 2 (Bb on beat 4) further affirms this. Lastly, in m. 3, we observe the resolution to Bb in the melodic layer and the 7-3 motion resolving to beat 4 in the upper VL layer. The lower VL layer displays the SD bourdon being established by the high point in the opening measure, which remains until it converges (C) with the upper VL layer on beat 4 of m. 4,

with no MC. The primary metrical placement for this crip, based on numerous instances, confirms the BB PS; thus, this one is a bit of a cheat, even for this research.

3. Phrase-slip on 3 (PS on 3)

The PS on 3 is like the backbeat phrase-slip, but now with the implication of the halftime backbeat. By reorienting the perceived downbeat to beat 3 of each measure, another layer of the metrical grid is added. This creates the halftime backbeat feel. In other words, if half-notes become the beat unit, implying the 4/2 meter, then the backbeat (accents on 2 and 4) appears on the equivalent in the 4/4 meter, or on beat 3.

The first example of the PS on 3 appears in Charlie Parker's solo on the master take of "Red Cross" (Grimes, 1945). A tune that is credited to Parker, but exhibits little of his compositional characteristics, except for the giddy-up and the "mop-mop" mm. 1-4 and the tag in mm. 7-8 Henry Martin shares an interview done by Robert Kenselaar interviewing Tiny Grimes during which, when asked about "Red Cross" Grimes states "...he had this thing, this first part, and then we got the middle part together, and that was that. I let it go as his song. But it was his song - just little shit I put in."¹⁷⁷ However, this is all put to rest by the words of the maestro himself. In an interview with Marshall Stearns and Chan Parker, when Parker finds out that "Red Cross" (1944) was attributed to him, he baulks, "...they're not supposed to do that, but I mean, Herman Lubinsky [owner of the Savoy label] does a gang of things he ain't supposed to do. [Laughs.] That don't mean anything!"¹⁷⁸

The example of the PS on 3 is shown below.

¹⁷⁷ Henry Martin, *Charlie Parker; Composer*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, (ebook), 2020, Ch. 2, sect. 5, para. 3.

¹⁷⁸ Carl Woideck, *Charlie Parker: His Music and Life — Six Decades of Commentary*, Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1998, p. 105.

Figure 163. Phrase-slip on 3 a

The musical score for Figure 163, titled "Phrase-slip on 3 a", consists of six staves. The top staff, labeled "A mm. 4-7", shows a sequence of chords: Cm7, F7, Bb7, Eb7, and Bb6. The second staff, labeled "VL U", shows a melodic line with a bracketed "DBC" (Downbeat C) and a harmonic progression of I, V7/IV 7 - 3, IV, iv, and I 3. The third staff, labeled "VL L", shows a melodic line with a bracketed "ABCa" and a harmonic progression of ii, #ii07I, IV, 7 - 3, and C. The fourth staff, labeled "Red Cross (Take 2)", shows a melodic line with a bracketed "WHCH" and a harmonic progression of 622E, WHCH, WHCH, WHCH, 3E, 223E, and 332E. The fifth staff, labeled "Percussion", shows a rhythmic pattern with a bracketed "2:3" and "3:2" ratio. The bottom staff, labeled "Background", shows a melodic line with a bracketed "PS on 3" (Phrase Slip on 3) event.

This event from the opening measures of “Red Cross” (1945), beginning on m. 4 of the first A section, again shows how Parker’s lick schema (a variant of his well-worn Ben Webster crip (BW), is used to generate metrical displacement. Using the DBC as shown in the upper VL layer, Parker begins the V7/IV on beat 3 of m. 4, pushing beat 1 of m. 5 to beat 3 of m. 4: Initiating the PS on beat 3. The subtle and brief ABCa in the lower layer nicely juxtaposes the longer durational descending voice leading of the DBC. The lower VL layer then confirms this PS on 3 by anticipating the Eb in m. 5 (beat 3 comes early). In m. 6 it is not the high point of the phrase that continues the PS on 3, but the move from IV to iv shown as in the upper VL. Finally, the phrase concludes abruptly in m.7 on beat 3, both as a rhythmic and a harmonic cadence

(leading tone to tonic), confirming the PS on 3. This is further affirmed by the second of the two points of convergence in the VL layers: beat 1 m.6, and the final cadence, beat 3 m.7.

A few of additional comments regarding features that are shown in the foreground and middle ground layers for their exemplary quality. In the foreground layer we see the four GU16 (Giddy-up 16ths), which, as per their design, add extra propulsion and momentum to Parker's already swinging 8th notes. The middle ground layer shows an interesting sequence of accents: listed in the score, which are housed within a 2:3 and 3:2 grouping.

For the second example of Parker's Phrase-slip on 3 we look to "Klactoveesedstene" (Parker, 1947). This was arguably one of Parker's most successful recording sessions, as it was shortly after his stay at the Camarillo facility, where he was admitted for psychiatric reasons, but probably benefited more from the substance reprieve.

Figure 164. Phrase-slip on 3 b

The musical score for "Klactoveesedstene" is presented in six layers. The top layer, "A m. 8, A mm 1-7", shows a sequence of chords: G⁷, C^{m7}, F⁷, B^bmaj⁷, G⁷, C⁷, F⁷, and B^b9. Below this, the "VL U" layer contains melodic lines with annotations like "DBC SS", "(#3)3&4(#4)", "V7/ii7 iii7", "bII(iv)", "I", "II7", and "7-3". The "VL L" layer continues the melodic development with "DBC" and "C" markings. The "Klacto. (Take 1)" layer features a complex melodic line with numerous accidentals and rhythmic markings such as "2252E", "33E", "522E", "223C", "222H", "3322E", "323E", "223E", and "732E". The "Middle Ground" layer shows a sequence of accents: "3up", "RCH", "HTS", "BBS", "HTS", "H2", "Pops3", "MM", "HTS", "CHL", and "RCH". The "Background" layer provides a harmonic foundation with "PS on 3" and "MC" markings. The score is written in 4/4 time and includes various rhythmic groupings like 3:2 and 3:2GU.

The discursive phrasing at the opening, as shown in the interplay between the upper and lower VL layers, establishes the PS on 3 through the entry points and the 3up figure in the

middle ground layer. At the opening, the VL layers are only partly responsible for establishing the PS on 3; moreover, they are essential for revealing the DBCSS executed using Parker's iiVb SS Bmaj7 triad in the opening and DBCT at the close. This is overlapped by the (#3)3&4(#4) interplay as shown in the upper VL layer. The accented regions that confirm the PS on 3 are as follows: the pickup to beat 3 in m. 8 of the previous section, and the re-entry on 3 in mm. 1-2. M. 3 becomes a little cloudy as Parker exits the SS that is housed within the longer span DBC SS – within this, the 7-3 VL in the lower layer is pivotal as the bIIImaj7 moves to V7 on beat 3, which is the marker for the PS on 3. Moving forward from here in mm. 4-6, the VL layers are critical for confirming the PS on 3; we see the VL move the 7-3 harmonic confirmations targeting beat 3: first the 7-3 in the lower VL, V7/II7, then in the upper VL, V7/V and finally V7 to the tonic. Both the VL U and VL L converge (C) (definitively) on beat 1 of m. 7 for the harmonic and rhythmic cadence: the metrical correction (MC). Many other features are included to complete the gestalt, but this discussion, central to the PS on 3, will conclude here.

Thomas Owens made an important observation: there are “lengthy stepwise descents”¹⁷⁹ that can be extrapolated from Parker's registral pivots/shifts, etc. While this is accurate, it is really the interplay and juxtaposition between the upper and lower VL layers that reveal Parker's nuanced musical behaviour: creating a sustained harmonic buoyancy that provides much-needed lift. The descending gestural trajectory, observed by Owens, must be balanced by this suspended interplay that prevents it all from devolving into a musical abyss!

