

Charlie Parker & the Genesis of Bebop:

A Transcription Performance Project & Musicological Case Study

by

Turner Hamilton

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Thesis Committee:

Jamey Simmons, Thesis Advisor

Dean John Vile, Thesis Board Director

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APPROVED:

James Simmons, Thesis Director

Director of Jazz Studies

Dr. John Vile, Thesis Committee Chair

Dean of University Honors College

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Abstract

The music of saxophonist Charlie “Bird” Parker is quintessential to the development of modern jazz. This project details a comprehensive examination of Parker’s specific musical contributions to the emerging genre of bebop through a musicological case study of four transcriptions from the Savoy and Dial recording sessions: “Billie’s Bounce,” “A Night in Tunisia,” “Quasimodo,” and “Ko-Ko.” This analysis is constructed around the transcription process, with an aural transcription of each recording, a complete musical analysis, and a live performance of the four transcriptions. Parker’s specific musical contributions are identified in the analysis and contextualized through a biographical and historical narrative that connects these innovations to the other musicians and outside factors that influenced or contributed to their creation.

Preface

For the practicing jazz saxophonist, Charlie “Bird” Parker is a name spoken with due reverence. When I first picked up the alto saxophone in middle school, I was lucky enough to hear the legend early: “Bird lives.” The first jazz book I ever bought was the *Charlie Parker Omnibook*, a collection of Parker’s transcribed solos notated by Ken Slone and Jamey Aebersold. Admittedly, the musical material went way over my head. Even so, Parker’s ideas were captivating. Opening up to “Scrapple from the Apple,” I fell in love with the way his language felt under my fingers. I had little to no formal instruction in jazz and the transcription process but still found myself enthralled by the energy in Parker’s sound, the direction of his lines, and the melodic phrasing that nestled within unmatched virtuosity. I started to notice Parker’s ideas everywhere, in jazz band charts, modern jazz recordings, and live concerts.

Unfortunately, this initial connection was practically the full extent of my relationship with Parker’s music at that point in my life. Before studying music in college, I was immaturely casual in my musicianship, so I never truly delved into this masterful material. This project was inspired in part by the desire to make up for lost time. The music of Charlie Parker warrants a lifetime of study, and while my undergraduate studies brought me closer to his language through the study of bebop, I was missing a deeper connection with its roots. Practically, the purpose of this project, as stated in the abstract, is the creation of a comprehensive narrative of the specific role Parker played in the development of the bebop style. On a personal level, though, it

represents a visceral desire to siphon out every bit of music in these short recordings —
to find my way into the mind of Bird and reconstruct the puzzle of his musical genius.

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I. Historical Context

Biographical Background

The life of saxophonist Charlie Parker is shrouded in mythology, with legends of binge-like practice sessions, lifelong drug abuse, and transcendent musical experience. While not all of these stories are based entirely in truth, they do reflect much of the grandiosity still attached to the life of the father of bebop. Truthfully, as revealed in Gary Giddins' comprehensive biography *Celebrating Bird: The Triumph of Charlie Parker*, Parker's life was not without isolation and turmoil. Parker was born on August 29, 1920 to parents Addie Parker and Charles Parker, Sr. in Kansas City, Kansas.¹ Little is known about young Parker's relationship with his father, as Charles, Sr. was mostly out of the family picture by 1927, but Charlie was very close with his mother, Addie — some even considered Charlie to be spoiled.² At the same time Charles, Sr. and Addie split up, the Parker family moved to Kansas City, Missouri, where Parker completed elementary school before returning to high school in 1932 with a seemingly brand new personality and affinity for trouble.³

Whatever happened in those few years between the move and Parker's thirteenth year is uncertain, but it clearly involved some personal and family trauma. Regardless, teenage Parker had strayed from his pampered childhood — Parker himself often recalled that his dabbling with drug use began around this time, though other sources who knew

¹ Gary Giddins. *Celebrating Bird: The Triumph of Charlie Parker*. (University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 19-23.

² Giddins, 23.

³ Giddins, 25.

him would dispute this claim.⁴ Around this same point, Parker found an affinity for music: he picked up his first saxophone at age thirteen, a practically unplayable alto of unknown origins. A few years passed before Parker fully committed to pursuit of the instrument, but by 1935, he was hooked. Parker began to absorb as much music in the Kansas City scene as possible. He played with amateur groups such as the Deans of Swing, learned his first melody, “Honeysuckle Rose,” and drew influence from touring musicians who passed through the area including Mary Lou Williams, Lester Young, Eddie Durham, Jo Jones, Duke Ellington, Fletcher Henderson, Coleman Hawkins, Johnny Hodges, and many more.⁵ Two of Parker’s biggest influences, though, were Kansas City natives. Alto saxophonist Buster Smith seemingly provided an impetus for much of Bird’s musical conception through his sharp, edgy tone, lack of vibrato, jagged melodic lines, and double or triple time phrasing.⁶ On a more personal level, Parker’s commitment to musical excellence was likely drawn in part from one of his only close friends throughout his entire life: trombonist Robert Simpson. Parker and Simpson, who were close in age, played together at a club called Frankie and Johnny’s, but Simpson died early in their relationship at the age of 21, likely from some sort of heart condition complications.⁷ Parker did not openly discuss his relationship with Simpson or the impact of his death, but reportedly, his regular use of alcohol and marijuana began around this time.⁸

⁴ Giddins, 25.

⁵ Gary Giddins. *Celebrating Bird: The Triumph of Charlie Parker*. (University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 29.

⁶ Giddins, 37.

⁷ Giddins, 39.

⁸ Ibid.

At this point in Parker's life, around 1936, several major events took place that would change the course of his personal and musical progression. First, Parker married Rebecca Ruffin: a close family friend who would be one of the most important women in his life, second only to his mother. Second, one of the foremost legends associated with Parker's musical life took place: the incident with Jo Jones' cymbal. By this point, Parker had already begun to practice his horn diligently, but he was far from the twelve-hour binge sessions that would earn him notoriety in jazz education forever. In the spring of 1936, Parker attended a jam session at the Reno Club, which often attracted names such as Count Basie and Lester Young but was presently presided over by Jo Jones at the drums.⁹ Though this story has been exaggerated in a variety of ways since its occurrence, Parker most likely was struggling to improvise at a fast tempo, but to the band's dismay, he continued to try and fail. After multiple attempts to get Parker's attention, Jones finally took his ride cymbal from its stand and tossed it at Parker's feet. Parker left the stage humiliated, but this event helped to spark Parker's lifelong obsession with practice, which apparently often consisted of twelve to fifteen hours of work in a single day. Finally, 1936 brought another tragedy to the life of Parker. *En route* to a gig with several of his bandmates, Parker was involved in a serious car accident that would leave him hospitalized for back injuries and probably started his use of opiate painkillers and eventually heroin.¹⁰

Around 1937, Parker took a gig that would launch his reputation to a national scale through association with some of Kansas City's most prolific touring musicians.

⁹ Gary Giddins. *Celebrating Bird: The Triumph of Charlie Parker*. (University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 39.

¹⁰ Giddins, 45.

Parker took post as second alto under Buster Smith, which would become an apprenticeship of its own for the young professional.¹¹ This band also fostered Parker's connection with pianist Jay McShann, who, enamored with Parker's already bold and virtuosic improvisation, would hire Parker for his touring band that eventually made its way to Chicago and New York City, where Parker's career would flourish. After a fight with Rebecca and some altercations related to money and his drug use, Parker ended up in New York City for a time, washing dishes and taking any gig he could find to make somewhat of a living.¹² It was here that Parker met guitarist Billy Fleet, and inspired by his chord voicings over "Cherokee" before a performance in 1939, Parker fully realized the use of chromatically-altered chord extensions, which would become foundational to the development of his bebop voice leading and harmonic substitutions.¹³ Shortly thereafter, Parker returned to Kansas City for a brief period following the death of his father. He reconciled with Rebecca for a time, but soon thereafter, Parker left again for a full tour with McShann.¹⁴ While the source of Parker's nickname, "Bird," is debated, it likely began in the early days of this tour, when Parker brought a road-killed chicken, or "yardbird," to a boarding house to be cooked for dinner.¹⁵

Parker's tenure with McShann continued for a few years, giving rise to multiple successful tours and some of the earliest known recordings that feature Parker's improvisational talent. During this period, Parker gained infamy for his virtuosic technique, especially in his contrafactual arrangements of popular tunes such as

¹¹ Giddins, 49.

