

COLTRANE PLAYS THE BLUES: MULTI-LEVEL COHERENCE AND
STYLISTIC TENDENCIES

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Music in partial fulfillment of the
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ABSTRACT

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By

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As a principal musical figure of the twentieth century, John Coltrane created a legacy that still resonates with listeners. Similarly, the blues may be regarded as one of the most iconic genres of the twentieth century. This dissertation examines Coltrane's shifting stylistic tendencies to the blues and explores structural relationships with reductive voice leading analysis. As a variation form, the blues poses issues of continuity since every chorus may be regarded as self-sufficient and internally closed. Voice leading analysis provides a powerful explanation for the fact that Coltrane's blues solos may be perceived as structurally unified. I also develop a topology of Coltrane's use of sentence structures and analyze how they express and reinforce deeper structural levels on the middleground and foreground. While voice leading analysis *à la* Schenker has been applied to jazz, no publications exclusively explore Coltrane and his blues output. The scope of the dissertation ranges across Coltrane's entire career, including his earliest recordings, which are virtually unexplored in scholarly research. Since Coltrane's blues output has not been systematically addressed, I hope that my project will lay the groundwork for further discourse.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation is a humble attempt to gain deeper understanding of certain aspects of the music of John Coltrane, whose diligence, knowledge, and music still resonates with and inspires so many. I am indebted to his art and black artists like him, who have lived their lives in pursuit of this art form in the midst of unimaginable adversity. I feel extraordinarily privileged to have had the opportunity to pursue my Ph.D. at the Graduate Center, where I have learned more than I could have ever anticipated.

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While studying at the GC I was and am still fortunate to teach at Juilliard MAP where I have received continuous support from the administrative director Rebecca Reuter and my colleague Sam Nester. For the teaching component of my GC fellowship I was placed at my *alma mater* CCNY where Prof. Shaugh O'Donnell and Prof. Chad Jenkins assigned a broad spectrum of classes to me from which I learned tremendously.

The unmeasurable emotional support I have received from my mother Susanne, stepfather Reinhold, brother Raphael, and girlfriend Yüting, helped me to get through the most demanding and challenging periods this long process. They always believe more in me than I ever could, and I will be forever grateful for all their love.

This dissertation was completed amidst a global viral pandemic, the ensuing economic turmoil, and much needed calls for justice and equality. I'd like to conclude with a quote by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. from his opening address of the 1964 Berlin Jazz Festival, which expresses many sentiments of this project and our times:

The Blues tell the story of life's difficulties, and if you think for a moment, you will realize that they take the hardest realities of life and put them into music, only to come out with some new hope or sense of triumph. This is triumphant music...Everybody has the Blues. Everybody longs for meaning. Everybody needs to love and be loved.

Everybody needs to clap hands and be happy. Everybody longs for faith. In music, especially this broad category called Jazz, there is a steppingstone towards all of these.

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Introduction

On June 29th, 2018, Impulse Records released the album *Both Directions at Once: The Lost Album*, containing tracks Coltrane recorded with his quartet in 1963.¹ The release of the album, recorded on tape roughly four years before his death in 1967, features the B♭ blues “Untitled Original 11383” as its opening track as well as the song “Slow Blues” in F. The publication of *Both Directions at Once* sparked a wave of rekindled interest in Coltrane and was likened to “finding a new room in the great pyramid” by saxophone luminary Sonny Rollins.² The media attention as well as the expected uproar within the jazz community surrounding the rediscovery of this lost album repositioned Coltrane in the limelight of contemporary cultural attention.

Recorded versions of various blues by Coltrane date back to the year 1946, when he was only twenty years old. During the early period of his professional career, Coltrane worked as a sideman in rhythm & blues bands such as those led by Billy Valentine and Gay Crosse, respectively, as well as prominent bebop groups such as the Dizzy Gillespie quintet where the blues was ever-present. Because there exist blues recordings over the course of Coltrane’s entire career, they enable a fruitful analytical avenue into a study of his stylistic transformations, devices, and artistic personality as an improviser and composer. Yet despite the prevalence of the blues in Coltrane’s career, the saxophonist’s relationship to the blues has thus far only been either partially or indirectly addressed by jazz scholars.

This dissertation will explore the connection between John Coltrane and the blues, examining phrase structure, the deployment of motives, and voice-leading structures accessed

¹ John Coltrane, *Both Directions at Once: The Lost Album*, Impulse! B0028228-02, 2018, CD.

² Ben Beaumont-Thomas, “‘A New Room in the Great Pyramid’: Lost 1963 John Coltrane Album Discovered,” *The Guardian*, June 8, 2018.

through a modified-Schenkerian approach. Our three analytical concerns are considered in tandem to illustrate how Coltrane's music is organized from a global *and* a local perspective. Motivic analysis is an integral part of Schenkerian theory and should not be conceived as a separate analytical tool. The inclusion of *Formenlehre* enables the contextualization of phrase-level structures within the larger voice-leading context. This approach affords the analyst a more nuanced view of the manner in which various musical structures operate on different levels. Schenkerian theory provides a framework for analyzing the overarching multi-level coherence of Coltrane's blues solos. Since the blues is essentially a variation form, deeper-level voice leading analysis can provide insight into how large-scale improvisations range across chorus-level boundaries. While scholars have thus far underemphasized the importance of the blues in Coltrane's output, I contend that an examination of his developing approach to that genre provides crucial insight into the trajectory of his compositional and improvisational thinking. In short, this dissertation proposes that the blues plays a far more integral role in Coltrane's artistic development than had been previously assumed. Indeed, I suggest that the blues served Coltrane as a testing ground for the continual development of his style. By examining changes to Coltrane's approach to blues recordings over the course of his career, one witnesses important shifts in his stylistic identity as a composer and improviser. Furthermore, I will take account of and identify the idiosyncratic improvisational devices that Coltrane utilized in the blues.

The blues' comparative harmonic simplicity along with the brevity of its form make it a useful testing ground for experimentation in regard to improvisational ideas and concepts. The blues is however not simply a song form but also a vernacular, a vocabulary, a harmonic practice, a performance practice, an expression of lamentation and overcoming, as well as a sounding object laden with cultural heritage and identity. The legendary jazz saxophonist Dexter

Gordon stated that “if you can’t play the blues you might as well forget it.”³ Gordon’s acclaimed twenty-first century colleague, Mark Turner, postulated that he “actually believes the blues to be sacred” in a recent interview.⁴ Doubtless, the blues plays an integral role within jazz and the culture of its performers, audiences, and indeed the entire western cultural hemisphere. Since Coltrane made around 180 blues and blues-based recordings, the form represents a highly significant portion of his overall oeuvre.⁵ In consequence a thorough survey of how one of the most celebrated jazz musicians of all time approached the blues is not only an intriguing undertaking but a necessary one. For the sake of presenting the full spectrum of the blues, the examples in this dissertation are chosen to demonstrate the rich diversity of the genre. All pieces are analyzed and introduced in chronological order to afford insight into the shifting tendencies Coltrane applied in his approaches to the blues.

Various analytical presentations and interpretative avenues are employed. Longer solos are represented as deep middlegrounds with foreground snapshots, while shorter solos are included in their entirety. The appendix includes full graphs of longer solos. I generally indicate whether Coltrane adheres to normative harmonic scenarios or superimposes alternative pathways. Careted numbers (eg.: $\hat{5}$) signify pitches of the overarching key, while uncareded numbers (e.g.: 5) refer to local pitches. The notion of consonance and dissonance is highly dependent on the respective analytical level that is the presumed vantage point of a given discussion. Generally, pitches of a key’s base triad (root, third, fifth) are considered to be structurally superordinate and all other pitches are deemed dependent on them. Throughout the

³ Mike Joyce, “Dexter Gordon: At the Source,” *The Washington Post*, September 24, 1982.

⁴ Kevin Sun, “Every Single Tree in The Forest: Mark Turner as Seen by His Peers,” *Music & Literature*, July 23, 2015.

⁵ See the blues discography in the appendix for detailed and chronologically ordered information about all of Coltrane’s blues output.

project I employ terms that are associated with Schenkerian theory and borrowed from other theoretical models (e.g. rotation, retransition, etc.). Please see the glossary at the end of this introduction for such terms and their use.

All improvisations and written heads, as well as the analytical graphs were transcribed and entered into Sibelius by me. Even though I have played and studied Coltrane's music for almost two decades, the transcription process often required a slowing down of the songs to 20% of their original tempo to ensure that the correct pitches and harmonies were entered.

The dissertation is divided into four chapters: Chapter 1: Methodology; Chapter 2: Early Coltrane; Chapter 3: Middle Period; Chapter 4: Late Period.

The first chapter lays out the analytical apparatus, which is applied throughout the dissertation. The methodology centers around the application of Schenkerian theory and integrates motivic and *Formenlehre* aspects with special focus on sentence structures. Since Schenker's analytical approach was originally devised for Austro-Germanic common practice music, I present some of the contributions to the field of jazz studies and discuss some of the issues that may arise from the application of the orthodox system. The central hypothesis regarding motivic analysis is based on prototypical motives which are composed out variously on different structural levels. This approach enables me to explore how motives function on diverse levels and observe how they stand in dialogue, expressing and reinforcing larger voice leading structures. On the middleground level, foreground diminutions of motives are sometimes unified through sentential phrase structures, for instance. In Coltrane's blues writing, sentential structures constitute a significant portion of his output. In his blues improvisations, sentences are likewise the most readily identifiable means of phrase structural organization. The sentential paradigm has not been explored in the context of the blues and Coltrane's music. The chapter

hence includes a topology of Coltrane's written blues material, which is assessed through the lens of sentential readings. Lastly, I present a discussion of periodization within the context of Coltrane studies.

The scope of the second chapter ranges from Coltrane's earliest blues recording to the last sessions before joining Miles Davis's band in 1955. The five blues solos featured in the second chapter chronicle Coltrane's approach, which already contains the stylistic tendencies that are observed throughout his career. While his earliest solos still show significant influences by other artists such as Charlie Parker and Lester Young, the consolidation of his own voice becomes evident throughout the pieces of the second chapter.

The third chapter is devoted to Coltrane's middle period and extends to the year 1959. The year was chosen as a significant date in which Coltrane recorded *Giant Steps*, which may be interpreted as the pinnacle of his scale-running and changes-driven style, while his contributions to Davis's *Kind of Blue* foreshadow this developing focus on modal music. The four pieces of the third chapter highlight the rich diversity of the blues spectrum.

Coltrane recorded his final studio take of a blues in 1965 two years before his death. The fourth chapter presents two blues, which were recorded in 1962 and 1964, illustrating how his approach shifted and how the blues seemed to have become a remnant of his earlier career, which he gradually phased out of his repertoire. As an arguably commercialized genre with a rigid 12-bar form, the blues does not seem to have the same potential to convey what Coltrane was pursuing throughout the later stages of his life. Yet, although Coltrane omitted the blues song form he continued invoking elements of the blues language.

In the conclusion, I summarize my analytical findings and present Coltrane's shifting approaches to blues improvisation while answering and addressing the following research questions:

- 1) What are the structures operating at deeper levels in Coltrane's music?
- 2) What are the relationships between structures (VL strands, sentences, motives) occurring on various structural levels?
- 3) How is overarching coherence achieved within the context of variation form?
- 4) What are the discernible stylistic differences in Coltrane's approach?
- 5) How does Coltrane use sentence structures within the blues?
- 6) How do Coltrane's motives operate on multiple structural levels?

De/Reframing Music Theory

As I was putting the finishing touches on this dissertation, a much-needed pronouncement by Philip Ewell (Hunter College and the CUNY Graduate Center) garnered wide attention in the field of music theory. In his presentation before the Society for Music Theory and his article published in *Music Theory Online*, Prof. Ewell voiced an important call for action demanding the examination and dismantling of the “white racial frame” in music theory.⁶ Although Ewell’s points are profound and important enough to deserve far more attention than I can add in a *post factum* manner, I’d be remiss not to at least briefly recognize some of the intersections between his points and my dissertation.

Ewell’s blog posts, article, and presentation focus primarily on notated music and composers of the so-called “classical tradition.” While he advocates considering the music of non-white musicians, he doesn’t draw specific attention to jazz, nor does he derive any particular lessons from improvisation-based music. And yet, as I hope to reinforce throughout this

⁶ Philip Ewell, “Music Theory and the White Racial Frame,” *Society of Music Theory Plenary*, November 9, 2019, <https://vimeo.com/372726003>; Philip Ewell, “Music Theory and the White Racial Frame,” *Music Theory Online*, June, 2019, <https://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.20.26.2/mto.20.26.2.ewell.html>. I also want to point the reader to Prof. Ewell’s blog posts in which he addresses many issues pertaining to and surrounding his MTO article and SMT presentation: <https://musictheorywhiteracialframe.wordpress.com>

dissertation, refusing to draw a hard and fast line between composition and improvisation affords us opportunities to rethink and reframe music-theoretical discourse in ways that Ewell advocates.

Indeed, I hope that my dissertation fulfills some of Ewell's proposed recommendations in a practical way, without engaging in what Ewell terms "solutionism." That is, my project does not simply encourage another application of a putatively questionable system to another body of music, nor is it an attempt to forge a kind of "exceptionalism" for John Coltrane or other jazz figures. I am not suggesting that Coltrane is acceptable insofar as he composes in a manner that would be recognizable within the context of "classical" masters. Rather, I am interested in employing specific aspects of Schenker's analytical techniques (not the totalizing theoretical underpinnings Schenker wedded to those techniques) in order to get at an element of Coltrane's music that most listeners find a compelling part of his output: continuity. I do not believe that examining continuity in this music is to place it within the terms of the "white racial frame" insofar as I do not consider continuity an inherently white musical characteristic. There are different manners and modes of continuity and there are musical modes of employing *discontinuity*. Tracing those discontinuous moments in music would be an equally rewarding enterprise. But Coltrane himself, as evidenced in numerous interviews (some of which are discussed in this dissertation) privileged continuity. Tracing how continuity operates in his music on his terms strikes me as a worthwhile endeavor and selected aspects of Schenker's analytical approach seem to be conducive to that endeavor.

This effort to analytically explore the musical manifestations of a value that Coltrane explicitly professed seems to resonate with Ewell's recommendations. Ewell advocates, among other things: "diversifying repertoires to include the music of nonwhite composers" and not

privileging “the compositional and theoretical work of whites over nonwhites.”⁷ Moreover, Ewell expresses that he is in favor of retaining Schenkerian research and pedagogy, insisting that he does “not suggest that we stop teaching Schenkerian analysis, or that scholars should cease their work thereon—there are of course many significant scholarly inquiries in this area of research.”⁸

Now, a difficult and troubling issue arises here as it does in Ewell’s presentations and while I certainly cannot pretend to address it fully in this limited space, it is well worth broaching, however briefly. Can we divorce the analytical techniques that we deem useful in tracing musical continuities from the theoretical apparatus that, as Ewell demonstrates, relies on a view of hierarchical structures that are pernicious when applied to human societies? Indeed, there are several questions operative here. First, can we divorce the analytical from the theoretical? Carl Schachter, in a thoughtful examination of this issue, suggested we can, at least to a certain extent.⁹ Second, does Schenker’s view of human hierarchy relate to his view of musical hierarchy? Ewell demonstrates that, for Schenker, hierarchy arose from nature and applied equally to human society and music. Third, given this fact, need Schenker be correct that musical hierarchy is directly connected to human hierarchy? Here I feel the jury is still out.

Across cultures, hierarchy plays some role in most forms of music. Certain beats are stronger than others, certain notes are more central than others, certain instruments take a leadership role in comparison to others. The question isn’t whether or not there is hierarchy in music. The question is: does that hierarchy always operate in the same manner? Is it Schenker’s

⁷ Ibid., sections 1.2. and 2.1.

⁸ Ibid., section 4.6.1.

⁹ Carl Schachter, “Elephants, Crocodiles, and Beethoven: Schenker’s Politics and the Pedagogy of Schenkerian Analysis,” *Theory and Practice* 26 (2001).

form of hierarchy or nothing? Clearly the answer to that is: no. The analyses in this dissertation demonstrate that Coltrane's sense of continuity and hierarchy derive from his space within a jazz tradition. There are resonances with the kinds of things we would find in "classical" composers but there are also notable differences. Anyone familiar with Schenker's own analyses of the music he discussed will immediately recognize that this is *not* the kind of music Schenker would have found musically sound. I don't think it is a question of not being able to "use the master's tools to dismantle the master's house" and clearly Ewell doesn't think so either.¹⁰ Rather we need be concerned with using those tools adequately, with an awareness of their limitations and a concern for what values they might be covertly bringing to bear on our work.

Glossary

<i>Anstieg</i>	Initial Ascent
b.i.	Basic Idea ¹¹
<i>Bassbrechung</i>	Fundamental bass arpeggiation
BG	Background
c.i.	Contrasting Idea
C.S.	Consonant Skip
C.T.	Cover Tone
Cadential segment	Measures 9-10 of the blues form
DN	Double Neighbor
FG	Foreground
<i>Führender Zug</i>	Superior Structural Line
Head	Composed melody of a blues
Internal closure	Chorus-level closure
<i>Kopfton</i>	The first note of the structural melodic 5 or 3 descent
LIP	Linear Intervallic Progression
LN	Lower neighbor
LP	Linear Progression
MG	Middleground
N	Neighbor note
<i>Nebenlinie</i>	Secondary Structural Line
Post-cadential space	Measures 11-12 of the blues form

¹⁰ Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," in *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings By Radical Women of Color*, Ed. Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldua (New York: Kitchen Table, 1983), 99.

¹¹ I have adopted William Caplin's notation system, which uses lower-case abbreviations for basic ideas and contrasting ideas.

Prg.	Linear Progressions
Retransitional	Applied in context with V7 in m. 12.
Rotation	One Blues Chorus
<i>Schicht</i>	Structural Level
UN	Upper Neighbor
<i>Urlinie</i>	Structural Descent or Fundamental Line
<i>Ursatz</i>	Combination of <i>Urlinie</i> and the <i>Bassbrechung</i>
VL	Voice Leading
VLS	Voice Leading Strand
I ⁷	Dominant seventh chord ¹²
C ⁷	Dominant seventh chord

¹² The superscript Arabic number 7 without preceding abbreviations or symbols such as M, Ma, Maj., or Δ denotes dominant seventh chords for the purposes of this dissertation.

Chapter 1. Methodology: Analytical Apparatus and Periodization

In this chapter I will discuss the analytical apparatus of this dissertation and how I have adapted it to modern tonal jazz. First, I will elaborate on some general issues pertaining to the application of modified Schenkerian analysis to Coltrane's blues solos. Second, because Schenker considered motivic analysis an integral part of his system, I will proceed by detailing my analytical approach to Coltrane's use of motives.¹ The third section covers elements of *Formenlehre* in Coltrane's blues music with special emphasis on sentential structures. The three components of the analytical apparatus are applied in tandem within the analytical graphs. The central aim in choosing these specific tools is to provide comprehensive insight into the blues output of Coltrane's career, and demonstrate how multi-level and overarching coherence is established. While overarching VL structures show how solos are coherently unified across chorus-level boundaries, motives and sentences illustrate how VL structures are reinforced at the foreground and middleground levels. Moreover, this analytical framework provides a unique way to chart the evolution of Coltrane's style over time. I will conclude with comments on the periodization of Coltrane's work and present my choices for the specific compartmentalization into the periods that I present in this dissertation.

¹ Heinrich Schenker, *Harmony*, (London: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 4. In regard to motives and their importance for his system Schenker states that “music became art in the real sense of this word only with the discovery of the motif and its use...Through the motif, music could finally be art, even without a pattern in nature, without, however, giving up those other inspirations which convey, so to speak, second hand or indirectly, other associations from nature.” Schenker also describes the centrality of motives in his article *The Spirit of musical Technique*, which is included in Robert Morgan, *Becoming Heinrich Schenker: Music Theory and Ideology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 41-59.

1. Schenkerian Analysis and Tonal Jazz

Scholars such as Henry Martin have proposed a revamping and expansion of Schenkerian analysis (neo-Schenkerian, modified Schenkerian) to account for its application to genres outside the Austro-Germanic common practice canon.² Steve Larson on the other hand has favored maintaining orthodox Schenkerian strictures in the analysis of jazz.

Schenkerian analysis is a powerful tool for providing insight into the structural organization and long-range coherence of tonal jazz. The utility of Schenkerian analysis has been successfully demonstrated by Henry Martin, Steve Larson, Stephen Gilbert, Benjamin Givan, Allen Forte, David Heyer, and others.³ In his article “Schenkerian Analysis of Modern Jazz: Questions about Method,” Larson poses and responds to three hypothetical questions critics might voice against applying Schenkerian analysis to jazz.⁴

- (1) Is it appropriate to apply to improvised music a method of analysis developed for the study of composed music?
- (2) Can features of jazz harmony (ninthths, elevenths, and thirteenthths) not appearing in the music Schenker analyzed be accounted for by Schenkerian analysis? and
- (3) Do improvising musicians really intend to create the complex structures shown in Schenkerian analyses?

² Henry Martin, “Schenker and the Tonal Jazz Repertory,” *Tijdschrift voor Muziektheorie*, 16, 1 (2011): 1-20. Henry Martin, “More Than Just Guide Tones: Steve Larson’s *Analyzing Jazz—A Schenkerian Approach*,” *Journal of Jazz Studies*, 7, 1 (2011): 121–144.; Stephen Gilbert, “Gershwin’s Art of Counterpoint,” *The Musical Quarterly*, 70, 4 (1984): 423.

³ Steve Larson, *Analyzing Jazz: A Schenkerian Approach* (Hillsdale: Pendragon Press, 2009).; Benjamin Givan, “Swing Improvisation: A Schenkerian Perspective,” *Theory and Practice*, 35 (2010): 25-56.; Steven E. Gilbert, “Gershwin’s Art of Counterpoint,” *The Musical Quarterly*, 70, no. 4 (1984): 423-456.; David J. Heyer, “Applying Schenkerian Theory to Mainstream Jazz: A Justification for an Orthodox Approach,” *Music Theory Online*, 18, No. 3 (2012).; Allen Forte, *Listening to Classic American Popular Songs* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001); Henry Martin, *Charlie Parker and Thematic Improvisation*, (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 1996).

⁴ Steve Larson, “Schenkerian Analysis of Modern Jazz: Questions about Method,” *Music Theory Spectrum* 20, 2 (1998): 210.

Unsurprisingly, Larson answers all questions in defense of Schenkerian jazz analysis. He believes one of the strengths of hierarchic voice leading analysis is its power to uncover flaws and strengths in the structural continuity and coherence of improvisations.

Is Schenkerian analysis applicable only to jazz performances that are exceptions? No, Schenkerian analysis may be applied to any jazz performance – and it may show the shortcomings of that performance. Real artistic long-range hearing is an exception both in classical music and in jazz.⁵

In the following three subsections I will expand on how Larson's answers relate to Coltrane and his blues output.

1.1 Applying Schenkerian Theory to Improvised Music

Larson asserts that Schenker himself championed improvisation. According to Schenker, improvisation was a skill that all masters of the past possessed and that has been unjustly underemphasized in modern music education. Larson prefaces his book *Analyzing Jazz: A Schenkerian Approach* with an epigraph that expresses Schenker's affinity for improvisation in the clearest and most convincing way.

The ability in which all creativity begins – the ability to compose extempore, to improvise fantasies and preludes – lies only in a feeling for the background, middleground, and foreground. Formerly such an ability was regarded as a hallmark of one truly gifted in composition, that which distinguished him from the amateur or the ungifted ... So it would be of greatest importance today to study thoroughly the fantasies, preludes, cadenzas, and similar embellishment [sic] which the great composers have left to us. All music instruction, be it public or private, should assign high priority to such study.⁶

⁵ Ibid., 241.

⁶ Steve Larson, *Analyzing Jazz: A Schenkerian Approach*, v. Schenker uses the German term *Verzierungen*, which translates to embellishments or ornaments and not singular embellishment.

Schenker also devoted the opening chapter of *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik Vol I* to improvisation.⁷ Schenker was not the first to relate the techniques of improvisation to deeper structures of coherence. The idea that both performers and composers “have a feeling for the background” while working on the foreground predates Schenker. Two well-known examples prefiguring quasi-Schenkerian thought are Robert Gjerdingen’s schema theory, which chronicles the rich tradition of two-voice BG and MG structures in the Galant Era, as well as compendia such as Diego Ortiz’s *Trattado Des Glossas*.⁸ The *Trattado* presents a wide variety of formulas which ought to be embellished by the performer. Schenker himself was influenced by C.P.E. Bach, whose *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments* includes a final chapter which is entirely dedicated to improvisation.⁹

Coltrane’s most iconic recordings have become quasi-*Urtexts* in their own right.¹⁰ For most jazz fans, famous solos have achieved the character of ossified artworks. Due to the paradigmatic character many of Coltrane’s solos have attained, the context of their creation seems secondary compared to the stature of the final product. The popularity of many recordings has separated them from the context of their genesis, as presumed spur-of-the-moment creations, and transformed them into calcified artifacts. The idea of improvisation as spontaneous *ex nihilo*

⁷ Heinrich Schenker and Hans Oster ed., *Free Composition*, (New York: Longman, 1979), 6. Heinrich Schenker and Oswald Jonas ed., *Der Freie Satz* (Wien: Universal Edition, 1956). The quote appears on page 32 of the German edition.; Heinrich Schenker ed. William Dabkin, *The Masterwork In Music Volume I* (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 2014), 2-19.

⁸ Robert Gjerdingen, *Music in the Galant Style* (New York: OUP, 2007).; Diego Ortiz ed. Annette Otterstedt, *Trattado de Glosas* (Kassel: Bärenreiter. 2008).

⁹ Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach ed. Wolfgang Horn, *Versuch Über die Wahre Art das Clavier zu Spielen* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2014).

¹⁰ Martin, “More Than Just Guide Tones: Steve Larson’s *Analyzing Jazz—A Schenkerian Approach*,” 131. “The focus of Larson’s book is “Round Midnight,” and Larson appropriately discusses two of Monk’s solo performances. As mentioned earlier, Larson does not generally concern himself with historical considerations. If he had, he might have made more of the fact that Monk, as the composer, provides us with a performed *Urtext* of the piece in some sense.”

creation can also easily be refuted by invoking Coltrane's well-documented obsessive practice habits. To say that Coltrane came prepared to his recording sessions would be considered a gross understatement by most Coltrane scholars.

Since the blues form represents the fundamental tonal and formal template of all of Coltrane's solos in this project, I deem it appropriate to propose a theory of the blues form, which is largely based on a Schenker-inspired conception. By no means do I claim that the blues arose from what George Lewis calls Eurological means, nor do I wish to develop a mutually exclusive binary between Afrological and Eurological contributions.¹¹ Rather, this reading pursues the idea that form is developed from harmonic and melodic procedures. The blues, as well as many other genres and song forms, underwent an unimaginably complex process of development and normalization during which many people and events contributed to its contemporary form.

1.2 Chordal Extensions

Larson's second question of whether Schenkerian analysis can account for jazz harmony is really a question about how to treat the coloristic dissonances found in so much jazz. Larson answers his second question by stating that chordal extensions ought to be treated as "embellishments of more basic structures, than in purely 'harmonic' terms, as deriving from chords that are stacks of thirds."¹² In this dissertation I attempt, wherever possible, to adhere to this regulation. Despite clear "chord stacking" tendencies in Coltrane, he tends to treat chordal extensions as consonances on the foreground and quasi-dissonances that resolve accordingly in the

¹¹ George E. Lewis, "Improvised Music after 1950: Afrological and Eurological Perspectives," *Black Music Research Journal*, 16, No. 1, (1996), 91-122.

¹² Steve Larson, "Schenkerian Analysis of Modern Jazz: Questions about Method," 214.

middleground. Alternatively, seemingly dissonant notes over foreground chords are explained by deeper middleground prolongations. For example, Coltrane often emphasizes the local 9th over IV⁷, pointing to a concern for the overarching dominance of the *Kopfton* in a $\hat{5}$ -descent. At the deepest levels where IV⁷ simply serves to prolong I⁷, the same pitch has to be viewed as a consonance over the tonic chord.

In this project $\hat{7}$ is generally treated as LN to $\hat{1}$ in the foreground, or as a pitch representing an implied $\hat{2}$ in the *Urlinie*. The chromatic mixture $b\hat{7}$ is treated identically. 9^{ths} are viewed as UNs of $\hat{8}$ locally, as $\hat{2}$ in the *Urlinie*, and as LN to $\hat{3}$. $b\hat{9}$ is generally regarded as a mixture of $\hat{2}$ if it appears to participate in a *Nebenlinie* or *Urlinie*. Since $b\hat{2}$ (Schenker's Phrygian $\hat{2}$) requires a minor key, the scenario does not arise in this project because it does not appear in "Mr. P.C." (the only minor blues). $\hat{4}$ is interpreted as a passing tone between $\hat{5}$ and $\hat{3}$ or $\hat{3}$ and $\hat{5}$, and an UN of $\hat{3}$. $\hat{6}$ is interpreted as an important UN to $\hat{5}$, which participates even at the deepest structural levels (aside from the BG). As the only chordal extension forming a consonance above I, $\hat{6}$ occupies a rather special position. In his article "Applying Schenkerian Theory to Mainstream Jazz: A Justification for an Orthodox Approach," David Heyer cites Henry Martin's interpretations of $\hat{6}$, which are listed in an unpublished article entitled "From Classical Dissonance to Jazz Consonance: The Added Sixth Chord."¹³

(1) a dependent non-chord tone (a surface-level embellishment of $\hat{5}$), (2) an independent chord tone (reducible only at deeper levels of structure), and (3) an inclusive chord tone (consonant and therefore left unreduced).

¹³ David Heyer, "Applying Schenkerian Theory to Mainstream Jazz: A Justification for an Orthodox Approach," *Music Theory Online*, 18, No. 3 (2012): 2.

While Martin's options enable a nuanced reading on the foreground, $\hat{6}$ is always dependent on $\hat{5}$ in this project. Larson presents further regulations about Schenkerian graphic notation, such as slurring rules, in his article "Strict use of Notation," which I adhere to whenever possible.¹⁴

The chromatic alteration $\# \hat{4}$ is generally viewed as an LN to $\hat{5}$. While these regulations are mostly upheld, it is crucial to address the respective structural level when discussing consonance versus dissonance.

1.3 Authorial Intent

According to some critics, jazz improvisers lack the capability and/or the intent to integrate long-ranging structural edifices into their solos.¹⁵ It is crucial however to untangle the three concepts of extemporaneous artistic creation, potential for multilevel coherence, and artistic intent. Extemporaneous creation may or may not be guided by intent and may or may not entail coherence at deeper structural levels. For Larson the main issue about the question of intent is that it "makes too much of the artificial distinction between composition and improvisation. (It also courts the 'intentional fallacy' - the mistake of confusing one's experience of a work of art with knowledge of its creator's intentions.)"¹⁶ Larson counters the idea that intent in an improvisational context is limited to short term structures, whereas "composition" implies larger-scale structural intent.

Of course, jazz improvisations do contain formulas. But so do improvisations in other idioms – and in fact, so do notated compositions. What is significant to the listener is the structure created by those formulas. While Smith intends to limit the notion of formula to

¹⁴ Steve Larson, "A Strict Use of Analytic Notation," *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy*, 10 (1996): 37–77.

¹⁵ Larson, *Analyzing Jazz: A Schenkerian Approach*, 31. Steve Larson relays an account of Wilhelm Furtwängler's concerns about the application of Schenkerian analysis to jazz. "When Furtwängler asserts that 'in jazz, *long range hearing* is absent,' he is suggesting that jazz lacks the global relationships that would reward long-range hearing."

¹⁶ Larson, "Schenkerian Analysis of Modern Jazz: Questions about Method," 218-219.

descriptions of pitch groupings that are contiguous in the foreground, it is also clear that jazz improvisations contain “formulas” at deeper levels of musical structure.¹⁷

The analyses of Coltrane’s solos in this dissertation buttress Larson’s assessment of multi-level structures in jazz improvisation. Martin posits that the ultimate outcome should be centered on the listener’s experience and suggests that coherence arises from infinite musical connections—many of which may not arise from direct intention. Thus, while intent is unlikely for Martin, it has no bearing on the resulting artwork.

Potential musical connections, even cogent ones, are numerous – theoretically even infinite – such plethora of musical relatedness cannot possibly be at the conscious grasp of any musician, however gifted. Hence, much musical connection that is cogent, musically telling, even exciting, may occur without the knowledge of its creator – that is, without the player intending the connection. Is it reasonable to assume that because the connection is unintentional, it is unimportant to the musical result aesthetically? It seems much more fruitful to view musical connections as they are *perceived* – that is, to shift the point of view, the burden of analysis, to the listener.¹⁸

Following Martin, I propose that connections at any structural level arise from the built-in relationships of tonal music and the pieces on which musicians improvise. Since blues and jazz standards are written according to the regulations of functional harmony, a performer may amplify structures that are encoded within a given composition. Martin’s statement also hints at the conception of personal improvisational styles in jazz. Coltrane developed his improvisatory arsenal in correspondence to the strictures of tonal harmony. A jazz improviser’s personal repository of musical devices (e.g. licks, harmonic ideas, etc.), however extensive, is finite in comparison to the innumerable musical connections within a blues. It could be argued that an artistic style is generated by superimposing Coltrane’s exhaustive yet finite improvisatory repository over the “infinite” options of the blues chorus.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Martin, *Charlie Parker and Thematic Improvisation*, 35-36.

Despite these arguments against the interpretive force of authorial intent, I see little reason to systematically ignore it just as there is no need to systematically adopt it as the primary interpretive lens. For instance, the line between intent and accident becomes blurred whenever Coltrane overrides the moments of structural closure at the chorus level, avoiding moments of internal closure encoded in the blues form. Likewise, the recurrence of motivic ideas throughout an entire solo points to formal unity on a large scale. We will never be able to answer to what extent such techniques were employed by Coltrane intentionally. While authorial intent seems far less important than the artistic product, Coltrane hinted at some tenets and practices he found important.

I thought in groups of notes, not of one note at a time. I tried to place these groups on the accents and emphasize the strong beats – maybe on 2 here and on 4 over at the end. I would set up the line and drop groups of notes - a long line with accents dropped as I moved along.¹⁹

I hypothesize that Coltrane was either consciously or intuitively aware of structurally important lines akin to Schenkerian *Urlinien* and *Nebenlinien*. When Coltrane speaks about “setting up lines” and “dropping notes from them,” it seems consistent with conceptions of middleground-and fundamental lines and their foreground diminutions. By “accents,” Coltrane may be referring to pitches that are articulated, placed on a strong beat, or otherwise emphasized. The highlighting of certain pitches further supports the notion of some pitches’ structural importance over others, akin to Schenkerian thinking. The well-known concept of guide tone lines in jazz, while not identical to Schenkerian *Züge*, further supports the likelihood of overarching voice leading strands (VLS) that are composed out during a performance.²⁰ At the very least, overarching lines

¹⁹ Chris DeVito ed., *Coltrane on Coltrane: The John Coltrane Interviews* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2010), 69. The interview was held on September 29, 1960.

²⁰ Henry Martin, “More Than Just Guide Tones: Steve Larson’s Analyzing Jazz— A Schenkerian Approach” presents the idea of guide tone lines as a concept that is endemic to jazz while being distinct from Schenkerian lines.

such as guide tone lines, which are used as frameworks for diminution, are not foreign in jazz.²¹

To infer that a musician with Coltrane's inventiveness could have developed his own version of a pseudo-Schenkerian conceptualization from the practice of guide tone lines is not unimaginable.

Even if we were to assume Schenkerian analysis is only appropriate when we know Coltrane explicitly wanted to connect foreground and background, we would have some reason to suspect as much. Coltrane's early training at the Ornstein School in Philadelphia could definitely have included Schenkerian instruction as well.²² Even though this fact is not clearly documented or well-researched, Leo Ornstein (1895-2002), who taught at his school until 1953, was a prolific performer and composer who moved from Europe to New York in 1907.²³ Immediately after arriving in the United States, Ornstein studied with pianist Bertha Feiring Tapper (1859-1915) who was a student of Theodor Leschetizky (1830-1915) in Vienna for one year.²⁴ Even though unfortunately no direct correspondence between Schenker and Leschetizky has survived, Schenker mentions him in several of his diary entries, two letters, and another document pertaining to the establishment of an "*organisation producirender und reproducirender Künstler*."²⁵ The letters demonstrate that Schenker respected Leschetizky but it

²¹ In guide tone lines local sevenths and thirds are parsimoniously connected to form extended melodies across sections or entire choruses. Many jazz improvisers use guide tone lines as MG melodies that serves as the foundation for foreground diminutions.

²² Ben Ratliff, *Coltrane: The Story Of A Sound* (London: Picador, 2008), 4.

²³ Carol Oja, *Making Music Modern* (Oxford: OUP, 2010), 12.

²⁴ Judy Barrett Litoff, *European Immigrant Women in the United States: A Biographical Dictionary* (New York: Garland, 1994), 297.; Carol Oja, *Making Music Modern*, 13. Oja presents information about Tapper's second husband and music theorist and composer Thomas Tapper, whom she married in 1895.

²⁵ Heinrich Schenker, "Schenker Documents Online,"

<http://www.schenkerdocumentsonline.org/search/?fq=all&kw=Leschetitzky> (accessed April 11, 2020) Schenker refers to Leschetizky in two handwritten letters dated September 17, 1913 and February 15, 1923.

Letter 1 Hammer to Schenker: (German) "Thatsache aber ist, dass ich eigentlich kein Instrument besitze wie es einem modernen Klavierlehrer – etwa Leschetitzky – als unbedingt notwendig erscheint."

English: "But the fact is that I actually don't own an instrument of the kind that a modern piano teacher – Leschetizky, say – would find absolutely necessary."

is not evident whether the latter was privy to, or an advocate of the analytical model. Since Schenker and Leschetizky were contemporaries of the musical intelligentsia in Vienna, it is very likely that they exchanged ideas. Regardless, a tentative lineage can be traced from Schenker to Coltrane (Schenker → Leschetizky → Tapper → Ornstein → Coltrane), which requires a future research project.²⁶ The lineage to Schenker should at least raise the bar of difficulty for those who would show the incompatibility of Schenkerian analysis with Coltrane's knowledge and intentions.²⁷

1.4 The Blues Cadence and the Functional Duality of IV⁷

The 12-bar blues is the fundamental template of the solos to be examined in this project. It may thus be useful to list the most common tonal patterns associated with the form. These divide into two basic types: the “jazz” type that ends ii-V-I, and the “traditional” type that ends V-IV-I. Figures 1.1-1.3 outline three structures for the jazz type. The implied modal mixture in the melody arises from the common addition of a stable dominant seventh above IV. The Schenkerian harmonic archetype of T-(PD)-D-T is preserved in the jazz blues and can easily be integrated. Moving on, the traditional V-IV-I type poses an interesting challenge due to the idiosyncratic placement of IV in the blues cadence.

Letter two Emma Fischer to Schenker: (German) “An Privatlehrern fallen mir vorläufig sogleich Prof. Robert (Klav. u. Theorie) ersten Rangs – und Paul Richier (vormals 1. Assistent v. Leschetitzky und hochgebildet) ein.” (English) “The private teachers who occur to me immediately are Prof. Robert (piano and theory), first-class, and Paul Richier (erstwhile first assistant to Leschetizky, and highly cultured).”

²⁶ While researching Coltrane's time at the Ornstein School could be a fruitful endeavor, an exhaustive study of his schooling at The Grandoff School of Music and his private studies with Dennis Sandole would be equally important.

²⁷ While Steve Larson is also very careful not to fall victim to the “intentional fallacy,” he attempts to reconstruct Bill Evans's potential exposure to Schenkerian analysis through material from interviews and chronicling the pianist's studies at The Mannes School, which was a major hub of Schenkerian theory in the USA.

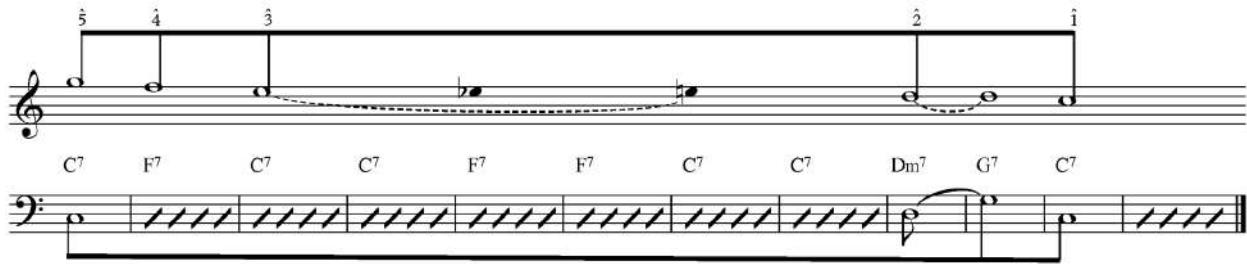


Figure 1.1 The blues form as elaboration of the *Ursatz*. 5-descent

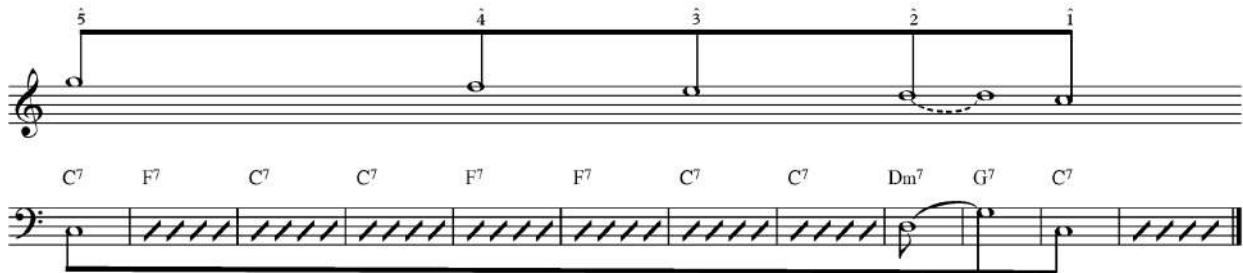


Figure 1.2 The blues form as elaboration of the *Ursatz*. $\hat{5}$ -descent.

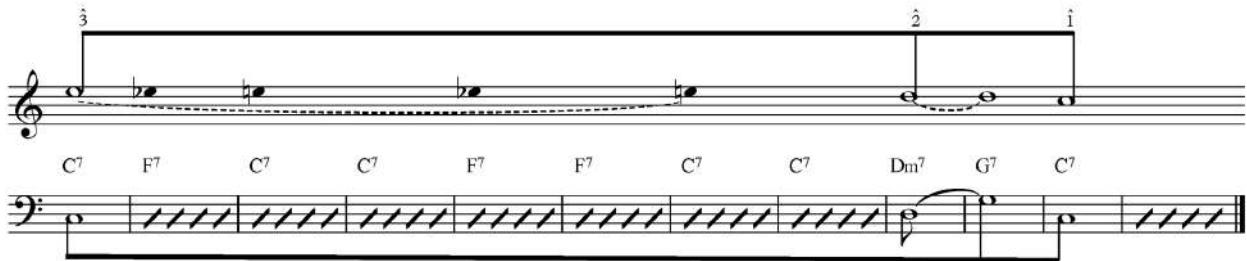


Figure 1.3 The blues form as elaboration of the *Ursatz*. $\hat{3}$ -descent.

Blues of the $V^7-IV^7-I^7$ type poses an interesting challenge in its harmonic structure. Esa Lija discusses complicating aspects arising from the blues cadence, chronicles how Schenker treated such instances, and lists examples of this progression in Western classical music, found in works by Beethoven and Brahms.²⁸ Lija argues that while a strong preference for the archetypal ordering of harmonic functions (T-(PD)-D-T) persists, blues cadence types are not completely

²⁸ Esa Lilja, *Theory and Analysis of Classic Heavy Metal Harmony* (Helsinki: IAML Finland, 2009), 77-78.

foreign to the common practice realm. Coltrane's blues heads, such as "Cousin Mary" ($\flat V^7$ - IV^7 - I^7), "Bessie's Blues," (V^7 - IV^7 - I^7), or "Take the Coltrane" (V^7 - IV^7 - I^7) include blues cadences or variations. In the case of "Cousin Mary," where Coltrane employed $\flat V^7$ - IV^7 , the problematic absence of a structural V , points to the functional duality of IV . Since V is entirely omitted, it would be impossible to label the cadential process of "Cousin Mary" as a "softened authentic cadence."

If a Schenkerian perspective is adopted for this particular harmonic event, certain qualifications have to be made to reconcile the odd positioning of IV^7 after V^7 . In his discussion of the blues cadence Lija references Mark Everett, who proposes a nuanced view of IV^7 , which places it in the interstitial space between dominant and tonic harmony.

However, for music theorists in the field of popular music, the so-called blues cadence has proved to be problematic. Example 3.19 shows a recent Schenkerian interpretation; an archetypical blues cadence V - IV - I (bars 9–11 of the twelve-bar blues formula) is analyzed as a "softened authentic cadence."



Figure 1.4 Schenkerian view on the blues cadence (reproduced from Everett 2004: fig. 12).²⁹

According to Everett's illustration, some notes of this "softened authentic cadence" anticipate the tonic arrival, while at the same time we see a local 8-7 elaboration of the V^7 structural dominant. This perspective renders IV^7 neither a D, PD, nor T harmony. It is entirely subsumed into the cadential process as a mere musical binding agent. Any functionality of IV^7 evaporates into an inessential ornament. While Everett's model is admittedly very elegant, it circumvents the issue

²⁹ Ibid., 79. Lija cites from Walter Everett, "Making Sense of Rock's Tonal Systems," *Music Theory Online*. December 2004, https://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.04.10.4/mto.04.10.4.w_everett.html. (Accessed 28 May, 2007).

of assigning function to IV⁷. A reductive analysis *à la* Schenker would necessarily reduce IV⁷ to an ornamental entity in the background as well. The issue of chord function however remains critical at the foreground and even close middleground structural levels. Lija extrapolates further aspects of the blues cadence and contextualizes the implications for popular music in his response to Everett's proposition.

It seems to reflect the fact that the DS [dominant to subdominant] cadence is forbidden in traditional text-book harmony; therefore, a fundamentally plagal cadence is explained as authentic. Allowing for the possibility that cadences may be heard in different ways, it is suggested here that the cadence is better understood as shown in Example 3.20: all three functions are treated as equal; the final progression IV-I gives the cadence its plagal flavor... In these kinds of musical practices, traditional voice leading has a diminutive role for the functional assignment of chords.³⁰



Figure 1.5 Example 3.20. A functional view on the blues cadence.

Lija's claim also evades the issue of assigning hierarchical weight to function, by simply stating that "all functions are treated as equal." This assertion renders the entire pursuit of functional harmony absurd insofar as function implies differentiation with respect to hierarchy and behavior; otherwise, all "functions" are merely labels based on root scale-degree. His figure reproduces the traditional chord functions associated with each chord, which does not solve the issue regarding their role in a Schenkerian context. Lija references Rameau relatively often but does not propose an explicit solution for the issue of a possible integration of a Schenkerian reading of the blues that derives from the French theorist.³¹ Rameau's original conception and

³⁰ Ibid., 79-80.

³¹ Ibid., 75. Lija also references Riemann, who adopted Rameau's concept of the *sous-dominante* and its function for his theoretical system, which also propagates the dominant quality of IV. Riemann distinguishes between the *Unterdominante* (lower dominant) and the OD = *Oberdominante* (upper dominant).

etymology of the subdominant chord may help us. What Rameau calls the *sous-dominante* is a chord built a fifth below the tonic rather than a step below the dominant.³² By adopting this conceptualization, the Rameauian *sous dominante* chord is imbued with a considerable degree of dominant flavor and function. Since the central root motion of a fifth is supported by this view, the sub-dominant chord is rendered a variant dominant sonority rather than a mere embellishment of the harmonies participating in Schenker's sacred triangle. This view also assigns structural functionality to IV⁷, which Everett's hybrid reading does not register. While the IV chord in the blues cadence is often seen as subordinate to either the preceding V or the succeeding I chord, I propose that the subdominant chord should be regarded as a chord of dual function in the blues cadence: 1) Following Everett's proposition, IV can be viewed as a non-functional musical hybrid, representing a nexus that "softens" the move from V to I. 2) IV can be seen as a Rameauian *sous-dominante* with dominant function.

The respective character of IV as either a softener of V-I or a genuine dominant variant (*sous dominante*) is crystallized by the given melodic realization. For instance, if IV⁷ is dominated by statements of material suggesting V⁷, the authentic cadence is softened by the harmonic undergirding which implies IV while the melodic content expresses V⁷. If, however, the improviser clearly outlines the underlying IV⁷ chord, it may be interpreted as a *sous dominante*. The nuanced readings of the blues cadence pertain to interpretations at the foreground and close middleground since IV⁷ is reduced at deeper structural levels. At the BG

³² Joel Lester, *Compositional Theory in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1996), 132. Lester presents Rameau's developing concept of the *sous-dominante*. "in the *Nouveau système*, Rameau adopts the name *subdominant* (*sous-dominante*; apparently coined as *sousdominante* in Dandrieu c. 1719) to refer to scale-step 4 as well as the added-sixth chord built there...Rameau denotes by that prefix that scale-step 4 lay a fifth below the tonic, complementing the dominant a fifth above the tonic...In *Generation*, Rameau proposes an origin for the subdominant akin to his derivation of the minor third, locating the interval below the fundamental rather than above it.

level, internal blues cadences are entirely omitted since they serve to promote the larger tonic prolongation.

In an *Ursatz* stretching across the blues form that incorporates a V-IV-I cadence, IV⁷ needs to include an added local sixth to support $\hat{2}$. Figure 1.6a represents an example a softened authentic cadence since $\hat{2}$ (D), which occurs over F⁷, is a primary chord tone of G⁷. Accordingly, G is in a sense composed out and expressed melodically rather than F⁷.

Figure 1.6a $\hat{5}$ - and $\hat{3}$ -descents as archetypal *Ursatz* forms with blues cadence.

In figure 1.6b the *Urlinie* closes with $b\hat{3}$ to $\hat{1}$, which accentuates the underdominant character of F⁷ since its seventh $b\hat{3}$ (E \flat) is articulated. The nature of IV⁷ coheres to two different functional identities in the two *Urlinen* in figures 1.6a (softened authentic cadence) and 1.6b (*sous dominante* or underdominant).

Figure 1.6b $\hat{5}$ - and $\hat{3}$ -descents as archetypal *Ursatz* forms with blues cadence.

1.5 “Tonicness” of the Mixolydian Mode

Many aspects of the blues are unique from a harmonic perspective. Beside the functional duality of IV⁷, which is especially evident in the blues, the prolongation of seventh chords also stands out. In the same vein, it is remarkable that the tonic function, which is usually fulfilled by major or minor chords/triads, is transferred to a dominant seventh chord in the blues. While the prolongation of seventh chords is heard throughout common practice music, the tonic functionality of a seventh chord structure that is even named after another function is unique.³³ This idiosyncrasy could be seen as a potential threat to the functional integrity of chords. To circumvent this issue, jazz musicians such as Coltrane tend to add extensions and alterations to portions of music that have a quasi-dominant function. In other words, when the bar for stability gets raised, so too does the bar for elaborations that pass between stable moments. The Mixolydian mode is thus largely used for areas of foreground prolongation, whereas altered and octatonic scales mark local departures from I⁷. Accordingly, the degree of relative tension between a B♭^{7,9,13} chord and a B♭^{7,b9,b13} (or B♭^{7,b9,13}) is similar to the contrast between a B♭ major triad and a B♭ dominant 7th chord in the classical tradition. In the blues this contrast is amplified by the preponderance of the Mixolydian sound and the relative scarcity of the altered or octatonic sound throughout the more extensive tonic prolongational sections. The overriding

³³ Yosef Goldenberg, “‘Negative Texture’ and the Prolongation of Seventh Chords,” *Theory and Practice*, 29 (2004), 97. Goldberg chronicles prolongations of seventh chords and suggests that dominant seventh chords should not be considered dissonances.: “Although the tonicization of dissonances is foreign to common-practice tonality, prolongation of non-tonicized dissonances is rather frequent. In particular, tonal masterpieces, at least from the time of Bach onward, ordinarily include prolongations of seventh chords - mostly dominant or diminished ones...Because prolongations of seventh chords seem ubiquitous, one might be encouraged to exclude seventh chords – or at least V⁷ – from the category of dissonances.”

ubiquity of the Mixolydian sound also lends a feeling of “tonicness” to the blues’ dominant seventh chords.

In Figure 1.7, Coltrane employs the $\flat 9$, $\sharp 9$, and $\flat 13$, of E_b^7 before moving to the IV⁷ chord in the fifth measure (not shown). This rich set of extensions either indicates that Coltrane was employing the E_b altered scale or a harmonic tritone substitute A^7 with its associated Lydian dominant scale. The two scales are identical since they are both different modes of the same melodic minor scale, yet their use arises from dissimilar approaches to the passage.

E_b altered: $E_b, E, F\sharp, G, A, B, C\sharp$ (= seventh mode of E melodic minor)
 A Lydian dominant: $A, B, C\sharp, D\sharp, E, F\sharp, G$ (= fourth mode of E melodic minor)

The local dominant function is amplified due to the added alterations of the Lydian dominant and altered scales in contrast to the Mixolydian scale.

Figure 1.7 illustrates the strict adherence to the Mixolydian mode in the preceding measures, imbuing the segment with contrast and a rising degree of tension. The tendency of including non-Mixolydian pitches after the first half of the blues’ first four-measure stanza is also represented in figure 1.7.



Figure 1.7 “Bessie’s Blues” rising harmonic tension throughout mm. 1-4 of the blues.³⁴

In the minor blues, the fourth measure is generally rendered as “major” (I^7) instead of minor in order to initiate the foreground harmonic motion to iv^7 in m. 5. The normative chord/scale choices for harmonically inactive areas in the minor blues are the melodic minor,

³⁴ John Coltrane, tenor saxophone, “Bessie’s Blues,” by John Coltrane, Recorded April 27, 1964, on Crescent, Impulse! AS-66, 1964, Vinyl.

Dorian, Aeolian, and harmonic minor scales. As in the normative Mixolydian blues, the minor blues' shift from i^7 , to I^7 as an active local dominant chord (measure four) lends a sense of contrast and heightened harmonic tension to the initial four-measure segment. (In figures 1.8 and 1.9 the chord symbol indicates the normative harmony.)