4. Phrase-slip on 4 (PS on 4)

The PS on 4 is Parker's ‘turnaround’ phrasing technique, where, like the bass line that typically accompanies the clave pattern, the stressed beat occurs on beat 4, shifting the metrical

¹⁷⁹ Thomas Owens, *Bebop: The Music and Its Players*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993, p. 35.

organisation by moving the perceived downbeat from beat 1 to beat 4. This is something Parker may have learned from Lester Young's solo in the B section "Shoe Shine Boy"¹⁸⁰ (Chaplin, Kahn, 1935), where Young continues to rhythmically 'resolve' to, or accent beat 4 (which also implies the feeling of a 3/4 measure). The key feature and effect of PS on 4 is that the time feels turned around due to the proximity of beat 4 to beat 1 (similar to the ups, it is not that 4 is the beat after beat 3, but that it is the beat before beat 1: beat 1 comes early).

The first example of the PS on 4 comes from take 5 of Parker's "Buzzy" (Parker, 1947), a Bb blues that was, likely, another 'on the spot' composition, as may have been the case with many of the other riff-style blues heads of Parker's, such as "Another Hairdo" (Parker, 1948), "Bluebird" (Parker, 1947), et al.

¹⁸⁰ Parker learned this entire solo: evidenced by when he played it in a jam session, which was recorded, in a hotel room in Chicago in 1943.

Figure 165. Phrase-slip on 4 a

The musical score consists of five staves. The top staff, labeled 'mm. 11-12 1-3', shows a sequence of chords: Bb6, Cm7, F7, Bb6, Eb7, and Bb7. The second staff, 'VL U', contains melodic notation with annotations: 'end of DBCT', '3&4', '3', 'WH 3-7', 'V7 I', '7 - 3', 'IV&I', and 'V7.IV'. The third staff, 'VL L', features a 'Bourdon' line and a 'C' annotation. The fourth staff, 'Buzzy (Take 5)', includes rhythmic patterns like '333E', '6-beat 423E', 'HR', '12-beat 6-beat 432E', '3', '432E', 'HR', '3:2GU', and 'GU16'. The fifth staff, 'Middle Ground', shows '3:2' groupings, 'Ba-da', 'H4', and 'BBL'. The bottom staff, 'Background', contains a 'PS on 4' annotation spanning four measures.

The PS on 4 spans four measures and is shown in the background layer. The primary phrase length shows Parker's 12-beat phrase, and the two 6-beat phrases before and within that. The PS on 4 begins on the

4th beat of m. 11 with a 423E, which is followed by a gesture that continues to employ the 432E, a crip of Parker's that is more typically used to articulate the cross-phrase, due to its pattern of hemiolas as shown in the middle ground layer (similar to the blues hang). The two hemiola rests bookend the H4 figures. The middle ground layer is included primarily because of this hemiola pattern. Within this layer, we also see the ba-da and the concluding BBL; the asymmetrical 3:2 groupings are also shown here (these 3:2 groupings are also a part of the foreground because the melodic layer overtly displays the 3:2 pattern in the rhythm of the lick).

In the upper VL layer we see that the PS on 4, begins on m. 12 and continues all the way to m. 3, partly established through the high points and the 3&4, the SD region is clearly heard with Parker's repeated targeting of the melodic 4th, which makes the already metrically disorienting PS on 4 even more pronounced and dissonant (and 'wrong'). For the numerologists, note that in this instance the PS on 4 and scale degree 4 conflate; perhaps this is coincidental, even poetic. Nonetheless, this targeting of 4 on mm. 1 and 3 further obfuscates the musical events by stressing IV & I while reorienting the perceived downbeat to beat 4. This not only shifts the harmonic region to SD (as the leading tone of IV is stressed and used, 3 (D) of the 3&4) but this is also what 'turns the time around.'

The upper VL layer is evident at the upper end of the DBCT, followed by a sustained 4th through the tonic harmony. The lower VL shows the 7-1 resolution (V7 I), and then the bourdon on the tonic that lasts for the duration. Both voices converge in m. 3 on the b7 (V7/IV as articulated by the WH 3-7).

The final example of the PS on 4, albeit occurring for a much shorter duration, is shown below in the channel of "Klactoveesedstene" (Parker, 1947) (Klacto.). The channel was a common term for the bridge or the B section c. 1945. Another important terminology distinction that applies, as "Klactoveesedstene" is written on the harmonic progression of "Que reste-t-il de nos amours ?" (Chauliac, Trenet, 1942). In an article written by James Patrick called "Charlie Parker and Harmonic Sources of Bebop Composition: Thoughts on the Repertory of New Jazz in the 1940s," he writes: "[b]y analogy to text substitution in medieval music, I call this general technique the "melodic contrafact" (contrafactum)."¹⁸¹ Parker, again in his most cavalier way

¹⁸¹ James Patrick, "Charlie Parker and Harmonic Sources of Bebop Composition: Thoughts on the Repertory of New Jazz in the 1940s," p. 3. *Journal Jazz Studies*, Vol. 2, Nov. 2, 1975

refers to these re-compositions simply as “satires.” In an interview with John Fitch in 1953 after listening to Stan Getz’s composition on Cherokee called “Parker 51” (1951), Charlie Parker responds by saying: “Oh yes, it’s – he’s really too much. I sure like that tune. That was “Cherokee,” that was a satire on “Cherokee.””¹⁸²

Below is an example of Parker’s PS on 4 in the B section of “Klactoveesedstene” (a Parker satire).

Figure 166. Phrase-slip on 4 b

B mm. 1-3

VL U

VL L

Klacto. (Take 1)

Middle Ground

Background

PS on 4

In the example above, we see Parker’s masterful ability to employ a set of preferred enclosure fragments - the 2&2E as a quick side-slip (SS) of the actual tritone sub, B7 but over iv and not V7, and the familiar 432E cluster that invokes the RCH - while shifting the perceived

¹⁸² Carl Woideck, *The Charlie Parker Companion: Six Decades of Commentary*, New York: Schirmer Books, 1998, p. 120.

downbeat to beat 4. In this example, Parker initiates the PS on 4 using the iv, from m. 2 of the B section, by introducing iv one beat early, on beat 4 of m. 1 using the 4th interval, which is expressed with the cram gesture. The upper VL uses another loose-fitting DBC SS form because of the chromatic 2&2 in m. 2. The lower VL conforms to the PS on 4 by resolving the B to Bb on beats 3 and 4, respectively: beat 4 is the point of resolve. The ACBa, which is essentially the 432E is also an expression of the abbreviated blues up gesture. There is overlap with the features of a fluid entity – as stated previously, stringent parameters, although desirable, do a disservice to the accuracy and representation of inconsistencies. In short, the PS on 4 is confirmed by the entry (iv on 4), and then the strong resolution to I on beat 4 m. 2. This lick is quite jarring and hugely disorienting.

Lastly, in the Parker phrase-slip repertoire, there are instances where Parker shifts the phrasing by a complete measure, which is known as the full bar phrase-slip (FB PS), but due to the infrequency of this and the difficulty in firmly establishing that this is happening for any lengthy durational span, it is excluded from the current discussion.

Chapter 20: Introduction to the Cross-phrase

It would be intolerable to the African listener if the master drummer *kept on* making his phrases fit the incidence of the low gankoqui note.¹⁸³

Arthur Morris Jones

Many aspects of Charlie Parker's music make it unprecedented and compelling; however, one of the most intriguing qualities is his propensity to seamlessly weave phrases that articulate the 3/4 meter over the 4/4 metrical grid. This research categorises Parker's interpolation of his licks in 3/4 into the 4/4 meter as the cross-phrase (CP). This phrasing device yields yet another layer of unpredictability and contributes to the renewal of Parker's heavily worn crips.