¹² Gary Giddins. *Celebrating Bird: The Triumph of Charlie Parker*. (University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 56.

¹³ Giddins, 59.

¹⁴ Giddins, 62.

¹⁵ Ibid.

“Honeysuckle Rose” and “Cherokee.” However, Parker’s time with the band ended in an unfortunate manner in 1942, when Parker overdosed on the bandstand.¹⁶ While Parker’s personal life was taking somewhat of a downward spiral by this point, his musical reputation and influence was constantly growing. In 1940, through a mutual relationship with trumpeter Buddy Anderson, Parker made acquaintance with trumpeter and composer Dizzy Gillespie, who is widely considered to be a working partner in the creation of the bebop style.¹⁷ Prior to Parker’s arrival on the New York scene, Gillespie had already ventured into the compositional harmonic substitutions that would, in part, define the growth of bebop. Around the time of Parker’s introduction to the Kansas City scene in the late 1930s, Gillespie was becoming active in New York, forming a brief partnership with drummer Kenny Clarke, whose innovations with swing ride cymbal patterns and conversational comping gave rise to not only bebop drumming, but the eighth-note focus of bebop’s melodic structure.¹⁸ While Parker fell deeper into his drug use, his music continued to elevate through association with these innovators, among others. He began to perform and record prolifically, often alongside Gillespie, until finally, in November of 1945, Parker recorded his first session as a leader with the Savoy label.¹⁹

Beginnings of Bebop

Parker’s Savoy and Dial sessions, which occurred between the years of 1945 and 1948, are widely considered to be some of the first definitive bebop recordings and are

¹⁶ Giddins, 78.

¹⁷ Scott Knowles DeVeaux. *The Birth of Bebop: A Social and Musical History*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 174.

¹⁸ DeVeaux, 179.

¹⁹ Gary Giddins. *Celebrating Bird: The Triumph of Charlie Parker*. (University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 100.

thus the source of the recordings included in this project. However, these sessions did not happen in isolation — they are ultimately the result of numerous historical and cultural pressures, setting factors, and individual contributions. From a historical perspective, black artistry responded viscerally to the end of the Second World War, especially in the vibrant communities of New York City, which is now referred to as the Harlem Renaissance. For the black musicians involved in this movement, this represented the end of the Swing Era as the primary artistic format in jazz music. Prior to this time, musicians such as Count Basie, Art Tatum, Coleman Hawkins, and others had been able to convey deep artistry convincingly and consistently in the format of swing bands.²⁰ However, post-war American culture commercialized this music to the point of contrivance. Genius-level musicians like Duke Ellington had to be clever with their commercial presence to remain relevant, often pushing the idea of blackness through stereotyped stage personalities and sounds of “jungle music.”²¹ White bandleaders had gained popularity, often pushing their black predecessors out of the commercial spotlight. Among masters of swing like Ellington and Basie, for example, Benny Goodman, a white bandleader, was popularly crowned the “King of Swing.”²² Even during the peak popularity of black swing musicians, both the bands and audiences were racially segregated, with clear wage gaps between black and white groups.²³ Due to these factors, among others, black musicians were struggling to excel professionally in the world of

²⁰ Gary Giddins. *Celebrating Bird: The Triumph of Charlie Parker*. (University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 89.

²¹ Michael Borshuk. “‘So Black, So Blue’: Ralph Ellison, Louis Armstrong and the Bebop Aesthetic.” (Genre 37, no. 2, 2004) 263.

²² Borshuk, 264.

²³ Roger W. Stump. “Place and Innovation in Popular Music: The Bebop Revolution in Jazz.” (Journal of Cultural Geography 18, no. 1, 1998), 17.

popular music. By the end of 1940, black musicians were employed twenty-five to thirty percent less than they had been just a few years earlier.²⁴

These pressures, among others, left an artistic void to be filled by the new generation of black jazz musicians. Not coincidentally, these musicians were hitting the scene in urban cultural hubs such Kansas City, Chicago, and New York City. Most notably, New York became the foremost home to the new music: black musicians regularly found work in the ballrooms and nightclubs of the inner city, especially the Harlem neighborhood, where black art was thriving across multiple mediums. Poet Langston Hughes, author Zora Neale Hurston, and painter Aaron Douglas are just a few examples of the prolific creative wave happening in this community, but after-hours in these same neighborhoods, bebop began to thrive. Perhaps most notable was the setting of the jam session. Unlike many popular swing band performances, jam sessions are an excellent sample of the artistic innovation that occurs through the aural tradition. These performances, which often began late at night and ran early into the morning, required their participants to maintain control over common standards, riff tunes, blues heads, and harmonic progressions — all by ear.²⁵ Also contrasting the dance band tradition, jam sessions were some of the first early examples of integrated jazz performance.²⁶

Another factor driving the innovation at these sessions was their informal nature: while they typically occurred at clubs, they would often take place at public parks or private residences. Gillespie, for example, would often open his home to jam sessions, as

²⁴ Scott Knowles DeVaux. *The Birth of Bebop: A Social and Musical History*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 147.

²⁵ Kent John Engelhardt. "Musical and Cultural Factors in the Musical Development of Young Charlie Parker as Demonstrated through Transcription and Analysis of the Improvised Solos of Young Charlie Parker with the Jay McShann Orchestra." (Order No. 3013264, University of Pittsburgh, 2001), 14.

²⁶ Engelhardt, 15.

recalled by Harlem musicians Budd Johnson and Billy Eckstine, among others.²⁷

Additionally, the audience was primarily made up of other performers waiting their turn to play, creating a collaborative atmosphere. This informality allowed the new generation of musicians an open creative forum. For the jam sessions, there was no competition for booking as the swing bands faced. Instead, musicians simply competed internally for feats of musical experimentation and virtuosity, though this did sometimes manifest in actual competition for gigs in a practice known as a “cutting contest.” Naturally, these gigs soon became home to the bebop style that had begun to develop. While the Harlem nightclubs had been hosting these musicians for years, the later 1930s brought the music to 52nd Street, midtown Manhattan.²⁸ For the bebop musicians, this district offered significantly more financial compensation, making it possible to earn a living wage, but for the jazz community in general, it provided an opportunity for swing traditionalists who had frequented the district for years to interact with the new generation of bebop modernists.²⁹ Gillespie, as one example, frequented a club known as Minton’s Playhouse, where he brushed against veteran trumpeter Roy Elridge, who would become a major influence in his style.³⁰ In the mid-1940s and post-war era, though, bebop musicians found a true foothold in the Broadway district at clubs like the Royal Roost, Bop City, and eventually Birdland, named in honor of Parker.³¹

²⁷ Roger W. Stump. “Place and Innovation in Popular Music: The Bebop Revolution in Jazz.” (Journal of Cultural Geography 18, no. 1, 1998), 22.

²⁸ Roger W. Stump. “Place and Innovation in Popular Music: The Bebop Revolution in Jazz.” (Journal of Cultural Geography 18, no. 1, 1998), 28.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Scott Knowles DeVaux. *The Birth of Bebop: A Social and Musical History*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 227.

³¹ Stump, 31.

It was in these settings that individual innovators found a canvas for their artistic accomplishments. Before Bird and Diz, swing-era players had begun pushing the music to its limits. Harmonically, musicians like Lester Young had begun to use chromatic passing tones, such as the lowered sixth and ninth, which eventually led to the use of harmonic substitutions like the tritone substitution, in which the relative tritone to a dominant chord is used in place of the dominant.³² This practice extended to Eldridge, who would be a primary influence of Gillespie with his jagged melodic lines and fluidity in range.³³ Young's harmonic substitutions also influenced Parker, first in the clubs of Kansas City, where Parker drew significant inspiration from Buster Smith, as aforementioned. By the first years of the 1940s, Parker, Gillespie, and Clarke joined other innovators like Thelonious Monk and Max Roach to capitalize on these musical inventions. Monk, for one example, introduced his contemporaries to the regular use of the half-diminished chord, especially in the context of a minor ii-V turnaround.³⁴ This innovation was just one compositional element that defined the bebop sound, and it was taken up quickly by Monk's contemporaries, including Gillespie in "A Night in Tunisia."