Figure 1.8 Non-Dorian/Aeolian/mel. minor pitches in “Mr. P.C. chorus 5 m. 4.³⁵



Figure 1.9 Non-Dorian/Aeolian/mel. minor pitches in “Mr. P.C.” chorus 8 m. 4.

In Figures 1.8 and 1.9 Coltrane includes the local leading tone E, which establishes a foreground VL procedure of a chromatically ascending step to F, the root of the iv^7 chord in the subsequent fifth measure. In the second example Coltrane includes the pitch $\widehat{b9}$ along with $\widehat{7}$. While $\widehat{b9}$ and $\widehat{\#9}$ point to a C altered or octatonic scale, $\widehat{7}$ is used as a chromatic lower neighbor resolving to $\widehat{5}$ of the F minor seventh chord in the next measure.

1.6 Variation- and Additive Forms

The central issue of applying a Schenkerian approach to variation sets is the fact that the respective variations, or choruses in case of the blues, can be regarded as self-sufficient closed

³⁵ John Coltrane, tenor saxophone, “Mr. P.C.,” by John Coltrane, Recorded May 3, 1959, on Giant Steps, Atlantic 1311, 1960, Vinyl.

modules. The next subsection (1.6.1) will however demonstrate that moments of internal chorus-level closure are continuously overridden by performers such as Coltrane. Nicolas Marston poses several questions in regard to the analysis of variation sets, which can be partly addressed through the application of Schenkerian means.

Why has the composer written this number of variations? Why do they occur in that particular order? Would the structure of the set be affected if some variations were omitted, or if the variations were played in a different order? Is the set as a whole governed by a single Fundamental Structure?³⁶

Accordingly, Schenkerian analysis may help us to answer why Coltrane improvises for a given number of choruses and how those choruses structurally unify into a congruent larger whole.

Rather than conceiving of a blues solo as a sequence of self-contained formal blocks, André Hodeir advances a cyclical conceptualization he terms “a closed endless circuit.”³⁷ In his view, the individual choruses are not chain-linked 12-measure modules but rather as one continuously unfolding cycle. The cyclic image promotes the idea of unity and persistence across the individual chorus-level moments of closure. In addition, this view promotes the possibility of presenting a new phrase at any moment of the blues form rather than at fixed formal locations.³⁸

³⁶ Nicholas Marston, “Analysing Variations: The Finale of Beethoven’s String Quartet Op. 74,” *Music Analysis*, 8, No. 3 (1989): 303.

³⁷ André Hodeir, *Toward Jazz* (New York: Da Capo, 1986), 84.

³⁸ An important facet of this issue is the divergence between experts and lay people. A musical expert, acutely aware of formal procedures while listening, may not have the same experience as a less musically informed person. For the musical lay person, for instance, Coltrane’s blues solos may be perceived as no different than non-variation form pieces, i.e. as larger integrated works.

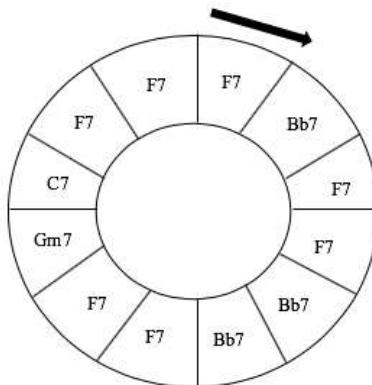


Figure 1.10 Hodeir's rotational conception of the blues form.³⁹

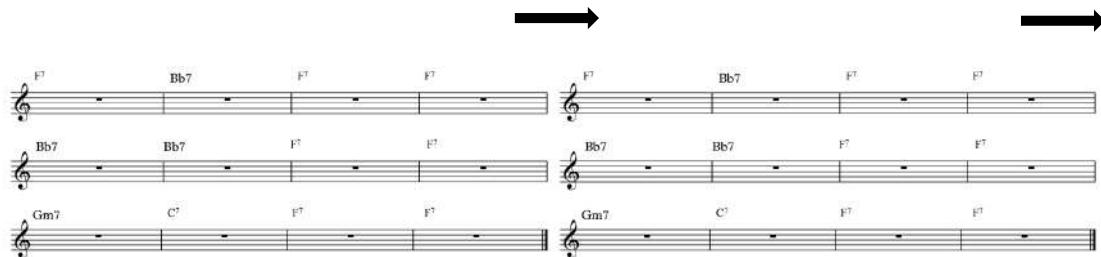


Figure 1.11 The blues perceived as a series of individually closed-off modular blocks.

While Coltrane often favored introducing new ideas at the beginning of the chorus, Hodeir's model helps to reflect the flexibility with which the boundary measures are treated in practice. The cyclical image softens the stark modular rigidity that may not be heard by the listener and accounts for the rhythmic flexibility Coltrane applied to the blues form in his late period. Pieces such as "Take the Coltrane" start phrases in comparatively unexpected moments of the form.

When applying a Schenkerian approach to variation forms, different degrees of structural significance have to be assigned to specific choruses. Some choruses may simply prolong an already well-established *Kopfton*. A confluence of melodic and harmonic factors contributes to the structural weight of specific choruses: these might include, for instance, the *Anstieg*,

³⁹ Ibid., 85.

introduction of the *Kopfton* and other members of the *Urlinie*, important *Nebenlinien*, and central motives.

1.6.1 Overriding the Internal Chorus-Level Cadential Moment

Larson has identified five techniques that jazz soloists use to stretch *Ursätze* across chorus level boundaries: lead-ins, cadential suspensions, elisions, “structural puns,” and fills.

(1) lead-ins connect half cadences to the downbeats of the following sections; (2) cadential suspensions postpone or eliminate the complete arrival of tonic at authentic cadences; (3) elisions bind formal sections, reducing or even eliminating the closure of authentic cadences; (4) structural puns overlap formal sections, allowing one passage of music to serve two functions simultaneously; (5) fills (metric diminutions on the long notes in a melody) and cadenzas (diminutions that suspend the meter) add content within phrases and at cadences. All of these devices work in a progressive way—successively reducing the divisive effects of sectional boundaries so that each succeeding phrase is more firmly linked to its neighbors.⁴⁰

Larson’s techniques enabling extra-chorus continuity are evident in Coltrane’s jazz- (ii-V-I) and traditional blues (V-IV-I) improvisations as well. In more specific terms Coltrane tends to adhere to the following four of Larson’s strategies:

- (1) Lead-ins: Coltrane fills gaps created through cadential suspension with anacrustes leading into the next chorus (m. 12). These pick-ups frequently consist of single held pitches.
- (2) Cadential suspensions: Coltrane extends V⁷ from mm. 10-12 of the jazz blues and mm. 9-12 of the traditional blues (blues with blues cadences). If $\hat{1}$ is stated, it appears on a weak beat and/or a *Nebenlinie* while ornamenting a more significant structural note (as a cover tone for instance).
- (3) Elisions: Contrary to (2) the cadence is not evaded by playing melodic material implying V⁷ but through omitting *any* material and thus creating a gap.

⁴⁰ Larson, *Analyzing Jazz: A Schenkerian Approach*, 66.; Martin, “More than Just Guide Tones,” 131. In his response to Larson, Martin also reproduces and discusses the five techniques.

(4) Structural puns: Coltrane uses LPs and secondary descents ranging across chorus-level boundaries. At the deepest structural levels, the *Urlinie* serves as the unifying force. Larson's fifth method applies to solo piano performances, which afford a greater degree of flexibility than Coltrane's blues playing. In solo piano performances, formal extensions such as added cadenzas, etc. do not require planning in the same way as quartet performances do.⁴¹

1.6.2 Interruptions and Nebenlinien

A descent from $\hat{5}$ or $\hat{3}$ to a non-resolving $\hat{2}/V^7$ would be interpreted as a Schenkerian interruption in the context of the blues. $\hat{2}$ over V^7 retains the character of a passing tone according to Schenker, even though $\hat{1}$ fails to crystallize. After the interruption, the *Kopfton* ($\hat{5}$ or $\hat{3}$) reinitiates the descent in the new chorus. As Schenker points out, the "near miss" of the background movement toward closure differentiates the interruption from other prolongational techniques that extend the form and prevent structural closure:

The interruption not only creates more content; it also has the effect of delay, or retardation, on the way to the ultimate goal $\hat{1}$ over I. The interruption is able to produce this effect only because it carries within it the fundamental structure, which must achieve its fulfillment despite all detours.⁴²

⁴¹ Steve Larson, Henry Martin, Benjamin Givan, Stephen Gilbert, *et al.* have explored Schenkerian approaches to variation form in connection to tonal jazz. Several other scholars have investigated this topic focusing on the "classical" tradition: Jeffrey Swinkin, "Variation As Thematic Actualisation: The Case Of Brahms's Op. 9," *Music Analysis*, vol 31, no. 1 (2012): 37-89.; Hui-Wah Au, *Diminution, Schenkerian Theory, and Variation Form: Three Case Studies* (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Rochester, Eastman School of Music, 2003).; Hui-Wah Au, "Progressive Trends in Variation Form: Robert Schumann's Piano Sonata in F Minor, Op. 12, Quasi Variazioni," *Gamut* Vol. 4, No. 1 (2011).; Judith Ofcarkik, *A Structural-Aesthetic Study of the Variation Movements of Beethoven's Late Period* (Ph.D. diss., Florida State Univ., 2013).; Antonio Cascelli, "Schenker, Chopin's Berceuse Op. 57 and the Rhetoric of Variations," *Ad Parnassum* Vol. 1, No. 2. (2003): 51-79.; Esther C. Cavett-Dunsby, *Mozart's Variations Reconsidered: Four Case Studies (K. 613, K. 501, and the Finales of K. 421 [417b] and K. 491)* (New York: Garland, 1989).; Catherine Dale, "Schoenberg's Concept of Variation Form: A Paradigmatic Analysis of 'Litanei' from the Second String Quartet, Op. 10," *JMRA* Vol. 118, No. 1 (1993): 94-120.; Timothy L. Jackson, "Diachronic Transformation in a Schenkerian Context: Brahms's Haydn Variations," in *Schenker Studies 2*, ed. Carl Schachter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 239-75., *et. al.*

⁴² Schenker, *Free Composition*, 37.

Schenker's commentary on interruptions illustrates precisely how extra-chorus continuity is maintained in some instances in Coltrane's blues solos. Specifically, the keywords "more content," "effect of delay," and "retardation" demonstrate how musical momentum is retained across interruptions in the blues.

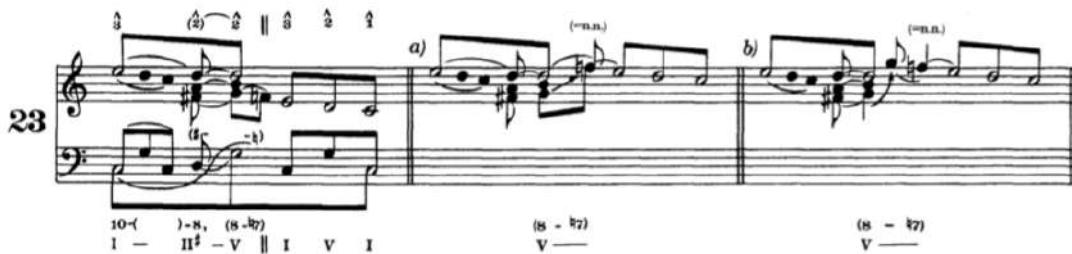


Figure 1.12 Schenker's interruption may be elaborating neighbor notes.⁴³

Measures 11-12 of the blues form are subject to a high degree of harmonic variance in Coltrane's blues output. While we ought to expect I^7 (m. 11) followed by a retransitional V^7 (m. 12), Coltrane tends to omit melodic statements expressing the tonic chord in the 11th measure. Secondary descents to $\hat{1}$ outlining internal cadences always occur in conjunction with a dominating *Urlinie*, which overrides the *Nebenlinie* occurring at the foreground in Coltrane's blues solos. *Nebenlinien* often participate in moments of internal chorus-level closure. The following examples demonstrate how prototypical *Ursätze* may stretch across the individual blues chorus form. Figures 1.13-1.22 are by no means exhaustive.⁴⁴

⁴³ Schenker, *Free Composition Supplement*, Fig. 23.

⁴⁴ Innumerable options for internal and external *Anstiege* prefacing the *Kopfton* significantly shape how the given *Ursatz* expands within the respective blues chorus. An external *Anstieg* occurs as an anacrusis in a previous chorus while an internal *Anstieg* takes place within the same chorus.

1.6.2a $\hat{5}$ -descents

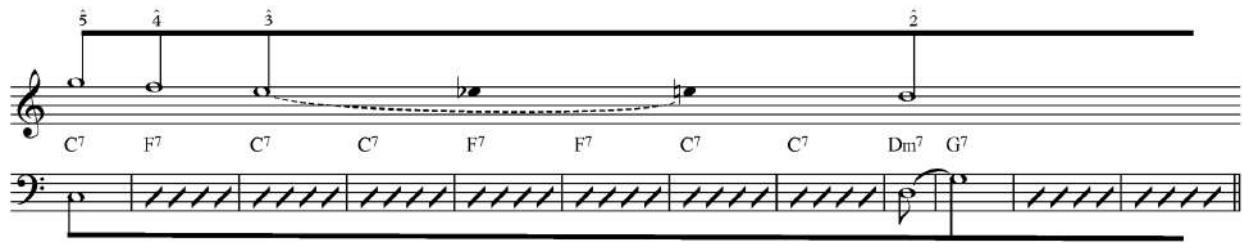


Figure 1.13 *Ursatz* with $\hat{5}$ -descent. The resolution to $\hat{1}$ is postponed into the next chorus.

Schenker calls an inclusion of non-diatonic pitches into the *Urlinie* “mixture of the first order.”⁴⁵

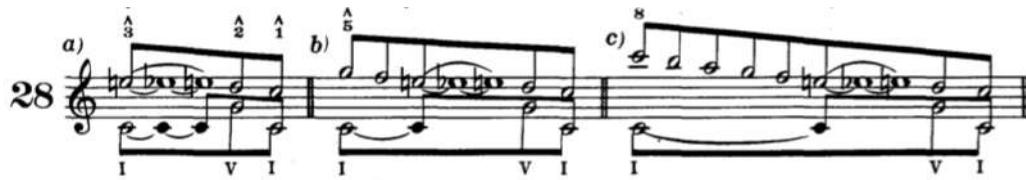


Figure 1.14 Schenker’s examples of various descents with first order mixtures.⁴⁶

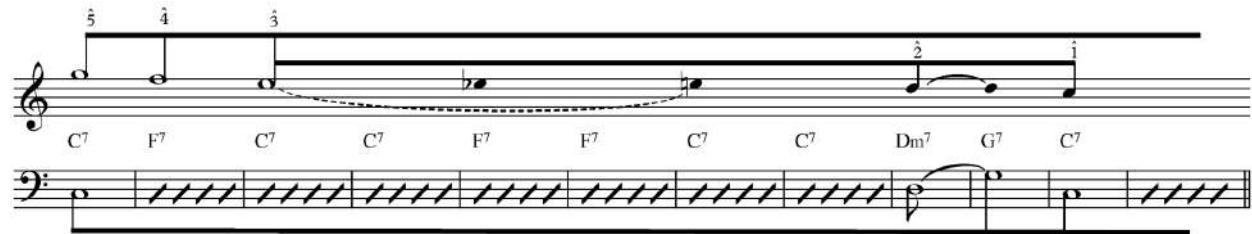


Figure 1.15 *Ursatz* with $\hat{5}$ -descent, *Nebenlinie* from $\hat{3}$, and internal closure.

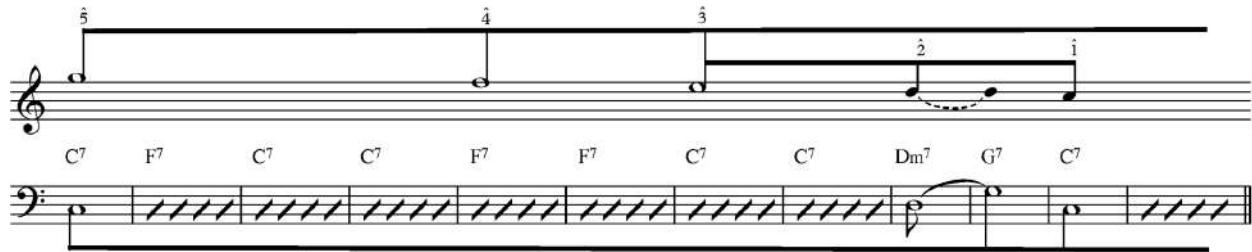


Figure 1.16 *Ursatz* with $\hat{5}$ -descent, *Nebenlinie* from $\hat{3}$, and internal closure.

⁴⁵ Schenker, *Free Composition*, 41.

⁴⁶ Schenker, *Free Composition Supplement*, Fig. 28.

A musical score for two staves. The top staff is treble clef and the bottom is bass clef. The score consists of ten measures. The first measure starts with a note labeled $\hat{5}$. The second measure ends with a fermata over a note labeled $\hat{5}$. The third measure starts with a note labeled $\hat{5}$. The fourth measure ends with a fermata over a note labeled $\hat{5}$. The fifth measure starts with a note labeled $\hat{5}$. The sixth measure ends with a fermata over a note labeled $\hat{5}$. The seventh measure starts with a note labeled $\hat{5}$. The eighth measure ends with a fermata over a note labeled $\hat{5}$. The ninth measure starts with a note labeled $\hat{5}$, followed by a note labeled $\hat{3}$. The tenth measure starts with a note labeled $\hat{5}$.

Figure 1.17 *Ursatz* with $\hat{5}$ -prolongation across the boundary of the chorus.

$\hat{5}$ serves as an anticipation over Dm^7 at the middleground and background levels while it is a stable 4th or 11th at the local level.

A musical score for two staves. The top staff is treble clef and the bottom is bass clef. The score consists of ten measures. The first measure starts with a note labeled $\hat{5}$. The second measure ends with a fermata over a note labeled $\hat{5}$. The third measure starts with a note labeled $\hat{5}$. The fourth measure ends with a fermata over a note labeled $\hat{5}$. The fifth measure starts with a note labeled $\hat{5}$. The sixth measure ends with a fermata over a note labeled $\hat{5}$. The seventh measure starts with a note labeled $\hat{5}$. The eighth measure ends with a fermata over a note labeled $\hat{5}$. The ninth measure starts with a note labeled $\hat{4}$, followed by a note labeled $\hat{3}$. The tenth measure starts with a note labeled $\hat{4}$.

Figure 1.18 Blues *Ursatz* with $\hat{5}$ -descent. $\hat{3}$ is prolonged into the next chorus.

A musical score for two staves. The top staff is treble clef and the bottom is bass clef. The score consists of ten measures. The first measure starts with a note labeled $\hat{5}$. The second measure ends with a fermata over a note labeled $\hat{5}$. The third measure starts with a note labeled $\hat{5}$. The fourth measure ends with a fermata over a note labeled $\hat{5}$. The fifth measure starts with a note labeled $\hat{5}$. The sixth measure ends with a fermata over a note labeled $\hat{5}$. The seventh measure starts with a note labeled $\hat{5}$. The eighth measure ends with a fermata over a note labeled $\hat{5}$. The ninth measure starts with a note labeled $\hat{4}$, followed by a note labeled $\hat{3}$. The tenth measure starts with a note labeled $\hat{4}$.

Figure 1.19 *Ursatz* with $\hat{5}$ -descent and $\hat{4}$ over the cadential segment.

A musical score for two staves. The top staff is treble clef and the bottom is bass clef. The score consists of ten measures. The first measure starts with a note labeled $\hat{5}$. The second measure ends with a fermata over a note labeled $\hat{5}$. The third measure starts with a note labeled $\hat{5}$. The fourth measure ends with a fermata over a note labeled $\hat{5}$. The fifth measure starts with a note labeled $\hat{5}$. The sixth measure ends with a fermata over a note labeled $\hat{5}$. The seventh measure starts with a note labeled $\hat{5}$. The eighth measure ends with a fermata over a note labeled $\hat{5}$. The ninth measure starts with a note labeled $\hat{3}$, followed by a note labeled $\hat{3}$. The tenth measure starts with a note labeled $\hat{3}$.

Figure 1.20 *Ursatz* with $\hat{5}$ -descent. $\hat{3}$ held over PD and D as 9th of Dm^7 and 13th of G^7 .

1.6.2b $\hat{3}$ -descents

The musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The music is in common time. The chords are labeled below the staff: C7, F7, C7, C7, F7, F7, C7, C7, Dm7, G7, C7. Above the staff, structural levels are indicated by numbers: 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. The melody starts at level 5 and descends through levels 4, 3, 2, and 1. A horizontal line connects the notes across the staff. The bass staff shows a continuous eighth-note pattern.

Figure 1.21 *Ursatz* with $\hat{3}$ -descent, *Nebenlinie* from $\hat{3}$, and internal closure.

The musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The music is in common time. The chords are labeled below the staff: C7, F7, C7, C7, F7, F7, C7, C7, Dm7, G7, C7. Above the staff, structural levels are indicated by numbers: 3, 3, 2. The melody starts at level 3 and descends through levels 3 and 2. A horizontal line connects the notes across the staff. The bass staff shows a continuous eighth-note pattern.

Figure 1.22 *Ursatz* with $\hat{3}$ -descent, and *Nebenlinie* from $\hat{3}$.

1.7 $\widehat{b3}$ to $\widehat{1}$ Closure of the Urlinie

In tonal jazz, $\widehat{b3}$ sometimes skips $\widehat{2}$ on its way to $\widehat{1}$ in structural descents. Indeed, this is a relatively frequent occurrence in Coltrane's blues solos. Henry Martin has also identified this peculiarity in Charlie Parker's music. Martin finds an intriguing explanation for the absence of $\widehat{2}$. He bases his reasoning on the hybridity of the “blue third” ($B\hat{3}$): it is neither $\hat{3}$, $\widehat{b3}$, nor $\widehat{2}$ from a classical equal-tempered standpoint.

A special example of a pitch which is dissonant according to European tonality, but can acquire higher-level status in a jazz-blues context is the blue third, or $B\hat{3}$. The blue third is well known for its unstable status: it may be articulated as $\widehat{b3}$ or as a pitch between $\hat{3}$ and $\widehat{b3}$, and is often given a sliding intonation in performance. Pianists often strike the $\hat{3}$ and $\widehat{b3}$ together, or the $\widehat{2}$ and $\widehat{b3}$, to simulate the “blue” frequencies unobtainable on a

piano. Hence the label $B\hat{3}$: the actual “pitch” of the third may not be defined by equal-tempered system and thus resists denotation by conventional scale degrees.⁴⁷

For the sake of simplicity, I notate both pitches ($B\hat{3}$ and $\widehat{b3}$) as $\widehat{b3}$ in analyses but adopt Martin’s conceptualizations and implications stemming from the nature of the pitch.

1.8 Imaginary Comping and Implied Tones

A remarkable degree of kinship is found between what William Rothstein terms the imaginary continuo and a jazz musician’s notion of implicit chord changes.⁴⁸ When jazz soloists improvise in unaccompanied fashion, they do so under the premise of an unrealized harmonic undergirding, or “imaginary comping.” (Of course this applies to tonal jazz styles such as bebop, cool jazz, and hard bop, where functional harmony serves as the harmonic undergirding.) As in the case of the imaginary continuo, we expect a plethora of implicit tones that may not be explicitly stated on the surface. The use of implied tones in my analytical graphs is founded upon this adaptation of the imaginary continuo to jazz. Even an accompanist on a chordal instrument will not always articulate every pitch of the “imaginary comping.” This practice opens the door for various group members to suggest harmonic shadings and alternative harmonic pathways, such as “backdoor ii-Vs” or tritone substitutions,” which are all part of the realm of possibilities inherent in a piece’s “imaginary comping.”

⁴⁷ Martin, *Charlie Parker and Thematic Improvisation*, 23.

⁴⁸ William Rothstein, “Rhythmic Displacement and Rhythmic Normalization,” in *Trends in Schenkerian Research*, ed. Allen Cadwallader (New York: Schirmer Books, 1990), 94. Rothstein proposes the application of the concept of the imaginary continuo for all tonal music. “I like to think of this latent chordal texture as a sort of imaginary continuo accompaniment that underlies every piece of tonal music – regardless of scoring, texture, or date of composition.”

1.9 Statistical Analysis

Throughout the dissertation I will occasionally refer to the data from the University of Weimar's Jazzomat project.⁴⁹ This freely accessible and searchable database provides statistical information such as Extended Chordal Diatonic Pitch Class Histograms (comparative frequency of specific chord tones), Pitch Class Histograms (comparative frequency of specific pitch classes), and Refined Contour Histograms (comparative interval frequency), among others. While the database includes various other tools, I exclusively use the three mentioned histograms to supplement my analytical readings. The process of selecting a *Kopfton* when analyzing a piece is based on several factors, which can occasionally be subjective. The relative structural importance of a pitch is also assessed by evaluating the context/emphasis of its statements. But sometimes the identification of the salient structural pitch can be complicated by the density of foreground diminutions. Searchable databases can provide empirical information about the relative frequency with which specific pitch classes occur. Statistical data can also be used to buttress claims about Coltrane's shifting stylistic tendencies. Refined Contour Histograms, for instance, show clear tendencies in interval preferences. Accordingly, it is possible to chart Coltrane's switch from the predominantly scalar utterances characteristic of his mid-period to the use of wider intervals in his later career with a degree of empirical accuracy.

⁴⁹ Pfleiderer, Martin ed., *Inside the Jazzomat: New Perspectives for Jazz Research* (Mainz: Schott Campus, 2017).

2. Motivic Analysis: Prototypes And Multi-Level Motivic Networks

Although Schenker is the theorist par excellence of reduction and the background, he shows an interest in “more developed and varied” foreground motives. Indeed, he considers improvisation a lost art of crucial importance precisely because its mastery requires sensitivity not only to fundamental structures but to their interaction with the foreground. Schenker suggests various degrees of elaboration of motives on different structural levels.

Each structural level carries with it its own motives...the specific organization and growth of these motives parallels the specific organization and growth of the structural level to which they belong. The nearer they are to the foreground, the more developed and varied the motives will be...⁵⁰

Accordingly, the analysis of motives from a Schenkerian perspective is more concerned with the emergence of their diversity from a stable background than it is with the adventures of pre-defined foreground gestures.

One of the central arguments of this dissertation in regard to motivic analysis is that Coltrane worked with prototypical ideas that he modified in a variety of ways. Beside the use of such prototypes at various structural levels, we often find that Coltrane used the same middleground motives with different foreground diminutions throughout his career. On the surface, motives thus often seem more varied than they are in their reduced form. Larson and Martin have adopted this view from Schenker and pioneered its application in jazz. Martin uses the term “higher-level structures,” while Larson seemed to have favored “concealed repetitions.”⁵¹

⁵⁰ Heinrich Schenker, William Drabkin ed., *The Masterwork in Music: Volume I 1925* (New York: Dover Publications, INC., 2014), 36.

⁵¹ Allen Cadwallader and David Gagné, *Analysis of Tonal Music: A Schenkerian Approach* (Oxford: OUP, 1998), 4. The authors attest Schenker’s reconceptualization of motives. “Schenkerian analysis often reveals connections among tones that are not readily apparent. When a configuration of tones recurs in identical or similar form, whether in immediate succession or over a broader span of music, such a recurring pattern is called a *motive*. Schenker’s extended concept of motive is one of his most profound and far-reaching contributions to the understanding of music.”

Schenker's theories of structural levels in music led him to discover a second kind of concealed repetition in which the same motive appears on different levels or elaborated with different diminutions.⁵²

Another important concept, central to the basic thesis of this study of Parker's music, is that higher-level structures...can be thematic. Higher-level structures in voice-leading analysis are usually of two types: stepwise progressions through an interval and neighbor motions.⁵³

Coltrane's motivic networks operate across structural levels. On the foreground his motives usually do not exceed the length of a measure. The relative brevity and simplicity of a motive is linked to its plasticity, its openness to a variety of extemporized transformations (inversions, transpositions, figurations, etc.). Another benefit of short motivic devices is that they easily blend into dense foreground textures, which obscures obvious repetitions of similar material in favor of an appearance of continuous invention.

3. *Formenlehre*-Inspired Readings: Sentential Structures

In this section I will present a topology of sentential structures in Coltrane's blues music. Many of Coltrane's written blues heads as well as his opening and closing solo choruses follow blues sentential structures. After a discussion of the recent efforts to revamp the sentential paradigm, I introduce the formal type I call "blues sentences," and contrast it with the riff blues. I also introduce the riff-sentence hybrid and the two subcategories of through-composed blues types (a) line-driven melodies and (b) modular melodies. In the effort of establishing a sentential perspective I do not dismiss traditional bar form readings, but rather supplement my interpretations with them in order to highlight the respective advantages and disadvantages.

⁵² Steve Larson, *Analyzing Jazz: A Schenkerian Approach* (Hillsdale: Pendragon Press, 2009), 40.

⁵³ Henry Martin, *Charlie Parker and Thematic Improvisation* (Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2001), 25.

3.1 Recent Trends in Expanding the Sentence Paradigm

“[I]t's the form most favored by post-classical music. In any case it's been used more than the period.”⁵⁴ While Webern most likely did not mean to include jazz in his claim about post-classical music, sentential structures nonetheless constitute an integral part of Coltrane's blues writing and blues improvisation. Webern's assertion also points us away from the Caplinian view that sentences and sentential structures are reserved for the analysis of Viennese classicism.⁵⁵

Throughout the last two decades calls for an expansion of the sentence paradigm have been voiced by scholars such as Matthew BaileyShea (2002/3), Mark Richards (2011), and Steven Vande Moortele (2011).⁵⁶ These authors' call for action is founded on two main premises: 1) an apparent over-specification of the sentence according to its original Schönbergian conception, and 2) the desire to formulate an analytical framework for common formal devices outside the canon of the first Viennese school.

The sentence was introduced by Schönberg in *Fundamentals of Musical Composition* and subsequently honed by William Caplin.⁵⁷ Schönberg, as BaileyShea points out, never intended for the sentence (Satz) to be “treated too dogmatically.”⁵⁸ The inventor of the twelve-tone system initially introduced the sentence as a pedagogical tool (“practice form”) for aspiring composers

⁵⁴ Anton Webern and Willi Reich, ed., *The Path to New Music*, ed. (London: Theodore Presser, 1963), 30.

⁵⁵ William E. Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (New York: OUP, 1998).

Arnold Schoenberg, Gerald Strang, and Leonard Stein, *Fundamentals of Musical Composition* (London: Faber, 1970)

⁵⁶ Matthew BaileyShea, “Wagner's Loosely Knit Sentences and the Drama of Musical Form,” *Integral*, 16/17 (2002/2003): 1-34.; Mark Richards, “Viennese Classicism and the Sentential Idea: Broadening the Sentence,” *Theory and Practice*, 36 (2011): 179-224.; Steven Vande Moortele, “Sentences, Sentence Chains, and Sentence Replication: Intra-and Interthematic Formal Functions in Liszt's Weimar Symphonic Poems,” *Integral*, 25 (2011): 121-158.

⁵⁷ Richards, 182.

⁵⁸ BaileyShea, 2. BaileyShea refers to Schönberg's *Fundamentals*: “...only an abstraction from art forms, sentences from masterworks often differ considerably from the scheme.” Arnold Schoenberg, Gerald Strang, and Leonard Stein, *Fundamentals of Musical Composition* (London: Faber, 1970), 60.”

and not within the context of a theoretical treatise.⁵⁹ The exemplary sentences used in the didactic work *Fundamentals* ought to represent phrase structures in their most normative form as ideal types, abstractions that are both clear in their general spirit and malleable in the detail of their surface presentations, not unlike Schenker's harmonic-contrapuntal structures.

In their respective publications Richards and BaileyShea identify what Richards terms the “op 2 no. 1 bias,” which amplified the calcification of the restrictive Caplinian sentence model.⁶⁰ The heavy reliance on Beethoven’s “op 2 no. 1” as an exemplary sentence tremendously shaped how sentential forms are viewed by theorists. Caplin defines the sentence as an eight-bar phrase that is divided into two main functions: a four-measure presentation and a four-measure continuation. The presentation is further divided into a bifold two-measure statement of a basic idea, or b.i. The continuation ought to contain a “liquidation” or elimination of the distinct motives preceding it (such as by fragmentation) and a cadential idea. Overall the sentence moves from more characteristic ideas to more generic or indefinite ones by the means of liquidation, and then ends with a conventional gesture, a cadence. In other words, it sets things up with a tight-knit repeated theme, destabilizes the form with the promise of new things to come, and closes out with a familiar punctuation.⁶¹

In his analysis of Wagner’s music BaileyShea has likened Alfred Lorenz’s bar form model (represented as AAB) to what he calls the “sentential idea.”⁶² Bar form constituted a favored analytical lens through which Wagner’s music was viewed. The blues is traditionally also seen through the perspective of the AAB format. While the sentential and bar form readings

⁵⁹ Richards, 180.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 181. Richards identified the use of “op 2 no. 1” as an exemplary sentence in 18 publications.

⁶¹ William E. Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven* (New York: OUP, 1998): 9-12.

⁶² Ibid., 182. Richards describes his requirements for identifying a chain of musical events as a sentence: “...all that is required to begin a sentence is a single basic idea to provide the frame of reference for the ensuing acceleration in the continuation. Needless to say, two basic ideas are far and away the norm for sentences...”

are certainly not invalid in their application to the blues, they are not identical and have their own respective merits. Similarly, bar form was devised for the analysis and taxonomy of sung music, while the sentence was advanced as a frame of reference for instrumental music. The blues was definitely developed from a sung tradition, but it was a purely instrumental entity in Coltrane's output. Accordingly, it seems more suitable to invoke the sentential perspective for Coltrane's music, which is inherently instrumental. Another benefit of the sentential frame is that it has a higher level of functional specificity than bar form, which BaileyShea calls "notoriously vague."⁶³ Richards provides an example of the flexibility with which some scholars approach the sentence is also evident in an assertion posited by James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, who "do not regard tonic prolongation itself as a necessary feature of a presentation."

David Forrest and Matthew Santa, who coauthored the article "A Taxonomy of Sentence Structures," formulated their concerns about the application of a Caplinian system to the blues.

One with an interest in popular music is likely to wonder whether or not a 12-bar blues structure – a a b, each phrase being four bars long – could be described in terms of the truncated sentence type. It could be, but the blues model doesn't specifically call for the sense of acceleration one typically finds at the beginning of the continuation, so it would have to be understood as a hybrid of the NF [no fragmentation] sentence type and the truncated sentence type, and by eliminating both the characteristic proportions of the sentence and the sense of acceleration usually found in the continuation, it would be easy to argue that its relationship to Schoenberg's practice form has been stretched to a breaking point. One could also argue that there is nothing to be gained by labeling the 12-bar blues as a "NF/truncated sentence," since the term "12-bar blues" is a much more detailed descriptor than the hybrid sentence label, in that "12-bar blues" also specifies a harmonic structure.⁶⁴

The general tendency of the sentence is to move from characteristic to generic material and the pace at which liquidation is achieved is not essential. Forrest and Santa's problematizing of a lacking "acceleration one typically finds at the beginning of the continuation," i.e. a

⁶³ BaileyShea, 2.

⁶⁴ David Forrest and Matthew Santa, "A Taxonomy of Sentence Structures," *College Music Symposium*, 54 (2014), note 23 in their notes section which lacks pagination.

fragmentation, is not regarded an essential element of the continuation by Caplin (see subsection 3.2). And even if we grant that it is important to a sentential form, acceleration is still induced through the cadential segment and the doubling of the harmonic rhythm ($\text{ii}^7\text{-V}^7$ or $\text{V}^7\text{-IV}^7$) in mm. 9-10 of the blues form. Omitted fragmentations in Coltrane's written blues heads do not endanger the continuation's rhetorical and functional identity. Moreover, in contradistinction to his written blues heads, Coltrane's improvised blues sentences *do* sometimes include fragmentations and abrupt liquidations. The effect of the blues sentence presents a gradual loosening of the form, first with the transposition of b.i. in measures 5-6 and then with the bridge-like release of motivic constraints near the end. Presentation and continuation functions are evident in Coltrane's blues music. While Forrest and Santa's "12-bar blues" descriptor may appear as a distinct framework, it seems to strongly resemble or at the very least imply a bar form reading. Although the 12-bar blues descriptor may be employed as its own definite formal scheme, I articulate a new formal type of the "blues sentence." The blues sentence is not a "hybrid" type or deviation from a norm but rather a highly conventionalized design, one that differs from the classical sentence yet has certain sentential characteristics:

Presentation (8 measures long and tonic prolongational)
basic idea
X-fold repetition/s of b.i.

Continuation (occurs over cadential segment)
compressed liquidation
closing module/cadence

Since what I term the blues sentence represents the most common organizational structure in Coltrane's written music and solos, it constitutes a useful heuristic tool for

understanding his music.⁶⁵ Using a *Formenlehre*-inspired approach I aim to develop a typology of Coltrane's blues sentences and other organizational designs. I will also present bar form readings in hopes of highlighting its respective advantages. The application of a toolset such as *Formenlehre* allows for more nuanced readings of structural subtleties that cannot be addressed through bar form labeling of the blues.⁶⁶ The interweaving of harmonic function, melodic organization, and rhetorical elements in Caplinian phrase structures enables a more detailed insight into the organization of blues heads and solo choruses. Identifying a subsection of the blues form as e.g.: a presentation of a sentence, conveys far more relevant information for my purposes than the stanza structure of the blues by the sheer virtue of its terminological labeling. Designating an "a" section does not inform the reader about the melodic organization of the section, its subsections, its likely harmonic foundation, or its rhetorical evocations.

3.2 Compressed and Omitted Fragmentations

Truncations and elisions of the fragmentation section are permissible within the Caplinian sentential paradigm. Accordingly, a lacking fragmentation in a blues sentence does not conflict

⁶⁵ Moortele, 134. Moortele introduces what he terms a sentence with a double basic idea, which is very similar to many blues sentences.

⁶⁶ Comprehensive analyses of blues formulas such as Michael Taft's *The Blues Lyric Formula* are heavily dependent on the semantic import of sung blues lyrics and syntactical elements of language and thus inapplicable to purely instrumental blues. Michael Taft, *The Blues Lyric Formula* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013).

with Caplin's framework. Caplin accounts for sentences with compressed continuation phrases and provides an example from Haydn.

EXAMPLE 3.17 Haydn, String Quartet in B-flat, Op. 50/1, ii, 1–6

Figure 1.23 Caplin's example of a compressed continuation.⁶⁷

In Figure 1.23 the fragmentation is significantly shortened, akin to what is often true of Coltrane's improvised blues sentential choruses. Because fragmentation is often lacking in Coltrane's written blues sentences, the process of liquidation may occur within a far more restricted time span.⁶⁸ While Caplin identifies the fragmentation as a characteristic element of the continuation, he asserts that its absence does not have a detrimental effect on the phrase function of the continuation.

Continuation function is characterized by the following four compositional devices: (1) phrase-structural fragmentation, (2) acceleration in the rate of harmonic change, (3) increase in surface rhythmic activity, and (4) sequential harmonies. Although often closely related to one another in a given continuation, these are distinct and independent processes. Moreover, none of them is a necessary condition of the function.⁶⁹

Apart from the omission of the fragmentation, the remaining three elements of the normative continuation remain intact in Coltrane's performance of the blues sentence. The (2) harmonic rhythm is generally doubled, the (3) rhythmic activity increases and even (4) sequential harmonies occur (i.e. V⁷ to IV⁷) within measures nine through twelve of the blues.

⁶⁷ Caplin, 48.

⁶⁸ Liquidation can be understood as a process through which characteristic material undergoes transformations which render it generic.

⁶⁹ Caplin, 41.

The main elements of dissimilarity between Caplinian sentences and the structure of Coltrane's *written* blues heads are the 1) bifold expansion of the presentation, 2) the omission of fragmentations, and 3) an insertion of b.i. material after the cadential idea. The central difference between the Caplinian type and Coltrane's *improvised* blues choruses is limited solely to the bifold expansion of the presentation.

3.3 Expanded Presentations

While Coltrane's written blues heads largely adhere to the presentation and repetition of the basic idea, further repetitions of b.i. also occur. Caplin accounts for instances of extended presentations and establishes two subcategories. The two strategies are to (1) either repeat the basic idea again (for a total of three b.i.) or to (2) repeat the whole two-part presentation (for a total of four b.i.). Both of these make the form looser than normal, which in classical form "is especially appropriate to subordinate themes."⁷⁰

In Coltrane's blues heads and improvised choruses, it is not the presentation itself but the repetitions of b.i. that are responsible for the presentation's expansion. In contrast to Caplin's (1) imbalanced phrase length, the various b.i. restatements always amount to an eight-measure presentation in Coltrane.

In summary, the blues sentence in Coltrane's written blues heads consists of an eight-measure presentation and a four-measure continuation in which the fragmentation section tends to be omitted. B.i.-related material is generally reintroduced at the end of the cadential idea within the continuation. The Caplinian ontology of the sentence is hence fulfilled in the blues

⁷⁰ Caplin, 99.

sentence. The repeated b.i.-related material occurs over tonic harmony, whereas the cadential idea is realized over the structural cessation. In bar form structures predating the blues, such as the Minnesinger and *Meistersinger* repertoires, it is not uncommon for the same material to close the A and B sections of the songs.⁷¹

The examples in the following subsection (3.4) illustrate that the blues sentence played an important role in his approach to crafting melodies within the standardized blues form. Without substantial accommodations bar form labeling cannot account for the occasional segmentations of its “A” modules into various submodules, the fact that “A” modules are not always simple repetitions of each other, and the occurrence of restatements of “A” material at the end of the supposedly contrasting “B” module.

3.4 Examples of Blues Sentences in Coltrane’s Composed Blues Heads - “AAB”

Figure 1.24 Coltrane’s “Mr. P.C.” read as a blues sentence.⁷²

⁷¹ An illustrative example of this tendency is Walther von der Vogelweide’s “Palästinalied” in which the A and B sections (*Aufgesang* and *Abgesang*) both end with the identical pitch sequence F-E-D-C-D-E-F-E-D. Since these phrase endings tend to largely be generic cadential ideas and not the most characteristic elements of b.i.s, the sentential rhetoric (characteristic → generic) remains intact.

⁷² John Coltrane, tenor saxophone, “Mr. P.C.,” by John Coltrane, recorded May 3, 1959, on *Giant Steps*, Atlantic – 1311, 1960, Vinyl.

Coltrane's "Mr. P.C." can be regarded as a textbook example of his blues sentences. We see an expanded presentation, an omission of the fragmentation, a cadential idea, and restated b.i. material in the end of the chorus. The adaptation of the Caplinian model allows for greater detail in a phrase structural analysis of the blues. Adhering to the conventional model would force the analysis to equally modify the simple "AAB" reading. The inherently more encompassing and comprehensive Caplinian framework accounts for deformations through emphasizing formal functions, whereas AAB just describes similarities and contrasts (and then only with modifications).

A = submodule a + submodule b

A = submodule a (transposed) + submodule b

B = cadential idea + submodule b

Figure 1.25 Adapted "AAB" labeling adding specificity to the reading of "Mr. P.C."

Figure 1.26 Coltrane's "Cousin Mary" read as a blues sentence.⁷³

The phrase structural design of "Cousin Mary" is very similar to "Mr. P.C." We observe an omission of the fragmentation in the continuation and a direct statement of the cadential idea followed by b.i. The main distinguishing element between the two blues heads is the fourfold

⁷³ John Coltrane, tenor saxophone, "Cousin Mary," by John Coltrane, recorded May 3, 1959, on *Giant Steps*, Atlantic – 1311, 1960, Vinyl.

repetition of b.i. in the presentation of “Cousin Mary.” Yet, the presentations take up the same number of measures in both pieces.

A = submodule a + submodule a

A = submodule a' + submodule a

B = cadential idea + submodule a

Figure 1.27 Adapted AAB labeling to add specificity to the reading of “Cousin Mary.”

The fourfold repetition of the b.i. is not reflected by simply applying AAB labels to “Cousin Mary.” Submodule a' erodes a degree of similarity between the two four-measure “A” segments. Moreover, the final “submodule a” undermines the obligatory contrasting character of “B.”

Figure 1.28 Coltrane’s “Bessie’s Blues” read as a blues sentence.⁷⁴

In “Bessie’s Blues” the final invocation of b.i.-related material is omitted after the cadential idea. “Bessie’s Blues” otherwise conforms with the design of “Cousin Mary” and “Mr. P.C.” aside from its unique fivefold repetition of b.i.

⁷⁴ John Coltrane, tenor saxophone, “Bessie’s Blues,” by John Coltrane, recorded April 27, 1964, on *Crescent*, Impulse! AS-66, 1964, Vinyl.

A = submodule a + submodule a transposed + submodule a-expanded
 A = submodule a-expanded transposed + submodule a
 B = cadential idea

Figure 1.29 Adapted AAB labeling adding specificity to the reading of “Cousin Mary.”

Figure 1.30 Coltrane’s “Equinox” read as a blues sentence.⁷⁵

“Equinox” and “Cousin Mary” follow an identical phrase structural design. In both pieces b.i. repeats four times in the presentation, the fragmentation is omitted, and the cadential idea is followed by b.i. material.

⁷⁵ John Coltrane, tenor saxophone, “Equinox,” by John Coltrane, recorded October 26, 1960, on *Coltrane’s Sound*, Atlantic SD 1419, 1964, Vinyl.

Figure 1.31 Coltrane’s “Vierd Blues” read as a blues sentence.⁷⁶

“Vierd Blues” represents another illustrative example of Coltrane’s adherence to the phrase structural design of the blues sentence. Moreover, “Vierd Blues” demonstrates that the phrase structural design is used despite the considerably denser foreground of the piece. The archetypal and universally applicable design of the blues sentence thus transcends the specific character of any given blues head in Coltrane’s blues writing.

3.5 Blues Sentences in Coltrane’s Improvisations

The specific instances of Coltrane’s improvised blues sentences will be discussed in chapters 2-4 and annotated in the corresponding analytical graphs. The main differences between Coltrane’s composed and improvised blues sentences are important to discuss from the outset. Generally,

⁷⁶ John Coltrane, tenor saxophone, “Trane’s Blues” (a.k.a. “Vierd Blues”), by John Coltrane, recorded May 11, 1956, with the Miles Davis Quintet, on *Workin’ With The Miles Davis Quintet*, Prestige – PRLP 7166, 1960, Vinyl.

Coltrane's improvised blues sentences do include fragmentations within their continuations. And we rarely hear the customary restatement of b.i. material after the cadential phrase.

3.6 Phrase-Level Sentential Simulacra

In Coltrane's blues solos, choruses sometimes start with what appear to be simulacra of sentential phrases that are unbound from the normative harmonic undergirding. In most cases these miniatures occupy the initial four-measure tonic prolongation before they are abandoned. These sentence-like gestures generally open with a discernible b.i. and its repetition. Examples of such *phrase-level sentential simulacra* are the opening of the sixth chorus of "Blue Train" and the beginnings of the fourth and eighth choruses of "Take the Coltrane" (see chapters four and five).

3.7 The Riff Blues – "AAA"

Another popular choice for the construction of melodies within the context of the blues is a simple threefold repetition of the four-measure b.i. The resulting "riff blues" form would only consist of a presentation section from a melodic perspective. This oversimplification, however, demands further explication, since melody, harmony, and rhetoric are inextricably linked in *Formenlehre*. Only as a well-orchestrated ensemble can the three elements fulfill their respective functions. The phrase structures fulfill specific functions, as Caplin's terms, such as "presentation" and "continuation," clearly indicate. The general trajectory of a sentence moves from the presentation, which showcases highly characteristic material, to the continuation where we encounter less characteristic material.

The riff blues's melodic construction partly overrides this sentential ontology since the third repetition of the b.i. presents an identical melody. Yet, the harmonic underpinning still

conveys a sense of movement and then closure. One of the great appeals of the riff blues is the notion that each of the three four-measure lines of the blues can be seen as a reharmonization of the same melody. The listener experiences the same melody from three different perspectives, making the threefold repetition of b.i. appear less redundant. Melodies of riff blues often do not conform explicitly with the underlying chords and fail to outline the harmonies as the melodies in the blues sentence tend to do. From a sentential perspective, the riff blues may be interpreted in two ways. (1) As an expanded presentation section in which the triple b.i. is undergirded by various foreground harmonies, or (2) a blues sentence that is solely realized by the normative harmonic template. Both readings privilege certain musical parameters over others. The first reading suggests a dominating b.i. (melody), resulting in an enlarged presentation without a continuation. The solo of a riff blues would then fulfill the expected continuation function. While the second reading privileges harmony, both interpretations result in either partial or weak articulations of a sentential structure.

Figure 1.32 Coltrane’s “Trane’s Slo Blues” as an example of a riff blues.⁷⁷

“Trane’s Slo Blues” is a clear example of Coltrane’s riff blues writing. In addition to its comparatively simplistic melodic design, Coltrane exclusively employs the constrained palette of

⁷⁷ John Coltrane, tenor saxophone, “Trane’s Slo Blues,” by John Coltrane, recorded August 16, 1957, on *Lush Life*, Prestige – 7188, 1961, Vinyl.

the B_b minor pentatonic scale for this blues head. The economy of means on display in this head stands in stark contrast to Coltrane's virtuosic improvised melodies and complex harmonic superimpositions during his solo. This discrepancy between relative plainness and adroit finesse is one of the elements which imbues the track with a great sense of musical diversity.

Riff blues show little to no adaptations of the melody as it is repeated over the various harmonies of the blues. The boxed annotations in “Trane’s Slo Blues” denote a minimal diversion, which is too insignificant to label it a riff-sentence hybrid. Riff Blues and Riff-Sentence Hybrids only occur in Coltrane’s written blues heads and are virtually nonexistent in his blues improvisations. While riff blues reflect sentential organization in weak or partial ways, riff-sentence hybrids show more explicit correlations to the sentence design. (See Subsection 3.8)

Musical score for piano showing two staves of music. The top staff features chords A♭⁷, D♭⁷, A♭⁷, A♭⁷, D♭⁷, and D♭⁷. The bottom staff features chords A♭⁷, A♭⁷, B♭m⁷, E♭⁷, A♭⁷, and A♭⁷.

Figure 1.33 Coltrane's "Bass Blues" as an example of a riff blues.⁷⁸

“Bass Blues” also illustrates some of the same features inherent in Coltrane’s riff blues heads. The basic idea is not transposed to fit IV⁷ and V⁷ and there are no substantial modifications of the intervallic make-up of the final b.i. statement. The minimal adjustments are shown with boxed annotations and are similar to the oscillations between $\widehat{b7}$ and $\widehat{1}$ seen in “Trane’s Slo Blues.” In

⁷⁸ John Coltrane, tenor saxophone, "Bass Blues," by John Coltrane, recorded August 23, 1957, on *John Coltrane With The Red Garland Trio*, Prestige 7123, 1958, Vinyl.

both pieces, the first phrase concludes with $\hat{1} \Rightarrow \widehat{b7}$ maintaining the musical momentum. The pitch pair is inverted after the final phrases to convey a sense of internal closure.

3.8 The Riff-Sentence Hybrid – “AAA”

Some examples among Coltrane’s blues heads, such as “Blue Train,” can be seen as a hybrid between the riff blues and the blues sentence since they show clear signs of melodic adaptation. While riff blues melodies bypass their harmonic undergirding, riff-sentence hybrids entail noticeable modifications of the triple b.i. which account for the shifting harmonic context. Like the blues sentence, the riff sentence hybrid transposes its basic idea over IV⁷, which further distinguishes it from blues heads of the riff blues category.

While the sentential rhetoric from distinct to generic is still rather weak in riff sentence hybrids, they do not appear as merely expanded presentations lacking continuations as riff blues. The unifying characteristic that is shared by riff blues and riff sentence hybrids is their focus on a single melodic idea. While Coltrane tends to transpose the b.i. to fit IV⁷, his melodies are more modified over V⁷. The b.i. transformation over V⁷, labeled as “crux,” is a decisive moment in every riff-sentence hybrid situating the given blues in between the categories of a riff blues and a blues sentence. In general Coltrane solely retains the rhythmic component of the b.i. for the crux.

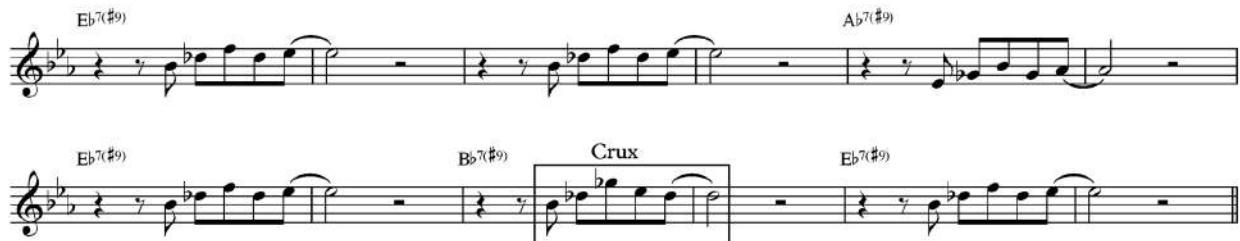


Figure 1.34 Coltrane’s “Blue Train” as a riff-sentence hybrid.⁷⁹

In this example Coltrane uses a short motive that is centered around an upper structure triad (B_b minor), which resolves to the tonic pitch. The implied minor sound is mirrored by the idiosyncratic choice of dominant seventh chord voicings, which Coltrane instructed his pianist Kenny Drew to play on this recording. Drew’s voicings contain the sharp ninth of every chord, which gives prominence to each chord’s minor third while the respective major thirds are played simultaneously. The obscuring of the much brighter Mixolydian sound transfers the sonic environment into a more somber region on the spectrum between major and minor. The sense of darkness which is thus invoked by the dominant seventh sharp ninth voicings is amplified by the minor-flavored melodic motive and carried beyond the statement of the head into Coltrane’s solo. The band does not shift to the normative Mixolydian sound until the fifth measure of Coltrane’s first solo chorus when Drew begins to omit the sharp ninth of the IV⁷ chord A_b⁷.