Parker may have acquired the technique from two of his musical influences, as there are several examples of Louis Armstrong playing cross-rhythms, such as "Hotter Than That" (Hardin, 1927), and Lester Young on his classic 1936 recording of "Lady Be Good" (Gershwin, 1924). Both examples show the superimposition of 3/4 over a 4/4 meter; however, they are overt and easily identifiable. Parker evolved the behaviour substantially. Brian Priestley observes, "during Parker's improvisation, in fact, this kind of polyrhythmic phrasing became such a central principle - constant yet constantly varied as to the starting note - that the effect is overlooked in its total integration with the harmonic and melodic shapes."¹⁸⁴ In other words, the polyrhythmic attributes and phrase displacements were often hidden beneath Parker's unassuming folksy gestures.

¹⁸³ Arthur Morris Jones, *Studies in African Music Volume I and II*, 1978, p. 189.

¹⁸⁴ Brian Priestley, *Chasin' the Bird: The Life and Legacy of Charlie Parker*, Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 112.

The term cross-phrase (CP) is derived/adapted from the well-known concept of the cross-rhythm: a musical technique in which two or more, often incongruent, rhythmic patterns are played simultaneously, creating dissonant accent groupings or subdivisions; most typically, varying expressions of three against two (a 3:2 ratio). Cross rhythms are endemic not only to Parker's music but also to African music traditions.¹⁸⁵ Arthur Morris Jones writes:

Cross-rhythm is the simultaneous use of contrasting rhythms, each establishing its own beat within a common time span.¹⁸⁶

The reason for the new moniker, cross-phrase instead of cross-rhythm, is to describe this highly original manipulation of the metrical organisation more accurately. When Parker plays in 3/4 meter, using the cross-phrase, it can be very subtle and thus, at times, imperceivable: the cross-phrase device is often not overt but instead deeply embedded within the accenting and voice-leading layers. Because of the profoundly physical nature of Parker's music, gesturally and otherwise, musical behaviours like this may once again be linked to dance. In African culture, there is a coexistence between music and dance: the music is polyrhythmic and the dance highly physical. To be clear, the argument is not that Parker's music had roots in African traditions or that it was meant for dancing, but that many of the attributes, such as the accenting and gestural, and in this case, 3/4 phrases executed over the 4/4 meter, were a part of his musical concept.

In Africa, the interconnectedness of music and dance unifies expressions of communal identity, spirituality, and storytelling. In discussing inclusionary concepts as articulated by John Miller Chernoff in his book *African Rhythm and African Sensibility: Aesthetics and Social Action in African Musical Idioms*, Alan P. Merriam writes that throughout the book, "considerable stress

¹⁸⁵ There are of course cross rhythms in the music of Johannes Brahms, Frédéric Chopin, et al. However, such links to European traditions of the cross-rhythm remain for another discussion.

¹⁸⁶ Arthur Morris Jones, *Studies in African Music*, p. 51.

is laid upon the special relationship between music and responding audience, and between music and response through dance.”¹⁸⁷

The integration of the social and dance sensibility with the music speaks indirectly to the behavioural attributes that exist within Parker’s music, as the physicality, or dance, if you will, is expressed within the gestural moves and the musical structures: attributes that define how Parker’s music moves. Further to this, Robert Kaufmann writes that “the rhythm of physical movement thus becomes another major determinant in the African time sense.”¹⁸⁸ A music like Parker’s, as shown throughout this work, is highly physical in nature. Regarding the social aspect of Parker’s music, the audiences affected and changed the way he played; i.e., Parker operated very differently in the studio versus a small nightclub, a large concert venue, or a jam session. Moreover, according to Parker himself, there was always a strong connection to storytelling, which Parker acknowledges by stating in the interview with Paul Desmond:

There’s definitely stories and stories and stories that can be told in the musical idiom, you know... music is basically melody, harmony and rhythm—but, I mean, people can do much more with music than that. It can be very descriptive in all kinds of ways, you know, all walks of life.¹⁸⁹

It is impossible to assess whether there are potential links to Africa, whether through social behaviours, music, or dance; however, what can be unequivocally stated is that Parker’s primary influence was the musical ethos of Kansas City c. 1935—deeply rooted in rhythm, dance, and blues. It is possible that the highly repetitive riff-based blues and jazz that came from Kansas City, rather than the oft-cited New Orleans (by which Kansas City was undoubtedly

¹⁸⁷ Alan P. Merriam, *Ethnomusicology* 24, no. 3, (1980): pp. 559–61. <https://doi.org/10.2307/851157>. Accessed July 2022.

¹⁸⁸ Robert Kauffman, “African Rhythm: A Reassessment.” *Ethnomusicology* 24, no. 3 (1980): 393–415, p. 402. <https://doi.org/10.2307/851150>. Accessed September 2020.

¹⁸⁹ Parker with Paul Desmond and John Fritch, WHDH, Boston, Massachusetts, circa January 1954. Carl Woideck, *The Charlie Parker Companion: Six Decades of Commentary*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1998, p. 122.

affected), has been more influential and pivotal in shaping the course of jazz, in part via the music of Charlie Parker (a discussion that exceeds the scope of this work). In Kansas City, the President (Lester Young) was a key influence on Parker. Young employed polyrhythmic phrases often. He had licks that were used as an overt expression of 3/4 over the 4/4 meter. Seminal recordings such as Young's solo over "Lady Be Good" (Gershwin, 1924) demonstrate this. The claim here is not that the musical behaviour was specific to Parker but that the manner in which he did so was unprecedented.

Despite the cross-phrase being a defining element of Parker's musical concept, it has only been explored in a cursory manner throughout extant research. Henry Martin acknowledges Parker's use of the cross-rhythms in his book *Charlie Parker: Composer*, but it is too brief on the matter and only draws attention to the more obvious instances (As do Woideck, Priestly and Owens). For example, Martin references cross-rhythms in the opening of "Another Hairdo" (Parker, 1947) and "Au Privave" (Parker, 1951), the latter via Juha Henrickson's observations of the implied 3/4 meter. Martin writes "Henrickson makes the nice point that the cross-rhythm here (3+3+2 mm. 1-2) is echoed in mm. 5-6,"¹⁹⁰ however, the investigation basically ends there. Given the ubiquity of this musical behaviour in Parker's wider musical lexicon, a more extensive investigation is necessary: a lacuna that has, in part, been the impetus for this work. To reiterate a key idea from the introduction: much of the theoretical research on Charlie Parker appears to have been conducted to prove a claim a priori, using models such as Schenkerian analysis. When the focus remains narrow and uses a singular methodology and preexisting theory (developed from music that Parker was adamant had no influence on him), a complex form of music, such as

¹⁹⁰ Henry Martin, *Charlie Parker, Composer*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020 (ebook), Ch. 6, sect. 64, para, 4.

Charlie Parker's, will align with some of the tenets. However, above all else, this proves the efficacy of the theory more than it provides further insight into the music.

Within the broader sphere of Parker's music, the cross-phrase is arguably the most frequently used phrase device and, as a result, a defining element of his musical style and concept. Virtually all the lick schema, many identified in part by Thomas Owens (albeit in an incomplete, fragmentary way, e.g., formulaic motives), are attractive melodic devices or motives; however, it is the full scope of their intrinsic properties that has been the subject of this work and is central to the current discussion.

Parker's crips can be as short as a single measure of 3/4, which shifts the bar line, only momentarily; however, there are instances in which, by connecting various groups of these crips, Parker can execute the cross-phrase over a much longer durational span. These latter events sustain the shift in the perceived bar line for lengthier durations, producing a metrical elasticity and reorientation that, even by Parker's many imitators, remains unparalleled. In an online article published by Stefan Love, *Possible Paths: Schemata of Phrasing and Melody in Charlie Parker's Blues*,¹⁹¹ Love cites Owens' observations on this matter:

...Parker also subjects the formulas to metric displacement, augmentation and diminution, addition and subtraction of notes, and altered phrasing and articulation.¹⁹²

This statement is accurate, but again incomplete: more specifics are required as to how these highly complex and defining phrase aspects of Parker's music manifest. Parker's phrasing schema cannot be described without specificity. Love investigates the matter of phrasing further by examining the broad-scale attributes that comprise Parker's phrasing concept on the twelve-

¹⁹¹ Stefan C. Love, "'Possible Paths': Schemata of Phrasing and Melody in Charlie Parker's Blues." *Music Theory Online*, 18, no. 3 (September 2012). Accessed March 2022.