These ideas are just a sample of the storm of musical development that pioneering bebop musicians brought to New York City. On November 26, 1945, Parker summarized this trend in the first of multiple legendary recording sessions with the Savoy label. This first session included "Billie's Bounce" and "Ko-Ko," among other standards in Parker's

³² Scott Knowles DeVeaux. *The Birth of Bebop: A Social and Musical History*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 185.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Scott Knowles DeVeaux. *The Birth of Bebop: A Social and Musical History*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 223.

repertoire such as “Now’s the Time.”³⁵ The personnel for this session included Miles Davis, Max Roach, Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis, Curley Russell, with Gillespie playing piano for “Billie’s Bounce” after engagements with Bud Powell and Sadik Hakim fell through for various reasons.³⁶ Though fully dominated by his heroin habit by this point, Parker still managed to produce a series of masterful recordings over the next few years. Notably, on March 28, 1946, he entered the studio for the Dial label in Los Angeles with personnel Miles Davis, Lucky Thompson, Arv Garrison, Dodo Marmarosa, Vic McMillan, and Roy Porter.³⁷ “A Night in Tunisia” and “Quasimodo” were both recorded with Dial, though at separate sessions. As detailed in the “Analysis” section, these recordings represent a synthesis of the musical ideas of early bebop.

“Bird Lives”

On March 12th, 1955, Parker’s untimely death sent waves through the world of music. Within a day of his death, the phrase “Bird lives!” began to appear painted on the walls in Greenwich Village and eventually all over the nation.³⁸ By this time, Parker’s influence in the world of jazz was already immeasurable. Musicians around the country had begun to copy the language Parker pioneered. Pianist Lennie Tristano even “remarked that Parker ought to invoke plagiarism laws.”³⁹ Parker’s influence even penetrated as far as the classical music world, including David Amram’s symphonies and

³⁵ Gary Giddins. *Celebrating Bird: The Triumph of Charlie Parker*. (University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 100-101.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Giddins, 108.

³⁸ Gary Giddins. *Celebrating Bird: The Triumph of Charlie Parker*. (University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 142.

³⁹ Giddins, 12.

John Lewis' ballets, such that Gunter Schuller suggested the term "Third Stream" for this modern jazz-inspired genre.⁴⁰ However, in the mainstream media and academic contexts, Parker's influence was initially ignored. *Time* magazine published an article about modern jazz that focused on white musician Dave Brubeck, and after Parker's death, many newspapers failed to even publish his correct age or first name.⁴¹

Not surprisingly, Parker's influence found a place in the world of jazz saxophone, especially alto saxophone, that has not faltered to this day. Saxophonists like Phil Woods and Sonny Stitt, who gained notoriety in the years following Parker's death, were both called the "New Bird" at various points and were even accused of copying his ideas.⁴² Conscious of the claims against him, Stitt even made the decision to switch to primarily playing the tenor saxophone.⁴³ These Parker followers were not contained to the immediate period after his passing, though. Modern alto saxophonist Vincent Herring draws clear influence from Parker with a clear, vibrant tone and intentional outlining of every chord change in his improvisation.⁴⁴ However, these three individuals are just a miniscule selection of the influence Parker had on modern music. It would be an impossible task to find a competent jazz musician who has not directly studied or been indirectly influenced by the music of Bird. Most 19th century music history courses and even college music theory classes will at least briefly cover Parker's accomplishments. Even in popular music, many musicians have drawn ideas from Parker and his

⁴⁰ Giddins, 14.

⁴¹ Giddins, 16.

⁴² Daniel Raymond Hutton. "Charlie Parker and Beyond: His Legacy and Everlasting Influences." (Order No. 1527326, California State University, Long Beach, 2013), 6.

⁴³ Hutton, 8.

⁴⁴ Daniel Raymond Hutton. "Charlie Parker and Beyond: His Legacy and Everlasting Influences." (Order No. 1527326, California State University, Long Beach, 2013), 9.

contemporaries. Tainted by hardship and addiction, Parker's life was cut tragically short, but his musical influence remains undying, forever echoing the maxim as his friends and followers did in 1955: "Bird lives!"

II. Transcription

Justification

The concept of transcription in jazz can be amorphous in its application. In general, the word “transcription” is an incredibly broad term and can be employed in a variety of contexts. For example, a court reporter *transcribes* the proceedings of a court case. The word simply means to exactly copy some kind of language into another format, but what does this mean in a jazz context? For many musicians, transcription is simply the process of writing down the notes and rhythms played by another musician. In this definition, the process is generally utilitarian in nature, with purposes such as ear training and acquisition of jazz vocabulary. Others may focus their practice on the noun form of the word, spending time “learning a transcription” of a significant solo. For this individual, they are likely referring to the act of reading a notated transcription from a book or another musician. For both of these approaches, the focus is on some sort of notated music as a practice tool homing in foremost on notes and rhythms. While there are clear and meritful benefits to each of these processes, they fail to fully capture the significance of jazz transcription.

Transcription simply serves as a buzzword for an ideological and practical process much more deeply ingrained in the music, we call jazz: the aural tradition. Jazz music owes its history to the innovative minds of countless black Americans who shaped it into its current form, as far back as its roots in African American spirituals and work songs. The nature of work songs and most spirituals is aural, meaning that the music and lyrics were never physically notated, only passed down by ear. Following the end of the

Civil War in 1865, newly free black Americans began to spread this music throughout the country as they attempted to enter the workforce and forge independent lives in a hostile population of overwhelmingly white, overwhelmingly racist, war-torn Americans. This musical tradition, in combination with this time of severe hardship, gave rise to the first direct ancestor of jazz, known as the blues. Early blues musicians at the turn of the 20th century such as guitarist Robert Johnson and vocalist Gertrude “Ma” Rainey pioneered this new genre, which made use of blue note tensions and syncopated rhythms and standardized a chord progression which we now simply call a “blues.” At this point in the history of this music, notation was practically irrelevant — everything was done by ear.

As blues spread throughout the country, it took root in certain American cities, namely New Orleans, Louisiana. By this point, the music had begun to naturally diversify, due in part to the influence of ragtime, which combined jazz rhythms with technical virtuosity and tuneful melodies. Creole and African American musicians in New Orleans, influenced by their own music history and these budding new genres, expanded the instrumentation of what would soon become known as Dixieland music, then swing, then jazz. Most of these groups operated through the use of head arrangements, which basically refers to the practice of arranging accompaniment parts in harmony to a given melody that can then be arranged and rearranged at will. These ensembles also gave rise to virtuosic improvisers and entertainers like trumpeter and vocalist Louis Armstrong, who is generally considered to be the father of jazz.

Members of the blues generation, such as Ma Rainey, as well as Armstrong and other new stars of the emerging genre of jazz began to record prolifically. By the 1920s, the affordability of factory-produced instruments allowed for thousands of amateur jazz

musicians to arise around the country. This was the first generation to experience jazz through records, and thus, it became the first to formalize a foundation for the modern process of jazz transcription. At this point in jazz history, lead sheets and transcription books were practically nonexistent, so to learn a song or a solo, musicians would go to the records. Learning a recording by ear requires countless repetitions, gradually building the listening skills to pick out the notes and rhythms played on the recording. However, through this process, the musician naturally begins to pick up elements of style, phrasing, and musicality. In other words, the aural tradition encompasses far more than what can be notated on a page. The musician may choose to notate the music to share or simply revisit later, but the process is aural from beginning to end.

Over time, transcription became the shorthand term for this tradition. Unfortunately, the term is not always fully understood by modern musicians, especially younger jazz players. In his article “The Complete Transcription Process,” saxophonist and educator David Liebman describes transcription as an “unbeatable tool... a means to an end.”¹ According to Liebman, transcription is an unfailing implement in jazz education. He explains that transcription is the closest thing to an apprenticeship in jazz music apart from actual one-on-one studies with a master musician.² In order to define the place of Charlie Parker in music history, then, transcription is absolutely crucial. Bebop was not just a music of notes and rhythms, as might be found in a book or Internet archive. Bebop is visceral — it is an expression of toil and a call for freedom with intricate stylistic nuance. To understand bebop is to realize the music completely, which can only be done by following the aural tradition.

¹ David Liebman. “The Complete Transcription Process.”

² Ibid.

