

(Eb)

(G)

E♭M7

E♭sus11

E♭M7

Dm7(b9)

G7

Cm7

A♭M7(b9)

Cm7

A m7

D7

G M7

POSTBOP

m. 5

m. 9

(G)

(B)

(Eb)

G M7

A m7

F m7

C m7

(G)

A m7

D7

G M7

JAZZ

IN THE

1960S

1.

A maj7#11

2.

C maj7#11

3.

D maj7#11

4.

E maj7#11

(Ebmaj7#11) (Dmaj7#11)

THE COMPOSITIONS OF

WAYNE SHORTER,

HERBIE HANCOCK,

& CHICK COREA

KEITH WATERS

Fsus9

AM7#11/E

Dsus13

D♭M7#11

Dm7

AM7#11/E

29

29

29

Postbop Jazz in the 1960s

POSTBOP JAZZ IN THE 1960s

*The Compositions of Wayne Shorter,
Herbie Hancock, and Chick Corea*

Keith Waters

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*To my fellow members of the Jazz Piano Collective: Steve Larson, Henry Martin,
and Steve Strunk.*

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INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book is dedicated to a repertory of jazz compositions from the 1960s, a repertory I describe as postbop. It features a number of compositions by Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock, and Chick Corea, along with those of Booker Little, Joe Henderson, and Woody Shaw. I suggest that these compositions depart from or transform some earlier principles of tonal jazz compositions, and require different analytical methods.

Chapter 1 describes features of postbop composition of the 1960s. It illustrates how some principles of postbop compositions intersect those of with earlier compositions, and provides some broad methods for considering features and problems associated with tonal jazz and modal jazz. Chapter 2 regards the work of Wayne Shorter, emphasizing “Penelope,” “El Gaucho,” “Pinocchio,” and “Face of the Deep.” Chapter 3 is devoted to Herbie Hancock’s “King Cobra,” “Dolphin Dance,” and “Jessica.” Chapter 4 examines Chick Corea’s “Windows,” “Inner Space,” and “Song of the Wind.” Chapter 5 features other postbop compositions by trumpeter Booker Little, saxophonist Joe Henderson, and trumpeter Woody Shaw. Finally, chapter 6 offers some further analytical ideas and reflects on some larger questions of jazz’s evolution.

I selected the compositions for this book for different and, at times, conflicting reasons. Particularly with the Shorter, Hancock, and Corea chapters, I was interested in investigating compositions likely familiar to experienced jazz players and listeners (Shorter’s “El Gaucho,” Hancock’s “Dolphin Dance,” Corea’s “Windows”) as well as some compositions perhaps less familiar (Shorter’s “Face of the Deep,” Hancock’s “King Cobra,” and Corea’s “Song of the Wind”). Those perhaps less familiar compositions are also in many cases experimental or ambitious (or both), and offer unusual features of harmony, melody, or form. I also selected some compositions that offered writing for three or more horns (Shorter’s “Face of the Deep,”

Hancock's "King Cobra" and "Jessica," Little's "We Speak") in order to exhibit some details of voicings and arranging in that format.

I do not wish to suggest that every 1960s composition by these composers invites the same analytical perspectives used here. In some cases I selected compositions and not others precisely because those perspectives seemed fruitful. Some readers might therefore find my argument circular: these are postbop compositions because they rely on the features that I described as postbop. But the intent here is to provide a location for a repertory, one that requires different views. There are likely other approaches and views, and many compositions unexamined here may require them.

Talking about jazz composition is problematic. Given the improvisational nature of jazz, lead sheet renditions of compositions are at best idealized versions of compositions that may differ markedly from performance to performance (and even within one performance).¹ Even copyright deposits of lead sheets by the composers themselves (which I discuss throughout this book) may relate to recordings of those compositions in only tenuous ways. Unlike musical scores of Western European music, lead sheets offer plans, not scripts. Nevertheless, examining jazz compositions—even through an idealized lead sheet—casts light on aesthetic priorities. The compositions illustrate how composers refashioned harmonic syntax to evoke ambiguity or clarity. As bebop composers adopted a newer improvisational language into the melodies of their compositions, so too did postbop composers appropriate newer aspects of melodic vocabulary into their own compositions. Formal designs departed from AABA and ABAC song forms. But the use of notated music here is meant merely to complement, not replace, the experience of listening to the recordings.