¹⁹² Thomas Owens, "*Charlie Parker: Techniques of Improvisation*," cited in Stefan Love, "Schemata of Phrasing and Melody in Charlie Parker's Blues," *Music Theory Online*, 18, no. 3 (2012). Accessed March 2022.

bar blues form. However, the criteria used by Love do not fully consider the lick schema of Parker's that drives his phrasing concepts.

As will be shown, there are instances of Parker's cross-phrase patterns that can last for as long as twelve measures in the 4/4 meter or sixteen in the implied 3/4 meter. These events can be continued even through the silences using hemiola rests (typically as dotted quarter or dotted half notes). Parker uses rests in a way that's inextricably linked to the phrasing, creating a kind of musical continuum – the rests often don't end the phrase but can instead perpetuate it. Moreover, the hemiola rests create a dramatic effect, similar to the pause in a sermon as will be demonstrated in an example from Parker's solo on take 4 of "Donna Lee" (Davis, 1947), from a recording session of the same year led by Miles Davis.

These continuum-like events, which incorporate rests but seem to convey a singular musical thought or idea, can also be heard in his compositions. A lengthy, seemingly singular musical thought (albeit without the cross-phrase as its structural basis) can be heard in a blues head such as "Bird Feathers" (Parker, 1947). In this instance, the phrase appears to last for the entire form, spanning a full 12 measures: at no musical juncture is there a conclusory rhythmic or harmonic cadence, even in the final bar of the 12-bar form (Parker ends on scale degree 2 as an anticipation of beat 1 in m. 12, which is also the starting pitch of the tune, something he also does on "Big Foot" (Parker, 1947) where the final note is also the starting note). In this manner, a kind of helix is created or a continuum where there appears to be no clear beginning or end, as they are one.

Criteria for Establishing the Cross-Phrase

Four essential criteria are used to determine when and where Parker employs the cross-phrase.

1. The voice leading that illustrates a change in the harmonic rhythm: typically, the harmonic 7-3 motion.¹⁹³
2. When the high points of the phrase articulate an accented figure and/or a change in melodic direction (the accent may not always be the high point).
3. Lick entry and re-entry
4. Hemiola rests¹⁹⁴

As demonstrated with the phrase-slip, which has similar criteria, these can occur separately or concurrently. In other words, there can be alignment, misalignment, and/or overlap, creating a juxtaposition between sets of criteria. When a contradiction (misalignment) arises — i.e., the high point of the phrase does not align with the harmonic rhythm as articulated by Parker's voice-leading — it can be difficult to ascertain which is the dominant feature; however, this research typically recognises the shift in harmonic rhythm (7-3 VL) as the paramount element. The entry or re-entry points also indicate beginnings, continuations, and/or confirmations of the cross-phrase, as it produces a stressed beat. Equally, a hemiola rest can determine whether an entry or re-entry point establishes the cross-phrase or is a continuation of it. The most subjective attribute is when Parker accents within a gesture rather than on a specific high point; for this, the recording is imperative. Moreover, this shows a key limitation of using the score format when observing music from oral traditions. The criteria can be fluid; however, as will be illustrated, there is also a measured consistency.

¹⁹⁴ Rests comprised of groupings of three that further perpetuate ternary phrases.

Chapter 21: Cross-phrase

In Charlie Parker's music, there are essentially three forms of the cross-phrase pattern.

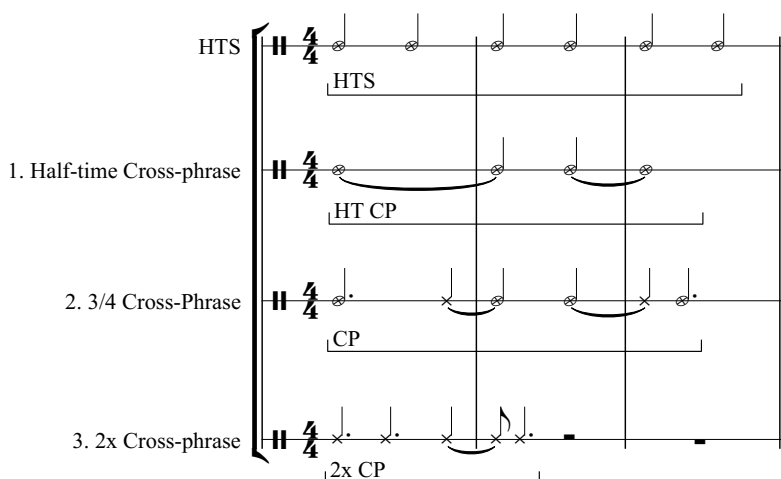
The most typical form can be understood as an augmentation of the hemiola pattern: another possible derivation from the opening figure in the son clave. Fundamentally, the cross-phrase is a ternary pattern occurring within the duple meter that can express any subdivision of three, i.e., the dotted quarter, half, or whole note.¹⁹⁵ In Parker's music, the cross-phrase is typically expressed using the dotted half-note, which retains the quarter-note values endemic to the 4/4 meter. When Parker's licks occur in the double time, the division becomes the dotted quarter note (eighth note pulse); conversely, when Parker extends the phrasing to the half time or an implied 3/2 meter (similar to the 6-beat phrase), we see the dotted whole note division as the duration of the hyper-measure (based on the half note beat unit).

The three cross-phrase types are as follows:

1. Half-time Cross-phrase (HT CP)
2. 3/4 Cross-Phrase (CP)
3. 2X Cross-Phrase (2x CP)

¹⁹⁵ The dotted whole note can only be adequately shown if the phrase is metrically reorganized, i.e., the events that occur on 4/4 become mixed meter entities.

Figure 167. List of Cross-phrase Types



The above outline of the three cross-phrase types first shows the half-time swing (HTS) pattern in the top staff to visually establish the referential point from which the three dissonant cross-phrase patterns deviate.

The 3/4 Cross-phrase (CP)

Before discussing the half-time and 2x cross-phrase, I will first examine the 3/4 cross-phrase, which uses the dotted half-note pattern and maintains the quarter-note pulse (beat unit) of the 4/4 meter. This is referred to by this research simply as the cross-phrase (CP), as it is the most common form of this phrasing device within Parker's music. The earliest example of Parker's use of this cross-phrase appears in his 1940 solo recording of "Honeysuckle Rose" (Razaf, Waller, 1932). Charlie Parker had a tumultuous relationship with the tune. In a radio interview in May of 1950 with John Maher and Marshall Stearns, where Chan Parker was present, Parker recalled, "Oh, it was a band working in a joint. There was a bunch of young fellows that had a band around Kansas City, it was Jimmy Keith's band then, so Keith and a piano player and Robert Wilson and James Ross... that's the fellows' names that were working at this club in Kansas City... so I go to playin' my "Honeysuckle Rose" and [unintelligible] I mean

ain't no form of conglomeration [unintelligible] they laughed me right off the bandstand they laughed so hard [unintelligible].”¹⁹⁶ Further admitting that, “I never thought about that there were other keys, you know?”¹⁹⁷

After this traumatic event, which has been retold in many exaggerated apocryphal ways, with flying cymbals and the like, that do not align with this version of the story, Parker proceeded to practice 11-15 hours a day over a period of three years. Therefore, the solo recording of “Honeysuckle Rose” (HSR) in 1940 must have had heightened importance for him.