Methodology

The transcription process involved in this project was done over the course of several months, taking time for each recording to fully learn everything from notes and rhythms to phrase structure to harmonic accompaniment. The work proceeded in the order of the project, starting in May 2021 with “Billie’s Bounce,” proceeding into “A Night in Tunisia” later that month, starting “Quasimodo” in mid-to-late June, and finishing with “Ko-Ko” in August. For the sake of memorization, the notes and rhythms of each recording were learned fully before moving to the next. After the next transcription began, the first was notated and regularly revisited for understanding of style, dynamics, and other more intricate elements. Overall, approximately six to seven hours were devoted to these transcriptions each week, which over the course of about eighteen weeks would total to somewhere around 120 hours of work. After this point, the transcriptions were reviewed regularly in preparation for performance.

The choice to wait until each transcription had been fully completed before beginning to notate it was a measured one. Each transcription would have to be learned in a linear manner. The choice to notate earlier sections while still progressing through later sections would likely have created an imbalance with an overreliance on visual images for the former while still attempting an aural image for the latter. The aim was a pure focus on Parker’s compositional ideas and solos. As a part of this focus, his solos were the only improvised material transcribed from the records. While there is certainly an abundance of merit to be garnered from the work of other personnel, such as Miles Davis, the specific bebop relevance and project work time simply did not allow for this additional material to be included. However, the notated transcriptions were created in

such a way to exactly reflect the form followed on the records, which allowed for recreation of melody and solo structure with any type of instrumentation for the final performance and presentation component. Prior to the completion of the notated solos, a mostly complete musical analysis was conducted as well. Detailed in a later section, this analysis generally occurred during the transcription process, as jazz theory was used as a basis for predicting some of Parker's melodic choices over the chord progressions to fast-track the note-learning process. The analysis, therefore, was included in the aural acquisition of musical information during transcription. Much in a similar manner to the solos themselves, a written analysis was not conducted until well after completion of the aural comprehension process.

III. Analysis

Introduction

This section focuses on the specific bebop innovations used by Parker in both the heads and solos of “Billie’s Bounce,” “A Night in Tunisia,” “Quasimodo,” and “Ko-Ko.” For the sake of continuity with the notated transcriptions (Appendices 1A, 2A, 3A, and 4A), all specific note references will be in Parker’s key of E flat. An accompanying measure-by-measure list of these analyzed musical elements is also included for each transcription in the appendices (Appendices 1B, 2B, 3B, and 4B).

Billie’s Bounce

“Billie’s Bounce” is a classic blues in F, or D in the alto key, that has permeated the jazz vernacular since its first recording for Savoy Records in November of 1945. Beginning with a four-bar piano intro by Dizzy Gillespie, the melody, which maintains an overall simplicity and swagger at a moderate swing tempo, hints at the modern musical language that gained Parker early recognition. Following a pickup on the preceding upbeat, the melody opens with a flatted fifth over a D7 chord and a flatted third just one-and-a-half beats later. Both of these altered tones are common blue notes, which had been common jazz language since the early blues singers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. However, the emphasis of the flat five on the first downbeat of the tune was much less common and would foreshadow Parker’s continued focus on nonharmonic tones and altered chord extensions.

The head continues with a rhythmic displacement pattern in which the same motive is repeated on the & of 4, the & of 3, and the & of 2, which mimics the type of pattern often used by jazz drummers and other comping instruments. Beginning the eighth measure of the form, Parker further foreshadows four major melodic innovations. First, the flatted ninth of B7 is emphasized with a jump up nearly an octave. Next, the fifth of the following ii chord, E minor 7, is prepared a chromatic walk up from below, which, in combination with the preceding flat nine, creates a common bebop idiom known as a chromatic enclosure. Perhaps most interestingly, this chromatic walkup hints at a foundational scale in bebop: the dominant bebop scale. Over the B7 where it occurs, this scale is simply a mixolydian modal scale with an added sharp seven, and Parker hints at this scale by walking up from A (flat seven) to A sharp (sharp seven) to the B “tonic” (now the fifth of E minor). Finally, in the ninth bar of the head, Parker uses a melodic reharmonization technique over E minor 7, in which he melodically superimposes the sharp seven, suggesting an E minor, major 7 chord and its implied harmonic minor scale.

Alongside this melodic material hidden within such a simple head, Parker also begins to develop the foundation for a bebop blues progression, also known as a Parker blues or Bird blues. Each major progression to the IV, to the ii, and back to the tonic is set up by its relative ii-V. Additionally, the IV section also adds transitional harmony returning to the tonic in measure 6 of the head with a G sharp diminished 7 chord. Both this chromatic passing bass motion (G to G sharp to A, the fifth of the tonic chord) and the aforementioned ii-V turnarounds will become central to the development of bebop harmony. The full Bird blues simply adds even more substitute ii-V turnarounds.

Parker's solo begins in measure 17 with the same blue notes of the first bar of the head as chromatic passing tones. This first chorus utilizes some simple blues language and chromaticism, evident in measures 21 and 22. Parker once again references the bebop scale of the key, in which the D major bebop scale uses the same chromatic notes as the relative B7 dominant scale mentioned previously, in measure 25. In this first chorus, Parker also makes repeated use of a melodic turn. The use of turns was not uncommon for bebop's predecessors, but they are idiomatic to Parker's playing and would become part of the ornamented nature of the bebop style. The second chorus begins with some blues language, focused on the flat fifth of D7, which becomes the flat ninth of G7 in the second measure. The only other new material introduced in this chorus occurs in measure 37, where Parker plays the only instance of double time phrasing in this solo. This two-bar idea once again uses primarily notes of the D major bebop scale, emphasizing the A sharp or B flat in measure 38, where it becomes the flat ninth of A7. However, the melodic language in this phrase can be quantified as a turnaround pattern in which Parker emphasizes the A7, walking chromatically up to the third and chromatically back down to its tonic.

Parker's third chorus is reminiscent of the first, with some blues language, turns, and altered tones. However, the latter receives more attention, with the first instance of a flat ninth of the tonic in measure 41 and three more flat ninths throughout the chorus. The final chorus once again makes use of common blues tensions, sustaining a natural ninth and flat third. In measure 60, Parker introduces an anticipation tone, in which the fifth of F sharp minor, C sharp, is played one full beat before the chord occurs. This C sharp can also be seen as a reharmonization for D major 7. Overall, Parker clearly uses some

technical restraint in this recording, focusing instead on expressivity and blues tonalities. However, even aside from the obvious bebop influence in his lone double time idea, Parker manages to include common bebop ideas throughout an otherwise straight-ahead tune and solo.

A Night in Tunisia

“A Night in Tunisia,” recorded not even a year after “Billie’s Bounce” for Dial Records, was originally composed by Dizzy Gillespie under the title “Interlude.” Compared to the original version, Parker’s iteration of this tune adds significant tempo, pushing up to 172 beats per minute, as well as a driving rhythm section and full band ostinato figures. The tune begins with an introduction setting up an Afro-Cuban style ostinato. The melody, introduced by Gillespie in measure 9, makes use of mainly chord tones, with the exception of a flat fifth in the second bar of the first three phrases and a flat ninth in the seventh bar of the form. Apart from these notes, the head is somewhat unique in its use of minor ii-V turnarounds, which are based in the harmonic minor mode of the home key. Gillespie chooses to also include a flat ninth on the dominant chords in these progressions, which is once again evident of bebop’s emphasis on non-harmonic chord extensions.

Parker takes up the melody at the bridge in measure 17, where the flat ninths of both dominant chords are included in the melody. Parker also includes enclosures from the last beat of both dominants into the third of both tonic chords in this section. The melody continues back through the A section into a coda section, which changes style to swing and uses a chromatic passing bass motion. For the first six bars, the bass passes

from C sharp down to B. It then restarts in measure 39 at E, eventually reaching the seventh of E flat in measure 43, then resolving to the tonic of B minor on the upbeat before measure 45. In this measure, Parker begins his famous four-bar solo break, which runs through the relative D major bebop scale in double time phrasing with both stepwise and intervallic motion until the last two beats, in which he implies an F sharp 7 flat 9.

Parker's solo on this tune is fairly succinct over just the repeated A section of the melody. He uses quotes from the melody in measures 53 and 61, and a few turns and enclosures are scattered throughout. In this measure 53 quote, Parker shifts the F sharp to the downbeat of the C7 chord, which implies a lydian sound over the dominant, also known as lydian dominant. There are also two more double time phrases in measures 55 and 59. The former uses the harmonic minor scale in B, but the latter adds further melodic interest in its use of chromaticism for two full beats of sixteenth notes before continuing back into B harmonic minor. While this solo is canonically known mainly for the break in measure 45, this last double time section may be the most interesting innovation. Parker combines the melodic elements of chromaticism and double time phrasing with a diatonic resolution. This type of phrase would become foundational to the growth of bebop for both its technical ornamentation and its juxtaposition of harmonic subversion and clarity.

