The Contributions of Earl "Bud" Powell to the Modern Jazz Style

David Joseph DeMotta
Graduate Center, City University of New York

How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!

Follow this and additional works at: https://academicworks.cuny.edu/gc_etds

Part of the Music Commons

Recommended Citation

This Dissertation is brought to you by CUNY Academic Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Dissertations, Theses, and Capstone Projects by an authorized administrator of CUNY Academic Works. For more information, please contact deposit@gc.cuny.edu.
THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF EARL “BUD” POWELL TO THE MODERN JAZZ STYLE

by

David Joseph DeMotta III

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Music in partial
Fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
The City University of New York

2015
This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Music in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Professor L. Poundie Burstein, Ph.D.

Date

Chair of Examining Committee

Professor Norman Carey, Ph.D.

Date

Executive Officer

Professor Stephen Blum, Ph.D.

Professor Mark Anson-Cartwright, Ph.D.

Professor Jeffrey J. Taylor, Ph.D.

Professor Pete Malinvern

Supervisory Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
ABSTRACT
THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF EARL “BUD” POWELL TO THE MODERN JAZZ STYLE
by
David Joseph DeMotta III

Adviser: Professor Stephen Blum

This is an analytical study of pianist and composer Bud Powell’s contributions to modern jazz (a.k.a. bebop or “bop”), focusing especially on the rhythmic and harmonic implications of Powell’s improvisations. The analysis is informed by a series of interviews with professional jazz musicians and is supported by original notated transcriptions of Powell recordings. The aim of this project is to present a cogent technical and theoretical account of Powell’s musical style that is grounded in the values of the contemporary jazz community and reflects that community’s continued passion for and engagement with Powell.

Chapter One, “Contemporary Pianists and Bud Powell’s Music,” summarizes the ways that eight professional jazz pianists conceive of Powell’s contributions to contemporary performance practice and to their individual musical styles and paths of development. The participants explain the ways in which they engage with Bud Powell’s music as listeners, students, teachers, and performers, speaking passionately about Powell’s genius and providing accounts of how their study of Powell’s music has contributed to their own development as artists and pedagogues.

Chapter Two, “Bud Powell’s Improvisations and the Aesthetics of Modern Jazz Rhythm,” explores how Powell’s improvised solos creatively encapsulate the textural and
rhythmic essentials of the modern jazz style. Special attention is paid to the relationship between Powell’s music and the textural developments of the rhythm section, especially advances in jazz drumming and the underlying harmonic rhythm as temporal reference. Topics include asymmetry of phrase placement and structure in relation to meter and cyclic form, irregular accents and left-hand “bombs,” beat-one avoidance and negative accents, harmonic displacement, phrasing “over the barline,” and cross-rhythmic groupings.

Chapter Three, “A Model For Harmony and Voice-leading in Bud Powell’s Linear-Melodic Improvisations,” describes the harmonic implications of Powell’s improvised lines. This analysis examines Powell’s concept of harmony and voice leading during his negotiation of descending-fifths sequences and related progressions through a five-strand voice-leading model based on chord tones.

Chapter Four, “A Case Study of Harmonic Paths and Voice-leading Discontinuities in Powell’s Negotiation of Subdominant Tonicizations in ‘I Got Rhythm’ Related A Sections,” is a study of Powell’s improvisation over measures five through eight of “rhythm changes” A sections, which present an obstacle to the descending-fifths-based harmony and voice-leading apparatus described in Chapter Three.

Chapter Five, “Flatted Fifths in Bud Powell’s Harmonic Approach,” discusses the various ways in which Powell saturated his music with a sound essential to bebop, the dominant seventh flatted fifth chord. Discussing Powell’s incorporation of this and related devices throughout his compositions and improvisations and in situations that vary in mood and tempo, this chapter offers a window into Powell’s creative process by illustrating his ability to maximally exploit one highly idiomatic element of his vocabulary.
I would like to thank my wife, Yoshiko DeMotta, for her love, patience, and technical support, and my parents, David and Mary Ann DeMotta, for encouraging me to follow my musical dreams. I would like to thank Stephen Blum, who not only advised this dissertation and opened many intellectual doors for me in the process, but who has been a supportive mentor throughout my doctoral studies, from the application process to the dissertation defense. I would like to thank my first reader, Mark Anson-Cartwright, and the members of my committee, Poundie Burstein, Jeffrey Taylor, and Pete Malinverni, for their careful reading and insightful comments. This project benefitted tremendously from the professional musicians who donated their time to discuss Bud Powell’s music with me, especially David Berkman, Tardo Hammer, David Hazeltine, Frank Perowsky, Joel Press, Pete Malinverni, Jordan Piper, Ted Rosenthal, Mark Soskin, and James Weidman. I was inspired by conversations with Earl John Powell, and his blessings on this project meant a great deal to me. Special thanks to Steve Slagle for listening through some of my most important transcriptions and for commenting on the relationship between Bud Powell’s improvisational style and that of Charlie Parker. Special thanks to Bill Moring for his comments on rhythm and for his many post-gig pep talks (“get the thing done!”). Special thanks to Curt Gary, Richard Huntley, and Colby Inzer for their input on modern jazz drumming and rhythm. I am grateful to the Graduate Center music faculty, especially Professors Peter Manuel and Jane Sugarman, for their years of encouragement, and to Tim Newman, David Demsey, and John Link of the William Paterson music faculty for encouraging me to pursue scholarship at the doctoral level.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction ..................................................................................................................... 1

Chapter One: Contemporary Pianists and Bud Powell’s Music ........................................ 25
The Participants .............................................................................................................. 26
“The Father of Modern Jazz Piano” .............................................................................. 30
Powell and the New Left Hand: Freedom from Stride and the Bebop Drumming Connection 32
Fierce Lyricism: the Linear-Melodic Dimension of Powell’s Playing .......................... 36
More than a Virtuoso: Powell the Composer .................................................................. 40
Harmonic Explorations ............................................................................................... 43
Three Ways of Hearing the “Un Poco Loco” Sonority .................................................. 45
“It’s hard to get away from:” Bud Powell’s Legacy in the Jazz Piano Canon ............... 49
Bud Powell’s Music as Professional Development ..................................................... 53

Chapter Two: Bud Powell’s Improvisations and the Aesthetics of Modern Jazz Rhythm . 62
Rhythm and Texture in Bebop ...................................................................................... 63
The Role of Harmonic Rhythm and the “Gravitational Black Hole” of Beat One ........... 65
Phrase Placement and Structure in Powell’s Improvising ........................................... 70
Metric Placement of Ornamental Triplet Figures ....................................................... 77
Dancing Around the Downbeat and the “Gravitational Black Hole” Effect in Powell’s Phrasing 80
The Role of Harmonic Anticipation and Displacement .............................................. 83
The Relationship between Phrase Placement and Left-hand Harmonic Anticipation at the Eighth-note Level ............................................................ 83
Quarter-note Level Harmonic Displacement in Powell’s Right Hand Lines .................. 88
Left Hand “Bombs” and Quarter-note Level Displacement ........................................ 89
Larger Scale Harmonic-rhythmic Displacements ....................................................... 94
Ternary Groupings ...................................................................................................... 95

Chapter Three: A Model For Harmony and Voice Leading in Bud Powell’s Linear-Melodic Improvisations ......................................................................................... 103
Strand 1: Roots and Tritone Substitutions .................................................................. 111
Strands 2 and 3: Thirds and Sevenths ......................................................................... 120
Strands 2 and 3 and Tritone Substitutes ..................................................................... 124
Powell’s use of the Blues-subdominant as a Tritone Substitute Pivot Chord ............... 127
Melodic Articulations of Strands 2 and 3 in Powell’s Solos ........................................ 128
Strand 4: Fifths and Ninths ......................................................................................... 132
Strand 4 in Polyphony with Strands 1, 2, and 3 .......................................................... 134
Harmonic Ambiguity and Voice-leading Coherence in Strands 1, 2, 3, and 4 .............. 143
Strand 5: Ninths and Thirteenth ............................................................................... 146
Strands 4 and 5 in Support of Longer Lines .................................................................. 152

Chapter Four: A Case Study of Harmonic Paths and Voice-leading Discontinuities in Powell’s Negotiation of Subdominant Tonicizations in “I Got Rhythm” Related A Sections. ......................................................................................... 157
Path group 1: The Modally Mixed Subdominant and Tonic Prolongation “By Arrival” .... 159
Path group 2: The Applied Diminished to Cadence Formula (vii/V—V6/4) ..................... 164
Hybrid Paths From IV That Involve Modal Mixture ................................................................. 170
Hybrid Paths Involving Cadential Six-Four via the bVII Backdoor Dominant ...................... 175

Chapter Five: Flatted Fifths in Bud Powell’s Harmonic Approach ................................ 179
The Flatted Fifth in Bebop ........................................................................................................ 180
“Tempus Fugit” and the Idiomatic Bebop Flatted Fifth .......................................................... 181
Flatted Fifths in Powell Solos ............................................................................................... 183
The Flatted Fifth – Tritone Substitute Connection ............................................................... 184
Flatted Fifths and the Augmented/Whole Tone Sound ......................................................... 186
Raised Elevenths and the Fourth Mode of the Melodic Minor Scale .................................. 189
The Flatted-fifth as an Appoggiatura .................................................................................... 191
Flatted Fifths in Powell’s Through-Composed Pieces ....................................................... 191

Conclusion ............................................................................................................................... 197

Transcriptions .......................................................................................................................... 200

Discography .............................................................................................................................. 339

Bibliography ............................................................................................................................ 341
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1: Musicians interviewed for this study................................................................. 26
Table 2.2: Measure and beat placement of triplet-based ornaments in A1 of “Bouncing with Bud” solo. ................................................................. 78
Table 2.3: Metric placement of triplet-based ornaments in A1 of two “Bouncing with Bud” takes. ............................................................................................... 80
Table 2.4: Metric placement of Powell’s left-hand chords in Example 2.11. ....................... 88
Table 3.1: Voice-leading schema of the five-strand model through a diatonic ii\(^{-7}\)/V\(^{7}\)/I\(^{maj7}\) progression ........................................................................................................ 108
Table 3.2: Voice-leading schema of the five-strand model through a ii\(^{-7}\)/bII\(^{7}\)/I\(^{maj7}\) tritone-substitute progression. .................................................................................. 109
Table 3.3: Abstract voice-leading diagram illustrating scale degree 7 as a stable pitch. ....... 122
Table 3.4: Abstract voice-leading diagram of strand 4 in a ii\(^{-7}\)/V\(^{7}\)/I\(^{maj7}\) progression........... 132
Table 3.5: Abstract illustration of strand 4-tritone substitute voice leading........................ 133
Table 3.6: Rhythmic articulation of strand 4 in Example 3.17............................................. 134
Table 3.7: Abstract illustration of strands 1 and 4 through an applied and diatonic ii\(^{-7}\)/V\(^{7}\) sequence. .................................................................................................................. 138
Table 3.8: Abstract diagram for strand 5 through a ii\(^{-7}\)/V\(^{7}\)/I\(^{maj7}\) progression............... 146
Table 3.9: Abstract illustration of strand 5-tritone substitute voice leading........................ 150
Table 4.1: Abstract voice-leading diagram for modally mixed iv – tonic prolongation by arrival, mm. 5-8 of rhythm changes A sections. ......................................................... 160
LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES

Example 0.1: C2A2 of Powell’s “Reets and I” solo, (2.04-2.07) (sample musical example) ..... 24
Example 1.1: “Un Poco Loco,” introduction and first half of A section (0.00-0.14) .................. 46
Example 1.2: Illustration of Weidman’s explanation of sonority in “Un Poco Loco” .............. 47
Example 1.3: Illustration of Tardo Hammer’s explanation of sonority in “Un Poco Loco” .... 48
Example 1.4: Illustration of “Un Poco Loco” sonority as a cycle of major and minor thirds stacked to create a C major seventh chord with a raised fifteenth ......................... 49
Example 1.5: Powell’s solo break on “Celia” (1.09-1.13) .................................................. 56
Example 2.1: C1 of Powell’s solo on “Bud’s Bubble” (0.34-1.02), phrases numbered ........... 72
Example 2.2: Right hand of Powell’s “Celia” solo, phrases numbered (1.09-2.02) ............... 75
Example 2.3: C1A1 of Powell’s “Bouncing with Bud” solo, (1.53-2.02) .............................. 78
Example 2.4: C1A1 of original release and alternate take one solos on “Bouncing with Bud.” .. 79
Example 2.5: Powell’s solo opening on “The Fruit,” (0.45-0.48) ...................................... 81
Example 2.6: Powell’s phrase to begin C1A3 of his solo on “The Fruit,” (1.14-1.16) ............. 81
Example 2.7: Powell’s phrase beginning C1A2 of his “Hallucinations” solo (0.46-0.47) ....... 82
Example 2.8: Powell’s phrase beginning C2A1 of his “Hallucinations” solo (1.10-1.12) ......... 82
Example 2.9: Powell’s phrase beginning C2A2 of his “Hallucinations” solo, (1.17-1.19) ...... 82
Example 2.10: C1A1 of Powell’s “Bouncing with Bud” solo, (1.52-2.03) ........................... 85
Example 2.12: C3B of Powell’s “Indiana” solo, (1.26-1.27) ............................................. 89
Example 2.13: C1A1-C1A2 of Powell’s “Wail” solo, (1.35-1.39) ........................................ 90
Example 2.14: C1A2 of Powell’s “I Want to Be Happy” solo, (1.41-1.45) ........................... 91
Example 2.15: C1A2-C1B of Powell’s “Parisian Thoroughfare” solo, (0.39-0.51) ............. 92
Example 2.16: C1A2 of Powell’s “Hallucinations” solo, (0.44-0.54) ................................. 94
Example 2.17: C2A1 of Powell’s “I Want to Be Happy” solo, (2.02-2.07) .......................... 95
Example 2.18: Final four measures of C2B of Powell’s “Indiana” solo, (0.52-0.55) ............ 96
Example 2.19: C2A1 of Powell’s “Tempus Fugit” solo, (1.04-1.10) ................................. 97
Example 2.23: C1B of Powell’s solo on “The Fruit,” (1.05-1.07) .................................... 100
Example 2.24: C1A2 of Powell’s solo on “Night in Tunisia” (1.35-1.37). ................................. 101
Example 2.25: C1B of Powell’s “Strictly Confidential” solo, (1.38-1.40). ................................. 101
Example 3.1: C3B of Powell’s “Hallucinations” solo, (1.55-2.06). ................................. 104
Example 3.2: HB-HA3 of “Parisian Thoroughfare,” 0.25-0.27. ...................................................... 112
Example 3.3: C1B-C1A3 of “Parisian Thoroughfare,” 0.51-0.53. ...................................................... 113
Example 3.4: “Parisian Thoroughfare” solo, C2B-C2A3, 1.18-1.20. ...................................................... 114
Example 3.7: Powell’s “Ornithology” solo, final four measures before Head out, (1.47-1.51). 118
Example 3.9: “Ornithology” (1949), introduction and first A section (0.00-0.16). .................. 123
Example 3.10: C1A2:5-6 of Powell’s solo on “The Fruit,” (1.30). ...................................................... 124
Example 3.11: First four measures of “Hallucinations” bridge during head (0.16-0.21), with voice-leading schema................................................................. 125
Example 3.12: “Hallucinations” head (0.00 – 0.05). ................................................................. 127
Example 3.13: C1B:1-4 of Powell’s “Hallucinations” solo, (0.54-0.59), with voice-leading schema. ................................................................. 129
Example 3.14: “Bud’s Bubble”: C1B of Powell’s solo, (0.48-0.55). ...................................................... 130
Example 3.15: C2A1:5-6 of Powell’s “I Want to be Happy” solo, (2.07-2.09). ......................... 131
Example 3.17: C3A1 of Powell’s “Indiana” solo, (1.20-1.23). ...................................................... 133
Example 3.18: Powell’s “Celia” solo, C1A3, (1.57-2.00) with voice-leading schema. ............. 135
Example 3.19: C3A2 of Powell’s “Parisian Thoroughfare” solo, (1.35-1.36), with voice-leading schema. .................................................................................................................. 137
Example 3.20: Powell’s solo on “The Fruit,” C1B:5-6 (1.10-1.13), with voice-leading schema of strands 1 and 4. ...................................................... 138
Example 3.21: C2B of Powell’s “Reets and I” solo (1.52-2.04). ...................................................... 139
Example 3.23: Powell’s solo on “The Fruit,” C1A1, (0.48-0.51). ...................................................... 142
Example 3.24: Transition from C2B to C2A2 in Powell’s “Ornithology” solo, (1.06-1.11)..... 143
Example 3.25: C2B of Powell’s solo on “Hallucinations,” (1.26-1.31), with voice-leading schema. .................................................................................................................. 144
Example 3.26: Powell’s “Reets and I” solo, C2A2:1-2, (2.04-2.07), with voice-leading schema. .................................................................................................................. 147
Example 3.27: C1A2 of Powell’s “Parisian Thoroughfare” solo, (0.40-0.47). ................................. 148
Example 3.28: C3-C4 of Powell’s “Dance of the Infidels” solo, (1.36-1.39). .......................... 149
Example 3.30: Powell’s “Hallucinations” solo, turnaround into C1A3, (1.01-1.03). .................... 151
Example 3.31: “Dance of the Infidels” solo, last four measures of C1 (1.00-1.05), with voice-leading schema................................................................. 151
Example 3.32: C1A3 of Powell’s “Hallucinations” solo (1.02-1.06), with voice-leading schema.  ........................................................................................................ 152
Example 3.33: C2A2 of Powell’s “Hallucinations” solo, (1.18-1.23), with voice-leading schema.  ........................................................................................................ 154
Example 4.1: Typical rhythm changes chord progression in B-flat major. ................................. 159
Example 4.2. C2A1 of Powell’s solo on “Bud’s Bubble,” (1.05-1.09). ......................................... 161
Example 4.3: C1A3 of Powell’s “Wail” solo, (1.56-2.01). ............................................................. 163
Example 4.4: C1A1 of Powell’s solo on “The Fruit,” (0.51-0.56). ................................................ 166
Example 4.5: C1A3 of Powell’s solo on “The Fruit,” (1.19-1.26). ................................................ 167
Example 4.6: C3A2 of Powell’s solo on “Parisian Thoroughfare,” (1.36-1.40). ....................... 168
Example 4.7: C1A1 of Powell’s solo on “Wail,” (1.35-1.39). ...................................................... 169
Example 4.8: C1A1 of Powell’s “Sonny Side” solo, (1.15-1.20). ................................................ 169
Example 4.9: C1A2 of Powell’s solo on “Wail,” alternate take, (1.32-1.36), voice-leading schema. ........................................................................................................ 171
Example 4.10: C3A3 of Powell’s solo on “Parisian Thoroughfare,” (1.49-1.53). ..................... 172
Example 4.12: C2A2 of Powell’s “Hallucinations” solo, (1.21-1.23). ........................................ 174
Example 4.13: C1A3 of Powell’s solo on “Bud’s Bubble,” (0.59-1.02). ...................................... 174
Example 4.14: C1A1 of Powell’s solo on “The Fruit,” (1.00-1.06), with voice-leading schema.  ........................................................................................................ 176
Example 4.15: C2A1 of Powell’s solo on “The Fruit,” (1.29-1.34). ............................................. 177
Example 5.1: Introduction to “Tempus Fugit,” use of flatted fifth, (0.00-0.08). ....................... 182
Example 5.2: Flatted fifths in the “Tempus Fugit” bridge, (0.24-0.28). ..................................... 183
Example 5.3: Powell’s “Un Poco Loco” solo, flatted fifth, (1.15-1.17). .................................... 183
Example 5.4: Opening statement of C14 in Powell’s “Bigfoot” solo, (3.35-3.40). ................. 184
Example 5.5: HB of “Parisian Thoroughfare,” (0.23-0.27). ..................................................... 185
Example 5.6: HB of “The Fruit,” (0.27-0.30)........................................................................186
Example 5.7: C2B of “I Want to be Happy” (2.18-2.21). .........................................................187
Example 5.8: C1B of Powell’s “I Want to Be Happy” solo, (1.52-1.56). .................................187
Example 5.9: C1B of Powell’s solo on “Bouncing with Bud, Alternate Take 2,” (2.29-2.35). 188
Example 5.10: C2B of Powell’s “Parisian Thoroughfare” solo, (1.16-1.20). .........................189
Example 5.11: “Take the A Train,” measures 1-4. ..................................................................190
Example 5.12: C1B of Powell’s “Indiana” solo (0.40-0.43). ....................................................190
Example 5.13 Final measures of Powell’s solo on “Sonny Side,” (1.39-1.45). .......................191
Example 5.16: “Sure Thing,” mm. 13-22 (0.17-0.27). .................................................................194
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Night in Tunisia</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All God’s Children Got Rhythm</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Foot</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bouncing with Bud</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bouncing with Bud Alternate Take One</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bouncing with Bud Comping Comparison</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bud’s Bubble</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celia</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance of the Infidels</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance of the Infidels Alternate Take</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance of the Infidels, Live at Birdland 1953</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dusk in Sandi</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fruit</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Glass Enclosure</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hallucinations</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Want to be Happy</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ll Keep Loving You</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ornithology</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parisian Thoroughfare</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polkadots and Moonbeams</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reets and I</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonny Side</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strictly Confidential</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sure Thing</td>
<td>311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tempus-Fugit</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Un Poco Loco</td>
<td>328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wail (Introduction)</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wail (solo)</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bud Powell was the definitive pianist of the bebop era. He fitted in with us more than anybody else because of the fluidity of his phrasing. He played just like we did, more than anybody else—Dizzy Gillespie (1979, 231).

Introduction

This is a study of pianist and composer Bud Powell’s contributions to modern jazz (a.k.a. bebop or “bop”). The methodology combines a series of interviews with professional jazz musicians and musical analysis focusing mainly on the rhythmic and harmonic implications of Powell’s linear improvisations. The aim of this project is to present a cogent technical and theoretical account of Powell’s musical style that is grounded in the values of the contemporary jazz community and reflects that community’s continued passion for and engagement with Powell’s music. The analysis is supported by original notated transcriptions of Powell recordings.

This dissertation reflects my efforts as a scholar and as a jazz pianist striving to raise my level of performance, and accordingly combines and adapts the research and analytical tools I’ve acquired as a doctoral student with my experiences as a working musician and goals as an artist. Before entering the ethnomusicology Ph.D. program at the City University of New York, I earned a Masters in Music degree in Jazz Studies and Performance from William Paterson University, where I was fortunate to study briefly under the late and truly great pianist Mulgrew Miller. After hearing me play, Mulgrew told me that in order to take my improvising to the next level, one of the things that I needed to do was to “put my lines under the microscope” and carefully examine the harmonic and rhythmic implications of my linear construction. He often
spoke about Bud Powell’s melodic inventiveness and ability play chorus after chorus of linear improvisation without much repetition and without losing the listener’s interest, and recommended that pianists study Bud Powell for this.

Eventually, in the midst of studying the styles of McCoy Tyner, Bill Evans, Herbie Hancock, Chick Corea, Wynton Kelly, Red Garland, Ahmad Jamal and others, I began to listen to and eventually transcribe Bud Powell solos. I found Powell’s improvisations to be shockingly profound in their melodic richness, lyricism, and rhythmic vitality. Especially compelling were his solo piano bop recordings like “The Fruit,” “Parisian Thoroughfare,” and “Hallucinations,” the 1949 quintet works like “Bouncing with Bud,” “Wail,” and “Dance of the Infidels,” and trio recordings like “Celia,” “Reets and I,” and “Ornithology.” As I transcribed and played through these, I was consistently surprised by the complex relationship between rhythm and harmony, both in the lines themselves and between Powell’s hands. I marveled at the many dissonant rubs dotting Powell’s rhythmic stream, and at the hauntingly romantic lyricism that permeates even his fastest improvised solos. The invigorating and sometimes disorientating feeling of Powell’s rhythm in my body led me to realize that I had seriously overestimated my understanding of jazz rhythm and its relationship to harmony—a realization that shaped the analytical framework in this dissertation.

Like many pianists, my initial aim in studying Powell’s music was to understand his linear concept, especially with regard to the relationship of rhythm, harmony, and voice leading in his bebop-oriented solos. However, early in the research process it became clear that if I was to produce a meaningful analysis of Powell’s bebop playing, I needed to engage with the elements of his work that differed from that style. Accordingly, I began a parallel study of Powell’s lush ballad recordings like “I’ll Keep Loving You,” “Polka dots and Moonbeams,”
“Dusk in Sandi,” as well as more reaching works like “Un Poco Loco,” “Sure Thing,” and of course, “The Glass Enclosure.” If these pieces are less present in this dissertation, transcribing and studying them has certainly shaped my conception of Powell’s linear-bebop solos and has opened many doors in my own musical development.

Chapter One, “Contemporary Pianists and Bud Powell’s Music,” summarizes the ways that ten professional musicians, including two saxophonists who heard Powell live several times and eight prominent pianists, conceive of Powell’s contributions to contemporary performance practice and to their individual musical styles and paths of development. The participants are given voice to explain the ways in which they engage with Bud Powell’s music as listeners, students, teachers, and performers. This chapter provides a foundation which guides the musical analyses presented in Chapters Two, Three, Four, and Five. The musicians interviewed not only spoke passionately about Powell’s genius, but also gave insightful accounts of how their study of Powell’s music contributed to their own development as artists, discussing the specific musical obstacles that Powell recordings helped them to address. Further, since most of these players themselves teach and mentor aspiring jazz professionals, several discussed the usefulness of Bud Powell’s music in pedagogical terms.

Chapter Two, “Bud Powell’s Improvisations and the Aesthetics of Modern Jazz Rhythm,” is an analysis of ways that Powell’s improvised solos creatively encapsulate the textural and rhythmic essentials of the bebop style through the specifics of his instrument. This chapter discusses various devices of Powell’s in relation to textural developments of the rhythm section, especially advances of modern jazz drumming, and the relation of those developments to harmonic rhythm. Topics include asymmetry of phrase placement and structure in relation to
meter and cyclic form, irregular accents and left-hand “bombs,” beat-one avoidance, harmonic displacement, phrasing “over the barline,” and cross-rhythmic groupings.

Chapter Three, “A Model For Harmony and Voice-leading in Bud Powell’s Linear-Melodic Improvisations,” describes the harmonic and polyphonic implications of Powell’s linear negotiation of descending-fifths sequences and related progressions through a five-strand voice-leading model that accounts for the chordal extensions (9ths, 13ths, etc.) idiomatic of modern jazz. At the center of Powell’s contributions is his ability to improvise melodic lines that are fresh and lyrical, yet harmonically nuanced and rhythmically charged. This chapter examines the structure of such lines through the most common types of harmonic movement in Powell’s repertory.

Chapter Four, “A Case Study of Harmonic Paths and Voice-leading Discontinuities in Powell’s Negotiation of Subdominant Tonicizations in ‘I Got Rhythm’ Related A Sections,” is a study of Powell’s improvisation over measures five through eight of “rhythm changes” related A sections, which present an obstacle to the descending-fifths-based voice-leading apparatus described in Chapter Three. Through a cross-examination of Powell solos over this form, two main paths of harmony and voice leading, as well as various hybrid paths, are identified.

Chapter Five, “Flatted Fifths in Bud Powell’s Harmonic Approach,” discusses the various ways in which Powell saturated his music with a sound essential to bebop, the dominant seventh flatted fifth chord. Discussing Powell’s incorporation of this sonority and related devices throughout his compositions and improvisations and in situations that vary in mood and tempo, this chapter offers a window into Powell’s creative process by illustrating his ability to maximally exploit one element of his vocabulary.
This project is positioned to make contributions to various scholarly and pedagogical disciplines; it fills gaps in the jazz studies discourse on a seminal, yet understudied figure. It provides a detailed, theoretically original analysis of Powell’s style that expands the literature on modern jazz and illustrates some of the ways in which Powell has become a rich source of inspiration and provided usable material for subsequent generations of musicians. It contributes to the academic discipline of music theory and the growing interest in jazz within that arena by offering an original analytical framework that emphasizes the relationship between pitch organization and rhythmic and cyclic aspects specific to this music. This project also contributes to the field of ethnomusicology by providing another example of how ethnographic research can support musical analysis (and vice versa), and by offering a “window” into the ways that contemporary professional musicians engage with the legacy of this seminal figure.

**Literature Review**

An analysis of Bud Powell’s music must draw upon scholarly and popular writings that specifically address Powell’s life and music as well as those which do not address him directly, or do so in a limited fashion. Throughout this study, I refer to writings or testimony that in some way inform my analytic method or arguments, provide examples of ethnographic research on jazz, or pertain to the social and historical context in which Powell’s career and legacy is embedded. I naturally utilize only certain elements of sources that do not directly address Powell. The following literature summary is divided by source-type, and discussions of discourses that are indirectly related to Powell’s music are accordingly represented in limited fashion as they contribute to my analytical framework.
Biographies of Powell and historical accounts that contextualize Powell’s position the history and development of jazz.

The most well-known book on Bud Powell is probably Francis Paudras’s *Dance of the Infidels* (1998; originally published in French as *La Danse des infidèles* in 1986). While insightful, Paudras’s work is more memoir than scholarship or biography, and deals much with the author’s psychological and emotional experience as Powell’s caretaker, friend, and most devoted artistic supporter. Nevertheless, the daily routines and struggles of Powell’s later life, descriptions of the pianist’s excitement and love for his colleagues—especially Thelonious Monk—and retellings of personal communications on the subject of Powell between Paudras and notable musicians such as Jackie Mclean render the book helpful to the scholar.

The first English-language biography on Powell is *The Glass Enclosure: The life of Bud Powell* (1993) by Alan Groves and Alyn Shipton. In this text, Groves and Shipton provide a concise (144 pages including index) but informative account of Powell’s career, including its several interruptions caused by Powell’s institutionalization, where Powell was the victim of electroshock therapy. Appended to this work is a chronology of Powell recordings (attributed to Shipton) that is preceded by a final chapter (94 – 116) discussing those recordings. A more comprehensive biographical account of Powell is found in Peter Pullman’s electronic book, *Wail: The Life of Bud Powell* (2012), which traces the pianist from his ancestral history through his untimely death in 1966. Of particular interest is Pullman’s portrayal of Powell’s relationships with other first generation bebop musicians, such as Thelonious Monk and Charlie Parker.

In his unique monograph, *Bouncing with Bud: All the Recordings of Bud Powell* (1997), Carl Smith chronicles well over 100 of Bud Powell’s most important recordings as a “musical biography” (1), offering a useful intersection of discographic and historical delineations as well as some stylistic analysis. While this text is a solid and enlightening reference on several
points—including pianist Chick Corea’s brief but revealing forward, a reprinting of Mark Gardner’s biographical sketch of Powell from the 1986 Mosaic reissue of the Bud Powell Blue Note session (appendix A), and a compilation of brief quotations by important musicians ranging from Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie to Bill Evans, Keith Jarrett and Herbie Hancock on Powell’s creative genius and contributions to modern jazz (appendix B)—perhaps what stands out most are Smith’s fair comments about Powell’s later work and ballad playing, which has been, in my opinion, incorrectly disparaged as inferior by writers (for an example of this see Gioia 1997, 238).

Guthrie Ramsey has done large-scale professional scholarship on Bud Powell, first in his dissertation *The Art of Bebop: Earl “Bud” Powell and the Emergence of Modern Jazz* (1994) and then in his subsequent monograph *The Amazing Bud Powell: Black Genius, Jazz History, and the Challenge of Bebop* (2013). Ramsey’s work focuses heavily on race and the relationship between discourses on race and historical and theoretical writings falling under the jazz studies umbrella. Ramsey addresses the broad achievements of African-American culture during Powell’s life and, drawing on the work of Samuel Floyd and other theorists, and rightly argues against the rigid separation of jazz from Black vernacular culture that criticism and institutionalization seem to promulgate. In his musical analysis, which covers several important early recordings of Bud Powell as a sideman with Cootie Williams and Dexter Gordon, Ramsey provides an account of Powell’s development into a modern jazz soloist.
Discussions of Powell’s music and career appearing in more general jazz historical writings have also contributed to my understanding of how the specifics of Powell’s style relate to the broader aesthetic framework of modern jazz. In this department, Ted Gioia’s *The History of Jazz* (1997), Lewis Porter’s *Jazz: From its Origins to the Present* (1993), James Lincoln Collier’s *The Making of Jazz* (1978), Ira Gitler’s *The Masters of Bebop: A Listener’s Guide* (1966), Burt Korall’s *Drummin’ Men, The Heartbeat of Jazz: The Bebop Years*, and Scott DeVeaux’s *The Birth of Bebop: A Social and Music History* (1997) have all served well. Interviews and autobiographical accounts by bebop-era musicians are particularly insightful regarding Bud Powell’s music specifically and the development of particular musical devices central to the modern style generally. Along these lines, my analysis is informed by Dizzy Gillespie and Al Fraser’s *To Be, or Not...to Bop* (1979), Ira Gitler’s *Swing to Bop: an Oral History of the Transition in Jazz in the 1940s* (1985), Arthur Taylor’s *Notes and Tones: Musician-to-Musician Interviews* (1977, 1993), and Edward Berger and David Chevan’s *Bassically Speaking: An Oral History of George Duvivier* (1993).

Ethnomusicological writings that deal with jazz.

The salient large-scale ethnomusicological account of jazz to date—and the result of over a decade and a half of research—is Paul Berliner’s *Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation* (1994). Berliner’s study of the processes through which jazz musicians overcome musical obstacles and become master improvisers is widely considered to be the most “comprehensive” in the literature (Monson 1996, 4; Cartwright 1998, 3-4). Beyond the immense strength of *Thinking in Jazz* as a stand-alone scholarly work that seamlessly weaves social context and analysis of musical issues into a cohesive narrative, Berliner gives such a clear voice
to his participants on so many interesting and relevant issues (according to Monson, “[n]o musical parameter is left unexamined” (1996, 5)), and chooses so many (60) participants, most of whom are well known in the jazz world, that his work has not only informed all subsequent ethnomusicological studies of jazz but has also been woven in varying degrees into ethnographic narratives by subsequent authors, such as Monson (1996), Cartwright (1998), and Solis (2008). Perhaps the most important attribute of all, however, is that in Thinking in Jazz, Berliner avoids the pitfalls of the various intellectual paradigms with which jazz scholars have aligned and instead allows the values of the jazz community to dominate the narrative.

Other important writings within this discourse stream include Monson’s Saying Something: Jazz Improvisation and Interaction (1996), which builds on Berliner’s study by focusing on the role of the rhythm section and includes several hybrid ethnography-cultural studies-musical analyses, Katherine Cartwright’s doctoral dissertation Quotation and reference in jazz performance: Ella Fitzgerald’s "St. Louis Blues," 1957-1979 (1998), which contributes a particularly powerful opening chapter that provides an ethnographic account of quoting and interpolation that informs Chapter One of this study, and Alex Stewart’s Making the Scene: Contemporary New York City Big Band Jazz (2007), which, focusing on the vibrant and very much alive New York big band scene(s) through ethnography and musical analysis, provides yet another interesting perspective on the contemporary jazz world. All of the above works have influenced my conception of the ethnographic component in this study of Powell’s contributions.