From a rhythmic perspective “Blue Train” can be regarded as a riff blues, yet there is a crucial melodic crux built into the ninth measure which provides just enough variance to push this piece a little closer into the realm of a blues sentence. In the context of nearly monotonous recurrences of the same theme such a moment clearly stands out and needs to be given special consideration.

⁷⁹ John Coltrane, tenor saxophone, “Blue Train,” by John Coltrane, recorded September 15, 1957, on *Blue Train*, Blue Note BLP 1577, 1957, Vinyl.

$A = \text{submodule } a + \text{submodule } a$
 $A = \text{submodule } a \text{ transposed} + \text{submodule } a$
 $A \approx B = \text{crux: submodule } a \text{ transformed} + \text{submodule } a$

Figure 1.35 Bar form labeling for “Blue Train”

In the case of “Blue Train,” the need for a more specific category of riff-sentence hybrid becomes evident. What could simply be referred to as “crux” occupies an odd space between “A-ness” and “B-ness.” While clearly A-related, the crux is too distinct to be a full-fledged “A” segment. But it does not contrast enough to be a fully-fledged b segment. We see a similar crux in “Chronic Blues.”

Figure 1.36 Coltrane’s “Chronic Blues” as a riff-sentence hybrid.⁸⁰

3.9 Through-Composed Blues

Through-composed blues pieces constitute the smallest category of Coltrane’s blues heads. Presumably some of these more loosely knit compositions harken back to the bebop era. If ideas are repeated in bebop, these ideas are generally only repeated once and then in altered form in most examples.⁸¹ Since Coltrane performed with some of the founding members of bebop during his early career, it seems plausible that some of his blues compositions would reflect this

⁸⁰ John Coltrane, tenor saxophone, “Chronic Blues,” by John Coltrane, recorded May 31, 1957, on *Coltrane*, Prestige PRLP 7105, 1957, Vinyl.

⁸¹ There are of course exceptions such as the Dizzy Gillespie compositions “Groovin’ High,” and “Bebop.”

influence. Coltrane's through-composed blues heads seem to split into the two general subgroups of 1) line-driven melodies, which seem to be influenced by the bebop style, and 2) modular melodies, which link together readily identifiable two-measure ideas.⁸²

3.9.1 Line-Driven Melodies

Figure 1.37 Coltrane's "Just for the Love" as a line-driven through-composed blues.⁸³

It's not necessarily the phrase structural design that lends cogency to "Just for the Love" but the relentless return to the *Kopfton* C, which sounds twenty times in the same register within the twelve-bar form and once in the lower octave. The pitch C becomes the guiding thread and a structural pillar of the whole piece. C is initially stated as a local 3 in the first measure over an A♭maj⁷ chord. The harmonic design of "Just for the Love" is unique as it does not begin with I⁷ but bIIImaj⁷. This very uncommon harmonic procedure is a testament to Coltrane's affinity for harmonic exploration, made famous by his milestone achievement *Giant Steps*.⁸⁴ (The pieces on *Giant Steps* were recorded in 1959, which separates that album from the earlier "Just for the

⁸² The modular subtype may be interpreted as blues sentences with four-measure presentations. Yet there are several issues related to this reading, such as return of b.i. material in mm. 7-8 and the dominating tonic prolongation ranging across mm. 1-8.

⁸³ John Coltrane, tenor saxophone, "Just for the Love," by John Coltrane, recorded September 21, 1956, with the Paul Chambers Sextet, on *Whims Of Chambers*, Blue Note BLP 1534, 1957, Vinyl.

⁸⁴ John Coltrane, tenor saxophone, "Giant Steps," by John Coltrane, Recorded May 3, 1959, on *Giant Steps*, Atlantic 1311, 1960, Vinyl.

Love" session by only three years.) The remainder of "Just for the Love" largely conforms to normative jazz blues in respect to harmony. There are two additional points of distinction, though: the proliferation of major seventh chords (as opposed to dominant sevenths) as well as the harmonic half-step slip in the second measure. The composition includes four different major seventh chords: $A\flat^{maj7}$ (m. 1), F^{maj7} (mm. 2-3), $G\flat^{maj7}$ (m. 2.3), and $B\flat^{maj7}$ (m. 5). While it is not entirely unusual to render the I chord as a major seventh in the bebop blues tradition, it is unusual to see three further chords of this quality in the same blues.

Coltrane uses two motives (A and B) throughout the piece. Motive A, consisting of the three eighth notes F, $E\flat$, and C, occurs twice in unaltered fashion as an opening idea and in the final measure. Motive B, an ascending triad resolving downward to C, likewise occurs twice but with slight modification. The third pitch of both statements is adapted to fit the local harmony. (first statement of B (G, $B\flat$, D, C), second statement of B (G, $B\flat$, $E\flat$, C)) From a Schenkerian perspective, the *Kopfton* clearly dominates the piece. The piece ends in a very unusual location of the form (m. 4), which is generally a prime *locus* for harmonic motion in the blues form and not associated with arrival. A clearly discernible descent is not readily apparent, and the melody seems to suggest a direct jump from $\hat{5}$ to $\hat{1}$.

The musical score consists of two staves. The top staff features a tenor saxophone line with various chords indicated above the notes, such as F7, Bb7, F7, F7, Bb7, and A. Annotations include 'C.T. = F + DN Eb & G', 'Presentation', and 'b.i.'. The bottom staff shows a rhythmic pattern with annotations 'Continuation' and 'cadential idea'.

Figure 1.38 Coltrane’s “Some Other Blues” as a line-driven through-composed blues.⁸⁵

The lower staff of Figure 1.38 showing only the rhythms of “Some Other Blues,” illustrates that the head follows a blues sentence structure. Since the outline is however solely realized rhythmically, the blues sentence structure is only hinted at in the vaguest sense. The somewhat odd title of “Some Other Blues” was chosen by Coltrane because he thought the piece sounded similar to Charlie Parker’s “Now’s the Time.”⁸⁶ Both blues heads open with the *Kopfton* $\hat{5}$ as a pick-up after which $\hat{1}$ serves as a cover tone. In “Some Other Blues” the cover tone is embellished with its DN $\hat{2}$ and $\hat{b}7$ whereas in “Now’s the Time” the cover tone $\hat{1}$ is only decorated by $\hat{2}$. Parker retains a cover tone throughout the piece, while Coltrane abandons it after

⁸⁵ John Coltrane, tenor saxophone, “Some Other Blues,” by John Coltrane, recorded on December 2, 1959, on *Coltrane Jazz*, Atlantic 1354, 1961, Vinyl.

⁸⁶ Charlie Parker, alto saxophone, “Now’s the Time,” by Charlie Parker, recorded on December 30, 1952 and July 28, 1953, on *Now’s The Time*. Verve Records 8005, 1957, LP.

the second measure. The initial prolongation of the *Kopfton* C (mm. 1-3) leads into motive A, which again consists of Coltrane's beloved $\hat{3}-\hat{1}-\hat{b}7$ trichord. The subsequent presentation of A occurs with a foreground diminution (PT $\hat{7}$), and introduces the first order UN $\hat{6}$, D in m. 5. The final statement of A subsides to the *Kopfton* in m. 6. Over the structural V⁷ chord C⁷, Coltrane arpeggiates up from the *Kopfton* to G via E, while he descends from F through D to the structural $\hat{4}$ over IV⁷. The structurally inferior apex pitches G (over C⁷) and F (over B b ⁷) may be interpreted as a slight reminder of the piece's opening cover tone area. The absence of $\hat{3}$ in the *Urlinie* is likely related to the fact that A would be a non-diatonic pitch over B b ⁷. For the harmonic underpinning of "Some Other Blues" Coltrane reinvisioned a basic country blues including a V⁷-IV⁷-I⁷ blues cadence which he enriched with a circle of fifths progression F⁷→B b ⁷→E b ⁷→A b ⁷→D b ⁷ that resolves by half step down to the structural V7 chord C7.

Figure 1.39 "Up Against The Wall" as example of the line-driven subgroup.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ John Coltrane, tenor saxophone, "Up Against The Wall," by John Coltrane, recorded September 18, 1962, on *Impressions*, Impulse! A-42, 1963, Vinyl.

Since “Up Against The Wall” does not fit the modular subtype of through composed blues heads, it cannot be segmented into bar from labels. The close middleground reduction shows that a riff blues hybrid (AA’A’) may serve as a template, which is richly ornamented with foreground diminutions. “Up Against The Wall” features the two motives A and B. A is best described as a descending Ab seventh chord arpeggio that starts with the root and fills the space of an octave.

The motive A is initially stated as an arpeggiation of Ab^7 and two arpeggiations of Abm^7 . Motive A becomes evident in its reduced form since it is obscured by various foreground diminutions, such as passing tones and chromatic neighbors. The first statement of A introduces the *Kopfton* Eb in m. 1. The head tone is stated on the third beat as a repeated eighth note, which lends emphasis to the pitch. The second statement of A (m. 9) appears similar but the double statement of the *Kopfton* is omitted along with a metric demotion to a weak beat. “Up Against The Wall” includes a full $\hat{5}$ -descent, however $\widehat{\text{b}3}$ takes the place of $\hat{3}$. A clearly articulated 8-prg. delineates $\hat{4}$ of the *Urlinie*. The octave transfer of $\hat{4}$ leads into $\widehat{\text{b}3}$. $\widehat{\text{b}3}$ can either be interpreted as a LN to the root of IV^7 , Db or more likely as a blues infected third that anticipates I^7 , Ab^7 . In contrast to A, which can be considered a *bona fide* middleground motive, B occurs on two *Schichten*.

Beside its multi-level occurrences, B is one of Coltrane’s favorite licks. In its archetypal form, $\hat{3}-\hat{1}-\widehat{\text{b}7}$, it represents a fragmented descending dominant seventh chord arpeggio which misses its fifth. Coltrane often fills the intervals of B with the passing tones in the foreground, resulting in the bebop scale fragment $\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\widehat{\text{b}7}$. B and its foreground diminution occur in many of Coltrane’s solos throughout this dissertation. Coltrane even uses motive B as the b.i. for his blues sentence “Bessie’s Blues.”

3.9.2. Modular Melodies

The individual motivic subunits of Coltrane's untitled "Original 11383" are far more discernible than in "Just for the Love." In the former, two contrasting ideas (b.i. and c.i.) are followed by a cadential idea. "Original 11383" is further unified through the strict use of the B♭ blues scale as pitch source for the whole head. This economy of means is usually only observed in riff blues.

Figure 1.40 "Original 11383" as a through-composed blues of the modular subgroup.⁸⁸

A = submodules a + a
 B = submodules b + a
 C = submodule b + cadential idea

Figure 1.41 Bar form reading of "Original 11383."

Coltrane abstains from the use of direct thirds in the melody of "Original 11383" and rather focuses on steps and fourths/fifths. The "thirdless" character of the piece is also evident in the quartal voicings for "Original 11383." The piece is thus horizontally and vertically unified though the restrictive use of seconds and fourths.

⁸⁸ John Coltrane, tenor saxophone, "Original 11383," by John Coltrane, recorded March 6, 1963, on *Both Directions At Once: The Lost Album*, Impulse! B0028228-02, 2018, compact disc.

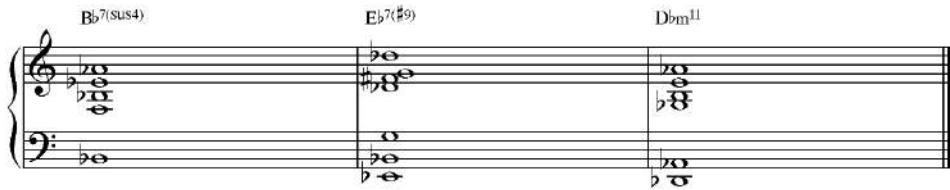


Figure 1.42 McCoy Tyner's quartal voicings for "Original 11383."

Figure 1.43 Coltrane's "Mr. Syms" as a through-composed blues of the modular subgroup.⁸⁹

The idiosyncratic chord-melody of "Mr. Syms" represents an important part of the character of this blues. The individually harmonized pitches of the various ideas occur over pedal points outlining the archetypal harmonic progression I-IV-V-I. "Mr. Syms" starts off with what appears to be a sentential phrase structure, yet a c.i. intervenes in mm. 5-7. The return of b.i. in mm. 7-8 strongly reinforces the tonic prolongation ranging across mm. 1-8.

- A = submodule a + submodule a
- B = submodule b + submodule a
- C = submodule c

Figure 1.44 "Mr. Syms" interpreted with ABC subsection labels.

⁸⁹ John Coltrane, tenor saxophone, "Mr. Syms," by John Coltrane, recorded October 24, 1960, on *Coltrane Plays the Blues*, Atlantic 1382, 1962, Vinyl.

The A and B segments of “Mr. Syms,” “Mr. Day,” and “Original 11383,” with their submodule structure $a + a + b + a$, invoke the notion of rounded binary form, which further amplifies the sense of an overarching tonic prolongation throughout the first eight measure.

The musical score consists of three staves of tenor saxophone music. The top staff starts with a melodic line, followed by a bracket labeled 'b.i.' above a chord symbol 'F#7'. This is followed by another 'b.i.' bracket above 'A' and a 'c.i.' bracket above 'F#m7/B'. The middle staff begins with an 'anticipation' bracket above 'A', followed by a 'b.i.' bracket above 'F#7' and a 'cadential idea' bracket above 'B9'. The bottom staff concludes with a 'cadential idea' bracket above 'A13' and 'F#7'.

Figure 1.45 Coltrane’s “Mr. Day” as a through-composed blues of the modular subgroup.⁹⁰

“Mr. Day” has a clear organization of musical ideas and phrases. A repeated b.i. is followed by a c.i. after which b.i. returns. Subsequently the blues head concludes with a cadential idea. This format is identical to the modular design of “Mr. Syms.” Coltrane’s trichord $\hat{3}-\hat{1}-\hat{b}7$ (labeled as “A”) is used to end the second and third b.i.s (mm. 4 and 8). The gapped *Urlinie* $\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{b}3-\hat{1}$ is dominated by a prolongation of the *Kopfton* $\hat{5}$ throughout mm. 1-9. Over IV⁷ (mm. 5-6) the pitch B suggests a role as LN to $\hat{5}$, which Schenkerian explicitly rules out since $\hat{4}$ usually

⁹⁰ John Coltrane, tenor saxophone, “Mr. Day,” by John Coltrane, recorded October 24, 1960, on *Coltrane Plays the Blues*, Atlantic 1382, 1962, Vinyl.

indicates the onset of an inescapable descent to $\hat{3}$.⁹¹ Throughout this dissertation I refrain from treating $\hat{4}$ as a LN within prolongations of $\hat{5}$.

A = submodule a + submodule a
 B = submodule b + submodule a
 C = submodule c

Figure 1.46 “Mr. Day” interpreted with ABC subsection labels.

Despite the potentially stark formulaic prescriptions of the blues as a conventional form, Coltrane applied immense inventiveness and approached the form with great flexibility. Coltrane’s approach to blues writing is reminiscent of the Verdian *tinta musicale*, according to which every piece ought to display its very own idiosyncratic tinge. (See Table 1.1.)

Piece	Key/Mode	<i>Tinte</i>
“Blue Train”	E \flat Mixolydian	Dominant seventh $\sharp 9$ sound
“Original 11383”	B \flat Mixolydian	Restricted interval use of 4 ^{ths} and steps which is vertically reflected through the use of quartal harmony.
“Just for the Love”	F Mixolydian	Offsetting proliferation of major seventh chords and added key centers. Persistent reinvocation of the pitch C.
“Up Against the Wall”	A \flat Mixolydian	Interplay of $\hat{3}$ and $\flat\hat{3}$ in the middleground motive A. Generally descending melodic gestures
“Mr. Syms”	C Dorian	Individually harmonized pitches within the modular melodic building blocks occurring over pedal points.
“Mr. Day”	F \sharp Mixolydian	Persistent invocation of prolonged C \sharp s governs the melodic make-up of the piece in conjunction with pedal points.
“Chronic Blues”	E \flat Dorian	Crux moment, uncommon key, manifold b.i. repetitions.
“Bessie’s Blues”	E \flat Mixolydian	Trichord $\hat{3}-\hat{1}-\flat\hat{7}$
“Trane’s Slo Blues”	B \flat mixolydian	Exclusive use of pitches belonging to the B \flat minor pentatonic scale
“Veird Blues”	B \flat Mixolydian	Chromatic passing tones between $\flat\hat{7}$, $\hat{1}$, $\flat\hat{3}$, and $\hat{4}$ in the b.i. contribute to the unique character of this blues head.
“Some Other Blues”	F Mixolydian	Circle of 5 ^{ths} reharmonization of the country blues
“Bass Blues”	A \flat Mixolydian	Use of the blues scale built on the 6 th degree (F)
“Cousin Mary”	A \flat Mixolydian	Reharmonization of the blues cadence: $\flat V^7 - IV^7 - I^7$

Table 1.1 Selected blues heads by Coltrane with their respective *tinte*.

⁹¹ Schenker, *Der Freie Satz*, 51. Schenker rules out composing out of $\hat{4}$ since it forms a dissonant interval over I. “Als dissonantes Intervall aber läßt die $\hat{4}$ keine Auskomponierung zu, denn ein Intervall, das selbst im Durchgangszustand ist, kann nicht zugleich Kopfton eines Auskomponierungszuges sein, der notwendig konsonant sein muß.”

In this opening chapter, I have included a selection of Coltrane's blues heads. The heads of many other compositions by Coltrane may be assigned to one of the formal categories discussed here: .

Blues Sentences:

"Pursuance," "By The Numbers," "Mr. Knight"

Riff-Sentence Hybrid:

"Blues to Bechet" & "Village Blues", "Chasin' the Train"

Riff blues:

"Blues Minor" (blues variant), "Locomotion" (with bridge)

Through Composed:

"Blues to You" (likely not notated), "The Last Blues"

4. Periodization

Coltrane's career is often divided into various segments. In most Coltrane scholarship his early recording and performance activity before joining the Miles Davis quintet in 1955 is largely overlooked. The general trope of Coltrane as a late bloomer, whose early works are not yet fully matured governs much of the discourse about his musical beginnings. David Baker focuses solely on "Coltrane's mature career" and skips Coltrane's early period entirely, beginning his periodization with what he calls the "Vertical or Change Running Period."⁹² According to Baker this period is represented by albums such as *Blue Train* (1957), and *Giant Steps* (1959).⁹³ He identifies another later period which he terms Coltrane's "Modal Period," which includes albums such as *My Favorite Things* (1960), and *Crescent* (1964).⁹⁴ The issue with this specific periodization is the fact that Coltrane contributed to Davis' album *Kind of Blue* (1959). This album is largely considered to have ushered in modal jazz, but its recording and release schedule preceded *Giant Steps* by many months. Consequently, Baker's periodization dovetails two periods, which is an inherent historiographical issue in any attempt to demarcate paradigmatic shifts. While Baker sidesteps the issue by limiting his periodization to Coltrane's solo career, the problem of accounting for Coltrane's many concurrent tendencies remains. As is the case with nearly every artist, areas of overlap and transition exist during which new *modi operandi* have not fully crystalized. Furthermore, it is hardly feasible to presume that a given artist is virtually reborn at the beginning of a new period, shedding his old skin and abandoning previously

⁹² David Baker, *The Jazz Style of John Coltrane* (Lebanon, IN: Studio 224, 1980), 12.

⁹³ I list the years in which the albums were recorded.

⁹⁴ John Coltrane, *My Favorite Things*, Atlantic 1361, 1961, Vinyl.; John Coltrane, *Crescent*, Impulse! AS-66, 1964, Vinyl.

acquired traits, knowledge, and materials. Accordingly, any attempt at a periodization should be regarded as a means to gain deeper insight and not as a hard and fast demarcation.

Baker proceeds by naming Coltrane's final period his "Experimental Period."⁹⁵

According to Baker this period is represented by albums such as *A Love Supreme* (1965), *Ascension* (1966), and *Interstellar Space*.⁹⁶ Again, the issue of periodization becomes quite evident. Most scholars and jazz connoisseurs would likely count *A Love Supreme* as an album which is situated towards the end of Coltrane's modal period or as the transitional segue into his final two years. Strictly speaking the music of *A Love Supreme* is modal from a jazz-centered perspective.

Tony Whyton's book *Beyond A Love Supreme* revolves around a highly related issue concerning Coltrane's periodization, especially as it pertains to his final years.⁹⁷ As the title of the book suggest, Whyton builds a case on the commonly held opinion that the album *A Love Supreme* represents a capstone of Coltrane's oeuvre. He explores the legacy of the album and focuses on the last two years of Coltrane's life, which are often overshadowed by the success and impact of *A Love Supreme*, and thus fills a gap in Coltrane scholarship. Most jazz specialists would likely agree with Whyton's assessment.

Perhaps more than any other jazz album, *A Love Supreme* has come to stand as a centerpiece of the jazz canon: its centrality both to the output of John Coltrane specifically, and to jazz history more broadly, remains unquestioned. *A Love Supreme* has a symbolic quality that feeds into several jazz mythologies, supporting the sense of homogenous tradition, canon, and spiritual jazz life.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Baker, *The Jazz Style of John Coltrane*, 13.

⁹⁶ John Coltrane, *Ascension*, Impulse! AS-95, 1966, Vinyl.; John Coltrane, *Interstellar Space*, ABC Impulse! ASD-9277, 1974, Vinyl.; John Coltrane, *A Love Supreme*, Impulse! A-77, 1965, Vinyl. Other less-often referenced albums such as *Expression* are also part of this category. John Coltrane, *Expression*, Impulse! A-9120, 1967.

⁹⁷ Tony Whyton, *Beyond A Love Supreme* (New York: OUP, 2013)

⁹⁸ Whyton, 45.

Interestingly Coltrane refrained from recording the blues throughout the last two years of his life. The last studio recording of a blues is aptly titled “The Last Blues,” (recorded on June 10, 1965) yet the final known performance of a blues stems from a festival in Juan-les-Pins, France where the quartet gave a live rendition of the *A Love Supreme* suite on July 26, 1965.⁹⁹ This live recording features a circa 21-minute version of “Pursuance” – the blues of the suite. The total length of the performance of the suite is 47 minutes and 42 seconds. Thus, the only blues of the four-part suite weighs in at nearly 50% of the entire performance’s total length. The blues was without doubt a significant companion for Coltrane during his entire career and the importance given to “Pursuance” demonstrates clearly that it was still important to him in the middle of 1965. After this point, however, there are no known recordings of the blues. Most likely, the blues carried too many earthbound and grounded connotations to serve as an effective vehicle for Coltrane’s transcendentalism and spirituality.¹⁰⁰ In addition to the blues presumed lack of metaphysical air, its strong connection with the entertainment industry and commercially oriented genres such as rhythm and blues, might have deterred Coltrane from utilizing it.

In his short but insightful little book *John Coltrane: Jazz, Racism, and Resistance* Martin Smith presents a more nuanced periodization of Coltrane which he chronologically subdivides as follows.:¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ John Coltrane, tenor saxophone, “The Last Blues,” by John Coltrane, recorded June 10, 1965, on *Living Space*, Impulse! – IMPD-246, 1998, Compact Disc.

John Coltrane, *A Love Supreme*, Impulse! 0731458994527, 2002, Compact Disc.

¹⁰⁰ See Ben Givan’s related assessment of the blues in chapter four p. 242-243.

¹⁰¹ Martin Smith, *Jazz, Racism and Resistance: the Extended Version* (London: Redwords, 2007), 7.

The Early Years
Bebop
Cool
Hardbop and Coltrane's big break
Standing out against the stream
The Classic Quartet
Rise of the Avant Garde
Jazz After Coltrane's Death

It has to be noted that Smith attempts to tie in socio-political currents and events whenever suitable. This periodization contextualizes Coltrane and his music to a point where it only tangentially touches upon concrete musical examples of Coltrane's work. For example, Smith's chapter on the early years is occupied with an attempt to paint a picture of Coltrane's wider context rather than specificities of his stylistic development. Smith shares the same assessment about the beginning of Coltrane's mature career by aligning it with his acceptance into Miles Davis' quintet.

John Coltrane's big break came about a year before the launch of the civil rights movement. In 1955 Miles Davis asked him to join his band. Coltrane was only a few months younger than Davis, but whereas Davis had been recording since 1945 and had featured with all the jazz greats, Coltrane was virtually unknown.¹⁰²

While Smith is definitely correct to identify this event as a major milestone in Coltrane's career, it is important to note that the young saxophonist was an active performer and well known in insider circles. Thus, when Martin mentions Coltrane's existence outside the limelight of whatever jazz audience there was in 1955, it has to be added that he was connected to many of the musicians.

Author and jazz critic Ben Ratliff steers clear of a hard and fast Coltrane periodization with enigmatically titled chapter headings that only people who are in the know can readily

¹⁰² Ibid., 49.

discern.¹⁰³ While Ratliff dedicates more details to specific musical events such as recording sessions, there is not a single concrete musical example in the entire work. He titles the period of Coltrane's life and career between the collapse of the Dizzy Gillespie small group in 1951 and his beginning with Miles Davis' group in 1955 simply as "not much happens."¹⁰⁴ A short examination of Coltrane's blues discography between these years reveals that Coltrane was recording, performing, and studying with the likes of Earl Bostic, Denis Sandole, Gay Crosse, James "Coatsville" Harris, and Johnny Hodges. Especially since Ratliff discusses all these connections and collaborations, his assessment of an uneventful period seems problematic.

Among Coltrane scholars, and especially Coltrane biographers, Lewis Porter may be regarded as *primus inter pares*. Porter tries to avoid the issue of periodization by accentuating Coltrane's perpetual growth.

Although Coltrane's music is commonly discussed in terms of periods – the early period, the Miles Davis Period, the 'classic' quartet, and the late period – I have purposely avoided using that approach because it obscures the fact that he was constantly developing and changing.¹⁰⁵

While Porter's argument that Coltrane was constantly developing as an artist is laudable, I believe there is still good reason to divide Coltrane's career into periods. Periodization seems to be an inescapable historiographic force, which no scholar can completely break free from. Porter's monograph is divided into chronologically ordered sections, and hence still appears to be rather compartmentalized. A tally of changing elements is important, but the underlying premise of constant change has difficulty accounting for two things that are just as important to a study of Coltrane's evolution: (1) aspects of his style that remained stable over the long term,

¹⁰³ Ben Ratliff, *Coltrane: The Story of Sound*, (New York: Picador, 2008).

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 16.

¹⁰⁵ Lewis Porter, *John Coltrane*, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2017), x.

and (2) major long-lasting changes that were abrupt rather than gradual. Moreover, similarities between the various periods might remain unaccounted for if the underlying premise is that of constant change. Coltrane's music shows overlapping tendencies that complicate periodization. Even when we conclude that he has entered a new period it does not mean he completely transformed into an entirely new artist. Coltrane's life was comparatively short, and even though he was always developing and changing akin to other artists such as Miles Davis and Pablo Picasso, implicit similarities exist across the segments of his career.

The periodization propounded by this dissertation (early period 1946-1955, mid-period 1955-1959, late period 1959-1965) revolves around notable shifts in Coltrane's aesthetic, and improvisational approach as it is manifested in his blues recordings. Since Coltrane did not record blues in the last two years of his life, the periodization is custom-tailored to his blues output. In addition, factors which profoundly influenced Coltrane's biography such as his spiritual awakening, drug habits, and employment, are also considered in choice of representative analyses. Coltrane recorded roughly 180 blues and blues-related pieces. An analysis of every single recording exceeds the bounds of this project. A number of well-chosen examples can however effectively demonstrate Coltrane's shifting approaches to the blues.

Chapter 2. Early Coltrane: “Now’s the Time” (1946) to “Strange Things All the Rage” (1953)

This chapter examines five early solos by John Coltrane through a Schenkerian lens. It situates the structural features of Coltrane’s early improvisations within a larger context, relating them to his influences, jazz conventions, and his later career. The recordings of Coltrane’s formative years are less examined by the scholarly community. A study of these early documents grants access to the identification of factors that shaped his style and charts how his performance tendencies shifted throughout the years. A close analysis of the music reveals that Coltrane’s early solos already demonstrate multileveled structural coherence and a concern for a repletion of motivic connection.

In addition to the noticeable bebop references, Coltrane’s profound interest in harmony and harmonic exploration, are already clearly discernible on his earliest recordings. In another interview about his collaboration with Thelonious Monk, Coltrane mentions a specific example that illustrates his concern for harmony.

In fact, due to the direct and free flowing lines in his music, I found it easy to apply the harmonic ideas that I had. I could stack up chords - say on a C⁷, I sometimes superimposed an Eb⁷, up to an F#⁷, down to an F. That way I could play three chords on one.¹

All three chords Coltrane mentions are subsets of the C half-whole diminished (octatonic) scale and can thus be substituted with each other; especially when played in a specific sequence. An additional A⁷ chord could be included as another tetrachordal subset of the C half-whole diminished scale. (For a detailed discussion of this device see p. 183.) The following solos evidence how Coltrane’s early musical core tenets translated into his improvisatory style.

¹ Chris DeVito, *Coltrane on Coltrane: The John Coltrane Interviews* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2012), 68.

1. “Now’s the Time”

The earliest surviving recordings of Coltrane were made on Saturday July 13, 1946 between 1:30–2:30 p.m. at the Armed Forces Radio Station on Oahu, Hawaii where he had been stationed with the Navy since December 1945.² The nineteen-year-old distinguished himself from the already skillful ranks of the larger Navy swing band with his profound working knowledge of harmony, instrumental technique, and the emerging bebop idiom.³ In this session, Coltrane led a small ensemble through a mixture of twelve pieces comprising jazz standards and recent bebop numbers. Among the pieces they played was “Now’s the Time” by Charlie Parker. This would be Coltrane’s first documented performance of a twelve-bar blues progression, albeit imbued with the hallmark sound of bebop. Indeed, Coltrane had not yet switched from alto saxophone to tenor and his personal improvisatory style was heavily influenced by his alto-playing hero Charlie Parker.

² Lewis Porter ed., *The John Coltrane Reference* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 29-30. Matias Rinar, liner notes to *John Coltrane: First Giant Steps*, John Coltrane, RLR 88619, CD, 2006. Rinar indicates that while the session with The Melody Masters was not Coltrane’s first recording, it is the only one of which the tapes survived. He also lists information about previous recording sessions featuring Coltrane.

³ Bill Cole, *John Coltrane* (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2001), 26.



Figure 2.1 Coltrane’s solo on “Now’s the Time” from July 13, 1946.⁴

1.1. The influence of Charlie Parker

1.1.1. Measures Seven and Eight of the Blues Form

In order to appreciate and understand Coltrane’s development and the process he underwent in formulating his own style, we must first note the impact his influences had on his early output. Coltrane only plays through two blues rotations in the solo portion of this recording. Yet he implies two different harmonic superimpositions in measures seven and eight

⁴ John Coltrane, alto saxophone, “Now’s the Time,” by Charlie Parker, Recorded July 13, 1946, on *John Coltrane: First Giant Steps*, Rare Live Recordings 88619, 2006, CD.

In a discussion Henry Martin noted that the opening of this solo resembles Owens’s Formula 2b and mm. 9-10 of the second chorus appear similar to Owens’s Formula 5c. I have reproduced both formulas in the appendix. See Thomas Owens, *Charlie Parker: Techniques of Improvisation 2 vols.* PhD diss., University of California, 1974. Vol 2, pages 1-2.

of the two respective solo choruses (mm. 7-8 and 19-20 in the figure below). In the first chorus Coltrane uses a comparatively simple harmonic underpinning, while the second chorus features a more elaborate reworking of the two-measure segment.

	Measure 7	Measure 8
1 st chorus mm. 7-8	I major 7	VI ^{7(b9)}
2 nd chorus mm. 7-8	I major 6	iii- ⁷ biii- ⁷

Table 2.1 “Now’s The Time” solo, mm. 7-8 of each chorus.

By articulating a VI^{7(b9)} chord, Coltrane treats the eighth measure of the first chorus in a rather conventional way, while the chromatically descending minor seventh chord substitutions in the second chorus are more inventive. Almost exactly eleven years later Coltrane used this identical type of chromatic substitution in the same location of the chorus in his “Trane’s Slo Blues” improvisation (August 16, 1957).⁵ Clearly, Coltrane explored alternative harmonic pathways early in his musical career and kept effective devices in his improvisatory repertoire for long periods of time. It is of particular interest that he tends to emphasize the minor seventh ($\text{Am}^7 \Rightarrow \text{Abm}^7 \Rightarrow \text{Gm}^7$) in this specific pathway. This tendency holds true for these early recordings, as well as other examples from about a decade later.

Charlie Parker used the harmonic superimposition of chromatically descending minor seventh chords in his compositions and improvisations over “Chi Chi,” “Now’s the Time,” and “Bloomsdido.” The harmonic substitution is generally applied in a compressed or an uncompressed manner by Parker and Coltrane. In the uncompressed variant, each measure is harmonized by a single chord, while the compressed version features two chords in the eighth measure of the blues form.

⁵ John Coltrane, tenor saxophone, “Trane’s Slo Blues,” by John Coltrane, recorded August 16, 1957, with Earl May and Art Taylor, on *Lush Life*, Prestige P-7188, 1961, LP.

Uncompressed Variant



Figure 2.2 Charlie Parker’s “Now’s the Time” solo, chorus 4, mm. 7-8.⁶



Figure 2.3 Head of Charlie Parker’s “Blues for Alice,” mm. 7-8.



Figure 2.4 Head of Charlie Parker’s “Bloomsdido,” mm. 7-8.



Figure 2.5 Head of Charlie Parker’s “Chi Chi,” mm. 7-8.



Figure 2.6 Coltrane’s “Blue Train” solo, chorus 7, mm. 7-9.⁷

The compressed version of the harmonic substitution, as heard in Coltrane’s Navy band recording, exists in Parker’s output as well. Coltrane generally expresses the chromatically descending chords by stating them as sequential arpeggiations (or fragments thereof), which

⁶ Charlie Parker, alto saxophone, “Now’s the Time,” by Charlie Parker, recorded December 30, 1952 and July 28, 1953, with The Quartet Of Charlie Parker, on *Now’s The Time*, Verve Records 8005, LP.

⁷ John Coltrane, tenor saxophone, “Blue Train,” by John Coltrane, recorded September 15, 1957, with The John Coltrane Sextet, on *Blue Train*, Blue Note 1577, LP.

facilitates an identification of the implied harmonies. Parker, however, largely avoids arpeggiations in the compressed version, which complicates an analytical reading. For performers of monophonic instruments, such as the saxophone, arpeggiations are the most effective and direct means of expressing harmony. The following excerpt from a May 2, 1961 interview with Ralph J. Gleason clearly demonstrates that Coltrane's melodies were borne out of his harmonic thinking. Although the interview was conducted in the later part of his mid-period, the same tendency is already evident in his early career.

I have yet to write a song that had a melody...“Syeeda’s Song Flute” was one of the few, that had a melody. And – well, “Naima” had a melody. That was a ballad, though. But these other things that I write, I’ve just been goin’ to the piano, gettin’ chords, and then I’ll take a melody, after a while, somewhere out of the chords, you know?...I think I’ve done enough of that. And in the future, I’m gonna really try to sit and think of these things, of the song. I’ve gotta take in more, you know? Musically and maybe some other ways too. And then maybe I’ll be able to write, build more melodies, think from melodies and write melodies.⁸

Compressed Variant

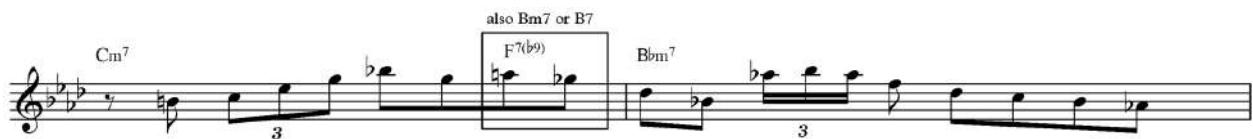


Figure 2.7 Charlie Parker’s solo over “Chi Chi,” chorus 3, m. 8.⁹



Figure 2.8 Head of Charlie Parker’s “Perhaps,” m. 8.

⁸ DeVito, *Coltrane on Coltrane*, 81.

⁹ Charlie Parker, alto saxophone, “Chi Chi,” by Charlie Parker, recorded July 30, 1953, with The Charlie Parker Quartet, on *Bird: The Complete Charlie Parker On Verve*, Verve Records 837 141-2, compact disc.



Figure 2.9 Coltrane's solo on "Now's the Time," chorus 2, m. 19-21.¹⁰



Figure 2.10 Coltrane's solo on his blues "Blue Train," chorus 3, m. 8.¹¹



Figure 2.11 Signature lick over F#m⁷ on "Blue Train," chorus 6, m. 8.¹²

The excerpt in Figure 2.11, features one of Coltrane's pet phrases applied over the compressed variant, which became one of the signature licks in his improvisatory arsenal. At its core this figure employs the chromatically descending motion from the root (F#), to the major seventh (F), down to the minor seventh (E), and finally the resolution to the third (D#) of the associated dominant chord.¹³

1.1.2. Major chords replace dominant chords

Coltrane treats many of the areas of the blues form, which would generally be interpreted as dominant chords, as major seventh chords (m. 7 and mm. 13-15) in this solo, which is yet

¹⁰ Coltrane, "Now's the Time," 1946.

¹¹ Coltrane, "Blue Train," 1957.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Don Sickler, *John Coltrane: Improvised Saxophone Solos* (Miami: Belwin, Inc., 1986), 9-10. Trumpeter, editor, and transcriber, Don Sickler chronicles several iterations of this phrase in Coltrane's mid-period output.

another reference to the style of Charlie Parker who often invoked the major seventh sound in the blues. Accordingly, the entire first four-measure segment of the second chorus is underpinned by a major seventh rather than the more conventional dominant-seventh sound in Coltrane's solo. Parker generally conceives of the seventh measure of the blues form as a tonic major seventh sonority. Coltrane seems to have borrowed this way of thinking from Parker.



Figure 2.12 "Now's the Time" as a major seventh chord by Parker, chorus 2, m. 7.¹⁴



Figure 2.13 Coltrane's "Now's the Time" solo, chorus 1, m. 7.

As evidenced in earlier figures, Coltrane tends to express the respective implied chord as a simple arpeggiation. Idiosyncratic melodies hold intrinsic interest while an arpeggio can come across as a bland module. In measure seven of the first chorus Coltrane utilizes the tonic major seven sound to voice-lead into the statement of an F♯ fully diminished seventh chord (m. 8), which serves to express the underlying D^{7(b9)} harmony. He employs the same exact diminished device to express the C^{7(b9)} chord two measures later. If the fifth, D, of the Gm⁷ chord is superposed, the top voice leading strand produces a smooth chromatic descent from the E over Fmaj7 to the C of the F major triad.

"I always associate this Coltrane pattern with the common Latin pattern:



¹⁴ Charlie Parker, alto saxophone, "Now's The Time," by Charlie Parker, recorded November 26, 1945, with Charlie Parker's Reboppers, on *The Complete Savoy Studio Sessions*, Savoy Records 5500, compact disc.

The musical score illustrates a blues progression. The top staff shows a progression from Fmaj7 to F#o (F#sus4), then to Gm7, then to Eo (E7), and finally to F. The bottom staff shows the corresponding bass line and harmonic movement. Arpeggiated patterns are used to express dominant chords.

Figure 2.14 Coltrane's "Now's the Time" solo, chorus 1 mm. 7-11.

Figure 2.14 illustrates the use of the I major seventh sound and diminished arpeggios to express the respective dominant chords. Conventionally improvisers would use a iii7 (as the predominant chord associated with VI7), or a I7 chord rather than a I major seventh chord in measure seven of the blues chorus as Coltrane does in this example. This relatively short five-measure section clearly demonstrates that Coltrane was well aware of voice leading procedures and knew how to present these potentially sterile arpeggiations in an idiomatic way. This statement of the F major seventh chord is an example of Coltrane's early improvisational approach, in which melodic thinking derives from the imposed harmonic substructures.

1.1.3. Rhythmic and Ornamental Gestures

The following figure displays a melodic fragment that is strongly associated with Parker and also surfaces in Coltrane's Navy band recording.

The musical score shows a melodic fragment. It begins with a Gm7 chord, followed by a C7(b9) chord. A circled section highlights a melodic line over an F7 chord, featuring a series of eighth-note patterns.

Figure 2.15 Charlie Parker's solo on "Now's the Time," chorus 1, mm. 9-11.¹⁵

¹⁵ Ibid.



Figure 2.16 Coltrane’s “Now’s the Time” solo, chorus 1, mm. 9-12.

While the pitch content and metric placement differ in the two phrases (marked with rectangles and ovals, respectively), the rhythmic similarities are undeniable. For example, both artists mark the tonic resolution with a group of four sixteenth notes featuring an upper neighbor embellishment. Coltrane clearly absorbed a significant amount of bebop vernacular at this young age. The examples also demonstrate that he does not merely replicate Parker’s material in an unaltered regurgitative manner, but that he understands the foundational syntax, which in turn enabled him to speak the language of bebop without simply copying his idols. Coltrane transcends mere replication though varying the specific pitch choices while maintaining Parker’s intervallic configurations and rhythms.

1.2. Modified Schenkerian and Motivic Considerations

Despite its many impressive aspects, this solo does not entail the cogent voice leading structure exhibited by his later improvisations. One of the most striking abnormalities is the extended $\hat{1}$, occurring in a secondary structural line, which winds up in UN $\# \hat{1}$ in the second chorus. Yet, Coltrane’s solo demonstrates overarching cogency at higher analytical levels (*Schichten*), despite minor structural incongruences in the close middleground.

1.2.1. A Lapse? “Now’s the Time” Solo mm. 15-21

In measures 15-17 of “Now’s the Time,” Coltrane goes for something he fails to execute with perfect acuity, and ultimately concludes the phrase in a resolution that hardly seems desirable. In measure 17 Coltrane plays the pitches G and G \flat over B \flat 7. The latter pitch G \flat , the b13th of B \flat 7, appears as a dissonance to most jazz musicians, especially if unresolved and hardly prepared as is the case here. A pitch such as the b13th requires sufficient preparation and occurs most frequently when transitioning between chords. In a more conventional setting, the pitch G \flat would serve as preparatory for a resolution to the fifth of B \flat 7, F. G \flat is thus perceived as an unresolved suspended pitch belonging to F⁷ but sounding over B \flat 7.



Figure 2.17 Common VL procedure leading from I⁷ to IV⁷ in an F blues.

The oddity of the G \flat is amplified by the harmonically dubious, and imprecisely delivered material immediately preceding this moment. G \flat , or rather F \sharp , could alternatively be interpreted as $\hat{\sharp}5$ of B \flat 7 that ought to resolve upward to $\hat{3}$ of an E \flat 7 chord, which is however not stated. An alternative analysis of the passage suggests the following superimposed progression: D^{7(b9)}, G, Cm⁷, and F^{7(b9)}.

Normative: F⁷

Implied:

D^{7(b9)} G Cm F^{7(b9)}

B_b⁷

Figure 2.18 Coltrane’s “Now’s the Time” solo, chorus 2 mm. 4-5.¹⁶

This chain of secondary dominant chords would perfectly lead to IV⁷ (B_b⁷) in measure five, yet it seems to be at least one beat displaced in addition to remaining unresolved.

Normative: F⁷

Implied:

D^{7(b9)} G Cm⁷ F^{7(b9)}

B_b⁷

Figure 2.19 Coltrane’s “Now’s the Time” solo, chorus 2, mm. 4-5.

In Figure 2.19 the melodic statement is set one beat earlier to fit the harmonic rhythm. The unstated potential resolution to F over B_b7 is also included. In summary there are five possible readings of the problematic pitch.:

1. G_b as b13th of B_b7^(b13) ($\widehat{b2}$ in the *Urlinie*).
2. G_b as unresolved passing tone within B_b7 ($G \Rightarrow G_b \Rightarrow X$)
3. F# as #5 chord tone of B_b+⁷, which would make it $\widehat{\#1}$ in the *Urlinie*.
4. F# as mistake, an unresolved neighbor to G over an absent E_b chord.
5. Unresolved b9 chord tone suspension of F^{7(b9)} from chorus 2, m. 4

Cases one and three are highly unlikely since a b13th or #5 do not sufficiently express the arrival of the new chord, B_b⁷. In addition, this pitch choice would be highly unidiomatic. Reading four appears more likely, albeit minimally so, given the absence of an E_b chord. This leaves options two and five as the most convincing choices for an analytical reading.

¹⁶ Coltrane, *Now's the Time*, 1946.

In the aftermath of the problematic pitch Coltrane quickly follows it up with an authoritative answer outlining the shift from IV⁷ to iv⁷ in measures five through six of the chorus. Coltrane anticipates the iv⁷ chord with a full beat in the fifth measure by stating the minor third, D_b, of the target chord Bbm⁷ (Eb⁷).¹⁷ This one-beat anticipation of iv⁷ seems to rebalance the off-kilter dissymmetry of the previous phrase's unresolved suspension:

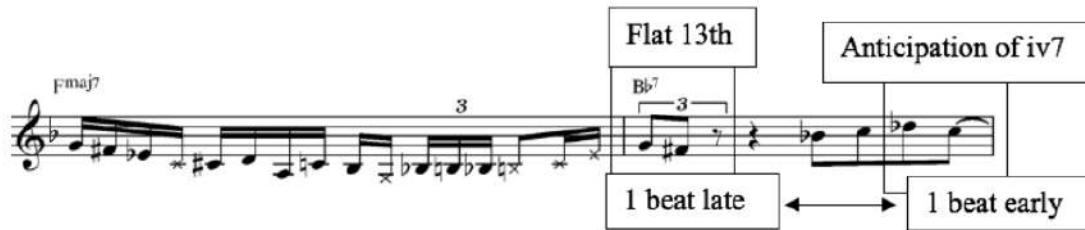


Figure 2.20 Coltrane's "Now's the Time" solo, chorus 2 mm. 4-5.

Coltrane continues by stating a sequential phrase between measures 19-20 of the solo with the greatest sense of control and intent. At the core of this melodic section, we find a chromatically descending minor third that serves as the backbone of this unequivocally simple, yet imaginative statement. This section also includes the aforementioned alternative harmonic path for this chorus's seventh and eighth measure distinguishing it from the first blues rotation.

¹⁷ Esa Lilja, *Theory and Analysis of Classic Heavy Metal Harmony* (Vantaa: IAML Finland, 2009), 189. Due to its occurrence in the gospel classic "Oh When The Saints Go Marching In" and the romantic repertoire, theorist Esa Lilja terms this I-V/IV-IV-iv7-I progression "The Saints" pattern and the "Romantic Cliché."

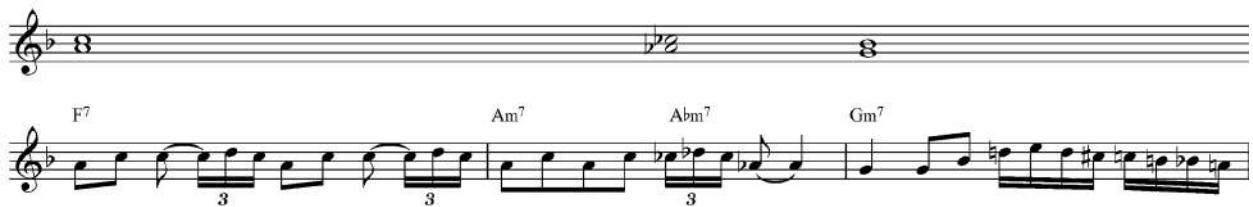


Figure 2.21 Coltrane’s “Now’s the Time” solo, mm. 19-21.¹⁸

1.2.2. Global Perspective

The *Urlinie* of Coltrane’s solo in “Now’s the Time” descends from a *Kopfton* of $\hat{5}$, or C. This primary tone does not appear immediately. It is delayed until m. 2 by Coltrane’s opening gesture of an initial arpeggiated octave ascent. The ornamentation of this ascent becomes a characteristic element throughout the remainder of this solo.



Figure 2.22 Coltrane’s “Now’s the Time” solo, initial arpeggiated ascent with ornaments.¹⁹

Coltrane integrates accented upper neighbors (AUN), as seen in m. 1, and complete upper neighbors (CUN) as seen in m. 2 throughout the solo. Coltrane provides overarching musical coherence through the repetition of the opening material. The embellishments thus achieve a quasi-motivic status. In the middleground, the first statement of the *Kopfton* (m. 2) is immediately transferred to a lower octave (mm. 2-4), answering the initial ascent. An extended descending secondary line begins after the initial statement of the *Kopfton*. The line continuously passes down (resetting the register twice) from the inner voice’s $\hat{3}$ in m. 2 beyond a full octave in

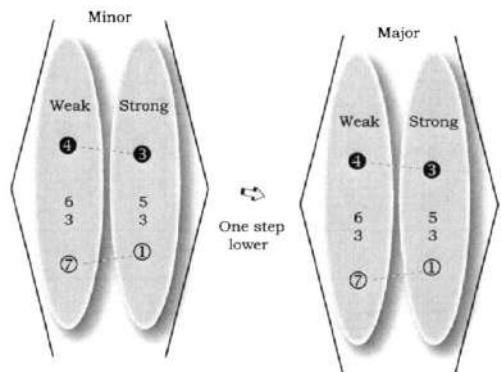
¹⁸ Coltrane, *Now's the Time*, 1946.

¹⁹ Coltrane, *Now's The Time*, 1946.

m. 9 to a restatement of the *Kopfton* C ($\hat{5}$) in m. 11.²⁰ Octave equivalence serves as the underlying principle Coltrane utilizes for this extended VLS. Whenever the line reaches the nadir pitches F (m. 7) or E (m. 10), Coltrane leaps up the interval of a seventh to continue the VLS, as if it unfolded in the same register. Coltrane restricts this improvisation to a relatively tight range of two octaves for the solo. The *Nebenlinie* also traverses the first chorus's IV⁷ chord area (mm. 5-6), where Coltrane surprisingly omits a statement of the local third, D. The two statements of C as the *Kopfton* that open and close the first chorus serve as structural bookends between which musical action is generated. Coltrane avoids structural closure across the boundaries of the blues rotations. He sustains musical momentum and unites the two choruses into a single engaging gesture (notwithstanding the hiccup at mm. 16-17). As we shall see, Coltrane continues this practice of stretching one *Ursatz* across multiple choruses in his later blues solos.

The first four measures of the second chorus are a prolongation of tonic where the root takes prominence. This prolongation of F (mm. 12-16) seems to end in a musical cul-de-sac when it is raised a semitone to the incomplete chromatic upper neighbor $\widehat{\text{1}}$: F \sharp over B \flat ⁷ in measure 17, discussed previously. Immediately after, Coltrane reestablishes the *Kopfton* (m. 17), from which he chromatically descends to the structural $\hat{4}$ in m. 21. Subsequently the solo quickly

²⁰ The line also includes a composed-out *fonte* schema moving from G Dorian to F major, which is marked with boxes in Figure 2.23. See Robert Gjerdingen, *Music in the Galant Style* (Oxford: OUP, 2007), 61-72.



terminates with a statement of $\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ (mm. 22-23).

1

Anstieg

7

Anstieg

*Fonte

2

12



Figure 2.23 Graph of “Now’s the Time” – Coltrane’s earliest recorded blues solo.

1.3. Striving for Variety

Coltrane demonstrates a considerably varied improvisatory approach to phrase lengths in “Now’s the Time.” Later in his career he confirms that variety represents one of the core elements of his personal style and that he regards it as one of the central tenets of what he considers important in his music.

From a technical viewpoint, I have certain things I’d like present in my solos. To do this, I have to get the right material. It has to swing, and it has to be varied.²¹

Aside from the varied phrase lengths of the nine distinct musical ideas Coltrane presents in the first solo chorus of “Now’s the Time,” there is also an extremely high degree of variance among the rests between them. This example from the initial stage of his career is an early testament to Coltrane’s desire to include a great deal of variety in his musical output.

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff begins with a measure labeled '1' above the staff, followed by a series of chords: F7, F7, F7, Bb7, Bb7. The bottom staff continues with chords: F#maj7, D7(b9), Gm7, C7(b9), C7, Gm7, C7. The notation includes various note heads, stems, and rests, with some measures containing three notes and others containing six. Measure numbers 1 through 7 are indicated above the staves.

Figure 2.24 Coltrane’s “Now’s the Time” solo, first chorus.²²

2. “Beer Drinking Baby” November 7, 1949

The earliest recordings after the Navy band featuring Coltrane as a soloist stem from Billy Valentine’s band from November 7, 1949. This session also includes Coltrane’s first solos on the tenor saxophone. The band included leader Billy Valentine on piano and vocals, Johnny Collins on guitar, Ray Brown on bass, and Specs Powell on drums. This brief solo chorus

²¹ DeVito, *Coltrane on Coltrane*, 69-70.

²² Coltrane, *Now’s the Time*, 1946.

showcases twenty-three-year-old Coltrane. Despite being restricted to a single chorus, Coltrane manages to establish an air of absolute musical authority through his rhythmically laid-back phrasing, melodic simplicity, and strategic placement of ideas.



Figure 2.25 Coltrane’s “Beer Drinking Baby” solo with Billy Valentine’s band (1949).²³

2.1. The 6th Sound and the Influence of Lester Young

Coltrane’s note choices are confined to the C major pentatonic (= A minor pentatonic) for the entire first four-measure segment of this solo. This restrictive gamut of pitches is strongly associated with earlier saxophonists such as Lester Young, whom Coltrane greatly idolized. Idiomatic examples of this pentatonic-based approach include Young’s solos over “Lester Leaps In” and “Lady be Good.” The use of the major pentatonic as primary source for melodic material strongly suggests an underlying major sixth chord sound. During Coltrane’s youth, this sound held a special place, as Allen Forte demonstrates with respect to its context within the American popular song.

A chord that is perhaps emblematic of the classic American popular song is the chord with the added sixth...Here the added sixth means that the note that lies six notes above in the scale is attached to the chord as a permanent embellishment. In the classic American song repertoire this glitz harmonic item came to be a standard replacement for the simple triad.²⁴

²³ John Coltrane, tenor saxophone, “Beer Drinking Baby,” by Billy Valentine, recorded November 7, 1949, with Billy Valentine, on *Mercury Blues 'n' Rhythm Story 1945-1955*, Mercury 314 528 292-2, compact disc.

²⁴ Allen Forte, *Listening to Classic American Popular Songs* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 14-15.