In this book I rely on nomenclature for chord symbols familiar to jazz musicians. In many cases those symbols merely supply the chord quality and variety of seventh (for example, Dm7 or DM7) and I assume the reader's broader knowledge of appropriate extensions for those harmonies. In some cases, I include extensions (or additional information) when they

1. I repeat here what I wrote in the introduction to *The Studio Recordings of the Miles Davis Quintet, 1965–68* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), xi: "I am aware of problems of ontology that arise from the idea of 'the composition,' that the notion of 'the composition' itself suggests a fixed and idealized entity at odds with the ways in which players freely and flexibly construct head statements. Rather than tend to those particular and interesting philosophical problems, I will use the term *composition* (or, as jazz musicians typically say, the *head* or *tune*) in the way that jazz musicians generally do—that the head relies on flexibly constructed statements of melody, harmony, bass, and rhythm, and subsequent statements preserve certain contours but may alter others."

support the melodic structure or offer alternatives that may not necessarily be inferred by readers (such as DM7#11 or D7alt). In some cases I use slash chords to indicate harmonies that shift above bass pedal points. There are multiple methods to indicate harmonies or harmonic classes, and many of the lead sheets created by these jazz composers show them grappling with appropriate symbols for a dynamically emerging harmonic language.

To indicate intervallic distances (for melodic or bass motion) I use M for major intervals, m for minor intervals, and A and d for augmented and diminished intervals, respectively. M3 is therefore equivalent to the distance of a major third, m3 to a minor third. For convenience, I use these symbols even in the case of enharmonic equivalence: for example, the pitches C-E-A \flat form a M3 succession, even though notationally E-A \flat forms a d4. Elsewhere, I have used interval-class sizes for these distances (i.e., using ic4 instead of M3 to represent four semitones), but specific/generic intervals (such as M3) will be familiar to more readers. In most cases, I use these intervals for ascending and descending motion (i.e., descending M3 rather than ascending m6). The single exception is P4 and P5: there I distinguish between ascending fourth and ascending fifth motion.²

Some readers might note that my discussion of skeletal melody bears some resemblance to the reductive techniques of Schenkerian analysis. My aims, however, are different. They do not make the same claims about tonal structure, structural levels, or organic coherence that Schenkerian analysis does. My intent is to show how melodic pathways sometimes express broader axis progressions or stepwise motion, creating an ongoing continuity.

This book includes and develops some material I have published elsewhere. The Hancock chapter further explores some ideas originally presented in an article entitled “Modes, Scales, Functional, and Non-functional Harmony in the Compositions of Herbie Hancock.” The article “‘Giant Steps’ and the ic4 Legacy” explores how major third transpositional schemes appear in Hancock’s “Dolphin Dance,” Shorter’s “El Toro,” and “Pinocchio.” A number of ideas related to modal jazz and circular tunes (as well as Shorter’s “Pinocchio”) appear in the book *The Studio Recordings of the Miles Davis Quintet, 1965–68*. Finally, the analyses from the Chick Corea chapter appear in “Chick Corea and Postbop Harmony.”³

2. The discussion of Corea’s “Windows” (chapter 4) points to an ascending P5 sequence of minor harmonies.

3. Keith Waters, “Modes, Scales, Functional Harmony, and Non-Functional Harmony in the Compositions of Herbie Hancock,” *Journal of Music Theory* 49, no. 2 (2005): 333–57; “‘Giant Steps’ and the ic4 Legacy,” *Intégral* 24 (2010): 135–62; *The Studio Recordings*