Gerhard Kubik’s essay “The African Matrix in Jazz Harmonic Practices” (2005) offers a compelling alternative perspective for addressing the organization of pitch in jazz framework in relation to Afro-American and African tonal aesthetics rather than from the viewpoint of European concepts of tonality. This piece, Kubik’s Africa and the Blues (1999) and Peter van der
Merwe’s *Origins of the Popular Style: The Antecedents of Twentieth-Century Popular Music* (1989) have all contributed to my understanding of the relationship between the blues modality and harmony in African-American music, and have more generally provided models for analyzing music that is situated along the fault lines of overlapping cultures and aesthetic systems.

*Schenkerian-informed theoretical writings on modern jazz that deal with voice leading and chordal extensions.*

The analyses in Chapters Three and Four are informed by a discourse on jazz harmony and voice-leading centering on the work of professional music theorists Steven Strunk (1985), Henry Martin (1996), and Steve Larson (1998, 2009), all of whom have applied Schenkerian or Schenkerian-inspired approaches jazz analysis, as well as writings by Michael Buchler (2006), and Allen Forte (1995), both of whom deal with the harmonic and voice-leading particularities of the American popular songs.

Of relevance to this project are the ways in which these theorists address modern jazz’s idiomatic use of (chordal) major sevenths, ninths and thirteenths, which, along with elevenths, have alternately been referred to in the jazz theory and pedagogy literature as either “tensions” or “extensions.” While contemporary jazz musicians, at least in parlance, tend to consider these pitches harmonically, music theorists working from a Schenkerian perspective disagree that such chords exist. According to Schenker:

>T]he ninth-chord is never self-sufficient. It is occasioned by other forces, such as univalence, pedal point, or suspension. Accordingly, the ninth chord lacks individuality as it is manifested by the triad or the seventh chord. Therefore, it is to be rejected as an original formation. It must be dissolved in each case into the elements from which it
originated. Such a conception, such a way of hearing a phenomenon in its causation, is infinitely more artistic than a merely theoretical grasping of intervals which have no common causation (1954, 204).

Schenker continues to state that in addition to rejecting the ninth chord, “the higher formations of the so-called ‘eleventh-chord,’ extending allegedly form the root tone to the eleventh, and of the so-called ‘thirteenth-chord’ have even less of a raison d’être than has the ninth chord” (1954, 205).

This perspective presents obstacles for analysts in the Schenkerian tradition regarding jazz. Steve Larson and Steven Strunk have attempted to overcome these obstacles by arguing that at a deeper structural level major sevenths, ninths and thirteenths are decorative dissonances of triadic pitches. Drawing upon Aldwell and Schachter’s (1978, 2003) position regarding such material in the realm of common practice tonal music, Strunk (1985) and Larson (1998, 2009) see such pitches as dissonances that have a “melodic relationship” to chord tones closer in proximity to the chord root (Strunk 1985, 97-98, Larson 1998, 2009), while Martin finds a more middle ground, allowing that such pitches “may function either as chord tones or nonchord tones” (1996, 14). In his analysis of the popular songs that modern jazz is often based on, Forte also claims these pitches to be “stepwise displacements of normative chordal elements” (1995, 8). According to Strunk, these pitches, which he calls “tensions,” are “melodic, not harmonic events” that are “related to a structurally superior pitch (usually a chord tone) by step, such that the tension represents and substitutes for the structurally superior pitch, called its resolution, in the register in which it occurs” (1985, 97-98, in Larson 2009, 6). Strunk compares these pitches to the various classes of non-chord tones in traditional tonal music, but states that “the concept of a tension is broader than that of a suspension, appoggiatura, passing tone, or neighbor tone, as
there is no requirement of manner of approach, manner of leaving, or rhythmic position in its
definition” (1985, 97-98, also in Larson 2009, 6). Larson provides generic examples (not taken
from transcribed recordings) of the resolution of such tensions, showing the 9th of a dominant
seventh chord resolving to its “8th” (root), the 13th of a dominant chord (which Larson labels “6”)
resolving to its 5th, and so on (2009, 7, ex. 2.1). Drawing on Strunk’s work, Larson goes on to
provide more model examples that show such resolutions delayed by “melodic ornament” or
“embellishment” (2009, 7, ex. 2.2). In dealing with cases where such tensions appear to have no
resolution on the music’s surface (a common phenomenon in modern jazz), these authors employ
the Schenkerian concept of elision. Larson states that in such cases, “a tension may be resolved
by a note that, because of the change of harmony, is itself a tension” (2009, 8), and cites Strunk’s
claim that “‘chains’ of stepwise tensions are possible when the progression is sequential, a
common pattern being the alternation of melodic ninths and thirteenth” (1985, 111, in Larson
2009, 9).

Michael Buchler (2006) presents an alternative to Forte’s, Strunk’s and Larson’s
positions in his analysis of the chord ninths that dominate the melody of David Raksin’s popular
ballad, “Laura.” Drawing on Kirnberger’s 18th century treatise Die Kunst des reinen Satzes,
where that author distinguishes between “essential” and “nonessential” (or incidental)
dissonances, Buchler proposes two alternative Schenkerian readings of “Laura,” one considering
its ninths as “essential” dissonances (something closer to chord tones), the other considering the
pitches “nonessential” (something closer to Strunk and Larson’s conception.) Particularly
enlightening is Buchler’s brief summary of the “common argument against ninths,” which the
author questions, that they “do not and cannot appear in inversion,” a fact that supposedly
renders the ninth chords to be unstable (2006, 11, author’s emphasis).
In what I hope scholars will see as a complementary position, my analysis of Bud Powell’s concept of harmony and voice leading departs from the discourse summarized above in that I am not concerned with the relationship of these pitches to the deeper structural levels of tonality, or even with the dissonance-consonance dichotomy more generally. As Steven Strunk has pointed out, “the distinction between consonance and dissonance as they are regarded in the theory of tonal classical music has only residual relevance to jazz” (1991, iii). Guided by my ears and experience and supported by the interviews conducted with professional musicians while researching this project, my approach, even when addressing Powell’s harmonically complex configurations, is centered on time and rhythm, especially Powell’s linear negotiation of the harmonic-rhythmic pulse. Accordingly, my focus is on the ways that a particular, if foreground-centered, concept of harmony and voice leading that includes chordal extensions allowed Bud Powell to improvise lines that are both lyrical and, through a kind of polyphonic melody, expressive of the core aesthetics of modern jazz rhythm.

Pedagogical materials.

In an effort to bridge what I perceive as a conceptual gap between the ways that musicians, myself included, seem to understand modern jazz harmony, especially ninth- and thirteenth-chords, and the Schenkerian-influenced approaches described above, I supplement the academic literature and my interviews with contemporary jazz pianists with pedagogical material, such as Phil DeGreg’s *Jazz Keyboard Harmony* (1994), Mark Levine’s *The Jazz Piano Book* (1989) and *The Jazz Theory Book* (1994), Jerry Coker’s *Keyboard for Pianists and Non-Pianists* (1991), and David Berkman’s *The Jazz Harmony Book* (2013). Of these, DeGreg’s work best illustrates the kind of voice leading that supports Powell’s lines.
Writings dealing with jazz rhythm and time.

As I will argue in Chapter Two, rhythm is widely considered to be the most important dimension in jazz by the music’s practitioners. Accordingly, there has been much scholarly interest in the topic in recent years. Writings focusing exclusively on jazz rhythm include Vijay Iyer’s analysis of microtiming and groove from the perspective of cognition (2002) and Fernando Benadon’s analysis of microtiming (2006), Stefan Love’s discussion of meter and “metric shifts” in the music of Bill Evans (2013), Christopher Washburne’s (1997) account of the parallels that jazz rhythm has with Caribbean music (Washburne points out that jazz is often phrased “in clave”), Cynthia Folio’s analysis of improvised polyrhythm in solos by Thelonious Monk, Ornette Coleman, and Eric Dolphy, and Keith Waters’s account of metric displacement in Herbie Hancock’s improvising (1996).

Musical analyses found in the ethnomusicological literature that do not specifically address jazz have also informed my analysis of Powell’s music and offered models of analytical techniques and conceptual frameworks for dealing with musical activity outside of the Western art music domain. For example, I found Gehard Kubik’s chapter on the absence of timeline patterns in African-American music of the Mississippi delta in Africa and the Blues (1999) to be helpful in framing Bud Powell’s relationship to broader African-American aesthetics of rhythm (particularly regarding Powell’s treatment of metric beat one). Peter Manuel’s writing on polyrhythmic grouping in the improvisations of Latin dance music (1998) was helpful in approaching the type of rhythmic play that Powell uses on up-tempo solos, such as “Tempus Fugit.” Despite that fact that it was used as a conceptual tool for Hindustani classical music, I found Martin Clayton’s (2000) discussion of cyclicity to be applicable to the jazz musician’s
experience of harmonic rhythm, cyclic form and the emphasis in jazz on the temporal dimension. Clayton refers to cyclicity as a “spatial-temporal metaphor used in order to clarify, mediate, and communicate subjective musical experience” (18-19), but notes the inherent paradox between the metaphors of cyclicity and the reality of unidirectional time passage, stating that “no music is cyclical in any empirically verifiable sense” (18) and that “musical meter is no more a circle…than it is a ruler or tape measure” (19). However, comparing the positions of Western and Indian music theorists on the matter, Clayton suggests that “if there is a difference between meter in Indian and Western music it may lie not so much in one being cyclical and the other not, but in the fact that Indian theorists have not been troubled by the apparent paradox of musical time as both linear and recurrent, whereas Western theorists have been inclined to play down the sense of recurrence, let alone cyclicity, in favor a more singular conception of linear development” (19).

Methodology and Musical Example Guideline.

A Methodology based on jazz performance and transcription.

My approach to Bud Powell’s musical legacy, though framed by the academic experience and informed by scholarly literature, is in many ways similar to the approaches taken by generations of jazz pianists, including the professionals who participated in this study. By far the largest portion of research conducted for this project involved direct engagement with Powell’s recordings, including listening, transcribing, by sitting at the piano and playing Powell’s music, working the solos up to tempo and playing some of them along with the recordings, practicing select passages or entire solos through all twelve keys, talking about Bud Powell recordings and general musical topics with jazz musicians (especially more experienced rhythm section players),
and attempting, with varying degrees of success, to perform Powell’s music in jam sessions and on gigs.

Following my interests, needs (as a player and scholar), and the recommendations of experienced colleagues working on the jazz scene, I chose to transcribe a fairly wide selection, though by no means all, of Powell’s recorded music (see Figure 0.1), including solo piano performances, solos in the context of the rhythm section, introductions, heads, and, in some cases, scores representing complete ensemble performances. Transcribing by ear is a difficult process, and I make no claims that my transcriptions are perfectly accurate. As I revisit and play through these transcriptions, I inevitably find and correct errors. However, I have circulated these transcriptions among jazz musicians, including those interviewed for this project, and the general consensus is that they are good representations of Powell’s music. Further, to strengthen the accuracy of the analysis, I avoid basing claims on passages that I am uncertain of and attempt to demonstrate major points of the paper with multiple examples taken from different recordings.

Table 0.1: Material transcribed for this project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Section Transcribed</th>
<th>Formal Design (of solo)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Night in Tunisia</td>
<td>1951</td>
<td>introduction, head, and Powell solo</td>
<td>AABA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All God's Children Got Rhythm</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>introduction, partial solo, right hand only</td>
<td>ABAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Foot (long version)</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>complete performance of trio</td>
<td>12 bar blues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bouncing With Bud</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Powell solo</td>
<td>AABA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bouncing With Bud Alternate Take 1</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Powell solo</td>
<td>AABA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bouncing With Bud Alternate Take 2</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Powell solo</td>
<td>AABA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bouncing with Bud (comparison, original release and Alternate Take 1)</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Powell’s comping rhythms behind Rollins and Navarro solos</td>
<td>AABA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bud’s Bubble</td>
<td>1947</td>
<td>Powell solo, right hand only</td>
<td>AABA (rhythm changes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celia</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Powell solo</td>
<td>AABA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance of the Infidels</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Powell solo, right hand only</td>
<td>12 bar blues (substitute changes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance of the Infidels Alternate Take</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Powell solo, right hand only</td>
<td>12 bar blues (substitute changes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance of the Infidels #1 from <em>Live at Birdland</em></td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Powell solo, right hand only</td>
<td>12 bar blues (standard)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dusk in Sandi</td>
<td>1951</td>
<td>complete performance of Powell, solo piano</td>
<td>through composed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hallucinations</td>
<td>1951</td>
<td>complete performance of Powell, solo piano</td>
<td>AABA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Want to Be Happy (with Sonny Stitt)</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>complete performance of Powell, solo piano</td>
<td>AABA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ll Keep Loving You</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>complete performance of Powell, solo piano</td>
<td>through composed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>1947</td>
<td>Powell solo, right hand only</td>
<td>ABAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John’s Abbey</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>coda, lead sheet only</td>
<td>(coda only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orinithology</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Introduction, head, and Powell solo</td>
<td>ABAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parisian Thoroughfare</td>
<td>1951</td>
<td>complete performance of Powell, solo piano</td>
<td>AABA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polka Dots and Moonbeams</td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Complete performance of Powell and George Duvivier</td>
<td>AABA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reets and I</td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Introduction, head, and Powell solo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonny Side (with Sonny Stitt)</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Powell solo, right hand only</td>
<td>AABA (rhythm changes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strictly Confidential</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Introduction, head, and Powell solo</td>
<td>AABA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sure Thing</td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Complete performance of Powell and George Duvivier</td>
<td>through composed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tempus Fugit</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Introduction, head, interlude, and Powell solo</td>
<td>AABA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fruit</td>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Complete performance of Powell, solo piano</td>
<td>AABA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Glass Enclosure</td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Complete performance of Powell and George Duvivier</td>
<td>through composed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wail</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Powell’s introduction</td>
<td>(intro only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wail</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Powell’s solo</td>
<td>AABA (rhythm changes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wail (alternate Take)</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Powell’s solo, right hand only</td>
<td>AABA (rhythm changes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Un Poco Loco</td>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Intro, head, interlude, partial solo</td>
<td>solo over vamp</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The variety of tempi, keys, types of cyclic form, musical situations, and sheer abundance of data processed through these transcriptions has allowed me to differentiate between material specific to one or another Powell solo and the kinds of general, deeply internalized structural
techniques that seem to have been at the center of Powell’s concept and informed his day-to-day music making. This is particularly useful in my analyses of rhythm and voice leading in Powell’s improvisations. Accordingly, in my analytical arguments—especially those regarding voice leading in Chapters Three and Four, I often draw upon multiple examples of varying keys and tempi to illustrate varied articulation of a particular structural device or to strengthen support of an argument.

This collection of Bud Powell transcriptions is further embedded within a larger body of transcriptions of other pianists and horn players that I’ve done, including, but not limited to, whole solos and passages by Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, Sonny Rollins, Red Garland, Wynton Kelly, Ahmad Jamal, Bill Evans, Stan Getz, McCoy Tyner, Herbie Hancock, and Chick Corea. Beyond transcription and notation, I’ve been actively listening to, studying, teaching, and performing jazz professionally for over ten years, and am familiar with the work of most notable pianists, including those whose careers preceded Bud Powell’s.

The benefits of this type of inclusive, performer’s approach to jazz scholarship range beyond the ability to illustrate particular analytic points with multiple examples. Firstly, while it’s undoubtedly possible for the listener unfamiliar with the jazz piano canon to recognize the musical brilliance of Bud Powell, hearing Powell’s music in the context of that canon helps one comprehend both the breadth of his genius and the perennial relevance of his contributions. A secondary, utilitarian reason for such broad engagement with the music involves the reality of soliciting and conducting unpaid interviews with sought-after jazz pianists who, though based in New York, are often touring in other parts of the world and have a rightful distrust of the motives of jazz scholars, who in the past have garbled musical technicalities or failed to represent the values of the jazz community. In order to gain access to such professionals one must display,
from the onset, a level of competence and a reputation as an insider on the jazz scene. Because
the participants of this project know me as a pianist first and as a scholar second, my relationship
to them goes beyond that of researcher to informant. As my mentors on the New York jazz
scene, these musicians have given me excellent advice and support that extends beyond Bud
Powell’s music and the dissertation process, and in several cases, they had been guiding my
development as a player for years before the interviews took place. They are absolute experts in
this music, and in most cases have been studying Bud Powell (and jazz piano generally) for three
or four decades. The participants’ command of this music was such that they often referenced
one or another of Powell’s solos or compared Powell’s musical style to that of other musicians
by singing complex passages from memory, sitting at the piano and playing difficult passages of
Powell tunes and solos, or speaking of sophisticated harmonic or rhythmic material in vibrant
detail, often asking me pointed questions on one or another element in Powell’s music. On
several occasions when I asked about a specific device or section of a Powell solo, participants
pointed to the piano and asked me to demonstrate my point or question. Such requests were both
out of genuine curiosity and, probably, out of an understandable desire to test my knowledge of
and commitment to the music. The groundwork laid by my transcribing, listening, and
performing allowed me to converse fluidly with these musicians, follow the topics that they
wished to address, and share in their wonder and love for Powell’s legacy. Moreover, it gave me
the opportunity to further solidify long-term professional relationships with some of the best
pianists in jazz, who I will undoubtedly be reaching out to in future research projects.
Guidelines for reading transcriptions and musical examples.

While the analyses in this dissertation are supported by many brief, in-text musical examples relating to the transcriptions, it is recommended that readers familiarize themselves with the sound recordings. Although notating transcriptions done by ear has allowed me to conduct an accelerated approximation of the kind of lifelong engagement with Powell’s music demonstrated by my participants, both the transcriptions and the in-text examples should be considered limited, if helpful, visual aids designed to facilitate discussion by allowing me to point to particular devices found in Powell’s music. They should not by any means be considered the equivalent of, say, excerpts taken from editions of Western art music scores, for the authority of this music lies foremost in the recordings, second in the collective memories and understandings of the jazz community, and perhaps last in such notated transcriptions and examples thereof.

Along these lines, since the analyses presented in the following chapters are based directly on sound recordings, and since the vast majority of Powell solos are supported by multiple repetitions of underlying cyclic chord progressions, I generally eschew the use of measure numbers in both the transcriptions and the in-text musical examples appearing throughout the chapters. Jazz musicians in the small-group or solo settings obviously don’t think in terms of measure numbers, and rather than serving to orient readers within the structure of a Powell recording, such numbers would likely have the opposite effect. Instead I combine an indication of each example’s position within the cyclic chorus structure and the approximate time that the passage being represented occurs in the recorded track (expressed as a range of

1 I make an exception to this by including measure numbers in my transcriptions of Powell’s through-composed pieces such as “The Glass Enclosure,” “I’ll Keep Loving You,” “Sure Thing” and “Dusk in Sandi,” which are not based on repeating cycles and contain little or no improvisation.
minutes and seconds). This design is intended to facilitate the reader’s ability to compare analogous points of the cyclic form (such as a particular moment in several different “A” sections of a solo) or from chorus to chorus (i.e., comparing Powell’s material in the second A sections of the first and second choruses of a solo), and easily locate in the recordings the moment a given example represents. I use the following shorthand to orient the reader to the formal position of each example:

H = “head”
C = “chorus” (C1 = “chorus 1” or the first chorus of Powell’s solo)
A = “A section” (C2A1 = “chorus 2, A section 1” or the first A section of the second chorus of Powell’s solo)
B = “Bridge” (C1B = “Chorus 1, Bridge”)

In an attempt to further aid readers in orienting musical examples to Powell’s position within a cyclic form, and to encourage readers to contextualize Powell’s improvising within the underlying harmonic rhythm, in many cases I include fake book-style chord symbols in the musical examples and transcriptions presented. Using such symbols is somewhat problematic for several reasons, as Powell certainly did not develop his harmonic concept from jazz fake books, may not have conceived the vertical structures in the ways that I labeled them, and, in many cases alters a cycling harmonic progression with explicit or implied substitutions several times during a single solo. I am well aware that to transcribe a Bud Powell solo piano composition such as “The Fruit” or “Hallucinations” and then proceed to write chord symbols over the score is a kind of analysis in itself, but the same can be said of the very acts of transcription and notation, and I believe that the benefits gained from doing so, particularly for jazz-oriented readers who are accustomed to both notated transcriptions and reading this harmonic shorthand, outweigh the potential negative consequences. Accordingly, I remind the reader that these chord
symbols are not intended to be read as analyses of the examples above which they appear, but are rather tools for harmonic-rhythmic orientation. The musical examples use the following notation shorthand:

\[ C^{\text{maj}7} = C \text{ major seventh} \]
\[ C^7 = C \text{ dominant seventh} \]
\[ C^-7 = C \text{ minor seventh} \]
\[ C^-7b5 = C \text{ minor seventh with a lowered fifth} \]

The Roman numeral chord symbols used throughout this dissertation are hybrids that combine case sensitivity (upper and lower cases to represent major and minor, respectively) with suffixes common to jazz notation (“maj7” for major seventh, “7” for dominant, and dash “-” for minor). Accordingly, a C major seventh chord in the key of C would be represented as “I^{maj7},” a G dominant seventh in the same key would be “V^7,” and a D minor seventh “ii^-7.” Applied chords are followed with a forward slash “/.” For example, a G minor seventh in the key of C major would be represented as “ii^-7/IV” (assuming it functions as such). The redundancy of combining case sensitive Roman numerals with jazz suffixes to describe a chord’s quality is intended to make the analysis easily accessible to jazz-oriented readers and academic music theorists alike.

Enharmonic spellings are generally more acceptable in jazz notational practices than in Western art music\(^2\). While I have made a reasonable effort to use consistent pitch spellings in musical examples, there are cases throughout this dissertation when readers will be asked to hear, for example, D-sharp, rather than E-flat, as the lowered thirteenth of a G dominant seventh chord, or F-natural, rather than E-sharp, as the raised ninth of a D-dominant seventh chord. To

\(^2\) An example of this can be found in Jamey Aebersold’s Charlie Parker Omnibook (1978), which mixes sharps and flats arbitrarily throughout and presents dozens of Parker transcriptions in various keys without using a single key signature.
jazz musicians, these are not misspellings, as the voice-leading implications are identical, and both are considered to be appropriate.

The following is a sample musical example.

Example 0.1: C2A2 of Powell’s “Reets and I” solo, (2.04-2.07) (sample musical example).

This three-second excerpt is taken from the beginning of the second “A” section of Powell’s second chorus of improvised solo on “Reets and I” at two minutes and four seconds into the recording.
Chapter One: Contemporary Pianists and Bud Powell’s Music

If I had to choose a single musician for his artistic integrity, for the incomparable originality of his creativity, but also for the greatness of his works, it would be Bud Powell. No one comes anywhere near him—Bill Evans (1979, in Smith 1997, 166).

This chapter summarizes a series of interviews with professional musicians about Bud Powell’s contributions to contemporary jazz piano performance practice and to their individual musical styles and paths of development. The aim is to give readers an overview of Powell’s legacy as heard by prominent experts, to examine the ways that pianists engage with Powell’s music, and to give voice to members of the jazz community on Powell’s place the modern jazz piano pantheon. The conversations summarized here illustrate and inform the positions taken in the musical analyses presented throughout the remainder of the dissertation. These interviews were all conducted in New York City during spring of 2014, were all recorded for accuracy, and ranged in duration from approximately thirty-five minutes to over three hours. I asked musicians to describe Bud Powell’s contributions to jazz and to explain the ways in which they engage with Bud Powell’s music as listeners, students, teachers, and performers. Most of the participants are pianists, although two of them are saxophonists who heard Powell play live several times in the 1950s. I am fortunate, probably due to a combination of my own reputation as a working pianist and a strong love for Bud Powell’s music among the jazz community, to have gained access to such an experienced and knowledgeable group of world-class players. Although their personal styles differ significantly from one another, and in some cases stray quite a bit from the bebop style, all of the musicians interviewed for this project expressed both tremendous reverence for
Powell’s contributions and a lifelong, nurturing engagement with Powell’s recordings and compositions.

The Participants

Table 1.1 lists the names, dates of interview, and instrumental category of each participant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date of Interview</th>
<th>Instrumental Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David Berkman</td>
<td>April 11, 2014</td>
<td>pianist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tardo Hammer</td>
<td>February 25, 2014 and May 20, 2014</td>
<td>pianist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pete Malinverni</td>
<td>June 2, 2014</td>
<td>pianist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Hazeltine</td>
<td>May 14, 2014</td>
<td>pianist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Perowsky</td>
<td>April 14, 2014</td>
<td>saxophonist/arranger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joel Press</td>
<td>March 25, 2014</td>
<td>saxophonist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan Piper</td>
<td>March 21, 2014</td>
<td>pianist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ted Rosenthal</td>
<td>March 26, 2014</td>
<td>pianist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Soskin</td>
<td>March 14, 2014</td>
<td>pianist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Weidman</td>
<td>April 19, 2014</td>
<td>pianist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.1: Musicians interviewed for this study.

David Berkman (b.1958) is a pianist and composer who has lived in New York since 1985, has recorded nine albums as a leader, and has worked as a sideman recording and performing with major artists such as Tom Harrell, Sonny Stitt, Brian Blade, Joe Lovano, Dave Douglas, Ray Drummond, Billy Hart, Dick Oatts, Tony Malaby, Chris Potter, and others. Berkman is an associate professor of jazz studies at Queens College.

Tardo Hammer (b.1958) is a New York native whose recording career spans forty years and nearly forty commercial albums. Known in the jazz community as an expert on Bud Powell’s music, and for his mastery of the bebop style generally, Hammer has worked with Lionel Hampton, Lou Donaldson, Art Farmer, Clifford Jordan, Abbey Lincoln, Johnny Griffin,
Bill Hardman, Junior Cook, and has held the position of accompanist and musical director for the vocalist Annie Ross since 1994. Hammer is on the faculty at the New School.

David Hazeltine (b.1958) is known for his mastery of the bebop style, and has performed with the likes of Sonny Stitt, Pepper Adams, Chet Baker, Charles McPherson, Al Cohn, Lou Donaldson, Eddie Harris, Junior Cook, and others. Hazeltine has recorded twenty-seven albums as a leader, including one dedicated to Bud Powell’s music (*Cleopatra’s Dream* 2006), as well as dozens as a sideman. He is also connected to the Powell legacy through his work with Sonny Stitt, who mentored Hazeltine early in his career. Hazeltine teaches in the jazz program at Purchase College, State University of New York.

Pete Malinverni (b.1957) moved to New York in 1981, and has since recorded ten albums as a leader and played on dozens as a sideman. He has worked with Joe Lovano, James Spaulding, Joe Romano, Charles Davis, Clark Terry, Major Holley, Rufus Reid, Michael Moore, Vernel Fournier, Mel Lewis, Jimmy Cobb, and Billy Higgins. Malinverni is assistant professor and head of the jazz program at Purchase College, State University of New York.

Ted Rosenthal (b.1958) won first prize in the 1988 Thelonious Monk International Jazz Piano Competition, and has gone on to record fourteen albums as a leader (including one partially dedicated to Bud Powell compositions) and has worked as a sideman with Gerry Mulligan, Art Farmer, Jon Faddis, Phil Woods, Wyckiff Gordon and Jay Leonhart, as well as with Wynton Marsalis in the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra and the Carnegie Hall Jazz Band. Rosenthal brings unique perspective to my study in that in addition to being a world-class jazz pianist, he is also highly active in the classical music scene as a crossover artist and has performed with several major symphonies. Rosenthal is on the faculty at both Juilliard and Manhattan School of Music.
Mark Soskin (b.1953) is a pianist with eleven albums as a leader, three albums as a co-leader, and some fifty albums as a sideman. Soskin has worked as a sideman with dozens of famous bandleaders, but perhaps most pertinent to this project are his nine albums and several years of touring with saxophonist Sonny Rollins, who in addition to being one of the greatest innovators in jazz history, is on the 1949 Bud Powell quintet sessions that produced the definitive “Bouncing with Bud,” “Wail” and “Dance of the Infidels” recordings. Soskin was also my private teacher from 2010-2012, and has been interested in and supportive of this project since its inception. Soskin is on the faculty at Manhattan School of Music.

Jordan Piper (b.1986) is an active pianist in the New York jazz scene. Piper’s first album as leader was released in 2011, and he has worked with Clarke Terry, Jimmy Heath, and Rich Perry, and has performed at the Blue Note, Cleopatra’s Needle, Spike Hill in Brooklyn and The Shrine in Harlem. In addition to being a knowledgeable jazz artist with a strong interest in Bud Powell, Piper, who is nearly thirty years younger than the other pianists who participated in this study, offers evidence of Powell’s continued relevance among the newest generation of professional jazz musicians.

James Weidman (b.1953) has recorded six albums as a leader and nearly thirty albums as sideman to major figures such as Joe Lovano, Steve Coleman, Abbey Lincoln, and Cassandra Wilson. Weidman has worked with Max Roach (who appears on several classic Bud Powell recordings), Woody Herman, Archie Shepp, James Moody, Greg Osby, Bobby Hutcherson, Slide Hampton, and others. Weidman is on the faculty at William Paterson University, and was one of my ensemble directors and private teachers during my master’s studies at William Paterson in 2005.
Frank Perowsky (b.1934) and Joel Press (b.1930) have different relationships to Powell’s music than my other participants in that neither are pianists (both are saxophonists and Perowsky is an active big band arranger and composer) and both heard Powell live in the early 1950s in New York City and in the late 1950s in Paris. Frank Perowsky is founder of the Jazzkey Music record label and has worked as a performer and recording artist with many top big bands, including those led by Lee Castle, Woody Herman, Tito Rodriguez, and Johnny Richards, and has performed with major figures inside and outside of the jazz scene, such as Peggy Lee, Sarah Vaughan, Billy Eckstine, Stan Getz, Roland Hanna, Liza Minnelli and others. One of the ways that Perowsky has engaged with Bud Powell’s music is by writing an excellent big band arrangement of “Bouncing with Bud” that features a saxophone solo Perowsky pieced together from various Powell solos on the tune. The arrangement gained international acclaim as a staple in the Buddy Rich book, and was recorded by Rich in 1978 on the Class of ’78 album. Beyond the formal interview that Frank gave me for this project, he has been a mentor of mine and has introduced me to several of New York’s high caliber music professionals, and hired me for a string of gigs as the pianist in his big band in 2011-2012. Joel Press is a tenor saxophonist who has recorded eight albums as a leader and has done sideman work with Jaki Byard, Jimmy Garrison, Sheila Jordan and Ray Nance. Press is highly active in the New York jazz session scene, and has been a valuable supporter of this project by helping me to connect with other pianists.

---

3 One of the dates that I played with the Frank Perowsky Big Band was a live recording at the jazz club ShapeShifter Lounge, where Perowsky featured me as a soloist in his “Bouncing with Bud” arrangement.
“The Father of Modern Jazz Piano”

It would be difficult to overstate the passion with which musicians speak about Bud Powell’s music. Powell was, according to Pete Malinverni, “such a great genius that when he was playing he was just a vessel, just a pure vessel for whatever it was that he felt compelled to say at the time.” Joel Press remembers hearing Bud Powell with Charlie Parker at Birdland in the early 1950s:

what I love about him to this day, I have never heard the intensity which he generated in anyone else. No one. There’s a propulsion, a swing, a tension that he sets up that’s just so beautiful and it just thoroughly gets to me, it slays me.

Where Malinverni describes Powell as a “vessel,” Press uses the words “intensity” and “tension,” Mark Soskin explains how “you get this feeling sometimes that there’s this urgency in the playing, you know, fierce urgency, like he’s just totally going out on a limb…that sense of urgency is also amazing and beautiful.” For Frank Perowsky, who heard Powell at Birdland in 1953, both trio and in a quartet with Charlie Parker, and again in Paris in 1958, Powell’s swing was the best...I think I was just taken with his playing because of the swing, and the flowing ideas, and the fact that he was really playing like a horn player with the long single lines…his swing was the first thing about him that I was always amazed at.

Beyond gaining fulfillment as listeners, pianists feel a personal debt to Powell for his contributions. As Pete Malinverni explains, because Bud Powell “basically invented [the] vocabulary” at the heart of jazz piano performance practice, when listening to the pantheon of jazz piano recordings, “there’s pre-Bud and there’s post-Bud, and there’s no confusing the two.” Along these lines, James Weidman views Powell as an essential figure in the transition of jazz
from a functional music to a concert music for listening, pointing out that “you really have to consider, with the small body of work that he did when he was able to really be productive, a real reflection and a real contribution to the movement of the music as it transitioned from…a show music, to music where people were really serious about moving the music in a direction.”

What Ted Rosenthal called the “many things [that] come back to Bud Powell” are not limited to Powell’s specific vocabulary. Rather, Powell contributed a foundational framework that generations of jazz pianists have been able to create from. As Rosenthal explains:

the way Charlie Parker is kind of the father of modern jazz saxophone, Bud Powell is really the father of modern jazz piano, He has a way of continuing to sound modern, and his approach has continued to be applicable to modern jazz piano, so the way the left hand works and the way the right hand lines work, and using that as a basis to then go into many directions that I and many other players like to go into, looking for ways to build upon that musical foundation.

Like Rosenthal, Mark Soskin considers Powell’s contributions to remain at the center of contemporary jazz piano performance practice, stating that “of course [Powell’s style is] coming from bebop, but it can definitely be applied to now, and that’s something about his playing, he was first and foremost in modern jazz piano playing, and it’s kept up to this day.”

While Powell was David Berkman’s “first big icon of music,” for David Hazeltine, “Bud Powell is the father of modern jazz piano, as opposed to, I think of Art Tatum, as the father of jazz piano.”

There is consensus among professional pianists that at the center of Powell’s genius was his ability to create a piano style that epitomized the aesthetics of the bebop movement and solidified the role of the piano within that modern framework, yet continued the legacy of the
swing-era, stride-based virtuoso school that was rooted in Earl Hines, progressed through James P. Johnson, Willie “the Lion” Smith and Fats Waller, and culminated with Teddy Wilson and Art Tatum. As Mark Soskin explains, “from a pianist’s standpoint, there’s nobody that assimilated the bebop style as well as Bud Powell.” Powell forged his way of playing by incorporating not just a collection of devices from his predecessors and contemporaries, but by carving out a conceptual space where the legacy of pre-modern jazz piano, in all of its virtuosity, is transferred to and able to thrive within the more conversational, interactive arena that typifies modern jazz. Bud Powell was not the first pianist to play or contribute to the modern style, and jazz historians rightly point out the contributions of his contemporaries Al Haig, Thelonious Monk, Lennie Tristano, as well as the several swing-era pianists who, as transitional figures, made important contributions to modern jazz piano playing. However, Powell was, as Tardo Hammer puts it, “a synthesizing point for things that were happening.” Along these lines, to David Hazeltine’s ears, “Art Tatum plus Charlie Parker equals Bud Powell, somehow.”