Quasimodo

“Quasimodo” is a contrafact of George Gershwin's 1928 “Embraceable You,” which was a standard tune in Parker's repertoire. “Quasimodo” is just one of many contrafacts that Parker wrote for the tune and one of few that were ever recorded.

However, it is harmonically unique in that it is not a true contrafact in the traditional sense — the chord progression beneath the melody is altered with some common bebop substitutions. In the second bar of the melody, for example, Parker substitutes Gershwin's passing diminished chord, E-flat diminished, for a common dominant substitution of B flat 7 flat 9. This substitution became common in the bebop era because it uses the same upper chord tones as the original E-flat diminished, but with the added B in the bass, it becomes a different chord with added tension. This reharmonization is echoed in measure 11 through Parker's melody, which implies a G7 sharp 11 over C major through the use of G, F natural, and the sharp eleven, C sharp. In measure 12, a slight timing alteration puts the ii-V to A minor on the second half of the bar, thus doubling the harmonic rhythm with changes every beat rather than every two beats or every bar.

In the B section of tune, beginning at measure 13 with the relative minor, Parker includes subtle voice leading in the melody. In measure 14, he emphasizes the movement of the bass over the turnaround to E minor, playing a C sharp, D natural, D sharp, and finally an E. Harmonically, he adds a passing D in the bass in measure 15 and ii-Vs throughout the section beginning at measure 16, which fill in the space left by Gershwin's measure-by-measure chord changes. Once again, an increase in harmonic rhythm drawn from ii-V substitutions reveals the addition of bebop material to an existing progression. While the typical contrafact focuses its creative innovation in the melody itself, Parker's melody for "Quasimodo" tends to leave room for harmonic interest to be heard. There is one section of double time in measures 27 and 28, but apart from the occasional flat ninth or chromatic passing tone, the melody is fairly diatonic. Its musical interest seems to be drawn instead from its somewhat awkward construction,

with short, disjunct phrases and sudden leaps almost reminiscent of the 18th century *empfindsamer stil*.

Finally in measure 37, Parker launches into a solo that seems to make up for every bit of bebop language that he left out from the head. The entire solo, which spans the first A and B section of the form, is phrased in double time with a combination of chord outlines and scale passages. Parker uses at least four clear enclosures, multiple flatted ninths and fifths, and heavy chromaticism. The solo ends with an application of the G whole tone scale to imply the altered tones of G7 in measure 52. Up until this point, most of Parker's language in these solos has been fairly true to the harmony. While bebop is an incredibly innovative style, it still retains a traditional improvisatory style. The harmony is outlined clearly, as the altered tones in solos are often also included in the accompaniment, and most nonharmonic tones are simply used to voice lead or ornament a chord tone. The type of implied harmony Parker uses in this final measure is almost more reminiscent of the improvisatory styles of late bebop, or hard bop, into modern jazz.

Ko-Ko

"Ko-Ko," also spelled "Ko Ko" or "Koko," is an original melody with solos over the changes of Ray Noble's "Cherokee." "Cherokee" has always been known for its quick tempo, even today, but Parker takes the tune to another level with "Ko-Ko" at a blistering 302 beats per minute. Overall, this tempo, or more specifically, Parker's ability to play clear and varied eighth note voice leading at this tempo, most evidently conveys the musical innovations in this tune. Traditionally, many jazz musicians would use more quarter note or syncopation figures at such a high tempo, and they would tend to repeat

and develop these ideas motivically. While Parker does repeat some ideas, he mostly sticks to rapid-fire eighth note phrases that vary over the course of his two-chorus solo.

Immediately straying from the expected pentatonic melody and AABA form of “Cherokee,” Parker opens his melody with disjunct phrases played without chordal accompaniment. While this melody could fit over the repeated A section of the original tune, it varies harmonically from Noble’s form. The opening of “Ko-Ko” seems to imply a C7 chord, in contrast to the G6 of “Cherokee.” Parker spins the melody quickly into an E harmonic minor sound in the fifth bar, where Noble would have gone to C major. However, by the last two bars of the 32-bar melody, Parker begins to set up a bebop interpretation of the original harmony, with a G blues riff and a quick jump down to D sharp, the augmented fifth or flat thirteen extension of tonic G. This idea is repeated throughout the solo, which starts at measure 33 with the original “Cherokee” chord changes, each time as a phrase ending to set up the next tonic or IV chord. After its introduction in measure 32, this suggested augmented sound appears four more times, in measures 35, 48, 51, 147.

This is not the only example in which Parker’s interpretation tends to focus on chord extensions. For instance, he tends to land on the ninth of A7 more often than not when it occurs in the form, in measures 43, 92, 108, 123, and 156. These note choices are significant; while the use of passing non-chord tones was commonplace prior to Parker’s time, the emphasis of and resolution to chord extensions as phrase endings was far from typical. When this A7 chord occurs in Noble’s original version, for example, the soloist ends a phrase on A7 using the seventh and fifth scale degrees. Parker’s solo on “Ko-Ko”

is packed full of these non-chord tone resolutions, such as the resolution to the ninth measures 67 and 70 in the first bridge for another example.

In addition to these concepts, Parker manages to include nearly every other aforementioned bebop innovation in this two-chorus solo. The whole tune can almost be considered an example of double time phrasing due simply to its incredible tempo, at least in terms of technique. In the second bridge, Parker uses rhythmic displacement, repeating an idea on various beats. Melodic ideas like lower neighbor tones, enclosures, and chromatic passing tones are all present as well, with examples of each in just the first A section. Dominant bebop scales are also frequently employed, with one example being the last A section of the first chorus in which Parker uses the G dominant bebop scale in measure 84 and the A dominant bebop scale in measure 91. Parker also utilizes heavy chromaticism, especially closer to the end of his solo. Just before the last bridge, he plays an incredibly chromatic ii-V idea that ends up incorporating a flat three, flat nine, raised seventh — all on downbeats — among others as passing tones on the upbeats. Finally, on Parker's last measures of improvisation in the out head, he seems intent to fit in as much bebop language as possible over the course of eight measures. This brief interlude includes chromatically passing diminished arpeggios (measures 181 and 182), chromatic passing tones (measures 182, 183, and 187), an enclosure (measure 185), and a bebop scale idea (measure 186).

For the purposes of this analysis, “Ko-Ko” can be seen as somewhat of a synthesis of the information provided in “Billie’s Bounce,” “A Night in Tunisia,” and “Quasimodo.” Realistically, Parker had every bit of musical language from this solo under his fingers when he played the other three. Parker developed the idiomatic musical

language known as bebop in the countless hours he spent in the practice room, but these technical building blocks were filtered through the lens of Parker's musicality on stage or in the recording studio. "Ko-Ko" is significant in that Parker seems to hold nothing back — instead allowing every bit of technique to fill up his two choruses, thus making this solo a prime example of the innovations of early bebop.

IV. Performance

Methodology

In the context of this project, the performance component serves as a controlled representation of the musical yield of transcription. As explained in the “Transcription” section, the process of aurally learning a jazz solo or tune can expand a musician’s jazz vocabulary, or control of common improvisatory language. Thus, the goals of this performance component were twofold. First, it allowed for an opportunity simply to present the unadulterated results of the transcription in a public setting. As David Liebman explains in his article on transcription, musical notation cannot fully capture musical reality, which can be detrimental when trying to capture the essence of the jazz idiom. Performing the transcriptions publicly allowed an opportunity to showcase elements such as style, inflection, sound quality, and phrasing that could not be included in the notated transcriptions here. Second, public performance with a live rhythm section created a setting for application and interaction with Parker’s musical ideas in a real-world setting. Soloists, accompanists, and audience alike were given the chance to hear Parker’s ideas in real time and respond according to their role in the music: melody, melodic support, and listener, respectively.