Both Coltrane and Young perpetuate the major sixth sound in their solos. It is also striking how Coltrane limits his pitch resources to the C major scale, with the exception of a single Eb in m. 6. Coltrane is clearly influenced by Young, who pioneered and mastered pentatonic-based improvisation on the tenor saxophone.

The solo also employs a limited range: a mere tenth between the lower E in the *Anstieg* and the upper G in m. 8. The same interval (inverted) appears in m. 2 as a leap of E down to G4, and this leap turns out to be the key shaping force of the melody. The initial ascent could have smoothly risen a third above E in m. 2. (See Figure 2.26 and 2.27) But by dropping down a sixth, Coltrane reserves the climactic G5 for later and establishes a second voice-leading strand in an inner voice. G is not only the zenith of the solo, then, but also a protagonist of its multi-voice structure.



Figure 2.26 Mms. 1-2 of “Beer Drinking Baby” – Coltrane drops to G4.²⁵



Figure 2.27 Mms. 1-2 of “Beer Drinking Baby” hypothetical decomposition.

It is remarkable how clearly Coltrane is able to outline the F¹³ chord in the fifth measure without stating its third (A), emphasizing instead the chordal 13th (D). Generally, improvisers would rather state the third or seventh of any new chord on the first beat of the measure in order to convincingly convey the notion that the new harmony has arrived. Thirds and sevenths determine the chord quality and are thus the most effective pitches to invoke when signaling the change

²⁵ Coltrane, *Beer Drinking Baby*, 1949.

from one chord to the next. D is prominent not just because it's anticipated and sustained, but because it contrasts with the emphasis on the C triad in the previous measures. The sense of prominence he lends to the pitch D as an anticipation and sustained pitch creates enough contrast to convince the listener of the successful transition from C¹³ to F¹³. To ultimately buttress the arrival of the IV chord, Coltrane states its seventh E♭ on the first beat of m. 6. In Larson's discussion of idiosyncratic chordal extensions in jazz, he quotes Steven Strunk's principle that $\hat{6}$ is consonant.

$\hat{6}/I$ is not dissonant with the root; nor does it form a seventh interval with a lower basic chord tone; yet it is not a triad member. It can behave as a tension standing for, and resolving to $\hat{5}/I$. But its consonant character enables it to serve as the resolution of $\hat{7}/I$, the major seventh tension, and this is its most usual role: an unresolved addition to I, not standing for $\hat{5}$ (which is often voiced a step away from it), but also not a chord tone.²⁶

Strunk's statement specifically refers to $\hat{6}/I$ but is valid for the sixth of any local harmony such as the F¹³ chord in "Beer Drinking Baby." In the solo $\hat{6}$ is initially featured as an incomplete neighbor to $\hat{5}/I^7$ in measures two and three. While the A in m. 3 embellishes the G before it, the D in m. 5 is treated as a consonant pitch over the IV⁷ chord and does not require resolution. Furthermore, the sixth can be the stable partner to the seventh above it. Hence the E♭ in m. 6 is an incomplete upper neighbor to the D in m. 5. The descending four-note group from E♭ is also quite unorthodox since Coltrane could very well have rendered it as a descending F⁷ chord (E♭, C, A, F). Instead, he invokes the pitch G and substitutes it for the more likely pitch A. Locally, G could either be read as the fifth of an implied Cm7 chord or an UN to F over F⁷. Invoking G in this manner lends more weight and importance to the pitch. The second G of the measure should

²⁶ Larson, "Schenkerian Analysis of Modern Jazz: Questions about Method," 8. Larson cites Strunk: Steven Strunk, "Bebop Melodic Lines: Tonal Characteristics," *Annual Review of Jazz Studies* 3, (1985): 110.

be considered an anticipation of C⁷, or as a one-beat implication of a G⁷ chord, leading back to I⁷.

After the structural melodic line terminates in measure eleven, Coltrane reverts back to the lower voice leading strand by restating the pitches G and A. These two pitches help to evoke a rekindled sense of musical momentum after the solo's structural closure in measures ten to eleven. It seems as though Coltrane uses this strategy to keep the musical energy moving, which helps him to craft a post-cadential appendix that resolves on the downbeat of the first measure of the next chorus. This is an important move, since the following chorus features a stop time structure in which the rhythm section only plays on every first beat of every measure. By adding the post structural addendum, Coltrane is able to lend a greater sense of control and authority to his solo since he participates and leads perfectly into this stop time chorus. Coltrane thus demonstrates that he is not merely supported by the rhythm section throughout his solo, but that he is an active, and fully integrated member of the group.

2.2. Modified Schenkerian Considerations, Concealed Repetitions, and Higher-Level Motives

Steve Larson and Henry Martin have identified the importance of higher-level motives in jazz.²⁷

Schenker's theories of structural levels in music led him to discover a second kind of concealed repetition in which the same motive appears on different levels or elaborated with different diminutions.²⁸

²⁷ Allen Cadwallader and David Gagné, *Analysis of Tonal Music: A Schenkerian Approach* (Oxford: OUP, 1998), 4. The authors attest Schenker's reconceptualization of motives. "Schenkerian analysis often reveals connections among tones that are not readily apparent. When a configuration of tones recurs in identical or similar form, whether in immediate succession or over a broader span of music, such a recurring pattern is called a *motive*. Schenker's extended concept of motive is one of his most profound and far-reaching contributions to the understanding of music."

²⁸ Steve Larson, *Analyzing Jazz: A Schenkerian Approach* (Hillsdale: Pendragon Press, 2009), 40.

Another important concept, central to the basic thesis of this study of Parker's music, is that higher-level structures...can be thematic. Higher-level structures in voice-leading analysis are usually of two types: stepwise progressions through an interval and neighbor motions.²⁹

Such motives are also evident in Coltrane's solo on "Beer Drinking Baby." Motive A, a rising melodic line (G, A, B, C) as well as motive B (D, E, C) occur three times each throughout the solo. Motive A, a move from an inner voice up to the tonic pitch, contributes to the characteristic nature of the solo as a compound melody. The motives are placed at significant structural moments within the blues form. Motive A is stated after the initial prolongation of the *Kopfton* in mm.2-4. Subsequently A is restated as a countermelody to the *Urlinie* during the moment of chorus-level closure. Lastly A is also included in the post cadential appendix leading into the following solo chorus. The last two statements of motives A and B coincide, while the first utterance of B is a minor variant of the motive including the only non-diatonic pitch (Eb) of the solo.

²⁹ Henry Martin, *Charlie Parker and Thematic Improvisation* (Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2001), 25.



Figure 2.28 Graph of Coltrane’s “Beer Drinking Baby” solo from 1949.

3. “We Love to Boogie” February 24, 1951

During his time with the Gillespie septet, Coltrane’s mature style emerged. Important aspects of this style include an emphasis on the upper register of the instrument, a proliferation of energy-laden scalar ascents, and held pitches in the upper register that are imbued with laser-like intensity. There are a handful of blues recordings featuring Coltrane with this band. “We Love to Boogie” showcases Coltrane’s playing not too long before the group disbanded.



Figure 2.29 “We Love To Boogie” – Coltrane’s solo from 1951.³⁰

His solo on “We Love To Boogie” begins with the second four-bar phrase of the first chorus since the first four measures are used as a sendoff by the band to propel Coltrane into his improvisation. He enters with an ascending scale from the root of the underlying IV⁷ chord C⁷. Coltrane employs what modern jazz performers refer to as the dominant bebop scale for this initial ascent. In place of the expected resolution to the root on the first beat of m. 2, he skips up to the ninth of the C⁷ chord.



Figure 2.30 A more common way of utilizing the bebop scale.

³⁰ John Coltrane, tenor saxophone, “We Love to Boogie,” by Dizzy Gillespie, recorded February 24, 1951, with The Dizzy Gillespie Band, on *The Champ*, Savoy MG 12047, LP.

The ascending scale run coupled with the sustained target pitch in the upper register are hallmark traits of Coltrane's mid-period style. The aesthetic conventions which dominated the world of the tenor saxophone were turned upside down by Coltrane as he progressed as an artist. Prior to Coltrane, the popular tenor style as exemplified by Ben Webster, Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, and many others revolved around an audible airstream, subtone, wide vibrato, and the lower registers of the instrument. Coltrane often restricts his solos to the top two octaves of the saxophone's range, with occasional altissimo cries in his later period. The preference for the upper tessitura likely derived from his early affinity and plentiful collaborations with alto saxophonists such as Charlie Parker, Johnny Hodges, and Earl Bostic. Moreover, there is a nearly complete absence of the heavy vibrato style that was made famous by tenor saxophonists before him. The airstream itself, which generates the pitch, is almost never heard on Coltrane's recordings with very few exceptions such as his sideman contribution on pianist Elmo Hope's 1956 Prestige album *Informal Jazz*. On their take of the Jimmy Van Heusen and Johnny Burke ballad "Polka Dots and Moonbeams," Coltrane fans get to witness one of the rare moments when Coltrane uses an audible airstream and subtone.³¹ Coltrane's statements over "We Love to Boogie" never reach below his mid-range A. All other pitches are stated above this A, and his preference for the uppermost pitches of the saxophone's intended range is clearly evident. As the solo continues Coltrane improvises a 5-prg beginning with the ninth of the C7 chord. The unexpected skip thus becomes the backbone of an important middle-ground procedure. The statement of the *Kopfton* over the local C⁷ chord evidences the stability of the local 9th in jazz

³¹ John Coltrane, tenor saxophone, "Polka Dots and Moonbeams," by Jimmy Van Heusen and Johnny Burke, recorded May 7, 1956, with Elmo Hope, Prestige Records 7043, LP.

compared to other idioms. In order to accommodate the opening C⁷ chord Coltrane includes B♭ in the first 5-prg. The 5-prg is then repeated an octave lower in mm. 4-6.



Figure 2.31 Graph of Coltrane's "We Love To Boogie" solo.³²

³² John Coltrane, "We Love to Boogie," 1951.

Simultaneously this operation lends a significant blues quality to the phrase and serves as an early example of Coltrane's mature approach to the use of blue notes. Coltrane tends to state blue notes of the underlying key whenever they are supported by the local harmony such as in this case. In the opening phrase of "We Love to Boogie," B \flat is supported by the C 7 as its seventh and is held as a suspension into the succeeding G 7 chord. Over the course of his career Coltrane refrains more and more from playing blue notes that are not also local chord tones.

For the beginning of the second chorus (starting m. 9) Coltrane prolongs $\hat{3}$ via two arpeggiations of the tonic triad. The pitch B participates in a large-scale 3-prg. (mm. 9-15) that leads back up to the *Kopfton* D in m. 15. The decoration of the descending statement of the first tonic triad mostly involves complete neighbor figures as well as consonant skips. Coltrane introduces pitch material that is not diatonic to the underlying G Mixolydian chord in mm. 11-12, immediately prior to the arrival of C 7 (IV 7). The inclusion of non-Mixolydian pitches prefacing IV 7 is a common tendency in Coltrane's work. The pitches in the example could be derived from the G altered scale which are equivalent to the pitches in the D \flat Lydian dominant scale. Both scales share A \flat melodic minor as their source scale. The only pitch Coltrane uses in the fourth measure of the chorus which is not diatonic to either scale is the passing tone C on second eighth note of the third beat of measure 12. The extended 3-prg. is elaborated with the passing diminished chord \sharp iv $^\circ$ in the second half m. 14. Since this diminished chord would more commonly be held for the entirety of the measure, Coltrane's statement impacts the passage's harmonic rhythm. Coltrane superposes the cover tone G and its lower neighbor F \sharp (mm. 13-16) while moving from $\hat{4}$ to $\hat{5}$ via $\sharp\hat{4}$ in the structurally dominant line. The passage also features the incomplete upper neighbor $\hat{6}$ (m. 17). Thus, the *Kopfton* $\hat{5}$ is approached stepwise from below with a 3-prg. and the suffix ornament $\hat{6}$, while the tonic pitch is prolonged in the foreground.

The slightly offset harmonic rhythm that was induced by Coltrane's delayed invocation of $\sharp iv^o$ in m. 14 is mirrored by his melodic strategy for the structural dominant chord in m. 18.

Coltrane states $\hat{3}$ (local $\hat{6}$) over the D^7 chord for the first two beats of m. 18 before chromatically descending to $\widehat{b3}$ (local $\widehat{b6}$) on the third beat.

The musical score shows a series of chords: C⁷, C[#]₇, G⁷, Bm⁷, E⁷, Am⁷, D^{7(add13)}, D^{7(b13)}, G⁷, A^{m7(b5)}, C^{m7}, F⁷, G⁷. Two specific moments are highlighted with boxes and labeled 'Delayed harmonic implication': one around the D^{7(add13)} chord and another around the A^{m7(b5)} chord.

Figure 2.32 Two delayed harmonic implications in “We Love to Boogie.”³³

$\widehat{b3}$ stands in for $\hat{2}$ in the *Urline* of the solo, crystallizing and amplifying the dominant character of the structural V^7 chord. Moreover, $\widehat{b3}$ generates significantly more tension than $\hat{3}$ (local $\hat{6}$).

The renewed emphasis on the third beat as the locus of harmonic change (m. 14 and m. 18) lends a greater sense of balance to the unexpected rhythmic placement of $\sharp iv^o$ in m. 14 since it does not remain an isolated event. “We Love To Boogie” is an example where the motion from $\widehat{b3}$, or rather $B\hat{3}$, to $\hat{1}$ replaces the classic $\hat{2}$ to $\hat{1}$ move in the closure of the respective *Urline*.

In his usual fashion, Coltrane fills the chorus level-post cadential space (mm. 11-12) with material that propels the musical momentum forward into the subsequent blues rotation. In “We Love To Boogie” the post-cadential appendix includes a restatement of the move from Bb to G (m. 19), which seems to be a clear echo of the structural closure of the *Urline*. Furthermore, Coltrane states the descending line $G, F, Eb, (LN C), D$ as an embedded middle ground repetition twice (mm. 19-20) after the moment of structural closure. There are two likely harmonic

³³ Ibid.

underpinnings Coltrane might have thought of for the post-cadential space: either $\text{Am}^{7(b5)} \Rightarrow \text{D7}^{\#}$ ⁹⁾ or $\text{Cm}^7 \Rightarrow \text{F}^7 \Rightarrow \text{G}^7$.

4. “Congo Blues” Live Radio Broadcast from Birdland NY 1951

Since Coltrane’s recorded output before joining Miles Davis is rather meager, another improvisation from his tenure with the Dizzy Gillespie’s quintet may serve as an example. The blues was a favored song form in Gillespie’s bands and bebop ensembles in general. An aspect that made the blues so popular was likely its nearly inexhaustible malleability. While “We Love to Boogie” represents a soulful, medium-tempo, side of the blues, “Congo Blues” points to the transmutations the blues underwent during the bebop era.³⁴ More and more, blues were played at breakneck tempos that demanded extreme levels of control, dexterity, and internalized knowledge of harmony, theory, and the idiomatic traits of the new bebop genre.

The live radio broadcast from 1951 was recorded at a gig the quintet held at Birdland in New York. The recording demonstrates Coltrane’s technical abilities and features his ability to coherently develop ideas at incredibly rapid tempos. The prevalence of blues-scale-based ideas, as well as the incorporation of specific musical quotations (associated with Sonny Rollins and Dexter Gordon) can be viewed as tendencies of his early period. The solo begins with a modulating interlude that launches the soloist into the repeating chorus structure. Coltrane handles the speed and changing harmonies of the interlude with aplomb and even develops a melodic motive which he transposes to fit the changing chords. The sense of musical thrust is then heightened by a four-measure solo break which Coltrane fills with a torrent of eighth notes,

³⁴ John Coltrane, tenor saxophone, “Congo Blues,” by Dizzy Gillespie, recorded January 6, 1951, with The Dizzy Gillespie Septet, on *Trane's First Ride 1951*, Oberon 5100, LP.

never abandoning the forward drive into his first chorus. He begins the chorus with a new motive that becomes the musical protagonist of the solo.

4.1. Motivic and Melodic Considerations

The solo's central idea, which I have labeled as motive A, is transformed and woven into the various structural levels throughout the four choruses, creating a dense web of musical interrelations. At first, motive A acts as an arpeggiated initial ascent to the *Kopfton* 5 but Coltrane adapts it to the changing context. He does this so frequently throughout the solo that it might be regarded a quasi-monothematic improvisation. In its most reduced form, motive A becomes the gesture of a 5th. This background iteration is reflected in the many transformations of motive A throughout the solo, starting with the first ones. The initial statement of motive A is answered in a subtly sentence-like fashion with a retrograded minor variant. This answer repeats a step higher before the first chorus concludes with yet another expanded retrograde version of motive A.

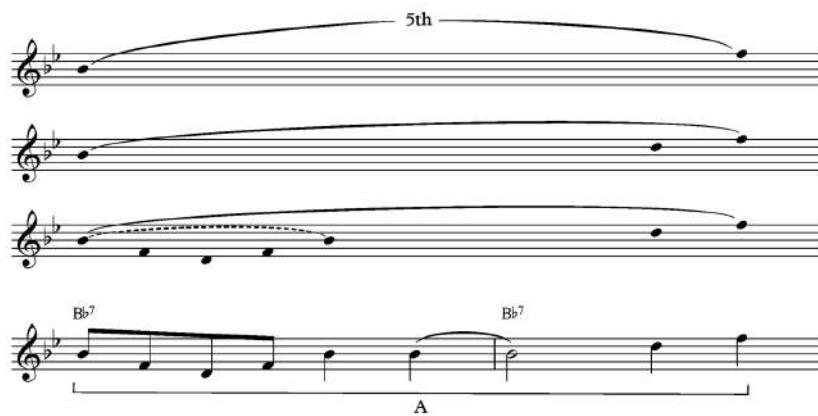


Figure 2.33 Motive A at various reduction levels.

The second chorus opens with a chromatically ascending sequence of the fragmented motive A. (The crossed note heads represent pitches that use “false” fingerings. These alternate fingerings produce unique timbres.)

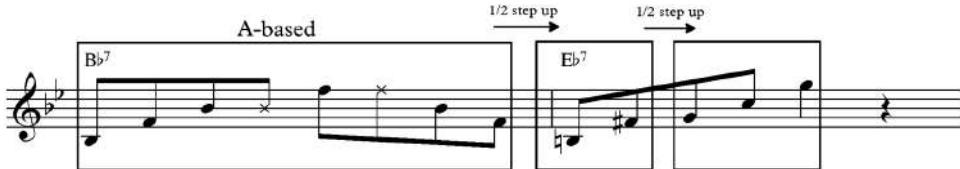


Figure 2.34 Chromatically ascending A-motive fragments, chorus 2 mm. 13-14.

Over the IV⁷ chord area of the second chorus (mm. 17-18) Coltrane plays a minor variant of motive A. The integrity of the thematic development, which has thus far been exclusively based on motive A, is interrupted by Coltrane’s quotation of “Westminster Quarters” in mm. 24-28.³⁵ The quote and motive A mainly consist of the pitches of the tonic triad, which makes the quote a disruptive domestic element that pops out from within the existing motivic network. In the fourth chorus Coltrane returns to motive A and states another minor variant in mm. 41-42.

Sentential organization of the fourth chorus

The fourth and final chorus presents an idea that is developed in sentential fashion. (Similar to the A-based phrase that opens the second chorus, this idea also features alternate fingerings.) The basic idea is repeated and then liquidated through dense eighth-note lines. As in the normative sentence, this means the musical rhetoric moves from the characteristic to the generic. Nevertheless, Coltrane manages to reinvoke the musical protagonist, motive A, one last time to end the chorus.

³⁵ “Westminster Quarters,” or formerly known as “Cambridge Quarters,” is the famous bell chime of the Big Ben clock tower of the British parliament.

Parallel Minor Procedure

This display of motivic development and variation points to one of the strategies Coltrane's used for treating the IV⁷ chord in the fifth and sixth measures of blues rotations. In his "Congo Blues" solo, as in his later solo on the Db blues "Two Bass Hit" from Miles Davis' album '*Round About Midnight*', Coltrane treats this two-measure IV⁷-chord-area of the blues form as a i⁷ chord.³⁶



Figure 2.35 Opening of Coltrane's solo on "Two Bass Hit," IV⁷ as i⁷ mm. 1-5.

This strategy is clearly evident and highlighted through the minor-variant restatements of motive A in chorus 1, mm. 5-6; chorus 2, m. 17; and chorus 4, mm. 41-42.

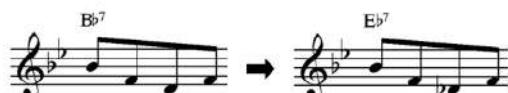


Figure 2.36 "Congo Blues" solo, transformation of motive A over IV⁷ in m. 17.

The harmonic implication is a IV⁷⁽⁹⁾ chord with an emphasis on the upper structure.

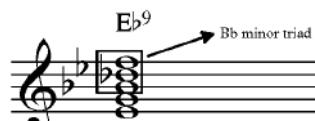


Figure 2.37 i⁷ as the upper structure triad of IV⁷⁽⁹⁾.

³⁶ John Coltrane, tenor saxophone, "Two Bass Hit," by John Lewis and Dizzy Gillespie, recorded October 26, 1955, with The Miles Davis All Stars, on *Circle in the Round*, CBSS (J) 36 AP 1409~10, LP.

This specific way of treating the IV⁷⁽⁹⁾ chord opens the door to using the parallel minor region for motivic development (see Figure 2.35). Furthermore, this improvisational strategy allows for a different conception of the harmonic shift between the I⁷ chord and the IV⁷ chord. Rather than viewing the two chords as separate harmonic areas, the parallel minor procedure enables the first eight-measure segment of the blues to be treated as modal mixture over the same root, Bb. In the final chorus of the solo, Coltrane restates motive A as an inverted minor variant over the IV⁷ chord in measure five of the blues form. While this last statement of motive A is neither an exact inversion, nor an exact retrograde inversion, the variant still consists of the identical pitch content as the original except for the transformation of D into Db.

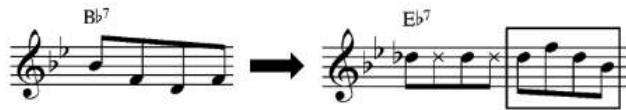


Figure 2.38 Inverted statement of motive A with parallel minor procedure, mm. 41-42.

4.2. Modified-Schenkerian reading of “Congo Blues”

The multiple iterations of the pitch F ($\hat{5}$), which is repeatedly emphasized through its rhythmic placement on the first beat (measures 5, 9, 10, 16, 18) clearly buttresses its role as the *Kopfton*. In addition, the *Kopfton* is also emphasized by multiple statements on other important rhythmic locations such as the third beats of mm. 6, 11, 13, and 18. The consistent return of the *Kopfton* and its embellishing first order neighbor $\hat{6}$ during the first two choruses is further evidence for its structural dominance. This solo includes an abundance of chromatic passing tones within the eighth note line segments of the improvisation. Coltrane uses the same chromatically descending pitches, G and Gb, to arrive at F in the first and second choruses. The chromatically approached F has different functions in each case. In the first chorus it is the fourth

of the structural predominant chord, Cm⁷ (m. 9). In the second chorus it is the fifth of the tonic Bb⁷ chord (chorus 2, m. 4). In other words, the same distinctive chromatic gesture lands on a passing F in one chorus and a structural F in the next, thus changing in meaning depending on the harmonic context. The persistent reinvocation of F, despite differing local harmonies points to its position as the *Kopfton* at the highest structural level. The structural $\hat{4}$ of the *Urlinie* descent is emphasized by Coltrane through a registral leap in m. 21 (chorus 2, m. 9) where it is supported by the predominant chord Cm⁷. $\hat{3}$ is then stated in an almost celebratory way within the “Westminster Quarter” quotation. Within mm. 36-41 $\hat{3}$ is momentarily replaced by a blues inflected b $\hat{3}$, where the latter participates in the A-related b.i. of the sentential phrase structure. The identity of b $\hat{3}$ is recontextualized to $\sharp\hat{2}$ in m. 44 and it takes on the role of a chromatic lower neighbor to $\hat{3}$. Subsequently, the *Urlinie* concludes in m. 46 where Coltrane anticipates the tonic chord Bb⁷.



Figure 2.39 VL Graph of John Coltrane's solo on "Congo Blues."³⁷

After his tenure with Dizzy Gillespie, Coltrane continued working in other ensembles such as Gay Crosse and the Good Humor Six (an R&B band) in 1956. Crosse's powerful and

³⁷ John Coltrane, "Congo Blues," 1951.

reverberant tenor saxophone sound coupled with his immaculately designed solos, which can be heard on tunes such as “Easy Rockin’,” must have left a profound impression on Coltrane. (Unfortunately, no improvisation of Coltrane was recorded with this band.) Other long-lasting influences on Coltrane were his engagements with fellow saxophonists Earl Bostic (1913-1965), Johnny Hodges (1907-1970), and Jimmy Heath (1926).

5. “Strange Things All The Rage”

There are hardly any recordings featuring Coltrane’s blues improvisations after the collapse of the Gillespie group and before he joined Miles Davis in 1955. An exception is his solo on “Strange Thing is All The Rage” from 1953.³⁸



Figure 2.40 Coltrane’s “Strange Things All The Rage” solo with four-measure interlude.³⁹

The short one-chorus feature solo with Harris’s band demonstrates Coltrane’s progress as an improviser and instrumentalist. This improvisation includes examples of motivic relations

³⁸ John Coltrane, tenor saxophonist, “Strange Thing Is All The Rage,” *Ham Hocks And Hominy / Strange Things All The Rage*. Recorded 1953. Nestor Records JG-06, 1953, shellac.

³⁹ Ibid.

occurring at several structural levels. The proliferation of triadic and trichordal statements, undoubtedly inspired by the arpeggiated initial ascent, take on a quasi-motivic role in this solo. Another motive that recurs throughout the short solo is Coltrane's use of $\hat{6}$ as a large-scale back-relating incomplete UN to the *Kopfton*. This ornament to the *Kopfton* is possibly inspired by the recurring phrase (m. 17 in Figure 2.41), which introduces the singer's verses throughout the song.

The musical score consists of two staves of music. The top staff is labeled "Interlude" and shows a series of quarter notes on a treble clef staff, with harmonic changes indicated by Roman numerals: Fm⁷, Eb⁷, Db⁷, C⁷, Fm⁷, Eb⁷, Db⁷, and C^{7(b13)}. The bottom staff is labeled "Solo" and features a vocal line with lyrics and musical annotations. The vocal line includes the number "1" in a box, "Anstieg" markings, and a circled section labeled "IUN". The vocal line also includes the numbers "5", "4", "3", "2", "1", and "6". Below the vocal line, the staff continues with harmonic changes: Fm⁷, Eb⁷, Db⁷, C^{7(b13)}, Fm⁷, Eb⁷, Db⁷, and C^{7(b13)}. The score concludes with a section labeled "4-prg." and harmonic changes: Bbm⁷, Bbm⁷, Fm⁷, and Fm⁷.



Figure 2.41 Graph of Coltrane's 1953 solo on "Strange Thing is All the Rage."⁴⁰

Coltrane seems to have taken his cue for the *Kopfton* from the interlude's emphasis on a descent from C ($\hat{5}$). As in his previous blues solos, Coltrane leaps into the first statement of the *Kopfton* via an initial arpeggiated ascent. The initial ascent also provides the guiding impetus from which motivic material is generated. Coltrane implies a relatively complex set of harmonies with falling triadic and trichordal statements immediately after the *Anstieg* in mm. 5-6. (Fm⁷

⁴⁰ Ibid.

$\Rightarrow A\flat^7 \Rightarrow D\flat \Rightarrow G^7 \Rightarrow Fm^7$) Akin to the choice of the *Kopfton*, this harmonic superimposition is most likely also related to the interlude and its harmonic underpinning.

Another element, which is often heard in Coltrane's blues improvisations, is his tendency to evade moments of structural closure at the chorus level. This is also the case in this solo, where he does not seem to resolve to the structural $\hat{1}$ until the downbeat of the next chorus. Even though his solo ends after one chorus, Coltrane inserts a brief post-cadential phrase in the beginning of the next chorus, which echoes the background motive featuring $\hat{5}$ and its first order IUN $\hat{6}$. Coltrane's concern for restricting his solos to a relatively confined range echoes Schenker's concept of the *obligate Lage* (obligatory register) according to which an *Ursatz* unfolds within a specific register.⁴¹ The concern for registral homogeneity affords a tight-knit voice leading apparatus that does not heavily rely on concepts such as implied tones and octave equivalence. For the most part Coltrane completely avoids the lowest fifth of his instrument's range, which might also be related to his artistic choices in regard to timbre. Avoiding the lowest parts of his range places Coltrane's style in clear contradistinction to the saxophonists who preceded him. Regardless of the registral confinement Coltrane tends to improvise compound melodies that invoke a rich multi-voice texture.

⁴¹ Heinrich Schenker, *Der Freie Satz* (Wien: Universal Edition A.G., 1956), 134-135.

6. Conclusion

The pieces discussed in this chapter provide an overview of Coltrane's earliest influences, professional collaborations, and improvisational strategies and devices. As we have seen, Coltrane's playing was markedly influenced by his idols Charlie Parker and Lester Young. In his mid- and later periods Coltrane seems to have completely refrained from quoting popular songs in his solos. This otherwise widely practiced tendency is still heard in his early stages, albeit very sparingly. Remarkably, Coltrane seems quickly to have moved on from overt displays of other performers' characteristics. He already developed his personal style around the time of "We Love to Boogie," which features his specific timbre (sound, tone), phrasing, affinity for the upper register, sense of registral awareness, and approaches to melodic material. Coltrane's interest in harmony reaches back to his very first recordings with the Navy band. Harmonic devices that are already evident in his "Now's the Time" solo from 1946, are still employed in the late stages of his career. A tendency to introduce *Kopftöne* through arpeggiated initial ascents is clearly evident in his early career. Moreover, Coltrane often composes out the initial ascents throughout the course of the solos.

With few exceptions, such as "Congo Blues," Coltrane's solos tend to be short compared to his later output. The relative brevity of the early improvisations influences the analytical apparatus in various ways. 1) Terms such as "overarching," "global," or "macro-level," appear almost as misnomers when discussing solos spanning merely twelve measures. The structural integrity of these miniatures can, however, still be assessed according to their own limited scale. 2) Motivic networks are less rich and extensive in Coltrane's shorter improvisations. Too many motives within a shorter timespan would likely clutter the improvisations' sense of clarity and coherence. 3) In his early career Coltrane's improvisations do not feature as many examples of

phrase structural organization such as blues sentences that are more pervasive in his middle and late periods. Still, the relative brevity of Coltrane's solos encouraged a tight-knit coherence that would remain in his later work.

His sense for integrating multi-level motivic coherence within his structural melodic descents is clearly evident in his earliest blues solos. His rising fame and confidence enabled him to explore his incipient tendencies and interests in longer solos in the ensuing years. In his mid-period Coltrane explored different means of introducing the *Kopfton*, more complex motivic networks, more explicit sentential phrase structural designs, and a shifting focus towards dense scalar/stepwise utterances at the foreground level.

Chapter 3. From Sideman to Leader: “Two Bass Hit” (1955) to “Mr. P.C.” (1959)

1. “Two Bass Hit” October 26, 1955

1955 was a momentous year in Coltrane’s life. He had his first performance with Miles Davis on September 27th and married Naima (née Juanita) Austin on October 3rd.¹ Dizzy Gillespie’s and John Lewis’s “Two Bass Hit” is the first blues Coltrane recorded with the Miles Davis group.² It was recorded on October 26, 1955 during the session for the album ‘*Round Midnight*’ at the Columbia Studio D in New York City.³ The band included drummer “Philly” Joe Jones, pianist Red Garland, bassist Paul Chambers, and the horn front line featuring Davis and Coltrane. While “Two Bass Hit” was a staple of the quintet’s repertoire, it was not included on the album and later issued on *Circle in the Round* in 1979. Coltrane’s solo contains improvisatory approaches he continued to cultivate throughout the second half of the 1950s, before his aesthetic shifted toward a modal approach. Throughout the 1950s, Coltrane became an unparalleled master of what is referred to as “running the changes,” usually by performing arpeggios and scale runs designed to articulate the underlying harmonies precisely yet with imagination and musical wit.

The written melody of “Two Bass Hit” features an eight-measure introduction with unison hits and interpolated drum solo fills. After the introduction (8 measures) the form follows a quite unconventional A, A (16 measures each), B (12 measures) outline. The layout is uncommon compared to the majority of standards, which tend to adhere to the AABA 32-bar

¹ Lewis Porter, “John Coltrane,” in *The Oxford Companion to Jazz*, ed. Bill Kirchner, (New York: OUP, 2000), 435–436.

² John Coltrane, tenor saxophone, “Two Bass Hit,” by Dizzy Gillespie and John Lewis, Recorded October 26, 1955, with Miles Davis, on *Circle In The Round*, Columbia KC2 36278, 1979, LP.

³ Lewis Porter ed., *The John Coltrane Reference* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 374–375.

form. The solo form consists of a D \flat blues, over which the remainder of the band provides a variety of background figures and harmonic substitutions. The sole element which situates the piece in the blues tradition is its solo form, which takes up slightly more than half of the recording's length. Aside from Jones's short fills Coltrane is the only soloist on the recording.

The instrumentation of the accompaniment during Coltrane's solo changes from a quartet, to a trio, and ultimately to a quintet setting. Garland on piano accompanies the first four solo choruses. He then drops out for the fifth, sixth, and seventh choruses before reentering with Davis for the eighth and ninth. This thinning of the instrumentation to just Chambers (bass) and Jones (drums) before the full band joins in contributes to the dramatic effect of Coltrane's solo. One might not notice initially that Garland has dropped out because Coltrane's playing is so authoritative from a melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic standpoint. Coltrane's phrasing here is distinctive. He often plays consecutive eighth notes with even subdivisions and staccato tonguing. This practice is largely consistent with that of his initial tenure with the Davis quintet: it seems to signal his interpretation of the rhythmic pulse of his bandmates.

1.1. “Two Bass Hit” Main Motives

Coltrane employs several motives and means of motivic development in his solo. As in earlier solos, motives appear on multiple structural levels. The improvisation opens with motive A, which Coltrane embeds in a blues sentence within the first chorus. In its prototypical form,

motive A (A_b , D_b , A_b , F) occupies the middleground. As seen in previous solos, the important material is related to and spun out of the initial ascent.



Figure 3.1 Motive A in chorus 1, mm. 1-3.

Within the first chorus, Coltrane also uses the parallel minor procedure to develop motive A and navigate local harmonies. For example, he adapts $\hat{3}$ to $\hat{b}3$ to accommodate IV^7 in mm. 4-5 of the first chorus.

Figure 3.2 Motive A with parallel minor transformation in chorus 1, mm. 5-8.

In the second chorus motive A recurs with further parallel minor adaptations:

Figure 3.3 Motive A embedded in the middleground in chorus 1, mm. 1-11.

Coltrane also introduces the rhythmic motive B (♪♪♪) and the bebop scale fragment C (F, E_b, D_b, C, B), which occur on the foreground and are presented within the first two choruses. Motive B appears in every chorus besides rotations six and eight. Like, motive B, C is also stated in all choruses but two (choruses one and five).

Lastly, Coltrane extends the motivic network in the fourth chorus with motive D, which only occurs three times but contributes to the sense of overarching motivic coherence since its statements are separated by up to three choruses. D is best described as a group of eighth notes with a specific shape consisting of two ascending intervals and six descending steps (see Figure 3.4). Such comparatively sparsely stated, yet evenly spaced out presentations of specific ideas are relatively common in Coltrane's longer solos of his middle period (see motive C in "Blue

Train" for instance). These sparse motives can be seen as pillars that operate on a deeper level of the motivic network than the more frequently occurring motives, which are constantly impressed onto the listener's consciousness.



Figure 3.4 Motive D in chorus 4, mm. 43-44 and chorus 7, mm. 79-80.

Coltrane's pitch material is also noteworthy. While the solo is largely diatonic in context, the moment-by-moment chord harmonization draws on modal mixtures and even symmetric scales. For instance, Coltrane uses the octatonic scale over the structural dominant chord ($A\flat^7$) in five of the nine solo choruses. Referring back to the same pitch source for a certain measure of the blues form strengthens the sense of long-range coherence. The tendency to reuse similar strategies for the ninth to eleventh measures of each chorus across a solo can be seen as a hallmark of Coltrane's mid-period blues style. The structural dominant chords of the remaining four choruses feature material that is derived from altered, Lydian dominant (of the tritone substitute D^7), and $A\flat$ Mixolydian scales. (All of the following measure numbers relate to Figure 3.17, which represents a graph of the whole solo.)

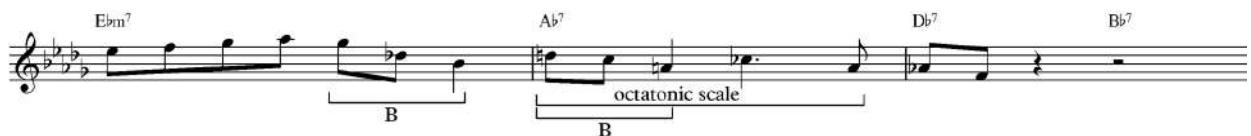


Figure 3.5 Octatonic scale in chorus 2, m. 22; figure shows mm. 21-23.



Figure 3.6 Octatonic scale in chorus 6, m. 70; figure shows mm. 68-70.



Figure 3.7 Octatonic scale in chorus 7, m. 82; figure shows mm. 81-84.



Figure 3.8 Octatonic scale in chorus 8, m. 94; figure shows mm. 93-95.



Figure 3.9 Octatonic scale in chorus 9, m. 106.⁴

1.2. "Two Bass Hit" and Formenlehre: Sentence, Motive C as Recurring Refrain, Sentential Simulacrum

Two of the nine solo choruses on "Two Bass Hit" adhere to relatively clear-cut phrase-structural organizations. Chorus two and choruses four through eight do not seem to follow readily identifiable designs, yet central melodic motives are frequently interspersed throughout them. Thus, motivic coherence is still maintained across the entire solo, despite the comparatively loose organization of these choruses. In addition, structural motivic parallels between some of the choruses further cement the sense of cogency.

The first chorus is designed as a blues sentence in which motive A is the basic idea (b.i.). Since motive A is derived from the initial ascent, it is fair to argue that, as in many of Coltrane's

⁴ While the material in figures 3.5-3.9 can be viewed as definitively being derived from the octatonic scale, figure 3.9 illustrates a subset (#9-b9-8-b7) that has become a typical motive in bebop language which takes on an idiomatic character far beyond the fact of its relation to the octatonic scale. Since Coltrane pioneered the use of the octatonic scale in jazz – famously documented in his solo on "Moment's Notice" – it is fair to assume that he was indeed primarily drawing inspiration from the scale and not the tetrachordal motive. Coltrane's immense interest in musical symmetry, as evidenced in his composition "Giant Steps," further supports this interpretation.

early and mid-period solos, the *Anstieg* serves as impetus from which material is spun out. The fourfold repetition of the b.i. is immediately followed by a cadential idea without intervening fragmentation (Figure 3.10). In contrast to many of his composed blues sentences, Coltrane does not restate b.i.-related material after the cadential phrase. The sentential organization unifies the statements of motive A into one coherent gesture within the first chorus. In Coltrane's middle period, blues sentences tend to occur in the beginning (usually the first chorus), and/or toward the end of the solo. The concept of beginning and ending his improvisations with clearly organized statements seems to have been deeply engrained in Coltrane's musical mind.

The musical score illustrates Chorus 1 as a blues sentence. It begins with a 'Presentation' section consisting of four measures of motive A (b.i. (A)) over a D♭7 chord, followed by a G♭7 chord, and then another D♭7 chord. This is immediately followed by a 'Continuation' section labeled 'cadential idea', which includes a D♭7 chord, an E♭m7 chord, an A♭7 chord, a D♭7 chord, a B♭7 chord, an E♭m7 chord, and an A♭7 chord. The score is written in G clef, 4/4 time, and features a key signature of three flats.

Figure 3.10 Chorus 1 as blues sentence with motive A as b.i.

While the structure of the first chorus is quite evident on the surface, a reduction as seen in Figure 3.10 elucidates the sentential design (Figure 3.17 illustrates how the first chorus is integrated into the large VL aspects of the solo).

The third chorus includes a relatively rare organizational layout where motive C and C-based variants act as a recurring refrain. Two statements of motive B initiate the third chorus.

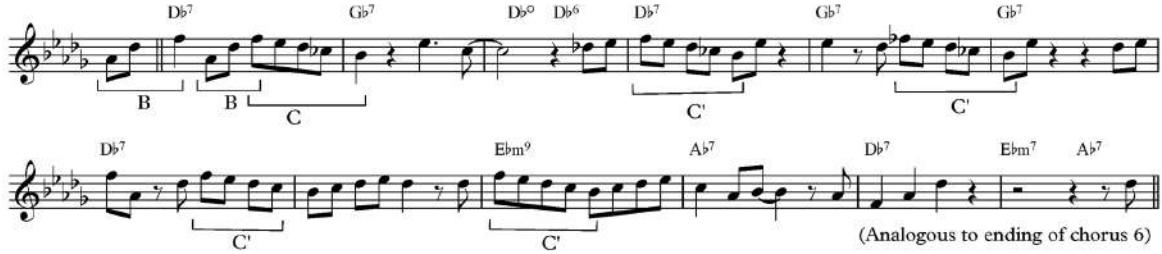


Figure 3.11 Chorus 3 of “Two Bass Hit” with C as recurring refrain.

1.3. Elements of Inter-Chorus Coherence: Rotations Three and Six, Seven and Eight

As shown in Figure 3.11, Coltrane ends the third chorus by stating a D♭ major triad in first inversion in quarter notes. Analogously, the sixth chorus is terminated in the same way (Figure 3.12). Another striking similarity is the four-and-a-half-beat gap between the final pitch D♭ and the onset of the next respective rotation. In both choruses (three and six) the ensuing chorus is prefaced by an anacrusis consisting of a single D♭ occurring on the upbeat of the fourth beat.



Figure 3.12 Coltrane’s “Two Bass Hit” solo, last four measures of chorus 6.

By the third chorus $\hat{5}$ has already yielded its power as the *Kopfton* to $\hat{3}$. While clearly suggesting closure on the surface level, the analogous closing gesture in choruses three and six is interpreted as reinforcing $\hat{3}$ on a deeper level through the pitch’s metric placement on the first beat (see Figure 3.17 for VL correlations).

Another striking moment of inter-chorus coherence is seen in the opening measures of the seventh and eighth choruses (Figures 3.13-3.14). Both rotations are initiated by a drawn-out $\hat{3}\text{-}\hat{4}\text{-}\hat{2}$ gesture that leads into a statement of motive C. While not identical on the surface, the two openings are strikingly similar in their design, which again suggests that Coltrane’s musical

thinking entailed prototypical musical structures pertaining to motivic networks and voice-leading. In both choruses $\hat{3}$ is prolonged on the foreground level via the chromatic lower neighbor D.



Figure 3.13 Opening of chorus 7, mm. 73-76.



Figure 3.14 Opening of chorus 8, mm. 85-88.

“Two Bass Hit” represents somewhat of an outlier in regard to its recording and editing process. Most of Coltrane’s solos are unedited, but there is clear documentation of the process that was applied to craft the master take of “Two Bass Hit.”

1.3.1. Recording and Editing Process

Before recording with Davis for Columbia, companies either did not employ involved editing processes or documentation thereof has not survived. Porter notes the stark differences between record labels and their preferred recording processes. Porter’s assessment situates the “Two Bass Hit” solo in a rather unique position, since it points to its hybrid nature as an improvised yet highly edited artwork.

Even though they were recorded around the same period [mid. 1950s], the Prestige and Columbia recordings differ from each other considerably. Prestige encouraged musicians to record one take of each number and to get through as much material as possible at each session. Recording for Columbia was more formal. Each number was recorded for as

many takes as needed to get it right, and splicing was used to combine the best moments from different takes.⁵

Since Columbia Records edited and spliced portions of several takes together when creating the master, it is worth exploring the ramifications of this practice as it impacts hermeneutic and analytic aspects of “Two Bass Hit.” Porter *et al.* detail the editing process of the recording (Figure 3.15).⁶ Although they provide precise durations of each spliced segment, a translation into musical and formal terms is still required (Figure 3.16). On the master, Coltrane’s first six solo choruses were taken from the second take. The next chorus (seven) was inserted from the fifth take, and the final two choruses (eight and nine) came from the first.

The master take of “Two Bass Hit” [a-m.] is made up of the following: a-2. (beginning 2:18) + a-5. (0:13) + a-1. (0:34) + a-5. (0:36). Columbia C6K 65833 gives the wrong take sequence.

a-1	CO54129-1	Two Bass Hit	fs+	(3:20)
a-2	CO54129-2	Two Bass Hit		(3:30)
a-3	CO54129-3	Two Bass Hit	2fs+bd	(1:05) uni
a-4	CO54129-4	Two Bass Hit	fs (0:01)+fs	(0:09) uni
a-5	CO54129-5	Two Bass Hit		(3:23)
a-m	CO54129	tk 2 + tk 5 + tk 1 + tk5	master *1	(3:42)

Figure 3.15 Editing process of the master take of “Two Bass Hit”⁷

Time on track	1:05	1:18	1:30	1:43	1:55	2:07	2:20	2:32	2:45
Chorus	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Take	2	2	2	2	2	2	5	1	1

Table 3.1 Master take of “Two Bass Hit” solo and its editing procedures.

The structural likeness between the seventh and eighth choruses (from different takes) was thus constructed in the editing process. Most likely the producers and Davis determined the edits. The

⁵ Porter, *The Oxford Companion to Jazz*, 436.

⁶ Ibid., 374-375.

⁷ fs = false start, bd = breakdown, uni = unissued

editing procedure of “Two Bass Hit” situates the piece in a strange position between composition and improvisation. The recorded material is largely improvised, yet its arrangement underwent a collage-like process that was ultimately unburdened by the immediacy of an extemporized creation. As we have seen, the final edit has a string of related motives. It now appears that Coltrane’s various takes contained common melodic devices between them. The impromptu nature of the analogous endings of the third and sixth choruses remains unchallenged by the editing process since choruses one-six were not affected by cutting and splicing.

1.4. VL Aspects of “Two Bass Hit”

While $\hat{5}$ seems to be quickly established as the *Kopfton* in the first and second chorus of the solo via an arpeggiated initial ascent, $\hat{3}$ emerges as the central structural pitch in the *Urline* in the third chorus (Figure 3.16 m. 25).⁸ There is no structural $\hat{4}$, resulting in a gapped *Urline*. From chorus three through the end of the solo, $\hat{3}$ is mainly prolonged through means of neighbors. In choruses one, three to five, and seven, Coltrane plays several secondary descents manifesting chorus-level moments of closure (Figure 3.16 mm. 7-10, 33-35, 45-47, 49-59, and 82-83). In the fourth chorus, for instance, a six-beat descending anacrusis leads into the fifth chorus, thus propelling the solo forward. Coltrane tends to include moments of rest after his statement of the tonic pitch, raising the sense of chorus-level closure.

The correlation between instances of tight-knit phrase-structural organization and important events in the overarching voice leading events is quite apparent in “Two Bass Hit.” $\hat{5}$ is introduced as the *Kopfton* through motive A, which serves as the b.i. of the first chorus’s

⁸ Please see the appendix for a reading that proposes $\hat{3}$ as the *Kopfton*. This alternative interpretation only shows the first two choruses since $\hat{3}$ gains structural centrality in both readings at the beginning of the third chorus.

sentential structure. Motive A is presented twice in the second chorus, but its prominence diminishes in comparison to the first chorus. The weakening of the eminence of motive A and $\hat{5}$ as the *Kopfton* seem to correlate. In addition, motive A clearly recedes into deeper structural levels throughout the second chorus. This retreat into the deeper middleground is achieved through the increasing amount of foreground diminutions and other motivic transformations such as rhythmic expansion. As the prevalence of motive A and $\hat{5}$ dwindles, the expectation of a handing over of structural power increases. By the end of the second chorus, the various iterations of motive B seem to overpower the already vulnerable regime of motive A and $\hat{5}$ and power is ceded to $\hat{3}$ in the first measure of the third chorus (Figure 3.17, m. 25). The gap in the *Urlinie*, the omission of $\hat{4}$, suggests the relatively abrupt change of structural power. Akin to the introduction of $\hat{5}$ as the apex pitch of motive A in the opening of the solo, $\hat{3}$ is inaugurated as the zenith pitch of motive D, which dominates the quasi-rondo structure of the third chorus. Similar to the first chorus where $\hat{5}$ was consistently reinforced as the climax pitch of motive A, $\hat{3}$ is continuously bolstered via the restatements of motive C (Figure 3.16, mm. 25-33). After $\hat{3}$ is established, its power seems unequivocal until the very end of the solo. $\hat{3}$ is prominently featured in the opening of every chorus after it was initially introduced as the pitch of central structural importance. The only two choruses (six and nine), which do not open with $\hat{3}$ clearly still buttress its power though a 3-prg. (chorus six) leading up to $\hat{3}$ and a composed-out neighbor note (chorus nine) targeting $\hat{3}$ (Figure 3.16, mm. 60-62, and 97).

Blues Sentence

1

Anstieg 1

5

A

D \flat 7 G \flat 7 D \flat 7 A

presentation

5

A

D \flat 7 G \flat 7 G \flat 7 D \flat 7 A

(presentation)

9

4 3 2 1

E \flat m7 A \flat 7 D \flat 7 B \flat 7 E \flat m7 A \flat 7

continuation

5

5-prg.

A

B

G \flat 7 C \flat 7 F \flat 7 A \flat 7 D \flat 7 D \flat 7 \sharp II

B

17

5

5

4

parallel minor procedure (IV7 as i7) I7

(A)

G \flat 7 G \flat 7 D \flat 7 D \flat 7

3 3 1 C

4 gains importance but fails to crystallize

5

Urlinie Gap

21

4

5

E \flat m7 Ab7 Db7 B \flat 7

B octatonic scale B

36

4 $\hat{3}$ $\hat{2}$ 3-prg.

Ebm⁷ Ab⁷ Db⁷ Gb⁷ Db⁷

40 $\hat{3}$ b $\hat{3}$ 7-prg.

C

D^{b7} Gb⁷ Gb⁷ Db⁷

C D

44 $\hat{5}$ $\hat{4}$ b $\hat{3}$ $\hat{2}$ $\hat{1}$ 4-prg.

Bb⁷ Ebm⁷ Ab⁷ Db⁷ Gb⁷

B D B

48 **5** 3-prg.

Fm⁷ Ebm⁷ Db⁷ Gb⁷ Db⁷

B B

52 $\hat{2}$

parallel minor procedure: implied v7 \leftarrow implied V7

56 7-prg. $\hat{2}$ $\hat{3}$ $\hat{1}$

Em⁷ A⁷ Ebm⁷ Ab⁷ Db⁷ Bb⁷

3 B B

60 6 3-prg. 3-prg.
 Ebm⁷ A_b⁷ D_b⁷ G_b⁷ D_b⁷
 3-prg.
 64 2
 D_b⁷ G_b⁷ G_b⁷ D_b⁷
 C 4 3 3
 68 Ebm⁷ A_b⁷ D_b⁷ B_b^{7(♯9)}
 octatonic scale (Analogous to ending of chorus 3)
 72 7 3 2 3
 Ebm⁷ A_b⁷ D_b⁷ G_b⁷ D_b⁷ D_b⁷ B_b⁷
 Analogous to opening of chorus 8 C
 77 8-prg. 3
 G_b⁷ B B D
 81 3 2 1
 delayed chous-level resolution
 Ebm⁷ A_b⁷ D_b⁷ D_b⁷ A_b⁷
 octatonic scale



Figure 3.16 Graph of Coltrane's "Two Bass Hit" solo.

The *Urlinie* closes with a rare descent that includes $\hat{3}-\overline{\hat{b}3}$ and $\hat{2}$ before resolving to $\hat{1}$.⁹

While the passage in Figure 3.16 (mm. 107-109) shows the normative chords of the blues rotation, it is very likely that Coltrane thought of another harmonization undergirding the final descent (Figure 3.17). The likely harmonic superimpositions illustrate the great flexibility Coltrane applies to the regular harmonic aspects of the blues, which not only affect harmonic shadings but even aspects of chord function. In this example (Figure 3.17) Coltrane may have anticipated I^7 in the last measure of the blues form, which is generally strongly associated with a retransitional V^7 .

The musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is a melodic line on a single line with four notes: $\hat{3}$, $\hat{3}$, $\hat{2}$, and $\hat{1}$. Above the first note is a brace, above the second is a curved arrow labeled "3-prg.", above the third is a brace, and above the fourth is a brace. The bottom staff is a harmonic progression in G clef, 2/4 time, with a key signature of one flat. It shows four chords: D_b^7 , E_b^m7 , $A_b^7(\overline{\hat{b}3})$, and D^7 . The first three chords have a brace below them, and the second chord has a "3" below it.

Figure 3.17 Likely harmonic superimposition for the final descent of the *Urlinie*.

Depending on the reading, the placement of $\hat{1}$ is subject to the respective harmonic underpinning. Accordingly, $\hat{1}$ occurs on the first beat of the next chorus in Figure 3.16, where it is supported by the tonic chord and only foreshadowed as an anticipation over what may be read as a cadential V_4^6 chord, A_b^7sus4 . In Figure 3.17 $\hat{1}$ occurs over an implied/superimposed tonic chord.

⁹ Since $\hat{2}$ appears as an implied tone the closure of the structural melodic descent may also be read as $\overline{\hat{b}3}$ before to $\hat{1}$.

1.5. Idiosyncratic Moments

Several illustrative moments provide a glimpse into how the band members of the Miles Davis quartet operated and interacted. The opening of the second chorus (Figure 3.18) demonstrates how Coltrane drew harmonic inspiration from written material such as background figures. In the third chorus Garland adjusts his accompaniment to a highly unexpected pitch Coltrane presents, while the fifth chorus contains an example of Coltrane's flexible approach to the blues when he implies V over the normative IV⁷ chord area of the blues form (mm. 5-6).