Powell and the New Left Hand: Freedom from Stride and the Bebop Drumming Connection

If contemporary pianists consider the virtuosity of Powell to be rooted in the stride legacy and ultimately the achievements of Art Tatum, they invariably consider Powell’s contributions to center on how he gave voice to the piano in the more linear, interactive and rhythmically flowing new music. According to James Weidman:

stylistically, I think his quest early in his beginnings was to really realize on piano the developments that were expressed by Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker. Especially Charlie Parker. You know, with all [Bud Powell’s] lines, he really went for that kind of
linear-melodic thing during that period, to the point where, well, he could play longer lines because it was on the piano.

Using the concept of “linearity,” Tardo Hammer elaborates on the specific obstacles that Powell had to overcome in order to reconfigure jazz piano performance practice to be both virtuosic and modern. According to Hammer,

prior to the modern jazz era, the piano players were great, they played with both hands, they played stride piano, and if you were to show up there—any of us—and play, they would have laughed us out of there, because we don’t have any left hand, comparatively. But what happened is that the music evolved in a way, in a linear way. There [was] a walking bass line that became an important part of the music, the drums changed, so that there’s linearity, and linearity means kind of a counterpoint, right? It means that all of the instruments are active parts melodically, rhythmically, or whatever else you generate counterpoint from. And like in baroque times, it allows for such a high degree of complexity to be attained, harmonically, the whole thing. And so, Bud Powell shows you a way that you can be a great piano player [i.e., one that continues the stride tradition of virtuosity] and not have an active, active left hand, so as to fit into modern jazz. Because you can’t, you can’t play that kind of [stride-based] left hand and have a walking bass line, a linear bass line, also you can’t, none of the those stride players have that kind of linear right hand going on.

Along these lines, something that David Berkman considers to be “really interesting about Bud is that he’s the first guy to really liberate us from stride, where the left hand is just kind of commentary.” This is important, because the stride-based left hand, with its emphasis on a
quarter note pulse, would be inappropriate within the aesthetics of the new, more flowing style. As James Weidman explains:

The whole idea of the new music was to change the flow from kind of just a boom-chick, boom-chick type of feel to something that was conversational, where everybody’s sort of contributing to what’s going on.

Accordingly, contemporary pianists relate the changes that Powell made in modernizing jazz piano performance practice to the innovations of bebop drumming and the greater focus on group interaction in the new style. Powell’s rhythmic organization, as heard by Mark Soskin, is “very, you know, syncopated, with beats in the left hand you wouldn’t expect.” When explaining Powell’s distribution of rhythmic texture in comparison to that of the preceding stride pianists, Ted Rosenthal uses language remarkably similar to what is generally used to describe drummer Kenny Clarke’s innovations, including what Clarke has called his “continuous cymbal line” (Gitler 1985, 53), in which the drummer assigns the new role of timekeeper to the ride cymbal, which in turn results in freeing the bass drum from a quarter-note pulse and transforming it into a tool for dropping “bombs,” i.e., accenting, especially beat four. Ted Rosenthal explains:

[Bud Powell] is letting go of a lot of the rhythm that the earlier pianists would have done. So when he plays, like, “Parisian Thoroughfare” or something, you hear a left hand that wouldn’t be that different from whether the rhythm section were there or not, so he’s kind of depending on the right hand to carry the rhythm, and the lines, the propulsion of a lot of eighth notes, to keep the momentum and the propulsion going. But at the same time, the register of the left hand is in the register you would expect of a solo pianist, he’s just
not playing the stride techniques, or the broken tenths, or the full out stride, something that [Art] Tatum would play…he doesn’t seem to have the need to describe the rhythm as consistently through the left hand. He clearly is more interested in some of those syncopations, like the dropping of the “bombs” and all that with the bass drums.

Similarly hearing “a big correlation between” Powell’s playing and the drums, Mark Soskin emphasizes Powell’s time by pointing out that “even at those breakneck tempos,” which could reach over three hundred beats-per-minute, “his time was so fantastic.” Commenting on “how [Powell] was hearing drums, even in the solo piano.” Soskin explains that “with piano, you can be a drummer.”

Similarly, David Berkman and Tardo Hammer both compare Powell’s left hand directly to specific drummers of the era. “One thing that [Berkman] internalized” in his own playing “about Bud’s left hand was that ability to just kind of like, drop bombs in funny ways, like there’s this way in which Bud is really, you know, when he plays solo, he’s kind of like Kenny Clarke.”

Hammer makes a similar comparison between Powell and drummers, but stresses that the implications of this device go beyond the textural organization of isolated syncopations and into a kind of metrically displaced phrase structure that he calls “four-is-the-new-one.” As Hammer explains:

His left hand is a little bit like the bass drum or the left hand of Max Roach or one of those funky drummers. You know how they drop bombs, what they call “dropping bombs?” But really, it’s just that the bass drum is creating a sense that beat four is like a beginning, instead of beat one. And he’d [Bud Powell] do that too.
Fierce Lyricism: the Linear-Melodic Dimension of Powell’s Playing

Of course, the relationship of Powell’s left hand to the innovations of bebop drumming is but one manifestation of his expression of and contribution to a set of modernist aesthetics that emphasize “linearity,” “flow,” and “conversational” group interaction. By considering Powell’s conception to be underpinned by such a framework, jazz musicians are able to understand the harmonic complexity of Powell’s right-hand lines not in opposition to or as something apart from his left-hand adaptations of drum innovations, but rather as two related expressions of the same value system. It is along these lines that while Mark Soskin admires the “beautiful rhythms” of Powell’s left hand, he stresses that “of course, when one talks about Bud Powell, you have to appreciate the right hand, and the fierceness of those lines,” and “how the left hand rhythms somehow fit perfectly with what he was doing in the right hand.” Pete Malinverni’s comments express perfectly how this underlying shift of aesthetics affects Powell’s concepts of rhythm, harmony, and melody:

I think of his rhythmic thing and his lines as being horizontal, as opposed to vertical, which I think was more the case before. Like, if you listen to [Art] Tatum, I think it’s very vertical in terms of the running of the chords, and even to a certain extent, Teddy Wilson, although I love Teddy and I think some of Bud’s lightness of touch, you’ll hear as having come from Teddy. But when you listen to Bud, it’s an across-the-barline kind of playing that I don’t hear as much with the others… while I hear chord progressions, obviously, in Tatum and Teddy, it’s more like they’re playing the chords, and you can hear the movement between them, but with Bud, his lines make that happen.
The linear-melodic material that Powell plays in his right hand is at the heart of his contributions to modern jazz and is, in most cases, the element that most draws pianists, including myself, to Powell recordings. As David Berkman explains, Powell’s “lines have so much destination,” that “when you’re listening to Bud it’s so much like Bach or something, and it has this sort of inevitable unfolding of a line through a series of chords, and it’s so compelling and it’s so logical, and…it also has this fierce thing.” Similarly, in Powell’s music, Ted Rosenthal hears “these resolution phrases and tones leading to places, but then very unexpected little twists of the melody.”

So great was Powell’s ability to improvise melodic lines that gave the piano a solo voice in the context of the high-volume, horn-dominated jazz ensemble that musicians place his contributions alongside horn players whose sole responsibility was the creation of such lines. As my former teacher, the late pianist Mulgrew Miller, said in a 2007 interview with Bret Primack, “personally, I think Bud was one of the greatest improvisers of all time, and if he had any peers, there weren’t many, in the whole history of this music, as far as I’m concerned. As a melodic improviser, at his best, he was probably without peer, maybe one or two” (Primack, Bret, "Mulgrew Miller: Horace Silver, Bud Powell, John Hicks and Walter Bishop, Jr."). Like Miller, who often spoke to his students of Bud Powell’s seemingly endless capacity for “melodic invention,” Ted Rosenthal believes that Powell is “really thinking melody…these melodies are sort of coming into his head.”

While the comparison is inevitable, pianists take special care when discussing the relationship between Powell’s linear concept and that of Charlie Parker. For example, while Mark Soskin points out that “for one musician who could assimilate what Charlie Parker was doing, it was Bud,” Soskin compares Powell’s musical level, rather than specific melodic
vocabulary, to Parker’s, saying that Powell’s “musicianship was up there with Charlie Parker.”

The care with which James Weidman uses the phrase “realize the developments” and Soskin uses “assimilate” to relate Powell’s playing with Parker’s (and Gillespie’s, in Weidman’s case) is telling, for they seem to be concerned with an issue that Mulgrew Miller warned about when he stressed that “it’s been overstated…about [Powell’s] style or vocabulary being derivative from Charlie Parker” and that “Bud was his very much his own man, his own thinker with his own creative process, and I think a real visionary” (ibid.).

Along these lines, David Hazeltine clarifies Powell’s individuality within the bebop idiom and in relation to Parker, noting that while at first he thought that Powell’s music was “like Bird transferred to piano, in a sense,” he later realized, you know, after studying Bud, that he really had his own language. It’s based on Bird, and there’s a lot of stuff there but you realize after a while that it’s piano language, and it’s very particular kind of piano language.

Pete Malinverni questions whether this relationship may be a “chicken and the egg kind of thing,” saying that

when I think about the language of bebop, just in general, forget piano or otherwise, you know we always hear about Bird….really, is it possible to know who was playing these things first? Because sometimes to me it sounds like Bud is really the guy who is doing “the thing” and Bird, to me, I hear more of the really overtly bluesy kinds of things. I guess by saying that I’m saying how great Bud really is and how important he really is.

Like Parker’s, Powell’s linear concept was complex and multifaceted, and accordingly, contemporary jazz professionals hear different qualities in it and turn to Powell recordings to
build a variety of skills in their own playing and the playing of their students. For example, “the thing” that David Berkman “was trying to get from [Powell] is a sort of melodicism, a way of [melodically] interpreting chord changes, that’s both very harmonic and at the same time very, very lyrical.” For Berkman, “the ability to construct great melodic lines, surprising melodic lines with twists and turns over chord changes…that begins with Bud, you know, in a lot of ways, as a piano player.”

Where Berkman emphasizes the relationship between lyricism, melodic contour and harmonic nuance, David Hazeltine emphasizes a logic or coherence in Powell’s phrasing that seems more related to motivic development than harmonic engagement. Stressing the close relationship between Powell the improviser and Powell the composer, Hazeltine explains that “his writing sort of symbolizes what goes on in his playing, I mean it sort of solidifies the kinds of things that go on in his improvising.” Continuing, Hazeltine points out that one of the things that’s very clear is his, to my students I call it “rhyming,” but it’s this idea of always referencing back to something in a very interesting way. You know, the head of “The Fruit” is classic, and unlike some of the other ones where every, you know, the other AABA tunes, the As are pretty much the same, they start the same they end the same, in “The Fruit,” every A is different, they end differently, and then the bridge is just a masterpiece of melodic phrasing, how it’s rhythmically interesting, but also how it just keeps referencing back on itself. You know, it always strikes me as musical poetry. It has rhyming phrases, they’re not duplicate phrases, they’re just referencing each other. You have to have a level of sophistication in your listening to appreciate that…and that happens in his playing [improvising] all the time.
Drawing on a conversation he once had with drummer Al Dreares to illustrate yet another perspective on the matter, James Weidman hears the blues as an underpinning to Powell’s phrase structure and phrase development. Like Dreares, Weidman believes that Powell’s ability in “dealing with the rhythmic flow and being melodic at the same time—singing at the same time” relates to his ability to “play the blues without playing the blues, without playing the blue notes.” Weidman clarifies:

It’s kind of like a nuance, it’s kind of like an inflection in a sense, it’s kind of like a vocabulary too that everybody’s familiar with that, you know, comes from that…really knowing how to play the blues was very important to those [bebop] musicians, without playing the blues, because then, I guess you’re following the whole traditional line of the African-American experience.

More than a Virtuoso: Powell the Composer

Bud Powell has been praised throughout the literature for his undeniable virtuosity and innovations regarding jazz piano performance practice. His contributions as a composer, which include at least forty-six pieces, however, are less mentioned in historical or critical writing. Not only is this neglect unfortunate, but quite contradictory to the thinking of contemporary jazz artists. In fact, nearly every musician interviewed for this project spoke passionately about Powell’s contributions as a composer. Where David Berkman calls Powell “an incredible free spirit and such an unusual voice as a composer,” Mark Soskin cites how Powell’s composed works “have affected the way I write and the way I play,” emphasizing that he “always thought of [Powell’s] compositions as equally important as his playing.” Even aside from the classical crossover through-compositions such as “Sure Thing,” and “The Glass Enclosure,” musicians note a high level of complexity in Powell’s bebop-style writing. Mark Soskin explains that “the
forms are tricky, it’s not just AABA or AAB, often times there’s C or D involved,” while Ted Rosenthal confirms these formal additions by explaining that in many cases “he’s got a construction of these things the really goes beyond the thirty-two bars, and they’re really part of the song.” For Frank Perowsky, the sophistication and formal complexity of Powell’s compositions differentiate him from Charlie Parker. Perowsky explains that Powell was a great composer, and he didn’t get the attention that Bird got. Maybe that’s why he was pissed, because he knew that he was a genius too. Bird wasn’t the only one. There was Bud, Diz, but Bird was in this kind of class of his own, you know, fantastic, everybody kind of agreed that he was, but it’s too bad for Bud I think, because those compositions! Bird just did Blues and I Got Rhythm, Yardbird Suite, Confirmation, but Bud did, Parisian Thoroughfare, different sounding compositions, Dance of the Infidels, based on a blues but [harmonically much more complex].

Invoking a similar comparison between Powell and Parker, James Weidman classifies Powell’s compositions with those of his contemporaries who are widely considered the most important composers of modern jazz, citing that as a composer, the things that he wrote, at that time, I mean, when you think about it, it rivaled what Monk wrote, it rivaled what Tadd Dameron was writing. It was right up there, and I mean they were complete compositions too. It wasn’t just like, just an “A” section, like Charlie Parker mostly did. There were intros, there were interludes, and things like that.

As Weidman and Soskin both point out, there is abundant formal complexity in Bud Powell’s bop-style compositions. On one hand, Powell tunes such as “Wail,” “Dance of the
Infidels,” “Hallucinations,” “The Fruit,” “Bouncing with Bud,” “So Sorry Please,” “Celia,” “Strictly Confidential,” “John’s Abbey,” etc., share core elements with the works of his fellow bop-oriented composers, including medium and fast tempos; familiar soloing forms constructed of chord progressions that are directly or indirectly based on twelve-bar blues or popular song formal structures; use of active, chromatically flavored melodies that exhibit bebop harmonic and rhythmic aesthetics; saturation with diatonic and chromatic “two-five” progressions and tritone substitutes thereof; tonicization of chromatic third relations; and a general functionality as vehicles for improvisation. On the other hand, Powell’s bebop tunes are among the most sophisticated of the era with regard to formal additions (introductions, interludes, codas), melodic complexity, and, in some cases, use of virtuoso pianistic devices.

In addition to highlighting this more heavily arranged, pianistic style of bebop composing, musicians describe or allude to a sort of musical exoticism and a degree of programmaticism that appears throughout Powell’s works. As Tardo Hammer explains:

I think that maybe he was a bit of a traveler in his mind, like he’s got “John’s Abbey,” which is a proper British man, I mean, really, it’s British, like a trip to England, the [coda] I mean. And you know I think “Dusk at Saudi,” that is the original name, now it has another name⁴…I always though it was like a desert…like another trip, he’s got French kind of stuff like “Parisian Thoroughfare,” and also “So Sorry, Please,” that’s China, and I think there’s Caribbean kind of stuff, and Un Poco Loco, which is kind of Cuban, like a demented version of [Afro]Cuban [music].

⁴ Though most commonly known today as “Dusk in Sandi,” or occasionally “Dusk in Saudi,” the original title from Clef Records was in fact “Dusky ‘n Sandy.” Recognizing the racial connotation in the title, James Weidman pointed out that Powell may have been referencing Vaudeville composer Max Hoffman’s 1911 composition “Dusky Sandy from Sandusky Ohio,” which would likely have been performed in blackface.
Several participants pointed out the powerful programmatic of “Parisian Thoroughfare,” which Powell cleverly based on the harmonic structure of Harold Arlen’s “Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea” (1932). Mark Soskin emphasizes the beauty of this Powell tune over the virtuosity of the scalar melody or the very fast tempo, stating that “just the intro to that tune, I mean just the intro, is gorgeous to me, it’s just beautiful the way it is,” then describing the head as “great” because “it does conjure up Paris, you know… when you’re listening to it, you kind of can visualize a crowded thoroughfare…so he really created a vibe.” Frank Perowsky asserts of Powell that in this composition that “you know he’s thinking of Champs-Élysées.”

**Harmonic Explorations**

A few of Powell’s compositions, rather than serving as vehicles for improvisation, are through-composed pieces intended to stand on their own merit, without improvised solos. With original works like “Sure Thing,” “I’ll Keep Loving You,” “Dusk in Sandi,” and “The Glass Enclosure,” and to a lesser degree with his heavily re-composed arrangements of standards like “Autumn in New York,” “Polkadots and Moonbeams” and “Embraceable You,” Powell’s legacy is not only of innovative virtuoso and jazz composer, but can be understood in the context of the classical-jazz hybrid stream that had been previously exemplified by Duke Ellington, Paul Whiteman, George Gershwin, and others, and culminated with the “third stream” movement of the late 1950s. Moreover, as one becomes increasingly familiar with Powell’s music, one realizes that these seemingly disparate sides of Powell’s legacy are in fact tightly intertwined. Powell’s bebop playing and composing, on the one hand, and his post-tonal (or near-post tonal) experiments, on the other, enhance one another’s richness. Along these lines, participants brought up various topics in interviews that seem to relate to what David Berkman calls Powell’s “very living, breathing sense of the harmony,” which is “quirky, and it’s different, and
sometimes odd, that’s that part, like that spark, in Bud that’s not imitable…it’s that quality in his playing that makes him such a sort of fierce modernist and individualist.”

Tardo Hammer sees “polyharmony” as a major part of both the bebop and more post-tonal sides of Powell’s harmonic legacy:

Everybody who was getting into extended harmony was getting into polyharmony, in some kind of way. But there’s two kinds, there’s one where you say, “well, I’m playing an A [dominant] seven but there’s a B triad up on top” [an idiomatic bebop chord, see Chapter Five], that kind of polyharmony. But then there’s polyharmony like “Glass Enclosure,” where it’s the wrong note. Like [sings mm. 3-4 of “The Glass Enclosure], where you have like an F chord with an A-flat\(^5\) [in the bass], You know what I mean? There’s \textit{wrong note} poly-harmony. It’s more dissonant.

Of Powell’s handful of through-compositions, “The Glass Enclosure” is of particular note for its haunting beauty and such daring exploration of harmony. The consensus regarding this piece among professional pianists, who generally gravitate toward Powell recordings to hear a great, original master of the bebop linear style, is awe. David Hazeltine, who recorded “The Glass Enclosure” for Venus records in 2006, summarizes this sentiment:

I remember the first time I heard it when I was just coming up and just getting into Bud, and I thought, wow! You know, like, wow, it’s so out, it’s out for Bud. I thought, with some of these harmonies, this guy is really on to something! Is there anything else like that? I mean these harmonies, there’s so many, it’s so dense with these harmonies, and even when it goes into time, wow, so modern! And the way those chords are running!

\(^5\) Hammer, who sings this exactly on pitch and describes the pitch content of the chord accurately, seems to be describing Powell’s affinity for chords based on the octatonic collection.
What can you say? It’s just more evidence of what a genius this guy was in a different kind of way… It’s great, man, it’s wonderful, I don’t know what else to say about it.

Three Ways of Hearing the “Un Poco Loco” Sonority.

Some of the more experimental elements of Powell’s harmonic concept defy contemporary jazz terminology, leading to different analytical interpretations among even the most knowledgeable performers. This is evident in the ways that several participants spoke about the harmonies in Powell’s “Un Poco Loco,” which Powell recorded in 1951 with Max Roach and Curly Russell. It is a daring, formally sophisticated Powell original set in an Afro-Cuban rhythmic style. The general format of the “head” is not dissimilar to many other Powell compositions in that it begins with a four-measure, once-repeated introduction, which is followed by the main tune in AABA form with sixteen-measure sections before transitioning to the improvising with a pre-solo interlude that is eighth measures in length and includes a one-measure solo break. Powell’s solo, however, does not follow the AABA form. Rather, he plays a repeated ostinato pattern emphasizing the tonic C in his left hand while he freely improvises in his right (he eventually abandons the left hand pattern). For Mark Soskin, the piece “definitely is one of my favorites. To this day, it’s in my solo repertoire. I’ll pull that out every now and then, keeping that left hand ostinato line going, and what always got me about that particular composition, was what Max Roach did, and to me it really was amazing, just that cowbell beat, fantastic!”

In addition to these rhythmic features, the A sections of “Un Poco Loco” contain extended harmonic structures that attract musicians. Particularly, jazz musicians are enthralled
by Powell’s ability, in the introduction and A sections, to place the pitch C-sharp above a C-major seventh harmony, seemingly without compromising the “major-ness” of that sonority. While pianists speak of this sound with adoration and surprise, they use disparate analytical means to describe the function of this pitch.

Example 1.1: “Un Poco Loco,” introduction and first half of A section (0.00-0.14). James Weidman hears this as an example of bitonality. Sitting at the piano and playing through the piece, Weidman explained this to me:

Well, you know that whole thing, for instance, in the beginning, he has this bitonality thing. Like you think, you go from E-flat, you go from D-flat, you go to C. But then, you have like a, what we could call… a G Lydian on top of the C…so you have two different
tonalities going on. But it moves so quickly, and it moves, I mean, the voice leading is so beautiful, that you don’t even notice the dissonance, that’s the beauty about it. Because it’s at a nice clip, because everything just resonates and everything is very harmonic.

![Musical notation]

Example 1.2: Illustration of Weidman’s explanation of sonority in “Un Poco Loco”

While Weidman describes this sound as a product of modal superimposition with a G Lydian (fourth mode of D major) over a C bass, Tardo Hammer, who also brought up this exact moment, calling the C-sharp a “flat ninth” (enharmonically D-flat), hears this as a product of the stacking of fifths. According to Hammer:

Bud’s the first guy, and maybe the last guy, who plays a major chord with a flat ninth in it [sings un poco loco introduction]. “Un Poco Loco,” F-sharp up to C-sharp, on a C Major? And so, he was extending harmony by fifths.

Hammer’s explanation of the sonority seems equally justifiable to Weidman’s, as the stacking of fifths does result in this sound.

---

6 Though Weidman acknowledged that musicians of Powell’s generation would not use this terminology.
Example 1.3: Illustration of Tardo Hammer’s explanation of sonority in “Un Poco Loco”

Considering this moment “something very indicative of [Powell’s] forward-looking musical elements of his composition,” Ted Rosenthal hears fifths as an important ingredient in the sound, but, by calling the C-sharp a “sharp fifteenth,” seems to analyze the pitch as a result of stacked major and minor thirds. Stating that:

[f]or example, that thing [where] he goes [sings F# to C#], where he ends up on the C-sharp, and he’s got C in the left hand, we sometimes joke around, “oh yeah, he’s playing the sharp fifteenth,” ‘cause that’s what that is if you think about it. It’s got this bright, cool sound, but then when you go analyze you realize that he’s emphasizing a C-sharp over a C major chord, you know, which seems, he’s gone F-sharp, G, A, B, C-sharp, so what you hear most clearly is the F-sharp – C-sharp – F-sharp [sings], and the fifths. You got a fifth in the bass, C and G low, you got a fifth in the, more or less, upper register, F-sharp to C-sharp, so it’s got this kind of cool fifths sound, and it does kind of ring out major, somehow it captures some of these overtones. But when you go really analyze it, like I said, you’ve got this note that you think, well how in the world could a C-sharp fit in over a C major chord?
Powell’s addition of a C-sharp (or D-flat) to the C-major seventh sharp-eleventh chord continues that chord’s interval pattern of alternating major and minor thirds. Though Powell does not play the chord’s ninth (D-natural) or thirteenth (A-natural), these pitches seem to be implied and sound appropriate when added to the structure.

Example 1.4: Illustration of “Un Poco Loco” sonority as a cycle of major and minor thirds stacked to create a C major seventh chord with a raised fifteenth.

“It’s hard to get away from:” Bud Powell’s Legacy in the Jazz Piano Canon

When I asked participants to name some of the ways that they hear Powell’s legacy in later pianists, many of the conversations, as expected, deteriorated to mutual laughter. Pete Malinverni’s comments sum up the consensus nicely:

The question that would yield complete silence is “name one who wasn’t influenced by Bud.” Who? It’s impossible! Even if it’s not overtly obvious, I mean, Bill Evans would tell you about that. Bill Evans, from what I understand, was tight friends with Sonny Clark, and you know if you really listen, you can hear stuff, whether it’s tone, et cetera. And certainly Bill’s early playing like the stuff with Philly Joe [Jones] and Paul Chambers, you know. No, I really can’t think of a pianist that I would spend two minutes listening to [that isn’t influenced by Bud Powell].
That Powell’s contributions as an improviser and composer have been at the center of jazz piano performance practice for some sixty years, and that generations of pianists have assimilated and transformed devices initiated by Powell when constructing their own voices on the instrument, has an inevitable effect on the ways that contemporary pianists hear his recordings. As historian Ted Gioia explains, Powell “is one of those select players…whose influence is so pervasive that it is easy to overlook. When one person steals your stuff, it is robbery; when everybody does it over and over again, your belongings sooner or later become common property” (1997, 236). For those of us playing and studying jazz piano in the early twenty-first century, Bud Powell recordings can be surprising in that we hear, at or near the moment of inception, vocabulary and techniques we may have associated with various later pianists. Along these lines, David Berkman mentions the reality of contemporary players encountering jazz as an “archaeological project,” stating that

there are certain players…who through their playing and whatever comes after, they become the iconic pianist for a generation of pianists, and Bud Powell is obviously one of those. More than the two other heavyweight pianists of that era, [Thelonious] Monk and Lennie Tristano, Bud is really the one I think who exerted the massive influence up to that, everybody from Bill Evans, you know, up to Bill Evans.

David Hazeltine remembers when he realized that Horace Silver based his comping style on Bud Powell’s, saying “wow, I mean it just struck me, that’s where Horace Silver is coming from! So much, just the way [Powell is] playing on ‘Wail,’ his comping on fast tunes like that, that’s how Horace plays! I mean it just struck me, and I had never noticed that before!” Speaking in more general terms, Mark Soskin hears Bud Powell’s concept as a foundation that goes far beyond
musicians whose styles resemble that of Powell’s, such as Silver, stating that the reach of Powell’s concept is

very, very broad. It’s used, you know, Herbie [Hancock] uses it, Chick [Corea], McCoy [Tyner]. It’s there, it’s ever present, you can’t get away from it, so no matter how out [i.e. outside the mainstream] or whatever, far from it, I’ll hear different pianists play…there’s still some in there from Bud Powell. There’s this, it’s hard to get away from.

When participants in this study speak of Powell’s “influence” on other jazz pianists, they do not imply that great pianists such as Horace Silver, McCoy Tyner, Chick Corea and Herbie Hancock, themselves major innovators with strong individual styles and contributions that continue to reverberate throughout contemporary jazz, simply play specific Bud Powell licks or comping rhythms. Rather, the pianists with whom I spoke can hear the ways in which Powell’s framework has allowed later innovators to find their own personal voice in the jazz language.

Along these lines, David Hazeltine points out that as later pianists have adapted Powell’s work, it gets transformed in a, you know, to all the different styles, like when you listen to players like Tommy Flanagan or Sonny Clark, or Red Garland, players form that era, they all, you can hear the Bud in all of them, but it’s, some parts of it are lost and some are transformed into other kinds of things. Except for Barry Harris, who seems to have preserved it, it’s pretty amazing how he’s preserved it, and yet [even he] added his own touch, his own things to bring it into the present time.

However, as with any figure whose legacy reverberates powerfully, several participants, possibly in part out of correctly viewing themselves as my mentors in the jazz world, warn or imply a
warning about the dangers of a too strict, ideological adherence to Powell’s style. David Berkman describes these two sides of Powell’s legacy:

He is both a revolutionary player like in the mode of Monk and, you know, a kind of stodgy, like, “this is how everybody has to play because that’s what good playing is” [kind of player], because what the tradition does to Bud is, it makes him the gospel, but he’s not the gospel, he’s a revolutionary!

Ted Rosenthal discusses how this duality operates in “the melodic aspect” of Powell’s playing, explaining that

at some levels, you hear some of what have become, they weren’t, but what have become, you know, stock bop phrases [sings bop line], that everybody plays, but somehow within that there’s so much that is very, to this day, kind of fresh and almost off the beaten path of some of these textbook so-called of bebop licks that everybody seems to like to play.

David Hazeltine and Pete Malinverni each speak to this issue of capturing not only the surface elements of Powell’s vocabulary, but the spirit and freshness of Powell’s artistry. For example, when preparing to record Cleopatra’s Dream, a complete album of Bud Powell’s music, David Hazeltine wanted to present Powell’s music near its original format without having the record sound like a “museum piece.” Using similar language, Malinverni sees this as a problem in jazz today:

The jazz world is littered with people who’ve made the wrong choices. They do it with Coltrane, they do it with Bud. You know, and what they get with Bud is they get this like, metronomic like, museum music of “correct bebop” vocabulary. I’m not interested! It doesn’t feel good!
Bud Powell’s Music as Professional Development

Despite the subtle and not-so-subtle changes that jazz has gone through since the bebop era, the multitude of ways that later innovative pianists have transformed parts of Powell’s style in developing their own voices, and the perceived danger of a too strong or ideological adherence to Powell’s style, the original, often scratchy-sounding Powell recordings continue to provide an invaluable learning and teaching resource for each new generation of jazz pianists. Ethnomusicologist Paul Berliner explains how learning jazz “involves acquiring a complex vocabulary of conventional phrases and phrase components” and how, for many musicians, “[c]omplete recorded improvisations also provide models” (1994, 95). Along these lines, contemporary pianists speak of learning to play Bud Powell phrases and complete solos—sometimes in all twelve keys—as a means of musical self-improvement and method of vocabulary building. Because “it’s very difficult to play those” Powell pieces that are set to “ridiculous tempos,” Powell solos remind Mark Soskin “of etudes, sort of like Bach pieces or something like that. They’re profound, and I play them. I play through those solos.”

The very fact that so many later pianists have used Powell’s style as a kind of musical foundation is one of the reasons that pianists continue to study the recordings. For many, including myself, believe that a deep familiarity with Powell’s music can lead to a better understanding of later figures in the jazz piano pantheon. James Weidman explains his experience regarding this:

when I started to play piano, the first tunes that I really learned as I was practicing included things that Bud was playing, like “All God’s Children [got rhythm]” and “Willow Grove.” I would play things like that. “Little Willie Leaps.” Those were some of the things that I started playing, because Bud played them, you know, and I even was
studying the way that he played Round Midnight with Bird, which I thought was one of the classic “Round Midnight” solos of all time, the solo by Bud. I think that, still, is a great foundation, even though, at that same time, I was trying to figure out what McCoy [Tyner] and Herbie [Hancock] was doing. But, [Bud] provided a great template for me.

If Powell’s music provides many pianists with a foundation for jazz piano performance practice, as they reengage with Powell’s music again and again throughout their lives, artists hear in greater detail the various nuances of Powell’s rich style. Ted Rosenthal declares how “Bud has been both an early influence and an ongoing, continuing influence,” and Jordan Piper explains how his working and reworking of Powell’s “So Sorry Please” mirrors the development of his career from childhood novice through young professional:

I remember buying a CD of The Best of Bud Powell on Verve, and I remember the first track being Ladybird…and then I just started listening to that CD a lot, and I learned a couple of the tunes like “So Sorry Please,” that was one tune that I remember playing even when I was first starting out, I tried to figure that out, so yeah, I’ve been playing that tune since I almost started playing jazz. I mean, it was definitely not as it is now, but I’ve tried to check it out through the years more and more, and there’s still more I’m hearing, as I get older and more experienced.

For Ted Rosenthal, learning “So Sorry Please” not only contributed to his musical development but also eased the path to acceptance into an arena of older, more experienced musicians and even gave him the chance to play for the legendary pianist Al Haig, who played in Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie’s group in the 1940s. As Rosenthal recalls:
I learned it [“So Sorry Please”] as a high school kid, and in early college, I was knocking around playing little gigs that I could find, little gigs with the bass player Todd Coolman…Todd is a few years older than me and had done a couple of things that I was still hoping to do, and was playing with some great players. Anyway, we did a few things [together], and I played “So Sorry Please” and he kind of gave me a smiling nod of approval. I remember coming to the duo gig he did with Al Haig back in the days when Al Haig was just playing this little quasi restaurant duo gig down in the village…So Todd said to Al, “I think you’ll get a kick out of my friend here, he plays ‘So Sorry Please,’” so he had me sit in.

Although my discussions with musicians covered a wide range of Powell recordings, and even as Tardo Hammer warned that singling out one of Powell’s great early recordings as more important than the others is “like saying this is the best Bach fugue,” one cut that came up time and again is “Celia” (1949). “Celia” is an original, medium-tempo trio composition that Powell named after his daughter. Saxophonist Joel Press fondly remembers buying the record when it came out:

When I was in the army I went up to Seattle from where I was stationed, Fort Lewis in Tacoma Washington, and there was this 78 record on Norgran, “Celia,” and I played it in the store and I bought it, and I had it in the barracks, and we had, it was 78s, but we had a little player, and we always played that record, and a bunch of Lester Young records, and Bird records, and it was something about the way he played that just killed me, and I, he became my favorite piano player, and still is.
While non-pianists like Press gain tremendous satisfaction and inspiration from listening to Powell’s recording of “Celia,” pianists see the track as a valuable tool for both self-development and the education of their students. Jordan Piper, who regularly includes “Celia” in performances, remembers “sitting with a [fellow] pianist one time, and we were listening to ‘Celia,’ and as a kind of automatic response, he went over to the piano and just played the [solo] break along with it, [laughs] and I was like, you know, I didn’t realize how many people probably had checked that out, but at the time I finally realized that!”

Example 1.5: Powell’s solo break on “Celia” (1.09-1.13).

David Hazeltine and Mark Soskin both spoke with tremendous passion and excitement about these two measures of music. For Soskin:

The solo break in Celia, those sixteenth notes, man, it’s perfect! There’s nothing, they’re just so formed, perfectly. What I’ve done in my playing, is taken some of those things, specifically that, that solo break in “Celia,” and go through the twelve keys, and just play those, whatever, two bars, you know. There’s a whole, it’s a theory lesson. It’s a jazz theory lesson!