The mechanics of the performance components were conducted as follows. First, instrumentation was determined according to manageability and accuracy to the record. Parker’s recording personnel varied from session to session, so it would not be possible to use his exact instrumentation without significant scheduling complications. Instead, the instrumentation was selected in order to serve the transcriptions effectively while using

minimal personnel. The final rhythm section included piano, upright bass, and drum set. While the formal structures of Parker's original recordings were followed in performance, the former two instruments replaced solos from the trumpet or guitar players on the record, and the latter also took over solo roles in "A Night in Tunisia," where even more horn players were included in the track. When the instrumentation *did* line up with the original recording, though, these players would take the original solo slots. For example, at the point of a drum set solo in the original, there would be a drum set solo in the transcription performance. The only variation in form occurred in "A Night in Tunisia," where I played an improvised solo of my own to demonstrate the synthesis of musical ideas I had picked up from Parker over the course of the project. Leading up to the performance, we conducted one full rehearsal and one soundcheck rehearsal.

Review & Reflection

The performance component of this project offered both unique challenges and new perspectives on my research. Overall, the performance format itself was not unfamiliar to me. As a music major, I have performed in countless recitals and even publicly played some of the same tunes from this project with the same rhythm section. However, the specific goals of the performance certainly provided a learning experience for me and everyone involved. The typical small group jazz performance is more focused on improvisation, with minimalist arrangements and an open creative conversation. In contrast, the predetermined form and recited transcriptions eliminated some of this freedom, at least on my end. The aim of the performance almost more closely reflected that of a classical performance, in which the performer tries to add as much expressiveness to predetermined music while honoring the intentions of its composer. In

a way, this was the exact goal of the project: to honor “Bird,” and to delve into his music as thoroughly as possible.

On a more detailed note, some specific musical elements presented new challenges and opportunities on the day of the performance. In general, I struggled to find a balance between playing the role of Charlie Parker and finding my own place within the ensemble. I spent so much time practicing the notes and rhythms of these solos and playing them alongside Parker and his rhythm section that when played with my own musical peers, Parker’s language felt out of place in my ears. It was almost like running into a teacher at the grocery store — the simple change of setting created an inexplicable mental friction. This tension manifested itself in an unfortunate way on the performance day.

As part of a commitment to the aural tradition, every bit of music had been learned and practiced only by ear, with notation done strictly for documentation and analysis. Near the beginning of Parker’s second chorus on “Ko-Ko,” I repeated to the wrong A section and found myself lost in the form, unable to reenter until the bridge. It is always an uncomfortable reality to make an unexpected mistake in front of an audience, especially on material that was so thoroughly prepared, but this caused me to find a key element that I had missed in my preparation. I knew the solo thoroughly, but rather than learning it as an interwoven part of the music and form, I had practically learned Parker’s solo in isolation, much like one would commit a speech to memory. Thus, when I mistakenly strayed from the material, even slightly, I was totally discombobulated and briefly unable to find my place in the form.

This was a hard lesson in the excruciating detail of true music learning. In order to truly commit these solos to complete and total isolation, as I have hoped to do, I will have to break the solo apart into phrasal pieces as it fits into the harmonic form, then reassemble it like a puzzle. Some strategies to do this might include chunking the solo, or working on small sections starting at place markers other than the beginning of a section, and learning the solo in other keys, which would force my brain into a new level of harmonic analysis and deeper formal connection.

Overall, though, the performance was an incredibly rewarding summation of the research that went into this project. The audience, many of whom were already intimately familiar with bebop and the work of Parker, had the chance to hear the music presented in a new setting with accompanying research information to create a greater depth of knowledge. For the rhythm section, this connection was likely even deeper, as they were allowed an uncommon chance to creatively interact directly with the actual notes played by Parker. Personally, the performance represented a completion of the first cycle of transcription: listening to the music, learning the notes and rhythms, copying the style and musicality, performing the music independently, and committing aspects of the music to my own playing. Following this first cycle, the second can now begin: listening for new details, relearning the music at a deeper level, and fully incorporating musical concepts as second nature to the subconscious improvisatory vocabulary.

V. Conclusion

Musical Concepts

The documentation of Charlie Parker's innovations in the early bebop era yields a wide array of musical perspectives worthy of study. For the purposes of this project, Parker's innovations, namely in the categories of melody, rhythm, and harmony, are summarized as follows. First and foremost, Parker's playing is rooted in the blues. His ideas were inspired by blues and swing musicians of the early 20th century including Lester Young, Count Basie, Johnny Hodges, and many more. This influence is highly evident in the solos studied in this project. "Billie's Bounce," as a twelve-bar blues, clearly has countless examples of blues language, often emphasizing the flat three or flat five of the chord. The other tunes, though not directly built on blues forms, still contain examples of the blues: "Quasimodo" at the end of the head and implied over B-flat 7 in the solo and "Ko-Ko" with blues ideas throughout the solo. Additionally, Parker uses and expands on the diatonic arpeggio-based soloing often employed by swing-era players like Coleman Hawkins, especially his solo on "Ko-Ko" over the A7 chord and the bridge, for example. However, Parker often extends the arpeggio, going to the nine over A7 for one example, or ornaments the chord tones with chromaticism or melodic turns.

On this foundational language, Parker adds his own mark to the style. Perhaps most commonly recognized, he perfected the use of double time phrasing. Examples include the solo break of "A Night in Tunisia" and the entirety of "Ko-Ko" due to its rapid tempo. Also in the rhythm category, Parker regularly employs rhythmic ornamentation such as turns. These ideas, though intrinsic to Parker's playing and used in

innovative ways, were still likely borrowed from players like Lester Young and Buster Smith. Parker's primary innovations were harmonic, with melodic ideas growing out of them. Parker mastered the use of chord extensions and substitutions. Compositionally, an example of this occurs in the second bar of "Quasimodo," where Parker substitutes Gershwin's original chord for a half-diminished chord, a harmonic concept pioneered in the genre by Thelonious Monk. However, Parker mainly applies these concepts melodically. Another substitution example occurs in the last measure of the solo on "Quasimodo," in which Parker plays a G augmented, or whole tone, idea over G7.

In terms of chord extensions, Parker applies non-diatonic and chromatically altered extensions throughout each of these solos and his original melodies. Using the A7 in "Ko-Ko" again as an example, Parker often ends on, thus emphasizing, the nine extension. Examples of extensions including flat nines, flat thirteens, sharp elevens, and more are found throughout the solos, with one prime example being measure 59 of "A Night in Tunisia" with chromatic passing tones from the third to the tonic then back up from the sharp eleven. Parker integrates these concepts with a couple of practical melodic tools. First, the chromatic enclosure is applied in each of these solos, but most obviously "Ko-Ko," which has at least ten notable examples. Second, one of Parker's foremost innovations is the bebop scale. Parker uses the bebop scale frequently in these solos, though the clearest example is likely the solo break of "A Night in Tunisia" once again, in which the entire passage is drawn from the B minor bebop scale, or relative D major bebop scale.

Significance & Application

In the past hundred years since his birth, Charlie Parker has become one of the foremost names in jazz music. Every musician aspiring to greatness in jazz, or even a basic handle on modern jazz language, will either interact with Parker's music directly or indirectly through the influence of his innovations in bebop. Parker, along with his contemporaries, changed the face of jazz music forever, making bebop into a "personal and cerebral modern music" of virtuosic performance and winding rhythms and harmony.¹ Bird was far from the first to push for a higher artistic pursuit of jazz. However, he did manage to synthesize both the specific musical innovations and general sound and feel that his peers were pushing for. As explained by post-bop saxophonist Charles McPherson: "it was like the collective unconscious, an idea being floated around the planet by different mentalities... but the point is that Bird nailed it."²

In practice, a few major points can be generalized from the detailed analysis of Parker's musical pursuits. First, for transcription to be most effective, it should be done aurally to the deepest possible extent. The recorded music should be committed to memory by ear, but at the same time, it should be related to the chord changes analytically and formally. Second, the foundation of bebop, and all modern jazz language, is chord tones and blues. Diatonic or chromatic passing tones, otherwise labeled as chord extensions, can be used to accent these chord tones or increase tension through placement at the beginning of a phrase, the end of a phrase, or in general on the strong beats. Finally, in any improvisatory setting, musicality is the foremost deciding

¹ Michael Segell. *The Devil's Horn: The Story of the Saxophone, From Noisy Novelty to King of Cool*. (New York, NY: Picador, 2006), 116.

² Segell, 11.

factor. As evident in “Ko-Ko,” Parker had a wealth of musical information ready under his fingers. However, not every song can be “Ko-Ko.” In “Billie’s Bounce,” Parker emphasizes diatonicism and blues language, with just a short burst of bebop double time. In “A Night in Tunisia” and “Quasimodo,” Parker accentuates the double time but often plays shorter phrases outlining the chord changes. Before Parker is a virtuoso, technician, or even an innovator, he is a master musician.