The excerpt shown below illustrates the cross-phrase and is from this recording in 1940.¹⁹⁸

Figure 168. 3/4 Cross Phrase a

The musical score for Figure 168, 3/4 Cross Phrase a, is presented in five staves. The top staff is a chord chart with chords: [A] F6, [B] F7, Bbmaj7, G7, and Db7. The second staff is for VL U (Violin Upper) with notes and fingerings. The third staff is for VL L (Violin Lower) with notes and fingerings. The fourth staff is for HSR (1940) with notes and fingerings. The fifth staff is for Middle Ground with notes and fingerings. The bottom staff is for Background with notes and fingerings. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

¹⁹⁶ Carl Woideck, *The Charlie Parker Companion: Six Decades of Commentary*, New York: Schirmer Books, 1998, pp. 93-95.

¹⁹⁷ Carl Woideck, *The Charlie Parker Companion*, p. 94.

¹⁹⁸ There is a great deal of dispute as to the exact date; however, 1940 seems close (a problem that in no way changes anything).

The cross-phrase (CP), as shown in the background layer in the example above from “Honeysuckle Rose,” (HSR) begins on the last two bars of the A section, on beat 3 of m. 7 from the high point (G), and in A m. 8, the 7-3 motion shown in the lower VL layers that is expressed using the 2N figure on beat 1 confirms this. In the B section, there is a metrical correction (MC) and a bar of HTS before the longer durational span CP commences on beat 1 of B m. 2, which is confirmed by the 7-3 motion on beats 3-4 in m. 2 of the B section, as shown in the lower VL layer (IV begins on beat 4). In m. 3 of B, the accented high point on beat 3, as shown in the upper VL layer on the second Bb, further confirms this. Then, in m. 4 of B, the lower VL layer shows the 7-3 harmonic motion again, confirming the CP on beat 2. The ii7 (C-7) on I in m. 3, b section is a Parker favourite; this is connected to the opening crip in his seminal solo on “Ko-Ko” (Parker, 1945), and the iconic opening of take 2 of “Merry-Go-Round” (Parker, 1947), and is known to this research as the ‘IiiI Bb.’

The second half of the B section continues the CP, as confirmed by the entry point on beat 1 of m. 5; it is through Parker’s accenting that beat 4 of m. 5 becomes the next 3/4 group rather than the high point. The MM figure beginning on beat 3 in m. 6 is the accent that gives us the 3/4 ‘downbeat’ in m. 6 (this time with the accent on the first note of the MM). Once into m. 7 of the B section. It is the anticipation of 2 that confirms the continuation and the last measure of the CP. There is some interpretation in mm. 5-6 of this excerpt; however, based on the audio source as a referential point, the CP is clearly articulated through Parker’s accenting (the audio source is essential).

The lower VL layer shows the 3&4/IV, 3&4/V, an allusion to an altered DBC SS (D, Db, Cb), in addition to the three 7-3 harmonic motions. The upper VL layer has the DBC, the DBC+ in its perfect form, an inconsequential 7-3 motion followed by a 3&4/II. The middle ground layer

has the accented patterns and three 3:2 groups, which house most of these syncopated events.

Finally, there are two convergent (C) points of the upper and lower VL layers.

Below is the same musical excerpt rewritten in 3/4 meter to illustrate further the metrical reorganisation resulting from this lengthy cross-phrase example.

Figure 169. 3/4 Cross Phrase a, in 3/4 Meter

Another early example of Parker's cross-phrase appears on the seminal big band recordings with The Jay McShann Orchestra. The following excerpt is from Parker's opening phrase to his solo on "St. Louis Mood" (McShann, 1942), (indicated as StLM in the score), recorded in 1942 at the Wichita Ballroom, Kansas City. When discussing this solo of Parker's, Carl Woideck observes:

An illustration of Parker's continuing reliance on the phraseology of his prime influence, Lester Young, is Parker solo on "St. Louis Mood," during which every phrase is consistent with Young's musical vocabulary.¹⁹⁹

In the example shown below, Parker demonstrates the more overt style of 3/4 cross-phrase, which, as Woideck eruditely points out, is a part of the Lester Young oeuvre, particularly within Young's solo in 1936 of "Oh, Lady Be Good" (Gershwin, 1924).

¹⁹⁹ Carl Woideck, *The Charlie Parker Companion*, p. 201.

Figure 170. 3/4 Cross Phrase b

The above excerpt provides a clear example of Parker's execution of the cross-phrase, albeit more overt, which arguably makes it easier for Parker to manipulate and for us to hear. Later, in Parker's improvisations, the subtlety of execution increases because the cross-phrase becomes the basis for many of his crips. (The figure discussed above on "St. Louis Blues" may not be improvised; however, because there are so few early recordings of Parker, we may never know.)

The background layer (BG) displays the cross-phrase, which begins on beat 4 of measure 8 of the previous section (mm. 1-7 start on measure 2 of the excerpt). This CP is driven entirely by the hemiola pattern as shown in the middle ground layer (MD). The CP lasts for a full 4 bars before being interrupted by a phrase-slip on two (PS on 2) that is facilitated by the 2-note figure, which pushes the resolution of V7/IV to IV from beat 1 to beat 2 of m. 6. This is confirmed by the 7-3 motion in the upper (and lower) VL layer. A 3-beat CP figure immediately follows this in m. 6. The phrase concludes with a metrical correction (MC) in m. 7, which articulates the Pops3

figure, cadencing on beat 3 of m. 7, implying the PS on 3, or the halftime backbeat. Ending phrases on beat 3 is a proclivity of Parker's. There is often no continuation, but the harmonic and rhythmic cadence to a plethora of preceding lick schemas will frequently end on beat 3 (the backbeat of the half-time). In the foreground layer of Parker's solo in mm. 6-7, the 223C and 243E gestures are shown. This all concludes neatly in m. 7 with the 3-beat gesture just mentioned, a preferred quote discussed earlier in the 3, 6, 12-beat section, that Parker used throughout his career; "My Kinda Love" (Alter, Trent, 1929), which comprises a hang gesture (333H).

The lower VL layer shows a bourdon on V and I (harmonic 4th), which converges (C) with the upper voice in mm. 6 and 7; the upper VL layer. Parker pivots his idea off both layers (the series of hemiolas that use scale degrees 1, 2 and 3), which is further indicated by the 2&3 in the upper VL (1 is not included as it is accounted for in the bourdon). Finally, this is all wrapped up with a DBCi (as there is no Cb, the b6) beginning from the end of m. 4 to m. 7.

The middle ground layer reveals three mop-mop (MM) figures, along with a lengthy group of seven hemiolas (H7). The longer durational spans of accented patterns, except for the opening and closing, are housed within three sets of 2:3 groupings, as indicated in this middle ground layer.

The following example of the cross-phrase is selected from Parker's solo on take 4 of "Donna Lee" (Davis, 1947). Due to the length and complexity of this example, the excerpt will be shown in two ways:

1. As complete with the CP in the background layer, physical gestures, and the upper and lower VL layers
2. With the melodic events and 7-3 VL rewritten into 3/4 meter.

Figure 171. 3/4 Cross Phrase c

The musical score for Figure 171, 3/4 Cross Phrase c, is presented in two systems. The first system includes staves for B mm. 7-8, A2 mm. 1-4, C mm. 1-3, VL U, VL L, Donna Lee (Take 4), and Background. The second system continues the music with various annotations and rests. The score is heavily annotated with musical symbols, including chords, rests, and performance markings.

System 1:

- B mm. 7-8:** Chords: Bbm⁷, Eb⁷, A^bmaj⁷, F⁷, Bb⁷. Markings: 2, [B], [A2], /.
- VL U:** DBCT, ii⁷, V⁷, I, [II], ii⁷, V⁷, I. Markings: 7 - 3, 7 - 3, 7 - 3, 7 - 3.
- VL L:** 7 - 3, 7 - 3, 7 - 3, 7 - 3.
- Donna Lee (Take 4):** 12-beat, 223C, 322C, 12-beat, 333E, BU, 2&2, HR. Markings: 2N, SU, 2N, 2N, SU, 2N, 3:2GU.
- Background:** CP.