Speaking of the “Celia” break, David Hazeltine emphasizes the “the gravity of it, the weight of it.” In comments that express a strikingly similar sentiment to Soskin’s, Hazeltine says:

The break of Celia is, a, I would say to a first year college student… that little line, that little break, is probably six weeks—half a semester! A wealth of bebop material, right
there, to just feast on, to learn in every key, to show how it connects to other things, you know? How it incorporates this [plays first nine notes of break], how to get from minor to dominant, how to get from major to the dominant sound, how to get from major to the two minor seventh sound, there’s just so much there. Maybe not six weeks, but there’s a good amount of time I’d have them working on that…. and, you could take sections of Bud Powell and just say that, there’s so much language there.

The language that Hazeltine speaks of is dense and not easy to internalize, even for the most talented and dedicated aspiring pianists. For example, David Berkman remembers the growing pains he experienced when, as a student twenty-five years ago, his first close encounter with “Celia” marked an important step in his development as a jazz pianist:

> When I went to Berklee…[in] 79 - ’80, the teacher that I had said “ok, you have to transcribe ‘Celia,’” you know, Bud Powell’s famous solo on that, and his piece, and he said, “and you have to do it in the library without a piano.” We had these old tape recorders, they were these Wollensak reel to reel, so you’d get the tape…and put it on, and it had a half speed on it, so you could slow it down, [but] of course, it dropped it an octave as well, so you, it was kind of challenging. Anyway, so I had never done anything like that and one of the things I really noticed was, you know I’d spend, whatever, two or three hours, like trying to get two or three bars. It was very slow work, and I would sing and then try and match the pitches, and write these chords, ‘cause I was writing out the left hand and the whole thing, and then I’d go check, go to a practice room and check on it, and it would be half wrong, you know! So I’d make a couple of corrections and then go back and do it again, so I did the whole thing away from the piano, which was really challenging and a struggle, a very difficult thing for me at that time. But, one of the
things I noticed was when I went to check out what I had written and I say what the mistake was, the mistake was invariably that something was chromatic that I didn’t realize was chromatic. It’s like, when I really listened to him play, I hadn’t realized those pitches were on the piano…You have to go past that sense of, okay, it’s C major, so it’s C major sounding notes, to hear how every chromatic passing note can release, you know, it’s tension back into the chord scale. And that’s really what I was hearing with Bud that I had never heard before, so that was really an epiphany, and it was all centered around that one tune, “Celia”. Now, I have to say, Celia might be the thing that I transcribed the best [laughs] because I did it that way and then I played it in every key, you know it was really very obsessive…and I think to this day it exerts a lasting influence on my sense of what line development is.

While pianists recall what they gained from such early exposures to “Celia” and other Powell recordings, they hear new meanings and become attracted to different aspects of these recordings as they revisit them throughout their careers. David Hazeltine describes how, after listening to “Celia” for the first time in over a year, he heard even more beauty in Powell’s clever application of modal mixture.

I was struck by one thing, one little musical thing that I’ve always liked but I don’t hear enough pianists do, but Bud seems to do it and it’s so early on, and one of my heroes, Buddy Montgomery, always liked this thing…the half-diminished chord or the minor seventh flat-five, and that’s the thing about “Celia,” you know, is that the two chord is that flat-five chord, and then it doesn’t go to four, it goes to four-minor, and of course the two minor seventh flat five and the four minor are almost the same kind of thing, but it’s just a beautiful, to me, it’s a much more colorful sound. Two is two, you know, but when
you play two as that chord [goes to the piano and plays C minor seventh flat-five], wow, it’s just so beautiful to me, it really makes it much more rich, and so, because it suggests so many other things that can happen, you know, melodically, harmonically. It seems to open doors.

Pianists have developed individualized methods and combinations of methods of engaging with Powell recordings as a means of professional development. Compare, for example, the rigorous task described above by David Berkman of transcribing the complete “Celia” track and then practicing it through all twelve keys with the following approach described by Pete Malinverni⁷:

mostly what I do is I listen, and I hear a phrase that I say to myself, “gee I wish I’d have played that,” and so then I extract that phrase, I transcribe it, and I try to understand it contextually. Well, ok, he does this when this is happening, and the extent to which you understand music theory, etc, you’ll be able to give it a more universal context. By that I mean, like, okay, on the third bar of “All God’s Children” he does this, so you wait and at the third bar of “God’s Children,” you play that figure. Or you could say, oh, when he plays from a two chord to a five chord he does this. Okay, now it’s more universally applicable. So that’s what I try to do is, I try to transcribe something just cause I dug the way it sounded, and then try to give it context, and then play it in the twelve keys, and try to fit it into whatever tunes I know, and by doing that it becomes your own. Like, for example, you listen to a great speech, or even better, you hear something spoken by

⁷ In making this comparison, I do not mean to imply either of these two pianists has neglected to use the approach described by the other. Malinverni and Berkman almost certainly have each done what the other described at some point in their careers.
someone who’s really good [at] extemporaneously speaking, like say a Bill Clinton, for example, let’s just say, for example. And he has like this beautiful turn of phrase, and you say, “wow, what a great way of referring to something!” Well, then it will sort of enter your own vocabulary, even though you might not be talking on that particular topic, but that rhythm, or that slightly more or slightly less poetical way of describing something will become part of your own vocabulary. You know, and so that’s what I would listen to for Bud, I would try to find little vocabulary or phrasing things, and then I would play the figure and then I would put some Bud Powell on, and then I’d turn it off and I’d play for a while, and when I would stop sounding like Bud, I would stop playing and put it on, and try to copy it and get inside the feel.

This chapter illustrated how eight contemporary professional jazz pianists hear Bud Powell’s legacy in the context of jazz history, and showed some of the ways that those pianists engage with Bud Powell’s music as improvisers, composers, students, and teachers. In addition to hearing Powell’s music with wonderfully acute ears and encyclopedic knowledge, the pianists who participated in this project have spent years, in most cases decades, at the center of New York’s professional jazz community, and their collective input accurately frames Powell’s historical contributions and continued relevance to jazz. All of the participants commended my specific choice of Powell as the focus for this study, and several expressed the feeling that a dissertation-length work on Powell’s music that is informed by the values of the jazz community is long overdue. Of the many fine comments, of particular value are the insights that participants in this study offered regarding the relationship between Powell’s style and modern jazz aesthetics as expressed by players of other instruments, and the explanations of musicians’
personalized approaches to studying Powell’s music. Chapter Two employs musical analysis to elaborate on some of the ways that Powell uses the particularities of his instrument to express the rhythmic dimensions of this aesthetic, while Chapters Three and Four explore the harmonic content of Powell’s linear improvisations in greater detail.
Chapter Two: Bud Powell’s Improvisations and the Aesthetics of Modern Jazz Rhythm

_The major fundamental of our music is rhythm, a great and definite rhythm_—Dizzy Gillespie (1979, 491-92).

Bud Powell’s bebop-style improvising displays a remarkable degree of rhythmic flexibility and inventiveness and a stunning ability to creatively employ every musical parameter as a means of expressing his personalized version of modern jazz rhythm. In solo piano bebop originals like “Hallucinations,” “The Fruit,” “Oblivion,” Parisian Thoroughfare,” and when playing medium- and up-tempo tunes with a rhythm section, Powell expresses his rhythmic concept through the particularities of the piano, including the ways he positions his linear phrases against the meter and cyclic form, the voice leading and melodic contour, dynamic and ornamental accents of those phrases, the texture and placement of his left-hand chords, and the multiple ways he displaces harmonically indicative material against the harmonic rhythm.

Conversely, as strongly implied by my conversations with professional pianists about Bud Powell’s music, the elements of pitch organization in Powell’s music are worthy of study on their own, but best understood in relation to the rhythm-centric framework of modern jazz aesthetics, and moreover, as expressions of the core elements of that rhythmic style. In his discussion of the relationship between pitch and rhythm in the development of a melodic improviser, Paul Berliner made comments that speak to this point, stating that “[t]he performer’s rhythmic conception can produce phrases whose melodic content is secondary, but it also forms the underpinning of successful melodic excursions” (1994, 147).

I frame my analysis of Powell’s rhythmic contributions between two interrelated poles of influence that together allow for his expression of bebop’s more “conversational,” flowing style
of rhythm. The first of these poles relates closely to the comments offered by professional pianists presented in Chapter One, and involves the changes in rhythmic texture that defined the bebop style in relation to the preceding swing and 1920s jazz style. This centers on a de-emphasis of overt articulations of meter and is perhaps most completely articulated by changes in the performance practice of drumming. The second pole of influence involves the relationship of this new style of textural organization to the harmonic-rhythmic and cyclic forms that supply the underlying structures for modern jazz improvisation. Accordingly, this chapter first draws on relevant literature to contextualize the main points articulated by musicians in Chapter One with the aim of outlining my understanding of modern jazz rhythm aesthetics in relation to Powell’s music. This is followed by a detailed analysis of specific devices that Powell uses to express these aesthetics.

Rhythm and Texture in Bebop.

Jazz scholars have described the stylistic changes introduced by musicians of the 1940s in textural terms, relating rhythmic and harmonic advances to evolving instrumental roles and the specific innovators within those roles. For example, Gioia notes that although “the underlying rhythm section of piano, string bass, drums, and occasional guitar remained unchanged, as did the use of saxophones, trumpets, and trombones as typical front-line instruments…how these instruments were played underwent a sea change in the context of modern jazz” (1997, 202). According to Gioia, while the work of horn soloists in the new music showed an affinity for “long phrases…built on a steady stream of eighth or sixteenth notes executed with quasi-mechanical precision, occasionally broken by a triplet, a pregnant pause…or a piercing offbeat phrases” (202), “much of the changing sensibility of modern jazz was driven by the rhythm sections” (204). Innovations in the performance practice of jazz drumming are considered central
to the overall rhythmic changes of the music. Accordingly, Gioia uses the term “sudden accents” to implicitly connect the “bombs” dropped by drummers like Kenny Clarke with the “crisp comping chords of pianists and guitarists” that “frequently arrived off the beat or on weak beats” (204). Dizzy Gillespie also emphasizes the importance in the music’s development of drummer Kenny Clarke, whose style, Gillespie claimed, “set the stage for the rhythmic content of our music” (Gillespie 1979, 137, also in Porter 1993, 192). Lewis Porter characterizes this style as providing by “a shimmering, bell-like background by emphasizing the cymbals and using the actual drums for punctuations instead of timekeeping” (192). Although the central innovator in much of this discourse is rightfully Clarke, in Drummin’ Men, The Heartbeat of Jazz: The Bebop Years (2002), Burt Korall presents a more nuanced picture, showing a complex web of transitional figures and major innovators and discussing the careers and specific technical and musical contributions of over twenty additional drummers involved in the new music’s creation.

Undoubtedly, the textural and rhythmic transitions that occurred in drumming played a huge role in the development of the modern jazz style, and an analysis of Bud Powell’s music must take these into account. My focus, however, is not to show the work of drummers as a historical precedent of Powell’s playing per se, but rather to frame the rhythmic dimension of Powell’s music within the context of a shared set of musical preferences that draw broadly upon swing, New Orleans-style jazz, as well as African-American musical styles more generally, but manifest in ways that differentiate bebop from these styles. For what Gioia calls “sudden accents,” Porter calls “punctuations,” and Gillespie calls “‘bombs’ and ‘klook-mops’ in the bass drum” (Gillespie 1979, 98, also in Porter 1993, 192) are clearly closely related concepts that are central to modern jazz rhythm. Whether articulated on the drum set via snare drum, bass drum and toms, or in the sparse, syncopated comping of Thelonious Monk behind Charlie Christian in
the early days at Minton’s Playhouse, these irregular accents of metrically weak positions articulate a kind of rhythmic phrasing that is unique to modern jazz. As explained in part by pianists in Chapter One, Powell expresses this by the syncopated left hand chords that he plays in the low register of the piano, via the placement of ornaments and dynamic accents within his long melodic lines, by his twists and unpredictable shifts in melodic contour, and by the asymmetrical placement of his phrases. All these things articulate a layer of irregular surface rhythmic activity that creates tension and forward motion by obscuring or implying dissonance against the quadruple metric structure.

The Role of Harmonic Rhythm and the “Gravitational Black Hole” of Beat One.

If a framework for studying Powell’s rhythmic concept must be strongly informed by the aforementioned relationship to an underlying aesthetic of modern jazz rhythm that, if not largely derived from, is at least most clearly articulated in bebop drumming, the other major factor which one must consider is the relationship between Powell’s outward rhythmic articulation and his (assumed) inner sense of chord progressions and the cyclic forms that they comprise. According to Steven Strunk:

Harmonic rhythm (the rate at which harmonies change) is less often attended to in traditional harmonic analysis than the constitution of the harmonies themselves; the case is the same with jazz, but the importance of harmonic rhythm in different styles of jazz is decisive and easily identified (1991, section V).

It seems logical that the rise of the American popular song as the standard vehicle for jazz improvisation, and with it the increased importance in virtually all aspects of a jazz performance of harmonic rhythm and harmonic-rhythmic cycles (i.e., cyclic forms), was a
catalyst to Bud Powell and other bebop musicians in developing their approach to rhythmic and
textural organization. The musicians of the bebop generation came of age during a time of star
singers and the developmental peak of a harmonically sophisticated style of American popular
song (see Forte 1995), and accordingly, modern jazz is a style built on cycling the harmonic
progressions of such songs.

Modern jazz musicians shared a propensity for using popular songs as vehicles for
improvisation, using the chord progressions of those songs as the basis for original compositions
in the new style, increasing and regulating the harmonic-rhythmic density of those progressions
through the insertion of descending-fifth progressions such as ii\(^7\) V\(^7\) I, composing entirely new
compositions in the basic harmonic style of popular songs, and re-harmonizing older forms—
especially the twelve-bar blues—to resemble harmonic-rhythmic cycles of popular songs.\(^8\) Such
practices are closely intertwined with the rhythmic and textural developments discussed above,
as these harmonic-rhythmic cycles provided (and continue to provide) performers with acute,
internalized temporal sensibilities that allowed for more rhythmic freedom on the music’s
surface. In his work on metric shifts in the music of Bill Evans, Stefan Love offers insights that
are useful to an analysis of Bud Powell and bebop, commenting that “[t]he strongest indication
of a beat at the half-note and down-beat level is a change in harmony. This reflects jazz’s
clockwork harmonic rhythm and the importance of harmony in the determination of meter”
(2013, 55, emphasis mine). Harmonic rhythm and the cyclic forms that it constitutes, then, serves
as a temporal reference for musicians to play against in the conversational style of modern jazz.

---

\(^8\) Compare, for example, the chord progressions of Charlie Parker’s “Blues for Alice” and
Powell’s “Dance of the Infidels” to the standard, three-chord blues form.
Self-sufficiency stemming from solid, internalized time was both a central value of and prerequisite for participation in modern jazz, and a strong, internalized sense of harmonic rhythm would have been an ideal means for swing-era big band musicians to orient themselves to the new style as it quickly evolved to de-emphasize overt articulations of metric hierarchy in favor of flowing phrases set in dissonance against the meter. Conversely, musicians lacking these attributes would find no welcome on the bandstand at modern jazz jam sessions. For example, it is not difficult to imagine a contemporary jazz pedagogue recommending Teddy Hill band trombonist Henry Woode, who complained that Kenny Clarke kept “breaking up the time” and asked “why doesn’t he keep four beats on the bass drum?” that he practice by playing the chord roots of a given harmonic-rhythmic cycle in time with a metronome. Clarke’s reply was:

if you are playing, the tempo should be in your head. It’s in your mind, or either it’s no use of your being here, if you’re depending on somebody to keep the tempo for you. You keep your tempo yourself. Because you can play the music without anything, alone. You can play your part (in Gitler 1985, 55).

Though limited data makes it impossible to infer a causal relationship from this fact, it is worth mentioning that those credited as being the most important contributors to the development of bebop rhythm and texture—drummers Kenny Clarke and Max Roach, and trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie—were all competent playing keyboard instruments in addition to their main instruments. As a child, Clarke’s mother taught him piano and organ, and “he played hymns in the parish church and composed pieces that were introduced there” (Korall 2002, 71). In addition to revolutionizing performance practice on the drums, Clarke would go on to play professional vibraharp (Korall 2002, 73). Max Roach, longtime collaborator of Bud Powell and bebop drum innovator, began on piano as well (Korall 2002, 90).
Harmony, texture, and rhythm thus seem closely intertwined in the development of modern jazz, and what Stefan Love refers to as “clockwork harmonic rhythm” seems a key ingredient in the ability of Bud Powell and other modern jazz artists to create a sense of forward motion by articulating irregular, metrically dissonant surface rhythms against a sort of silent or understated, but powerfully felt, harmonic-rhythmic beat. The result is that an acute, deeply internalized awareness of larger formal sections of four, eight, sixteen, and even thirty-two bars is necessary for the jazz musician to improvise chorus after chorus of a thirty-two bar, AABA cyclic form. Accordingly, the concept of hypermeter has proven adaptable to jazz analysis by scholars such as Keith Waters (1996) and Stefan Love (2011). In the context of repeating cycles such as the thirty-two bar AABA song form, jazz musicians likely experience the odd-numbered measures as hypermetric downbeats and their even-numbered counterparts as hypermetric upbeats.

When thinking about (two-measure) hypermeasures, four-measure groupings, and larger eight-measure formal units in modern jazz, one must consider that there is something of an inverse correlation between a beat’s structural importance and the aesthetic value of directly articulating that beat in performance. In the context of group interaction, temporal goalposts such as the first beat of an eight- or sixteen bar section have become not so much results of one or another musician’s rhythmic activity, but as “invisible” entities that musicians agree upon and metaphorically dance around. The novice pianist playing in a professional rhythm section learns this when he or she awkwardly plays a powerful chord on the downbeat of a chorus or on the bridge, clashing horribly with the slick “fill” played by the drummer in order to avoid such obvious articulation. In his chapter on the “strange absence” in African (North) American music of the asymmetrical timeline patterns common in the more polyrhythmic Afro-Caribbean and
Afro-South American music, Kubik (1999, 51-62) provides insights that are useful in understanding this special relationship between harmonic-rhythmic goalposts and surface rhythmic activity. Kubik outlines three “levels of subjective timing” that Afro-American and Afro-Caribbean/Afro-South American music tend to share (the fourth, unshared level comprises the asymmetrical timeline patterns). The first two levels are the “elementary pulsation,” i.e., the unmetered beat, and the “reference beat” (57). According to Kubik, the reference beat “combines a regular number of elementary pulses, usually three or four, into larger units that steer the dancers’ steps, and constitute beat awareness, for example, in jazz musicians” (57). In an explanation that resonates powerfully with my experience as a jazz performer and as a listener to Bud Powell recordings, Kubik goes on to state that

[i]n contrast to Western music, the reference beat in African and African-American music does not embody the notion of pre-accentuation, i.e., “strong” and “weak” parts of the meter. *Beat 1* can be so unobtrusive acoustically that it functions like a black hole (with a powerful gravity, but virtual invisibility). Not pre-accented, accents can then be set on-beat or off-beat according to the melodic-rhythmic structures to be developed.

This way of thinking about the metric downbeat as a position to be simultaneously acutely perceived and avoided remains an important part of the jazz aesthetic. For example, when, during the break of a gig, I asked professional bassist Bill Moring to share his thoughts on rhythmically articulating beat one, Moring’s comments resonated with Kubik’s perspective:

you have to know exactly where it is at all times, but you don’t necessarily want to play it. One of the problems many of my students have is that they start too many of their phrases on beat one (sings phrase). I say, “why not start on beat two and end on beat one,
or better yet, end *after* beat one” (personal communication, February 2014, emphasis mine).

In line with Kubik’s and Moring’s descriptions, I often experience beat “one” in modern jazz generally and Bud Powell’s music specifically as a powerful “gravitational black hole” or negative accent. I would add that the highly developed sense of harmonic rhythm common to jazz musicians and clearly heard in Bud Powell’s music strengthens this “black hole” effect, for when Powell engages in such irregular surface harmonic activity, from “bombs” to his asymmetrical phrasing structure, it is within the framework of the harmonic-rhythmic pulse and often includes some level of harmonic displacement against that pulse.

The specific analytical points that follow regarding Powell’s rhythmic style reflect this framework of an internal but often understated “clockwork harmonic rhythm” that is often expressed with negative, “gravitational black hole” accents on temporal goalposts, and a texturally flowing rhythmic stream that is ornamented in a multitude of ways with irregular accents that create perceptual “bumps” in that stream.

**Phrase Placement and Structure in Powell’s Improvising**

One of the ways that Powell expresses the aesthetics of bebop rhythm is by situating his phrases in unpredictable, asymmetrical ways against the meter and cyclic form. The lengths of these phrases vary considerably, and the phrases rarely begin or end on beat one, resulting in a sound that jazz musicians call “playing over the barline.” These types of phrases, which sound both independent and expressive of the metric structure, can be heard in the first chorus of Powell’s two-chorus solo on “Bud’s Bubble” (1947). Here, of the nine phrases that Powell plays in the thirty-two-measure chorus (numbered correspondingly in Table 2.1 and Example 2.1),
only one begins on a downbeat (phrase 5, starting on the bridge), and not a single one *ends* on beat one. But beyond Powell’s avoidance of beat one as a starting or ending point, there is a great deal of variety in both the metric positions book-marking the phrases and the lengths of the phrases themselves (see Table 2.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Starting Beat</th>
<th>Phrase Length</th>
<th>Ending Beat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>phrase 1: four</td>
<td>12 beats total</td>
<td>and-of-three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phrase 2: and-of-three</td>
<td>6.5 beats total</td>
<td>and-of-one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phrase 3: two</td>
<td>22 beats total</td>
<td>and-of-three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phrase 4: two</td>
<td>12 beats total</td>
<td>and-of-one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phrase 5: one</td>
<td>27 beats total</td>
<td>and-of-three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phrase 6: and-of-one</td>
<td>6 beats total</td>
<td>three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phrase 7: and-of-one</td>
<td>3.5 beats total</td>
<td>and-of-four</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phrase 8: two</td>
<td>7 beats total</td>
<td>four</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phrase 9: three</td>
<td>11 beats total</td>
<td>and-of-one</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1: Phrase Placement in C1 of Powell’s “Bud’s Bubble” solo.
Example 2.1: C1 of Powell’s solo on “Bud’s Bubble” (0.34-1.02), phrases numbered.

Despite the asymmetry of phrase placement in this solo, Powell manages to achieve rhythmic coherence by concluding his phrases in the kind of rhyming pattern that David...
Hazeltine pointed to in Chapter One. For example, Powell alternates the placement of his endings of the first five phrases between the “and-of-three” and the “and-of-one.” The following four phrase endings alternate between numbered beats and “ands.” Phrases five and six, which end on the “and-of-three” and “three” respectively, rhyme with phrases seven and eight, which end on the “and-of-four” and “four” respectively. The result is that a listener experiences a kind of inner coherence or symmetry within this highly asymmetrical phrasing style.

Such complexity of phrase structure alone would provide a degree of rhythmic interest to Powell’s improvisations, even if the individual phrases themselves consisted solely of eighth notes. However, there is often much more rhythmic sophistication in Powell’s lines, which, in addition to eighth notes, may contain a variety of ornaments, subdivisions below the eighth-note level, and unexpected rests and ties. Ted Rosenthal describes this phenomenon:

…well, his lines, there’s so much there that, you know, when you first hear them and hear a lot of eighth notes you say, okay, well, eighth notes, but then depending on the tempo he does almost as much or as much in the rhythmic subtleties and intricacies that Charlie Parker does. [There are] these little turns, little mordents, little embellishments, little flurries of sixteenths within the eighth note line, and then, again, tempo is a big part of it, so if it’s really fast, of course, you’re going to hear mostly eighth notes, if it’s that, sort of medium tempo, maybe like a “Celia” or something, where you can tell, he wants to like, get that intensity going but it’s not quite something that he’s just going to play double time on, cause it’s a little too fast, but you’ll hear these little flourishes, you’ll hear four sixteenths [leading] into an eighth note phrase, four sixteenths in the middle of an eighth note phrase, and it just kind of gives it, it’s like one step beyond an embellishment, almost, like you’ve got the embellishments, the typical [sings triplet figure leading to
eighth note phrase], and this is like, like one little step to me beyond that, and then of course there’s the full out double time which he may or may not do, but sometimes he seems to pick a tempo that you almost can’t go all the way into double time as easily, so it’s interesting.

While the tempo of “Bud’s Bubble” is quite fast—over two hundred and sixty beats per minute, the tempo of “Celia” is approximately one hundred and fifty-five beats per minute. This slower tempo gives Powell the room for more rhythmic nuance, but renders a sustained sixteenth-note based double-time line extremely fast, roughly equivalent to three hundred and ten beats per minute. There is recorded evidence that Powell was capable of producing melodically creative improvisations at three hundred-plus beats per minute (see the 1947 recording of “Indiana,” for example), but “Celia,” though not a ballad, is far more of a lyrical tune than a typical up-tempo “barn-burner,” and Powell improvises accordingly. While Powell does include a few moments of double time in his “Celia” solo, including the aforementioned solo break, this one-chorus, AABA solo fits Rosenthal’s description very well overall.
Example 2.2: Right hand of Powell’s “Celia” solo, phrases numbered (1.09-2.02).
In fact, the longest stretch of “full out” double time in the “Celia” solo is the break (phrase 1 in Example 2.2), where Powell displays his terrific virtuosity with a sixteenth note line that stretches for a total of seven beats and lands squarely on downbeat of the first A section. This is the last downbeat articulated by phrase placement, for none of the following phrases in this solo begin or end on beat one.

Powell plays a second significant burst of double time, this one totaling six and a half beats, in the final two measures of the first A section (phrase 6), but instead of “landing” on the hypermetric downbeat of the second A section, he continues over the barline with the type of very fast ascending flourish that Rosenthal was likely speaking of. This second burst of double time also speaks to Rosenthal’s statement of a place “where you can tell, he wants to…get that intensity going but it’s not quite something that he’s just going to play double time on.” The rest of the solo is saturated with rhythmic variety. In fact, Powell’s only phrase that consists solely of eighth notes—and it is a brief one—is heard in the third and final A section (phrase 12). This phrase seems to be motivically derived from the first phrase of the “Celia” head, though it is displaced by a measure in the cyclic form.

The other phrases of the solo combine eighth notes with trios of eighth-note triplets, the more ornamental combination of three sixteenth note triplets plus one swing eighth note groupings, straight (un-swung) groupings of four sixteenth notes, or faster flourishes consisting of smaller subdivisions and well-placed rests and tied notes.

Powell’s rhythmic work during the bridge (C1B) is of particular interest. Notice how, after a relatively long stretch of eighth notes in the first half of the bridge (phrase 11, the longest in the solo), Powell follows with a clever articulation of a contrapuntal elaboration of the static
harmony ($C^7\#11$, the $V^7/V$ harmony)\textsuperscript{9} that allows him to use an additive rhythmic technique (first quarter notes alternating with trios of eighth note triples, followed by a quarter note alternating with a quartet of sixteenth notes, then a tied extension of the next quarter note followed by a flourish-like ascending phrase before the phrase continues).

For more examples of this type of discontinuous, nuanced rhythmic texture that borders on but (mostly) avoids “full-out” double-time, see Powell’s solos over the two 1949 quintet takes of “Dance of the Infidels” or “Ornithology.” For examples of Powell solos that feature abundant, lengthy stretches of full out double-time, see “Strictly Confidential” (1949) and “Reets and I” (1953).

**Metric Placement of Ornamental Triplet Figures**

Both the “Bud’s Bubble” and “Celia” solos feature several phrases that are constructed largely of eighth notes but have ornamental, triplet-based figures within them. The variety of metric placement of such in-line ornaments seems to function similarly to the placement of the phrases themselves, for like “bombs,” off beat snare accents, and comping attacks, the ornamental figures heard within Powell’s lines create a moderate degree of dissonance against the underlying meter and harmonic rhythm. Powell’s placement of the triplet figure generally does not imply any perceptible polyrhythmic layer (such as two against three, etc.), but rather presents sudden, unpredictable “bumps” in the rhythmic stream that help to detach one’s perception of that stream from the underlying meter and cyclic form. A logical question then is, just how “unpredictable” is Powell’s placement of these figures? If, for analytical convenience, we conflate the varieties of 1) a trio of evenly spaced eighth-note triplets and 2) a group of four pitches spaced over one beat and rhythmically articulated as either “sixteenth-note triplet plus

\textsuperscript{9} This line is a clear example of what Cocker calls CESH (1984, 41).
swung-eighth note” or “straight” sixteenth notes, we can look for consistencies regarding Powell’s placement of the figures within the metric framework and the phrase at hand.

In Powell’s medium-tempo “Bouncing with Bud” solo, each of the first seven measures contains such a one-beat ornamental figure. The irregularity of placement regarding these figures is such that by the sixth measure of the solo, each of the four metric beats has been decorated. Studying the solo’s rhythmic development, it does not seem possible to determine where in the meter Powell’s next ornament will fall as he moves from one phrase to the next.

Example 2.3: C1A1 of Powell’s “Bouncing with Bud” solo, (1.53-2.02).

Measure 1:beat 4
Measure 2:beat 3
Measure 3:beat 2
Measure 4:beat 3
Measure 5:beat 3
Measure 6:beat 1
Measure 7:beat 2
Measure 8:beat –

Table 2.2: Measure and beat placement of triplet-based ornaments in A1 of “Bouncing with Bud” solo.

When one compares this solo to Powell’s solo on Alternate Take One of the same tune (recorded in the same 1949 session), the metric placement of these figures is among the less consistent rhythmic elements of the two takes. The overall rhythmic design of the two solos is
quite similar (see pp. 221-224), with the first two A sections of each solo consisting mainly of eighth-note based phrases situated over the barline and laden with the irregularly placed triplet figures, followed in each case by bridges that feature a preponderance of double-time sixteenth notes (especially in the second halves), and concluding with final (A3) sections that rhythmically resemble the A1 and A2 sections (mainly eighth-note phrases with inserted triplet figures). Like its counterpart in the originally released solo, the double-time passage that begins A2 of the alternate take is a quote, and this fact seems more significant than the double- vs. single-time rhythmic division in whatever internal model Powell was working with for the two solos.

Example 2.4 compares the first A sections of the two solos.

Example 2.4: C1A1 of original release and alternate take one solos on “Bouncing with Bud.”

While Powell’s metric placement of the ornamental triplet figures seems unpredictable or irregular within each solo, there are several instances when both solos feature ornamental triplet figures at coinciding measures and beats. In these cases, however, other rhythmic attributes of
the solos align. It seems that, like snare accents, unpredictability was an aesthetic value regarding Powell’s placement of such ornaments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(original)</th>
<th>(alternate take one)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Measure 1:beat 4</td>
<td>Measure 1:beat -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measure 2:beat 3</td>
<td>Measure 2:beat 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measure 3:beat 2</td>
<td>Measure 3:beat 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measure 4:beat 3</td>
<td>Measure 4:beat 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measure 5:beat 3</td>
<td>Measure 5:beat 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measure 6:beat 1</td>
<td>Measure 6:beat 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measure 7:beat 2</td>
<td>Measure 7:beat 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measure 8:beat -</td>
<td>Measure 8:beat -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.3: Metric placement of triplet-based ornaments in A1 of two “Bouncing with Bud” takes.

**Dancing Around the Downbeat and the “Gravitational Black Hole” Effect in Powell’s Phrasing**

When jazz musicians talk of the importance of phrasing “over the barline,” and “swinging,” they’re not only referring to an improviser’s ability to situate phrases so as to begin and end on weak metric beats or to play eighth notes in a relaxed, triplet-based manner. A big part of jazz phrasing involves the ability to convey an authoritative rhythmic statement that strongly emphasizes important downbeats with either silence or minimal articulation. Put another way, a proficient improviser in the modern jazz idiom has such confidence in “the time” that he or she can imply it indirectly, while a novice tends to over-articulate beat one as compensation for a feeling of temporal insecurity. In Bud Powell’s improvising, over-the-barline phrasing in conjunction with well-placed uses of silence (or ties) reflects not only this rhythmic security but also illustrates how he expresses an aspect of the bebop aesthetic that is akin to Kubik’s concept of beat one as a gravitational black hole or negative accent. It is as if Powell emphasizes the downbeat most strongly by avoiding it.
For example, to open his solo on “The Fruit,” Powell plays a phrase that is not only over the barline at the downbeat of the chorus, but that also cleverly avoids that downbeat by placing buoyantly repeated B-flats (scale degree five) on rhythmic positions surrounding it. What is so powerful about Powell’s proverbial dancing around beat one’s gravitational pull in this performance is that even though he is playing solo piano and thus rendering beat one as truly silent, this silence functions as a sort of negative accent that only increases the sonic pull of that downbeat, rendering the listener acutely aware of the exact moment of its arrival.

Example 2.5: Powell’s solo opening on “The Fruit,” (0.45-0.48).

After his rhythmically adventurous bridge of the same chorus, Powell again plays an over-the-barline phrase that skirts the downbeat of the third A section in a similar manner.

Example 2.6: Powell’s phrase to begin C1A3 of his solo on “The Fruit,” (1.14-1.16).
In his “Hallucinations” solo, also solo piano, Powell uses this device as a motive of sorts, beginning the second A section of this first improvised chorus and the first two A sections of the following chorus with it.

Example 2.7: Powell’s phrase beginning C1A2 of his “Hallucinations” solo (0.46-0.47).

Example 2.8: Powell’s phrase beginning C2A1 of his “Hallucinations” solo (1.10-1.12).

Example 2.9: Powell’s phrase beginning C2A2 of his “Hallucinations” solo, (1.17-1.19).
The Role of Harmonic Anticipation and Displacement

In each of the above examples, Powell’s avoidance of direct articulation of a structurally significant downbeat seems to emphasize or accent the downbeat further in the listener’s mind. While downbeat avoidance is essentially a rhythmic device, there are, of course, harmonic implications at work here as well, which Powell often exploits to enhance the “black hole” effect. Along these lines, he uses various methods of harmonic displacement, including the anticipation and delay of chord tones/voice-leading positions within right-hand lines as well as harmonic-rhythmic displacement between the hands. Powell’s use of harmonic rhythm as a vehicle for rhythmic play is clever, for it provides the pianist a regular, expected pulsation against which to create temporal dissonance, but does not require the kinds of textural interruptions that would detract from the flowing, forward motion so characteristic of the modern jazz sound. Particularly in the solo piano context, Powell’s use of harmonic displacement as a means of rhythmic expression allows him to provide a continuous, forwardly flowing rhythmic stream while simultaneously creating dissonance after dissonance against that stream. Powell’s manipulation of these elements is also quite innovative, for it foreshadows the harmonic-rhythmic play of generations of pianists.

The Relationship between Phrase Placement and Left-hand Harmonic Anticipation at the Eighth-note Level.