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Appendix: List of Terms

- Head (of a tune): The melody or introductory material of a jazz tune, which is generally played once at the beginning (with or without repeats) and again after the improvised solos (with or without repeats).
- Chorus (of solo): One full repetition through the song form during improvisation.
- Time feel: A musician's personal relationship to tempo (e.g. in front of the beat, behind the beat).
- Blue note: A lowered melodic note in jazz music; often the third, seventh, or fifth degree of the key lowered by a half step or microtonal division.
- ii-V-I: One of the most common harmonic progressions in jazz music; shorthand for the progression of supertonic (ii), dominant (V), to tonic (I) in a given key.
- Chord extension: The notes in a chord above the three-note triad. From a given root note, a triad uses the first, third, and fifth tones, while chord extensions add the seventh, ninth, and so on.
- Tritone substitution: One of the most common chord substitutions for a dominant (V) chord in jazz: a dominant chord built on the tritone, or flat fifth, interval of the dominant.
- Suggested double time: Melodic phrasing and/or accompaniment style changes to twice the original tempo, but the harmonic progression continues at the original tempo (as opposed to true double time, in which the harmonic progression also doubles tempo).

- Turn: Melodic/rhythmic embellishment in which a single note is broken down into the starting note, the note above, the starting note again, and the note below; typically in double time (i.e. within the space of the original note in regular time).
- Anticipation: A non-harmonic tone in which a chord tone from one chord is suggested in the melody line over the previous chord.
- Enclosure: Melodic device in which a target note is anticipated by at least one note above and one note below (or vice versa). May be diatonic or chromatic.
- Bebop scale: An octatonic scale with one chromatic passing tone. The two primary variations are major (major scale, CPT between scale degrees 5 and 6) and dominant (mixolydian mode, CPT between scale degrees b7 and 1).
- Melodic quote: A melodic or improvisatory device in which a portion of the tune's main melody is repeated exactly or with some slight variation.
- Turnaround: Transitional harmonic material in which a major harmonic event, often a return to the tonic, is prepared by use of ii-V chords (i.e. iii-VI-ii-V-I), passing chords, or a similar harmonic figure.
- "Back door" ii-V: A ii-V-I substitution in which the dominant V and its relative ii are drawn from the key a minor 3rd above the tonic (i.e. f minor 7 - Bb7 - C).
- Chromatic lower neighbor tone: A nonharmonic tone one half step below the nearest chord tone.
- Contrafact: A composition that uses an existing chord progression but employs a new melody.

Appendix 1A: “Billie’s Bounce” Notated Transcription

Billie’s Bounce

Transcription for 2021 MTSU Honors Thesis

Charlie Parker, trans. Turner Hamilton

Medium swing ♩ = 160

Intro Head (2x)

1 3

9 G7 G#o7 D7 F#-7 B7

13 E-7 A7 D7 D7

Solo

17 D7 G7 D7 A-7 D7

21 G7 G#o7 D7 F#-7 B7

25 E-7 A7 D7 E-7 A7

29 D7 G7 D7 A-7 D7

33 G7 G#o7 D7 F#-7 B7

37 E-7 A7 D7 B7

A musical score for the jazz standard "Billie's Bounce" in 4/4 time, transcribed for piano. The score is written on a single staff in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It begins with an "Intro" section (measures 1-3) and a "Head" section (measures 4-12) which is repeated twice. The "Solo" section (measures 13-37) follows, featuring various chord changes and triplet markings. The score includes measure numbers 1, 9, 13, 17, 21, 25, 29, 33, and 37. Chord symbols such as G7, D7, A-7, E-7, G#o7, A7, F#-7, and B7 are placed above the staff to indicate harmonic structure. The piece concludes with a double bar line at measure 37.

40 E-7 A7 D7 G7 D7

44 A-7 D7 G7 G#07 D7 F#-7 B7

49 E-7 A7 D7 B7 E-7 A7

53 D7 G7 D7 A-7 D7

57 G7 G#07 D7 F#-7 B7

61 E-7 A7 D7 B7 E-7 A7 D7

Solos over form; head out

Appendix 1B: “Billie’s Bounce” Analysis

Measure #	Melodic	Rhythmic	Harmonic (1st occurrence only)
5	b5, b3	--	--
6 - 8	--	Displacement pattern	--
8	b3	--	ii-V to IV
10	--	--	Passing diminished IV
12	b9, chromatic passing tone (CPT)	--	ii-V to ii
13	Implied reharmonization: E- ⁷	Turn	--
16	--	--	ii-V to I
17	Chromaticism (CPTs) (b3, b5)	--	--
18	Turn	Turn	--
19	Turn	Turn	--
21	Blues	--	--
22	CPTs	--	--
25	CPT	--	--
29	Blues, b5	--	--
30	b9	--	--
31	b3, b5 CPT	--	--
32	Turn	Turn	--
33	Turn	Turn	--

35	Turn	Turn	--
37 - 38	Double time phrasing (DBL X)	DBL X	--
37	CPT	--	--
38	b9	--	--
41	b9 CPT	--	--
43	Turn, b3 turn	Turn, turn	--
46	Blues	--	--
48	Turn, b9	Turn	--
49	b9 anticipation (ANT)	--	--
50	b9	--	--
53	Turn	Turn	--
54	Turn	Turn	--
59	ANT	--	--
60	Turn	Turn	--
61	Turn	Turn	--
62	b3	--	--
63	Blues	--	--

Appendix 2A: “A Night in Tunisia” Notated Transcription

A Night in Tunisia

Transcription for 2021 MTSU Honors Thesis

Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker,
trans. Turner Hamilton

Latin ♩ = 172
Intro

1

7

9

A Head
C7 B- C7 B-

13

C7 B- C#°7 F#7b9 B-

17

B Swing
F#°7 B7b9 E-7

21

E°7 A7b9 DΔ7 C#°7 F#7b9

25

A Latin
C7 B- C7 B-

29

C7 B- C#°7 F#7b9 B-

33

C Swing
C#°7 C7#11

The image displays a musical score for the jazz standard "A Night in Tunisia". It is a transcription for a 2021 MTSU Honors Thesis, based on the original by Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker, transcribed by Turner Hamilton. The score is written in 4/4 time with a tempo of 172 beats per minute, marked as "Latin". It begins with an "Intro" section of 7 measures. The main body of the piece is divided into three sections: Section A (measures 9-16), Section B (measures 17-24), and Section C (measures 25-32). Section A is marked "Head" and "Latin", while Section B is marked "Swing". Section C is marked "Swing". The notation includes various chords such as C7, B-, C#°7, F#7b9, E-7, E°7, A7b9, DΔ7, and C7#11. The score is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). Measure numbers 1, 7, 9, 13, 17, 21, 25, 29, and 33 are indicated at the start of their respective lines. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of measure 32.

37 **B-7** **E7#11**

41 **E-Δ7** **E-7** **Eb7#9** *approximate rhythm*

45 **Solo Break**
generalized over steady time *in time* *drop beat* *3*

47 *3* *3* *3*

49 **A** **C7** **B-** **C7** **B-**

53 **C7** **B-** **C#ø7** **F#7b9** **B-**

57 **A** **C7** **B-**

59 **C7** **B-**

61 **C7** **B-** **C#ø7** **F#7b9** **B-**

65 **B** **Solos** **A** *7* *8*
Head out

Appendix 2B: “A Night in Tunisia” Analysis

Measure #	Melodic	Rhythmic	Harmonic (1st occurrence only)
10	b5	--	--
14	b5	--	--
15	--	--	Minor ii-V (diminished ii, V7b9)
18	b9	--	--
22	Enclosure (EN)	--	--
23	Turn	Turn	--
24	EN	--	--
26	b5	--	--
30	b5	--	--
33 - 44	--	--	Passing chords: chromatic descending bass
35, 39	--	--	Extension: dominant #11
41	--	--	Minor, major 7
43	--	--	Extension: dominant #9
45 - 48	DBL X, major bebop scale, implied F#7b9	DBL X	--
45	EN	--	--
46	EN	--	--
49	Turn	Turn	--

53	Melodic quote, lydian dominant	--	--
54	DBL X, EN, EN	DBL X	--
59 - 60	DBL X	DBL X	--
59	Chromaticism (CPTs), b5	--	--
60	Harmonic minor scale	--	--
61	Melodic quote	--	--
62	EN, turn	Turn	--
63	b9	--	--
64	Turn	Turn	--