In the first four measures of the second chorus, Coltrane replaces the harmonic underpinning of the rhythm section with a chain of secondary dominants. This idea is likely derived from the background figures that Davis and Garland perform during Coltrane's last two solo choruses. The chromatically descending background line Davis performs behind the saxophonist represents a guide tone line outlining a chain of dominant chords. Every chromatically descending progression of dominant chords can also be rendered as a circle of fifths progression due to the principle of tritone substitution. Coltrane must have had the idea in his ears since the group rehearsed for the recording session and performed the arrangement during live performances.



Figure 3.18 Harmonic superimposition in the beginning of chorus 2, mm. 13-16.

Figure 3.19 Davis's and Chambers' background figures.

The next extraordinary moment occurs in the third chorus and is a true testament to Garland's musicianship. Coltrane plays a somewhat unexpected major seventh, C, over Db⁷ in measure 27. Garland immediately accommodates this uncommon pitch-choice by stating a Db^ø chord for the first two beats of m. 27, which he resolves to a Db⁶ chord on beats three and four (**Figure 3.20**). The pitch C must have come as a surprise for Garland since it is not a member of the normative Db⁷ chord, which would usually occupy the third measure of the blues form. The move from i^ø to I⁶ is sometimes referred to as a delayed resolution in jazz and bossa nova, which is not only used in improvisation but also in compositions such as Billy Strayhorn's "Upper Manhattan Medical Group" (mm. 29-32) and Antônio Carlos Jobim's "Corcovado" (m. 7).

Figure 3.20 Coltrane's unexpected statement of the pitch C and Garland's adjusted harmony in m. 27.

Another outstanding moment occurs in the fifth chorus between mm. 53-54 over G_b⁷.

Here Coltrane seems to outline A_b⁷ rather than a G_b⁷ leading back to D_b⁷, which corresponds to a substitution of V⁷ for IV⁷. While this superimposition seems like an obvious choice, given the resolution to I⁷, it is extremely uncommon in blues performance practice. Implicitly this tactic points to the role of IV⁷ as a structurally less significant entity which serves to prolong tonic at a deeper level. Accordingly, IV⁷ can be substituted with other chords fulfilling this function, such as V, ii, bII⁷, iv, bVII⁷, or #iv^o.



Figure 3.21 Coltrane substitutes IV⁷ with V⁷ with in chorus 5, mm. 53-54.

“Two Bass Hit” evidences a correlation between important VL events and the occurrence of tight-knit phrase structural organization. The arpeggiated initial ascent takes on a motivic character, introduces the *Kopfton*, and serves as impetus for generating the melodic material that becomes the b.i. of the first blues sentence. During the editing process the producers and Davis left the integrity of structural 3 intact and increased inter-chorus coherence by juxtaposing choruses seven and eight. While they likely were not considering Schenkerian aspects, such as the *Kopfton*, their editing was probably based on the likeness of the seventh and eight chorus’ openings, which coincidentally feature the head tone 3. As in earlier solos, Coltrane applies the parallel minor procedure, opens the solo with a blues sentence, and overrides moments of internal closure through harmonic superimpositions or elision in mm. 11-12 of the blues form. After his first recording with Davis’s band Coltrane remained with the group until April 28, 1957, when the leader fired him. Some of the collaborations featuring Coltrane’s blues playing

after his first recording with Davis include Elmo Hope, Sonny Rollins, Tadd Dameron, Thelonious Monk, and Sonny Clark, among others.¹⁰

2. “Blue Train” Sept. 15, 1957

The album was recorded at the legendary Van Gelder studio in Hackensack, New Jersey and features the nineteen-year-old Lee Morgan on trumpet, Curtis Fuller on trombone, Kenny Drew on piano, Paul Chambers on bass, “Philly” Joe Jones on drums, and Coltrane on tenor saxophone. In an interview with jazz scholar Yasuhiro Fujioka from March 25th, 2006, “Curtis Fuller recalls that the band had a three-hour rehearsal at Nola Studio the day before the session.”¹¹ Coltrane’s solo on the issued master take of “Blue Train” was not edited.¹²

¹⁰ Please see the blues discography section in the appendix for a detailed chronological listing of all of Coltrane’s known blues recordings.

¹¹ Porter, *The John Coltrane Reference*, 490.

¹² Michael Cuscuna, liner notes to *Blue Train*, John Coltrane, Blue Note 724359172125, CD, 2003. “For this definitive version of “Blue Train,” two alternate takes have been added. Both immediately preceded the master take at the session. A word of explanation is necessary about the alternate take of the title tune. The master take, as issued, is take 9 with the piano solo from take 8. While take 8 has some very different and formidable playing, it did not occur to me until recently to restore the piano solo taken out of it and make it a whole alternate take. The actual piano solo from take 9 has not survived, but here we’ve restored take 8 to its original form, thus repeating the piano solo used on the LP.”

2.1. Preference for Scalar Motion

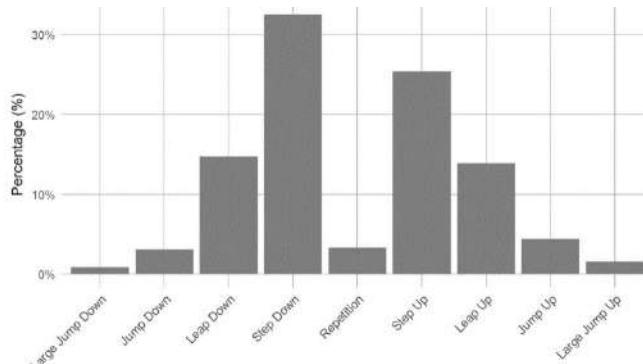


Figure 3.22 Most prominent intervallic motions in the “Blue Train” solo.¹³

According to the information from the University of Weimar’s searchable database, the solo features an overwhelming amount of ascending and descending stepwise motion at the foreground level. The proliferation of stepwise motion in Coltrane’s middle period stands in contrast with his very early and very late periods, which are dominated by larger intervals. Arpeggiations and leaps, although fundamental building blocks of tonal music, thus take on a somewhat idiosyncratic identity within the context of this solo. The prevalence of stepwise motion also lends greater effect to intervallic leaps. The motivic statements in “Blue Train” are hence highlighted through the breaking of the largely homogeneous texture consisting of scale runs. In his article “Musical Forces, Melodic Expectation, and Jazz Melody,” Steve Larson discussed the importance of differentiating between leaps and stepwise motion.

The distinction between steps and leaps also plays an important role in the theory of musical forces. The theory claims that melodic leaps tend to leave “traces” and that melodic steps tend to displace those traces.¹⁴

¹³ Martin Pfleiderer et al., *Inside the Jazzomat: New Perspectives for Jazz Research* (Mainz: Schott Campus, 2017)

¹⁴ Steve Larson, “Musical Forces, Melodic Expectation, and Jazz Melody,” *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 19, No. 3, (Spring 2002), 352.

By “traces” Larson means that listener expectations are rebooted after every step in a scalar progression, while leaps leave us with a sense of open-endedness. Stepwise motion resets expectations after every pitch, while leaps set up expectations of compound melodies, which may or may not materialize.

2.2. Blues Sentences in “Blue Train”

Out of the eight solo choruses, only rotations one, six, and eight are organized as blues sentences. Coltrane’s tendency to reserve tight-knit phrase structures for the opening and closing choruses is clearly evident in “Blue Train.” The remaining five choruses (two-five and seven) of the solo can be viewed as through-composed. Yet even the more loosely organized choruses contain motivic ideas that appear throughout the solo, ensuring overarching coherence.

The prominence of stepwise motion is reflected in the b.i. (F-E \flat -F) of the first chorus. The idea is likely derived from the melodic material of the head, which features an arpeggiation with an embedded double neighbor figure rising up to and encircling the tonic pitch. The b.i. bridges the gap between the head and the solo and also echoes the dominant 9th sound which is characteristic of the head’s melody. The pitch material of the b.i. strongly suggests the implication of extended chords since F is the ninth of E \flat ⁷ and the thirteenth of A \flat ⁷. The b.i. can be regarded as a prolonged F with a complete lower neighbor E \flat . This idea, however turns the orthodox expectation of consonance and dissonance on its head. Coltrane frames F as a consonance and uses the tonic pitch as a lower neighbor. His dominating musical authority and persuasiveness weakens the otherwise strong magnetism of the tonic triad and propels the music with a sense of antigravitational buoyancy that remains powerfully grounded through his rhythmic and timbral command.

Akin to the opening blues sentence of “Two Bass Hit,” the specific organization of the blues sentence becomes evident through a reduction of foreground diminutions (Figure 3.23). The opening blues sentence and its b.i. thus have to be seen as a middleground structure, which permeates to the foreground where it appears as a florid diminution. The blues chorus of the first chorus includes a fragmentation as well as a cadential phrase. In contrast to Coltrane’s written blues heads there is no restatement of b.i. material after the cadential phrase. During the fragmentation, b.i. statements appear in quick succession and are ornamented with pitches from the Eb blues scale (Figure 3.23). In the fragmentation b.i. characteristics are liquidated through the persistent omission of the final pitch (F) of the original idea (F-Eb-F). The cadential idea marks a clear departure from the melodic material of the presentation and its tonic prolongation.

Presentation b.i.

The score consists of five staves of music. Staff 1 starts with a single note followed by a sixteenth-note pattern. Staff 2 shows a melodic line with eighth-note chords labeled Fm⁷ and Bb⁷. Staff 3 is labeled '1' and shows a melodic line with eighth-note chords labeled Eb⁷, Ab⁷, Eb⁷, and Eb⁷. Staff 4 is labeled 'fragmentation' and shows a melodic line with eighth-note chords labeled Ab⁷, Ab⁷, Eb⁷, and Eb⁷. Staff 5 is labeled 'Continuation cadential phrase' and shows a melodic line with eighth-note chords labeled Fm⁷, Bb⁷, Fm⁷, Bb⁷, Eb⁷, and Bb⁷. Measure numbers 1-10 are indicated above the staff lines.

Figure 3.23 Sentential organization in the first chorus.

6 Presentation

The score consists of five staves of music. Staff 1 is labeled 'Presentation' and shows a melodic line with eighth-note chords labeled b.i., b.i., b.i., b.i., b.i., b.i., and b.i. Staff 2 is labeled 'fragmentation' and shows a melodic line with eighth-note chords labeled Eb⁷, Ab⁷, Eb⁷, Eb⁷, and Eb⁷. Staff 3 is labeled 'Continuation cadential idea' and shows a melodic line with eighth-note chords labeled b.i., b.i., Ab⁷, Abm⁷, Eb⁷, Eb⁷, and Gbm⁷. Staff 4 shows a melodic line with eighth-note chords labeled b.i. and b.i. Staff 5 shows a melodic line with eighth-note chords labeled Fm⁷, F#m⁷, Fm⁷, Bb⁷, and Bb⁷. Measure numbers 1-10 are indicated above the staff lines.

Figure 3.24 Sentential organization in the sixth chorus.

The sixth chorus (Figure 3.24) is also constructed according to a blues sentence design, which surfaces after the dense foreground diminutions are eliminated. The b.i. is constructed of the root position tonic triad. The fragmentation is introduced by a retrograde statement of the b.i. in the third measure of the chorus, which contributes to the erosion of the original idea's characteristic elements. Throughout the fragmentation Coltrane transposes pitches of the b.i. to adapt it to superimposed chords, such as A⁹ in the fifth measure of the sixth chorus. Over IV⁹ (mm. 5-6 of the chorus) Coltrane obscures the b.i. with florid foreground scale runs and arpeggiations, further disintegrating its traits. During the course of the fragmentation, the original b.i. recedes more and more into the middleground. The cadential idea is also introduced prematurely in the eighth measure via superimposed chromatically descending triads, leading to ii⁷ in the ninth measure. While measures four and eight are considered part of the phrase-level tonic prolongations, they may also be *loci* of harmonic action in practice. Normative blues sentences generally include presentations, which span across the first eight measures of the blues. Yet in solos, tonic prolongations are often cut short, since the eighth measure usually contains chordal superimpositions, which lead to ii⁷ in the ninth measure. Figure 3.25 shows normative versus *praxis* phrase-level tonic prolongations in the blues. The staff illustrating tonic prolongations in improvisatory practice contains frequently used chord options that are used in the fourth and eighth measures in place of I⁷. While in the normative example the tonic prolongations last for the first four or eight measures respectivley, they only persist for three or seven measures in the latter. Coltrane's improvised blues sentences generally adhere to the normative length of tonic prolongations. Chorus six is however an example of a seven-measure tonic prolongation. Coltrane implies iii⁷ and biii⁷ in the eighth measure.

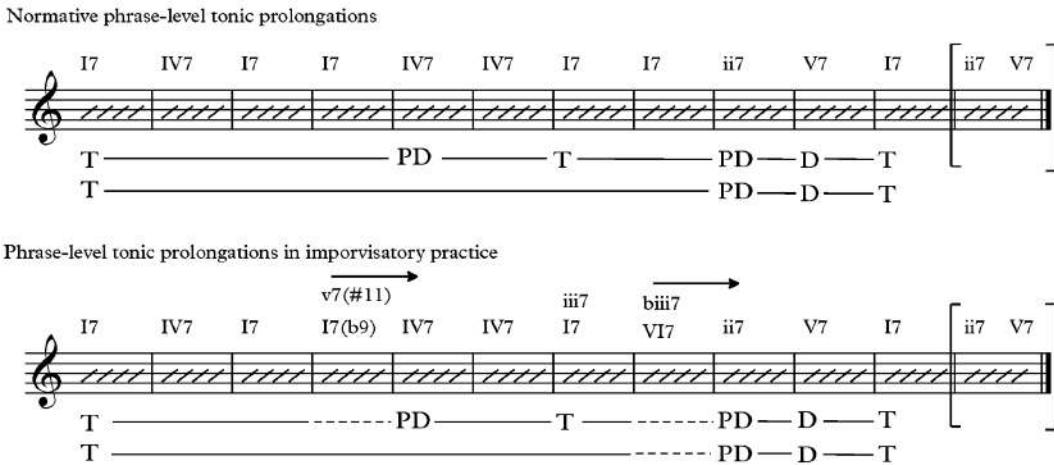


Figure 3.25 Normative versus practice phrase-level tonic prolongations in the blues.

The final blues sentence occurs in the last chorus of the solo and does not require a reduction to make its various subsegments clearly discernible (Figure 3.26). Analogous to the sixth chorus, the b.i. of the eighth rotation also consists of the tonic triad, albeit this time in second inversion. After the b.i.-related arpeggiations are clearly established as the central melodic driving force throughout the fragmentation, stepwise motion is reintroduced with the cadential idea. The b.i. itself can also be regarded as a foreground elaboration of the solo's important motivic element, the ascending minor sixth. This characteristic interval, mostly employed to signal foreground closure, is evoked as an emblem of closure in the final chorus.

In the first and eighth chorus Coltrane stretches the fragmentation into the predominant area (m. 9 of the form). This tendency is likely founded on the principle of extended chords, since the tonic triad is often employed as an upper structure over ii^9 constituting its ninth, eleventh, and thirteenth. The tonic prolongation may thus be stretched into the ninth chorus where it exists as the upper structure of ii^{13} .

Figure 3.26 Sentential organization of the eighth chorus.

2.3. Main Motives in “Blue Train”

Besides the motivic ascending minor sixth (G-E \flat) several other musical protagonists contribute to Coltrane’s network of motives. Motive A is an ascending scale (C, D \flat , D, E \flat , F, G \flat , A \flat , B \flat) that Coltrane only plays over IV 7 in the second measure of the blues form. In the ascent from the third of Ab 7 (C) to the ninth (B \flat), Coltrane uses an uncommon scale. The inclusion of the chromatic passing tone D between D \flat and E \flat , hints at an E \flat bebop scale. Yet the substitution of the pitch G with G \flat to accommodate the underlying Ab 7 chord points away from this scale. The resulting scale is thus a Mixolydian scale with an added chromatic passing tone between 4 and 5. Generally dominant bebop scales contain an added passing tone between b7 and 1. (In his “Two Bass Hit” solo, a scale fragment of the dominant bebop scale also takes on a motivic role.) Motive A conforms with the stepwise texture of the solo as a whole but still stands out through its nearly identical recurrences. At times Coltrane overshoots the target pitch B \flat , yet only to

revert back to it in the next bar as seen in Figures 3.28-3.39. The relatively static character of A consistently reinforces the *Kopfton* Bb, whose momentum seems to be rekindled by the energy-laden scale run that constitutes motive A. While dissimilar from A on the surface, motive B seems to share the same larger purpose - the bolstering of *Kopfton* Bb. (Measure numbers refer to the graph of the entire solo in the appendix.)



Figure 3.27 Opening of the chorus 2 with motives A and B.



Figure 3.28 Motives A and D in opening of chorus 5.



Figure 3.29 Motive A in chorus 6, mm. 66-67.

In its reduced prototypical form, motive B consists of the two pitches G and Bb. Coltrane applies a great deal of rhythmic variance and diverse foreground diminutions to his four renderings of motive B. He refrains from repeating the idea note for note, which supports the view that B is a deeper-level motive that Coltrane composes out in various ways during his solo. Besides Figure 3.32, all foreground diminutions of motive B include the added pitches Ab, A, and C. Figure 3.27 illustrates that the goal of motives A and B seems to be an amplification of the kinetic energy of the *Kopfton*.

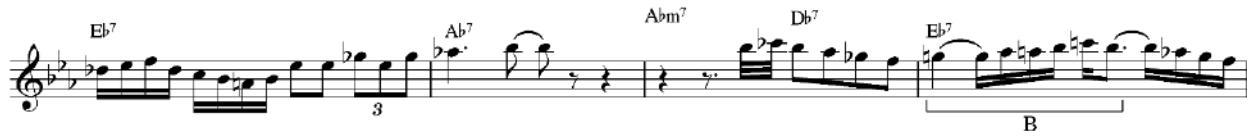


Figure 3.30 Statement of motive B in chorus 2, m. 20.



Figure 3.31 Statement of motive B in chorus 5, mm. 52-53.



Figure 3.32 Statement of motive B in chorus 5, m. 56.



Figure 3.33 Statement of motive B in chorus 6, m. 68.

Motive C, a thrice repeated single pitch, occurs four times in the solo. It is initially stated in the penultimate measure of the second chorus (m. 24), after which Coltrane immediately reuses it to begin his third chorus (m. 26). Remarkably, C does not resurface until the very end of the solo in mm. 112 and 120. Motive C thus bookends the solo as a whole. As a simple pitch repetition, it markedly contrasts the other florid foreground diminutions. Three of the four statements of motive C feature the pitch Eb, while one iteration revolves around G.¹⁵ The larger

¹⁵ The sparse yet strategic placements of motive C are reminiscent of Coltrane's use of motive E in "Two Bass Hit."

purpose of C seems to be its grounding function through the threefold affirmative pitch repetition. In contrast to the extremely florid foreground texture of the solo, motive C can be interpreted as a brief moment of recuperation before the onset of the following pitch torrent.



Figure 3.34 Motive C in chorus 2, m. 24.



Figure 3.35 Motive C in chorus 3, m. 26.



Figure 3.36 Motive C in chorus 8, m. 88.



Figure 3.37 Motive C in chorus 8, m. 96.

Motive D is likely the most exemplary foreground device of Coltrane's mid-period style. The basic form of motive D, along with its harmonic implications, has been addressed in the first chapter (See FN 13 on page 96). The idea features a recurring pedal tone below a chromatically descending VLS. In its prototypical rendering, the line charts the move from $\hat{8}-\hat{7}-\bar{b}7$ of a local ii⁷ and its resolution to $\hat{3}$ of the subsequent local V⁷ chord. Yet, Coltrane often omits various pitches of the chromatic VLS as well as the implied V⁷. This only leaves the core gesture of the motive

intact (Figures 3.39). Motive D also sometimes appears in a chromatically descending sequence and in moments of harmonic transition such as measure four of the blues form as well as measures seven through nine ($\text{iii}^7 \rightarrow \text{biii}^7 \rightarrow \text{ii}^7 \rightarrow \text{V}^7$) (Figures 3.41 and 3.42). The respective statements of motives B, C, and D are interspersed evenly across the solo and do not frequently occur in immediate succession.



Figure 3.38 Motive D in chorus 4, m. 40. Implied ii^7 and omission of 7.



Figure 3.39 Motive D in chorus 4, m. 47. The resolution to 3 of Bb^7 is omitted.



Figure 3.40 Motive D in chorus 5, mm. 50. with omission of the local 7 in the VLS.



Figure 3.41 Descending sequential statement of motive D in chorus 6 m. 69.



Figure 3.42 Another sequential statement of motive D in chorus 7 mm. 81-82.

Coltrane's motivic network serves a variety of functions. The motivic ascending minor sixth is used as an emblem of foreground closure, while motives A and B are designed to buttress the *Kopfton* B \flat . Motive C is strategically placed in the beginning and end of the solo and thus fulfills a bookending function that contrasts the other exuberantly embellished foreground statements. Motive D is used in moments of transition between central chords such as the move from I 7 to IV 7 or I 7 to V 7 .

Due to the extended length that Coltrane's solos begin to take on in his middle period, I will first present a brief overview of the most critical VL aspects and then proceed by presenting a deep middleground graph and discuss selected intriguing moments.

2.4. *Voice Leading Considerations in “Blue Train”*

2.4.1. *Overview*

Coltrane's “Blue Trane” solo ranges across eight choruses. It features a stepwise ascent ($\hat{2}$ - $\hat{b3}$ - $\hat{3}$ - $\hat{4}$ - $\hat{5}$) to the *Kopfton* $\hat{5}$ in the first chorus and the *Urlinie* includes a gap between $\hat{5}$ and $\hat{3}$. The structural importance of *Kopfton* $\hat{5}$ appears relatively unchallenged until the very end of the solo. The ubiquity of linear progressions reinforcing structural tones and connecting choruses is a notable characteristic of the solo. In the following paragraphs I will present a description some of salient structural events which are graphically represented in Figure 3.43.

The first chorus opens with an unusual prolongation of $\hat{2}$, which participates in the initial scalar ascent. The eminence of $\hat{2}$ is related to the melody of the head, where the pitch is prominently featured. Coltrane uses a blues sentence for the phrase structural design of the first chorus in which its b.i. also prominently features $\hat{2}$. The initial ascent is supplemented with the

chromatic tone $b\hat{3}$, which imbues the first chorus with a noticeable blues flavor. The *Kopfton* is introduced over the structural dominant chord Bb^7 , over which Coltrane implies a “backdoor ii-V” $Abm^7-Db^{7(\#11)}$. From the *Kopfton* Coltrane composes out a 10-prg., which postpones the internal resolution into the 12th measure. The 10-prg. ends with a statement of $\hat{3}$ and a leap up to Eb , representing the motivic interval of a minor 6th. From this Eb in mm. 12 of the first chorus, Coltrane composes out a 4-prg. ($Eb-Db-C-Bb$) that stretches into the next chorus and resolves on the *Kopfton* Bb .

The third chorus opens with a descending 5-prg ($\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}-\hat{7} \nearrow \hat{6}$). The cover tone Eb occurs in conjunction with the prolongation of $\hat{6}$, which yields its power to the *Kopfton* in the seventh measure. Coltrane plays another linear progression ($\hat{5}-\hat{4} \nearrow \hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{6}-\hat{5}$), which is stated over the structural predominant chord ii^7 and leads directly into an ascending 8-prg. A weak $\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ descent subsequently falls from the *Kopfton*, whose sense of surface-level finality is crushed by the inadequate support of $\hat{1}$ over an implied ii^7 (Fm^7) and its weak rhythmic placement.

Coltrane leads into the fourth chorus with a 5-prg ($\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$). He immediately arpeggiates up to the *Kopfton* buttressing the sense that any notion of arrival is relegated to the foreground. From the *Kopfton* Coltrane then plays a 4-prg ($\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{3}-\hat{2}$), which terminates over IV^7 in the sixth measure of the rotation. Coltrane uses IV^7 as a divider for this middleground interruption. Another more extended 5-prg falling from the *Kopfton* (mm. 8-11 of the chorus) creates a sense of internal closure in the chorus. Yet, Coltrane immediately leaps back up to the *Kopfton* and plays another 5-prg leading into the fifth chorus.

While Bb is clearly prolonged throughout the fifth chorus, an internal 5-prg stretching from mm. 7-11 lends a sense of foreground closure to the rotation. Akin to the previous chorus,

Coltrane immediately rekindles the power of the *Kopfton* by leaping up to it and playing an 8-prg. into the next chorus. The sixth chorus' fourfold repetition of b.i. features the *Kopfton* as its apex pitch.

After presenting the *Kopfton* in the first measure of the seventh chorus, he uses IV⁷ of the second measure as local harmonic support for $\hat{4}$ of a 5-prg. The next intriguing moment is a 6-prg ($\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{6}-\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{3}$), which leads directly into the final rotation. The clear arrival on $\hat{3}$ creates the expectation of a shifting power dynamic in the *Urlinie*. The structural inferiority of $\hat{3}$ becomes apparent quickly, once we notice that Coltrane plays an ascending extended 3-prg. ($\hat{3}-\hat{4}-\hat{5}$) back to the *Kopfton*. Coltrane states the final descent ($\hat{5} -(\hat{4})-\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$), which resolves on the downbeat of the next chorus. The *Urlinie* does not feature a strong structural $\hat{4}$, causing a gap in the structural descent. While a very weak $\hat{4}$ is present, it seems too feeble to be an equal member of the *Urlinie*. The factors that contribute to the weakness of $\hat{4}$ are its rhythmic placement as a second eighth note triplet, its relative brevity, and its inappropriate harmonic support.¹⁶

¹⁶ See appendix for a full graph of Coltrane's solo on "Blue Train."

e

Presentation

6 5 5 b6 5 4 3 3-prg. 5 b6 6 2 3-prg. 5 1

17 IV9 17 N IV9 17 N ii7 V7 17 V7

7 5 5 b6 5 3 3 5 3 2 5 6 2 5 6-prg.

17 IV7 17 IV9 iii7 P ii7 V7 17 V7

f

Eb7 Ab7 Abm7 Eb7

C Arp.

8 5 6 b6 5 3-prg. 3 2 1

iii7 VI7 bIII7 bVI7 ii11 V7b9 I7 V7 ii7 I7

C.T. = Eb

9 1

3-prg. 5 6 b6 5 3-prg. 3 2 1

iii7 VI7 bIII7 bVI7 ii11 V7b9 I7 V7 ii7 I7

g

Presentation

1 Eb7 Ab7 Eb7 Eb7 3 1

b.i. b.i. C 3 3 3 3

Continuation

Ab7 3 1 Ab7 3 3 3 3

b.i. (composed out)

Figure 3.43 “Blue Train” solo middleground graph with foreground snapshots *a-g*.

2.4.2. VL Snapshots

2.4.2.a. 4-prg With Register Transfers

Moment *a* illustrates how Coltrane's motives are integrated into the deeper VL structure of the solo. The 4-prg. ($E_b \nearrow D_b \searrow C \nearrow B_b$) ranging from the tonic to the *Kopfton* is embellished by the motivic ascending minor sixth (G, E_b), and motive A on the surface level. Coltrane uses register transfers for every pitch of the 4-prg. The 4-prg fulfills multiple functions such as (1a) creating inter-chorus coherence between rotations one and two, (1b) strengthening overall coherence exceeding the chorus-level, (2) buttressing the *Kopfton*, and (3) unifying individual motives into a larger coherent gesture. After the 4-prg., Coltrane reinforces the *Kopfton* by stating motive B.

2.4.2.b. 5-prg Aimed at UN $\hat{6}$

Snapshot *b* shows a descending 5-prg. ($G-F-E_b-D\nearrow C$) in the first two measures of the third chorus. The third rotation is relatively uncharacteristic, since it does not explicitly invoke the *Kopfton* in its opening. In most other choruses of the solo the *Kopfton* is stated very close to the beginning of the rotation. The 5-prg. of the third chorus is clearly aimed at UN $\hat{6}$, C. Coltrane transfers the final pitch of the 5-prg up an octave. C occurs in conjunction with the cover tone E_b during its prolongation. The chromatic UN D_b is also used to prolong $\hat{6}$. Coltrane uses three different superimposed chords ($D_b m^7-G_b^7, E_b m^7$) to provide local support for D_b before returning to $\hat{6}$ as the third of $IV^7 (A_b^7)$. Coltrane does not restate $\hat{6}$ as a first order embellishment of the *Kopfton* until the sixth chorus.

2.4.2.c. 8-prg With Register Transfer

The fourth chorus includes several compelling moments in regard to voice leading, such as the moment of interruption mentioned in the overview. Box *c* depicts a highly ornamented 8-prg, which is aimed at a prolongation of the *Kopfton*. Coltrane integrates his stock lick, labeled as motive D, and uses tritone substitution over the chorus-level V⁷ chord for this 8-prg (B_b-A_b-G-F-E_b-D⁷-C[#]-B_b). As he had done previously, Coltrane includes an ascending register transfer to position the two last pitches of the linear progression into the upper octave. The tendency to include register transfers in linear progressions may hint at Coltrane's concern for a tight-knit approach to his use of registers. The "Blue Train" solo operates within a two-octave ambitus. While we may never know whether Coltrane was conscious of applying such registral constraints, his avoidance of the lowest fifth of the tenor saxophone's range is quite evident. The diminutions of snapshot *c*, embellishing the underlying 8-prg are even constricted to the ambitus of a ninth.

2.4.2.d. Internal $\hat{5}$ -Descent

Moment *d*, occurring in the fifth chorus, represents an instance of internal closure via a $\hat{5}$ -prg that proceeds from the *Kopfton*. The descent begins in the seventh measure of the rotation over I⁷. $\hat{2}$ of the $\hat{5}$ -prg is prolonged over the chorus-level V⁷ chord and into the first beat of the eleventh measure, which would normally be harmonized by I⁷. During its prolongation $\hat{2}$ is harmonically supported by an implied backdoor ii-V (A_bm⁷-D_b⁷) which occurs over V⁷. G_b, the b7th of A_bm⁷ serves as a chromatic UN to $\hat{2}$. Coltrane resolves to $\hat{1}$ on the second beat of the rotation's eleventh measure. The sense of resolution is rather short-lived since Coltrane

immediately leaps back up to the *Kopfton* and begins a new linear progression which bridges the divide between this and the next chorus.

2.4.2.e. Interplay of b.i. and *Urlinie*

The b.i. of the sixth chorus consists of arpeggiations that all share the same apex pitch B \flat - the *Kopfton*. Moment *e* illustrates how the blues sentential b.i. is integrated within the larger VL context. The sixth chorus is a revealing example of the interaction between several structural levels. The *Urlinie* permeates through the deep middleground, shaping the blues sentence on the close middleground, while the b.i.s reinforce the fundamental line on the foreground.

2.4.2.f. $\hat{5}$ -Descent Outlining Phrase-Level Tonic Prolongation

Box depicts a 5-prg. (B \flat -A \flat -G-F-E \flat) outlining the foreground tonic prolongation of the first three measures of the seventh chorus. A \flat is supported by IV 7 and iv 7 in the second measure. The 5-prg closely resembles the tactic Coltrane uses in the fourth chorus, where the linear progression comes to a halt on $\hat{2}$ and is then reinitiated from $\hat{5}$. Coltrane might have intended to decelerate the musical momentum by not similarly interrupting the linear progression as in the fourth chorus. By resolving to $\hat{1}$ Coltrane signals the impending closure of his solo at the end of the next chorus.

2.4.2.g. Correlation of Another b.i. to the *Urlinie*

The final chorus is structured as a blues sentence. Its VL design is similar to the third chorus, which features an ascending 3-prg (G-A \flat -B \flat) to the *Kopfton*. In the eighth chorus this linear

progression is realized through the b.i., which consists of an ascending first inversion of the tonic triad (G, B_b, E_b). Coltrane adapts the b.i. to fit IV⁷ by stating it as a root position A_b major triad (A_b, C, E_b). Both triadic inversions share the same zenith pitch E_b. Snapshot g demonstrates how 3 (G) is prolonged throughout the presentation. 4 is stated in the beginning of the continuation and 5 is presented as the ninth of A_b⁷. The *Kopfton* B_b is restated via an arpeggiated register transfer. The 3-prg thus ranges across the first six measures of the eighth chorus. The patient stepwise ascent to the *Kopfton* is reminiscent of the more extensive initial ascent of the first chorus, which spans across the first ten measures of the form.

2.4.3. *Kopfton Choice and Statistical Data in “Blue Train”*

Coltrane's clearly emphasizes the *Kopfton* B_b through various prolongation techniques such as linear progressions, register transfers, and its prominent rhythmic placements. Since our hearing is also informed by the quantity of pitch statements, statistical data can provide useful supplemental information supporting the choice of a *Kopfton*.

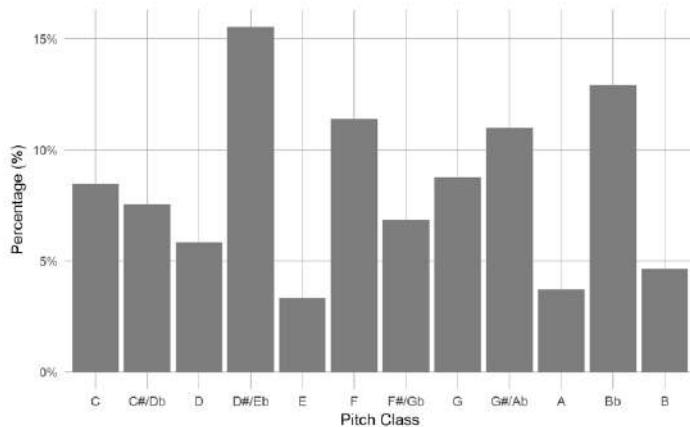


Figure 3.44 Pitch classes according to their relative occurrences in “Blue Train.”¹⁷

¹⁷ Pfleiderer, *Inside the Jazzomat*.

The data of Figure 3.44 indicates that besides the root E_b, $\hat{5}$ (B_b) is stated most frequently throughout the solo. While the number of occurrences should not be the sole determining factor in choosing a *Kopfton*, it is nonetheless a relevant aspect. The significance of $\hat{5}$ can also be assessed by taking the frequency of its use as a local chord tone into account. Figure 3.45 illustrates how often Coltrane plays a given chord tone in “Blue Train.” Besides the local roots, Coltrane seems to strongly favor fifths. I completed the analysis before referring to the empirical data. However, as is evident in the final graph, my choice of $\hat{5}$ as *Kopfton* was supported by the statistical data.

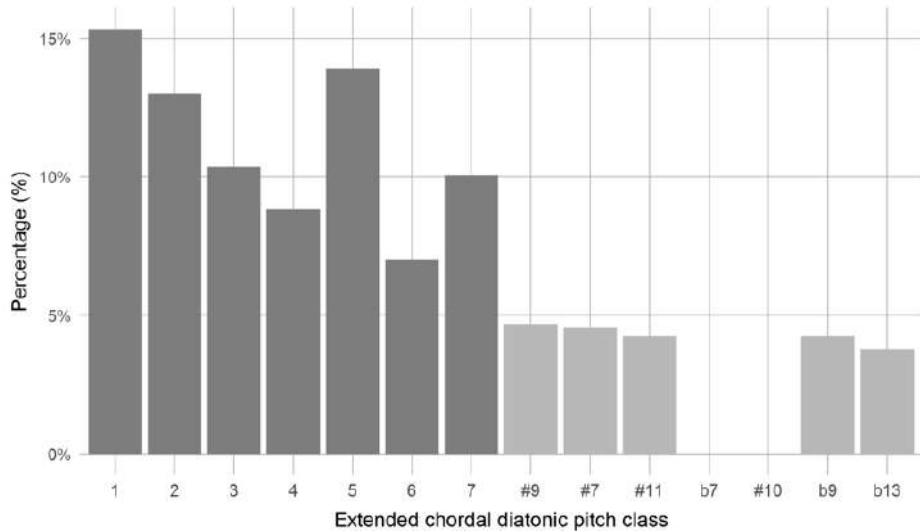


Figure 3.45 Relative frequency of chord tones.¹⁸

¹⁸ Ibid.

2.5. Some Harmonic Peculiarities in “Blue Train”

Coltrane’s solo includes some harmonic superimpositions, which demonstrate his flexible approach to blues harmony such as the “backdoor ii⁷-V⁷,” #iv^o chords, tritone substitution, and chromatically descending sequential ii⁷-V⁷s.

On several occasions Coltrane replaces V⁷ with iv⁷- bVII⁷ in the tenth measure of the blues form. Two such instances occur in mm. 35 and 83 in “Blue Train.” Jerry Coker nicknamed this cadential process “backdoor ii⁷-V⁷,” assuming that the ordinary ii⁷-V⁷ is viewed as the “front door” path.¹⁹

Normative: B♭⁷
Implied: A♭m⁷ D♭⁷(#11)

Figure 3.46 “Backdoor ii⁷-V⁷” replaces the structural V7 chord in the first chorus m. 11.

Normative: B♭⁷
Implied: A♭m⁷ D♭⁷

Figure 3.47 “Backdoor ii⁷-V⁷” replaces structural V7 chord in the fifth chorus m. 59.

Aside from replacing the chorus-level structural V⁷ chord, Coltrane also uses the “backdoor ii7-V⁷” in other contexts. In the third chorus (m. 29), he implies a “backdoor ii7-V⁷” in the fourth measure of the blues form prefacing IV⁷.

¹⁹Jerry Coker, *Elements of the Jazz Language for the Developing Improvisor* (Miami: Belwin, 1991), 82. Coker affirms the relative frequency of the backdoor progression in jazz. “The I chord, in a given progression, is often preceded by IVm7 to bVII7, instead of the usual V7 chord.”

Normative: D_b⁷
 Implied: D_bm⁷ G_b⁷

Figure 3.48 “Backdoor ii⁷-V⁷” in the fourth measure of the third chorus.

In the third chorus Coltrane implies #iv^o in transitioning back to I⁷/5. In both instances Coltrane plays the pitch D, hinting at a D-related chord (Figures 3.49-3.50). The four diminished chords A^o, C^o, E_b^o, and F[#]^o can all be viewed as inversions of the same upper structure of D^{7(b9)}. Since these upper structure diminished chords all contain the third and the seventh of the D⁷ chord, they can replace it. Alternatively, the #iv^o chord can be read as a vii^o/v₄⁶.

Figure 3.49 #iv^o resolving to I⁷/5 in chorus three (mm. 27-28)

Figure 3.50 #iv^o resolving to I⁷/5 in chorus three (mm. 31-32)

Throughout the course of his solo Coltrane also leads to the IV⁷ chord of measures five and six of the blues form with the tritone substitute A⁷ and/or its corresponding predominant chord Em⁷ (Figures 3.51-3.53). He also adds the tritone substitute (E⁷) of V⁷ in the tenth measure of the blues form (Figure 3.54).

Normative: E \flat ⁷

Implied: Em⁷ A⁷

Figure 3.51 Tritone substitution prefacing IV⁷ in m. 41.

Normative: E \flat ⁷

Implied: Em⁷ A⁷

Figure 3.52 Tritone substitution prefacing IV⁷ in m. 65.

Normative: E \flat ⁷

Implied: Em⁷

Figure 3.53 Tritone substitution prefacing IV⁷ in m. 77.

Normative: B \flat ⁷

Implied: Bm⁷ E⁷

Figure 3.54 Tritone substitution replacing V⁷ in m. 47.

Coltrane occasionally interpolates chromatic ii⁷-V⁷ progressions, resulting in chromatically descending harmonic sequences. In m. 33 F \sharp m⁷ is placed between E \flat ⁷ and Fm⁷. Since E \flat ⁷ may be replaced with Gm⁷- C⁷ in this context, the resulting effect is that of a sequence of ii⁷-V⁷'s descending in half steps (Figures 3.55-3.58).



Figure 3.55 Chromatically descending harmonic sequence in mm. 33-34.



Figure 3.56 Chromatically descending harmonic sequence in mm. 69-70.



Figure 3.57 Chromatically descending harmonic sequence in mm. 81-82.

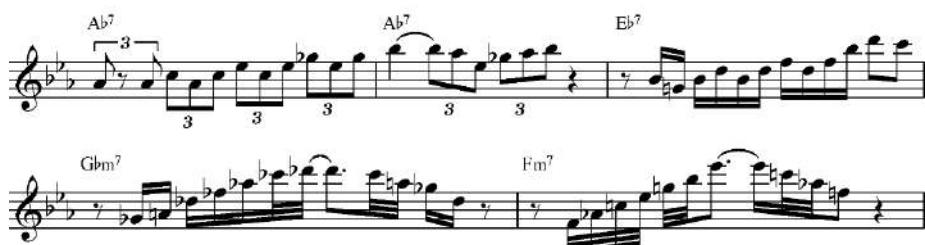


Figure 3.58 Chromatically descending sequence in mm. 90-94.

3. “All Blues” April 22, 1959

Less than one and a half years after recording *Blue Train*, Coltrane found himself in the studio with the Miles Davis sextet to record one of the most revered albums of jazz history: *Kind of Blue*.²⁰ The many innovative musical and aesthetic aspects of *Kind of Blue* make it a watershed recording that was integral in ushering in a modal style of playing. The album features the two blues “Freddie Freeloader,” and “All Blues.” Often, relatively little information exists

²⁰ John Coltrane, tenor saxophone, “All Blues,” by Miles Davis, Recorded March 2 and April 22, 1959, with The Miles Davis Sextet, on *Kind of Blue*, Columbia CL 1355, 1959, LP.

about the pre-compositional process of jazz originals, yet a few details about Davis's "All Blues" were documented.

Ralph J. Gleason reviewed the gig in the San Francisco Sunday Chronicle , June 7, 1959 ("The Miles Davis Sextet All Play Miles' Way," Datebook, p. 23), and discussed "All Blues": "'All Blues,' a remarkable waltz written by Davis, took almost six months to compose slowly, part by part, at the piano at Davis' home in New York. Finally, when he had it, he brought it to Gil Evans, his close friend with whom he has collaborated on several LPs, to get it ready for recording. 'I wrote it in 4/4,' Miles says, 'but when we got it to the studio, it hit me that it should be 3/4. I hadn't thought of it like that before, but it was exactly right.'"²¹

Due to its iconic status, it is now almost inconceivable to think of "All Blues" as a piece in four-four. Aside from its relatively uncommon triple meter, "All Blues" can be viewed as a long-meter blues where the form is extended to twice its normal length, resulting in a twenty-four-measure chorus. In addition, the moment of chorus level closure diverges from the normative blues. In place of a more typical ii⁷-V⁷-I⁷ or V⁷- IV7-I7 cadential procedure, Davis composed a V⁷-bVI⁷-V⁷-I⁷ progression for "All Blues." This strategy, which includes a move from bVI⁷ to V⁷, is sometimes found in minor blues, such as in "Mr. P.C." "All Blues" was recorded at the Columbia 30th Street Studio in New York City. Davis's sextet consisted of Miles Davis (tp), Julian "Cannonball" Adderley (as), John Coltrane (ts), Bill Evans (p), Paul Chambers (b), and Jimmy Cobb (dr). ²² On "Freddie Freeloader" pianist Wynton Kelly replaces Bill Evans.

3.1. Blues Sentences in "All Blues"

Three out of the four choruses in Coltrane's solo follow a blues sentence layout. Only the final chorus is loosely organized by comparison. The preponderance of blues sentences in "All Blues" makes the solo a textbook example of Coltrane's use of this phrase structural design. In the first

²¹ Porter *et al.*, *The John Coltrane Reference*, 162.

²² *Ibid.*, 617-618.

chorus Coltrane uses an extensive b.i. consisting of submodules *a* and *b* (Figure 3.58). These submodules also serve as important motivic devices outside of the blues sentence of the first chorus, which will be described in more detail the next subsection. In short, submodule *a* consists of a fourth and *b* of the three pitches B \flat , G, A. The presentation of the sentence introduces the central motives of the whole solo. In Figure 3.59 a reduction of the foreground diminutions helps to uncover the essence of the sentence's underlying structure. The b.i.'s expansive length, its *aab* segmentation, and the bifold repetition make this blues sentence unique in Coltrane's output. Usually Coltrane prefers to state b.i.s more than twice in his written and improvised blues work. This bifold repetition can likely be attributed to the inherent repetitive organization of the b.i., which includes a repeated *a* submodule. The fragmentation is omitted in the continuation and b.i.-related material is restated at the end of the cadential idea. Generally, Coltrane reintroduces b.i. material after the cadential phrase in his written blues heads and very rarely in his improvisations. In this example, b.i. material is presented rather implicitly through a retrograded transposition (F, C) and octave displacement (D \searrow G). In the post-cadential area Coltrane plays one of his favorite trichords (026) before launching into the b.i. of the second chorus.

Presentation

b.i.

a

b

a expanded

G⁷

C⁷

4th

4th

4th

(b.i.)

Continuation
cadential idea

a

b

3

4th

3

3

3

3

3

3

3

3

3

D^{7(#9)}

3

a retrograde

a

One of Coltrane's
favorite trichords (026)

D^{7(#9)}

Eb^{7(#9)}

D^{7(#9)}

G⁷

3

3

3

5th

3

6

Figure 3.59 Coltrane's first chorus with its blues sentence design.

The b.i. of the second chorus consists of an ascending scale run (*a*) that climaxes in $\hat{3}$ and is followed by a descending diatonic third to (*b*) (Figure 3.60). In the second b.i. statement, Coltrane omits a large portion of the ascending scale run. During the third statement of the b.i. Coltrane already hints at the fragmentation by beginning to compose out *b*. The ascending scale runs build up so much energy, that it seems difficult to contain the various submodules in their original states and ordering. The beginning of the fragmentation features a stepwise descending elaboration of *b*, which implicitly contains a retrograde of *a*. While the opening of the fragmentation is thus explicitly *b*-based, it implicitly reinvokes *a*. The remainder of the

continuation showcases static repetitions of *b* in combination with the solo's motivic fourth, demonstrating how Coltrane combines local events with overarching structures. The b.i. is only implied in the vaguest sense after the cadential idea as a transposed inversion (B_b, F), featuring B_b as emblem of phrase-level closure.

Figure 3.60 Sentential structure of the second chorus.

Chorus three includes a b.i. that can be viewed as a summary of some previous important musical events (Figure 3.61). This b.i. opens with the motivic ascending fourth and mirrors the solo's gradual ascent ($\hat{1}-\hat{2}-\hat{3}-\hat{4}-\hat{5}$) to the *Kopfton* $\hat{5}$ on a smaller scale. For the second statement of the b.i., Coltrane superimposes a IV⁷, adapting the idea to fit the implied harmony. The continuation begins with an octave transfer of $\hat{4}$ that is achieved via a diatonic scale run. In the

fragmentation Coltrane recycles the adapted b.i. variant he played over the superimposed IV⁷ chord. After the cadence, Coltrane introduces an ascending chromatic idea, which he answers and composes out in the next chorus.

Figure 3.61 Sentential structure of the third chorus.

Figure 3.62 First response to the chromatic idea in the fourth chorus.

Figure 3.63 More explicit second response to the chromatic idea in the fourth chorus.

The first response to what is labeled the “chromatic idea” can be viewed as a line cliché (Figure 3.62). The shared characteristic between the “chromatic idea” and the cliché are the inclusion of non-diatonic material as well as the respective melodic directions. The initial chromatic idea ascends and appears like a question, which is then answered by the descending line cliché. However, the line cliché seems too tame to ease the turbulence of the initial chromatic idea. Thus, Coltrane references the chromatic idea anew by embedding it in a diminution of motive A (Figure 3.69 mm. 85-87). This last reference to the chromatic idea mitigates the non-diatonic tension of the idea by arriving at the structural $\hat{3}$ of the *Urlinie* (See Figure 3.69, m. 85).

The fourth and final chorus follows a loosely knit organization by comparison with the previous choruses. The sheets of sound, spanning from mm. 77-80 in the fourth chorus, contribute to its through-composed character (Figure 3.69). Yet, Coltrane resolves the sheets of sound gesture with a statement of A, tying in larger organizational principles. While it is difficult to pinpoint the exact harmonic substructures of this gesture in “All Blues,” the graph displays a hypothetical harmonic pathway Coltrane might have taken, based on his commentary.

In fact, due to the direct and free-flowing lines in his [Miles Davis’s] music, I found it easy to apply the harmonic ideas that I had. I could stack up chords – say, on a C⁷, I sometimes superimposed an E_b⁷, up to an F#⁷, down to an F7. That way I could play three chords on one. But on the other hand, if I wanted to, I could play melodically. Miles’ music gave me plenty of freedom. It’s a beautiful approach. About this time, I was trying for a sweeping sound. I started experimenting because I was striving for more individual development. I even tried long, rapid lines that Ira Gitler termed “sheets of sound” at the time. But actually, I was beginning to apply the three-on-one chord approach, and at that time the tendency was to play the entire scale of each chord. Therefore, they were usually played fast and sometimes sounded like glisses.²³

²³ DeVito, *Coltrane on Coltrane*, 69.

All three chords (C^7 , E_b^7 , and $F^\#7$) Coltrane mentions are subsets of the same octatonic scale and can consequently be employed over the same underlying dominant chord.

The figure illustrates the relationship between four dominant chords (C^7 , E_b^7 , $F^\#7$, A^7) and two diminished chords (C° , $C^\circ\#$) as subsets of the 0,1 Octatonic Collection. The top row shows the chords with their respective notes highlighted. The middle row shows the 0,1 Octatonic Collection scale. The bottom row shows the two diminished chords with their notes highlighted.

Figure 3.64 Four dominant and two diminished chords as subsets of the octatonic scale.

While Coltrane conceived of playing three different chords, he was actually playing different subsets of the same eight-note collection. Coltrane's affinity for musical symmetry and invariance, which is evident in his pioneering works such as "Giant Steps" and the application of diminished scales, is also reflected in his statement regarding the organization of his sheets of sound. In "All Blues" Coltrane improvises this particular "sheet" over I^7 (G^7). As per Coltrane's description we should expect $G^7 \rightarrow B_b^7 \rightarrow D_b^7$ and a resolution down to C^7 as a move into IV^7 , or $D^7 \rightarrow F^7 \rightarrow A_b^7$ descending to G^7 . Yet he must have had a different harmonic superimposition in mind for "All Blues."

The figure shows a musical score for "All Blues" with various chords labeled: G^7 , D^7 , E_b^7 , $A_b\text{maj}7$, D_b^7 , G_b^7 , G_m^7 , $D_m^7(b5)$, and $G^7(b9)$. The score consists of six staves of sixteenth-note patterns.

Figure 3.65 Coltrane's use of sheets of sound in "All Blues."

Some of the pitches within this section are indiscernible even if slowed down. Yet, there are enough clearly audible pitches left, to construct a hypothetical path of harmonic superimposition.: $D^7 \rightarrow Eb^7 \rightarrow Ab^{\Delta 7} \rightarrow Db^7 \rightarrow Gb^{\Delta 7} \rightarrow Gm^7$ (or $G7^{(\#9)}$)

Coltrane initiates the phrase with an ascending half step into Eb^7 . Such an ascending half step motion is also evident in Coltrane's composition "Countdown" on the album *Giant Steps*, which was recorded only thirteen days after "All Blues" on May 4, 1959.²⁴ In "Countdown," Coltrane begins the harmonic progression with ii^7 . In this phrase it is more likely that the first D chord is conceived of as a dominant chord since the pitch F is a lower chromatic neighbor of the third $F\sharp$ (Figure 3.65). This D chord then leads into Eb^7 , which seems to resolve to its associated tonic chord $Ab^{\text{maj}7}$. This local tonicization is followed by a $V^7 \rightarrow I^7$ gesture involving the chords $Db^7 \rightarrow Gb^7$. Essentially, the harmonic path after the initiating half step motion can be viewed as a circle of fifths ($Eb^7 \rightarrow Ab^{\text{maj}7} \rightarrow Db^7 \rightarrow Gb^7$). The last chord of this chain is followed by yet another ascending resolution via a semitone to $G7^{(\#9)}$ (or possibly Gm^7). Hence, the circle of fifths segment is bookended by ascending half-steps. After this upward resolution, Coltrane seems to imply a cadential gesture of $ii^{7(b5)} \rightarrow V^7$ ($Dm^{7b5} \rightarrow G^7$), reaffirming $G7^{(\#9)}$ as the phrase's target chord.

3.2. Motivic Relationships in "All Blues"

Coltrane's motivic network consists of a motivic fourth, motive A (Bb , G , A), and a motivic single pitch Bb . "All Blues" illustrates Coltrane's ever-growing affinity for an economy of

²⁴ Porter, *The John Coltrane Reference*, 621.

means. He enters his solo with the motivic fourth outlining the move from $\hat{5}$ to $\hat{1}$ (D, G) over the tonic chord G⁷. The interval of a fourth is prominent in the foreground throughout the performance. The motivic use of a fourth signals a clear departure from his strong proclivity for stepwise motion governing the musical surface. Moreover, Coltrane might have preferred the use of a fourth as motivic interval to reflect the quartal harmony which was famously pioneered on *Kind of Blue*. Motive A (B \flat , G, A) occurs at multiple structural levels throughout the solo. The motivic elements Coltrane introduces in the first six measures of the first chorus provide nearly all the material for the remainder of the solo (Figure 3.66). Motive A begins with $\widehat{b3}$, which takes on a significant role in its own right. At this time of his career Coltrane generally avoids blue notes when harmonically unsupported by local chords. Evans's voicings signify a clear Mixolydian underpinning, which does not include $\widehat{b3}$. In addition, $\widehat{b3}$ stands out because of its overtly bluesy character, which contrasts the crystalline quartal aesthetic of "All Blues." Coltrane does not seem to use the G blues scale or G minor pentatonic scale but rather the G Dorian mode as pitch source for the first eight measures of the solo. His several invocations of the pitch A point away from a straightforward blues sound. Coltrane seems to implant $\widehat{b3}$ into the soundscape of "All Blues" and restates it as emblematic pitch at various important moments of phrase-level closure throughout the solo.

The musical score consists of two parts. The top part, labeled 'Blues Sentence 1', shows a melodic line with a bracket labeled '3-prg.' above it. The bottom part, labeled 'Motive A reduction', shows a melodic line with a bracket labeled 'A reduction' above it. Both parts are in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp. Measure 1 starts with a melodic line. Measure 2 shows a 'presentation' section with a bracket below it, featuring a G7 chord. Measure 3 shows a melodic line. Measure 4 shows a melodic line. Measure 5 shows a melodic line. Measure 6 shows a melodic line. Measure 7 shows a melodic line. Measure 8 shows a melodic line. Measure 9 shows a melodic line. Measure 10 shows a melodic line. Measure 11 shows a melodic line. Measure 12 shows a melodic line. Measure 13 shows a melodic line. Measure 14 shows a melodic line.