Perhaps the most abundant of Powell’s harmonic-rhythmic displacement techniques is his preference for anticipating harmonic-rhythmic changes by an eighth-note in his left hand chordal attacks. This device, of which Powell was both a master and innovator, was taken up by virtually all of the pianists of the 1950s and beyond, and can be heard prominently in the work of Red Garland, Ahmad Jamal, Wynton Kelly, Bill Evans, McCoy Tyner, Herbie Hancock, Chick Corea

10 Chapter Three addresses this in more detail from a voice-leading perspective.
and many others. In his work on the more dissonant “metric shifts” in Bill Evans’s improvising, Stefan Love notes that “[s]uch anticipations are so common as to be a cliché of left-hand *accompaniment style* and are easily understood within the schematic metrical grid partly because of their ubiquity” (2013, 51, emphasis mine). I see this device, in all its ubiquity, not so much as a “cliché,” but as an important ingredient that is central to the modern jazz style. Though swing era pianists such as Teddy Wilson did in fact use this device occasionally,¹¹ this seems to be one of Powell’s contributions to modern playing.

David Hazeltine considers this device as designed by Powell and his drummer contemporaries to remain at the center of the pianist and drummer’s relationship, which constitutes a kind of team effort in propelling the forward motion of the band from one sectional division of the cyclic form to the next by accenting the last eighth note of the each unit: the “and-of-four,” that’s one time where the drummers, you know…with the piano becomes…especially the “and-of-four” going into another eight bars…often becomes the, the bass drum and the high hat [scat sings drum accent on the “and-of-four’], one of these things that, it’s on the “and-of-four,” like “one two three four-phhh,” and it gives it that little accent, and that’s where the pianist likes to [play], you know that stuff hooks up too, so it’s not just the left hand, it’s the drummer and the pianist hooking up.¹²

Such snare accents create a sense of forward motion and dissonance against the strong beats one and three, but the effect is even stronger when heard as anticipated chords in Bud Powell’s left hand due to the harmonic-rhythmic displacement that it entails.

¹¹ Listen, for example, to Wilson’s 1942 solo piano recording of “These Foolish Things” to hear his limited but well-placed use of the device.
¹² Hazeltine’s point is well illustrated by Powell’s comping rhythms for the solos of Sonny Rollins and Fats Navarro on the three 1949 takes of “Bouncing with Bud;” see pp. 227-229.
This type of left-hand anticipation is somewhat independent from the harmonic implications of Powell’s improvised melodic line. Powell may choose to couple eighth-note level harmonic anticipation in his left hand with right-hand phrases that articulate the harmonic rhythm “on the beat,” or with right-hand phrases that anticipate or avoid the downbeat. These variations can be heard in the first A section of Powell’s “Bouncing with Bud” solo.

Example 2.10: C1A1 of Powell’s “Bouncing with Bud” solo, (1.52-2.03).

The negative accent or “gravitational black hole” effect is strongest, of course, when Powell avoids direct articulation of the downbeat in both hands, as he does twice in this eight-bar section. The first such occurrence is heard in the third measure of Example 2.10, when Powell plays material in each hand that anticipates the downbeat of the D minor (for which Powell substitutes a I6 tonic in his left hand), and the second instance of this device is heard exactly four measures later, when Powell anticipates the C minor sonority in his left hand and again leaves the downbeat of this harmonic-rhythmic position silent. Notice that the right hand line of both
phrases contain repeated pitches that straddle the downbeat similarly to the phrases illustrated above in Examples 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, and 2.9.

A lesser degree of the negative accent effect is heard when Powell’s left hand harmonically and rhythmically anticipates strong metric beats but his right hand, despite its metrically dislocated phrase placement, articulates the chord progression with harmonic-rhythmic consonance. This occurs three times in the brief passage illustrated above (each instance labeled by number in Example 2.10), with Powell’s placement of 1) treble F-sharp of the D dominant seventh chord (spelled G-flat in Example 2.10), 2) the B-flat on the fifth measure articulated on the harmonic-rhythmic position belonging to G minor, and 3) the E-natural, third of C-sharp diminished seventh articulated on the downbeat of the following, sixth measure. In addition to the sense of forward motion and slight negative accent that Powell creates with this device, there is an interesting pitched-based harmonic dissonance inherent in each of these anticipations (G in the right hand against the D/F-sharp tenth in the left, C in the right hand against the G/F shell in the left, F in the right hand against the C-sharp/E shell in the left). Though each of these cases sounds a quasi 4-3 suspension, these suspensions differ from their counterparts in common practice tonal music in that they are caused by harmonic anticipation rather than melodic delay.

Although left-hand anticipations of the harmonic rhythm can be heard at any point in Powell’s playing, he tends to use the device with increased frequency toward the ends of solos, perhaps as a means of building tension to be released with the reappearance of the head. For example, he uses abundant left-hand anticipation to create a strong sense of forward motion in the approach and duration of the final A section of his “Celia” solo.
Example 2.11: C1B-C1A3 of Powell’s “Celia” solo, (1.44-2.02).

Again here we have the quasi 4-3 suspension as a result of Powell’s anticipation of the B-flat major seventh shell voicing on the “and-of-four” before the downbeat of the final A section (C1A3), where his right hand line plays an E-flat against the left hand shell voicing. The same thing happens four measures later in anticipation of the D minor seventh, and then again with the anticipation of the B-flat major left hand shell in final cadence of the solo two measure after that. But perhaps more important than the pitched-based “rubs” that these momentary dissonances create is the way in which the harmonic-rhythmic implications of Powell’s left hand placement

---

13 The term “shell voicing” refers to incomplete voicings used by modern jazz pianists to represent larger chords. Such voicings usually consist of root and third degree or root and seventh degree.
contribute to a sense of forward motion against the very steady metric framework. For if we ignore Powell’s right hand for a moment and focus just on his left, we can hear that of the fourteen chordal attacks that Powell plays in his left hand in this final A section eleven are anticipated by an eighth note.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chord</th>
<th>Timing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bb\textsuperscript{maj7}</td>
<td>anticipated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C\textsuperscript{7b5}</td>
<td>anticipated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D\textsuperscript{7}</td>
<td>two attacks in one measure, both anticipated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eb\textsuperscript{7}</td>
<td>anticipated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ab\textsuperscript{7}</td>
<td>on beat (three)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D\textsuperscript{7}</td>
<td>anticipated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Db\textsuperscript{7}</td>
<td>anticipated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C\textsuperscript{7}</td>
<td>on beat (one)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F\textsuperscript{7}</td>
<td>on beat (three)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bb\textsuperscript{maj7}</td>
<td>anticipated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F (bass pitch)</td>
<td>anticipated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C\textsuperscript{7}</td>
<td>anticipated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B\textsuperscript{7}</td>
<td>anticipated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.4: Metric placement of Powell’s left-hand chords in Example 2.11.

Quarter-note Level Harmonic Displacement in Powell’s Right Hand Lines.

Powell uses various techniques to displace the harmonic rhythm and/or meter at the quarter-note level, potentially creating a much higher degree of metric dissonance than the eighth-note level harmonic anticipations described above. One way that Powell does this is by using ornamental melodic material in his right-hand lines to delay the arrival of a harmonically indicative tone, causing it to arrive a beat later than its harmonic-rhythmic position (which is usually beat one or three). Because Powell can utilize this technique in a melodic line that consists solely of eighth notes, he is able to create metric dissonance via harmonic-rhythmic displacement without interrupting the textural flow that his stream of eighth notes provides. For this very reason, the device is particularly useful at fast tempos, where, as Ted Rosenthal mentioned, “of course, you’re going to hear mostly eighth notes.”
Accordingly, Powell does this in the third chorus of his solo on his breakneck-tempo recording of “Indiana” (1947), where he uses diatonic neighbor tones (C-natural and B-flat) to surround and delay the third degree of a G dominant seventh chord by one beat (B-natural).

![Musical notation](image)

Example 2.12: C3B of Powell’s “Indiana” solo, (1.26-1.27).

This device involves both rhythm and voice leading, and accordingly will be discussed in more detail in the following two chapters.

**Left Hand “Bombs” and Quarter-note Level Displacement.**

A way that Powell contributes more powerfully to the paradox of a less dynamically articulated but stronger *felt* beat one is by accenting beat four in his left hand. This creates a potentially disorienting sense of metric dissonance in fast tempo improvisations, especially when Powell articulates such beat-four accents with powerful chords or octaves that imply harmonic anticipations. As several of the professional pianists with whom I spoke to for this project pointed out, this is Powell’s pianistic equivalent to or approximation of the “bombs” that bebop drummers dropped by accenting beat four via bass drum.

Powell’s left-hand bombs can take the form of harmonic anticipations via shell voicings or low-register octaves, or they can be more rhythmic-melodic in nature, in which cases they generally manifest as the apex pitch of a riff played in octaves or block chords that arrives at scale degree 5 on beat four to imply a dominant pedal point. In the very first A section of his
“Wail” solo, Powell uses both versions of the device; first with an ascending riff in his left hand (A-flat, A-natural, culminating with B-flat on beat four of the second measure in Example 2.13), then, in the last measure of the A section, with the powerful E-flat octaves with fifth on beat four, anticipating the harmony of the C1A2 downbeat.

Example 2.13: C1A1-C1A2 of Powell’s “Wail” solo, (1.35-1.39).

Another example of the version of this device that involves harmonic displacement can be heard in the first chorus of Powell’s “I Want to Be Happy” solo, where he anticipates the already unstable vii<sub>dim7</sub>/ii (F-sharp diminished seventh) in his left hand with powerful octaves on beat four of the previous measure (see Example 2.14 below). This causes increased metric instability and provides the “gravitational black hole” type of negative accent on beat one, intensifying the overall sense of forward motion to this already fast solo. Note that these F-sharps on beat four are preceded by three syncopated attacks in the left hand (“&-of-one,” “&-of-four” and “&-of-two,” giving the F-sharp octaves a sense rhythmic stability even as they destabilize the meter and harmonic-rhythm.
Example 2.14: C1A2 of Powell’s “I Want to Be Happy” solo, (1.41-1.45).

In his “Parisian Thoroughfare” solo piano improvisation, Powell creates tremendous metric dissonance by playing several such beat-four accents in his left hand. Of particular interest is his rhythmic work beginning just before the second A section of his first chorus and continuing into the bridge of that chorus.
Example 2.15: C1A2-C1B of Powell’s “Parisian Thoroughfare” solo, (0.39-0.51).

Powell anticipates the important structural downbeat of C1A2 with powerful left hand F-octaves on beat four (just before the double barline), anticipates the fifth measure of the section similarly with a prominent F bass note on beat four of the preceding measure, and then—creating substantial harmonic dissonance in its placement against the right-hand F-natural—anticipates the bridge’s starting A major chord with a left-hand shell voicing before that double barline (C1B). Furthermore, similar to the above example of “Wail,” Powell plays a riff commonly found in African-American music in the left-hand during measures 5-8 of this A section.
(melodically, 1, 3, 4, #4, 5 or F, A, B-flat, B-natural, C). In doing this, he not only anticipates the aforementioned F bass note by placing it on beat four of the fourth measure, but actually anticipates beat three of the sixth measure by placing the B-natural of that riff on beat two (which in turn displaces the implied B diminished seventh). The accumulation of these left-hand displacements causes a significant degree of metric dissonance that Powell takes to an even higher level at the arrival of C1B, where in his right hand he plays a quote of the opening phrase of the “Parisian Thoroughfare” bridge melody, displaced to start one beat early!

In the “Parisian Thoroughfare” example above, we heard one instance where Powell combined harmonic and textural anticipation of beat one with mid-measure, riff-based melodic anticipation of beat three, when, in the midst of the former, he placed the left-hand B-natural octaves on beat two rather than on the expected beat three. Powell combines harmonic displacement of both the metric downbeat chords (which fall on beat one) and the upbeat chords (which fall on beat three) in other solos as well. For instance, he does this several times in his solo piano “Hallucinations” recording. One such occasion occurs in C1A2, where after several eighth-note level harmonic anticipations in his left hand voicings on the first four measures, Powell places a harmonic change to B-diminished, a chord that “belongs” on the harmonic upbeat beat three, on the “and-of-one,” displacing the harmonic rhythm by a beat and a half (see Example 2.16 below).
Example 2.16: C1A2 of Powell’s “Hallucinations” solo, (0.44-0.54).

Powell goes on to increase this instability through his next few left-hand attacks, first by anticipating the A-minor seventh chord “belonging” to the downbeat of the following measure by an eighth note. He follows this more dramatically by playing the D dominant seventh shell voicing a beat early, putting it on beat two rather than beat three. After one more eighth-note level anticipation (the G-minor seventh shell voicing that follows the aforementioned D and F-sharp tenths), Powell resolves the tension with a few squarely placed left hand attacks in the last two measures of the A section.

**Larger Scale Harmonic-rhythmic Displacements**

In addition to the destabilizing metric dissonance that Powell creates through rhythmic and harmonic displacement at the quarter-note level in his bop-oriented improvisations, he occasionally implies harmonic displacement by two or more beats in his improvisations, creating
an even higher degree of instability. We heard this, for instance, in his anticipation of the B-
diminished seventh chord above in the “Hallucinations” A section depicted in Example 2.16. An
even more remarkable instance can be heard in his anticipation of the F-sharp diminished
harmony in the opening passage of his second solo chorus on “I Want to be Happy.”

Example 2.17: C2A1 of Powell’s “I Want to be Happy” solo, (2.02-2.07).

Here, after anticipating chord a full four-and-one-half beats early in his left hand (first
measure of C2A1), Powell more powerfully anticipates the F-sharp diminished in both hands,
displacing the harmonic rhythm by at least a half note.

Ternary Groupings

Another technique that Powell employs to create metric dissonance without interrupting
his eighth note-based linear stream involves playing repeated or sequential phrases that imply
two-against-three cross rhythms via melodic contour. These phrases generally consist of repeated
ternary groupings of binary rhythmic divisions, such as eighth- or sixteenth notes articulated in
groups of three or six through melodic contour. Like many of the rhythmic devices that Powell
employs, this is common to earlier jazz styles and to Afro-Latin music.\textsuperscript{14} Indeed, Louis Armstrong employed ternary groupings in his vocal scat solo over “Hotter than That” two decades prior to Powell’s first release as a leader. However, due to a combination of faster tempos and more overall rhythmic dissonance, including his propensity to drop left-hand “bombs” discussed above, Powell’s uses of repeated ternary groupings result in even higher levels of instability than Armstrong’s or those of other pre-bebop artists. This device can be heard in the buildup to the downbeat of his second solo chorus in “Indiana.” Here, at the approximate tempo of 320 beats per minute, Powell plays a three-beat grouping of eighth notes five times in a row, beginning the pattern a sixth time at the downbeat of his second chorus.

\begin{example}
\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{example2.18.png}
\caption{Example 2.18: Final four measures of C2B of Powell’s “Indiana” solo, (0.52-0.55)}
\end{figure}
\end{example}

This device serves to push Powell’s super-fast, energetic solo to an even higher level of intensity and propels the band and listener into the next chorus, thereby carrying the momentum for another thirty-two measures.

Some of Powell’s most dramatically effective recorded uses of ternary groupings occur in his “Tempus-Fugit” solo. In this two hundred and seventy-five beat-per-minute warhorse, Powell combines right-hand ternary groupings with left-hand beat four anticipations and accents (bombs) to create a staggering amount of metric dissonance that makes the super-fast tempo

\textsuperscript{14} For example, see Peter Manuel’s discussion on such devices in the improvisation of Latin dance music (1998).
sound even faster. Powell begins using the ternary groupings in the first measure of C2A1 of his solo, where, starting on beat three of that measure, he plays six repetitions of a three-beat figure.

Example 2.19: C2A1 of Powell’s “Tempus Fugit” solo, (1.04-1.10).

In doing this, Powell creates an implied three-against-two cross-rhythm against the underlying half-note pulse of metric beats one and three. Powell increases the resulting degree of metric dissonance by articulating beat four with the low-register tritone pedal (A-natural and E-flat) to begin the fourth repetition of the figure. However, unlike his “Indiana” solo discussed above, where Powell uses the device just once (at a high point in his solo and seemingly as a means of propelling himself into the next chorus), in “Tempus Fugit” Powell uses the device three times. Example 2.20 shows the second A section of Powell’s second chorus of solo (directly following the passage depicted in Example 2.19), where he again plays six repetitions of the ternary grouping.
Example 2.20: C2A2 of Powell’s “Tempus Fugit” solo, ternary groupings. (1.11-1.16).

Powell plays his third installment of the ternary grouping device in the first A section of his third and final chorus of solo (see Example 2.21).

Example 2.21: C3A1 of Powell’s “Tempus Fugit” solo, (1.29-1.35).

This time, rather than beginning the implied cross-rhythm on the third beat of that section’s first measure and playing six groupings, Powell begins it on beat four and plays seven three-note
groups. Powell’s choice to change the placement of this pattern is interesting for a few reasons: such alteration of a repeated device in a solo, on the third repetition, exemplifies Powell’s excellence as an improviser in that it provides his solo with coherent continuity and freshness. Also, Powell’s ability to begin this device on seemingly any beat (beat two in the “Indiana” solo, beats three and four in the “Tempus Fugit” solo) leads one to believe that he had, at his disposal, a layer of two-against-three polyrhythm that he could summon at any time to create rhythmic interest and metric dissonance.

At times, Powell also mixes binary and ternary groupings in his lines, creating more of a sense of unpredictably in his rhythmic flow. A descending whole tone-based passage in the second chorus of his “Tempus Fugit” solo is a clear illustration of this technique.

Example 2.22: Transition from C2B to C2A3 in Powell’s “Tempus Fugit” solo, (1.20-1.26).

Here, in the final two measures of the bridge, Powell initiates a descending pattern in both hands that squarely accents the half note. However, on the downbeat of C2A3, Powell
changes this pattern to a one-plus-two ternary grouping. After playing this grouping for two
cycles, he returns to the former binary version. This descending whole tone pattern is a staple of
Powell’s melodic vocabulary, and he used it often in up-tempo solos to the effect of displacing
both meter and tonal center. Other examples can be heard in his “Cherokee” solo a 1:48, and in
his ultra-fast solo piano rendition of “Just One of Those Things” at 1:50.

In what seems to be a device he shared with Charlie Parker, Powell also uses ternary
groupings that create rhythmic interest and forward motion in his “double-time” playing. One
example can be heard in the first bridge of Powell’s solo on “The Fruit.” Here, he plays a fast,
double-time line with a melodic contour that implies two-against-three at the eighth note level,
with four ascending chromatic groups of sixteenth-notes beginning on beat two and “landing” on
beat one of the following measure.

Example 2.23: C1B of Powell’s solo on “The Fruit,” (1.05-1.07).

Powell uses the same chromatic, ascending melodic contour to imply the double-time
ternary grouping in the second A section of his “Night in Tunisia” solo.

---

15 See, for instance, the second chorus of Parker’s “Billie’s Bounce” solo.
Example 2.24: C1A2 of Powell’s solo on “Night in Tunisia” (1.35-1.37).

In the first bridge of his “Strictly Confidential” solo, Powell also uses ternary groupings in his double time line. In this passage, however, he reverses the melodic contour of the second grouping, placing three ascending sixteenth notes between two descending groups. Nevertheless, rhythmically the effect is the same.

Example 2.25: C1B of Powell’s “Strictly Confidential” solo, (1.38-1.40).

This chapter outlined a framework for understanding the modern jazz rhythmic aesthetic, and then went on to discuss some of the most pertinent and creative ways that Bud Powell expresses and contributes to that aesthetic through the particularities of his instrument. As my conversations with professional pianists summarized in Chapter One indicated, and much literature supports, it is useful to think of rhythm as the most important dimension in Powell’s music, and specifically helpful to consider his rhythmic devices in relation to the innovations of
bebop drummers on one hand and the underlying harmonic rhythm and cyclic form on the other. In Chapters Three and Four, I examine in detail the harmonic implications of Powell’s melodic lines and how those lines are woven through the harmonic rhythmic cycles at hand. I sometimes refer back to the arguments presented in this chapter directly, but even when this is not the case, readers are encouraged to consider the coming examples in relation to the general aesthetics and specific devices discussed in this chapter.
Chapter Three: A Model For Harmony and Voice Leading in Bud Powell’s Linear-Melodic Improvisations

As illustrated in Chapter One, virtually all of the pianists interviewed for this project implied that Powell’s linear style is characterized by a combination of freshness, melodic creativity and a special relationship among the harmonic, melodic, and temporal dimensions. Jazz musicians are attracted to the “surprising melodic lines with twists and turns over chord changes” that Powell was able to create, and the sense of “destination” of those lines (David Berkman). Accordingly, several participants in this study, independently and without provocation, compared Powell’s music to that of Johann Sebastian Bach. While I don’t take this to mean that Powell’s lines literally resemble Bach’s, there is a profound richness and sophistication in the ways that harmony, melody and rhythm interrelate in Powell’s lines that satisfies the listener on multiple levels. Accordingly, there seems to be a general consensus among experts that among Powell’s greatest contributions to modern jazz is his technique of constructing melodic lines that are harmonically and rhythmically implicative yet also lyrical.

To orient readers to this perspective, the following passage from the last chorus of Powell’s improvised solo on “Hallucinations” (1951, solo piano) is representative of the type of melodic lines that so fascinate jazz musicians.
Example 3.1: C3B of Powell’s “Hallucinations” solo, (1.55-2.06).

In this passage, Powell plays a right-hand line that, through a specific style of voice leading, encapsulates and perpetuates the harmony. Of course, when improvising such a line, Powell did not isolate voice leading from the temporal aspects of the music, rather he used it to express the rhythm and swing and as a foundation for melodic invention. Notice that Powell displaces harmonically indicative pitches against one another, against his left-hand comping (which he also displaces), and against the underlying harmonic rhythm. With right-hand lines and left-hand comping like this, Powell found a way to use an eighth-note based linear style as a means of expressing the metric dissonance and flow of the modern jazz rhythmic aesthetic.
This chapter examines the harmonic implications of such lines by exploring Powell’s melodic negotiation of modern jazz’s most common harmonic root movement, descent by fifth, as well as related, tritone substitute descent by semitone, through the lens of a five-strand voice-leading model. The model is based on chord tones as commonly understood by jazz musicians (roots, thirds, fifths, sevenths, ninths, and thirteenth), and a voice-leading style that is taught by jazz educators and appears in pedagogical material that deals with jazz piano chord voicings. Perhaps the most explicit pedagogical illustration of such voice leading, complete with voice-leading tables similar to those found in this chapter, is in Phil DeGreg’s *Jazz Keyboard Harmony: a Practical Guide for All Musicians* (1994). In *Stylistic II/V7/I Voicings for Keyboardists* (2000), Luke Gillespie also provides chordal exercises that imply the same voice-leading style. This chapter differs from such workbooks in that it is not designed to analyze Powell’s chord voicings in isolation from his melodic improvisation, but rather to illustrate certain voice-leading techniques that underpin Powell’s improvisations through the descending-fifths related progressions that are so ubiquitous in the chord progressions of his repertory. To reiterate my position with regard to the writings of music theorists such as Strunk, Forte, and Larson, my purpose is not to argue against these scholars for an expanded conception of tonal consonance that includes pitches above the triad, but rather to offer a mechanism that aids the reader in understanding how Powell created the harmonically-engaged linear style that is so attractive to the professional pianists represented in Chapter One.

*Why descending fifths?*

One of my early teachers used to say that jazz standards consist mainly of “two-five-ones and Elmer’s glue,” implying that if aspiring musicians are comfortable improvising over the \( \text{ii}^7/\text{V}^7/\text{I}^{\text{maj}7} \) progression in all keys, they are on their way to competence playing tunes. Like the
above passage taken from “Hallucinations,” the repertory that Powell wove his lines through is based on repeated, cyclic chord progressions that are largely constructed of chords played in root position that descend by fifth at a highly regular harmonic-rhythmic pulse of either one or two chords-per-measure. For example, “All God’s Children Got Rhythm,” “Reets and I” (based on “All God’s Children Got Rhythm”), “Indiana,” “I Want to be Happy,” “Ornithology” (based on “How High the Moon”), “Parisian Thoroughfare” (based on “Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea”), and “Dance of the Infidels” all share these features. The overwhelming dominance of descending-fifths harmonic motion in modern jazz repertory most probably linked to the aesthetic need for predictable temporal regularity through harmony (i.e., a strong harmonic-rhythmic beat) in order to allow for the intense negative accents on metric downbeats (Kubik’s “gravitational black hole” effect) and wide variety of surface dissonances that permeate the rhythmic texture of the style as discussed in Chapter Two. For, as Simon Sechter noted in 1853-54, fundamental-bass progressions of descending fifths and ascending fourths are the most metrically decisive (Caplin 1983, 7).

If diatonic and applied ii$^7$/V$^7$/I$^{maj7}$ progressions constitute a significant majority of the harmonic movement in modern jazz, this majority is even larger if we include the abundant tritone substitute movement in which chord roots descend by semitone, but, as I argue below, which shares much of the voice-leading structure as a dominant-to-target chord motion descending by fifth. Jazz’s ii$^7$/V$^7$/I$^{maj7}$ progressions, or “two-fives,” including their tritone substitutive and chromatic variants and their use in applied/secondary situations, are particularly important in bebop: melodic soloists such as Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Bud Powell, Sonny Stitt, Sonny Rollins, Fats Navarro and others routinely wove improvised lines that implied additional, often chromatic/tritone substitute “two-fives” beyond the chords played by the
rhythm section. Similarly, composers and arrangers such as Tadd Dameron re-harmonized standards by adding additional “two-fives” to the original progressions.\footnote{A strong foreshadowing of this practice can be heard in 1930s swing era soloists such as Coleman Hawkins, Art Tatum, Teddy Wilson, etc. For example, compare the A sections of “Body and Soul” as performed by Louis Armstrong in 1930 with Hawkins’s 1937 rendition and note the additional “two-fives” in the latter.} Popular songs were commonly reharmonized in the bebop era in ways that replaced periods of static harmony, or approaches via diminished chord, with “two-five” progressions. Bud Powell’s remarkable fluency as a melodic improviser in this idiom, in conjunction with his inherent ability as a pianist to articulate multiple pitches in simultaneity and thus to display his concept of harmony and voice leading in any given passage more completely than his horn-player contemporaries could, renders his work well suited for a study of bebop’s idiomatic voice-leading style. Accordingly, this chapter draws upon recordings of varying performance settings, tempi, and keys, to illustrate Powell’s concept of harmony and voice leading in melodic lines through such progressions.

Overview of the Model

The model presented in this chapter consists of five voice-leading strands that Powell weaves through ii\(^{-7}\)/V\(^7\)/I\(^{maj7}\)-based descending-fifths progressions and chains thereof. Though each of these strands can be heard as a distinct linear voice moving through the harmonic-rhythmic fabric of Powell’s music, it is useful to think of them as grouped into three levels of structural hierarchy. Strand 1, which consists of chord roots, constitutes the first level of this hierarchy. Strands 2 and 3, each of which alternates chord-thirds with chord-sevenths, constitute the second level, while strands 4 and 5, which contain chord-fifths, ninths, and thirteenths, constitute the third and most decorative level of structural hierarchy in the model.
Reflecting the most common alignment of harmonic quality and harmonic rhythm found in Powell’s repertory (and modern jazz generally), this model is designed to place the predominant (minor seventh) and tonic (or target) chords on harmonic-rhythmic downbeats, and the dominant chords on harmonic-rhythmic upbeats. In the context of a harmonic-rhythmic pulse that moves at the half note, harmonic-rhythmic downbeats (hence predominant and tonic/target chords) fall on the first beat of each measure, while harmonic-rhythmic upbeats coincide with metric beat three. When the harmonic-rhythmic pulse is halved and the descending-fifths sequence unfolds at the rate of only one chord per measure, two-bar hypermeasures take the place of a single measure, resulting in the predominant and tonic/target chords falling on odd-numbered measures (hypermetric harmonic-rhythmic downbeats) and the dominant chords falling on even-numbered measures (hypermetric harmonic-rhythmic upbeats). Though Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th></th>
<th>ii−7</th>
<th>V7</th>
<th>Imaj7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strand 5</td>
<td>9th</td>
<td>13th</td>
<td>9th</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strand 4</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>9th</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strand 3</td>
<td>7th</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>7th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strand 2</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>7th</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th></th>
<th>Root</th>
<th>Root</th>
<th>Root</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Table 3.1: Voice-leading schema of the five-strand model through a diatonic ii−7/V7/Imaj7 progression.
3.1 and 3.2 illustrate short, three-chord sequences, many of the examples discussed throughout this chapter feature longer chains of applied descending-fifth related progressions.

A major factor contributing to the rhythmic vibrancy and melodic richness of Powell’s improvisations is his affinity for chromatic substitution and (harmonic)-rhythmic displacement of strand positions. Much of this substitution centers on the dominant chords that fall on the harmonic-rhythmic upbeats, and involves Powell combining pitches that are locally diatonic (to a dominant chord that descends by fifth to its target) with pitches associated with that chord’s tritone substitute. Table 3.2 shows the voice-leading schema of a $i^7/V^7/Imaj^7$ descending-fifths progression that replaces the dominant chord with its tritone substitute (in the key of C major, G dominant seventh would be replaced with D-flat dominant seventh).

Table 3.2: Voice-leading schema of the five-strand model through a $i^7/bII^7/Imaj^7$ tritone-substitute progression.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Strand</th>
<th>9th</th>
<th>9th</th>
<th>9th</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>5th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7th</td>
<td>7th</td>
<td>7th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Root</td>
<td>Root</td>
<td>Root</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While Powell does occasionally employ (or imply) such a complete tritone substitution, he most often combines elements of diatonic dominant chords with elements of their tritone
substitutes. By combining diatonic dominant roots with pitches from upper strand positions of their tritone substitutes, Powell multiplies the colors in his harmonic palette (allowing for the creation of dominant seventh chords with lowered ninths and/or lowered thirteenths or combinations thereof).

More important, however, are the rhythmic implications that these options provide. By improvising melodic lines that articulate diatonic upper strand positions followed by their chromatic variants (which are a semitone lower), Powell is able to ornament the harmonic-rhythmic flow via a manipulation harmonic-rhythmic density (by implying multiple harmonic sonorities in a single harmonic-rhythmic position). A related mechanism through which Powell increases the perceived harmonic-rhythmic density involves strand 1, where he at times follows a diatonic dominant root with its tritone substitute in a single harmonic-rhythmic position. Additionally, this variety of options allows Powell to express the various displacement techniques discussed in Chapter Two, and articulate surface rhythms central to modern jazz aesthetics while expressing the underlying harmonic rhythm. Such combinations of added substitutions are defining elements of Powell’s style and modern jazz generally, and undoubtedly contribute to the powerful sense of forward motion and melodic richness that participants in this study describe. However, they are best considered to be decorations of (mainly) harmonic-rhythmic upbeats that play on the listener’s perception of the harmonic rhythm without actually altering the structure of the underlying pulse.

Bud Powell’s lines are best considered in the context of his overall concept of harmony and harmonic rhythm, and accordingly, the following analysis is organized beginning with the conceptually “lower,” more structural strands—those which encompass chord-roots, -thirds, and -sevenths—before progressing to the conceptually “upper,” somewhat more decorative strands—
those which contain diatonic and chromaticized chord-fifths, -ninths, and -thirteenths. While the behavior of the upper strands is perhaps more uniquely idiomatic to the bebop linear-melodic style (and likely of more immediate interest to readers attempting to gain a better understanding of the pitch organization heard in modern jazz), my model of this voice-leading style is more coherently articulated from the ground up, beginning with the chord roots and their tritone substitutes and progressing through chord thirds and sevenths before discussing fifths, ninths and thirteenths.

**Strand 1: Roots and Tritone Substitutions**

Chapter Two discussed some of the ways that Powell displaces his left-hand shell voicings against the harmonic rhythm at hand to create metric dissonance and to provide negative accents on beat one. Here, I approach chord roots from a somewhat more abstractly theoretical perspective as constituting the lowest strand of the five-strand voice-leading model, which consists of chord-roots and tritone substitutions thereof. Strand 1 thus forms a line that descends by fifths or semitones. In addition to the powerful harmonic displacements caused by his left-hand “bombs,” Bud Powell’s playing displays a surprisingly high degree of independence between chord roots and pitch choice of the upper voice-leading strands. This independence is somewhat at odds with common assumptions about the importance of harmonic substitution that proliferate throughout jazz pedagogical material and even appear in music theory writings on the topic (for an example of the latter see Strunk 1991, section v). In some cases, the degree of this independence is sufficient to render a contrapuntally-centered analysis preferable to an analysis based solely on harmony, and in a few of the cases discussed below, Powell’s voice leading is coherent while his harmonic intentions are unclear.
An analysis of Powell’s manipulation of strand 1 displays the following optional voice-leading paths: (1) to play either a diatonic root or its tritone substitute with “matching” chord tones in upper strands; (2) to play either a diatonic root or its tritone substitute independent of the harmonic implications of upper strand articulations; (3) to play a diatonic root in simultaneity with or within close temporal proximity of its tritone substitute, with either diatonic, altered/tritone substitute, or hybrid combinations of harmonic implications in the upper strands; and 4) to omit one or more chord roots in a given descending-fifths sequence.

One can hear this independence in Powell’s solo piano recording of “Parisian Thoroughfare,” an up-tempo F-major AABA composition. In the transition from the bridge to the last A section during the head, Powell plays the expected dominant (an implied C dominant seventh) both before and after playing its tritone substitute (G-flat seventh).

Example 3.2: HB-HA3 of “Parisian Thoroughfare,” 0.25-0.27.

However, at the same position of the cyclic form during the first chorus of his solo, Powell saves the tritone substitute for the last two beats of the bridge.
Example 3.3: C1B-C1A3 of “Parisian Thoroughfare,” 0.51-0.53.

This in itself doesn’t illustrate an independence among strands sounded or implied in simultaneity. However, the G natural in Powell’s right-hand line on the last beat before C1A3 (Example 3.3), especially taken in context of the preceding pitches spelling the upper tones of a G minor ninth and the following resolution to the tonic pitch F, supports my argument that, when choosing between dominant chord roots and their tritone substitute counterparts, Powell’s conception seems at times to have been more contrapuntal or voice-leading based than harmonic. For a G-natural (or A-double flat) would be the lowered ninth of the G-flat dominant seventh, but, from a harmonic perspective, to replace the diatonic dominant with its tritone substitute and then alter that tritone substitute would be redundant.

At the corresponding harmonic-rhythmic position of the following chorus (last measure of the bridge into the last A section), Powell does something like the reverse, this time pairing a pitch that belongs to the tritone substitute chord (the A-flat, ninth of G-flat dominant seventh) with the diatonic dominant seventh (strand 1 represented by low C).
Example 3.4: “Parisian Thoroughfare” solo, C2B-C2A3, 1.18-1.20.