Appendix 3A: “Quasimodo” Notated Transcription

Quasimodo

Transcription for 2021 MTSU Honors Thesis

Charlie Parker, trans. Turner Hamilton

Medium swing ♩ = 136
Intro

[A] Head

1 C $\text{B}7^{\flat 9}$ $\text{D}-7$ $\text{G}7$

9 $\text{D}-7$ $\text{G}7$ C $\text{C}\Delta 7$ $\text{B}\emptyset$ $\text{E}7$

[B] 13 $\text{A}-$ $\text{A-}/\text{G}$ $\text{F}\sharp-7$ $\text{B}7$ $\text{E}-$ $\text{E-}/\text{D}$ $\text{A}\emptyset 7$ $\text{D}7^{\flat 9}$

17 G $\text{E}-7$ $\text{A}-7$ $\text{D}7$ $\text{D}-7$ $\text{D}-7$ $\text{G}7$

[A'] 21 C $\text{B}-7^{\flat 5}$ $\text{D}-7$ $\text{G}7$

25 $\text{D}-7$ $\text{G}7$ $\text{G}-7$ $\text{D}7^{\sharp 5}$ $\text{G}-7$ $\text{C}7$

[C] 29 $\text{F}6$ $\text{B}-7$ $\text{E}7$ $\text{A}-$ $\text{A-}/\text{G}$ $\text{D}7^{\text{alt}}$ $\text{F}7$

33 C $\text{F}-$ $\text{E}-7$ $\text{A}7$ $\text{D}-7$ $\text{G}13$

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Quasimodo" in 4/4 time, with a tempo of 136 beats per minute. The score is written for a single melodic line on a treble clef staff. It includes an 8-measure introduction and three main sections: A (Head), B, and A'. Section A (measures 1-8) and Section A' (measures 21-24) are 4-measure phrases. Section B (measures 13-20) is an 8-measure phrase. The notation includes various jazz chords such as C, B7b9, D-7, G7, D-7, G7, C, CΔ7, B∅, E7, A-, A-/G, F#-7, B7, E-, E-/D, A∅7, D7b9, G, E-7, A-7, D7, D-7, D-7, G7, C, B-7b5, D-7, G7, D-7, G7, G-7, D7#5, G-7, C7, F6, B-7, E7, A-, A-/G, D7alt, F7, C, F-, E-7, A7, D-7, and G13. The score also features triplet markings (3) and dynamic markings like accents (^) and slurs. Section markers [A], [B], [A'], and [C] are placed at the beginning of their respective sections.

A Fine
CΔ7 Solo B-7^{b5}

37

39 D-7 G7 E∅7 A7^b

41 D-7 F-7 Bb7

43 C B∅7 E7

B A- A-/G F#-7 B7

45

47 E- E-/D A∅7 D7^{b9}

49 B-7 E7 A-7 D7 straight →

51 D-7 G7

A' CΔ7 Solos **C** Last X D.S. al Fine

53

Appendix 3B: “Quasimodo” Analysis

Measure #	Melodic	Rhythmic	Harmonic (1st occurrence only)
6	--	--	Dominant sub
6	Turn	Turn	--
9	b5 CPT	--	--
11	Implied reharmonization: G7#11	--	--
12	DBL X, CPT	DBL X	DBL X ii-V
15	--	--	Passing bass turnaround
16	b9	--	Extension: dominant b9
18	--	--	Extension: major 13
20	--	--	Turnaround to I
27	DBL X	DBL X	--
28	DBL X, CPT, ANT, EN	DBL X	--
29	--	--	Extension: major 6
30	b3	--	--
32	Harmonic minor	--	Altered dominant
34	b5	--	--
35	Blues	--	--
37 - 41	DBL X	DBL X	--

39	b5	--	--
40 - 41	Harmonic minor	--	--
41	CPT	--	--
44 - 53	DBL X	DBL X	--
44	b5, b9	--	--
45	b5, harmonic minor, EN	--	--
46	b9, CPTs	--	--
47 - 48	--	--	Passing bass substitution
47	EN	--	--
48	EN, harmonic minor, CPTs	--	--
49	EN, ANT	--	--
50	--	Straight 8ths	--
51	CPT	--	--
52	Whole tone scale	--	--

Appendix 4A: “Ko-Ko” Notated Transcription

Ko-Ko

Transcription for 2021 MTSU Honors Thesis

Charlie Parker, trans. Turner Hamilton

Up-tempo swing ♩ = 302

Head

Trumpet Solo

20

25

A

Solo
G6

D-7

G7

37

C Δ ⁷

F7

41

G6

A7

45

A-7

E7b9

A-7

D7#5

49

G6

D-7

G7

53 $C\Delta^7$ F^7

57 G^6 A^7

61 $A-^7$ D^7 G^6

65 B $Bb-^7$ E^b7 $A^b\Delta^7$

69 $G\#-^7$ $C\#^7$ $F\#\Delta^7$

73 $F\#-^7$ B^7 $E\Delta^7$

77 $E-^7$ A^7 $A-^7$ $D^7\#^5$

81 A' G^6 $D-^7$ G^7

85 $C\Delta^7$ F^7

89 G^6 A^7

93 A-7 palm key D7 G6

97 **A** G6 D-7 G7

101 CΔ7 F7

105 G6 A7

109 A-7 E7b9 A-7 D7#5

113 G6 D-7 G7

117 CΔ7 F7

121 G6 A7

125 A-7 D7 G6

129 **B** Bb-7 Eb7 AbΔ7

133 $G\#-7$ $C\#7$ $F\#\Delta7$

137 $F\#-7$ $B7$ $E\Delta7$

141 $E-7$ $A7$ $A-7$ $D7\#5$

145 A' $G6$ $D-7$ $G7$

149 $C\Delta7$ $F7$

153 $G6$ $A7$

157 $A-7$ $D7$ $G6$

161 *Open Drum Solo* *Head*

169 *1st x only* *Trumpet Solo* 8

181



Appendix 4B: “Ko-Ko” Analysis

Measure #	Melodic	Rhythmic	Harmonic (1st occurrence only)
All	DBL X feel (302 bpm)	DBL feel (302 bpm)	DBL X feel (302 bpm)
17	Harmonic minor	--	--
20	Harmonic minor	--	--
21	CPT	--	--
23	CPT, CPT	--	--
24	Lower neighbor (LN)	--	--
33	EN	--	Extension: major 6
34	LN	--	--
35	EN, b9/#5 ANT	--	--
42	b9 CPT	--	--
43	EN, b9 CPT	--	--
44	EN, implied diminished arpeggio	--	--
45	b9 ANT	--	--
46	b9	--	Extension: dominant b9
47	CPTs	--	--
48	b9	--	Extension: dominant #5
49	CPT, EN	--	--

50	LN	--	--
51	EN, b9/#5 ANT	--	--
55	Blues	--	--
57	b9 CPT	--	--
58	EN	--	--
61	CPTs	--	--
66	CPTs	--	--
70	CPTs	--	--
74	CPT, dominant bebop scale (DBS)	--	--
75	CPT	--	--
76	ANT	--	--
77	EN	--	--
78	Diminished dominant substitution (b9)	--	--
79	Harmonic minor, b9 CPT	--	--
83	CPT	--	--
84	DBS, CPT	--	--
88	b9	--	--
91	DBS, CPT	--	--
99	DBS, CPT	--	--
100	Augmented dominant	--	--
104	CPTs	--	--
107	DBS, CPT	--	--
110	b9	--	--

113	CPTs	--	--
114	b3, LN	--	--
115	CPTs, LN	--	--
116	CPT	--	--
117	DBS, CPT	--	--
121	CPTs	--	--
125	CPT	--	--
126	CPTs (b3, b9)	--	--
127	b3, EN	--	--
129	--	Rhythmic displacement	
130	ANT	--	--
134	DBS	--	--
135	CPTs (b3, b9)	--	--
140	CPT	--	--
142	b3 CPT	--	--
143	b9 CPT	--	--
145	LN	--	--
146	b9, CPTs	--	--
147	b9/#5 ANT	--	--
152	CPTs	--	--
155	DBS	--	--
157	Blues	--	--
159	CPTs	--	--
160	CPT, #5	--	--
181	Diminished	--	--

182	Diminished	--	--
183 - 184	CPTs	--	--
185	EN	--	--
186	DBS	--	--
187	CPTs	--	--