Figure 3.66 Motivic fourth and motive A with $\widehat{b3}$ in chorus 1, mm. 6 and 14.

The musical score shows a melodic line in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp. The line features a G7 chord. The melody consists of eighth-note patterns. A bracket below the line indicates a 'b.i.' (break in the implied) over a 4th interval. The melody continues with a C7 chord, followed by a G7 chord, and then another G7 chord. The line ends with a melodic line.

Figure 3.67 Statement of $\widehat{b3}$ implying IV^7 in the presentation of chorus 3, mm. 48-52.

The musical score shows a melodic line in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp. The line features a G7 chord. The melody consists of eighth-note patterns. A bracket below the line indicates a 'd triad' over a 4th interval. The melody continues with an A chord, followed by a G7 chord, and then another G7 chord. The line ends with a melodic line.

Figure 3.68 $\widehat{b3}$ embedded in motive A stated in lower register in chorus 3, mm. 61-64.

The most evocative statements of $\widehat{b3}$ over G^7 are spread relatively evenly across the solo, roughly twenty measures apart. In the first chorus, $\widehat{b3}$ emphasizes moments of foreground closure and

simultaneously initiates the middleground motive A (Figure 3.66). In its second notable statement, $\widehat{b3}$ implies IV⁷ in the third chorus's presentation, becoming the local b7 of an implied C⁷ chord (Figure 3.67). The use of IV⁷ in the second measure of the blues form seems to have been a deeply ingrained device for Coltrane's approach to blues performance. As in the other situations where he states $\widehat{b3}$, the rhythm section does not support or suggest the pitch in their accompaniment. The final highlighted (marked three times through repetition, register transfers, and timbre) set of statements of $\widehat{b3}$ occur in mm. 63-64, where they function more or less as they do in the first chorus (Figure 3.68). Coltrane's immediate restatement of $\widehat{b3}$ in m. 65 in the lower register speaks to its idiosyncratic role and reinforces its importance within the context of the solo. (The explosive timbre and harsh articulation with which Coltrane produces Bb in the lower register further distinguishes it from all other pitches in the improvisation. Coltrane largely abstains from using the lowest fifth of his instrument's register.)

3.3. Voice-Leading in "All Blues"

Coltrane gradually approaches the *Kopfton* D via an initial scalar ascent ($\widehat{1}-\widehat{2}-\widehat{b3}-\widehat{3}-\widehat{4}-\widehat{5}$). $\widehat{5}$ first appears as the *Kopfton* in m. 31 in the second chorus (Figure 3.69). Leading up to the *Kopfton*, Coltrane accentuates $\widehat{b3}$ in the first chorus through the use of lower neighbors. At the end of the first chorus, in m. 24, $\widehat{b3}$ is replaced by $\widehat{3}$, the proper third associated with the underlying Mixolydian chord. While the importance of $\widehat{b3}$ as a special device has already been addressed, it has yet another role in the VL context of the *Urlinie*. $\widehat{b3}$ can either be read as an independent structural entity or as a lower neighbor to $\widehat{3}$. Since Coltrane draws a sharp distinction between his

Mixolydian and blues-inflected statements in this solo, it seems that $\widehat{b3}$ should be heard as an outside pitch used to mark relevant moments within phrase structures in blues sentences.

The relative dominance of $\widehat{3}$ in the ascent to $\widehat{5}$ manifests throughout mm. 25-30 in the second chorus, where it is the zenith of the presentation's b.i. This structural $\widehat{3}$ is short-lived, however, since Coltrane ultimately states the *Kopfton* by shooting past $\widehat{3}$ in the fourth repetition of the b.i. The $\widehat{3}$ is thus virtually overpowered by the sheer kinetic energy of Coltrane's repeated ascending scale runs (Figure 3.69 mm. 24-29) After the initial statement of the *Kopfton* (m. 30), Coltrane plays an 8-prg from $\widehat{5}$, which is elaborated with a b.i.-based diatonic third pattern. The structural *telos* of this 8-prg, a register transfer of $\widehat{5}$, fully crystalizes in m. 37. After this, $\widehat{5}$ occurs alongside the cover tones $\widehat{b7}$ and $\widehat{1}$ in a rapidly repeating three-note grouping. This oscillating pattern is performed with such speed and vehemence that it creates the effect of a simultaneously sounding trichord. In the cadential section of the second chorus, Coltrane sidetracks by elaborating the cover tones $\widehat{b7}$ and $\widehat{1}$ (Figure 3.69, mm. 37-45). Yet at the moment of chorus-level resolution (m. 46) he quickly reaffirms $\widehat{5}$.

The b.i. of the third chorus's blues sentence has $\widehat{5}$ as its zenith pitch, thus reaffirming its role as the *Kopfton*. There are no secondary descents indicating internal or phrase-level closure until the third chorus, where Coltrane states a condensed retrograded version ($\widehat{5}-\widehat{4}-\widehat{3}-\widehat{b3}-\widehat{2}-\widehat{1}$) of the initial ascent (Figure 3.69, mm. 62-69). This secondary line foreshadows the approaching end of the solo at the end of the next rotation. Coltrane reestablishes the *Kopfton* in the upper register immediately after the moment of internal closure. In addition to stating $\widehat{5}$ in the highest octave of the saxophone's intended range, he holds the *Kopfton* for three and a half beats and rearticulates it three times before the onset of the final rotation and thereby clearly overrides the chorus-level closure at a deeper level.

$\hat{5}$ does not surrender its power as the *Kopfton* until mm. 81 in the fourth chorus (Figure 3.69). In m. 81 the structural $\hat{4}$ is announced through the transposed statement of the motivic fourth (G-C). Subsequently, $\hat{3}$ appears in m. 85, followed by $\widehat{b3}$ in m. 89. Like the $\hat{4}$ before it, a motivic fourth announces the $\widehat{b3}$ (F-B \flat). The solo concludes with a $\widehat{b3} \rightarrow \hat{1}$ motion in the structural melodic descent with $\hat{1}$ occurring in m. 94. Since Coltrane played an initial scalar ascent which included a first order mixture ($\widehat{b3}$) that was also featured in the *Nebenlinie* in the third chorus, we may expect the final descent of the fundamental line ($\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\widehat{b3}-\hat{3}-\widehat{b3}-\hat{1}$) to be structured similarly. Coltrane, however, surprises us by reversing the positions of $\widehat{b3}$ and $\hat{3}$, and omitting $\hat{2}$. The patience of the gradual initial ascent to the *Kopfton* is not mirrored by the rather rapid final descent of the *Urlinie*. After $\hat{1}$ is stated, Coltrane echoes motive A in the post-cadential appendix, further buttressing the solo's motivic uniformity.

16

continuation

24

Blues Sentence

2 Blues Sentence

A

b.i. b.i. b.i. b.i.

presentation

31

8-prg.

C.T. = G & F

b.i. frag. b.i. frag. (presentation) b.i. frag.

39

C.T. = G & F ...

G7 D7(59) D7(59) Eb7(59) D7(59)

(presentation) continuation

45

5

3 blues sentence

G7 IV7 implied

4-prg.

(continuation) b.i. presentation b.i.

53

5

A

3-prg.

4th b.i.

(presentation)



Figure 3.69 Graph of Coltrane's solo on "All Blues"

In Coltrane's "All Blues" solo we see a heretofore unprecedented level of organization. Three out of four choruses are structured as blues sentences. The respective sentential structures reinforce the underlying *Urlinie*. The extended initial scalar ascent to the *Kopfton* represents a feature of Coltrane's mid-period blues soloing, while the evident economy of means foreshadows tendencies that are further developed in his later period. "All Blues" thus stands at the crossroads between marked shifts in Coltrane's style. Such transitions are however never clear-cut and should be regarded as continuous processes. While "All Blues" may signal what is to come, Coltrane has not yet fully entered his modal period.

4. "Mr. PC" May 5, 1959

Coltrane's minor blues "Mr. P.C." was recorded only thirteen days after Davis's "All Blues" session.²⁵ Thus, two of the most important albums in jazz, Coltrane's *Giant Steps* and Davis's *Kind of Blue* were recorded less than two weeks apart. The aesthetic approaches of both albums differ greatly, with *Kind of Blue* pioneering a reserved modal approach and *Giant Steps* epitomizing harmonic complexity and overt virtuosity. The grossly dissimilar creative orientations of the two albums showcase Coltrane's flexibility.

Giant Steps, his first album as leader for the Atlantic label, is the first LP exclusively featuring Coltrane's original compositions. The album was recorded at the Atlantic Studios in New York City. On "Mr. PC," the band consists of John Coltrane (ts), Tommy Flanagan (p), Paul Chambers (b), and Art Taylor (dr).²⁶ "Giant Steps," the album's title track, represents the highly innovative culmination of Coltrane's obsessive interest in musical symmetry. "Mr. P.C.,"

²⁵ John Coltrane, tenor saxophone, "Mr. P.C.," by John Coltrane, Recorded May 4-5, and December 2, 1959, with The John Coltrane Quartet, on *Giant Steps*, Atlantic 1311, 1960, LP.

²⁶ Porter, *The John Coltrane Reference*, 624.

on the other hand, can be viewed as a *tour de force* of well-established minor blues performance practice. The wealth of ideas, improvisational and instrumental prowess, and endurance Coltrane brings to the recording can be considered an innovation in its own right. The piece is dedicated to Coltrane's long-time collaborator, bassist Paul Chambers, who was also a member of the first Miles Davis quintet.

"Mr. P.C." is Paul Chambers who provides excellent support and thoughtful solos on the record as a whole and whom Coltrane regards as "one of the greatest bass players in jazz. His playing is beyond what I could say about it. The bass is such an important instrument, and has so much to do with how a group and a soloist can best function that I feel very fortunate to have had him on this date and to have been able to work with him in Miles' band so long."²⁷

In *The John Coltrane Reference*, Lewis Porter *et al.* point out parallels between "Mr. P.C." and existing musical material, specifically a folk song.

Many listeners have noted a similarity between the theme of "Mr. P.C." and a folk song called "Shadrack" that Sonny Rollins recorded in 1951, issued on Prestige PRLP 7029. Since Coltrane was closely associated with Rollins and knew his work, it's possible that he took the folk theme (which is not a blues) and used it as the basis for his blues. The common basis of both tunes (climbing up the first five notes of the minor scale) is so generic that Coltrane could have easily thought of it himself, and it's impossible to prove any connection on this basis. However, Rollins also played the "Shadrack" theme immediately after the piano solo on Max Roach's "Mr. X" in 1956, which strengthens the suspicion, since now we have not only the musical similarity, but also the similarity between the titles ("Mr. P.C."/ "Mr. X").²⁸

While Coltrane generally abstained from quoting during his solos, some of his compositions were occasionally influenced by other composers' material. His modal piece "Impressions," for instance, is not only a contrafact of Davis's "So What" but also makes use of Morton Gould's "Pavanne" [sic] in its A section, and Maurice Ravel's *Pavane pour une infante défunte* (or from the popular song that was based on it, "The Lamp is Low") in its B section.²⁹

²⁷ DeVito, *Coltrane on Coltrane*, 53. Nat Hentoff's liner notes for the album *Giant Steps*.

²⁸ Porter, *The John Coltrane Reference*, 625-626.

²⁹ Porter, *The Oxford Companion to Jazz*, 441.

When Coltrane borrows, the source materials are often reimagined to a degree where they hardly resemble the original material.

4.1. Motivic Organization of Coltrane's "Mr. P.C." Solo

As in other blues improvisations which have been examined thus far, Coltrane employs a set of short motives that he manipulates and intersperses throughout the whole solo. Often, these motives operate on multiple structural levels. In "Mr. P.C." Coltrane uses many means of motivic development, such as transposition, retrogradation, inversion, and repetition to transform and disguise the various restatements of his motives. The non-motivic material in the solo mostly consists of scale runs, which can be seen as filler material. Yet, importantly these scalar statements tend to adhere to larger VL and phrase structures and are thus not haphazard in their design and ordering. The material Coltrane presents during cadential moments of the respective choruses (mm. 9-10) in "Mr. P.C." is so distinct from the motivic apparatus he uses for the remainder of the blues form, that it requires a separate discussion.

4.1.1 Chorus-Level Cadential Areas in "Mr. P.C.": Motivic Gestures

Coltrane treats the cadential area of each blues form (mm. 9-11) distinctly from the remainder of the form in "Mr. P.C." The voice leading graph of the solo demonstrates how these two-measure segments nonetheless integrate into the solo as a whole (see appendix). Coltrane reuses the same device, labeled as gesture B, for nine of the sixteen choruses over the cadential section of the given choruses. I describe B as a motivic gesture rather than a motive because the various restatements seem to diverge more from their underlying prototypical design than his motives. While the general hypothesis of motivic analysis of this project presumes archetypal ideas that are variously rendered at the foreground, the essence of B seems harder to pinpoint

than in other motives. B consists of two ascending gestures that are each derived from similar pitch sources. (Measure numbers correspond to the analytical graph in the appendix.)

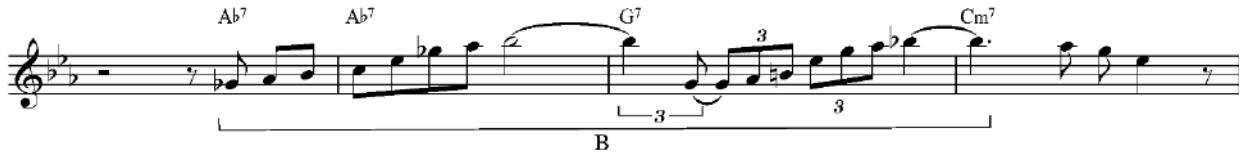


Figure 3.70 Gesture B in chorus 1, mm. 20-23.



Figure 3.71 Gesture B in chorus 2, mm. 33-34.



Figure 3.72 Gesture B in chorus 3, mm. 43-44.



Figure 3.73 Gesture B in chorus 4, mm. 56-57.

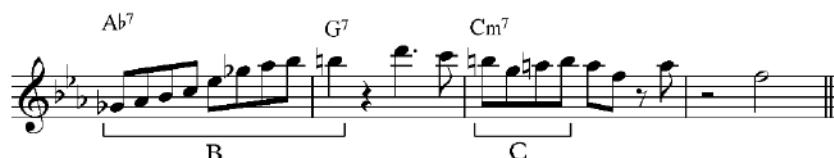


Figure 3.74 Gesture B in chorus 5, mm. 68-69.

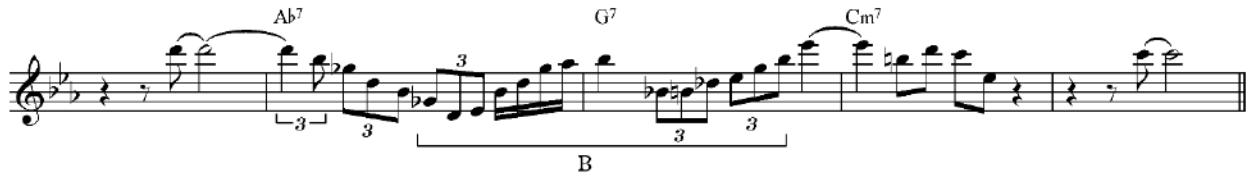


Figure 3.75 Gesture B in chorus 7, mm. 92-93.



Figure 3.76 Gesture B in chorus 9, mm. 116-117.



Figure 3.77 Gesture B in chorus 11, mm. 139-141.



Figure 3.78 Gesture B in chorus 14, mm. 176-177.

In five (choruses one, two, three, five, and nine) of the nine renderings of the motivic gesture B,

Coltrane exclusively uses the same pentatonic collection over $\flat VI^7$ (Ab^7). This five-note scale is constructed of the chord tones of an $Ab^7(9)$ chord.

Figure 3.79 $Ab^7(9)$ as chord and five-note scale.

In the fourth chorus Coltrane adds the pitch D \flat , which hints at A \flat 's associated predominant chord E \flat m 7 (Figure 3.73). In choruses seven, nine, and fourteen Coltrane uses pitch material from the Lydian dominant and Mixolydian scales. The A \flat $^{7(9)}$ pentatonic is however still present as a subset of both of these scales. The statements over A \flat 7 are all ascending, tend to begin from the root or b7 of the chord, and lead up to the local 9th (B \flat). It is feasible that Coltrane had a prototypical conception of an A \flat 7 device in mind that he varied in his extemporization.



Figure 3.80 Coltrane's potential A \flat $^{7(9)}$ prototype device.

While still largely ascending, Coltrane's material for the ensuing V 7 chord, G 7 , is far more varied than his A \flat 7 material. Most of the devices Coltrane plays over G 7 seem to embellish a G augmented triad and employ fragments of the G altered scale.



Figure 3.81 Coltrane's potential G 7 prototype device.

Another implement Coltrane uses besides motivic gesture B is the imposition and addition of the local predominant chords, resulting in two chromatically descending ii 7 - V 7 cadences (E \flat m 7 - A \flat 7 - Dm 7 - G 7). The inclusion of the respective predominant chords is especially apparent in choruses ten, eleven, and twelve. Occasionally Coltrane also skips the dominant chords and replaces them with their predominant chords. Chorus six is an example of

this tactic. Coltrane frequently avoids chorus-level closure through resolutions to $\hat{7}$, $\hat{6}$, or $\hat{2}$ over Cm⁷ following G⁷ in “Mr. P.C.”

4.1.2. Motivic Relations Outside the Chorus-Level Cadential Moment

A wealth of motivic devices and relationships exists outside the chorus-level cadential moment.

Motive A (Ab-Eb-E-G) recurs numerous times, unaltered. Coltrane’s efficiency and effectiveness as an improviser lies in the brevity and simplicity of some of his motives. Since they easily blend into the dense foreground diminutions, repetitions of shorter motives are harder to notice and easier to transform than longer and more characteristic ideas. One example of this sort of simple idea is motive C (B-G-A-B), which Coltrane composes out sequentially after its initial statement (Figure 3.83-3.84).

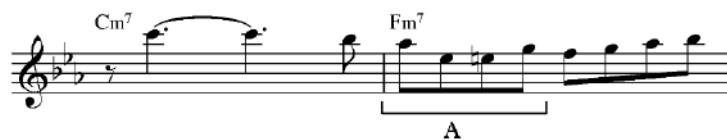


Figure 3.82 Motive A in m. 16.

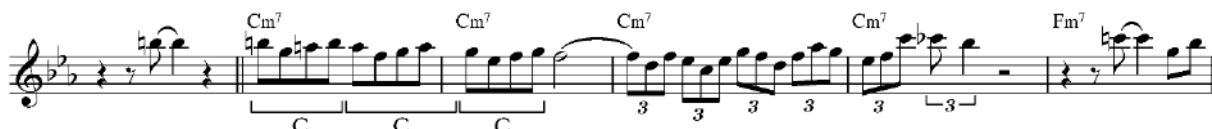


Figure 3.83 Motive C in mm. 25-26.



Figure 3.84 Motive C and its transposed retrograde inversion following A in mm. 36-41.

Whether or not Coltrane intended to play a retrograde inversion of C as in the example above is irrelevant. What matters is that the simplicity of C allows for such operations in an improvised

context without a forbidding degree of real-time calculation. Short motives, and patterns that are based on them, can be internalized with far greater facility than more extensive licks.

One of the other musical protagonists, motive D, is featured in close proximity to a statement of motive A in the next excerpt (Figure 3.85). The eighth-note motive D and its derivatives D' and D'' share the same scalar fourth $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-\hat{3}-\hat{4}$ as the latter half, which is prefaced by distinct four-note groups resulting in varying harmonic implications. Motives D and D' move from V to i, while D'' implies I at the foreground (Figure. 3.86).



Figure 3.85 Motives A and D in mm. 30-31.

Motive D:	G, A, B, D, C, D, Eb, F	(Dominant \Rightarrow Tonic)
Motive D':	B, G, B, D, C, D, Eb, F	(Dominant \Rightarrow Tonic)
Motive D'':	C, G, A, B, C, D, Eb, F	(Tonic)

Figure 3.86 The harmonic implications of D and its variants.

D opens with one of Coltrane's favorite pitch sequences: 1, 2, 3, 5 ($\hat{5}-\hat{6}-\hat{7}-\hat{2}$ in relation to the key). This assemblage outlines the underlying or implied harmony with great effectiveness and utility. The four-note group is famously associated with Coltrane's solos on his compositions "Giant Steps" and "Countdown." He does not always restate the sequence of pitches verbatim and makes use of their 24 permutations in order to create variety while referring to the same source material. Motive D, however, reappears in the same fashion and without permutations in "Mr. P.C."

1235	2135	3215	5123
1253	2153	3251	5132
1325	2351	3125	5231
1352	2315	3152	5213
1532	2513	3512	5312
1523	2531	3521	5321

Figure 3.87 24 permutations of 1, 2, 3, 5.



Figure 3.88 A fragment of motive D alongside a complete rendering of D'' in mm. 48-50.



Figure 3.89 Fragments and a complete statement of D' in mm. 96-100.

Coltrane also uses descending diatonic thirds motivically. Figure 3.90 shows the prototype of motive E embedded within an expansion of motive F. The latter motive is also heard in Coltrane's solo on "Two Bass Hit" and can be considered one of his stock licks.



Figure 3.90 Prototypical statement of motive E in m. 62 (chorus five).

Coltrane often varies the line directions within motive E. The following example displays motive E along with an extension leading into a transposed statement of motive C.



Figure 3.91 Variants of motive E, C, and B in quick succession.

Aside from the expanded middleground version in which E is embedded (Figure 3.90), motive F only occurs one more time nine choruses later. The second statement of F can be regarded as a prototypical rendering of the idea (Figure 3.92). Since motive F only appears twice, it does not contribute to the motivic uniformity of the solo as a whole. From a meta perspective, such motives, recurring sparsely throughout many solos, lend Coltrane's playing a sense of artistic stylistic identity.³⁰

Figure 3.92 Prototypical statement of motive F in the continuation of chorus 15 m. 191.

4.2. Blues Sentences in “Mr. P.C.”

Only choruses thirteen and fifteen include relatively clear-cut blues-sentence layouts. Remarkably, the explicitly organized portion (in terms of phrase structure) is situated in the last quarter of the solo. The first blues sentence in chorus thirteen features a middleground arpeggiation of the underlying Cm⁷ chord as its b.i. In the foreground, the arpeggiation is

³⁰ John Coltrane, tenor saxophone, “Nutty,” by Thelonious Monk, Recorded July 1957, with The Thelonious Monk Quartet, on *Thelonious Monk With John Coltrane*, Jazzland JLP 46, 1961, LP.

In the fourth chorus of his solo on Thelonious Monk’s “Nutty” he includes a single statement of motive F, albeit as a major variant.

In addition to playing a major variant of motive F, Coltrane also substitutes the initial pitch, local 5, with 7 (based on an underlying B♭7 chord), resulting in an ascending chromatic approach to 1. The concept of archetypal ideas that vary according to context is again evident here. Coltrane seemed to have worked with a prototype of motive F.³⁰ Marc Medwin, “Attaining Unity: Self-Reference in the Music of John Coltrane,” *Jazz Research Journal* 2/2 (November 2008): 120. Medwin proposes that stylistic uniformity arose in Coltrane from the desire to manifest his world view and biography through music. “Furthermore, I will demonstrate that in quoting his own work and invoking the stages of his own musical biography, he employs musical unity to reflect the biography of his race during one of its most turbulent chronological periods.”

furnished with added pitches from the C and F blues scales respectively. Coltrane transposes the b.i. to fit the underlying local harmony when moving to iv⁷. As in some other examples, the fragmentation of b.i. is omitted in the continuation. The thirteenth chorus is an exquisite example of what seems to have been one of Coltrane's foundational strategies as an improviser: he uses fundamental building blocks of tonal music, such as scales and arpeggios, to express and supplement larger structural entities. As expected for Coltrane's improvised blues sentences, b.i. material is not restated after the cadential phrase. The continuation begins directly with the cadential idea and the fragmentation is omitted. In Figure 3.93 Coltrane immediately activates the retransitional V⁷ chord in the last measure of the thirteenth chorus.

Figure 3.93 Blues sentence structure in chorus thirteen.

The blues sentence of the fifteenth chorus also features arpeggiations as its b.i. More precisely it consists of a triad pair (C minor and B♭ major) which is performed in root position and rapid succession. This is one of the earliest clear examples of a jazz saxophonist employing such a device. The idea of crafting a hexatonic scale out of two triads has become an important

concept in jazz improvisation since Coltrane.³¹ A myriad of melodic patterns can be generated from such hexatonic scales. In the fifteenth chorus Coltrane transposes his b.i. to fit the chorus's IV⁷ chord area (mm. 184-185) (Figure 3.94). The presentation is directly followed by a continuation that does not contain a fragmentation.

Figure 3.94 Blues sentence in chorus fifteen.

4.3. Voice leading in “Mr. P.C.”

Similar to “Blue Train,” I will first present an overview of crucial VL events and then discuss special moments of “Mr. P.C.” by working from the deep middleground to the foreground.³²

³¹ For examples of jazz method books that revolve around hexatonic scales see Walt Weiskopf, *Intervallic Improvisation* (New Albany: Jamey Aebersold Jazz, 2015) and Jerry Bergonzi, *Inside Improvisation Series Vol. 7: Hexatonics* (Mainz: Advance Music GmbH, 2015)

³² See appendix for a close middleground graph of “Mr. P.C.”

4.3.1 Statistics & VL Overview

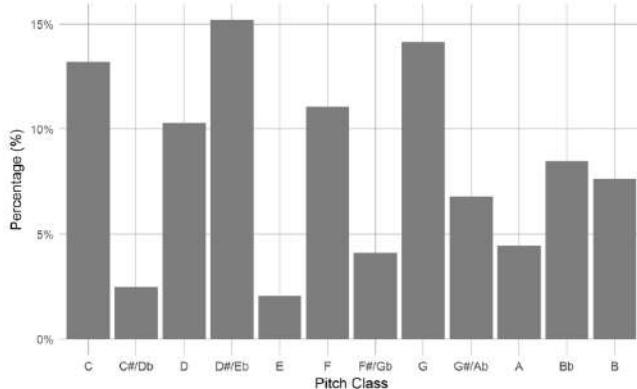


Figure 3.95 Coltrane's pitch class frequency in “Mr. P.C.”³³

In his solo on “Mr. P.C.” Coltrane plays $\hat{5}$ slightly less often than $\hat{3}$. The difference is however so marginal that a reading of $\hat{5}$ as a potential *Kopfton* is still feasible; the mere frequency of a pitch’s relative occurrence cannot be the sole factor in determining a *Kopfton*. The relatively equal prominence of $\hat{5}$ and $\hat{3}$ should however be factored into an analytical reading of the solo. Just as in “Blue Train,” stepwise motion is by far the most favored and frequently occurring intervallic structure in the “Mr. P.C.” solo.

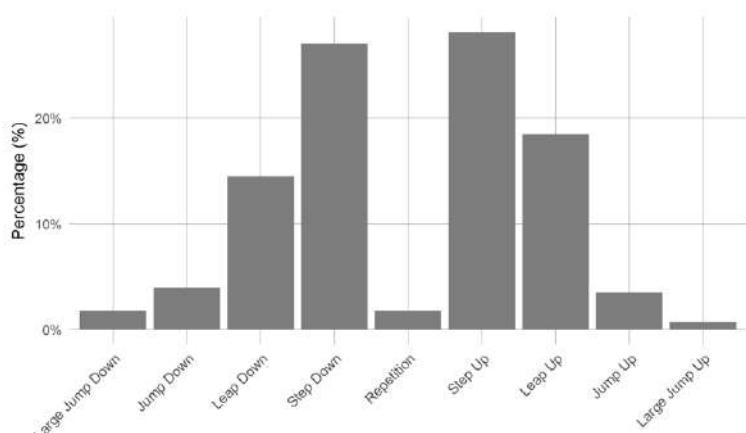


Figure 3.96 Coltrane interval choice tendencies in “Mr. P.C.”

³³ Pfleiderer *et al.*, *Inside the Jazzomat*.

Coltrane takes his cue from the head's melody and quickly establishes structural $\hat{5}$ in the solo's *Urlinie* in m. 14. (= second measure of the first solo chorus). He ascends to $\hat{5}$ via a stepwise progression from $\hat{5}$ an octave below. The first order neighbor $\hat{6}$ is then introduced in m. 19, from which Coltrane descends back down to $\hat{5}$ in m. 22. At the same time a secondary line is established, which features $\widehat{b7}$ and $\hat{7}$ leading up to $\hat{1}$ (mm. 21-29). This secondary VLS leads from the first chorus's cadential segment to the second chorus's iv7 chord. The VLS is thus only relevant for inter-chorus coherence and subordinate to the *Urlinie*. Coltrane echoes the same idea, including $\widehat{b7} \rightarrow \hat{7} \rightarrow \hat{1}$, for another *Nebenlinie* in the second chorus between mm. 33-35.

After its establishment in m. 14, the relative prominence of $\hat{5}$ seems to be undebatable until m. 84, where, after a gap, $\hat{3}$ swiftly takes control within the *Urlinie* (Chorus 7 m. 85). Aside from the two secondary structural lines in the first and second choruses, there are no *Nebenlinien* until the sixth chorus, where Coltrane plays a local $\hat{5}$ -descent in mm. 74-75. This lower-level descent heralds the subsequent gapped descent to $\hat{3}$ in the *Urlinie*. The new structural dominance of $\hat{3}$ is further amplified through its statement in the top register of Coltrane's range. This relatively early transition to $\hat{3}$ as the focal pitch of the *Urlinie* is supported by the data of the Jazzomat Project, according to which $\hat{5}$ is stated slightly less frequently than $\hat{3}$. Thus, the first six choruses revolve around a background prolongation of $\hat{5}$, after which $\hat{3}$ takes over for the remaining ten blues form rotations. $\hat{3}$ is not challenged until chorus thirteen, where it is buried beneath the cover tones G and B \flat , before it returns as the apex in m. 160 (Figure 3.93 and 3.97). Chorus fifteen also poses challenges to the prominence of $\hat{3}$ since the b.i. emphasizes $\hat{5}$ alongside $\hat{3}$ in the b.i. of its blues sentential structure (Figure 3.94 and 3.97). This fifteenth chorus is also a cover tone-rich area, but it obscures $\hat{3}$ only in the foreground. Still, the proliferation of cover

tones in the thirteenth and fifteenth choruses may be interpreted as a gradual tempering of the *Kopfton*'s dominance and a forewarning of the imminent moment of structural closure in m. 201.

a

b

c

d

e



Figure 3.97 “Mr. P.C.” solo deep middleground graph with foreground moments *a-i*.

4.3.2.a. *Anstieg*

The initial scalar ascent is clearly based on the head's melody. A middleground reduction illustrates that the initial ascent is identical to the melody of the head. In comparison to other more extensive blues solos, the initial ascent establishes the *Kopfton* rather quickly within the first two measures of the solo. Coltrane embellishes the plain underlying melodic outline ($\hat{1}-\hat{2}-\hat{3}-\hat{4}-\hat{5}$) that leads to the *Kopfton* with a reaching over pattern that includes upper thirds and lower chromatic neighbors. The anacrusis leading into the initial ascent comprises Coltrane's iconic 1, 2, 3, 5 scale-pattern over the key's dominant chord, G. Alternatively, taking the anacrusis into account, the initial ascent could be read as an ascending 8-prg. from the G-G. Since the head does not feature an anacrusis, after which the *Anstieg* is clearly modeled, the first reading of the initial ascent seems more plausible.

4.3.2.b. Motive C

Snapshot *b* demonstrates how the sequential restatements of motive C contribute to the larger VL context. $\hat{7}$ (B) is stated in the final measure of the first chorus, signaling forward momentum. Coltrane begins the first chorus by stating motive C from $\hat{7}$, connecting the two choruses. On a deeper structural level B is prolonged and participates in a descending 3-prg, which is aimed at the *Kopfton*. Each sequential transposition of motive C is a foreground diminution of this 3-prg. Motive C thus operates on the foreground and the middleground at the same time. After the *Kopfton* is presented, Coltrane plays yet another descending 3-prg. which includes a held statement of $\hat{4}$ implying a superimposed local V⁷ chord in the latter half of the second measure of the second chorus.

4.3.2.c. Compound Melody

Coltrane begins the third chorus with a compound melody that combines a descending 8-prg (G-G) and an ascending 4-prg (G-C). The 8-prg. is notated an octave lower to show the two lines more clearly. Motive C is restated for the purpose of prolonging $\hat{7}$ within the compound melody. Coincidentally the two LPs also converge at the statement of motive C. The motive thus takes on a special significance again, as it operates in several ways simultaneously. (1) It represents the focal point at which the two LPs intersect, and (2) serves to prolong a pitch of deeper structural significance (B) on the surface. Since both linear progressions are spun out from $\hat{5}$, the *Kopfton* is reinforced as the unquestioned locus from which musical action emanates in the opening measures of the third chorus.

4.3.2.d. 4-prg with LIP 6- \flat 7-6-5-6

The 4-prg (C-G) in snapshot *d* is harmonized by an implied LIP 6- \flat 7-6-5-6. The sixth Eb-C on the first beat of the tenth measure of the sixth chorus belongs to the suspended Ab⁷ chord. The held C, then becomes the \flat 7th of a superimposed Dm⁷ chord that resolves to the third (B) of V⁷, G⁷. Before finally descending to the *Kopfton* G, Coltrane states A, the ninth of G⁷. This brief passage illustrates Coltrane's contrapuntal thinking in tandem with his flexible approach to the normative blues harmony, choices for superimpositions, and concern for overriding the internal closure.

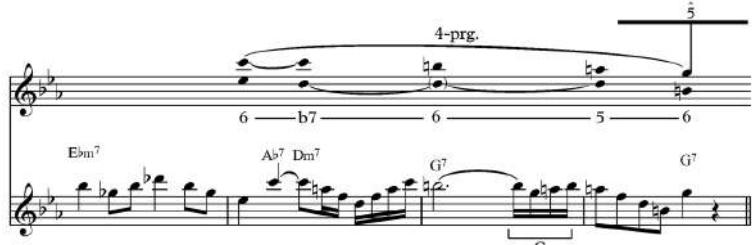


Figure 3.98 Overriding internal closure via a 4-prg and implied LIP in chorus 6.

4.3.2.e. *Urlinie* Gap

The opening measures of the seventh chorus feature the handing-over of power between $\hat{5}$ and $\widehat{b3}$ without an intervening $\hat{4}$ in the *Urlinie*. Coltrane bolsters the new central pitch of the fundamental line ($\widehat{b3}$) by presenting it in the upper register and approaching it with an ascending LP $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-\hat{3}$. He holds LN $\hat{2}$ before moving up to $\widehat{b3}$. Some other of Coltrane's solos, such as "Blue Train," also omit $\hat{4}$ in the *Urlinie*. Due to the occasional omission of $\hat{4}$, some Schenkerians, such as Peter Westergard, view $\hat{5}$ -lines with circumspection.³⁴ The nature of $\hat{4}$ as a dissonance against a tonic bass can however be remediated through local harmonies such as ii and IV at the close middleground. The issue however remains problematic on deeper structural levels at which such foreground harmonies may be reduced. The unsupported stretch has led some scholars to believe that $\hat{5}$ -lines are altogether impossible as Carl Schachter remarks. Schachter, however, asserts that "for many pieces a reading from $\hat{5}$ makes more sense than any other interpretation, for it accounts best for the articulative elements of the middleground and foreground." He buttresses his claim by invoking Schenker's own reasoning stating that "Schenker conceives of the Fundamental Structure as a kind of second species counterpoint with dissonant passing tones,

³⁴ Carl Schachter and Joseph Straus ed., *Unfoldings: Essays in Schenkerian Analysis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 192.

rather than as a first-species counterpoint restricted to consonances.”³⁵ The analyses in this dissertation demonstrate that $\hat{5}$ -lines are no rarity in Coltrane’s blues output and echo Schachter’s sentiment about the interpretative acuity they afford the analyst.

4.3.2.f. Prolongation of $\hat{2}$

Snapshot *f* depicts how Coltrane prolongs $\hat{2}$ within a 3-prg that bridges the boundary between the thirteenth and fourteenth chorus. Coltrane prolongs $\hat{7}$ in the first measure of the 14th chorus by playing up to $\hat{2}$ and back down to $\hat{7}$. Since $\hat{7}$ can be interpreted as an implied $\hat{2}$, I read the first half of the first measure of the 14th chorus as $\hat{2}$. After arriving at the second B ($\hat{7}$) Coltrane plays a surface-level 8-prg into the second measure of the form implying a superimposed V⁷ chord G⁷ after which he resolves the 3-prg. on the first beat of the third measure of the rotation.

4.3.2.g. 3-Prgs. Leading to and Falling From $\widehat{b3}$

The eleventh chorus features six 3-prgs leading to and from the main structural pitch $\widehat{b3}$. Box *g* begins with a foreground diminution of the chorus’s second 3-prg and includes four 3-prgs in total. Thus far we have mainly seen how motive C is used as a multi-level motivic device. In this example motives E, D, and A are employed. Motives E and D ornament the first two 3-prgs while motive A can be seen as an embellishment that is aimed at resolving to $\hat{5}$. Alternatively, motive A could be read as opening up a 6-prg (C-B \flat -A \flat -G-F) leading to $\widehat{b3}$. Since the underlying VL structure of the chorus suggests a strong favoring of 3-prgs it seems more feasible to regard motive A as a surface level prefix embellishment delaying the onset of the next 3-prg.

³⁵ Ibid., 193.

4.3.2.h. 3-Prg Leading Into the Next Rotation

Coltrane connects the fourteenth and fifteenth chorus with a 3-prg. (G-F-E \flat), that begins in the last measure of the fourteenth chorus and resolves to $\widehat{b3}$ in the next rotation. The sense of direction Coltrane imbues the 3-prg. raises the question whether Coltrane was mindful of the VL structure on the deeper level. The first two pitches of the LP (G and F) are harmonized by the two respective seventh chords Am^{7(b5)} and G⁷ and E \flat is stated with its under third C. Regardless, of whether Coltrane intended to establish all these correlations, the short passage serves as a testament to his sense of control. In an interview for Arthur Taylor's monograph *Notes and Tones*, the saxophonist's long-time collaborator Elvin Jones attests that Coltrane was "perfectly aware of what he was doing and had almost supernatural control..."³⁶ Whether this awareness included deeper-level structural correlations may never be uncovered.

4.3.2.i. Miniature Sentential Simulacrum

In the final chorus Coltrane reverses the direction of the descending 3-prgs. By so doing, he reinvokes the melody of the head and the initial ascent. The last chorus thus harkens back at the beginning of the piece. He does not state the phrase verbatim, but rather structures it as what appears like the beginning of a blues sentence with three distinct repetitions of a b.i. sequentially ascending. Since this sentential simulacrum rekindles the sense that $\widehat{5}$ might be reinstated as the *Kopfton*, Coltrane seems to quickly abandon it and proceeds by reemphasizing $\widehat{b3}$ with an 8-prg.

³⁶Art Taylor, *Notes and Tones* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1993), 228.

5. Conclusion

Coltrane's mid-period style showcases some of the most overt displays of virtuosity in jazz as well as recordings of improvisations of unprecedented length. Besides Coltrane's increasing ability as an improviser, the lengthening of his solos is likely also attributable to his growing confidence, recording technology, and his popularity. Due to the ability to record longer solos, tendencies which were only noticeable in their inchoate stages seem to be fully realized in his middle period. Coltrane also rose to fame within the jazz world and underwent several personal changes. General tendencies of his style include networks of short motives, sentential structures, and a concern for overarching voice-leading procedures. The four analyses in this chapter can only serve as representative examples of his mid-period style. They were selected based on their comparatively contrasting rendering of the normative blues, their significant recording dates, important collaborations, and relevant moments in Coltrane's life. "Two Bass Hit" is a blues in D_b, which is a very uncommon key in performance practice. "Blue Train" represents a more normative type, while it occupies a category of its own with its dominant seventh sharp nine flavoring. "All Blues" is a long meter blues in a ternary meter with an uncommon chorus-level cadential segment, and "Mr. P.C." is a wonderful example of Coltrane's minor blues performance. The aim, besides the identification of various means of generating musical coherence, is to show the broadest feasible spectrum of Coltrane's blues work in his middle period.

Chapter 4. “The Last Blues”

In this chapter I will present analyses of two examples from Coltrane’s blues output that were recorded in 1962 and 1964. Coltrane made his last studio recording of a blues in 1965, two years before his death.¹ The findings of this chapter chronicle Coltrane’s shifting tendency toward less dense foreground diminutions, his growing affinity for the use of wider intervals, the prevalence of LPs bridging choruses, the heightened importance of rhythmic motives, and an increasingly flexible approach to normative blues harmony.

1. “Take The Coltrane” September 26, 1962

“Take The Coltrane” was recorded at the Van Gelder Studio in Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey and was issued on *Duke Ellington and John Coltrane*. The album features John Coltrane (ts), Duke Ellington (pn), Aaron Bell (bs), Jimmy Garrison (bs), Sam Woodyard (dr), and Elvin Jones (dr).² The blues was recorded in one take by a quartet consisting of Coltrane, Ellington, Garrison, and Jones.

¹ John Coltrane, tenor saxophone, “The Last Blues,” by John Coltrane, Recorded June 10 and 16, 1965, with The John Coltrane Quartet, on *Living Space*, Impulse! IMPD-246, 1998, CD. Although titled “The Last Blues,” the actual last documented blues performance of Coltrane is his live recording of “Pursuance” from *A Love Supreme* at the Antibes Jazz Festival held on July 26-27, 1965. John Coltrane, tenor saxophone, “Pursuance,” by John Coltrane, recorded July 26 and 27, 1965, with the John Coltrane Quartet, on *John Coltrane – A Love Supreme, In Antibes 1965*, Jimco Records – JICL-89548, 1994, CD. “The Last Blues” is Coltrane’s final recording of a blues from a studio session. John Coltrane, tenor saxophone, “Take The Coltrane,” by John Coltrane, recorded September 26, 1962, with Duke Ellington, on *Duke Ellington & John Coltrane*, Impulse! – A-30, 1963, LP.; Chris DeVito, ed., *Coltrane on Coltrane: The John Coltrane Interviews* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, Inc., 2010), 334. In an interview with Ralph Gleason conducted on March 29, 1963 and published in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Coltrane remembers his collaboration with Duke Ellington.: “Coltrane, who is considered by his peers to be in the very front rank of experimenters, recorded recently with Duke Ellington. ‘Was it fun?’ I asked. ‘Fun! I was scared to death!’” Carl Woideck, ed., *The Coltrane Companion: Five Decades of Commentary* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1998), 208. “With Ellington we had two great musicians existing from two different eras and I felt that they could play together. I think that most musicians can really play together so I went and asked Duke if he would want to do an album with John Coltrane with just a rhythm section. He said yes and that’s how the album came about. ...the thing that impressed me most about Coltrane and Ellington, was the fact that Coltrane, up until the Ellington album, had always spent what I would consider really too much time on his recordings. He would do a tune maybe 12, 15, or 20 times before he was satisfied...Also from then on, John’s recordings were really based on one or two takes.”

² Lewis Porter ed., *The John Coltrane Reference* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 743.

1.1 Motivic Network in “Take The Coltrane”

The solo over “Take The Coltrane” includes a rich network of motives that are combined and transformed in various ways. Coltrane presents one of the most important ideas, the rhythmic motive A ($\bullet\bullet\downarrow$), in the opening of his solo (Figure 4.1, mm. 1-4). Motive A is introduced as a sequentially descending diatonic double neighbor figure, embellishing an underlying 4-prg ($\hat{1}-\widehat{b7}-\widehat{6}-\widehat{5}$). Over the course of the solo, motive A also appears as a stepwise scale fragment. Coltrane plays retrograded repeated statements of motive A over the seventh chorus’s internal cadential area (Figure 4.2). In contrast to the descending sequence Coltrane employed to introduce motive A, the motive takes on a static character in the seventh rotation, where it is used to prolong $\widehat{3}$ (A) at a deeper level while also using $\widehat{1}$ as a pedal tone and $\widehat{4}$ as a UN. Similarly, Coltrane reintroduces motive A over the cadential area of the ninth chorus. In this elaborated version Coltrane retrogrades the original rhythm and expresses the prototypical quarter note of motive A as repeated eighth notes on the same pitch (Figure 4.3). In contradistinction to his treatment of the motive in the first and seventh choruses, Coltrane uses A to prolong the *Kopfton* C and its UN, D, in the deep middleground. In the ninth rotation Coltrane uses the cover tone F and its UN, G, while prolonging the *Kopfton*. Motive A appears in all eleven choruses of the solo except rotations five, eight, and ten.

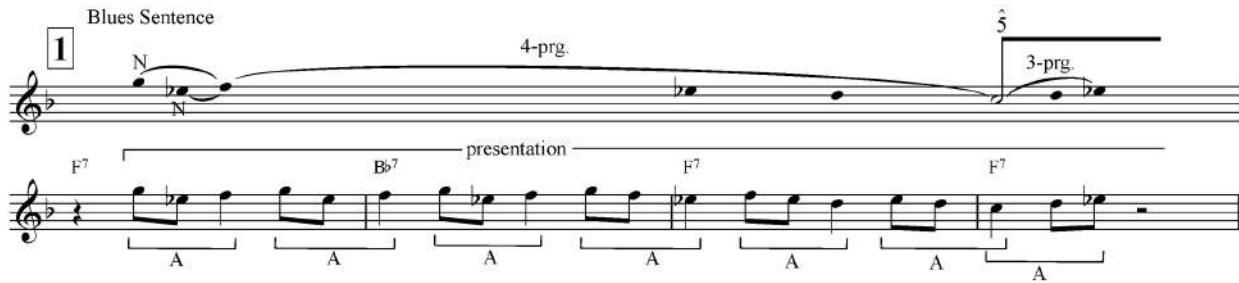


Figure 4.1 Motive A Coltrane's "Take the Coltrane" solo chorus 1, mm. 1-4.³

Figure 4.2 Motive A and superimposed prolongation of ii⁹ in chorus 7, mm. 81-84.

Figure 4.3 Coltrane's use of motive A in chorus 9, mm. 105-108.

The next motive, B, an ascending scale fragment consisting of the pitches E, F, G, A, is introduced within a theme complex, marked as TC, which also contains motives C (Coltrane's signature 1, 2, 3, 5 tetrachord) and D (tonic triad in second inversion) (Figure 4.4). All motives within TC also occur repeatedly outside the context of the TC. TC is stated twice within the solo with the same internal ordering of motives (C, B, D, C) in mm. 10-12, and mm. 22-23 (see appendix). In both of its presentations TC is stated over the respective chorus's cadential area,

³ Coltrane, "Take The Coltrane," 1962.

which Coltrane rigorously reharmonizes in both instances. (Coltrane's harmonic superimposition of the cadential area will be discussed below.) In the first chorus the final motive of TC, C, is embellished with G as an UN to its final pitch, F. In choruses one and two both TCs are employed to articulate a prolongation of the *Kopfton* at the deep middleground, while they express distinct secondary lines on the foreground (Figures 4.4-4.5). In chorus one TC is used to state a secondary $\hat{5}$ -descent signaling internal closure (Figure 4.4). In the second chorus two 3-prgs fall from the *Kopfton* (Figure 4.5). The interpretative anomaly of an identical melodic structure (TC) giving rise to two distinct readings arises from the context of the respective appearances of the structure within the blues rotation and within the overall trajectory of the solo, in addition to the differing ornamental pitches interpolated into the two iterations of TC. The first TC is preceded by a statement of motive B while the second TC is prefigured by an ornamented V triad, strongly invoking the *Kopfton*.

Figure 4.4 TC in Coltrane's solo on "Take The Coltrane" in chorus 1, mm. 9-12.

Figure 4.5 TC in Coltrane's solo on "Take The Coltrane" in chorus 2, mm. 22-23.

Coltrane begins the second and the sixth chorus with statements of motive E, which contains an embedded retrograde version of motive C. Motive E is the longest single motive in the solo and its two statements are separated by forty-eight measures, equaling four choruses. Motive C comprises the first four pitches of E, after which a bebop scale fragment ($\hat{1}-\hat{7}-b\hat{7}-\hat{1}$) and a 3-prg leading from $\hat{6}$ up to $\hat{1}$ complete the motive (Figure 4.6). Depending on its surrounding context E serves different purposes in the larger VL context. In the second chorus, E can be interpreted as a statement of the *Kopfton* from which the remainder of the tonic triad (A and F) is stated. In the sixth chorus E suggests the *Kopfton* and a subsequent move to UN 6 (Figure 4.7).

Figure 4.6 Motive E in chorus 2, mm. 13-14.

Figure 4.7 Motive E in chorus 6, mm. 61-64.

Aside from motive A, motive F can also be regarded as a rhythmic idea. The characteristic rhythm of motive F, a dotted quarternote followed by three eighth notes, is featured six times throughout the solo and is always used to conclude phrases (Figures 4.8-4.13). Motive F

illustrates Coltrane's focus on rhythms as archetypal structures for his improvisation and signals a clear departure from earlier periods. Coltrane does not furnish a single statement of motive F with the same pitches.



Figure 4.8 Rhythmic motive F in chorus 3, m. 28. Figure shows mm. 27-28.



Figure 4.9 Rhythmic motive F in chorus 4, m 40. Figure shows mm. 38-40.

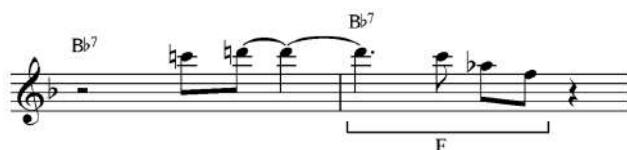


Figure 4.10 Rhythmic motive F in chorus 4, m. 42. Figure shows mm. 41-42.

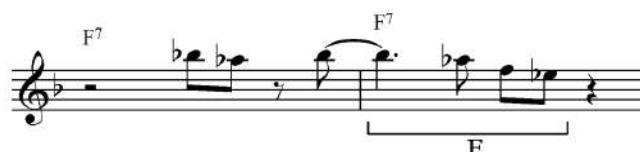


Figure 4.11 Rhythmic motive F in chorus 5, m. 52. Figure shows mm. 51-52.

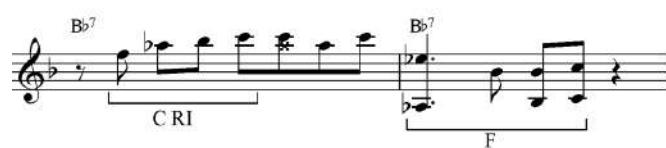


Figure 4.12 Rhythmic motive F in chorus 10, m. 114. Figure shows mm. 113-114.



Figure 4.13 Rhythmic motive F in chorus 11, m. 132. Figure shows mm. 131-132.

The final idea of the motivic network, G, consists of five pitches (D-F-G-C-B♭) outlining IV (B♭⁷) (Figures 4.14-4.16). Motive G occurs three times in the same respective location (m. 2 of the blues form) in choruses three, four, and nine. In its first presentation the last four pitches of motive G are played an octave lower than in the other two statements pointing to the fact that the prototypical variants are uttered after the varied version.



Figure 4.14 Statement of motive G in chorus 3, m. 26. Figure shows mm. 25-26.



Figure 4.15 Statement of motive G in chorus 4, m. 38. Figure shows mm. 37-40.



Figure 4.16 Statement of motive G in chorus 9, m. 98. Figure shows mm. 97-98.

“Take the Coltrane” hosts a motivic web of nearly unprecedented complexity. It consists of seven distinct ideas, out of which two are rhythmic. Due to the rich network of motives most of the solo’s content possesses numerous correlations resembling a tight-knit tapestry of ideas. Sentential structures and VL interrelations further augment the dense sense of interrelatedness in the solo.

1.2 Blues Sentences in “Take the Coltrane”

Out of his eleven choruses, Coltrane improvises two choruses (one and ten) that follow blues sentence structures; using choruses constructed as sentences to frame a longer solo is a hallmark of Coltrane’s approach. Motive A serves as the b.i. of chorus one, while the presentation of chorus ten includes a transposed retrograde inversion of motive C as its b.i.

The presentation of the first chorus may be interpreted as containing a bifold repetition of a larger b.i. According to this reading the first b.i. consists of seven and the second b.i. of five statements of motive A (Figure 4.17). Alternatively, the presentation could be understood as a twelvefold repetition where motive A constitutes b.i. Since such excessive b.i. statements are atypical of Coltrane, it is more likely that the blues sentence contains two long b.i.s which each include the A motives as their submodules. The blues sentence of the first chorus does not include a fragmentation (for VL relations see Figure 4.21).

Presentation

b.i.

b.i.

Continuation
cadential idea

TC

Figure 4.17 Blues sentence structure of chorus 1.

The tenth chorus unequivocally contains four b.i. repetitions, which are each segmented into the submodules *a*, *b*, and *c* (Figure 4.18). Every b.i. begins with submodule *a*, which is a retrograde inversion of motive C. The consistent pattern of submodules $a+b \rightarrow a+c \rightarrow a+b' \rightarrow a+c$ illustrates a tight-knit organization. Similar to the blues sentence of the first chorus, rotation ten

does not include a fragmentation. The cadential idea consists of the fundamental base triads of the blues cadence. In addition to integrating a transformed variant of motive C into this blues sentence, Coltrane also includes the rhythmic motive F in the sixth measure of the tenth chorus.

The musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is titled "Presentation" and shows three measures of blues sentence organization. The first measure starts with an F7 chord, followed by a blues sentence with motives a and b. The second measure continues with motive a and ends with a blues sentence with motives a and c. The third measure concludes with a blues sentence with motives a and b'. The fourth measure begins with a blues sentence with motives a and c, followed by a cadential idea (b.i.) over an F7 chord. The bottom staff is titled "Continuation cadential idea" and shows a continuation of the blues sentence. It starts with a blues sentence with motives a and c, followed by a cadential idea over an F7 chord. This is followed by a Gm7 chord and a C7 chord, each with a blues sentence with motives a and c.

Figure 4.18 Blues sentence in “Take the Coltrane,” chorus 10.