The combination of raised fifth or lowered thirteenth and raised and/or lowered ninth of a dominant seventh with its diatonic root is referred to as an “altered” dominant chord in jazz circles. In a comment along the lines of this analysis but phrased somewhat differently, theorist Dmitri Tymoczko considers altered dominant chords in jazz to be tritone substitutions in which the upper voices feature their substitutions while “the bass does not participate in the substitution” (2008, 17 – 18). Strunk allows a broader definition of the altered chord, defining it as “one in which an element or elements of the chord other than the root, third, or seventh may be regarded as borrowings from the tonic minor key if the prevailing key is major, or the tonic major key if the prevailing key is minor, or from another scale altogether (such as the phrygian or lydian modes)” (1991, section ii). Although both of these conceptions circulate among jazz musicians, I use the term to indicate the more specific definition put forth by Tymoczko and, to clarify from a modal perspective, associate the altered dominant chord with the seventh mode of the (ascending) melodic minor scale only.

If a descending fifth (or its ascending inversion) has a slightly more powerful “pull” toward its target than does the descending semitone of its tritone substitute, the most powerful
pull occurs when *both* the root and its tritone substitute occur either in simultaneity or in sequence during such moments. This is a device that Powell uses often, either playing these pitches in succession, beginning with the dominant and moving through the tritone substitute to the target pitch, or in simultaneity. The former is illustrated in the second measure of Powell’s “Hallucinations” solo (C1A1), where he plays both the root-tenth shell voicing of the D dominant seventh and the root-seventh seventh shell voicing of its tritone substitute (A-flat dominant seventh, the seventh degree of which is spelled as F-sharp Example 3.5).

Example 3.5: Powell’s “Hallucinations” solo, C1A1, 0.38-0.40.

Like the example taken from “Parisian Thoroughfare” above, the independence of this strand is emphasized by the A-natural Powell plays in his right-hand line at the same moment as the A-flat tritone substitute (the A-natural is circled in Example 3.5). Harmonically, this right-hand A-natural is a diatonic pitch that belongs with the preceding $V_7^{II}$ harmony and not with its tritone substitute (again, chromatic alteration of a functional tritone substitute chord would be redundant).

Another of the many examples of Powell following a dominant seventh tenth shell voicing with its appropriate seventh tritone substitution shell voicing, despite non-altered upper
chord tones, can be heard in the head to his 1949 “Ornithology” recording. Here, approaching the F major seventh in the fifth measure, Powell follows his C dominant shell with a G-flat seventh shell despite his harmonized right hand melody sounding G-naturals and a D-natural.

Example 3.6: “Ornithology” (1949) Head A1, (0.10).

This device functions beyond the parameter of pitch, and is closely connected to the harmonic rhythm and perception of formal cyclicity that one experiences when listening to Powell’s medium- and up-tempo solo piano recordings. The increased harmonic-rhythmic density that Powell achieves by playing two different chord-root bass notes within a single harmonic-rhythmic position creates a sense of intensified forward motion. This forward motion is experienced beyond the pitch-based dissonance-to-consonance resolution of the applied dominant-to-target harmonic movement; it builds tension on a rhythmic level by creating the perception of a temporary “doubling” of the harmonic rhythm. Accordingly, Powell often exploits this device at less stable parts of cyclic forms as a means of building momentum towards a key formal goalpost or hypermetric downbeat. For instance, in Example 3.6, the F major seventh sonority that Powell approaches via this device arrives on measure five, a hypermetric downbeat and significant formal goalpost of the thirty-two measure ABAC form (which comprises four eight-measure sections).
Powell uses the device similarly in his improvised “Hallucinations” solo. While this solo spans a mere two-and-a-half choruses, in that period Powell follows the root of a dominant chord with the root of its tritone substitute a total of 10 times:

Dominant followed by tritone substitution in Powell’s “Hallucinations” solo listed by chorus, formal section and time:

Chorus 1: A1:2 (0.40), A1:8 (0.46), A3:8 (1.10).
Chorus 2: A1:8 (1.18), A2:8 (1.26), B:2 (1.28) B:4 (1.30).
Chorus 3: A1:2 (1.44), A1:8 (1.50), B:2 (2.00).

Every one of these instances occurs on “even-numbered” measures, which, in a 32-bar form consisting of four eight-measure subsections, function as hypermetric upbeats of two-measure groupings. Further, fifty percent fall on the final (eighth) measure of their respective eight-bar formal sections. The eighth measure is the least stable in each section due to the high degree of anticipation of the impending downbeat, which begins the next formal section or chorus.

An analysis of Powell’s use of this device in his solo on “The Fruit” yields similar results: he uses it eight times in the solo, one hundred percent of its appearances occur on even-numbered measures, and seventy-five percent of these on the final measures of eight-measure sections.

Dominant followed by tritone substitution in Powell’s “The Fruit” solo listed by chorus, formal section and time:

Chorus 1: A1:8 (0.55), A2:8 (1.05), A3:8 (1.24)
Chorus 2: A3:8 (1.53)
That the only two occasions when Powell uses the device in a harmonic-rhythmic position other than measure eight of a section in “The Fruit” occur in the third and last chorus of his solo suggests that Powell may have deliberately used it as a means to give a more linear large-scale form to his solo by rendering the third and final chorus more unstable than the preceding two via increased harmonic-rhythmic density.

Powell occasionally reverses the order of the two bass notes in this device, playing a tritone substitute shell followed by a fifth-descending dominant tenth shell voicing. This can be heard in the turnaround ending his solo on “Ornithology” (1949), where Powell moves from the B minor left-hand shell down a semitone to the B-flat seventh shell before playing the E seventh to A minor voicings.

Example 3.7: Powell’s “Ornithology” solo, final four measures before Head out, (1.47-1.51).

From a rhythmic perspective, it makes little difference whether the applied dominant or its tritone substitute is played first, for the resultant increase in harmonic-rhythmic density is achieved simply by having two different chord roots in the expected space of one. Considering the relationship between harmony and voice leading, however, the preceding “Ornithology” example does further illustrate the independence of strand 1 when compared to the upper harmonic material. For in his right hand line Powell plays a B-natural against the B-flat seventh
shell (second measure of Example 3.7), then plays the G-natural and F-natural dyad (the G ornamental to the main pitch F) against the E seventh shell, effectively reversing the corresponding upper harmonic pitches of the two roots.

In addition to playing the chord root and its tritone substitute successively to the effect of increased harmonic-rhythmic density, at times Powell also plays these two in simultaneity. The reader versed in jazz studies may have the initial reaction of considering such a situation in terms of harmonic extension, as a raised eleventh or dominant seventh flat-five chord. With the well-documented fascination that the beboppers had with the flatted-fifth sonority, there can be little doubt that that aesthetic value is at work in such cases. Accordingly, I explore this sonority from that perspective in Chapter Five. The present essay addresses from a voice-leading perspective those situations where the dominant root and its tritone substitute occur in a register below the chord third and seventh (strands 2 and 3) and the ninth, thirteenth, or chromatic alterations thereof (strands 4 and 5). Powell does this twice during his eight-bar introduction to “All God’s Children Got Rhythm” (1949), in the fourth and eighth measures over C-dominant seventh chords.
Example 3.8: Powell’s introduction to “All God’s Children Got Rhythm,” 1949 (0.00-0.07).

For more examples of Powell combining the roots of dominant seventh chords and their tritone substitutes, see the A sections of his solo on “Tempus Fugit.”

Strands 2 and 3: Thirds and Sevenths.

Moving metaphorically upward from chord roots, the next two strands in this model consist of chord thirds and sevenths. As these two strands share the same pitch content, I differentiate between strands 2 and 3 not to imply that one is structurally superior to the other, but rather to illustrate their contrapuntal relationship with one another and with the other strands in Powell’s playing. Accordingly, I label the strand beginning on the third degree of the first chord in a given descending-fifths sequence (or segment of a sequence) as “strand 2” and the strand beginning on the seventh degree of that chord “strand 3.” While strands 2 and 3 dominate the voice leading in many of Powell’s right-hand improvised lines, these strands are particularly
prominent in Powell’s left hand comping, as they constitute the upper voice in the alternating root-seventh and root-third (tenth) shell voicings throughout his playing. Powell’s use of strands 2 and 3 to create inner-voice lines in his left hand is embedded in a history of jazz pianists doing so; his predecessors Teddy Wilson and Art Tatum often created tenor-voice counterpoint melodies from alternating chord-thirds and -sevenths as part of their stride playing. Pianists working after Powell in the 1950s such as Red Garland, Wynton Kelly, Ahmad Jamal, and Bill Evans also maintained such lines in counterpoint to their right-hand solos, but would generally discard the low-register root—especially while playing with a bassist. Rather, these later players would employ the chord-thirds and -sevenths that constitute strands 2 and 3 as the lowest two pitches of three- or four-note rootless voicings.

The chord thirds and sevenths that constitute strands 2 and 3 exhibit similar harmonic functions to their counterparts in common practice tonal music. One exception, however, is the potential stability, at least on the structural level that this analysis is concerned with, of the tonic major seventh chord and its effect on the behavior of the leading tone in the dominant-to-tonic movement. In Bud Powell’s music, scale degree 7, articulated as the third of the dominant, may or may not resolve upward to the tonic pitch (scale degree 8).

This idiosyncratic stability of scale degree 7 has no effect on scale degree 4’s descent to 3 in the dominant-to-tonic motion. In modern jazz, the descent from 4 to 3, along with the root movement (dominant to tonic or tritone substitution to tonic) and the voice leading of the upper strands (discussed below) is sufficient for dominant-tonic resolution.
Table 3.3: Abstract voice-leading diagram illustrating scale degree 7 as a stable pitch.

Whether the analyst considers the major seventh degree to be a melodic ornament, an essential dissonance, or a chord tone, major seventh chords were part of Powell’s harmonic language, and examples of major seventh degrees that do not resolve upward can be found throughout his music. Example 3.9 shows this in the first A section of Powell’s partial head statement in his 1949 recording of “Ornithology.”
Example 3.9: “Ornithology” (1949), introduction and first A section (0.00-0.16).

After the introduction, Powell begins the head with an anticipated seventh shell voicing that articulates strand 3 as the F-sharp (seventh of the tonic G major seventh sonority) This voice, in turn, is a continuation of the voice leading established by the G-flat, seventh of the tritone substitute A-flat dominant seventh chord that concludes the introduction. The F-sharp, after reappearing in the right hand as the seventh of a staccato A-flat seventh harmony that, as tritone substitute for the D dominant seventh, prolongs the G major sonority, descends a semitone to F-natural, seventh of the G minor chord in the third measure of the head. From here
the strand continues, descending to an E-natural, upper tenth of a C dominant seventh shell voicing in the following measure, repeated again (spelled as F-flat) as the seventh of the G-flat seventh (another tritone substitution). The E natural is repeated yet again as the unresolved major seventh of the F major harmony in the fifth measure of the head statement, before descending, after another prolongation in the head’s sixth measure (the F to E natural of the G-minor to C\textsuperscript{7} left-hand chords), to E-flat, seventh of the F minor. At this point, Powell’s right hand takes over the strand with some ornamental melodic material that results in the E-flat descending to D-natural, third of the B-flat seventh chord in the eighth measure of the section.

Powell plays the major seventh as an unresolved pitch in other solos as well. For example, in C2A1 of his solo on “The Fruit,” he plays the sonority in his left hand shell voicing for the subdominant A-flat chord.

![Musical notation image]

Example 3.10: C1A2:5-6 of Powell’s solo on “The Fruit,” (1.30).

**Strands 2 and 3 and Tritone Substitutes**

Strands 2 and 3 articulate the augmented fourths/diminished fifths at the center of a tritone substitution. A brief digression into the harmonic workings of the “Hallucinations” bridge
will help to orient the reader to the types of contrapuntal choices involving strands 1, 2, and 3 that Powell makes when negotiating the relationship between dominant chords and their tritone substitutes in a descending-fifths sequence, and will prepare the reader for more such choices in the upper strands of the voice leading (strands 4 and 5) as discussed below.

Example 3.11: First four measures of “Hallucinations” bridge during head (0.16-0.21), with voice-leading schema.

The first four measures of the “Hallucinations” bridge serve to prolong the submediant harmony from its arrival on the downbeat of the bridge. During this passage, the quality of the submediant undergoes transformation from a diatonic minor seventh chord (vi) to its applied dominant seventh form (V\textsuperscript{7}/ii),\textsuperscript{17} sounded as a D dominant seventh at the end of the bridge’s fourth measure. The descending-fifths sequence that Powell uses to span the three-plus measures between these points is a minor-to-dominant seventh progression that descends by whole steps

\textsuperscript{17} Whether one reads this as having elided a resolution to the relative minor harmony or as moving directly to the V\textsuperscript{7}/ii is irrelevant to this argument.
(D\(^7\)/G\(^7\)/C\(^7\)/F\(^7\)/Bb\(^7\)/Eb\(^7\)). Left to run to completion, this sequence would arrive back at a D minor seventh chord after cycling through six descending ii\(^7\)/V\(^7\) progressions (D\(^7\)/G\(^7\), C\(^7\)/F\(^7\), Bb\(^7\)/Eb\(^7\), Ab\(^7\)/Db\(^7\), Gb\(^7\)/Cb\(^7\), E\(^-7\)/A\(^7\)/D\(^7\)). Naturally, Powell does not have time to both run this sequence to completion in four measures and maintain the two-chord-per-measure harmonic-rhythmic pulse established in the preceding A sections. His various solutions hinge on the tritone substitute relationship between E-flat dominant seventh, A-flat dominant seventh, D dominant seventh, and the impending target G minor that arrives on the bridge’s fifth measure.

During the head, the bridge melody is dominated by strand 2 (beginning on F, third degree of D minor and descending accordingly through thirds and sevenths). The basic structure of Powell’s solution is to run the sequence to the E-flat dominant seventh chord, use that as a tritone substitute for V\(^7\)/vi (A dominant seventh), and then elide the D minor, replacing it with a dominant seventh V\(^7\)/ii to lead to the G minor-seventh chord that begins the bridge’s second half.

If a few of the chord roots are inaudible on Powell’s 1951 recording, the pitches that can be heard in Powell’s left hand in conjunction with his composed right-hand melody during the bridge of the “Hallucinations” render the overall voice-leading structure clear: strand 2 begins with the F-natural on the downbeat of the bridge, and descends through the thirds of each ii\(^7\) chord and sevenths of each V\(^7\) chord through the D-flat, seventh of E-flat dominant seventh. Strand 3, beginning with an implied C-natural (seventh of D-minor seventh), descends through the sevenths of each ii\(^7\) and thirds of each V\(^7\) through the G-natural, third of E-flat dominant seventh. Here, however, rather than continuing the sequence with the expected A-flat minor seventh on the downbeat of the bridge’s fifth measure, this E-flat dominant functions as a tritone
substitute for a $V^7/vi$ ($A^7/D^\text{min}$, perhaps best illustrated as $bII^7/vi$), a chord that is elided in favor of an emphatically stated D dominant seventh, applied $V^7/ii$ sonority.

**Powell’s use of the Blues-subdominant as a Tritone Substitute Pivot Chord.**

A common use of tritone substitution in modern jazz involves motion to the mediant (iii) via a dominant seventh chord built on IV. This motion is implied, for example, in the “Hallucinations” A sections, both in the head and in Powell’s solo.

Example 3.12: “Hallucinations” head (0.00 – 0.05).

Approaching an explicit or elided\(^{18}\) diatonic mediant chord with a tritone substitute (a dominant seventh chord built on IV) deserves a brief digression. For, in the modern jazz context, this sound is much less dissonant than other tritone substitutions tend to be. Part of the reason that such a motion to iii (or in “Hallucinations,” the motion to $V^7/vi$) is so smooth-sounding lies in the relative harmonic and modal stability of the IV\(^7\) (the B-flat dominant seventh chord in the first measure of the “Hallucinations” A sections), which, despite being a tritone substitute for $V^7/iii$, actually sounds less foreign or “chromatic” than that fifth-descending applied dominant

\(^{18}\) as in the case of “Hallucinations,” where the diatonic A minor is replaced with a $V7/vi$, A dominant seventh, sonority.
chord would sound in this context. This is likely due to the presence of a blues tonal aesthetic operating in bebop, and the relative consonance that this chord has within that aesthetic.

In his chapter on “The Blues Tonal System,” Kubik discusses the conflict between the modal/melodic characteristics of the blues and the “three common Western chords” used to accompany that music, calling those chords “aliens” to the style (1999, 118). Despite this conflict, Kubik goes on to state that of the three primary chords (I, IV and V), the subdominant is “more acceptable” than the dominant (1999, 126). From a Western diatonic perspective, the only chromatic pitch of the IV\(^7\) is its lowered seventh degree (i.e., A-flat of a B-flat seventh in the key of F), but though chromatic to the major scale, this pitch is important within the blues tonal framework, as it’s what van der Merwe would label a “dropping third” (1989, 122) and, though he was referring to microtonal neutral thirds, what Kubik may label the “lower blue note” (1999, 121). The blues subdominant is thus a triad built on scale degree 4 with an added lowered seventh degree (i.e., a IV\(^7\) chord), but, in the context of the blues, it functions not as an applied dominant in need of resolution but as a (relatively) stable subdominant. In situations outside of the twelve-bar blues context, such as popular AABA or ABAC standards or original jazz compositions, this chord can be used as a sort of pivot that both implies the blues tonal aesthetic and functions as a tritone substitute for V\(^7\)/iii. Along these lines, my private teacher James Weidman taught me to consider using the blues subdominant as a substitute in approaching the diatonic mediant (iii) in situations where implying the blues was desired.\(^{19}\)

**Melodic Articulations of Strands 2 and 3 in Powell’s Solos.**

Powell’s improvised solos feature many melodic lines that are strongly supported by strands 2 and 3, each connecting the chord thirds and sevenths. In the bridge of his first

\(^{19}\) For example, in the A sections of Duke Ellington’s “I Got it Bad and That Ain’t Good.”
improved chorus on “Hallucinations” (Example 3.13), Powell plays a right-hand line based on such guide tones that can be analyzed as a compound melody featuring strands 2 and 3 in polyphony. Note the subtle ways in which Powell positions these harmonically indicative strand positions against the harmonic rhythm.

![Example 3.13: C1B:1-4 of Powell’s “Hallucinations” solo, (0.54-0.59), with voice-leading schema.](image)

There are many similar examples of Powell articulating strands 2 and 3 in polyphony to constitute the voice-leading structure of improvised melodic lines. The melodic articulation of these strands renders the underlying harmonic movement strikingly clear, marking one’s position in the cyclic form for other musicians to hear, or alternately allowing for rhythmic play via the displacement of these key chord tones against the harmonic rhythm. Accordingly, in Powell solos, melodic lines featuring voice-leading support by strands 2 and 3 seem to be particularly prominent in bridges and other sections of harmonic-rhythmic cycles that depart from the tonic.
For instance, the material Powell plays over the first bridge of his “Bud’s Bubble” (1947) solo consists of a line thoroughly supported by these two strands.

Example 3.14: “Bud’s Bubble”: C1B of Powell’s solo, (0.48-0.55).

Here, both strands 2 and 3 are woven into the line with every harmonic change. Articulation of strand 3 begins with the C-natural (seventh of D dominant seventh) of the first measure. This descends to the B-natural with the arrival of the G dominant seventh chord. After reappearing in the following measure on the “and-of-one,” this strand descends to the B-flat (seventh of C dominant seventh), is projected down an octave in the second measure of that chord (beat 4), before descending to A-natural with arrival of the F dominant seventh; Powell reiterates it on beat 3 and then on beat 2 of the following measure. That strand’s counterpart, strand 2, begins with the F sharp on the second measure of the D seventh sonority (reiterated on the “&-after-3), and proceeds to descend to the F-naturals (seventh of G dominant seventh) before descending to the E-natural (third of C dominant seventh), and then descending again to the E-flats (seventh of F dominant seventh).

20 The F-natural that begins Example 3.14 is not an articulation of strand 2 because it is not the chord-third of the D7. This pitch is better analyzed as either a raised ninth or part of the five-note, descending chromatic ornament that serves to displace C-natural, strand three, which falls on beat three.
Harmonic Displacement of Strands 2 and 3 within Powell’s Improvised Lines

That chord-thirds and -sevenths define harmonic movement so clearly makes strands 2 and 3 particularly useful to Powell as means of expressing harmonic-rhythmic dissonance within melodic lines. Of course, practically every time that Powell plays a root-third or root-seventh shell voicing on the “and-of-two” or “and-of-four” in his left hand, we hear a mild degree of harmonic displacement. But there are also many instances of Powell using such harmonic-rhythmic displacement techniques in his right-hand lines. The effect of this type of in-line harmonic displacement is often quite subtle, but it gives Powell’s linear improvisations an unmistakable sense of forward motion, a degree of metric dissonance and a general richness.

For example, in C2A1 of his solo on “I Want to be Happy,” Powell plays a quasi-suspension of the first measure’s strand 3 position by placing F-natural, seventh of G minor seventh, to arrive on beat one of the following measure, which in turn delays the E-natural (third degree of C dominant seventh) by a quarter note, placing this pitch on beat two.

Example 3.15: C2A1:5-6 of Powell’s “I Want to be Happy” solo, (2.07-2.09).
In the second A section of his “Sonny Side” solo, Powell does something like the opposite, this time anticipating a strand 2 harmonic-rhythmic position by playing G-flat, third degree of E-flat minor, one beat “early” on beat two rather than beat three.

![Musical notation]

Example 3.16: C1A2 of Powell’s “Sonny Side” solo, (1.23-1.25).

**Strand 4: Fifths and Ninths.**

In descending-fifths sequences that feature alternating minor seventh and dominant seventh chords (i.e., standard ii$^7$/V$^7$/I$^maj7$ progressions), strand 4 begins on the fifth degree of the ii$^7$ chord, continues to become the ninth degree of the V$^7$ chord and/or descends to the lowered ninth degree of that chord (a chromatic variant that implies modal mixture with the parallel minor). This resolves by descending again to the fifth degree of the tonic or tonicized target chord.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strand 4</th>
<th>ii$^7$</th>
<th>V$^7$</th>
<th>I$^maj7$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9 - b9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Strand 1 | R | R | R |

Table 3.4: Abstract voice-leading diagram of strand 4 in a ii$^7$/V$^7$/I$^maj7$ progression.

When a tritone substitute is used in place of the fifth-descending dominant, strand 4 articulates the fifth degree of that chord instead of the ninth degree of the fifth-descending
dominant. The result is that in situations where strand 1 employs a tritone substitute for the dominant chord in a $ii^7/V^7/I^{maj7}$ progression, the pitch content of strand 4 remains unchanged, but with the semitone descent sounding as the fifth degree of the tritone substitute rather than as the lowered ninth of the diatonic dominant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strand</th>
<th>$ii^7$</th>
<th>bII$^7$</th>
<th>$I^{maj7}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strand 4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strand 1</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.5: Abstract illustration of strand 4-tritone substitute voice leading.

Whether as the ninth to lowered ninth of a fifth-descending dominant or as the fifth of its tritone substitute, this melodic thread is heard often in Powell’s linear improvisations. One of many such instances is in the first A section of the third chorus of Powell’s “Indiana” solo (Example 3.17). The highest pitches of this line are the fifth of the $ii^7$ chord (D-natural of G minor seventh), the lowered ninth of the $V^7$ chord (D-flat of C dominant seventh) and the fifth of the tonic (C of F major).

\[ \text{Example 3.17: C3A1 of Powell’s “Indiana” solo, (1.20-1.23).} \]

Just as he does with strands 1, 2, and 3, Powell often uses strand 4 to express rhythms that are central to the modern jazz aesthetic. However, perhaps because the material articulated by strands 1, 2 and 3 is more harmonically defining than that of strands 4 and 5, Powell does
not seem to use the upper two strands for harmonic displacement as often as he does strands 1, 2, and 3. Rather, strands 4 and 5 can be most often heard articulating rhythmic cells and certain syncopated metric positions throughout Powell’s recorded solos. For instance, in the passage shown in Example 3.17, Powell expressed the following rhythm via his articulation of Strand 4:

![Table 3.6: Rhythmic articulation of strand 4 in Example 3.17.](image)

Most typical about this rhythmic expression with regard to Powell’s articulation of strand 4 is his placement of the lowered ninth degree of the dominant chord on the “and-of-three,” followed by the fifth of the tonic (or target chord) on beat one. As several of the following examples will show, when articulating strand 4, Powell often places the lowered ninth of the dominant on the “and-of-three” before placing either the fifth of the tonic (or another pitch of harmonic-rhythmic consonance) on the downbeat of the following measure. Powell’s tendency towards this articulation may reflect a two-bar hypermeter, suggesting that at some level the harmonic-rhythmic upbeats (in the case of “Indiana,” the even-numbered measures) are employed as grounds for syncopation and chromatic alteration.

**Strand 4 in Polyphony with Strands 1, 2, and 3.**

Much as he combines strands 2 and 3 in his improvised lines to create compound melodies, so Powell often combines strand four with other strands in polyphony. This can be heard, for instance, in the final A section of his one-chorus solo on “Celia,” where he plays a phrase combining strands 2, 3, and 4 that leads to the final cadence on the tonic B-flat major.
In this phrase of the “Celia” solo, the upper pitches of Powell’s line begin by outlining strand 4 (G-natural, fifth of C minor seventh to G-flat, lowered ninth of F dominant seventh). Note that here, once again, Powell places the lowered ninth of the dominant seventh on the “and-of-three” (G-flat of F dominant seventh). However, unlike the previous example, with the arrival of the tonic B-flat major seventh sonority, strand 4 becomes absorbed into the voice-leading fabric (manifested by the F-natural, fifth of B-flat major seventh, sounded in the left hand shell voicing or perhaps in the F octave pedal tones on the “and-of-two” of that measure). At this point, strand 2 is projected into the upper register, with the D-naturals of the triplet figure sounding on beat one of the B-flat major seventh sonority. This strand can be heard with the treble E-flats of the previous measure (third of C minor seventh and seventh of F dominant), as
can its counterpart, strand 3, which is articulated by the B-flat in the first shell voicing of the example (seventh of C minor), then simultaneously sounded in the F dominant tenth shell voicing and projected up to Powell’s right-hand melody to sound the A-natural (third of F dominant seventh). Strand 3 is once again relegated to the left hand as the A-natural of Powell’s B-flat major seventh shell voicing.

When articulating strand 4, Powell sometimes ornaments the lowered ninth of the dominant chord with a raised ninth. This ornamental tone functions doubly as an upper neighbor to the strand position and, from the perspective of blues modality, a dropping third\(^{21}\) to the fifth of the following tonic/target chord). Example 3.19 shows this in Powell’s “Parisian Thoroughfare” solo, where the D-flat (lowered ninth of C-dominant seventh) is decorated with its upper-neighbor, the E-flat or enharmonically D-sharp (raised ninth of C dominant seventh).

\(^{21}\) See van der Merwe’s “Ladder of Thirds” theory (1989, 120 – 129).
Example 3.19: C3A2 of Powell’s “Parisian Thoroughfare” solo, (1.35-1.36), with voice-leading schema.

Powell articulates strand 4 identically as above in situations where a secondary ii$^{7}$/V$^{7}$ progression approaches the diatonic ii$^{7}$. This is illustrated in a line from the first bridge of his solo on “The Fruit” (shown below in Example 3.20). Here, Powell plays the fifth of the ii$^{7}$/ii chord (D-natural of G minor seventh) in the harmonically anticipatory position of beat four of the previous measure (first measure of Example 3.20). This strand is then transferred down an octave during an elaboration of strand 3’s descent from F (seventh of G minor) to E natural (third of C dominant seventh) before reappearing in its original register, having descended, again on the “and-of-three,” to the lowered ninth of the V$^{7}$/ii chord (D-flat of C dominant seventh). This
D-flat is followed on beat 4 with an ascending chromatic gesture (B-flat to B-natural) that reaches the fifth of the target ii\(^{-7}\) chord on beat 1 (C of F minor seventh).

![Musical notation]

Example 3.20: Powell’s solo on “The Fruit,” C1B:5-6 (1.10-1.13), with voice-leading schema of strands 1 and 4.

Theoretically, this strand could continue until arriving on the fifth of the tonic.

![Table]

Table 3.7: Abstract illustration of strands 1 and 4 through an applied and diatonic ii\(^{-7}/\text{V}^7\) sequence.

Powell also articulates strand 4 in passages where he chooses to improvise in double-time, constructing lines with sixteenth notes rather than eighth notes. In his “Reets and I” solo,
Powell plays a very fast double-time passage in the B section of the second chorus that creatively exploits the chromatic descent of strand 4.

Example 3.21: C2B of Powell’s “Reets and I” solo (1.52-2.04).

This passage begins as expected, with strand 4 articulated by F-sharp (fifth of B minor seventh), descending to F-natural (lowered ninth of E dominant seventh), which in turn descends to E-natural (fifth of A minor seventh), then E-flat (lowered ninth of D dominant seventh), then D-natural (fifth of G-minor seventh) and then to what should be the penultimate articulation of the strand, D-flat (lowered ninth of C dominant seventh). However, instead of playing the expected C natural at the arrival of the tonic F major seventh chord, Powell plays material that
emphasizes the sixth degree of that sonority (D-natural). This is a very clever move on Powell’s part, as it renders the just-articulated lowered ninth of C dominant seventh (the D-flat of the third measure of Example 3.21) to sound in retrospect as a leading tone to a pivotal chord that could be heard as either an F major sixth or a D minor chord. As shown in Example 3.21, the B section of “Reets and I” (based on “All God’s Children Got Rhythm”) tonicizes the relative minor (D minor), and appropriately, Powell repeats the D-natural in the following measure to sound as strand 3 of that impending tonicization, following this through the sixth of the D-minor sonority (D-natural over E minor seventh flat five, C-sharp over A dominant seventh, and then C-natural descending to B-natural over D-minor, the B-natural then projected down as the chord-third of G dominant seventh). This quasi “crossing” of strands 4 and 3 allows Powell to continue the forward motion of his line through this harmonic-rhythmic cycle’s detour to the relative minor. Finally, in a remarkable display of voice-leading coherence, Powell reintroduces strand 4 in the turnaround that ends on the downbeat of C2A2, this time in fact articulating the descent from D-flat (lowered ninth of C dominant seventh) to C-natural (fifth of F major seventh).

Strand 4 and Tritone Substitutions

Like strands 2 and 3, Powell’s articulation of strand 4 is somewhat independent of his choice whether to play fifth-descending dominant seventh chords or their tritone substitutes in strand 1. As shown in Table 3.5, the semitone descent of the strand is the same in both cases, but

---

22 Pianist Barry Harris, a contemporary of Powell, has developed a sophisticated pedagogical method based on this kind of movement that he calls the “diminished sixth” system, which emphasizes the approach of pivotal major sixth/minor seventh structures (and their minor sixth/half-diminished counterparts) via functional diminished seventh chords. Harris’s method serves a variety of improvisatory and compositional purposes, including the harmonization of scalar melodies in “drop-two” style, techniques for smooth modulation, and the creation of pianistic, chordal textures that disguise the underlying descending-fifths motion (for an example of the latter, see Powell’s “I’ll Keep Loving You”).
while strand 4 sounds the lowered ninth of dominant chords that descend to their targets by fifth, it sounds the same pitch as the fifth of the tritone substitutes of those chords. This is evident in his expression of the descending-fifths sequence from ii\(^7\)/ii (B minor) to I (G major) in C2A3 of his 1949 “Ornithology” recording. Here, Powell plays a sequential pattern supported by strand 4 that, along with his left hand shell voicings, anticipates the harmonic rhythm by an eighth note.

![Musical Staff Image](image)

**Example 3.22:** C2A3 of Powell’s “Ornithology” (1:25-1.28), with voice-leading schema.

In the first two installments of Powell’s melodic sequence shown in Example 3.22, strand 4 is articulated as F-sharp (fifth of B-minor), then as F-natural (fifth of B-flat dominant seventh, tritone substitute for V\(^7\)/ii or E dominant seventh). However, when Powell repeats the sequence two more times over the ii\(^7\) to V\(^7\) progression to G major, he is able to continue the exact melodic pattern, but with the E-flat sounding as the lowered ninth of the D dominant seventh.
chord, rather than as the fifth of a nonexistent A-flat dominant seventh chord that would have continued the left-hand pattern.

This voice leading is not peculiar to one passage in Powell’s “Ornithology” solo, but appears throughout his bebop-style improvisations. It can also be heard in the first A section of Powell’s solo on “The Fruit,” where he substitutes a bIII\(^7\) for V\(^7\)/ii (G-flat dominant seventh for C dominant seventh).

Example 3.23: Powell’s solo on “The Fruit,” C1A1, (0.48-0.51).

Here, strand 4 is articulated as the fifth of the ii\(^7\)/ii chord (D-natural of G minor seventh) and descends to D-flat (fifth of G-flat seventh, bII\(^7\)/ii, again on the “and-of-three”) to C-natural (fifth of F minor seventh, ii). Displaying independence from the other strands, Powell plays this semitone D-natural to D-flat an eighth note before he defines the harmony in strand 1 by playing the left-hand G-flat dominant seventh shell voicing on beat four. The independence of these voice-leading strands is brought further to light by the harmonic ambiguity resulting when Powell plays a G-natural in his descending right-hand triplet figure after clearly defining the harmony as a G-flat dominant seventh sonority.
Exemplifying another variant of Powell’s ability to displace his articulation of strand 4 against the harmonic rhythm in a tritone substitute situation is a different passage of the “Ornithology” solo.

Example 3.24: Transition from C2B to C2A2 in Powell’s “Ornithology” solo, (1.06-1.11)

In this passage, Powell delays the semitone descent of strand 4 from E-natural (fifth of the ii\(^{-7}\) chord, A minor seventh) to E-flat (fifth of the tritone substitute bII\(^{-7}\) chord, A-flat dominant seventh) until three full beats after playing the tritone substitute shell voicing in his left hand (A-flat seventh). By reiterating the E-natural on the downbeat of the A-flat dominant seventh’s harmonic-rhythmic position, Powell creates a harmonically incoherent, quasi suspension in strand 4.

**Harmonic Ambiguity and Voice-leading Coherence in Strands 1, 2, 3, and 4.**

As we have seen, Powell may choose to articulate strand 1 as descending fifths, descending fifths interspersed with tritone substitutes (descending semitones), or various combinations of the two, making this choice at least somewhat independently of the pitch content of strands 2, 3, and 4. This type of voice-leading independence can potentially result in a degree of harmonic ambiguity, as it did in the passage shown above in Example 3.24. Another instance of this harmonic ambiguity can be heard during the bridge of chorus 2 of Powell’s
“Hallucinations” solo, where he uses material constructed from strands 1, 2, 3, and 4 to navigate a complex and flexible descending-fifths sequence that utilizes tritone substitutes in various ways.