System 2:

- Chords:** G^{#7}, C⁷, Fm⁶, G^{#7}, C⁷, Fm⁶, G^{#7}, C⁷, Fm⁶. Markings: [C].
- VL U:** DBCT, DBCSS, [iv ii⁷ - vii⁰⁷ i], I₇/IV IV iv, I₇. Markings: 7, 3.
- VL L:** 7th^s, 7 - 3, 7 - 3, 7 - b3, 7 - 3, 7 - 3, 7 - 3. Markings: [iv vii⁰⁷ i⁻].
- Donna Lee (Take 4):** 6-beat, 2333E, 32E, 32E, 333E, HR, 33E, WHICH, 423E, 223C, 3, 633E, 344E. Markings: SU, SU, 2N, SU, 2:3GU.
- Background:** CP Cont., CP Cont.

As shown in the above example, the entry points throughout contribute to confirming the CP pattern. Additionally, the hemiola rest (HR) duration in A2 mm. 4-5 shows a three-beat rest, further supporting the CP, as does the quarter-eighth (hemiola) rest in m. 7, two bars before C.

The melodic foreground layer showcases various enclosures (E), cycles (C), blues-up (BU), and 2&2 gestures, alongside the 2-note (2N), giddy-up (GU), setup (SU), and whole tone chromatic (WHCH).

The background layer illustrates this thirteen-measure cross-phrase as executed by Charlie Parker. Both the upper and lower VL layers are crucial for understanding how this occurs and the link to Parker's blues behaviour. The upper layer shows a series of DBCT voice-leading patterns on the harmonic regions I, II, and iv. There is a DBCSS where Parker plays his side-slip lick from Eb7 on the C7, V7/IV IV iv I, (this was discussed earlier in the DBC chapter). The lower VL displays all the critically important 7-3 motions that confirm the cross-phrase pattern throughout, except for the iiVF motive in A2 m. 5-6. In this example, iiVF functions as a self-contained unit that has the cross-phrase built into its structure. Because of this 'built-in' feature, it functions as an effective continuation of this lengthy CP. As mentioned, the entry and re-entry points throughout confirm the cross-phrase further. Finally, the convergent (C) points of the two VL layers appear a total of five times, as shown.

To further illustrate the cross-phrase events in this excerpt, below is a rewritten version presented in 3/4 meter.

Figure 172. 3/4 Phrase c in 3/4 Meter

Figure 172 shows a musical score for a 3/4 phrase in 3/4 meter. The score is written for two staves. The top staff is labeled "In 4/4 B mm. 7-8", "A2 mm. 1-8", and "C mm. 1-3". The bottom staff is labeled "Donna Lee (Take 4)". The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into two systems. The first system has a key signature change to two flats (B-flat, E-flat) and a time signature change to 3/4. The second system has a key signature change to one flat (B-flat, E-flat) and a time signature change to 3/4. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and bar lines. Above the staves, there are labels for measures: [B], Bbm7, Eb7, Abmaj7, [A2], F7, Bb7, and [C]. Below the staves, there are labels for measures: Gm7(b5), C7, Ab7, Dbm7, Abmaj7, C7, and Fm6. The score also includes a 7-3 harmonic voice leading pattern in several measures.

This rewrite of the excerpt into the new metrical framework demonstrates that Parker is playing in 3/4 over the 4/4 meter. The phrases align with the high points, rests, re-entries, and, of course, the crucial element of the 7-3 harmonic voice leading, the critical gesture that confirms the metrical shift of the harmonic rhythm. With the previously mentioned disclaimer regarding the self-contained unit that is the iiVF lick schema, all the indicators for the bar lines in 3/4 meter are either confirmed by the high points or the 7-3 VL. For bar numbering references, see the previous example. Additionally, the chords shown in this rewrite indicate what Parker is likely playing, as reflected by the VL and the pitch collection (the original chord progression is presented in the previous example).

Parker's harmonic move to iv (Db-7) the ii7 of Gb7, in the fifth measure of the second stanza in the excerpt above shows a side-slip that is most unusual, as this is typically Parker's side-slip lick schema on a ii7 V7 I in Ab, his side-slip iiVAb SS Gb7 (as shown in the DBC chapter), which is exactly what he does here, basically ignoring the modulation to F-. Parker does not modulate to F- until the last measure of the excerpt: five bars later than the harmonic

rhythm dictates (in the 4/4 meter). Parker transgresses the modulation to F- even more overtly in the previous chorus.

Half-time Cross-phrase (HT CP)

The half-time version of the cross-phrase overlaps with the 6-beat phrase category in that the span is identical. The reason the HT CP is distinct is that the 6-beat figure is inherently consonant and not used as a metrical device to superimpose, in this case, the 3/2 metrical grid over the 4/4 meter. Moreover, the HT CP is often interspersed with the previously discussed cross-phrase; the half-time cross-phrase essentially works in conjunction with the (3/4) cross-phrase to further perpetuate the ternary phrase patterns endemic to these features.

The example of the half-time cross phrase comes from take 3 of “Bird Gets the Worm” (Parker, 1948) (indicated as BGTW in the score). This is arguably another of Parker’s ‘on the spot’ compositions, like “Merry-Go-Round” (Parker, 1948) and “Bird’s Nest” (1946), which begins with the improvised solo choruses and a tag ending that uses a prepared riff.²⁰⁰

²⁰⁰ This compositional form is unprecedented. It is comprised of lengthy improvisations that finish with a short four or eight-measure tag: a kind of coda section that comes out of nowhere.

Figure 173. Half-time Cross-phrase (Fragment)

The musical score for Figure 173 is a fragment of a half-time cross-phrase in B-flat major, 4/4 time, spanning measures 13-16. The score is organized into five staves:

- B mm. 13-16:** Piano accompaniment with chords Fm^7 , Bb^7 , Bbm^7 , and Eb^7 .
- VL:** Voice leading with Roman numerals ii^7/II , V^7/V , and V^7 , and fingerings 7-3, -, -, 7.
- BGTW (Take 3):** Bass line.
- Middle Ground:** Rhythmic notation with accents and labels CH, Ba-da, CH, CHL, and BBS. A bracket labeled 3:2 spans the first two measures, and a bracket labeled 3 spans the last two measures.
- Background:** Rhythmic notation with labels HT CP and CP. A bracket labeled HT CP spans the first two measures, and a bracket labeled CP spans the last two measures.

Due to the harmonic simplicity of this phrase, only a single layer of voice leading is provided, which shows the 7-3 motion from V^7/V to V^7 (or ii^7), the latter of which confirms the HT CP. The entry in m. 13 beat 3 marks the beginning of the HT CP, as shown in the background layer. This layer also shows the CP continuation into mm. 15-16.

The middle ground layer is included to illustrate further how the previously discussed accented elements are braided into Parker's layers. Within this layer, there is, in order, the CH, Bada, CH, CHL, all of which conclude with a BBS. As shown, the lick expressing the HT CP, a ii^7V^{Eb} , which is virtually identical to the ii^7VF forms a group of 3:2 accents.

It could be argued that this motive should be classified as a 6-beat phrase, but to dispel this notion, not only does the HT CP move into the CP, it then reappears in a longer durational span. There is a continuation of the HT CP, illustrated below by a rewrite into 6/4 and 3/4 time of this excerpt (the opening 2/4 measure indicates that this HT CP begins on beat 3 of the 4/4 meter).

There are two scores below. The first presents the excerpt in 4/4 meter as a referential point, while the second illustrates the same passage in 6/4 meter (when applicable).