In addition to the two explicit blues sentence organizations of the first and tenth choruses, Coltrane also begins the fourth rotation with an opening that starts in the manner of a blues sentence (Figure 4.19). The juxtaposed motives D and G are framed as quasi-b.i.s, yet Coltrane seems immediately to abandon the idea of composing the structure out as a sentence by stating highly contrasting material. The opening of the eighth chorus similarly begins with a simulacrum of a sentential presentation (Figure 4.20). Coltrane plays two retrograded variants of motive C built on I and IV, resembling a repeated b.i., yet the contrasting material of the third and fourth measures erode the expectation of an ensuing blues sentence. Noticeably, both sentence-like openings are disturbed by prominent invocations of $\widehat{b5}$, signaling the use of the tritone substitute of I^7 . Perhaps, these moments demonstrate how Coltrane’s concern for harmony overpowered his sense for phrase structural organization.

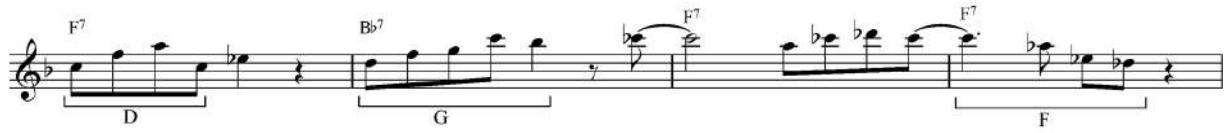


Figure 4.19 Opening resembles the start of a blues sentence, chorus 4, mm. 37-40.



Figure 4.20 Opening resembles the start of a blues sentence, chorus 8, mm. 85-88.

1.3 Voice Leading in “Take the Coltrane”

Due to its extensive length and for the sake of variety in my analytic presentations, I will approach the VL analysis of “Take the Coltrane” by showing a middleground graph (Figure 4.21) while interspersing figures illustrating foreground details throughout the ensuing discussion.



Figure 4.21 Middleground Graph of Coltrane's solo on "Take The Coltrane."

"Take The Coltrane" exhibits a rare descent to the central pitch of the *Urlinie*. The solo's opening phrase ($\hat{1}-\hat{b}\hat{7}-\hat{6}-\hat{5}$), a 4-prg decorated with double neighbors that is rhythmically undergirded by motive A, concludes with a statement of the *Kopfton*, $\hat{5}$. Since a major characteristic of the *Urlinie* is its descending nature, an initial descent poses some hermeneutic issues. Commonly the *Kopfton* is approached via ascending arpeggiated or scalar ascents, which

leads notable Schenkerians such as Carl Schachter to describe them as “a counterforce to the descending Fundamental Line.”⁴ If the descending nature of the *Urlinie* ought to represent a process of driving toward closure, the *Anstieg* should likely be read as an energizing entity imbuing a piece with musical momentum. Yet Coltrane’s solo demonstrates enough forward propulsion to disqualify this assumption. The musical energy created by an initial descent resembles that of a meteoric impact, thrusting debris back up into the atmosphere. The dynamism of Coltrane’s initial scalar descent and its impact landing on the *Kopfton*, similarly forces material back up. The collision onto $\hat{5}$ is followed by an ascending 3-prg ($\hat{5}-\hat{6}-\overline{\hat{b}7}$) (Figure 4.1 m. 4). Coltrane repeats the descent to the *Kopfton* but expands it to a 7-prg ($\hat{4}-\overline{\hat{b}3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}-\overline{\hat{b}7}-\hat{6}-\hat{5}$) (at the deep middleground), that outlines the foreground harmonic motion from IV⁷ back to I⁷ (mm. 5-8 in appendix). Figure 4.17, showing the sentential structure of the first chorus, illustrates that a descent from $\hat{1}$ to $\hat{5}$ (mm. one through four) is elaborated through multiple statements of motive A in the foreground. An internal $\hat{5}$ -descent, ranging from the *Kopfton* in measure four to the end of the first chorus, generates a sense of chorus-level closure while the superordinate structural line (*Führender Zug*) continues.⁵ This secondary $\hat{5}$ -descent is elaborated by TC on the foreground (Figure 4.4).

Chorus two opens with motive E, which is initiated from the *Kopfton* and supported by its under third (A) and under fifth (F) (Figure 4.23). The deeper structure of the first six measures suggests that Coltrane hangs triads from structurally superior pitches. After the first two measures, which reinforce $\hat{5}$ and the tonic triad, mm. 3-4 revolve around UN $\overline{b}\hat{6}$ (D \flat) from which

⁴ Carl Schachter, *Unfoldings – Essays in Schenkerian Theory* (New York: OUP, 1999), 200.

⁵ Heinrich Schenker, *Der Freie Satz* (Wien: Universal Edition A.G., 1956), 125. Schenker labels the main descent “*Führender Zug*” aside which other descents can occur simultaneously.

Coltrane hangs a G \flat minor and an F augmented triad. The G \flat minor triad is an upper structure of the tritone substitute C \flat ^{7(*11)} expressing its fifth, seventh, and ninth. Over the IV⁹ chord Coltrane restates the *Kopfton* from which he hangs the pitches A \flat and F, resulting in a i triad. On the macro-level Coltrane thus invokes the use of the parallel minor tactic between his statements of the first and fifth measures of the second rotation. From his statement of the *Kopfton* over IV⁹ in the fifth measure of the chorus, Coltrane plays a 5-prg ($\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\widehat{\text{b}3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$). The arrival on $\hat{1}$ is however not supported by tonic, but by bVII⁹ (E \flat ⁷) denying tonic closure (mm. 18 in appendix). A pitch from an inner voice D \flat , the local b7th of E \flat ⁷, serves as a chromatic upper neighbor leading to a statement of the *Kopfton* in the seventh measure of the chorus, where Coltrane plays a 3-prg that ascends from the *Kopfton*. Coltrane harmonizes the first two pitches of the 3-prg with the diatonic triads (C major and B \flat major). After the initial introduction of this idea, linear progressions that are harmonized by diatonic triads become a central improvisatory strategy for the remainder of the solo. The cadential area of the second chorus features two descending 3-prgs from the *Kopfton* that are embellished by the TC on the surface level. The final tone $\hat{3}$ (A) of the repeated 3-prg is transferred to an upper register. A 4-prg ($\hat{1}-\widehat{\text{b}7}-\hat{6}-\hat{5}$), reminiscent of the initial descent, connects the second and third chorus (Figure 4.23).

Figure 4.23 Chorus 2 of Coltrane's solo on "Take the Coltrane."

One of the most intriguing aspects of the third chorus is an ascending 6-prg ($\hat{4}-\hat{5}-\hat{6}-\hat{7}-\hat{1}-\hat{2}$) overriding the local tonic area (mm. 7-8 of the chorus) through a prolongation of PD harmony (Figure 4.24). Coltrane connects $\hat{4}$ over IV⁷ (m. 5 of the chorus) to $\hat{2}$ over ii⁷ (m. 10 of the chorus). The intervening statement of $\hat{1}$ within the 6-prg, undergirded by tonic harmony, is thus overridden and relegated to a surface-level passing event. Chorus three does not include a secondary line suggesting internal closure and the *Kopfton* is clearly featured as the dominating pitch throughout the cadential- and post-cadential area of the rotation. The last statement of the *Kopfton* is embellished by two upper voices F and A. The third, G and B_b, uttered on the last beat of the chorus, is transferred to a lower register and serves as a pair of upper neighbors to F and A, which recur in the opening of the fourth chorus (see figure 4.21).

Figure 4.24 Chorus 3 of Coltrane's solo on "Take the Coltrane."

Akin to the first chorus, rotation four also includes a subordinate chorus-level $\hat{5}$ -descent, suggesting internal closure (Figure 4.25 mm. 46-48). The strength of the *Urlinie* squashes any strong sense of finality and the solo proceeds to the next chorus. One of the most intriguing aspects of this internal $\hat{5}$ -descent, is the prolongation of $\hat{3}$, which is embellished by an ascending 4-prg (motive B). After its introduction over dominant harmony, A is then sustained as the top note over what may be interpreted in two ways, as either (1) a cadential $\frac{6}{4}$ chord (C^7sus4), or (2) a premature second inversion tonic triad. Since Coltrane implies V (or ii) after the prolongation of $\hat{3}$, over which he presents $\hat{2}$, it seems reasonable to read the interpolated chord as a cadential $\frac{6}{4}$, prolonging dominant harmony. After the arrival on $\hat{1}$, Coltrane leads into the next chorus by stating the *Kopfton* as anacrusis.

Figure 4.25 Internal $\hat{5}$ -descent in chorus 4, mm. 46-48. Figure shows mm. 45-48.

The fifth chorus opens with what may be interpreted as a palindromic VL organization at the middleground level. The opening participates in an extended 3-prg ($\widehat{b3}-\widehat{4}-\widehat{5}$), which leads to the *Kopfton* (Figure 4.26). Within the opening $\widehat{b3}$ is prolonged via UN $\widehat{4}$. $\widehat{b3}$ is buttressed by its under third $\widehat{1}$, which is embellished by its own LN $\widehat{b7}$. During the prolongation of $\widehat{b3}$ in the 3-prg, UN $\widehat{4}$ takes on so much importance, that it threatens to initiate the ascent to $\widehat{5}$ prematurely. Yet the return to $\widehat{b3}$ in the fourth measure of the chorus elucidates the function of $\widehat{4}$ as a local UN. After the prolongation of $\widehat{b3}$, embedded in the palindromic design, $\widehat{4}$ takes on its position as a member of the larger 3-prg leading to the *Kopfton*. In a reversal of roles $\widehat{4}$ is now prolonged via $\widehat{b3}$ serving as a neighbor. Coltrane's presentation of the *Kopfton* and the subsequent statement of $\widehat{b7}$ over IV⁷ suggests that he might have wanted to imply an anticipated I⁷ chord.

Figure 4.26 Palindromic opening and ascending 3-prg in chorus 5, mm. 49-54.

The post cadential space of the fifth chorus is void of any material connecting it to the next rotation. An internal $\hat{5}$ -descent (Figure 4.27 mm. 55-59) strongly suggests cessation at the chorus level. Despite the strong sense of foreground closure, the *Kopfton* is still reinforced on a deeper level thought two 5-prgs amidst the subordinate descent.

Figure 4.27 Enforcing the *Kopfton* amidst a secondary descent in chorus 5, mm. 57-59.

Alternatively, the concluding passage of the fifth chorus could be analyzed with a foreground prolongation of $\hat{5}$, which dismantles the latter 5-prg (Figure 4.28). Both interpretations center around the dubious harmonic support of the phrase's third measure. Normatively, the first half of this measure ought to be undergirded by tonic harmony, yet Coltrane clearly postpones its arrival

onto (at least) the second beat, when he states $\hat{3}$. The first reading of the passage suggests that $\hat{4}$ is embellished by a structurally inferior local UN C in the second 5-prg.

Figure 4.28 Alternative reading of chorus 5, mm. 57-59. Figure shows mm. 57-60.

The sixth chorus follows a relatively simple trajectory, in which the integrity of the *Urlinie* remains unperturbed. The relative simplicity of the sixth chorus in regard to VL operations seems to balance out the previous rich VL activity. In the post-cadential penultimate measure of the sixth chorus Coltrane states the first three tones ($\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{3}$) of a relatively extensive secondary $\hat{5}$ -descent (Figure 4.21). This secondary descent connects the sixth and seventh choruses and supports the overarching unifying *Urlinie*. The remaining tones of this $\hat{5}$ -descent ($\hat{2}-\widehat{b2}-\hat{1}$) are stated within the first four measures of the seventh chorus.

Coltrane states a somewhat uncommon chromatic mixture in the remainder of the $\hat{5}$ -descent by including $\widehat{b2}$, which is locally supported by an implied bV^7 (the tritone substitute of I^7). The $\hat{5}$ -descent arrives at $\hat{1}$ in the very last possible moment of the initial tonic prolongation before the fifth measure of the rotation. After the closure of the $\hat{5}$ -descent Coltrane seems to superimpose a ii^9 chord over the last four measures of the chorus, overriding the normative chords V^7 , IV^7 , and I^7 (Figure 4.29). The pitch A, the local ninth of the implied ii^9 chord (Gm^7), occurs in conjunction with the pedal tone F. Motive A provides the rhythmic foundation for this last four-measure segment of the chorus. On a deeper structural level, the prolonged tone A, is

interpreted as an under third ($\hat{3}$) that is arpeggiated up to the *Kopfton* ($\hat{5}$). Only two beats before the onset of the eighth chorus Coltrane states $\hat{7}$ (E), which strongly suggests a move from ii^9 to V leading into the next rotation. The passage poses an issue for Larson's preferred reading of triadic pitches as superior tones. In Figure 4.29, Coltrane superimposes an extended chord whose ninth is prolonged. The third (B \flat) of the implied chord (Gm 9) serves as UN, which is contradictory to Larson's postulate. While this pertains to a foreground reading, Larson's preferred approach works for the middleground, where the local ninth of Gm 9 is elevated in status to $\hat{3}$ and prolonged by UN $\hat{4}$. A consideration for the respective structural level is hence crucial, when putting forth any prescriptive or generalizing assertions.⁶

Figure 4.29 Transition from chorus 7 to 8 (mm. 81-85) with implied Gm 9 chord.

While the sentential simulacrum of the opening of the eighth chorus, which reinforces the *Kopfton*, has been addressed earlier (Figure 4.20), the remainder of the rotation revolves around

⁶ In countless examples, Coltrane renders IV 7 chords as IV 9 chords (the local ninth of IV is $\hat{5}$ of the key), which highlights to the deeper function of IV in the blues as a chord, which is subservient to phrase-level tonic prolongations.

the first order UNs $\hat{6}$ and $\hat{b6}$ (Figure 4.30). These deeper-level ornaments are embellished by foreground material that is derived from the head, whose melody is essentially constructed of minor seventh chord arpeggiations (Figure 4.31). While Coltrane's references to the head may appear as descending arpeggiations of minor seventh chords at the surface level, they are actually upper structure tetrachords of superimposed minor eleventh chords on a deeper level. In the last eight measures of the eighth chorus Coltrane implies the chromatically descending chords $Bbm^{11} \rightarrow Am^{11} \rightarrow Abm^{11} \rightarrow G^6 \rightarrow Gb^7$. The three minor seventh chords of this superimposed progression are expressed through their upper structure chords $Fm^7 \rightarrow Em^{11} \rightarrow Ebm^{11}$. The last four measures are furnished with the cover tone Bb , its UN B , and a descending 6-prg, which is aimed at UN $b6$. Before the close of the eighth chorus Coltrane states the third of the implied Gb^7 chord, which resolves to $\hat{3}$ in the first measure of the ninth chorus.

Figure 4.30 References to the head via upper structure triads, cover tone Bb , and 6-prg expressing superimposed bII^7 chord (Gb^7) in chorus 8, mm. 89-96.

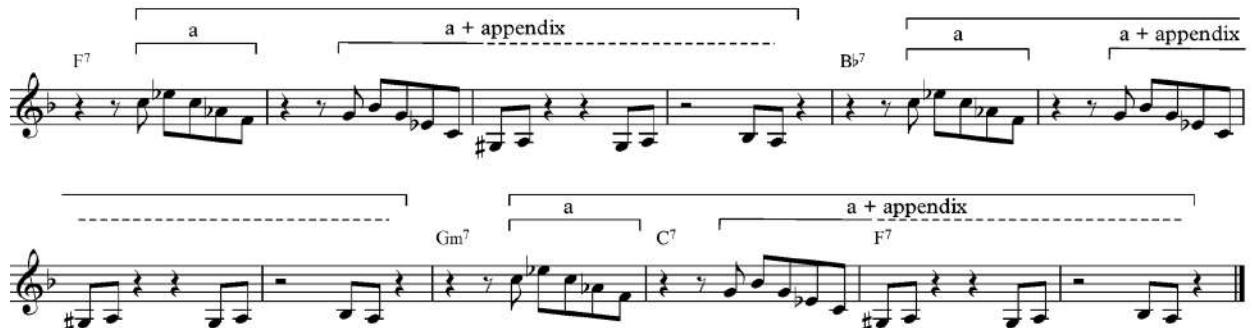


Figure 4.31 “Take The Coltrane” - riff blues based on minor seventh chords.

In the ninth chorus Coltrane plays a secondary $\hat{5}$ -descent which outlines the tonic prolongation that ranges across the first eight measures of the blues form (Figure 4.32). $\hat{4}$ of this $\hat{5}$ -descent is supported by IV^7 (mm. 5-6 of the chorus) and prolonged through a register transfer and an 8-prg. After stating $\hat{3}$ Coltrane presents $\hat{2}$ (G) with its under fourth D implying a superimposed surface-level ii chord. The statement of $\hat{2}$ is rhythmized by motive A and foreshadows Coltrane’s approach for the cadential area of the rotation, throughout which A is elaborated. The cover tone F and its UN G furnish the IV chord of the blues cadence, over which Coltrane presents the first order neighbor $\hat{2}$.

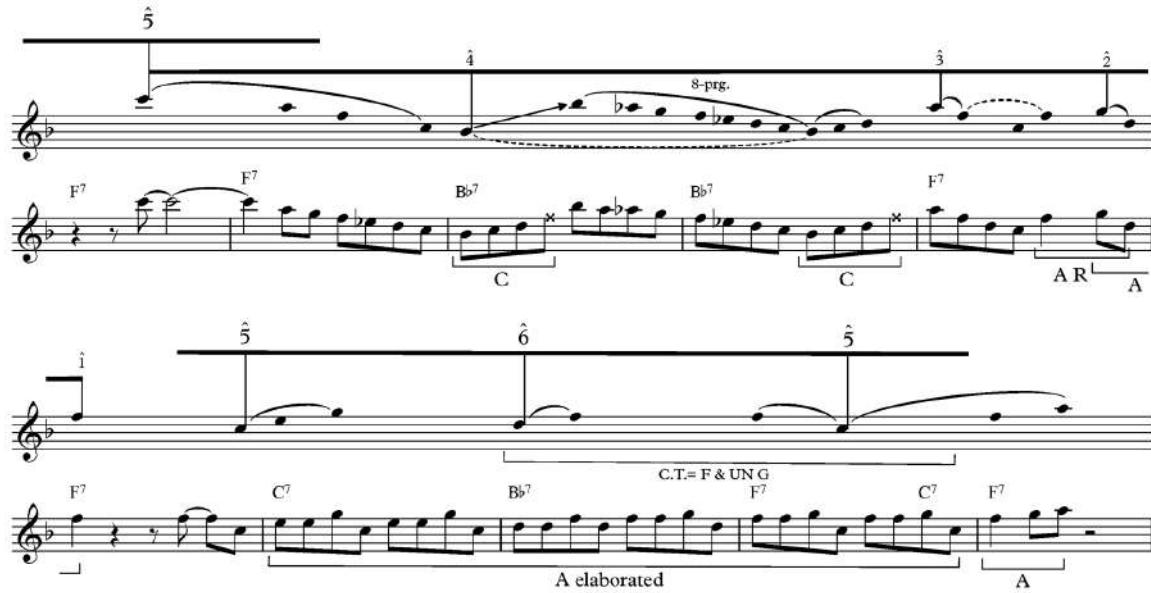


Figure 4.32 $\hat{5}$ -descent outlining chorus-level tonic prolongation in chorus 9, mm. 3-12.

The tenth chorus of the solo and its blues sentential structure have been shown in Figure 4.18. Its b.i. bolsters the *Kopfton* through arpeggiations which lead up to it. Coltrane employs the parallel minor tactic to adapt his b.i. to IV⁷. Due to its clear sentential design the VL aspects of the tenth chorus are clear cut. The rotation does not include a secondary descent.

In the final chorus the *Urline* descends to $\hat{4}$ in the second measure of the form where it is supported by IV⁷ (Figure 4.33). $\hat{3}$ is introduced at the end of the same measure and prolonged until the penultimate measure of the chorus. Coltrane integrates the chromatic mixture $b\hat{3}$ several times throughout the prolongation of $\hat{3}$. After $\hat{3}$ assumes dominance in the *Urlinie*, a secondary $\hat{3}$ -descent outlines a foreground-level tonic prolongation ranging across mm. 4-7 of the rotation. $\hat{2}$ within this $\hat{3}$ -descent is supported by IV⁷ (mm. 5-6 of the chorus) and furnished by the pedal tone D. During the final descent to $\hat{1}$ in the *Urlinie*, $\hat{2}$ is presented in the final measure of the chorus and embellished by the incomplete upper neighbor $\hat{3}$. The cessation of the fundamental line coincides with a 6-prg. ($\hat{3}-\hat{4}-\hat{5}-\hat{6}-\hat{7}-\hat{1}$) that ascends to the tonic pitch. $\hat{1}$ is thus approached

from above through the final descent of the *Urlinie* and the ascending 6-prg. Coltrane reinvokes a part of the head's melody, the IUN embellishment of $\hat{3}$, in a short post-cadential appendix phrase while bassist Jimmy Garrison already begins his solo.

The musical score consists of three staves of music. The top staff shows a melodic line with various note heads and stems, accompanied by harmonic chords below. Measure 1 starts with a 4-prg pattern. Measures 2-3 show a 6-prg pattern. Measure 4 features a melodic line with a 'Pedal Tone = D'. The middle staff continues the melodic line with a 3-prg pattern. The bottom staff shows a harmonic progression through Bb7, F7, C7, Abm7, Gm7, and C7. Various melodic markings like '4-prg', '6-prg', and '3-prg' are placed above the notes. Harmonic labels include F7, Bb7, C, F7, Cb7, F7, Bb7, Bb7, Bb7, F7, C7, and Gm7. Melodic labels include 'Urlinie', '4-prg', '6-prg', '3-prg', and 'C.S. N Reference to head'.

Figure 4.33 The final chorus of “Take the Coltrane.”

1.4 Peculiarities

1.4.1 Internal Cadential Areas

One of the most readily identifiable idiosyncrasies of Coltrane's solo on “Take the Coltrane,” is his extremely flexible harmonic approach to the last four-measure segment of the

blues form. He only explicitly adheres to the underlying blues cadence (V^7 - IV^7 - I^7) in two of the eleven choruses (choruses nine and ten) (Figure 4.34).

Figure 4.34 Coltrane's final four measures of every chorus.

In the remaining nine choruses, where Coltrane does not strictly follow the blues cadential procedure, other harmonic pathways are suggested through his lines. In Figure 4.34, the labels T, PD, and D indicate middleground prolongations of chord functions. Despite Coltrane's extremely varied approach on the foreground, the T, PD, and D prolongation labels allow for a classification of Coltrane's approach into four subgroups. The different cadential areas, belonging to the respective subgroups, share the same middleground harmonic prolongation strategies but may be elaborated variously on the foreground. In establishing the subgroups, the blues cadence is considered the normative framework.

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 1. Explicit adherence to the blues cadence: | 9, 10 |
| 2. Outlining the normative (D→T) harmonic rhythm while omitting IV ⁷ : | 2, 5 |
| 3. Implied ii-V-I cadence: | 11 |
| 4. Rearrangement of normative harmonic rhythms and chord functions: | 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 |

Subgroups one through three, are relatively straight forward, while subgroup four requires elaboration since Coltrane's approach varies markedly from chorus to chorus.

The third chorus features a displacement and alteration of the underlying harmonic rhythm. Coltrane's procedure for the last four-measure segment of the third chorus results in a I-ii-V-I progression. Accordingly, the tonic chord is superimposed over the normative dominant chord area. This superimposition is followed by a postponed implied ii-V-I cadence, which resolves in the final measure of the chorus.

In chorus four Coltrane prolongs PD harmony for two measures before superimposing V over the normative tonic chord area. The implied V chord is then prolonged until the final measure where Coltrane implies a tonic resolution across the last two beats of the rotation.

The sixth chorus includes some peculiar harmonic features, which are absent in the other rotations. Coltrane begins by outlining V for the first two beats of the passage and approaches IV⁷ with an intervening bV passing chord (B). While Coltrane generally adheres to the pitches of the fundamental triad to express IV⁷, he employs the altered scale as pitch source in the sixth chorus. Coltrane overrides the tonic resolution by prolonging V for the last two measures of the form.

The harmonic deformations of the seventh and eighth choruses have been addressed in the respective discussions about motivic relationships. The divergences of the two choruses are derived from Coltrane's elaborations of motivic material, which occur across larger segments. The cadential areas of the seventh and eighth rotations are hence adapted to conform to

Coltrane's motivic process. In chorus seven the rhythmic motive A is employed to express a prolonged Gm⁹ chord across the cadential section, while in chorus eight, references to the head are followed by a superimposed tritone substitute, which extends across the final two measures of the form.

1.4.2 Expanded Tritone Substitution Before m. 5

Aside from the high degree of flexibility with which Coltrane approaches the cadential areas, the solo includes some of the most expansive tritone substitutions prefacing IV⁷ in the fifth measure of the respective blues forms. Accordingly, the first four-measure segments of choruses two, three, four, seven, eight, and eleven follow a harmonic outline suggesting I⁷-I⁷ [or IV⁷]-bV⁷-bV⁷. While this tendency is already discernible in his mid-period style, it is only this extended in later examples.

4.1.3 Prevalence of Triadic Statements

The focus on triadic statements has already been noted in the discussion about the harmonized LPs. Presumably, Coltrane's use of triads is related to the melodic design of the head. Alternatively, the prominence of triads could be interpreted as a use of hexachords consisting of triad pairs, which was prefigured in "Mr. P.C." The triadic utterances of the solo stand in stark contrast to the scale-centered foreground texture of other solos. Coltrane could have also preferred the increased use of triadic statements as an effective means to express harmonic substitutions with a monophonic instrument. The employment of triads and triadic inversions unequivocally results in the preponderance of wider intervals, which seems to also influence the

ambitus of the solo. While Coltrane generally restricts his solos to a two-octave tessitura, he uses the entire range of the tenor saxophone in “Take the Coltrane.”

2. “Bessie’s Blues” June 1, 1964

“Bessie’s Blues” was issued by Impulse! on the album *Crescent* and features the members of what is often referred to as the classic quartet, consisting of John Coltrane (ts), McCoy Tyner (pn), Elvin Jones (dr), and Jimmy Garrison (bs).⁷ Coltrane’s solo is accompanied by the full rhythm section for the first two choruses, after which Tyner drops out. Throughout choruses three through five, Coltrane is only accompanied by Jones and Garrison. Tyner reenters for the out head, which is stated directly after Coltrane’s solo. Benjamin Givan identifies three characteristics of “Bessie’s Blues,” which he considers “anomalous.” (1) The blues is the only up-tempo piece on *Crescent*, which otherwise “mostly features comparatively rhapsodic, meditative performances,” while (2) “it is stylistically closer to the quartet’s earliest work on albums like the 1960 *Coltrane Plays the Blues*.” Thirdly, Givan points out the relative (3) brevity of three-and-a-half minutes by contextualizing it within Coltrane’s output during the time, which is dominated by longer recordings. As a synthesis of his assessments regarding the anomalies, Givan describes “Bessie’s Blues” as a “nod to the past.”⁸ It seems as if Coltrane had run into an impasse with the blues toward the end of his career and slowly phases it out of this repertoire. Perhaps the blues could not reflect and accommodate Coltrane’s ever-increasing focus on

⁷ John Coltrane, tenor saxophone, “Bessie’s Blues,” recorded on June 1, 1964, with The John Coltrane Quartet, on *Crescent*, Impulse! – AS-66, 1964, LP.; Porter ed., *The John Coltrane Reference*, 806-807. “Information from annotations on a tape box from the recording session. The annotations do not identify which take was chosen as the master, and the status of the actual session reel is unknown.” Seven takes were recorded out of which two are incomplete.

⁸ Benjamin Givan, “Apart Playing: McCoy Tyner and ‘Bessie’s Blues,’” *Journal of the Society for American Music* 1, no. 2 (2007): 260.

spirituality and freer forms. The analyses presented throughout the following subsections, will hopefully elucidate whether Givan's assertion holds true, or whether we might encounter a less retrospective and rather ever-developing approach in Coltrane's blues performances.

2.1 Sentence Structure and Motivic Network

As has been uncovered through the analyses of this dissertation, Coltrane prefers to organize the opening and closing choruses of his blues solos as blues sentences. This tendency is also evident in "Bessie's Blues." Out of Coltrane's five choruses on "Bessie's Blues" only the first chorus contains a blues sentence structure (Figure 4.35). The fact that Coltrane directly proceeds from the solo to the out head likely accounts for the absence of a blues sentence structure toward the end of his solo. In the first chorus motive A (E_b, G, A_b, B_b) serves as the sentence's b.i. On a deeper structural level, the repetitions of the b.i. reinforce the Kopfton B_b, which is established through an anacrusis leading into the solo. The presentation features six repetitions of motive A and transformations of A, as well as motive B (3-1-b7), which references the head's central motive. Coltrane transforms A with a parallel minor procedure in the second measure, adapting the motive to the local IV⁷ chord, A_b⁷ (E_b, G, A_b, B_b → E_b, G_b, A_b, B_b). After this adaptation Coltrane restates A in its original form over I⁷ in the third measure of the form. From the apex pitch B_b of motive A, Coltrane plays a $\hat{5}$ -prg ($\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$), which may be interpreted as a retrograded version of A that includes the added passing tone F ($\hat{2}$). Over the IV⁷ chord area of the first chorus (mm. 5-6) Coltrane adapts motive A by transposing its last three pitches (E_b, G, A_b, B_b) up a diatonic step (E_b, A_b, B_b, C). While the prototypical rendering of motive outlines the fifth $\hat{1} \rightarrow \hat{5}$, the adaptation for IV⁷ delineates the major sixth $\hat{1} \rightarrow \hat{6}$, invoking the first order UN $\hat{6}$. In measure seven of the chorus Coltrane restates motive A in its archetypal form over I⁷

and moves directly into the cadential idea of the continuation. While the continuation lacks a fragmentation in the interpretation illustrated in Figure 4.35, the various transformations of motive A (mm. 4-6 of the chorus) could be regarded as a quasi-liquidation process. Yet, the explicit restatement of motive A in measure seven reaffirms the characteristics of the b.i., weakening any sense of a successful liquidation. A retrograded minor variant of motive A is embedded in the latter half of the cadential idea. In the continuation Coltrane also introduces the final idea of the motivic network, motive C. This motivic device consists of a UN and a descending triad. Similar to motive B, C is also derived from the melodic material of the head, where it is used throughout the cadential segment of the form (Figure 4.36). All of the solo's motives and the *Kopfton* are introduced within the first chorus of the solo.

The figure consists of two musical staves. The top staff is labeled 'Blues Sentence' and features a series of eighth-note patterns. Above the staff, a horizontal line with five vertical stems is marked with the numbers 5, 5, 5, 5, and 6. Below the staff, various chord symbols are placed under specific notes: Fm⁷, B_b⁷, Eb⁷, Ab⁷, Eb⁷ (labeled 'presentation'), Eb⁷, Ab⁷, and Eb⁷. Annotations above the staff identify different motives: 'A' with arrows pointing to the first two patterns, 'IV7 as i7 parallel min. procedure' with an arrow pointing to the third pattern, 'A' with an arrow pointing to the fourth pattern, 'AR' with an arrow pointing to the fifth pattern, and 'AE' with an arrow pointing to the sixth pattern. The word '5-prg.' is written above the last note of the sixth pattern. The bottom staff is labeled '(presentation)' and 'continuation'. It shows a similar sequence of eighth-note patterns. Above this staff, a horizontal line with five vertical stems is marked with the numbers 6, 5, 6, 5, and 5. Annotations below the staff identify motives: 'B' with an arrow pointing to the first pattern, 'A' with an arrow pointing to the second pattern, 'C' with an arrow pointing to the third pattern, 'AR' with an arrow pointing to the fourth pattern, and '3-prg.' with an arrow pointing to the fifth pattern. Chord symbols placed under notes in this staff include Ab⁷, Eb⁷, Eb⁷, Bb⁹, Ab⁷, and Eb⁷.

Figure 4.35 Blues sentence with motives A, B, and C in chorus 1.

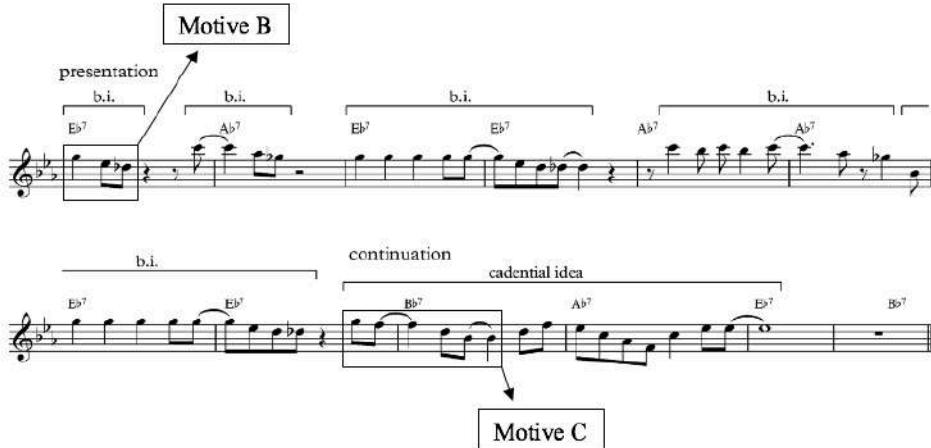


Figure 4.36 “Bessie’s Blues” as blues sentence with the solo’s derived motives B and C.

While the sentential aspects of the head have been addressed in chapter 1, a pertinent detail ought to be discussed in regard to its melodic design. Despite its seemingly disjunct transpositions fitting the underlying I⁷ and IV⁷ chords, the b.i. is linked via semitones. Figure 4.37 shows a reduction of the presentation with a compressed ambitus and arrows indicating the chromatic linkages between the b.i. statements.



Figure 4.37 Presentation with compressed ambitus and chromatic linkages.

Similar to the sentence-like beginnings failing to crystallize into full blues sentences, as observed in “Take the Coltrane,” the third chorus of “Bessie’s Blues” exhibits what appears to be the initiation of a sentence. The *pseudo*-b.i. of this inchoate sentence-like opening is characterized by its rhythmic foundation, consisting of a chain of seven consecutive eighth notes which are stated on the upbeat of the fourth beat (Figure 4.38). This idea is repeated three times in the beginning of the third chorus. While the latter two repetitions of the *pseudo*-b.i. may be interpreted as renderings of motive C, the first presentation of the idea fails to conform to the

traits of the motive. The melodic divergence across the three statements of the *pseudo*-b.i. points to its character as a rhythmic motive. Figure 4.38 includes a rhythmic reduction of the opening phrase, as well as a VL graph. The first three measures of the third chorus clearly demonstrate Coltrane's privileging of rhythm for the passage. Coltrane's thinking as an improviser was largely shaped by his harmonic conceptions, as has been established throughout the second and third chapters. Chorus three, along with the inclusion of rhythmic motives in his motivic networks charts a significant shift in his improvisatory approach.

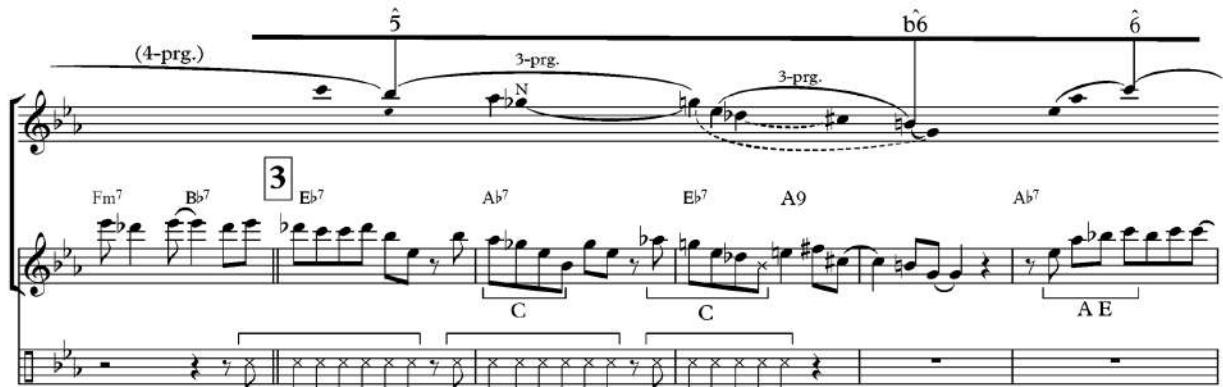


Figure 4.38 Sentence-like opening in chorus 3, mm. 25-28. Figure shows mm. 25-30.

2.2 Voice Leading in “Bessie’s Blues”

Coltrane's solo on “Bessie’s Blues” is the only example in this dissertation that directly leads into the out head. For this reason, the analytical graph shows the *Urlinie* extending past the solo into the final statements of the head. This analytical perspective is rooted in the listeners' phenomenological experience. Coltrane's saxophone playing is without doubt the center of attention during his solo and the last statements of the head. Thus, the listeners' focus is not interrupted by intervening musical events such as improvisations of different band members; resulting in different textures and instrumentations. Moreover, Coltrane seems to have accounted

for this fact by overriding all chorus-level moments of closure until he reaches the end of the second out head where the *Urlinie* closes.



Figure 4.39 Middleground graph of Coltrane's solo and out heads of "Bessie's Blues."⁹

Coltrane bursts into his solo with an energetic one-measure anacrusis announcing the *Kopfton* 5 (B_b). The dominance of 5 seems undisputed throughout the solo. At times, 5 even seems to take on the air of a reciting tone. The eminence of 5 is also reflected in the data, presented by the University of Weimar's Jazzomat project. Only the tonic pitch is stated more frequently than the *Kopfton*. Statements of 3 occur nearly five percent less frequently than 5. According to the database roughly fifteen percent of the solo's 352 pitches are statements of the *Kopfton*. In addition to the quantitative prevalence of the *Kopfton* in the solo, local fifths also play an integral

⁹ Coltrane, "Bessie's Blues," 1964.

role. Aside from the dominating statements of individual chordal roots, fifths are the most frequently uttered local chord tones.

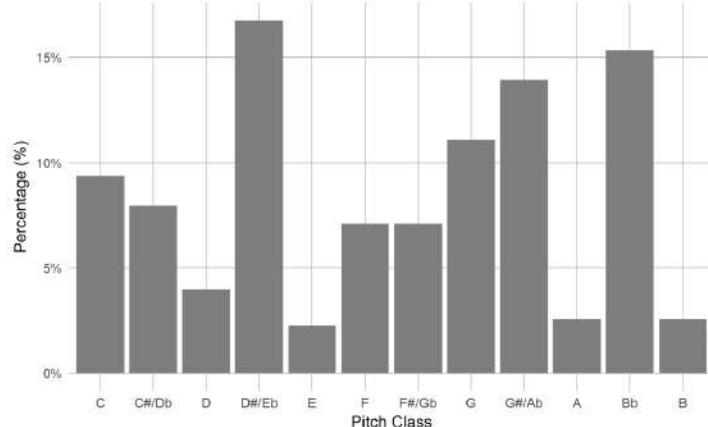


Figure 4.40 Pitch class histogram for “Bessie’s Blues.”¹⁰

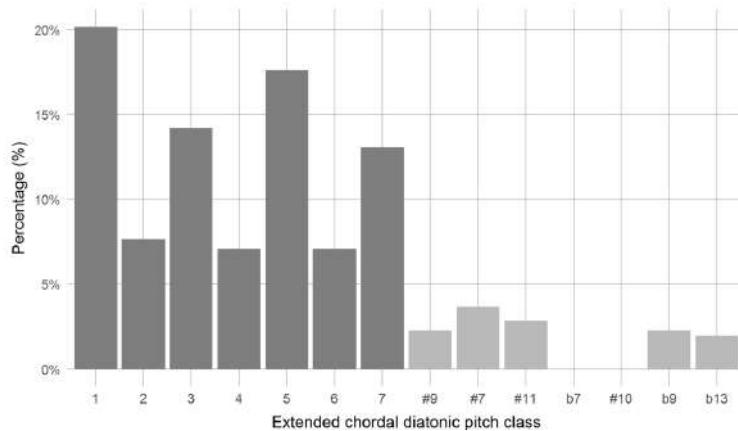


Figure 4.41 Extended chordal diatonic pitch class histogram for “Bessie’s Blues.”¹¹

2.2.1 Chorus 1: Blues Sentence and Beyond

After the presentation of the *Kopfton* via a pickup leading into the solo, Coltrane plays the blues sentence’s b.i.s, which feature the Bb and its UN C as their zenith pitches. After the first three repetitions of the b.i. Coltrane plays a foreground-level $\hat{5}$ -descent in the third measure of the

¹⁰ Martin Pfleiderer ed., *Inside the Jazzomat: New Perspectives for Jazz Research* (Mainz: Schott Campus, 2017)

¹¹ Ibid.

chorus. Immediately thereafter, the b.i., is restated with its adaptation fitting IV⁷ reinforcing $\hat{6}$ (chorus 1 mm. 5-6). $\hat{6}$ is prolonged through its chromatic UN Db over IV⁷. The final statement of the b.i. climaxes with the apex pitch Bb, the *Kopfton*. Coltrane expresses the cadential idea of the continuation by stating the upper structure triads of the underlying V⁷ and IV⁷ chords. Accordingly, Bb⁷(V⁷) is articulated through an F minor triad and Ab⁷ by an Eb minor triad. The two minor triads contain the local fifth, minor seventh, and ninth of the underlying chords. From a macro perspective, the upper structure triads reinforce the first order neighbor C (local 9th of Bb⁷) and the *Kopfton* Bb (local 9th of Ab⁷). Coltrane approaches C over Bb⁷ through a 3-prg (m. 9). The final four measures of the form can be regarded as dominant prolongational since Coltrane completely elides internal tonic closure. After the presentation of the *Kopfton* Bb as the local 9th of Ab⁷, the *Kopfton* is transferred down an octave and furnished with its incomplete lower neighbor Ab affirming the dominant prolongation (Bb to Ab is interpreted as a move from the root to the minor seventh of V⁷). This neighbor motion may have provided Coltrane with the impetus which governs the next rotation.

2.2.2 Chorus 2: Incomplete Upper Neighbors and 4-prgs

Coltrane prefaces the second chorus with a sustained statement of $\hat{6}$, which resolves down $\hat{5}$ within the first measure of the chorus. $\hat{6}$ may be regarded as the nexus bridging the first and second chorus, softening the rotational boundary. The accentuated incomplete upper neighbor idea is composed out throughout the first eight measures of the chorus. After stating the *Kopfton*, Coltrane plays a high F (mm. 2-3), which is aimed at a resolution to Eb from which a 4-prg ($\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{6}-\hat{5}$) leads back to the *Kopfton* (m. 4). Another 4-prg ($\hat{6}-\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\widehat{\flat 3}$) outlines the move from the local

third to the minor seventh of IV⁷, bolstering $\hat{6}$ on a deeper structural level. The IUN idea returns, with a move from $\hat{4}$ (Ab) to $\hat{3}$ (G). The third occurs over an anticipated superimposed I⁷ chord in m. 6 of the second chorus, from which Coltrane arpeggiates the tonic triad down to the *Kopfton*. A descending 8-prg including three register transfers ($\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1} \nearrow \hat{7} \nearrow \hat{6} \nearrow \hat{5}$) is then used to prolong Bb across mm. 9-10 of the chorus (Figure 4.42). While Coltrane clearly outlines the chords of the blues cadence (V⁷ and IV⁷) through arpeggiations, it is rather ambiguous which harmonic support should be assumed for the head tone concluding the 8-prg since the tone could be ungirded by three different chords. Bb could be read as the local ninth of Ab⁷, (2) as the fifth of the anticipated tonic chord Eb⁷, or (3) as the root of the superimposed dominant chord Bb. Since Coltrane overrides the moment of internal closure by eliding a clear sense of tonic closure following the blues cadence, the harmonic support should reflect a dominant prolongation, which suggests that interpretation three is the most probable. Coltrane connects the second and third chorus with a 4-prg ($\hat{1}-\hat{b7}-\hat{6}-\hat{5}$) which spans across the rotational boundary.

Figure 4.42 8-prg with register transfers across the blues cadence in chorus 2, mm. 20-23. Figure shows mm. 19-24.

2.2.3 Chorus 3: Linear Progressions

After resolving the connecting 4-prg to the *Kopfton* in the first measure of the third chorus, Coltrane plays a 3-prg ($\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{3}$) which outlines the tonic prolongation of the first three measures. $\hat{4}$ within the 3-prg is supported by the IV⁷ chord of the second measure. Another descending 3-

prg ($\hat{1}-\flat\hat{7}-(\sharp\hat{6})-\flat\hat{6}$), reinforcing $\flat\hat{6}$ on a deeper level, highlights the foreground use of a tritone substitute. Leading to IV⁷ Coltrane states melodic material that is distinctly associated with Eb Mixolydian mode and then shifts to A Lydian dominant. The expanded variant of motive A and its retrograded version are used to reintroduce $\hat{6}$ in mm. 5-6. Over V⁷ the *Kopfton* is buttressed though an 8-prg which is followed by an extensive 6-prg ($\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}-\flat\hat{7} \nearrow \hat{6}-\hat{5}$) that connects the third and fourth rotation. The 6-prg is initiated from $\hat{3}$, which is stated over Ab⁷. Since IV⁷ does not contain $\hat{3}$, Coltrane conceivably superimposed ii⁹ (Fm⁹) as interpolated chord within a longer dominant prolongation (Figure 4.43).

Figure 4.43 8-prg and beginning of 6-prg in chorus 3, mm. 34-37. Figure shows mm. 31-37.

2.2.4 Chorus 4: 3-prgs and Cover Tone

After the bridging 6-prg descends to the *Kopfton* in m. 3 of chorus 4, a 3-prg ($\hat{1} \nearrow \flat\hat{7}-\hat{6}$) falling from an inner voice leads, to $\hat{6}$ in m. 6 of the chorus. Throughout mm. 8-11 the *Kopfton* occurs in conjunction the cover tone Eb and its upper neighbor F. Coltrane states motive B over IV⁷ of the blues cadence and avoids a strong sense of internal closure by stating $\hat{3}$ on the first beat of m. 11. The lead-in to the fifth chorus, consisting of a sustained C ($\hat{6}$) resembles the initial anacrusis of the solo as well as the transition from the first into the second chorus.

2.2.5 Chorus 5: $\hat{5}$ -descents

While Coltrane generally slightly delays the statement of the *Kopfton* at the beginning of a new rotation in “Bessie’s Blues,” he immediately resolves $\hat{6}$ serving as a pick-up by presenting B \flat on the first beat of the fifth rotation (Figure 4.39). A surface-level $\hat{5}$ -descent occurs in the two measures, for which Coltrane suspends I 7 into the second measure. An internal $\hat{5}$ -descent ($\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{b}\hat{2}-(\hat{2})-\hat{1}$) closes the solo on the foreground while the *Kopfton* is buttressed by an ascending 3-prg ($\hat{b}\hat{3}-\hat{4}-\hat{5}$), which occurs conjointly with the descent. The $\hat{5}$ -descent ranging across the blues cadence includes three shadings of $\hat{2}$, which is first introduced as the local fifth of V 7 and subsequently chromatically altered to $b\hat{2}$ as the minor sixth of IV 7 . Ultimately $\hat{2}$ occurs as an implied tone over a statement of $\hat{7}$. The pitches of the ascending 3-prg are interpolated between the latter two variants of $\hat{2}$ and the foreground resolution to $\hat{1}$ (Figure 4.44). An anticipatory final statement of $\hat{5}$ as the *Kopfton* leads into the out head, which quickly passes through $\hat{4}$ before handing over its structural eminence to $\hat{3}$. While $\hat{4}$ is present, it is too weak to be considered a full-fledged member of the fundamental descent.

Figure 4.44 Internal secondary descent in chorus 5, mm. 58-60. Figure shows mm. 57-62.

2.2.6 Out Head 1 & 2: $\hat{3}$ Takes Over, Interruption, Closure

The melody of the head is largely $\hat{3}$ -prolongational with interspersed chromatic mixtures of $b\hat{3}$, the local minor seventh of IV 7 (Figure 4.39). Coltrane overrides the internal closure of the first

out head through an interruption (Figure 4.45). While the chorus includes a foreground-level internal closure, $\hat{2}$ is emphasized in multiple ways on a deeper structural level. $\hat{2}$ is first introduced as the fifth of V^7 and prolonged over IV^7 as its local sixth. After the foreground closure, Coltrane immediately restates $\hat{2}$ in conjunction with $\hat{6}$, implying ii^7 , followed by statements of $\hat{2}$ and $\hat{5}$, outlining V^7 . After the interruption the fundamental line restarts from $\hat{3}$. At the end of the second out head a sense of closure is realized through Coltrane's omission of any post-cadential material subverting the tonic resolution (Figure 4.46).

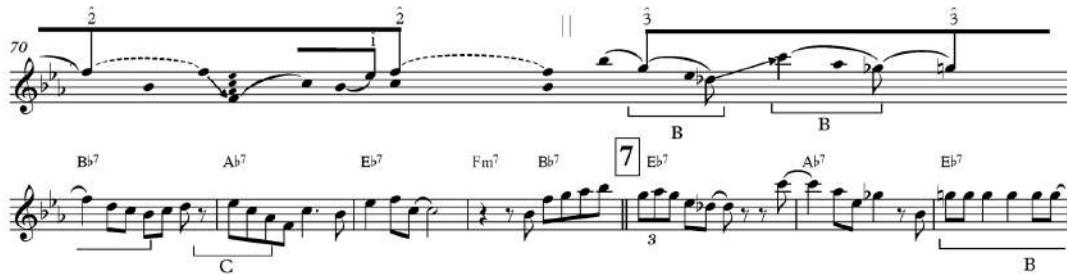


Figure 4.45 Interruption between out heads, mm. 72-74. Figure shows mm. 70-76.

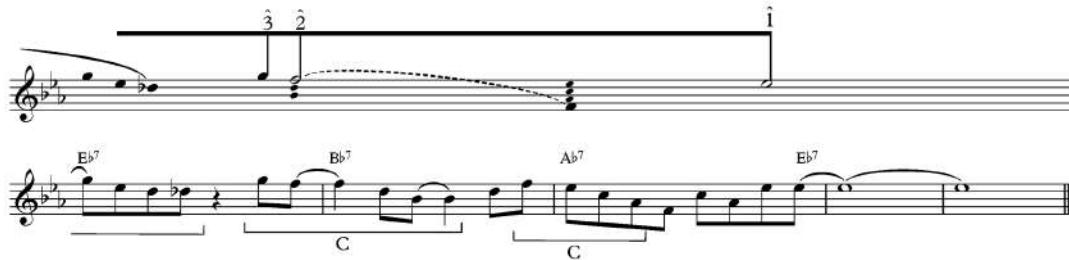


Figure 4.46 Closure of the second out head mm. 81-83. Figure shows mm. 81-84.

4. Conclusion

Noticeably, the blues improvisations of the later period are far less scalar and feature more leaps and arpeggiations. Interestingly, this tendency was foreshadowed in some of Coltrane's earliest blues solos and seems obscured in the thick scale-laden texture of his mid-period style. Large intervallic skips and arpeggiations are mostly identified as middleground structures in his mid-

period style, which are concealed by scalar foreground diminutions. At important moments, such as phrase endings, or as motivic entities, interval jumps surface at the foreground in his mid-period.

Coltrane might have preferred a more arpeggiated style for solos such as “Take the Coltrane” because of the melodic design of its head, which outlines a broken minor seventh chord. Since early and mid-period blues heads also consist of arpeggiations, such as “Blue Train,” a strong link between the influence of written material and improvisational style seems erroneous. While Coltrane references written material in his solos, composed elements seem to not have a strong bearing on his improvisational style at large. Another general tendency of his later style, as evident in “Take The Coltrane,” is the slight lightening of the musical texture of his solos compared to his mid-period manner of playing.

In contrast to almost all other of Coltrane’s blues solos in this dissertation, the local cadential areas seem to be much more integrated into the remainder of the improvisation in “Bessie’s Blues.” Especially in Coltrane’s mid-period style, chorus level cadential areas seem to feature distinct material that differs from the rest of the blues form at the foreground. Importantly, these cadential areas are still continuously aligned with overarching structural levels and architectures, and thus integrated at deeper levels. In “Bessie’s Blues,” Coltrane does not seem to work with an antithetical foreground rhetoric in the chorus-level cadential area, which is otherwise quite noticeable.

Coltrane also seems to have embraced rhythmic motives more in his late-style, compared to his earlier manner of improvising. Rhythmic kinship seems to be the common core element of many motivic devices he employs in his later career. Motive A in “Take the Coltrane,” serves as a clear example of this tendency.

Conclusion

The eleven solos I analyzed throughout this dissertation take us from the earliest beginnings of Coltrane's career, to some of his last blues recordings. The analyses have affirmed widely held assumptions about Coltrane's playing and uncovered some new findings. During the early stages the blues served as a vehicle for some of his first recordings, while it later seemed to have hampered his quest to express freedom and spirituality in his music.

Coltrane's tendency to employ brief arpeggiated initial ascents can be regarded as a hallmark trait of his early blues style. During the initial stages of his career the *Kopfton* is quickly established after a short initial ascent. Full-fledged improvised blues sentential structures are already evident in pieces such as "Congo Blues," and his motives occur on several levels. "Congo Blues" already instantiates Coltrane's tendency to play blues sentences in the opening and/or final choruses, which remains a characteristic organizational principle throughout his blues oeuvre. "We Love To Boogie" illustrates Coltrane's focus on the upper range of the instrument and his registral restriction to two octaves, which he upholds until the end of his middle period. The analyses also show that Coltrane absorbed much information in the beginning stages and internalized not only the surface-level gestures of his idols but the underlying syntax of their works. This enabled him to reflect the tradition in a non-regurgitative manner. He transcended his influences rather quickly and developed his personal style before joining Miles Davis in 1955. His early solos generally feature complete descents without gaps and rarely feature as many internal secondary descents as in his middle and late period solos. The *Kopfton* choices seem to be largely inspired by the material of the head. In "Congo Blues" and "Strange Things All the Rage" Coltrane echoes the initial ascent in the post cadential segment after the resolution to $\hat{1}$ in the *Urlinie*. While Coltrane tends to use LPs of various lengths as nexuses

bridging consecutive rotations in his middle period, individual choruses are mostly linked with anacruses that are uttered after brief gaps in the internal post-cadential space (mm. 11-12 of the form) in his early career. Coltrane's music shows a clear preference for 5-descents in his early period. While sparsely applied, quotations are still heard in his early playing.