At this point in his solo, Powell employs tritone substitute harmony somewhat differently than he did in the head (described above), presenting a longer melodic passage with strand 4 at the forefront of a tightly-knit, four-part voice-leading schema (constructed of strands 1, 2, 3 and 4). This passage illustrates the independence of the strand’s chromatic descent through the descending-fifths sequence with regard to Powell’s choice of tritone substitutes in strand 1.

![Music notation diagram]

Example 3.25: C2B of Powell’s solo on “Hallucinations,” (1.26-1.31), with voice-leading schema.

This strand 4 descent begins with the high A-natural (fifth of the D minor seventh), continues to the A-flat (lowered ninth of G dominant seventh, again appearing on the “and-of-three”), then to the G on the following downbeat (fifth of C minor seventh). The next chord in
the sequence *should* be an F dominant seventh, with G-natural as the ninth moving to G-flat as the lowered ninth, and Powell does play this F dominant, with the aforementioned G on beat 1 still fresh enough in the ear’s memory to sound as an implied ninth. But, when on beat 4 Powell’s melody inevitably descends to G-flat, he inserts a tritone substitute into Strand 1 (the low B-natural). This briefly accelerates the perceived harmonic rhythm and renders the treble G-flat to sound as the fifth of a B dominant seventh chord (a misspelled F-sharp) rather than the lowered ninth of the F dominant seventh. The strand then proceeds to descend another semitone to F-natural to sound as the fifth of B-flat minor seventh and then the ninth of E-flat dominant seventh. What happens next, though coherent from a voice-leading perspective, is harmonically nebulous. That Powell’s line does not continue the pattern established in the preceding two measures with regard to strand 4 and descend to F-flat, the lowered ninth of the E-flat dominant seventh chord, hints that the E-flat dominant may be understood to serve as a tritone substitute for V7 of D rather than V7 of A-flat, as altering the extensions of a tritone substitute chord would be redundant. The F then, as ninth of E-flat seventh, is expected to descend to E-natural, the ninth of D dominant seventh. However, it descends to an E-flat—a pitch that clearly continues the strand 4 line established, but with a questionable harmonic underpinning (is the harmony an altered D dominant V7/ii or a tritone substitute A-flat dominant seventh bII7/ii). From a voice-leading perspective, this measure is perfectly sound, with every voice as established in the preceding three measures accounted for: the E-flats continue strand 4, the C continues strand 2, the G-flat (or perhaps F-sharp) continues strand 3, and the D *and* A-flat both continue strand 1. Whether as the lowered ninth of a D altered-dominant harmony or as the fifth of an A-flat seventh, the E-flat does continue strand 4 by descending once more, this time to the fifth of a harmonically defined ii7 chord (D of G minor seventh, not shown in Example 3.25).
Strand 5: Ninths and Thirteenths

Strand 5 shares a position in the structural hierarchy of Powell’s voice leading through descending-fifths-related progressions with strand 4 and, depending on the chord qualities of the progression at hand, also shares strand 4’s pitch content. However, in standard $\text{ii}^7/\text{V}^7/\text{I}^\text{maj7}$ progressions, I label strand 5 as the line that begins on the ninth of the $\text{ii}^7$ chord, is reiterated as the thirteenth of the following dominant seventh and/or descends through that position’s modally mixed chromatic variant (the lowered thirteenth of $\text{V}^7$ or diatonic ninth of the $\text{bII}^7$ tritone substitute chord) before eventually descending to the ninth of the tonic or target chord.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strand</th>
<th>$\text{ii}^7$</th>
<th>$\text{V}^7$</th>
<th>$\text{I}^\text{maj7}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13-b13</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.8: Abstract diagram for strand 5 through a $\text{ii}^7/\text{V}^7/\text{I}^\text{maj7}$ progression.

A clear articulation of this strand in conjunction with strands 1, 2, 3, and 4 can be heard in Powell’s solo on “Reets and I,” where he plays a fast ascending and descending phrase over a tonic F major $\text{ii}^7/\text{V}^7/\text{I}^\text{maj7}$ progression in the second measure of the second A section of his second solo chorus.
Example 3.26: Powell’s “Reets and I” solo, C2A2:1-2, (2.04-2.07), with voice-leading schema.

Strand 5 dominates Powell’s line in this passage beginning with the A-naturals (ninth of the ii₇ chord) that he plays in the harmonic-rhythmic position of G minor seventh. These A-naturals descend to the A-flat (lowered thirteenth of the V⁷ chord) in the harmonic-rhythmic position of C⁷, and then the G-natural (ninth of the tonic) that arrives on the downbeat with the F major seventh.

The recordings contain many such examples of Powell articulating strand 5. For instance, in the opening measures of the second A section of his “Parisian Thoroughfare” solo, Powell’s line outlines this movement three times.
Example 3.27: C1A2 of Powell’s “Parisian Thoroughfare” solo, (0.40-0.47).

The first of these articulations is played with a degree of harmonic-rhythmic consonance, as the A-natural (ninth of G minor seventh), A-flat (lowered thirteenth of C dominant seventh) and G-natural (ninth of F major seventh) all fall within their appropriate harmonic-rhythmic positions. However, notice that during the tonicization of the subdominant B-flat major, Powell plays both D-natural and D-flat during the F dominant seventh harmonic-rhythmic position, delaying D-natural, which would have sounded the ninth of C minor seventh, to sound instead as the thirteenth of the F dominant chord. He does something of the opposite in his next installment of the device two measures later, sounding both pitches during what is expected to be the harmonic-rhythmic position of the G-minor seventh or ii\(^7\) chord.
Working in the same key, but in a far more relaxed tempo, Powell plays a similar line through the turnaround leading into his fourth solo chorus on the 1949 quintet recording of “Dance of the Infidels.”

Example 3.28: C3-C4 of Powell’s “Dance of the Infidels” solo, (1.36-1.39).

In this passage, the A-natural (ninth of G minor) is stated first in the low register on the downbeat of that harmonic-rhythmic position, and reiterated an octave higher one beat later before reappearing after the harmonic shift to the dominant chord. Only on beat four, a beat after the harmonic change, does it descend to the lowered thirteenth (A-flat) before eventually landing on the tonic ninth (G of F major) on the downbeat of the fourth chorus.

The above examples illustrate Powell’s use of this voice leading in F major and, as a tonicized subdominant, B-flat major. Powell plays a very similar line in the key of E-flat major during the first chorus, third A section of his solo on “The Fruit.”

Example 3.29: C1A3 of Powell’s solo on “The Fruit,” (1.16-1.20).

---

23 “Dance of the Infidels” is a heavily reharmonized twelve-bar blues in the key of F major.
Here too, Powell shows his ability to create harmonic-rhythmic dissonance by detaching his articulation of the strand from the harmonic rhythm, delaying the G-natural (which would be ninth of the F minor seventh, ii chord) until after his harmonic change to the dominant B-flat seventh. This renders the pitch to sound as a diatonic thirteenth before its descent to the lowered thirteenth and then, on the downbeat of the following measure, to the ninth of the tonic E-flat major seventh chord.

Strand 5 and Tritone Substitutes

Strand 5 is similar to strand 4 in that the replacement in strand 1 of the diatonic (fifth-descending) dominant seventh chord with its appropriate (half-step descending) tritone substitute harmony does not alter its pitch. In such cases, the lowered thirteenth of the fifth-descending dominant simply sounds as the ninth of the tritone substitute dominant chord.

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
\text{Strand} & \text{ii}^7 & \text{bII}^7 & \text{I}^{\text{maj7}} \\
\text{5} & 9 & 9 & 9 \\
\text{Strand 1} & R & R & R
\end{array}
\]

Table 3.9: Abstract illustration of strand 5-tritone substitute voice leading.

An articulation of this pattern can be heard in the final A section of Powell’s solo on “Hallucinations,” where the ninth of the ii\(^7\) chord (A-natural of G minor seventh) descends to the ninth of the tritone substitute bII\(^7\) (A-flat of G-flat dominant seventh) before descending to the ninth of the tonic (G-natural of F major).
Example 3.30: Powell’s “Hallucinations” solo, turnaround into C1A3, (1.01-1.03).

This type of inter-strand relationship also holds in cases where, after the ii$^7$ harmony, the tritone substitute is preceded by its pre-dominant ii$^7$ chord. An example of this can be heard in the first chorus of Powell’s “Dance of the Infidels” solo, where the tritone substitute bII$^7$ (G-flat seventh) appears after the diatonic ii$^7$ (G minor seventh) with its predominant (D-flat minor seventh) in tow.

Example 3.31: “Dance of the Infidels” solo, last four measures of C1 (1.00-1.05), with voice-leading schema.

In Example 3.31, the ninth of the ii$^7$ chord (A of G minor seventh) descends to the fifth of the bII$^7$ tritone substitute’s predominant (A-flat of D-flat minor seventh). This A-flat is then briefly sounded as the ninth of the bII$^7$ tritone substitution (A-flat of G-flat dominant seventh,
played in the 16th note triplet figure) before eventually descending to the ninth of the tonic (Gnatural of F major seventh, though this position is delayed during the first two beats of the F major harmonic-rhythmic position while Powell resolves strands 2 and 3, which were also in play in the previous measures.

Strands 4 and 5 in Support of Longer Lines.

In addition to its piecemeal appearances as the voice-leading support of shorter phrases, Powell also uses strand 5 to weave somewhat longer melodic lines, as can be heard in the last A section of his first solo chorus on “Hallucinations.”

Example 3.32: C1A3 of Powell’s “Hallucinations” solo (1.02-1.06), with voice-leading schema.
In this passage, Powell plays a line that begins to be dominated by strand 5 during the turnaround at the end of the bridge and continues to sound strand 5 through the first four measures of this A section. The strand 5 articulation is first heard with the high A natural (ninth of G dominant seventh, a $V^7/V$ chord and the chromatic variant of G minor seventh, though Powell delays the chord-third B-natural past its harmonic-rhythmic position), and continues in that measure to the A-flat (ninth of G-flat dominant seventh, the bII$^7$ tritone substitute for C dominant seventh) before descending again to the Gnatural on the downbeat of C1A3 (ninth of the tonic F major seventh chord). It then descends to the F natural just before beat 3 of that measure (fifth of B-flat dominant seventh, a pivot chord that functions as a blues subdominant but also tritone substitute for $V^7/iii$). Strand 5 continues in the following measure with the E-naturals (fifth of A minor seventh, ii$^7/ii$, and ninth of D dominant seventh, $V^7/ii$, respectively), before sounding as the D-natural on the (downbeat of G minor seventh or the diatonic ii$^7$), the D-flat on beat 4 of that measure (lowered ninth of C dominant seventh), and finally to the C that comes one eighth-note later in anticipation of the tonic F major seventh chord.

Example 3.32 begins with strand 5 articulating the ninth of the first chord (A-natural of G minor or G dominant seventh) and descending from there. When the sequence cycles back—six harmonic-rhythmic positions later—to the G minor seventh chord, strand 5 actually articulates the fifth of that chord, in a way becoming strand 4. However, the fact that these two strands share the same pitch content does not make them indistinct voice-leading options for Powell to rhythmically articulate. Rather, in the midst of any given descending-fifths sequence the decision whether to articulate either strand 4 or 5, or to weave both in counterpoint with one another, is real. This can be observed by examining another of Powell’s lines over the same harmonic-rhythmic structure in “Hallucinations” as above.
This passage, a frolicsome, virtuosic series of arpeggios that Powell plays over the first half of this “Hallucinations” A section (C2A2), is dominated by strand 4 in its upper register, though it contains strand 5 with almost every harmonic change as well. Here, Powell’s articulation of strand 4 derives from a silent but implied fifth (C-natural of the tonic F major) and begins in earnest when that pitch sounds the ninth of the following B-flat dominant seventh chord. Strand 4 descends through this C-natural to the B-natural on the following downbeat (ninth of A dominant seventh), then to the B-flat on the last triplet of that measure (the lowered thirteenth of D dominant seventh), to the A-natural on the downbeat with the G seventh chord, then the A-flat on the last eighth-note triplet of the measure, and finally to the G-natural on the downbeat with the tonic F major seventh chord.
If the two main polyphonic voices of Powell’s right-hand line in the passage consist of strands 2 and 4 (strand 2 beginning with the D-natural, third d of B-flat dominant seventh, and continuing as the lowest two right-hand pitches for the following two measures), Powell’s arpeggios and left-hand accompaniment articulate strands 1, 3, and 5 as well. Strand 3 is heard in the upper pitches of Powell’s shell voicings and in the second-to-highest pitch of each harmonic-rhythmic position, while strand 5 descends from the F-natural, fifth of B-flat dominant seventh (beginning the triplet figure of that harmonic-rhythmic position) through the E-natural, fifth of A-dominant seventh, the E-flat, lowered ninth of D dominant seventh, the D-natural, fifth of G dominant seventh, then the D-flat, lowered ninth of C-dominant seventh. Though Powell does not explicitly articulate this pitch, this D-flat presumably descends to an implied C-natural, fifth of the tonic F major, in the voice-leading structure of this progression.

Conclusions on the Model

This chapter used a five-strand voice-leading model to analyze the intersection of compound melody and voice leading with harmony and harmonic rhythm in Bud Powell’s bebop-style linear improvisations. Though abstracted from transcriptions of Powell solos, the model outlined above may be a useful tool for the analysis of other modern jazz soloists (Charlie Parker, Sonny Stitt, etc.), and can complement the more Schenkerian-inspired approaches put forth by Strunk, Larson, and Martin. Additionally, the model may prove pedagogically useful for learning or teaching the mechanics of a particular, highly idiomatic, sound—a sound that I hear as a central part to mid-twentieth century jazz innovation. Of course, this model is not meant to present a complete picture of that music, nor do I mean to imply the presence or lack of this type of voice leading to be used as a qualifying criterion for music to be called “bebop” or “modern
jazz.” Furthermore, the voice-leading style outlined in this model is largely dependent on a fairly specific harmonic-rhythmic underpinning, namely the descending-fifths sequences and substitutes thereof that appear in modern jazz and the American popular song repertoire from roughly 1930 to 1950.

As common as such progressions are in the modern jazz repertory, they certainly do not represent all of the harmonic movement in Bud Powell’s music or that of his peers. Even in the many cases of extended descending-fifths sequences, Powell does not always articulate the descending strands of this model. Rather, I propose that this type of pitch organization is central to Powell’s concept of harmony and voice leading, like an underlying grammar that he may choose to engage or ignore. In the following chapter, I analyze Powell’s negotiation of one particular harmonic motion that interrupts the flow of such descending-fifth sequences, and discuss, from a voice-leading perspective, how Powell navigates a rather complex web of harmonic routes resulting from this interruption.
Chapter Four: A Case Study of Harmonic Paths and Voice-leading Discontinuities in Powell’s Negotiation of Subdominant Tonicizations in “I Got Rhythm” Related A Sections.

This chapter presents an analysis of Powell’s linear improvisations over a common harmonic progression that interrupts the descending-fifths motion, and focuses on the material that Powell plays when the chord progression at hand leads him to alter or abandon the voice-leading apparatus described in Chapter Three. Specifically, I explore Powell’s improvisations during motion to the subdominant in “rhythm changes” A sections, and the harmonic paths that lead from this destination back to the tonic. In the following analysis, two main “path groups” and two hybrid path groups are identified in Powell’s improvisations.

In AABA cyclic forms with eight-measure A sections based on “I Got Rhythm” (i.e. “rhythm changes” progressions), tonicization of the subdominant occurs after an initial four-measure tonic prolongation gives way to an applied ii–7/V7 or related progression in the fifth measure that achieves the subdominant on the downbeat of measure six of that section. This happens in Powell’s recordings of true “rhythm changes” tunes like “Wail,” “Sonny Side,” and the solo changes to “Bud’s Bubble,” as well as closely related progressions like those of “The Fruit” and “Parisian Thoroughfare.” In such cases, the arrival of IV feels something like an opposing pole to the first measure tonic within the perceived cyclicity of the eight-measure section. While there are various harmonic paths that lead to the subdominant (for example, Powell may approach the sonority via applied dominant and/or applied tritone substitution, with or without preceding applied predominant chords), of greatest interest from the perspective of

24 During the head of “Bud’s Bubble,” mm. 5-6 of the A sections tonicize the chromatic third relation bVI instead of IV, but the solos are supported by a standard rhythm changes form that moves to IV in this harmonic-rhythmic position.
harmony and voice leading is the period between the subdominant’s arrival and the reiteration of the tonic at the downbeat of the following A section (or, in the case of second A sections, the arrival of the first chord of the bridge). An analysis of Powell’s improvisations in these three measures demonstrates a web of harmonic paths and voice-leading articulations of those paths that Powell chooses from. These are outlined below and categorized into two main groups, each with variants.

Two other common harmonic-rhythmic positions for subdominant tonicization are found in the fifth measure of the twelve-bar blues and blues-inspired AABA forms (such as Powell’s “Hallucinations” or Charlie Parker’s “Confirmation”), on the downbeat of the B and sometimes C sections of ABAC forms (such as the B section of “Indiana”), and on the downbeat or second measure of B sections of AABA forms (such as “I Want to Be Happy”). Reaching the subdominant in measure five of the A sections of an AABA or twelve-bar blues form (rather than in measure six as in rhythm changes) adds even more harmonic-rhythmic stability to its arrival, but also generally allows more space for Powell to negotiate a path back to the tonic. The same can be said for B and C sectional subdominant tonicizations as well as those that occur in the bridges of AABA forms. Though Powell’s improvisations through these situations exhibit similar voice-leading patterns to one another, this chapter is mainly concerned with rhythm changes related A sections that arrive at the subdominant in the sixth measure. Example 4.1 shows a typical, generic rhythm changes progression in B-flat major to aid the reader.
Example 4.1: Typical rhythm changes chord progression in B-flat major.

Path group 1: The Modally Mixed Subdominant and Tonic Prolongation “By Arrival.”

In rhythm changes-related situations where Powell achieves the subdominant in measure six of an A section but does not resolve to the tonic in measure eight of that section, instead delaying the resolution until measure one of the following section via a descending-fifths progression starting on iii\(^7\), ii\(^7\)/ii, or V\(^7\)/iv,\(^{25}\) motion from the subdominant usually begins with its minor parallel, the iv chord (see A1 of Example 4.1). In such a situation, the link between the descending-fifths progression that tonicizes the subdominant (in the key of B-flat major: F minor seventh, B-flat dominant seventh, to E-flat major seventh) and the descending-fifths progression that leads to the tonic on the downbeat of the following section (in the key of B-flat major: D

\(^{25}\) Henry Martin describes this as tonic prolongation “by arrival” (1996, 9).
minor seventh, G dominant seventh, C minor seventh, F dominant seventh, to B-flat major seventh) is the semitone descent of the iv (E-flat minor seventh) to the ii\(^{-7}\)/ii (D minor seventh). This results in a harmonic motion of IV\(^{maj7}\) - iv\(^{-7}\) - ii\(^{-7}\)/ii - V\(^7\)/ii - ii\(^{-7}\) - V\(^7\) - I\(^{maj7}\). Though Powell may take this path in any of the three A sections of a given AABA chorus, he uses this strategy most often in the first A section of such a form, perhaps in order to reserve the sense of closure that moving to a tonic on measure eight would provide for the A section before the bridge (which divides the cycle in half) and the last A section (which concludes a chorus). Though not a descending-fifths sequence per se, this progression allows Powell to continue any or all of the five voice-leading strands until the hypermetric downbeat of the following A section. Table 4.1 provides an abstract diagram for this voice-leading potentiality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>m. 5</th>
<th>m. 6</th>
<th>m. 7</th>
<th>m. 8</th>
<th>(m. 1 of next A section)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F(^{m7})</td>
<td>Bb(^{7})</td>
<td>Eb(^{maj7})</td>
<td>Eb(^{m7})</td>
<td>D(^{m7})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii(^{-7}/IV)</td>
<td>V(^7/IV)</td>
<td>IV(^{maj7})</td>
<td>vi(^{-7})</td>
<td>ii(^{-7}/ii)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strand 5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13-b13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strand 4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9-b9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strand 3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strand 2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strand 1</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1: Abstract voice-leading diagram for modally mixed iv – tonic prolongation by arrival, mm. 5-8 of rhythm changes A sections.

In Powell’s lines, the voice leading from iv to ii\(^{-7}/ii\) is almost identical to that of a tritone substitute-to-target chord motion, forming a brief linear-intervallic pattern where each of the five
strands simply descends by semitone to its parallel position in the following chord. In C2A1 of his solo on “Bud’s Bubble,” Powell plays a line that illustrates part of this voice-leading structure.

Example 4.2. C2A1 of Powell’s solo on “Bud’s Bubble,” (1.05-1.09).

In this passage, strand 2 is the most prominent thread through the progression and serves to connect the two descending-fifths sequences through the E-flat minor seventh to D-minor seventh descent by articulating the thirds of those chords (circled in Example 4.2). Strand 2 begins with the A-flat (third of F minor seventh), is reiterated as the last pitch of that measure (A-flat, seventh of B-flat dominant seventh), descends to G-natural, the third of subdominant E-flat major seventh on the following downbeat and, as Powell restates the descending two-eighth-note-to-triplet motive in that measure, descends through the third of the iv (G-flat of E-flat minor seventh) to F-natural, the third of the D-minor seventh chord (ii\(^7\)/ii) on the downbeat of that harmonic-rhythmic position. From here, the strand continues in the new descending-fifths progression as the seventh of the V\(^7\)/ii chord (F-natural of G dominant seventh) and is projected to the upper octave as the third of the ii\(^7\) chord (E-flat of C minor seventh), before finally reappearing in the opening measure of the following A section as the third of the tonic (D-natural of B-flat major seventh, last pitch shown in Example 4.2).
Strand 3 appears in a more piecemeal fashion, beginning with the E-flat to D-natural descent (seventh of F-minor seventh to third of B-flat dominant seventh), appearing next as the D-flat, seventh of E-flat minor seventh, then as the B-flat, seventh of C minor seventh. Powell articulates strand 4 in the subdominant tonicization, playing C-natural, fifth of F minor seventh, followed by C-flat, lowered ninth of B-flat dominant seventh and reappearing twice in the following measure, first as B-flat, fifth of E-flat major seventh and then as the same pitch, fifth of E-flat minor. Strand 4 then disappears for nearly two measures, reappearing in the upper octave with the G-natural (ninth of F-dominant seventh) to F-natural (fifth of B-flat major seventh) descent that Powell plays into the downbeat of C2A2. Strand 5 is articulated through the descending-fifths motion to IV (G-natural, ninth of F minor, restated up an octave as thirteenth of B-flat dominant, descending immediately to G-flat, lowered thirteenth of that chord, then reappearing as F-natural, ninth of E-flat major seventh and the following E-flat minor seventh). It is no surprise that after prominently articulating strand 5 in his subdominant tonicization, Powell avoids the strand with the arrival of the ii\(^7\)/ii chord, as an E-natural (ninth of D minor and potential continuation of strand 5) would articulate a non-diatonic pitch in the key of B-flat and hence would serve to lessen the utility of that sonority as a pivot chord (both iii and ii/ii in B-flat major).

Demonstrating a variation of this harmonic path in C2A2 of his “Wail” solo, Powell plays a line that continues the semitone descent of strands 2 and 3 embedded in the IV to iv transition, effectively re-harmonizing the descending-fifths progression from ii\(^7\)/ii to the tonic that begins the following A section (see Example 4.3 below).
Example 4.3: C1A3 of Powell’s “Wail” solo, (1.56-2.01).

Operating here in the key of E-flat major, Powell plays a right-hand line that, from a voice-leading perspective, extends the linear intervallic pattern beginning on iv all the way to the diatonic ii chord. This develops the aforementioned semitone descent articulated in strands 2 and 3 through the transition from iv to ii⁷/ii into a motive of sorts, and replaces the expected V⁷/ii (a C dominant seventh) with an F-sharp minor sonority that in turn descends to the ii⁷ chord (F minor seventh). Harmonically, though this F-sharp minor seventh essentially functions as a passing chord between iii and ii, it preserves much of the voice leading that a tritone substitute (F-sharp or G-flat dominant seventh) would offer. Strand 2 (circled in Example 4.3) is particularly affected by this harmonic choice of Powell’s, because the A-natural of this chord allows Powell to continue the descent by semitone that connects the two descending-fifths progressions (C-natural, third of A-flat major to C-flat, third of A-flat minor to B-flat, third of G-minor to A-natural, third of F-sharp minor to A-flat, third of F-minor). Strand 3 also descends by semitone (G-natural, seventh of A-flat major to G-flat, seventh of A-flat minor to F-natural, seventh of G-minor to E-natural, seventh of F-sharp major to E-flat, seventh of F-minor).

Powell abandons this pattern after the F-minor sonority. However, as if the momentum to continue is too powerful, he plays other pitches that seem to imply an E minor modality (all from
E dorian) over his left-hand B-flat octaves, suggesting his that the pattern continues at some level.

**Path group 2: The Applied Diminished to Cadence Formula (vii/V—V6/4).**

A second group of harmonic and voice-leading paths that Powell takes from sixth measure subdominants involves the IV chord “morphing” into a diminished seventh chord up a semitone (vii\(^{\text{dim7}}\)/V). This diminished chord functions as an applied chord to a cadential six-four that resolves to the tonic on the downbeat of m. 8 of the section or, more often, initiates one of a variety of turnarounds over a dominant pedal that builds tension in anticipation of the impending tonic on the downbeat of the following A section.

This progression and its derivatives relate to Powell’s tendency to use the cadential six-four chord,\(^{26}\) which is a somewhat idiosyncratic practice in modern jazz. Further, such places are among the few moments where Powell regularly interrupts his linear-melodic stream. Because the cadential formula of the “sharp-four diminished” (a term jazz musicians often use in lieu of vii/V) to V6/5 does not support the upper strands of the descending-fifths voice-leading schema, Powell is forced to abandon those strands in favor of a less harmonically indicative melodic vocabulary, employing either blues-based and/or diatonic material. While the exact material that Powell plays varies from section to section and solo to solo, he often concludes this material on scale degree 5, making the preceding section sound, in retrospect, as a prolongation of that pitch.

By interrupting the descending-fifths-based voice-leading apparatus, which Powell almost always uses to approach the subdominant, and allowing his A sections to culminate in the

---

\(^{26}\) See m.6 of the “Hallucinations” A sections for a similar use of this chord after a fifth measure subdominant tonicization, and see “Sure Thing,” mm.39-40, for an example of Powell using this chord in his “classical” style.
relative harmonic-rhythmic stagnancy of this big, two-measure dominant sound, Powell tends to lose at least some of the forward momentum that he created through his linear engagement with the harmonic rhythm in the preceding six measures of the section. Perhaps this loss of voice-leading-driven forward motion explains the highly dissonant chord that he often uses to approach the following section, for in a great many cases independent of the particular tune (head) or key, Powell achieves the impending tonic harmony via the combination of a dominant bass pedal and either 1) a powerful, often two-hand altered dominant chord that features a raised fifth and/or “flatted” fifth or 2) a similarly powerful tritone substitute bII\(^7\) chord. It is also notable that although Powell sacrifices a degree of section-to-section flow with this group of choices by providing a sense of closure at the end of one formal section, in doing so he creates a sort of fresh palette for melodic invention at the beginning of the next section.\(^{27}\)

Variants of the above-described formula can be heard throughout Powell’s rhythm changes improvisations. Powell’s solo on “The Fruit” contains several such passages, beginning with his very first improvised A section.

\(^{27}\) Along these lines, Powell often plays very similar material in the final two measures of a twelve-bar blues form, allowing for fresh melodic invention in the measures that begin the following chorus. For an example of this, see his many solo choruses on “Big Foot,” pp. 210-220.
Example 4.4: C1A1 of Powell’s solo on “The Fruit,” (0.51-0.56).

Here, in the material leading up to the aforementioned diminished chord (A diminished seventh), all five-strands from the descending-fifths voice-leading model are accounted for. While the subdominant tonicization lacks an applied predominant ii–7/IV, Powell nevertheless implies a harmonic-rhythmic pulse of two chords per measure by using the tonic as a pivot (V/IV) for two beats and then moving to its tritone substitute (A dominant seventh). Powell cleverly reaches that tritone substitute in strand 1 (A-natural) just as he arrives at the lowered seventh in strand 3, rendering the D-flat to sound enharmonically as the third of A dominant seventh. Strand 2 is also quite clear, moving from the two G-naturals in (third of E-flat major and seventh of A dominant seventh,) to the G-flat, seventh of the subdominant (turning this IV sound into a blues-subdominant, a common substitute for the diatonic IVmaj7). Strand 4 can be heard with the ornamental F-natural of the triplet figure that Powell plays over the E-flat chord, followed later in that measure by the same pitch, this time sounding as the lowered thirteenth of the A-dominant seventh, before descending to the E-flat, fifth of A-flat seventh on the “&-after-one” of the following measure. Strand 5 is articulated by the high C-natural to the high B-flat in the first two measures of Example 4.4. The C-natural can be considered a displaced thirteenth of E-flat dominant seventh or a raised ninth of the A-dominant seventh, and the B-flat is the ninth of the subdominant A-flat chord. These choices illustrate the discussion in Chapter Three of the
voice-leading independence between upper strands and strand 1 when Powell uses tritone substitutes.

As mentioned above, the arrival of the A diminished chord presents a harmonic obstacle to Powell continuing this voice leading, especially regarding strands 4 and 5. Accordingly, Powell abandons this vocabulary for blues-based/diatonic material that emphasizes scale degree 5 (the multiple B-flats sounded in the final two measures of the A section). Powell then concludes the A section with a powerful two-hand tritone substitute E-dominant seventh flat five chord that can be heard to sound over the B-flat dominant pedal and that cleverly reiterates both the dominant pedal and aforementioned melodic B-flat in its top voice (the flatted fifth).

Example 4.5 shows Powell’s solo on “The Fruit” in an analogous position of the cyclic form one chorus later (C1A3). Much of the harmony is identical to that of Example 4.3 above, but in this chorus Powell chooses to approach the subdominant A-flat major not via tritone substitute (A dominant seventh) but by V/IV (E-flat dominant seventh).

Example 4.5: C1A3 of Powell’s solo on “The Fruit,” (1.19-1.26).

Notice how similar the melodic material that Powell plays in the measure preceding the A-flat major seventh is to that which he played a chorus earlier (shown in Example 4.4 above). The material after the arrival of the A diminished seventh chord is also quite similar,
emphasizing scale degree 5 with a blues-based line, then playing the tritone substitute E dominant seventh with a flatted fifth (stated by the right hand octaves on the very last beat of the A section).

The basic structure observed in Example 4.5 is not unique to this particular passage of Powell’s solo on “The Fruit,” but is representative of a potential harmonic and voice-leading path through subdominant tonicizations. It can be observed in the following examples of corresponding segments of A sections of Powell’s “Parisian Thoroughfare” and “Wail” solos. For example, in his solo on “Parisian Thoroughfare,” Powell uses almost identical voice leading to approach the subdominant (B-flat seventh, again using the blues subdominant).

Example 4.6: C3A2 of Powell’s solo on “Parisian Thoroughfare,” (1.36-1.40).

Much as in the above examples of “The Fruit,” here Powell does not play a pre-dominant (which would be a C minor seventh), but rather a line that descends from E-natural, seventh of the tonic F major seventh, to E-flat, lowered seventh of the V7/IV F dominant seventh chord. Another thing that this example shares with those above is that on the “and-of-three” of the V7/IV chord’s harmonic-rhythmic position, Powell’s melody reaches up to articulate strand 5 with that chord’s thirteenth (D-natural, thirteenth of F dominant seventh), which descends in the voice leading to the blues-subdominant’s ninth (C-natural of B-flat seventh). However, because it is the second A section leading to the bridge, this example from “Parisian Thoroughfare”
differs from those taken from “The Fruit” in that it resolves to the tonic on the eighth measure of the section.

Powell plays a line approaching a sixth-measure subdominant tonicization in his “Wail” solo that uses this same basic voice-leading structure regarding the descent to the lowered seventh of the $V^7/IV$, emphasis on the thirteenth of that chord (in this case, the lowered thirteenth, C-flat, follows), and the ninth of the subdominant (B-flat of A-flat major seventh).

Example 4.7: C1A1 of Powell’s solo on “Wail,” (1.35-1.39).

An example of different melodic material that is underpinned by similar harmonic movement can be heard in the first A section of Powell’s solo on “Sonny Side.”

Example 4.8: C1A1 of Powell’s “Sonny Side” solo, (1.15-1.20).

Here, Powell’s line articulates strand 3 in the F minor seventh to B-flat seventh change (E-flat, seventh of F minor descending to D-natural, third of B-flat), and then seems to articulate strand 4 with the change to E-flat major seventh (C-natural to C-flat, ninth and lowered ninth of B-flat seventh to B-flat, fifth of E-flat major seventh).
Hybrid Paths From IV That Involve Modal Mixture.

The two path groups described above represent distinct but related methods of moving from IV to I in rhythm changes-derived A sections. Not surprisingly, an analysis of Powell’s improvisation on several rhythm changes-related A sections yields further variants of each path group and some combinations of the two. One such hybrid path involves Powell combining the modally borrowed iv with the cadential six-four, then either prolonging the dominant until the arrival of the following hypermetric downbeat or, in situations where closure is appropriate (such as the second A section leading to the bridge), completing the cadence to achieve the tonic on the downbeat of the eighth and final measure of that section. The latter can be heard in C1A2 of Powell’s solo on the alternate take of “Wail.”
Example 4.9: C1A2 of Powell’s solo on “Wail,” alternate take, (1.32-1.36), voice-leading schema.

When Powell precedes the cadential six-four with a iv sonority (as opposed to a diminished chord built on the raised fourth degree), he tends to (at least superficially) continue the chromatic descending line of strand 2 beyond the descending-fifths sequence to the fifth degree of the cadential chord. This melodic strand is identical to situations when Powell follows the iv chord with a iii (or ii/ii) chord, but here the pitch that would be the third of that chord sounds as scale degree five of the key (or root of the cadential six-four). In the case of Example 4.9 above, this descending line begins on D-natural (seventh of tonic E-flat major seventh), descends to D-flat (seventh of the V7/IV, an E-flat dominant seventh), then to C-natural (third of the IV A-flat major seventh), C-flat (third of the iv A-flat minor seventh), then finally to B-flat (chord-fifth of the V6/4).

When navigating this “hybrid” path, Powell articulates this strand 2 descent through the third degrees of IV and iv and (superficially) to the fifth of the cadential chord in various tunes.
and keys, regardless of whether the A section at hand resolves to the tonic in the eighth measure or delays resolution until the following section. In the final A section of his “Parisian Thoroughfare” solo, after this strand 2 descent (D-natural to D-flat, third degrees of subdominant B-flat major and B-flat minor, circled in Example 4.10), Powell delays the fifth of the cadential chord and displaces the pitch up an octave (C-natural of F6/4, circled), but the effect of continuity is still present.