Figure 174. Half-time Cross-phrase (Complete)

Figure 175. Half-time Cross-phrase in 6/4 Meter

The crips: iiVEb, T-lick (Extended), and iiVF, shown above, are ubiquitous within the Parker lexicon (m. 3 of the score shows IVmaj7 which indicates the harmonic region implied by Parker as it is V7 in the harmony). In this example, from “Bird Gets the Worm”, the HT CP is only partially established by the 7-3 motions in the VL layer. The more prominent feature is the entry and re-entry points of this extended HT CP, which are interwoven with two articulated measures and two rests that indicate the (3/4) CP. The opening HT CP aligns with both the entry and the VL confirmation on V7 as a 7-3-7 motion, which is followed by the (3/4) CP with the resolution to I from V7 (without the leading tone), which is beat 2 of m. 1 of the last A section. This appears as the second HT CP—the V7 to I resolution—and the 6/4 bar appearing in m. 6 of

the score, m. 1 of the last A section. The CP follows this in its rest form. Finally, the iiVF (yet again) in its minor form (Parker plays the Ab in the scalar descent portion of this lick instead of the A natural) exemplifies the HT CP Parker uses to extend the ternary pattern further. It tends to be that no matter the configuration of the iiVF lick, or for that matter, most of Parker's licks, the ternary metrical structure is often implied. The opening lick is the transposed version of this iiVF lick: moved down a whole step. It is rare to see Parker using what could be called thematic material, except within his slow blues performances; in this instance, the development is simply the same crip transposed up a step; a iiVEb to its native iiVF (in this instance in minor). Finally, the metrical correction continues the misalignment, resolving to beat 3 of m. 6 of the form with a decisive and clear BBS.

2x Cross-phrase (2x CP)

The 2x cross-phrase (2x CP) places the dotted quarter, hemiola pattern in the background layer, establishing it not as a pattern of accents that typically appear in the middle ground layer, but as the basis of the harmonic rhythm. The example below is another sequence of Parker's that uses another example of what many would call motivic development, but this research identifies as the repetition of his crips, designed primarily, in this case, to articulate this 2x CP. Like the previous example, Parker repeats one of his well-worn crips; however, now, instead of being transposed up a whole step, the sequence is transposed up a half-step (half for double CP and whole for half CP!).

Figure 176. 2x Cross-phrase

The musical score for Figure 176, titled "2x Cross-phrase", is written in 4/4 time and B-flat major. It consists of five staves. The first staff, labeled "C mm. 6-8 D m. 1", shows a sequence of chords: [C] B7, Emaj7, Gm7(b9), C7, and [D] Fm7. The second staff, labeled "VL U", shows a melodic line with chordal annotations: [bVI - ii7 V7 7-3 - - - - I bIV] and [iv ii7 V7 7-3 - - - I iv]. The third staff, labeled "VL L", shows a melodic line with chordal annotations: [bVI V7 7 - - - - I bIV] and [iv V7 7 - - - - I iv]. The fourth staff, labeled "BOP (Take C)", shows a complex melodic line with annotations: [ivVE], [3and1 Up], and [ivVF-]. The fifth staff, labeled "Background", shows a rhythmic pattern with annotations: (PS on 2), 2x CP, (PS on 2), 2x CP, and MC.

The events shown above from Take C of “Bird of Paradise,” an improvisation, not even an ‘on the spot’ composition, based on Jerome Kern’s “All the Things You Are” (1939), clearly show the 2x CP as executed by Parker. The entry points and re-entry points (which are also two of the high points) mark the beginning of each 2x CP in mm. 6 and 8. These stressed beats suggest a PS on 2, but there is no confirmation of it. Instead, we observe two full measures of the 2x CP using Parker ‘ivVE’ gesture, which is concluded with another favourite crip that outlines the major 7th from the 3rd and the root known as ‘3and1 Up’ (Clifford Brown was fond of this gesture). This is followed by the second 2x CP, with the same lick schema in minor, transposed a semitone higher, ivVF-, which also ends with an ascending gesture of the minor chord outlined off the 3rd. The harmonic regions and the 7-3 VL, shown in the upper and lower VL layers, confirm the observations made above.

Figure 177. 2X Cross-phrase in 3/8 Meter

The musical score for Figure 177 is written for piano (C mm. 6-8) and bassoon (BOP (Take C)). The key signature is C major (one sharp). The time signature is 3/8. The piano part is in 3/8 meter and includes a 2X cross-phrase. The bassoon part is in 3/8 meter and includes a 2X cross-phrase. The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains measures 1-4, and the second system contains measures 5-8. The piano part has a 3/8 meter and includes a 2X cross-phrase. The bassoon part has a 3/8 meter and includes a 2X cross-phrase.

The entries on the high points and the 7-3 voice leading both conspire to consolidate the musical events shown above.

3:2 and 2:3 Cross Phrase

There is a variant of the cross-phrase that produces combinations of the ternary and duple metrical groupings. This occurs when there is an isolated cross-phrase event: the result is a perceived mixed meter, e.g., 5/4 or 5/8. Because these variants are an extension of and/or variation on the cross-phrase, they are seen as additive, a kind of metrical accretion, and therefore are not an integral part of the basic taxonomic system.

The two types of combination cross-phrase patterns are as follows.

1. 3:2 Cross-phrase
2. 2:3 Cross-phrase

When these combined ternary and duple meter patterns occur within the double-time grid, they are indicated as 2x 3:2 CP or 2x 2:3 CP. This cross-phrase variance does not appear to happen in the half-time metrical grid.

The following example illustrates how the 3:2 and 2:3 cross-phrase defines the opening gestures to the Parker blues “Past Due” (1947).

Figure 178. 3:2 and 2:3 Cross-phrase: “Past Due”

The musical score for "Past Due" is presented in 4/4 time. The staves and their contents are as follows:

- mm. 1-3:** Treble clef, 4/4 time. Chords C^6 , F^7 , and C^6 are indicated above the staff.
- VL U:** Treble clef, 4/4 time. A bracket labeled "3&4" spans the first two measures.
- VL L:** Treble clef, 4/4 time. A bracket labeled "Bourdon" spans the first two measures.
- Past Due:** Treble clef, 4/4 time. Four groups of notes are bracketed and labeled: "432E", "434C", "234C", and "33H".
- Middle Ground:** Treble clef, 4/4 time. A bracket labeled "2:3" spans the first two measures, and a bracket labeled "3:2" spans the last two measures. Below the staff, the sequence "2up RCH Pops3 CH RCH BBS 2up" is written.
- Background:** Treble clef, 4/4 time. A bracket labeled "3:2 CP" spans the first two measures, and another bracket labeled "3:2 CP" spans the last two measures. The letters "MC" are written at the end of the staff.

Henry Martin observes that this is a 5/4 measure, consistent with the above analysis, but an anomaly within Parker's music. The interpretation, as illustrated above, shows the connection to Parker's broader phrase design as illustrated throughout this work. In a similar vein the patterns of accents are very pronounced in this example and are shown as a 2:3 group followed by a 3:2 group.

The following example of the 3:2/2:3 CP comes from the seminal Charlie Parker slow blues recording, "Parker's Mood" (Parker, 1948), possibly another 'on the spot' composition. In his autobiographical book *Raise Up Off Me*, Hampton Hawes remembers:

["Parker's Mood"] begins with a three-note figure contained in a G minor triad – in this sequence: Bb-G-D – and whenever you heard someone whistling those notes in L.A., you knew you were in the presence of a friend. It signified you were using but cool, and when you went to buy dope late at night (which was the usual time to cop) if the bell wasn't working or if you didn't want to jar the Man out of a sound sleep or there might be someone uncool on the premises, you went Bb-G-D in that fast, secret way and the cat

would pop his head out of the window. When Bird first played his “Parker's Mood” I think those notes might have been drifting around somewhere in his head and they just flew right out.²⁰¹

Whether this is true or not, it is a fun story, albeit about a profoundly destructive subject matter. Below is an excerpt, taken from take 4 of “Parker’s Mood,” of the 2x 2:3 and 3:2 CP pattern.