The music of Coltrane's mid-period style is dominated by florid scalar foreground diminutions, a slow creeping up to the *Kopfton* via scalar ascents, and gapped *Urlinien*. The proliferation of stepwise motion in Coltrane's middle period stands in contrast with his very early and late periods, which are dominated by larger intervals. At times his initial scalar ascents stretch across several choruses before reaching the *Kopfton*. Throughout the middle period we observe a strong preference for scalar ascents. Even though the solos are far more extensive than in the early period, $\hat{4}$ is often omitted in $\hat{5}$ -descents, which seems to be the exclusive template for his *Urlinien*. In both, the early and middle period $\flat\hat{3}$ is a common chromatic mixture that occurs frequently in conjunction with its diatonic partner $\hat{3}$. Coltrane frequently includes local-level 5-descents, which occur together with the reigning *Urlinie*. His middle period is laden with LPs of various length. While $\hat{5}$ is still clearly the preferred *Kopfton* during this period, the improvisations often feature a handing-over of structural dominance to $\hat{3}$ after the half-way point of the solo. Coltrane's register transfers distinctly demonstrate his concern for maintaining a two-octave ambitus, which he begins to expand in his latter part of the middle period. Blue notes are generally stated when there is appropriate local harmonic support for them. E.g. $\flat\hat{3}$ tends to be presented as the local $\flat\hat{7}$ of IV⁷.

The middle period also features the most frequent use of sentence structures. 75% of his "All Blues" solo is organized as blues sentence. The respective b.i.s always work in tandem with

the *Urlinie*, either reinforcing integral pitches in the initial ascent, or buttressing the *Kopfton*.

While middleground motives are still noticeable in his mid-period style, they are obscured by the rich foreground textures. Middleground motives are thus more readily discernible in his early period. Sentence structures seem to be the bridging elements between the deepest structural levels and the foreground during the middle period, while motives seem to fulfil this function in the early period. In “Congo Blues” for instance, the middleground motive A provides the fundamental structure, which is embellished on the foreground, while In “All Blues” sentences are embellished by motives on the foreground. The tendency to reuse similar strategies for the ninth through eleventh measures of each blues form across a solo can be seen as a hallmark characteristic of Coltrane’s mid-period blues style. The distinct material Coltrane uses for the internal cadential moments are integrated into the larger whole through VL and sometimes motivic connections. Some of the favored alternative harmonic pathways are tritone substitution and “backdoor ii-Vs.” Coltrane largely adheres to the harmonic rhythm of the cadential segment of each chorus, while he seems to break away from the undergirding structure more and more in his late period (e.g. “Take the Coltrane”). In general, important motives seem to bookend the solos. In his late period, wide intervals command the foreground texture. LPs are harmonized by diatonic triads and the blues form is approached with a high degree of flexibility. Now Coltrane seems to treat the blues as a retrospective vehicle, which appears somewhat anachronistic and antithetical in his interest in the avant-garde. The fifth measure is often prefaced with an expanded tritone substitute of I⁷ in the later period. Coltrane’s growing affinity for rhythmic motives becomes quite noticeable and general musical texture is slightly less dense than during the middle period. The use of wider intervals echoes his early style. Blues sentences are the predominant organizational template for Coltrane’s written blues heads, which all contain very

characteristic traits akin to a Verdian *tinta musicale*. Throughout his career 5 is often featured as the local 9th of IV⁷, pointing to a concern of overarching structural VL coherence.

As any other study that aims to explore an artist's approach to a given form or genre, this dissertation focuses on representative examples. A truly comprehensive study would require an analysis of all of Coltrane's ca. 180 blues and blues-based recordings. As the only analytical monograph on Coltrane, this dissertation fills a gap in scholarship that is dominated by largely biographical contributions.

The Schenker-inspired analytical apparatus enables the analysis of Coltrane's music on several structural levels, which works in tandem with phrase-level organization and motivic networks. This methodology can be applied to the music of any jazz performer. Accordingly, I hope that its application will be deemed a viable tool for others.

APPENDICES

1. Owens's Formulas 2b and 5c

M.2B

M.5C

ca. 200 exs.

ca. 200 exs.

The image shows two musical staves. The top staff, labeled 'M.2B', consists of a single line of sixteenth-note patterns. The bottom staff, labeled 'M.5C', has two lines: line 'a' and line 'c'. Line 'a' contains sixteenth-note patterns with various grace note markings. Line 'c' contains eighth-note patterns. Both staves have a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. A brace groups the two lines of M.5C, with the label 'ca. 200 exs.' placed to its right.

2. "Two Bass Hit" interpreted as $\hat{3}$ -line

1

$\hat{3}$

$\hat{3}$

b $\hat{3}$

IN

D \flat 7 G \flat 7 G \flat 7 D \flat 7

D \flat 7 G \flat 7 G \flat 7 D \flat 7

DN

$\hat{3}$ $\hat{2}$ $\hat{1}$

E \flat m7 A \flat 7 D \flat 7 B \flat 7

This image shows a single bass staff with various markings. It starts with a measure labeled '1' above the staff. The next measure begins with a bass note followed by a horizontal line with a dot at the end, labeled ' $\hat{3}$ '. The third measure starts with another bass note followed by a horizontal line with a dot at the end, labeled ' $\hat{3}$ '. The fourth measure starts with a bass note followed by a horizontal line with a dot at the end, labeled 'b $\hat{3}$ '. The fifth measure starts with a bass note followed by a horizontal line with a dot at the end, labeled 'IN'. The sixth measure starts with a bass note followed by a horizontal line with a dot at the end, labeled 'D \flat 7'. The seventh measure starts with a bass note followed by a horizontal line with a dot at the end, labeled 'G \flat 7'. The eighth measure starts with a bass note followed by a horizontal line with a dot at the end, labeled 'G \flat 7'. The ninth measure starts with a bass note followed by a horizontal line with a dot at the end, labeled 'D \flat 7'. The tenth measure starts with a bass note followed by a horizontal line with a dot at the end, labeled 'D \flat 7'. The eleventh measure starts with a bass note followed by a horizontal line with a dot at the end, labeled 'G \flat 7'. The twelfth measure starts with a bass note followed by a horizontal line with a dot at the end, labeled 'D \flat 7'. The thirteenth measure starts with a bass note followed by a horizontal line with a dot at the end, labeled 'B \flat 7'. The fourteenth measure starts with a bass note followed by a horizontal line with a dot at the end, labeled 'B \flat 7'. The fifteenth measure starts with a bass note followed by a horizontal line with a dot at the end, labeled 'DN'. The sixteenth measure starts with a bass note followed by a horizontal line with a dot at the end, labeled ' $\hat{3}$ $\hat{2}$ $\hat{1}$ '. The seventeenth measure starts with a bass note followed by a horizontal line with a dot at the end, labeled 'E \flat m7'. The eighteenth measure starts with a bass note followed by a horizontal line with a dot at the end, labeled 'A \flat 7'. The nineteenth measure starts with a bass note followed by a horizontal line with a dot at the end, labeled 'D \flat 7'. The twentieth measure starts with a bass note followed by a horizontal line with a dot at the end, labeled 'B \flat 7'.

2

2

Ebm⁷ Ab⁷ Db⁷ Gb⁷ Cb⁷ Fb⁷ A⁷ D⁷ D^{b7}(#II)

b3 b3 3-prg. 3-prg. 3 4-prg.

Gb⁷ Gb⁷ Db⁷

3 3

N N 5-prg.

D^{b7} Ebm⁷ Ab⁷ Db⁷ Bb⁷

3. "Blue Train" Graph

The musical score for "Blue Train" is presented in ten staves, each containing two measures of music. The analysis includes various musical concepts such as blues sentence, Pick-up, Presentation, Continuation, b.i. truncated, b.i. truncated variant, b.i. fragmentation, 10-prg., 6th, b.i. variant, Arp., D⁷(¹⁰), chorus-level closure postponed, 4-prg., 8-prg., 3-prg., A, B, and C.

Staff 1: blues sentence, Solo, Pick-up, Fm⁷, Presentation, B^b7, b.i.

Staff 2: 2, Continuation, Eb⁷, Ab⁷, Eb⁷, Eb⁷, Ab⁷, Ab⁷, b.i. truncated, b.i. truncated variant, b.i. fragmentation, b³, 3, 4, 5, 10-prg.

Staff 3: 8, Eb⁷, Eb⁷, Fm⁷, Bb⁷, Abm⁷, Arp., D⁷(¹⁰), Arp., chorus-level closure postponed.

Staff 4: 13, 4-prg., 5, 5, 8-prg.

Staff 5: Eb⁷, Bb⁷, Eb⁷, Eb⁷, Ab⁷, Eb⁷, 6th, Arp., 3, 3, A, B.

Staff 6: 17, 5, 5, 5, 3-prg., 3-prg., 8-prg.

Staff 7: Eb⁷, Ab⁷, Abm⁷, D^b⁷, Eb⁷, 3, 6, 6, B.

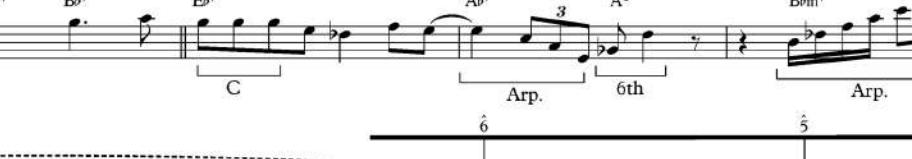
Staff 8: 21, 4, 3, 2, N, 6, 6, 5.

Staff 9: Eb⁷, Fm⁷, Bb⁷, Eb⁷, Arp., Arp., C.

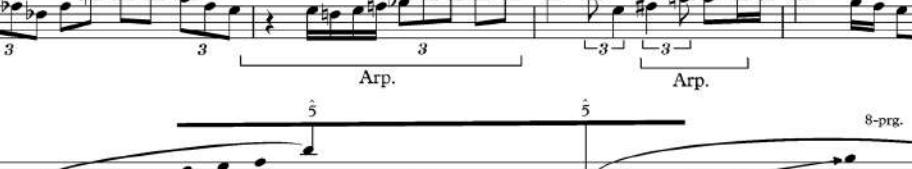
3

5-prg.

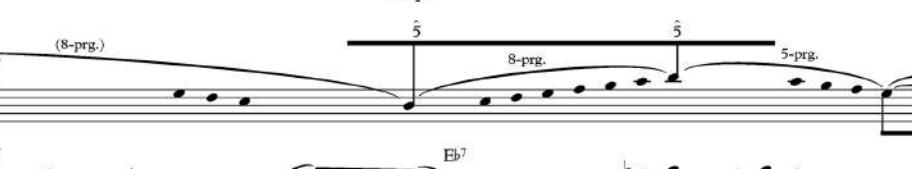
C.T. = Eb

25 

29 

33 

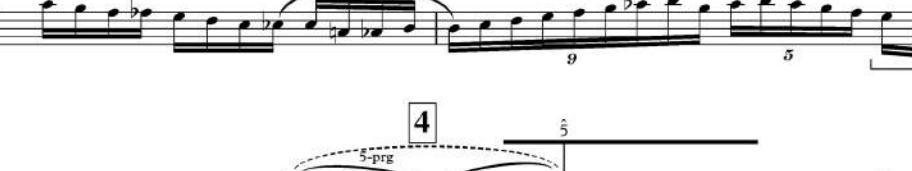
35 

37 

4

5-prg.

C.T. = Eb

40 

42 

42 5-prg. 4 3 2
Arp.
 45 6th A
D
 48 5 4 3 2 1
Arp.
Abm⁷
D
 52 3-prg. 3-prg. 4th
Arp.
 Eb⁷ B Eb⁷ Arp. Eb⁷ Ab⁷ Abm⁷
 56 3-prg. 4 3 2 3-prg. 2
Arp. Arp. Arp. Arp.
 Eb⁷ B Eb⁷ 6th Fm⁷ Abm⁷ Db⁷
 60 5 5 8-prg.
 Eb⁷ Fm⁷ Bb⁷

62 6 Presentation Continuation
Eb⁷ Ab⁷ Eb⁷
b.i. b.i. b.i. b.i.
b6 5 4 3
Arp.
Eb⁷ Ab⁷ Abm⁷
3 3 3 3
Arp. 6th A Arp.
5 b6 2 6
3-prg.
B D
E^b E^b Gbm⁷ Fm⁷
3 3 3 3
C.T. = G
Fm⁷ B^b E^b F#m⁷ Fm⁷ Bb⁷ E^b
3 6th
3 2 1 5 4
3-prg. Arp. Arp. Arp. Arp. Arp. Arp.
C C C C C C C
Ab⁷ Arp. Abm⁷ Eb⁷ Eb⁷ Ab⁷ Ab⁷
1 1 1 1 1 1 1
Arp. Arp. Arp. Arp. Arp. Arp. Arp.
Eb blues scale
7
5 5 5
Arp.
Gm⁷ Fm⁷ Bb⁷
3 3 3
B variant D
Ab⁷ Eb⁷ Eb⁷ Gbm⁷ Fm⁷
3 3 3 3 3
Bb⁷

8

83 5 6th 3 6th N Presentation

Bb⁷ Eb⁷ Fm⁷ Bb⁷ Eb⁷ Ab⁷

3 3 3 3 b.i. b.i.

3-prg. 5 6

6th 4 Continuation

Eb⁷ Eb⁷ Ab⁷ Ab⁷ Eb⁷

3 3 3 3 b.i. (composed out) b.i. (composed out)

b.i. b6 6 b6

93 Gbm⁷ Fm⁷ Bb⁷

b.i. (composed out) b.i. (composed out) 3

5 4 3 2 5th 1

Eb⁷ Fm⁷ Bb⁷ Eb⁷

3 C 5th

4. “Mr. P.C.” Graph

Blues Sentence

1 Anstieg presentation 4 3

Cm⁷ Fm⁷

continuation 7 3 2 1

Cm⁷ Ab⁷ G⁷ Cm⁷

13 1 Anstieg 5

Cm⁷

16 5 6

Cm⁷ Fm⁷ Fm⁷ Anticipation Cm¹³

A

20 5 b7 5

Ab⁷ Ab⁷ G⁷ Cm⁷

B

24 2 5 3-prg. b7 1 3-prg.

C C C 3 3 3 3 3-prg.

Cm⁷ Cm⁷ Cm⁷ Cm⁷ Fm⁷

30 $\hat{b}6$ $\hat{5}$

 33 $\hat{b}6$ $\hat{7}$ $\hat{5}$ $\hat{6}$
 A Fm⁷ Cm⁷ Cm⁷
 D
 B Ab⁷ G⁷ Cm⁷
 36 3 $\hat{5}$ 4-prg. $\hat{b}6$ 3-prg.
 8-prg.
 C Cm⁷ Cm⁷ Cm⁷ Cm⁷ Fm⁷
 A C (TRI)
 42 $\hat{5}$ $\hat{5}$
 E-based Cm⁷ Cm⁷ Ab⁷ G⁷ Cm⁷
 C I 3 B frag.
 48 4 $\hat{5}$ $\hat{5}$ 3-prg.
 D frag. D''
 Cm⁷
 52 $\hat{b}6$ $\hat{5}$ $\hat{5}$ $\hat{5}$
 Fm⁷ G^{7(b9)} Cm⁷
 D E

56

5

Ab⁷ G⁷ Cm⁷ D^{m7}

B 3 5

61

b6

F expanded

Raenderspiel

5 5 5

Cm⁷ D E frag.

65

68

5

4 3

Ab⁷ G⁷ Cm⁷ D^{m7}

B C 6

F frag.

75

2 1

5

3-prg.

4-prg.

3-prg.

G⁷ C⁷ Fm⁷ Bb⁷ Cm⁷

D^{m7} DN 4-prg. 3-prg.

79

Ebm⁷ Ab⁷ Dm⁷ G⁷ Dm⁷ G⁷

C

84 *Urline Gap* 3-prg.

 88 3-prg.
 Fm⁷
 A

91 2 3 3

96 8 3
 Cm⁷
 D'-based fragments D' Fm⁷
 A A

101 3 3-prg.
 Fm⁷
 E frag.

104 3 3 4
 G⁷
 E I G⁷
 Structural closure evaded at chorus level

9

108

Cm9 arp.

8-prg.

Cm⁷

Fm⁷

113

(8-prg.)

Cm⁷

3-prg.

b13th down

b13th up

116

Ab⁷

G⁷

Cm⁷

R

10

120

Cm⁷

Dm^{7(b5)}

G^{7(b9)}

Cm⁷

D'

123

Fm⁷

B^{b7}

Cm⁷

C RI

6-prg.

11

127

4

3

5 4 3 2 1

Cm⁷

D frag.

Ab⁷

G⁷

Cm⁷

133

C^m⁷ C^{7(b3)} F^m⁷ C^m⁷

E-based frag. D frag. A D-based

12

6th 6th 6th

Ab⁷ G⁷ C^m⁷ C^m⁷ 8va

B

6th F^m⁷ C^m⁷ 5 4 3 2 1

A

145

6th

151

Ab⁷ G⁷ C RI

Blues Sentence 13

C^m⁷ presentation

b.i. b.i. b.i.

158

(presentation)

F^m⁷ 3 13:8 3 13 b.i. b.i.

162 (presentation) continuation

Cm^7 Ab^7 G^7 Cm^7

b.i. b.i. b.i. D'

167 3-prg.

Cm^7 $\text{Dm}^7(\text{bs})$ $\text{G}^7(\text{bs})$ Cm^7

172 Fm^7 Cm^7

3 3 3 C I b13th

176 $\hat{2}$ $\hat{b2}$ $\hat{7}$ $\hat{6}$ $\hat{5}$ 15 Blues Sentence

b13th b7th closure avoided at chorus level presentation

Ab^7 G^7 Cm^7 Cm^7

B 6 C 3 b.i.

181 $\hat{4}$ $\hat{3}$ $\hat{4}$ $\hat{3}$

(presentation)

Fm^7 Cm^7

3 b.i. b.i. b.i.

187 $\hat{2}$ $\hat{3}$ $\hat{3}$

(presentation) continuation

Ab^7 G^7 Cm^7

3 D F

Sentential Simulacrum

16

192 3-prg.

197 8-prg.

200 Cm⁷ Fm⁷ E-based

reference to head

5. “Take the Coltrane” Graph

Blues Sentence

1

4-prg.

3-prg.

presentation

A A A A A A

4-prg.

(presentation)

continuation

A A A A A

9
 (continuation) C
 C⁷ B[♭] C⁷ F⁷ B[♭]⁶ F⁷ C⁷
 B C B D TC
 13 [2] b6
 F⁷ B[♭]⁷ C^{b7(♯10)} C^{b7(♯11)} C^{b7(♯11)} C^{b7(♯11)}
 C R E C RI N
 17 5-prg. 5
 B[♭]⁷ B[♭]^{m7} B[♭]⁹ F⁷ B[♭] C⁷ F⁷
 A
 21 4-prg.
 C⁷ B[♭] C⁷ F⁷ B[♭] G^{m7}
 C B D C TC
 25 [3] (4-prg) N
 F⁷ B[♭]⁷ F⁷ F⁷
 G F

29

6 5 6 7 1

33

5 5 5

4 (Sentential opening mm. 37-40)

37

5 6 b6

41

5 6 b6

45

6 5

5

3-prg.

F7 Bb7 F7 F7

53 (3-prg.)

 B_b⁷ B_b⁹ F⁷ F⁷ G
 57

 C⁷ B_b⁷ C⁷ F⁷ G_m⁷ C⁷
 CR

6

 3-prg.
 F⁷ B_b⁷ B_b^m⁷ C F⁷ F⁷
 CR E A

65 C.T.=F

 B_b⁷ B_b⁷ F⁷ F⁷
 3

69

 C⁷ B_b⁷ C⁷ B_b⁷ C⁷
 A B B

7

 73

 D' A RI

F⁷ B_b⁷ F⁷ F⁷

6
 77 c.s. c.s. b
 Bb⁷ Bb⁷ F⁷ F⁷
 C A A

Pedal Tone = F ——————
 reference to opening

81

Gm⁹ Gm⁹ Gm⁹ Gm⁹ C⁷
 A

85 5 6 5
 F⁷ Bb⁷ F⁷ F⁷
 C R C R

89 5 6 b6
 Bb⁷ Bbm^{II} Am^{II} Abm^{II} Abm^{II}
 3

C.T. = Bb & UN B ——————
 93 6 b6
 Abm^{II} G⁶ Eb Gb⁷
 C

97 5 5 6 5
 F⁷ Bb⁷ F⁷ F⁷
 A G

101

8-prg.

Bb⁷ C Bb⁷ C F⁷ A R F⁷

$\hat{5}$ $\hat{6}$ $\hat{5}$

$\hat{5}$ $\hat{6}$ $\hat{5}$

C.T.=F & UN G

C⁷ Bb⁷ F⁷ Gm⁷ C⁷

A elaborated

Blues Sentence & b7 - 1 idea as in "Original 11383"

10

109

F⁷ C RI Bb⁷ presentation F⁷ C RI

$\hat{5}$ $\hat{5}$

113

Bb⁷ C RI Bb⁷ (presentation) F⁷ F⁷

$\hat{5}$ $\hat{6}$ $\hat{5}$

continuation F⁷ Gm⁷ C⁷

$\hat{5}$ $\hat{4}$ $\hat{3}$ $\hat{b3}$

11

121

F⁷ Bb⁷ C F⁷

$\hat{5}$ $\hat{4}$ $\hat{3}$ $\hat{b3}$

4-prg

$\hat{5}$ $\hat{4}$ $\hat{3}$ $\hat{b3}$

B

124

Pedal Tone = D

A

A b3

128

3-prg

4-prg

6-prg

F7 C7 Bb C F7 Abm7

A

B

132

2

1

N

N Reference to head

Gm7 C7

F

12

6. “Bessie’s Blues” Graph

5 5 5 5 6

A A A A R A E

IV7 as i7 parallel min. procedure

1 Blues Sentence

Fm⁷ Bb⁷ Eb⁷ Ab⁷ Eb⁷ Eb⁷ Ab⁷

presentation

3 6 3

6 5 6 5 5

B A C AR

(presentation) continuation

Ab⁷ Eb⁷ Eb⁷ Bb⁹ Ab⁷ Bb⁷

3 3 3 3 3 3

13 6 5 5 6

N N 4-prg. 4-prg. N

B

2

Fm⁷ Bb⁷ Eb⁷ Ab⁷ Eb⁷ Eb⁷ Ab⁷

B 8va

5 5

N 8-prg. & register transfers 4-prg.

19 Ab⁷ Eb⁷ Eb⁷ Bb⁷ Ab⁷ Bb⁷

C ant. 3

25 (4-prg.) 3 3-prg. b6 6

31 6 5 8-prg. 6-prg.

4 38 5 6 5 3-prg.

45 5 5 6 5 6 5 3-prg. 5 5

51 structural 4 present but weak

 sus.
 57 A R
6 outhead
B
 Eb = pedal tone

B B B B
C
B B B B
C

77

B

E \flat ⁷ A \flat ⁷ A \flat ⁷ E \flat ⁷

B

81

3 2 1

E \flat ⁷ B \flat ⁷ A \flat ⁷ E \flat ⁷

C C

7. John Coltrane's Blues Discography 1946-1965

This discography includes every single known recorded performance of the blues and blues-related pieces by John Coltrane that he soloed on. It begins with his very first recording session on July 13, 1946 and ends with his live recording of the *A Love Supreme suite* in Juan-les-Pins on July 26, 1965. This last entry includes "Pursuance," which is a blues that takes up 21 minutes and 31 seconds of the recording's total length of 47 minutes and 42 seconds.

This discography includes roughly 180 blues and clearly illustrates that the blues was an omnipresent and quintessential entity throughout Coltrane's career. Some of the watershed albums which Coltrane contributed to could be largely considered blues albums or albums where the blues played an important role. Four out of six tracks on Davis' *Milestones* are blues. The only documented collaboration of Coltrane and Sonny Rollins, "Tenor Madness," is a blues. Similarly, "Take the Coltrane," arguably represents one of the first manifestations of Coltrane's move toward the aesthetic that governed his late style.

It is noteworthy, that the song listed as "The Last Blues," is only Coltrane's final studio recording of a blues that is known. The real final blues recording stems from the afore mentioned festival performance of "Pursuance" in Juan-les-Pins. There were a few other Impulse! recording dates after this session which have not yet been published. It is however very doubtful that any of these sessions contain a blues.:

Feb 27, 1967. Van Gelder Studio , Englewood Cliffs, NJ.

JOHN COLTRANE QUINTET: John Coltrane (ts); Alice Coltrane (p); Jimmy Garrison (b); Rashied Ali (dr); Marion Brown (bells)

Impulse! unissued. We haven't heard these recordings (unless they actually consist of recordings issued under other titles). Information from Impulse! documentation. [2] According to a letter from Marion Brown (Feb. 17, 1993), he did not play alto sax, but only shook some bells. He was there only as a listener.¹²

March 29, 1967. Van Gelder Studio

¹² Lewis Porter et al., *The John Coltrane Reference*, 876.

JOHN COLTRANE QUARTET: John Coltrane (ts); Alice Coltrane (p); Jimmy Garrison (b); Rashied Ali (dr)

Impulse! unissued. We haven't heard these recordings (unless they actually consist of recordings issued under other titles). Information from Impulse! documentation. [2] We don't know why "Number Three" is missing. The missing "Number One" may be the first track [a.] recorded at session 67-0307.¹³

May 17, 1967. Van Gelder Studio , Englewood Cliffs, NJ.

JOHN COLTRANE SEXTET: John Coltrane (ts); Pharoah Sanders (as); Alice Coltrane (p); Jimmy Garrison (b); Rashied Ali (dr); Algie DeWitt (bata drum)

Impulse! unissued. We haven't heard these recordings (unless they actually consist of recordings issued under other titles). Information from Impulse! documentation; titles as listed on the ABC-Paramount session log. [2] See session 67-0000 (1) , Session Note [1], for discussion of recording dates. [3] This is Coltrane's last known studio session.¹⁴

Throughout the recent two years (2018 & 2019) Impulse! seems to have adopted a new marketing strategy according to which they release previously unissued material from Coltrane annually. In 2018 it was the presumably rediscovered recording *Both Directions at Once: The Lost Album* (1963) as well as *Blue World* (1964) in 2019. This tendency makes jazz aficionad*s hopeful that Impulse! will continue to open their vaults and publish unheard material. Whether the recently issued recordings, were truly lost gives cause for debate, yet there are two factors which lend credibility to the claim. As Tony Whyton, author of the book *Beyond A Love Supreme* attests, Coltrane was deeply involved in the postproduction process of his albums and generally had to give his final consent to not only the music but even the cover/sleeve design.

The view of Coltrane as manipulated subject does not correspond with accounts of the artist's standing and influence at Impulse! records as Lewis Porter noted, "Coltrane was given complete artistic control, even over the packaging of the LPs."¹⁵

Four titles from Coltrane's spring 1967 recording sessions were released on the album *Expressions*, approved by Coltrane shortly before his death.¹⁶

¹³ Ibid., 878-879.

¹⁴ Ibid., 880.

¹⁵ Tony Whyton, *Beyond A Love Supreme*, 52.

¹⁶ Lewis Porter et al., *The John Coltrane Reference*, 870-871.

The issuing of new material can be regarded problematic if Impulse! publishes material Coltrane never intended to be heard publicly and never gave his consent to. Thus, Impulse! conceivably acts against Coltrane's authorial intent, unless they have documented evidence of his agreement. In addition, it seemed to have been common practice to destroy materials which were not used on site. The issue of consent and the practice of destroying unused materials make it unlikely for there to be any material left which is not affected by either factor.

Coltrane's popularity increased exponentially after joining the Miles Davis group and skyrocketed in the ensuing years within the world of jazz, which is also reflected by the increasing number of recordings in this discography. One manifestation of his augmented market value was the proliferation of albums stemming from his European tours. Small labels attempted to profit by recording and issuing his live recordings in various countries. Therefore, we are left with many albums with titles such as *John Coltrane Quartet/The Copenhagen Concerts*, *John Coltrane Quintet/The 1961 Helsinki Concert*, *The Paris Concert*, etc. The result is a near day-to-day documentation of Coltrane during his European tours where he generally stuck to a specific repertoire of pieces.

In this discography blues are entered in list format when they are by the same composer.:

“Some Other Blues” and “Village Blues”	John Coltrane
--	---------------

If multiple blues were written by various composers on an album the tracks are divided by a dotted line.:

“Walkin””	Miles Davis
“Two Bass Hit”	John Lewis, Dizzy Gillespie

The discography is ordered chronologically according to the recording date, since the publication of an album does not always reflect the proverbial state of the art.

	Ca. 1953			"Strange Things All The Rage"	James "Coatesville" Harris	James "Coatesville" Harris	Nestor – JG-06	Released as a 78
1954								
June- early July 1954		<i>Johnny Hodges/At a Dance, in a Studio, on Radio</i>	"Castle Rock"	Johnny Hodges	<i>Johnny Hodges</i>	Enigma – 1052		
1955								
October 26, 1955	November 1979	<i>Circle in the Round</i>	"Two Bass Hit" *	John Lewis, Dizzy Gillespie	Miles Davis	Columbia – KC2 36278	The band recorded five takes of "Two Bass Hit" during the 'Round Midnight session. "Two Bass Hit" was not included on the album and issued later on the album <i>Circle in the Round</i> in 1979.	
1956								
274	March 2, 1956	<i>Chambers' Music: A Jazz Delegation from the East</i>	"John Paul Jones"	John Coltrane	Paul Chambers	Jazz West – JWLP-7	"John Paul Jones" is also known as "Veird Blues" and "Trane's Slo Blues"	
April 20, 1956		1975	<i>High Step</i>	"Trane's Strain" and "Nixon, Dixon and Yates Blues"	Curtis Fuller	Paul Chambers	Blue Note – BN-LA451-H2	
<i>Recorded May 7, 1956</i>		September or October 1956	<i>Informal Jazz</i>	"On It"	Elmo Hope	Elmo Hope	Prestige Records – PRLP 7043	

May 24, 1956		released ca. Oct. 1956	Tenor Madness	“Tenor Madness”	Sonny Rollins	Sonny Rollins	Prestige Records –PRLP 7047	Also known as “Sportin’ Crowd,” “Royal Roost,” or “Rue Chappa,”
May 11 and Oct. 26, 1956		ca. Jan. 1960	<i>Workin' with the Miles Davis Quintet</i>	“Trane's Blues”	John Coltrane	Miles Davis	Prestige Records –PRLP 7166	
				“Ahmad's Blues”	Ahmad Jamal			
Oct. 26, 1956		ca. Mar. 1958	<i>Cookin' with the Miles Davis Quintet</i>	“Blues by Five”	Miles Davis	Miles Davis	Prestige Records –PRLP 7094	
Sept. 7, 1956		Feb. or March 1957	Tenor Conclave	“Bob's Boys”	Hank Mobley	Prestige All Stars	Prestige Records – PRLP 7074	Bird Blues changes! originally credited to the <i>Prestige All Stars</i>
Sept. 21, 1956		Jan. 1957	<i>Whims of Chambers</i>	“Just for the Love”	John Coltrane	Paul Chambers	Blue Note – BLP 1534	
Nov. 30, 1956		Feb. 1957	<i>Mating Call</i>	“Romas”	Tadd Dameron	Tadd Dameron	Prestige Records – PRLP 7070	Two takes were recorded
Dec. 8, 1956		<i>John Coltrane/Private Recordings and Curios.</i>	“Walkin’”	Miles Davis	Miles Davis	Recording Arts – JZCD 316		Live radio broadcast, Bandstand, U.S.A., program #20.

1957

Feb. 16 & 23, 1957		<i>Spider Burks and the Miles Davis Quintet at Peacock Alley, July 14 & 21, 1956</i>	“Walkin” “Two Bass Hit”	Miles Davis John Lewis, Dizzy Gillespie	Miles Davis	Soulard –VGM-SOU 1997	Live radio broadcast, Spider Burks Show (KSTL-AM 690) From Blue Note in Philadelphia
March 22, 1957	Late Oct./early Nov. 1957	<i>Interplay for 2 Trumpets and 2 Tenors</i>	“Light Blue”	Mal Waldron	Art Taylor	Prestige Records –7112	Also released as <i>Taylor's Wailers</i>
April 8, 1957	Oct. 1957	<i>A Blowin' Session</i>	“Smoke Stack”	Johnny Griffin	Johnny Griffin	Blue Note – BLP 1559	They recorded 5 takes
April 13, 1957			“Walkin”	Miles Davis	Miles Davis		Live radio broadcast, Bandstand, U.S.A. from Café Bohemia in NYC. Davis broke up the group shortly thereafter.
April 19, 1957	Ca. Nov. 1957	<i>Mal/2</i>	“Blue Calypso”	Mal Waldron	Mal Waldron	Prestige Records –PRLP 7111	Reissued as <i>The Dealers</i>

April 20, 1957	ca. Dec. 1963	<i>Dakar</i>	“Mary's Blues”	Pepper Adams	Prestige all starts	Prestige Records –PRLP 7280	Different changes with pedal point interlude
May 17, 1957	Ca. Oct. 1959	<i>Cattin' with Coltrane and Quinichette</i>	“Cattin’”	Mal Waldron	John Coltrane & Paul Quinichette	Prestige Records – 7158	Sounds similar to “Walkin’”
May 31, 1957	ca. Oct. 1957	<i>Coltrane</i> (aka. <i>The First Train</i>)	“Chronic Blues”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Prestige Records – 7105	
June 25, 1957	2006	<i>Thelonious Monk with John Coltrane/The Complete 1957 Riverside Recordings</i>	“Blues for Tomorrow”	Thelonious Monk	Thelonious Monk	Riverside 888072300279	Also known as “Club Dues”
August 16, 1957	Ca. March 1961	<i>Lush Life</i>	“Trane's Slo Blues”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Prestige Records – 7188	Two versions were recorded. The second take of this blues was issued under the title “Slowtrane.”
Aug. 16, 1957	ca. Dec. 1965	<i>The Last Trane</i>	“Slowtrane” and “By the Numbers”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Prestige Records – 7378	Recorded during the same session as “Trane's Slo Blues.”
Aug. 23, 1957	ca. Feb. 1958	<i>John Coltrane with the Red Garland Trio</i>	“Traneing In” and “Bass Blues”	John Coltrane	Red Garland	Prestige Records – 7123	“Traneing In” is a blues with a bridge; Two versions of “Bass Blues” were recorded.

Sept. 1, 1957	Mid-March 1958	<i>Sonny's Crib</i>	“Sonny's Crib”	Sonny Clark	Sonny Clark	Blue Note – BLP 1576	Blues with a bridge; 2 versions recorded				
Sept. 15, 1957	Ca. Jan. 1958	<i>Blue Train</i>	“Blue Train” and “Locomotion”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Blue Note – BLP 1577	The group recorded three takes of “Blue Train” and two of “Locomotion”				
Sept. 20, 1957	April 1958	<i>Wheelin' & Dealin'</i>	“Things Ain't What They Used to Be”	Mercer Ellington, Ted Persons		Mal Waldron	Prestige Records – 7131	Three out of four tracks are blues on this album			
			“Wheelin’” and “Dealin’”	Mal Waldron							
Nov. 15, 1957	April 1958	<i>All Mornin' Long</i>	“All Mornin' Long”	Red Garland		Red Garland	Prestige Records – 7130				
Nov. 15, 1957	Late 1960	<i>Soul Junction</i>	“Soul Junction”	Red Garland		Red Garland	Prestige Records – 7181				
			“Birk's Works”	Dizzy Gillespie							
Nov. 29, 1957	Septemb er 27, 2005	<i>Thelonious Monk Quartet with John Coltrane at Carnegie Hall</i>	“Blue Monk”	Thelonious Monk		Thelonious Monk	Blue Note – 0946 3 35173 2 5				
Dec. 13, 1957	Ca. Sept. 1962	<i>Dig It!</i>		Charlie Parker		Red Garland	Prestige Records – PR 7229				
			“Billie's Bounce”								
Dec. 13 1957	ca. Dec. 1961	<i>High Pressure</i>	“Lazy Mae”	Red Garland		Red Garland	Prestige Records – PRLP 7209	“Undecided” was recorded during the November 15 th 1957 session but is included on <i>High</i>			
			“Soft Winds”	Benny Goodman, Fletcher Henderson							
			“Undecided” recorded on	Sid Robin, Charlie Shavers							

			“Two Bass Hit”	Dizzy Gillespie, John Lewis			<i>Pressure.</i> “Soft Winds” and “Two Bass Hit” were recorded on Dec. 13 th 1957
Dec. 1957	Last week of January 1959	<i>Art Blakey Big Band</i>	“Tippin”” “The Outer World”	Donald Byrd Al Cohn	Art Blakey	Bethlehem – BCP-6027	The big band recorded eight takes of “Tippin”” and nine of “The Outer World”
1958							
279	Jan. 3, 1958	1958	<i>Groove Blues</i>	“Groove Blues”	Mal Waldron	Gene Ammons	Prestige Records –PR 7201
	Jan. 3, 1958	1958	<i>The Big Sound</i>	“The Real McCoy”	Mal Waldron	Gene Ammons	Prestige Records – PRLP 7132
	Feb. 4 and March 4, 1958	Sept. 2, 1958	<i>Milestones</i>	“Dr. Jackle” (March 4) “Sid's Ahead” (March 4) “Two Bass Hit” (Feb. 4) “Straight, No Chaser” (Feb. 4)	Jackie McLean Miles Davis John Lewis, Dizz y Gillespie Thelonious Monk	Miles Davis	Columbia – CL 1193

							melodic design similar to “Walkin’.” Occasionally “Dr. Jackle” was released as “Dr. Jekyll.” The album was recorded during two sessions. The respective recording dates of the pieces are given in parentheses.
March 7, 1958	May 1963	<i>Kenny Burrell & John Coltrane</i>	“Freight Trane” “Big Paul”	Unknown Composer Tommy Flanagan	Kenny Burrell	Prestige Records – NJ 8276	“Freight Trane” features bird blues changes.
March 13, 1958	Ca. mid-1958	<i>Mainstream 1958: The East Coast Jazz Scene</i> Coltrane and Wilbur Harden	“Countdown” and “Snuffy”	Wilbur Harden	Wilbur Harden	Savoy – COCB-53901	The band recorded six takes of “Countdown.” This song is the namesake of Coltrane’s later and infamous composition.
March 26, 1958	Ca. Dec. 1961	<i>Settin’ The Pace</i>	“By The Numbers”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Prestige Records – PR 7213	

May 13 1958	late 1958	<i>Tanganyika Strut</i>	“B.J.” and “Anedac”	Wilbur Harden	Wilbur Harden	Savoy –MG-12136	Three takes of “B.J.” were recorded
May 17, 1958		<i>Miles Davis/Makin' Wax</i>	“Walkin’” “Two Bass Hit”	Miles Davis John Lewis, Dizzy Gillespie	Miles Davis	Chakra – CH 100 MDA	Live radio broadcast from the Café Bohemia, Bandstand, U.S.A. #41
May 23, 1958	Aug. 20, 1964	<i>Black Pearls</i>	“Sweet Sapphire Blues”	Bob Weinstock	John Coltrane	Prestige Records –PR 7316	With 18:13 this is a long mid-period blues
June 24, 1958	1958	<i>Jazz Way Out</i>	“Dial Africa”	Wilbur Harden	Wilbur Harden and Curtis Fuller	Savoy MG – 12131	Two takes of “Dial Africa” were recorded
June 25, 1958	Jan. 5, 1959	<i>Legrand Jazz</i>	“Wild Man Blues”	Michel Legrand	Michel Legrand	Columbia – CS 8079	
July 3, 1958	ca. June 1964	<i>Miles & Monk At Newport 1958</i>	“Straight, No Chaser” “Two Bass Hit”	Thelonious Monk John Lewis, Dizzy Gillespie	Miles Davis	Columbia – CS 8978.	
Aug. 9, 1958			“Walkin’”	Miles Davis	Miles Davis		Live radio broadcast, Bandstand, U.S.A. from the Spotlite club in Washington, D.C.

Sept. 9, 1958	Sept. 28, 1973	<i>Jazz at the Plaza Vol. I</i>	"Straight, No Chaser"	Thelonious Monk	Miles Davis	Columbia – C 32470	
Sept. 25, 1958		<i>Joe Brazil and Friends</i>	"Now's the Time"	Charlie Parker	Joe Brazil	Cool Jazz	Joe Henderson is also on this recording.
October 13, 1958	ca. Feb.-May 1959	<i>Stereo Drive</i>	"Shifting Down" "Double Clutching"	Kenny Dorham Chuck Israels	Cecil Taylor	United Artists (Later on Blue Note) – UAS 5014	Reissued as Hard Driving and as Jazz Coltrane Time)
Nov. 1, 1958	1988	<i>Miles Davis All Stars Featuring John Coltrane with Cannonball Adderley</i>	"Sid's Ahead" "Straight No Chaser"	Miles Davis "Thelonious Monk"	Miles Davis	Jazz Band – EB409	Live radio broadcast, Bandstand , U.S.A. #65 from the Spotlight club in Washington, D.C.
1959							
Jan. 3, 1959		<i>Miles Davis All Stars Featuring John Coltrane with Cannonball Adderley</i>	"Bag's Groove"	Milt Jackson	Miles Davis	Jazz Band	Live radio broadcast, Bandstand, U.S.A. #73 from Birdland in NYC
Jan. 15, 1959	Mid July 1961	<i>Bags & Trane</i>	"Bags & Trane," "The Late Late Blues," and "Blues Legacy"	Milt Jackson	Milt Jackson	Atlantic Records – 1368	

February 3, 1959	ca. Sept. 1960	<i>Cannonball Adderley Quintet in Chicago</i> (later released as <i>Cannonball & Coltrane</i> in 1964, on <i>Limelight</i>)	“The Sleeper”	John Coltrane	Cannonball Adderley	Mercury – MG 20449	
March 2 and April 22, 1959	Aug. 17, 1959	<i>Kind of Blue</i>	“Freddie Freeloader” and “All Blues”*	Miles Davis	Miles Davis	Columbia – CL 1355	Four takes of “Freddie Freeloader” were recorded at the March 2 nd session. “All Blues” was recorded during the April 22 nd session.
May 5 1959	ca. Jan. 1960	<i>Giant Steps</i>	“Cousin Mary” and “Mr. P.C.”*	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Atlantic – 1311	The band recorded two takes of “Cousin Mary.” “Mr. P.C.” may have been inspired by “Shadrack.”
Dec. 2, 1959 & Oct. 21, 1960	ca. Feb. 1961	<i>Coltrane Jazz</i>	“Some other blues” and “Village Blues”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Atlantic – 1354	“Village Blues” was recorded on October 21, 1960
1960							
March 21, 1960		<i>Miles Davis en Concert avec Europe I</i>	“Walkin’”	Miles Davis	Miles Davis	Trema – 710455	Recording of a live concert in Paris.

March 22, 1960	1985	<i>Miles Davis & John Coltrane/Live in Stockholm 1960</i>	“Walkin”	Miles Davis	Miles Davis	Dragon – DRLP 90/91	
Ca. March 23-April 10, 1960		<i>Miles Davis & John Coltrane Live in Europe 1960</i>	“Walkin”	Miles Davis	Miles Davis	RX	
March 24, 1960	1989	<i>Miles Davis—John Coltrane Copenhagen 1960</i>	“All Blues”	Miles Davis	Miles Davis	Royal Jazz – RJ 501	“All Blues” is the only track that stems from a radio broadcast of Denmark Radio. It was added onto the album.
March 28, 1960			“Walkin”	Miles Davis	John Coltrane	RX	This version of “Walkin” was recorded at the WDR studio in Cologne and Davis was supposed to have been present.
April 8, 1960	1993	<i>The Miles Davis Quintet “Live in Zürich 1960”</i>	“All Blues”	Miles Davis	Miles Davis	Jazz Unlimited – JUCD 2031	Recorded live at the Kongresshaus Zürich in Switzerland.
April 9, 1960		<i>Miles Davis Quintet/Live in Holland</i>	“Walkin”	Miles Davis	Miles Davis	Unique Jazz – UJ 19	Recorded live at the Kurhaus in Scheveningen in the Netherlands

June 10, 1960	April 1, 2011	<i>John Coltrane Quartet/Live at the Jazz Gallery 1960</i>	“Summertime”	George Gershwin	John Coltrane	Rare Live Recordings – RLR 88662	Recorded during a concert at The Jazz Gallery in NYC. “Summertime” is not a blues but shares many communalities.
July 1, 1960			“Summertime”	George Gershwin	John Coltrane		Audience tape
Ca. July 18-23, 1960		Showboat Philadelphia, PA	“Cousin Mary;” “Equinox,” “Blue Train,” “Some Other Blues,” and “Mr. Syms” (Also contains an incomplete F blues, possibly “Chasin’ the Trane”)	John Coltrane	John Coltrane		Private recordings. There are two versions of “Cousin Mary,” “Equinox,” and “Blue Train”
Oct. 24, 1960 (2:00 p.m.-6:30 p.m.)	July 1962	<i>Coltrane Plays the Blues</i>	“Mr. Syms” and “Summertime”	John Coltrane George Gershwin	John Coltrane	Atlantic – 1382	This is the take of summertime that was used for the <i>My Favorite Things</i> album.

Oct. 24, 1960 (7:30 p.m.-midnight)	July 1962	<i>Coltrane Plays the Blues</i>	"Blues to Elvin," "Blues to Bechet," "Blues to You" "Mr. Day," and "Mr. Knight"	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Atlantic	Four takes of "Blues to Elvin" and three of "Blues to You" were recorded.
Oct. 26, 1960	Late June/early July 1964	<i>Coltrane's Sound</i>	"Equinox"	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Atlantic –SD 1419	Two takes were recorded.
Sept. 8, 1960	1962	<i>The Best of Birdland Vol. I</i>	"Mr. Day"	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Roulette – SR 52094	Also known as "One and Four." Three versions of "Mr. Day" were recorded.
1961							
March 1-5 and/or 8-12, 1961			"Jon Paul Jones;" "Equinox," "Summertime," " and "Blue Train"	John Coltrane	John Coltrane		Sutherland Lounge, Sutherland Hotel, Chicago, IL (47th and Drexel Blvd.). March 1–12, 1961. Live radio broadcasts on WSB-CFM (93.1)
May 25, 1961		<i>Olé</i>	"Dahomey Dance"	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Atlantic – SD 1373	
June 7, 1961	Sept. 1, 1961	<i>Africa/Brass</i>	"Blues Minor"	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Impulse! – A-6-S	The album influenced Steve Reich.

November 1, 1961	1977	<i>The Other Village Vanguard Tapes</i>	“Chasin’ the Trane”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Impulse! – AS-9325	
November 2, 1961	Ca. Feb. 1962	<i>Coltrane "Live" at the Village Vanguard</i>	“Chasin’ the Trane”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Impulse! – A-10-S	
November 2, 1961	1979	<i>Trane's Modes</i>	“Chasin’ Another Trane”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Impulse! – 2-4140	“Chasin’ Another Trane” is a B♭ blues while “Chasin’ the Trane” is an F blues. Both tracks were recorded live at the Village Vanguard on the same night.
Nov. 18, 1961	1987	<i>Live in Paris 1961</i>	“Blue Train”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Jazz Way – LTM - 1503	
Nov. 22, 1961		<i>John Coltrane Quintet/The 1961 Helsinki Concert</i>	“Blue Train”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Gambit – 69275	Recorded live at the Kulttuuritalo in Helsinki, Finland.
Nov. 23, 1961		<i>The John Coltrane Quartet with Eric Dolphy in Europe, Vol. 2</i>	“Blue Train”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Beppo –BEP 504	Recorded live at the Konserthuset in Stockholm, Sweden .
1962							
Feb. 10, 1962		<i>That Dynamic Jazz Duo/Coltrane-Dolphy</i>	“Mr. P.C.”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Ozone – 912	Live concert at Birdland New York City (1678 Broadway at 52nd St.)

Feb. 17, 1962	September 25, 2009	<i>John Coltrane Quintet with Eric Dolphy/The Complete 1962 Birdland Broadcasts</i>	“Mr. P.C.”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Gambit Records – 69325	Live concert at Birdland New York
June 2, 1962		<i>Impassioned Tenor-Man</i>	“Cousin Mary”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Alto – AL 724	
November 19, 1962	1981	<i>Bye Bye Blackbird</i>	“Traneing In”			Pablo Records – 2308-227	Blues with a bridge. Awarded a posthumous Grammy for Best Jazz Solo Performance in 1982.
Maybe recorded in Berlin on 2 Nov. 1963 or in Paris, on 17 Nov. 1962.		<i>The Paris Concert</i>	“Mr. P.C.”			Pablo Records – 2308 217	
September 18, 1962	Mid July 1963	“ <i>Impression</i> ”	“Up ‘Gainst the Wall”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Impulse! – A-42	Three versions of “Up ‘Gainst the Wall” were recorded
September 26, 1962	February 1963	<i>Duke Ellington & John Coltrane</i>	“Take the Coltrane”	Duke Ellington	Duke Ellington & John Coltrane	Impulse! – A-30	
Nov. 17, 1962	1979	<i>The Paris Concert</i>	“Mr. P.C.,” and “Traneing In”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Pablo Live – 2308 217	Recorded live at Olympia, Paris, France

Nov. 19, 1962		<i>Blue Train Live on Mount Meru Vol. I</i>	“Mr. P.C.” and “Traneing In”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Historical Performances –HPLP-3	Recorded live at Konserthuset , Stockholm, Sweden.
Nov. 20, 1962		<i>John Coltrane/Helsinki 1962</i>	“Mr. P.C.” and “Traneing In”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Le Chant Du Monde – 574272.61	Recorded live at Kulttuuritalo, Helsinki, Finland .
Nov. 22, 1962	1989	<i>John Coltrane Quartet/The Copenhagen Concerts</i>	“Mr. P.C.” “Traneing In,” and “Chasing the Trane”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Jazz Up – JU-316	Recorded live at Falkoner Centret , Copenhagen (København), Denmark.
Nov. 28, 1962	1992	<i>The Complete Graz Concert '62</i>	“Mr. P.C.”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Magnetic Records – MRCD 104/05	Recorded live at Grosser Stefanien Saal, Graz, Austria.
Dec. 2, 1962		<i>Everytime We Say Goodbye</i>	“Chasing the Trane;” and “Mr. P.C.”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	EAR Records	Recorded live at Teatro dell'Arte, Milano, Italy .
1963							
Jan. 19, 1963			“Mr. P.C.”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Private recording	Recorded live at Penn State University
March 2, 1963		<i>Impassioned Tenor-Man</i>	“Mr. P.C.”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Alto – AL 724	Recorded live at Birdland, NYC
March 6, 1963	June 29, 2018	<i>Both Directions at Once: The Lost Album</i>	“Untitled Original 11383,” and “Slow Blues”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Impulse! – B0028228-02	

June 10, 1963	April 15, 2010	<i>John Coltrane Trio & Quartet/More Live at the Showboat 1963</i>	“Mr. P.C.”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Rare Live Recordings – RLR 88657	
Ca. July 4, 5, or 6 1963	<i>September 25, 2009</i>	<i>John Coltrane Quartet/The 1962 Milan Concert</i>	“Up ‘Gainst the Wall”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Rare Live Recordings – RLR 88652	Recorded live at La Tete de L'Art , Montreal, Canada
Aug. 19–25, 1963		<i>John Coltrane Quartet-Live at the Showboat</i>	“Mr. P.C.”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Rare Live Recordings – RLR 88620	Showboat, Philadelphia,
October 8, 1963	January 1964	<i>Live at Birdland</i>	“The Promise,” “Mr. P.C.” and “Traneing In”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Impulse! – AS 50	The head of “The Promise” could be seen as a 16- bar blues.
October 22, 1963	1980	<i>The European Tour</i>	“Mr. P.C.” “The Promise,” and “Traneing In”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Pablo Records – 2308-222	Recorded at Koncerthuset in Stockholm, Sweden.
Oct 25, 1963		<i>John Coltrane Quartet/The Complete 1963 Copenhagen Concert</i>	“Mr. P.C.”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Gambit – 69239	Recorded at Tivolis Koncertsal, Copenhagen, Denmark
Nov. 1, 1963	1979	<i>The Paris Concert</i>	“Mr. P.C.”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Pablo Live – 2308 217	Recorded at Salle Pleyel, Paris, France

	Nov. 2, 1963	<i>Afro Blue Impressions</i>	“Mr. P.C.,” “Chasin’ the Trane,” and “Cousin Mary”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Pablo Live – 2620 101	Recorded at Auditorium Maximum, Freie Universität, Berlin, West Germany.
	Nov. 4, 1963	<i>Unissued Concert in Germany 1963 Part One</i>	“Mr. P.C.” and “The Promise”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Jazz Galore – 1001	Recorded at Mozart-Saal, Liederhalle , Stuttgart, West Germany.
1964							
291	April 27, 1964	<i>All songs but “Bessie’s Blues” for the album Crescent stem from this session</i>	“Bessie’s Blues” (2:58)	John Coltrane	John Coltrane		The complete version of “Bessie’s Blues” from this session was 4:40, according to Impulse! records. Only an incomplete version has survived.
	June 1, 1964	July 1964	<i>Crescent</i>	“Bessie’s Blues”*	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Impulse! – AS 66
	June 24, 1964	September 27, 2019	<i>Blue World</i>	“Village Blues” and “Traneing In”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Impulse! – B0030158-01
							Two additional takes of “Village Blues” were recorded.

December 9, 1964	January 1965	<i>A Love Supreme</i>	“Pursuance”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Impulse! – A 77	Two takes of “Pursuance” were recorded.
1965							
June 10 1965	ca. Jan. 1967	<i>Transition</i>	“Last Blues” and “Transition”	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Impulse! AS-9195	Two takes of “Last Blues” were recorded. “Transition” can be regarded as a 16-bar blues.
Jul. 26, 1965		<i>A Love Supreme</i>	“Pursuance” (21:31 – by far the longest track. Total album length= 47:42)	John Coltrane	John Coltrane	Ingo – Ingo Eleven	Recorded at the Festival International du Jazz Antibes— Juan-les-Pins , Juan-les-Pins, France.

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