I am unable to list all the individuals who helped me think through many of the ideas in this book. But I have profited immensely from informal conversations with Allan Chase, Marc Copland, Dave Hanson, Andy LaVerne, Brian Levy, and Dave Liebman. Clay Downham, Bruce Dudley, Tom Hojnacki, Henry Martin, Keith Salley, and Micheal Sebulsky read drafts of some chapters and provided excellent suggestions for improvement. In spring 2016 and again 2018, I taught a doctoral seminar on Postbop Jazz that made use of significant portions of this book, and I am deeply grateful to all the class members (in 2016: Ed Brazeale, Greg Harris, Otto Lee, Matt Michaud, Paulo Oliveira, Josh Reed, Rafael Rodriguez, Ben Sieben, Ryan van Scoyk, Heath Walton, and Paul Zaborec; in 2018: Brian Casey, Clay Downham, Sean Edwards, Hugh Ragin, Jonathan Saraga, David Smith, Charles Wofford) who worked through the analyses and offered numerous suggestions for clarification or correction.

I also would like to thank Larry Applebaum, senior librarian at the Library of Congress, for helping provide access to many of the copyright deposit lead sheets. I also owe a debt of gratitude to Lindsay Woppert of Hal Leonard and Luca Balbo of Music Sales for their work in helping me obtain reprint permissions for most of the lead sheets used in the text. I also thank Lauren Brockie of Gelfand, Rennert, and Feldman for her attempts to obtain copyright permissions for the Hancock compositions discussed. Since she was ultimately unsuccessful in those attempts, I have had to rely here on explanatory diagrams (rather than lead sheets) for the Hancock compositions in order to avoid any copyright infringements. Finally, I owe a special debt of gratitude to Henry Martin, Steven Strunk, and Steve Larson. From 1998 until the untimely deaths of Steve Larson in 2011 and Steven Strunk in 2012, the four of us performed, collaborated, and presented lectures together, maintaining a friendship that allowed frequent opportunities to discuss jazz, jazz harmony, and jazz improvisation. In Strunk and Larson we have lost too soon two very profound musical thinkers. It is our quartet—The Jazz Piano Collective—to whom this book is dedicated.

of the Miles Davis Quintet, 1965–68 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); “Chick Corea and Postbop Harmony,” *Music Theory Spectrum* 38, no. 1 (2016): 37–57.

A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

Some of the terms used in this book will be familiar to some readers. Others I have coined to call attention to specific techniques. The following terms are used throughout the book in order to clarify some of the postbop practices discussed.

Aeolian progression: The use of a first inversion M7 harmony (or second inversion m7 harmony) in a progression of two or more chords with the same bass note (pedal point). That first inversion M7 harmony may be heard as an Aeolian harmony or a subset of an Aeolian collection (for example, CM7/E from E Aeolian). Most often the Aeolian harmony is the second chord in the progression, as in mm. 31–32 of Hancock’s “Dolphin Dance” (Esus13-CM7/E).

Axis movement (Axis motion, Axis progression): Sequential harmonic, melodic, or bass motion by a single interval (m2, M2, m3, M3, etc.). Coltrane’s “Giant Steps” uses the M3 harmonic axis throughout (tonicized by intervening V or ii-V progressions), and most consistently uses the M3 melodic axis in mm. 8–15. In mm. 8–15 of “Giant Steps” (and in other cases, as in the Introduction to Corea’s “Inner Space”) a M3 melodic axis is elaborated by other pitches. In most cases, axis harmonic progressions preserve the same chord type (such as M7) when moving through the axis.

A double-axis progression arises through pairs of chords transposed systematically. For example, mm. 21–24 of Woody Shaw’s “Moontrane” creates a broader m3 axis progression with the chords Gm7-Fm7-Bbm7-Abm7-C#m7-Bm7. That double-axis progression is indicated in this book as m3 (–M2, +P4): m3 indicates the motion across two harmonies, and the figures in parentheses indicate direction (+ for up, – for down) and distance for the consecutive harmonies within the pair.