Figure 179. 2x 2:3 and 3:2 Cross-phrase: “Parker’s Mood”

The figure displays a musical score for "Parker's Mood" (Take 4) across four staves. The top staff, labeled "mm. 4-6", shows a treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature, containing notes for Fm7, Bb7, and Eb7. The second staff, "Parker's Mood (Take 4)", shows a treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature, featuring a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes. The third staff, "Middle Ground", shows a treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature, containing a series of notes and rests, with annotations for "2x", "H2", "HTS", "MM_H2", "CHL", and "MM". The bottom staff, "Background", shows a treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature, containing a series of notes and rests, with annotations for "2x 2:3 CP", "HTS", and "2x 3:2 CP".

This excerpt includes more of Parker’s well-worn crips: iiVEb, IV&I GU, and BH. The 2x cross phrase combinations shown above, 2:3 and 3:2 is in the reverse order of those in “Past Due.” Another key characteristic of this excerpt from “Parker’s Mood is the housing of the accented groups, e.g., two 3:2 accented patterns.

The pinnacle of this research’s findings, arguably the most important discovery, is the phrasing structures deeply embedded within Charlie Parker's crips and his metrical shifting of

²⁰¹ Hampton Hawes, *Raise Up Off Me*, Da Capo Press, 1974, p. 12.

them. He used what this research has dubbed the cross-phrase and the phrase-slip to continually displace the meter, bar line, and harmonic rhythm, both as played by the rhythm section and as perceived by the listener. In some respects, these devices are hidden, as Parker resorted to them extensively without sounding contrived or compromising his appealingly melodic, lyrical flow. The implications of the discoveries laid out in the final section of this work are broad and far reaching and have immense potential for further development of original ideas, beyond dogged emulation of the Parker style.

Conclusion

When endeavouring to develop theories that may elucidate a complex art form, such as Charlie Parker's music, with the stringent methodologies required for cogent academic research, the 100% rule is seldom achievable. This is, of course, due to the contradictions and inconsistencies endemic to human behaviour and to an improvised musical art form. These contradictions present humanistic features that exhibit varying degrees of pluralism, ambiguity, and irrationality, which do *not* require resolution; instead, they enrich the complexity and lived experience of the thing. In other words, opposing forces such as these are an intrinsic *feature* of artistic expression and not a negation of it. Friedrich Nietzsche, who had many insightful aphorisms that incisively express the fraught nature of the human condition and the realities within which we are beset, writes, "[t]he unreasonableness of a thing is no argument against its existence but rather a condition thereof."²⁰² The theories developed for this research have embraced this instead of avoiding it, using it to further test the efficacy of the theoretical speculations: musical rules require conceptual elasticity.

Throughout this research, it has become apparent that there are many facets to Charlie Parker's musical concept. Arguably, the most striking aspect was the discovery that Parker's music was antithetical: intensely scripted but always spontaneous. The degree to which his scripts occurred can only be accounted for, in part, through the identification and parsing of the motivic fragmentary formulae. There are fragmentary aspects; however, the motivic properties are insufficient in accounting for the larger schematic design at play. The blues licks and crips identified by this research are generally not fragmentary and, more importantly, often occur in

²⁰² Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*, London: Arcturus Publishing, 2022, p. 241.

combination over longer durational spans. Despite this repetition, Parker's music is never without the element of surprise, even upon repeated listens. Suffice it to say, it is most unusual for something repetitive not to appear so. It is the underlying elements, such as the physical gestures, harmonic obfuscation through the subdominant, accented patterns, asymmetrical groupings, shift of the perceived downbeat, and Parker's playing in ternary meters, that make the repetition feel spontaneous. In other words, the predictable elements (motives) are a 'front,' a kind of 'Trojan Horse;' it is what we recognise, but the many braided layers beneath these motives are what we experience. It is the *motive* behind the motive!

Development of a Theory

The methods used to conduct this investigation into Charlie Parker's music were always based on the interpretation of empirical evidence, not on assumptions: the data (evidence) must guide both the theory and the speculations thereof. Moreover, as a musician who improvises, it is the usefulness of theory that is of primary interest, i.e., if a theory on Parker's music cannot be used to replicate his style closely and provide tools to forge new musical ideas (that retain a tangible link), then a theory's efficacy may be in question. Bertrand Russell helps to clarify this; he writes:

...in mediaeval thinking, the most general principles were the starting point, in science they are the final conclusion – final, that is to say, at a given moment, though liable to become instances of some still wider law at some point... Science thus encourages abandonment of truth, and the substitution of "technical" truth, which belongs to any theory which can be successfully employed in inventions or in predicting the future. "Technical" truth is a matter of degree: a theory from which more successful inventions and predictions spring is truer than one that gives rise to fewer.²⁰³

²⁰³ Bertrand Russell, *Religion and Science*, Oxford University Press, 1935, p. 15.

As Russell states, future outcomes are a reliable measure of whether a hypothesis that becomes a theory is correct, whether in science or in music. And that this is the only ‘technically true’ way to assess the efficacy of a given theory. That Parker’s music gave rise to virtually every seminal jazz musician who succeeded him, both those who copied him and those who used him as a basis for new ideas, is the embodiment of Russell’s assertion, e.g., “a theory from which more successful inventions and predictions spring is truer.”

It is critical to acknowledge that Parker’s countless followers, c. 1950, did not learn his music from a theory book or in a classroom; instead, they did so through immersion and assimilation. An education that can result in individuals who have profound conceptual understanding and superior artistic ability; however, they may not possess the desire or what have you to serialise their knowledge for pedagogical purposes. Barry Harris is a notable exception to this. Through his immense generosity, he tried to codify and share many of Charlie Parker's musical concepts.

Throughout this research, it has become increasingly apparent that there can be no single perspective on a musical concept such as Charlie Parker's. His invertible, helix-like musical continuums, that spin florid expressions of melody and harmony in rhythm, are fundamentally enigmatic. However, because of the structural integrity of his music, i.e., there is nearly always a tangible, observable logic embedded within the underlying structure, it is an excellent source for investigation. This is only one such investigation: there is much more research to be done.

Next Steps

As speculative as some of the observations and interpretations may be, the broader aim of this work is to contribute to the pedagogical arena of jazz education. It is imperative that jazz pedagogy be based on seminal music such as that of Charlie Parker. Moreover, the extrapolation and codification of theoretical principles must be a cornerstone of such pedagogy, as it is in the education of Western Art Music. This research illustrates that within Parker's music, there are highly nuanced expressions of harmony, rhythm, and phrase that were pivotal in the forging of jazz but remain underrepresented in jazz education. In other words, the primary lessons taught in jazz schools should be based on the concepts that underpin music, such as that of Charlie Parker, rather than a model that employs 19th-century harmony and chord-scale theory.

The progressive order of content, as presented in this work, is conducive to developing a course syllabus. The work begins with analyses and theoretical data derived from the foreground layer, then gradually moves deeper into the blues, the voice-leading layers, an exploration of Parker's harmonic underpinnings within the subdominant, blues cadences, and finally the middle ground accents and background phrasing layers, all of which constitute important aspects of the musical gestalt that comprises Charlie Parker's musical concept. The latter two sections, parts VI and VII, represent what is arguably Parker's greatest contribution to the jazz arena: his unprecedented, accented patterns, rhythm, and phrasing concepts.

In jazz pedagogy, it is essential that jazz is taught by example first and foremost, i.e., that the examples used are not simply ones that conveniently fit the lesson being taught, but rather are drawn from repeated instances (examples) of a seminal musician like Parker, which determine convention and therefore, the content and direction of the lesson. As Charlie Parker was one of the key figures who laid the groundwork for jazz today, it is imperative that we begin to

reference what it was that he played and how he played it in detail and with immensely high levels of specificity if we wish to honour and respect that which he was: a cultural icon and a key progenitor of modern jazz (at that time under the pejorative moniker bebop).

In closing, this dissertation offers further insight into Charlie Parker's musical concepts through observation, hypotheses, and theory development, as well as a potential resource for developing pedagogical tools that could be a valuable addition to the rich and evolving sphere of jazz education.

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