Example 4.10: C3A3 of Powell’s solo on “Parisian Thoroughfare,” (1.49-1.53).

Also of interest in Example 4.10 is the material that Powell plays between the D-natural to D-flat descent and the C-natural. While the descent from A-natural to A-flat articulates the seventh of the IV and iv chords (albeit harmonically displaced), these pitches clearly lead to the G-natural on the downbeat of the F6/4 chord. If we consider the E-natural before that G in conjunction with these pitches, it seems that Powell has found a way to “have his cake and eat it too.” That is, by making this parallel chord-seventh descent sound like the material that I label “strand 5” in ii7 – V7 – Imaj7 progressions (A-natural as ninth of a nonexistent G minor, A-flat as lowered thirteenth of an implied C-dominant seventh, moving to G-natural, ninth of tonic F-major seventh, Powell is able to construct a melodic line that exhibits the harmonic-rhythmic impetus of a descending fifths progression without being supported by such a progression.
The chromatic descent through the third degrees of IV and iv to scale degree 5 of the
cadential chord was a particularly attractive voice-leading path through subdominant
tonicizations for Powell. Accordingly, there are even passages in the recordings where he
combines this strand 2 voice leading in a clear articulation of the modally-mixed iv even as he
plays or implies in his left hand the diminished chord built on the raised fourth degree. This
represents yet another hybrid path—one with a significant degree of harmonic ambiguity. While
the recording quality renders it difficult to hear Powell’s left hand bass note, it seems that he
combines these two paths in the last A section of his first solo chorus of “Parisian
Thoroughfare.”

Example 4.11: C1A3 of Powell’s solo on “Parisian Thoroughfare,” (0.57-1.01).

That Powell displaces the blues-subdominant B-flat seventh and B-diminished seventh
shell voicings against the harmonic rhythm by anticipating each by one-and-a-half beats has little
effect on this argument, for as illustrated in Chapter Two, such displacements are central to
Powell’s rhythmic concept. The strand 2 descent occurs with the D-natural, third of a
harmonically displaced B-flat dominant seventh to the D-flat, which sounds like the third of a B-
flat minor that clashes with the (displaced) B-diminished chord that Powell plays in his left hand,
to the C-natural, fifth of the F and then the implied six-four.
Powell articulates this harmonically nebulous path in C2A2 of his “Hallucinations” solo through a measure-five subdominant tonicization rather than the measure-six rhythm changes variety, (see Example 4.12 below).

Example 4.12: C2A2 of Powell’s “Hallucinations” solo, (1.21-1.23).

Representing a possible reverse of this hybrid path, in “Bud’s Bubble,” Powell plays the IV to iv in his left hand voicings, but plays a descending line in his right hand over the iv chord that seems more harmonically suitable for the diminished option. Like many other Powell lines over the diminished option, this line emphasizes scale degree 5 in the final two measures of the A section.

Example 4.13: C1A3 of Powell’s solo on “Bud’s Bubble,” (0.59-1.02).
Hybrid Paths Involving Cadential Six-Four via the bVII Backdoor Dominant.

Another variant of this IV – iv – V6/4 path involves a chord known in the jazz community as the “flat-VII” or “backdoor dominant.” The backdoor dominant, which is closely related to iv, involves approaching a target chord from a dominant seventh built a whole tone below, on the lowered seventh scale degree. In The Jazz Harmony Book (2013), David Berkman provides examples of standard tunes that use this chord. Berkman explains that “this chord has a bluesy sound and usually leads to the one chord” and goes on to claim that it “replaces the V chord and leads back to I” (64-65). When Powell uses the chord in measure six subdominant tonicizations, he substitutes it for iv, and is thus able to retain the basic strand 2 (and 3) voice-leading structure described above (the pitch that articulates the lowered third of the iv chord articulates the lowered seventh of bVII7). This, in turn allows Powell to descend to scale degree five of either the tonic or the cadential chord just as he does in IV – iv – V6/4 situations or IV – iv – I situations. Examples 4.14 and 4.15 below, both taken from Powell’s solo on “The Fruit,” illustrate his use of this chord as an alternative to iv after a subdominant tonicization.
Example 4.14: C1A1 of Powell’s solo on “The Fruit,” (1.00–1.06), with voice-leading schema.

In the passage shown above in Example 4.14, strand 2 is articulated by the D-flats (seventh of E-flat dominant seventh), the C-natural (third of A-flat major seventh), and then the C-flats (first the beat 2 harmonic anticipation of the lowered seventh of D-flat seventh, then the reiteration of that pitch on the last sixteenth note of that measure). Table 4.3 illustrates the voice-leading structure of this example.

Similar harmonic and voice-leading behavior is heard in C1A1 of Powell’s solo on “The Fruit.”
Conclusion

For the purpose of examining Powell’s voice leading when the descending-fifths-related motion discussed in Chapter Three is interrupted, this chapter discussed several ways that Powell negotiates the measures that directly precede and directly follow measure six subdominant tonicizations in the A sections of rhythm changes-related cyclic forms. Two main path groups were identified. The first involves Powell using the semitone relationship between the modally mixed subdominant chord and the following mediant or ii–7/ii chord to connect the descending-fifths progression that achieves the subdominant with a second such progression that arrives at the tonic on the downbeat of the following eighth-measure section. The second path group involves Powell discontinuing the five-strand voice-leading structure after arrival of the IV chord, and following that chord with an applied diminished seventh to a cadential six-four sonority and (generally) playing melodic material that emphasizes scale degree 5 with that V6/4.

This chapter also identified a number of hybrid paths, which contain combinations of the main path groups along with some harmonic and voice-leading surprises.

Powell’s improvising displays a surprising degree of harmonic and voice-leading variety throughout these brief, often fast-moving four-measure sections, and his web of choices contributes to the melodic variety and overall freshness and interest of his soloing in the rhythm
changes setting. Through closely observing this particular harmonic-rhythmic motion, we have been able to study some of the ways that Powell handles a harmonic-rhythmic obstacle in relation to the five-strand voice-leading model outlined in Chapter Three. These two chapters could be expanded upon in a future research project to include a comparative analysis of Powell’s negotiation of voice leading through descending-fifths sequences and measure-six subdominant tonicizations and those of his peer bebop innovators, such as Charlie Parker, or to examine Powell’s voice leading through subdominant tonicizations in other types of cyclic forms.
Chapter Five: Flatted Fifths in Bud Powell’s Harmonic Approach

Bud Powell’s harmonic concept was not limited to the kinds of voice-leading techniques discussed in the previous two chapters, but rather included a broad palette of colors. Chapter One briefly gave voice to musicians regarding Powell’s experiments with post-tonality in “The Glass Enclosure” and “Un Poco Loco,” and such techniques also appear in “Dusk in Sandi” and parts of “Sure Thing.” Beyond these experimental techniques, Powell’s music is saturated with elements that have become so standard in contemporary jazz that one can almost forget that his uses of them were revolutionary at the time. For example, the student of Powell can hear creative uses of tritone substitute harmony in his bop-style compositions like “Dance of the Infidels,” in all of his improvisations, and even in through-composed ballads like “Dusk in Sandi” and “Sure Thing.” For even more variety, Powell inserts “Ladybird” turnarounds in improvised solos like that on “Strictly Confidential,” in the A sections of “All God’s Children Got Rhythm” and, perhaps most creatively, in his through-composed ballad “I’ll Keep Loving You” (p. 269, m. 15). This device, based on Tadd Dameron’s composition of the same name, colorfully approaches a target chord by descending fifths from the modally mixed chromatic mediant (in C major, E-flat (major or dominant) seventh, A-flat (major or dominant) seventh, D-flat (major or dominant seventh) to C). Another aspect of Powell’s harmonic prowess, which was further developed by Barry Harris, is his manipulation of diminished seventh and pivotal major or minor sixth chords to approach desired tonal destinations (i.e., Harris’s “diminished sixth” technique). This can be heard in “I’ll Keep Loving You,” in his arrangement of “Polkadots and Moonbeams,” and even in the “Hallucinations” A sections. All of these topics deserve further exploration in the future, but perhaps no harmonic technique frames Powell as the quintessential bebop pianist as does his uses of the “flatted fifth.”
The Flatted Fifth in Bebop

The dominant seventh flatted fifth sonority is a defining characteristic of the bebop style. As a young, explorative player in the late 1930s, Dizzy Gillespie was among the first jazz musicians to systematically exploit this sound. According to Gillespie:

Edgar Hayes had this arrangement, a ballad arrangement, and the chord was an E-flat. You see, I was always aware of where the chord was and also the time. I figured that was fundamental, but you don’t stick to fundamentals. He had an E-flat chord in there, and I heard this A concert going up a scale, and I played it, and I played it again, played it again, played it again. I said, “Damn! Listen at this shit. Listen at this, man!” That’s when I first became aware that there was a “flatted fifth.” Before that time, until 1938, that was not a part of my musical conception (Gillespie 1979, 92).

The dissonant and colorful added tritone that Gillespie unearthed in his improvising would become a staple ingredient of the new style, and musicians would soon find a multitude of creative ways to include it in their compositions and improvisations. Bud Powell’s use of flatted fifths is so extensive that it’s impossible to name one of his compositions that doesn’t include the sonority, at least harmonically, and most use it melodically. Dominant seventh flatted fifth chords are just one of the ways that bebop musicians found to saturate their music with non-functional tritones. In his discussion of Thelonious Monk’s affinity for half-diminished chords, DeVeaux offers comments that speak to this:

The ultimate fascination of the half-diminished chord lay in the tritone buried in its interior. Monk’s harmonic language was centered around the tritone: it showed up in his fondness for augmented chords, whole-tone scales, and the infamous “flatted fifth.”
Although this territory had already been explored by a number of jazz musicians, including Coleman Hawkins, Monk’s compositions isolated the characteristic sonority of the tritone more systematically than any music then in circulation (DeVeaux 1997, 224).

The above declarations by DeVeaux about Monk’s use of the tritone can apply to Bud Powell as well, and while Monk was indeed a mentor for the younger Powell and may have provided an early model for using the dissonant sound, Powell found a multitude of creative and personalized ways to employ it. The very technique that DeVeaux was attributing to Monk can be heard in the second measure of Powell’s “Celia” A sections, where a C half-diminished chord (modally mixed ii in B-flat major) supports a descending melodic tritone in the melody (C to G-flat).

Powell often colored his compositions and improvisations with modally borrowed predominant chords and dominant seventh flatted fifth sonorities. While the two sounds are related in the bebop context, this chapter is specifically concerned with Powell’s integration of flatted fifths into his music. Accordingly, the following analysis begins with “textbook” examples of the idiomatic bebop flatted fifth in Powell’s music, which to my understanding do not resolve the dissonant pitch upward by semitone, and then explores various closely related devices that Powell uses which allude to this sound.

“Tempus Fugit” and the Idiomatic Bebop Flatted Fifth

Powell’s up-tempo original composition, “Tempus Fugit,” creatively employs perfectly idiomatic bebop flatted fifths both melodically and harmonically. Beginning in the introduction to this D minor composition, on the “and-of-three” of the third full measure of music, Powell invigorates his primary dominant (A dominant seventh flatted five) with the pitch (E-flat). This creates an intense dissonance in the first three seconds that foreshadows the remaining two-plus
minutes of the track. Continuing on through the introduction, Powell then uses the E-flat as the melodic apex of both the introduction and the entire head and pre-solo interlude.

![Example 5.1: Introduction to “Tempus Fugit,” use of flatted fifth, (0.00-0.08).](image)

Breaking slightly from the bebop tendency towards descending-fifths progressions, the A sections of “Tempus Fugit” consist of a subdominant – dominant – tonic motion (G minor seventh – A dominant seventh – D minor). Powell accordingly employs yet another dominant seventh flatted fifth sonority, the secondary dominant V7/iv (D dominant seventh of G minor) to conclude his introduction and lead to the A section’s opening subdominant chord.

Powell uses the flatted fifth sound again, this time articulated with the added technical flair of descending, chromatic parallel thirds, in the secondary dominant V7/iv (D dominant seventh flat five) that concludes the bridge, preparing the G minor harmony that begins the last A section, (see Example 5.2).
Example 5.2: Flatted fifths in the “Tempus Fugit” bridge, (0.24-0.28).

Flatted Fifths in Powell Solos

In addition to enriching compositions like “Tempus Fugit” with the device, Powell also plays idiomatically unresolved “bebop” flatted fifths in many of his improvisations. A particularly memorable instance of this can be heard in the beginning of his solo on “Un Poco Loco.” Rather than following the cyclic form of the tune’s head, Powell improvises his “Un Poco Loco” solo over a left-hand ostinato that emphasizes a C pedal. Example 5.3 depicts Powell’s opening motive, which he repeats three times before developing it further. Notice that the phrase is framed with the F-sharps (G-flat spelled enharmonically to avoid confusion with the G-naturals of the left-hand ostinato).

Example 5.3: Powell’s “Un Poco Loco” solo, flatted fifth, (1.15-1.17).

---

28 He does imply a G dominant early in the solo, and eventually abandons the left hand ostinato.
The device can be heard in the same key but in a very different situation in the opening measures of Powell’s fourteenth chorus of Charlie Parker’s twelve-bar blues “Big Foot.” Here, Powell humorously uses the flatted-fifth (spelled F-sharp in Example 5.4) to conclude a phrase that otherwise would have sounded like a swing-era cliché.

![Example 5.4: Opening statement of C14 in Powell’s “Bigfoot” solo, (3.35-3.40).](image)

**The Flatted Fifth – Tritone Substitute Connection**

As mentioned in Chapter Three, the flatted fifth sonority is a very close relative of the dominant seventh tritone substitute chord, as the root of a tritone substitute is the flatted fifth of the dominant seventh for which it stands, and vice versa. Powell creatively exploits this relationship throughout his compositions and improvisations. For example, in the final measure of the two-measure C dominant seventh concluding the bridge to “Parisian Thoroughfare,” Powell’s composed melody ends with a tritone descent from scale degree 5 (C-natural) to its flatted fifth (G-flat, flatted fifth of C dominant seventh).
Example 5.5: HB of “Parisian Thoroughfare,” (0.23-0.27).

However, in a motion that can almost be described in Schenkerian terms as a voice-exchange, Powell supports the treble C with the shell voicing for its tritone substitute, G-flat dominant seventh, then, just after the melodic descent to G-flat, plays the diatonic dominant in the bass (C). This further saturates the moment with the flatted-fifth sonority, for the melody C sounds as the flatted fifth of the implied F-sharp dominant seventh, while the melodic G-flat is the flatted fifth of the C dominant seventh.

Another example of Powell’s creative use of this flatted fifth – tritone substitute relationship can be heard in “The Fruit.” Here, he prepares the V/IV E-flat dominant seventh harmony that begins the bridge with a pair of low B-flat broken octaves in the left hand. These pitches, however, immediately give way to a two-hand E dominant seventh chord, with B-flat, the flatted fifth, as the highest pitch.
A moment later, Powell once again employs the flatted fifth in the melody of the bridge’s second measure, here as an A-natural against the E-flat seventh $V^7/IV$. That Powell’s left hand reaches the tritone substitute A dominant seventh chord in simultaneity with the second appearance of that melodic A natural does not diminish the effect, but rather strengthens it.

Flatted Fifths and the Augmented/Whole Tone Sound

In ways similar to DeVeaux’s description of Thelonious Monk’s music (above), Powell exploits the close relationship between the dominant seventh flatted fifth sonority and the whole-tone-based dominant seventh raised fifth sound (i.e., the whole-tone collection). One of the ways that he does this is by articulating the flatted fifth, flatted seventh, and natural ninth of a dominant seventh chord as an upper-structure augmented triad. This technique can be heard over the $V^7/IV$ chord beginning the bridge of Powell’s second solo chorus on “I Want to be Happy” (in Example 5.7, the flatted fifth of F dominant seventh is spelled B-natural, rather than C-flat).
Example 5.7: C2B of “I Want to be Happy” (2.18-2.21).

In the final measures of the bridge of his previous chorus in this solo, Powell plays similar material over two consecutive applied chords approaching V.

Example 5.8: C1B of Powell’s “I Want to Be Happy” solo, (1.52-1.56).

Notice that here, after using this flatted fifth, flatted seventh and natural ninth combination in his line over the D-dominant seventh and G-dominant seventh chords, Powell articulates the primary dominant C-seventh as a raised fifth sonority, possibly indicating an awareness of the close relationship between the two devices.
Another instance of Powell combining the flatted fifth with the raised fifth sound in an improvised line is heard in the second half of the bridge of his solo on “Bouncing with Bud, Alternate Take 2,” where Powell develops a motive based mainly on descending tritones.

Example 5.9: C1B of Powell’s solo on “Bouncing with Bud, Alternate Take 2,” (2.29-2.35).

Notice that the E-flat, (an enharmonically spelled raised fifth of G dominant seventh), is almost directly followed by the flatted fifth (D-flat). Again over the primary dominant (F seventh), Powell combines the flatted and raised fifth (C-flat and D-flat, respectively).

Along these same lines, Powell uses the flatted fifth (spelled as F-sharp in Example 5.10) as a lower neighbor to the raised fifth (G-sharp) over the primary dominant ending C2B of his solo on “Parisian Thoroughfare” bridge (C-dominant seventh).
Raised Elevenths and the Fourth Mode of the Melodic Minor Scale.

Powell often plays material that emphasizes the raised eleventh, an enharmonic pitch to the flatted fifth, as the only altered pitch in his lines over “static” dominant seventh chords that do not resolve directly to their tonics. This creates a sound equivalent to the fourth mode of the melodic minor scale. Though closely related, the raised eleventh dominant sonority is differentiated from the more idiomatic bebop flatted fifth due to its inclusion of the natural fifth. A regular candidate for this modal treatment is the chord that in jazz circles is sometimes referred to as the “dominant II.” The dominant II is a (mostly) unaltered V\(^7\)/V that moves indirectly to the V through the ii\(^7\) chord. To David Berkman, the dominant II “feels like another ‘place’ in a tune, in the same way that waiting on the I chord feels like being in a place” (2013, 55, author’s emphasis). In The Jazz Harmony Book, Berkman describes the difference between this chord and a functioning V\(^7\)/V chord:

II\(^7\), (D\(^7\) in the key of C) looks a lot like a secondary dominant, V\(^7\)/V. However there is a functional difference between a II\(^7\) and a V\(^7\)/V. A secondary dominant of V\(^7\) has the function of leading to the V\(^7\) chord. It often has altered tensions (to suggest that we are heading to a resolution up a fourth). It is often preceded by its related ii\(^7\) chord. A II\(^7\) is a different animal. It tends not to be preceded by its relative ii\(^7\) chord but rather by the I
chord. It has natural tensions and it just sits there, without much desire to move to the
next chord (2013, 53).

Berkman clearly considers the raised eleventh degree as a “natural tension,” for his first example
of this chord was measure three of Billy Strayhorn’s “Take The A Train,” which features a
melodic G-sharp over a D dominant chord (see Example 5.11), and the remaining four examples
provided by Berkman all include a raised eleventh in their respective accompaniment parts (not
shown here).


While at a slightly deeper structural level the II\(^7\) chord does function as an applied
dominant to V, I agree with Berkman that, from the perspective of a jazz soloist, the harmonic
motion seems to stagnate on this chord.

Like Strayhorn did in “A Train,” Powell often uses this as an opportunity to play the
colorful raised eleventh. Such an instance can be heard in Powell’s “Indiana” solo, where he
articulates this sound in the key of F major over the G dominant seventh that falls near the end of
the first B secti

Example 5.12: C1B of Powell’s “Indiana” solo (0.40-0.43).
The Flatted-fifth as an Appoggiatura

Another way that Powell articulates the flatted-fifth sound in his improvising is as an appoggiatura that resolves to scale degree five. If experienced outside the context of bebop, this type of device seems unrelated to the type of harmonic dissonance that we heard in the above examples of “Tempus Fugit.” However, given the importance of flatted fifths within the modern jazz culture, one can reasonably assert the connection between the two. Such is the case of the concluding phrase of Powell’s “Sonny Side” solo (see Example 5.13) and the concluding phrase of his “Dance of the Infidels” solo (see p. 235). A similar technique can be heard in Powell’s introduction to “I’ll Keep Loving You” (see p. 272).

Example 5.13 Final measures of Powell’s solo on “Sonny Side,” (1.39-1.45).

Flatted Fifths in Powell’s Through-Composed Pieces

Powell’s use of the dominant seventh flatted fifth sonority is not limited to his medium- and up-tempo bop tunes and improvisations. Rather, it is a staple ingredient of his harmonic concept that he employs creatively in a wide variety of situations. For instance, Powell uses the sound to create a hauntingly beautiful effect in his through-composed ballad “Dusk in Saudi,” which features the sonority no less than six times in the opening five measures (see Example 5.14 below). That two of the chords, D-flat seventh and F-seventh, are lacking thirds does not
disguise the flatted-fifth color. It is worth pointing out that again here, the flatted fifth chords are interspersed with dominant seventh raised fifth chords (not labeled in Example 5.14).

Example 5.14: “Dusk in Sandi,” opening five measures (0.00-0.17).

Even a work as seemingly removed from the bebop style as Powell’s nearly through-composed “Sure Thing” is saturated with the flatted fifth sound. Featuring baroque-like counterpoint between his right hand line and a left-hand line doubled by the acoustic bass, Powell’s texture in this piece causes the flatted fifth appearances to sound almost comical. Powell introduces the sonority in m. 6 and m. 11, again with third-less flatted-fifth chords.
Moments after this opening material of “Sure Thing” ends, Powell begins his use of flatted fifth sonorities in earnest, introducing two idiomatic bebop dominant seventh flatted fifth chords (F dominant seventh flat five in m. 15 and A-flat dominant seventh flat five in m. 18) followed by a similar-sounding chord built on a bass F-natural that contains both an A-natural and a B-natural (perhaps best described as an inverted D minor sixth).
Example 5.16: “Sure Thing,” mm. 13-22 (0.17-0.27).

The dissonance builds in the composed portion of “Sure Thing,” culminating in a large D dominant seventh flatted fifth sonority on the downbeat of measure thirty-seven. Here, Powell’s left hand moves from the D\(^7\) shell voicing to an A-flat in a similar exploitation of the relationship between flatted fifth dominant seventh chords and their tritone substitutes as discussed above. Moments later, Powell uses this tritone substitute device once again with a G-flat dominant seventh followed by a C dominant seventh in measure forty-three of “Sure Thing” to end the through-composed portion of the work.
Example 5.17: “Sure Thing,” mm. 31-43 (0.37-0.54).

This chapter discussed several ways that Powell incorporates a harmonic device that is essential to the bebop style, the flatted fifth sound. Standard, idiomatic articulations of the device were discussed, as well as some less obvious passages where Powell expresses or hints at the sonority with related devices. We explored Powell’s incorporation of flatted fifths and closely
related sounds in a variety of tempi and moods, in his bebop compositions and linear improvising and in his through compositions. Examining Powell’s disparate uses of a single device offers a window into his creative process as an improviser and composer. Future research on Powell’s uses of other devices, or comparing Powell’s uses of the flatted fifth with those of his contemporaries such as Thelonious Monk, Dizzy Gillespie, or Charlie Parker, may yield significant contributions to jazz analysis.
Conclusion

As a composer and improviser, Bud Powell contributed immensely to modern jazz, and through his recordings and the many elements of his style that have been absorbed by others, his music continues to reverberate powerfully in the jazz community. Among professional pianists, he is widely thought of as the “father of modern jazz piano.” While it is not my place to attribute such title to any single artist, Powell certainly created an instantly identifiable and fiercely individualized style of playing that is “pure Bud,” yet embodies all of the aesthetics of bebop. These aesthetics relate to the textural changes in the rhythm section centered on the innovations of jazz drummers such as Kenny Clarke and Max Roach, the flowing, harmonically engaged melodic lines usually associated with Charlie Parker, and the quirky dissonances and rhythmic displacements of Dizzy Gillespie and Thelonious Monk. Generations of jazz pianists have found ways of creating within and expanding upon the overall framework and specific devices of Powell’s style, transforming his contributions to suit their own needs and artistic visions.

This project combined a series of interviews with jazz musicians with technical musical analysis to examine the ways that Powell’s improvisational style embodied and contributed to the aesthetics of modern jazz. The professional pianists interviewed for this dissertation explained how Powell’s playing encapsulated the bebop style, identifying two main interrelated components of Powell’s music that differentiate him from his predecessors and contribute to his continued relevance. The first of these components involves how Powell developed a more flowing, conversational rhythmic approach that de-emphasizes overt articulation of the meter and provides a strong feeling of forward motion. The second component centers on Powell’s melodic improvisations, and how through the lyricism, melodic invention, phrasing style, and harmonic nuance of his lines he was able to carve out a conceptual space for the piano as a solo instrument alongside his “horn” player contemporaries. Chapters Two, Three, and Four presented musical
analyses of the specific rhythmic, textural, and voice-leading techniques that characterize these components of Powell’s style, while Chapter Five examined the ways in which he creatively saturated his music with a sound that held special meaning for the modern jazz generation—the flatted fifth.

The methodological approach of this dissertation fused elements of ethnomusicology, music theory, and jazz studies to discuss the elements of Powell’s style that are understood to be most important by performers active in the jazz community. Because jazz musicians are naturally concerned with improving their own artistry and finding new ways to create within their idiom, when studying recordings they tend to be more concerned with improvisational processes, relationships, style-specific aesthetic values and vocabulary than with final recorded products, dissonance vs. consonance or coherence of large-scale form. Examining Powell’s music from this perspective has been fruitful, as input by jazz pianists has led this analysis to be more time- and rhythm-oriented, more reflective of the relationships between instrumental roles, more concerned with the aesthetics of African-American musical culture, and more informed by the work of other important musicians in the jazz pantheon than it might have been otherwise.

There are many ways that future research projects could extend this dissertation. While my participants are among the most qualified to discuss the technicalities of Powell’s music, expanding this relatively small number of musicians could lead to a broader view of how performers engage with Powell’s legacy. Speaking to a larger pool of musicians would also allow for inclusion of voices further from the mainstream of contemporary jazz, including musicians who specialize in avant-garde and fusion.

A detailed study focusing exclusively on Powell’s compositions could complement the analyses of his rhythmic and linear approaches to improvisation presented here. Such a study
could be designed to include both Powell’s bebop-style “tunes” (such as “Wail,” “Bouncing with Bud,” “The Fruit,” etc.) and his more through-composed works (especially “The Glass Enclosure”). Regarding the former, Powell’s development as a jazz composer could be discussed through a comparison between his works from the late 1940s and early 1950s to works from the late 1950s. The analyses in this dissertation could also be used as a starting point for comparing Powell’s style to that of other bebop musicians, including pianists such as Barry Harris, Lennie Tristano, and Thelonious Monk, as well as “horn” players such as Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie. An inquiry into ways that Powell’s concept of rhythm and harmonic-rhythmic displacement relates to the Afro-Latin music that he was exposed to would be another useful contribution.
Transcriptions
A Night in Tunisia

Bud Powell 1951
Transcribed by D. DeMotta
A Night in Tunisia

```
E₉₇  D-6  E₉₇  D-6

C₁A₂  E₉₇  D-6  E₉₇  D-6

E₉₇  D-6  E₉₇  D-6

C₁B  (A₇₈₅)  D₇  G-7

G-₇₈₅  (C₇)  F₇₅  E-₇₈₅  A₇
```
All God’s Children Got Rhythm

All God's Children Got Rhythm

as played by Bud Powell, 1949
Transcribed by D. DeMotta
All God's Children

G7          G7          C7          Fmaj7

C2A1
Fmaj7  D7  G7  C7  Fmaj7  D7  G7  C7

G7
Fmaj7  D7  C7  A7b5  Eb7  D7

C2B
B7  E7  A7  D7  G7  C7

E7  A7  D7  G7  G7  C7

C2A2
Fmaj7  D7  G7  C7  Fmaj7  D7  G7  C7

G7  C7  A7  (Eb7)  (D7)

C2C
B7  E7  A7  D7  G7  C7  A7  D7
Big Foot

Big Foot (long version)

Bud Powell and George Duvivier 1958
Transcribed by Dave DeMotta

HC1 (12 bar blues, C major)

HC2
Big Foot

C1 (Powell solo)

C2
Big Foot
Big Foot
Big Foot

to bass solo
Bouncing with Bud

Bouncing with Bud (solo)

Bud Powell 1949
Transcribed by D. DeMotta
Bouncing with Bud Alternate Take One

Bouncing with Bud Alt. Take 1 (solo)

Bud Powell 1949
transcribed by D. DeMotta

C1A1
Bb maj7    C-7   D-7   Eb-7   D-7   G7   C-7   D-7

G-7   C# dim7   C-7   F7   Bb maj7

C1A2
Bb maj7    C-7   D-7   Eb-7   D-7   G7   C-7   D-7

G-7   C# dim7   C-7   F7   Bb maj7   D-7
Bouncing with Bud Alt. Take 2

Bud Powell 1949
Transcribed by D. DeMotta

C1A1
Bb maj7 C-7 D-7 Eb-7 D-7 G7 C-7 D7

G-7
(Cdim7)
C-7 F7 Bb maj7

C1A2
Bb maj7 C-7 D-7 Eb D-7 G7 C-7 D7

G-7
Cdim7
C-7 F7 Bb maj7 D7
Bouncing with Bud Alt. Take 2

C1B
G-7
A-7b5
D7

G7
C7
F7

C1A3
Bbmaj7
C7
D7
Eb7
D7
G7
C7
D7

G7
C#dim7

C7
F7
Bb maj7
head out
Bouncing with Bud Comping Comparison

Bouncing with Bud comping comparison
Powell's comping rhythms for horn solos, all takes
Bud Powell 1949
Transcribed by D. DeMotta

A1 (Rollins solo)
Bouncing with Bud comping comparison
Bouncing with Bud comping comparison

orig. rel.

alt. tk. 1

alt. tk. 2

orig. rel.

alt. tk. 1

alt. tk. 2

(Beginning of Powell's solo)
Bud's Bubble (solo, right hand)

Bud Powell 1947
Transcribed by D. DeMotta

C1A1
Bb G-7 C-7 F7 D-7 G7 C-7 F7
F-7 Bb7 Ebmaj7 Eb7 D-7 G7 C-7 F7

C1A2
Bb G-7 C-7 F7 D-7 G7 C-7 F7
Fm7 Bb7 Ebmaj7 Eb7 C-7 F7 Bb

C1B
D7
G7

C7
F7

C1A3
Bb G-7 C-7 F7 D-7 G7 C-7 F7
Fm7 Bb7 Ebmaj7 Edim7 Bb/F F7 Bb (F7#5)

To trading
Celia (solo)

Bud Powell 1949
Transcribed by D. DeMotta

Celia
Celia

D-7  Db7  C-7  B7  Bbmaj7

C1B  A-7b5  D7b9  G-7

(C7)  C-7  F7

C1A3  Bbmaj7  C-7b5  D-7  Eb7  Ab7

to head out

D-7  Db7  C-7  F7  Bbmaj7  C-7  B7
Dance of the Infidels

Dance of the Indifels (solo)

Bud Powell 1949
Transcribed by D. DeMotta
Dance of the Infidels (Powell Solo)

Fm7  Bb7  A m7  Abm7  Db7

Gm7  Dbm7  Gb7  F  C7

C3  F  Fm7  Bb7

Am7  Gm  F#7  B7

Fm7  Gb7  Am7  Abm7  Db7
Dance of the Infidels (Powell Solo)

Gm7 D♭m7 G♭7 F Gm7 C7

C4 F

Fm7 B♭7 Am Gm F♯m7 B7

Fm7 B♭7 Am A♭m7 D♭7

Gm7 D♭m7 G♭7 F

(to Fats Navarro solo)
Dance of the Indifels Alternate Take (solo)

Bud Powell 1949
Transcribed by D. DeMotta

C1  Fmaj7  F-7  Bb7  A-7  G-7  F#-7  B-7
C2  Fmaj7  F-7  Bb7  A-7  G-7  F#-7  B-7
C3  Fmaj7  F-7  Bb7

Dance of the Infidels Alternate Take
Dance of the Indifels Alternate Take (solo)

F-7    Bb7   A-7    Ab-7   Db7

G-7    Db7    Gb7    Fmaj7   D-7    G-7    C7

C4    Fmaj7    F-7    Bb7    A-7    G-7    F#7    B7

F-7    Bb7

A-7    Ab-7    Db7

G-7    Db7    Gb7

Fmaj7    D-7    G-7    C7    Fmaj7

(to Fats Navarro solo)
Dance of the Infidels, Live at Birdland 1953

Dance of the Infidels Live at Birdland 1953 #1 (solo)

Bud Powell
Transcribed by D. DeMotta

C1 (standard F blues progression)

C2

C3
Bud's Dance of the Indifels solo (1953#1)
Bud's Dance of the Indifels solo (1953#1)
Dusk in Sandi

Dusk in Sandi (aka Dusky 'n' Sandy)  
Bud Powell 1951
Transcribed by Dave DeMotta

played freely throughout
Dusk in Sandi

accel.

a tempo
Dusk in Sandi
The Fruit

Bud Powell, 1951
Transcribed by D. DeMotta
The Fruit

C1A1 (Solo)

C7 F7 Bb7 G7 Gb7 F7 Bb7

Eb Ebmaj7 A7 Ab7 A dim7 EbBb F7 Bb

C1A2

Eb C7 F7 Bb7 Eb C7 F7 Bb7

Eb7 Abmaj7 Db7 Eb Bb7 Eb
The Fruit

C3A2  Ebmaj7  C-7  F-7  Bb7  G-7  C7  F-7  Bb7

Eb7  Eb7  Abmaj7  Db7  EbBb

C3B  Eb7

Abmaj7  (Ab-7)  (Db7)

G-7  C7
The Fruit

B♭7 (B♭7)

C3A3 (Eb) C-7 F-7 B♭7 G-7 C7 F7 B♭7
turns time around

E♭7 A♭maj A dim7 E♭/B♭ B♭7 to head out
The Glass Enclosure

Bud Powell, played by Powell and George Duvivier
Transcribed by D. DeMotta
The Glass Enclosure

25
B.P.

G.D.

played flat but may be D natural

28
B.P.

G.D.

32
B.P.

G.D.
The Glass Enclosure

med. march tempo, 116 bpm
Hallucinations

Hallucinations
Bud Powell 1951
Transcribed by D. DeMotta

HA1

HA2
Hallucinations

C1B    D-7    G7    C-7    F7    Bb7    Eb7    D7

G-7

F    Ab7    G-7    Gb7

C1A3    Fmaj7    Bb7    A-7    D7    G-7    C7    Fmaj7    F7

Bb7    Bdim7    F/C    D7    G-7    C7    F

C2A1    F    Bb7    A-7    D7    G-7    C7    F    (F7)
Hallucinations

(Freely)
I Want to be Happy

I Want to be Happy (solo)  Bud Powell, 1949
Transcribed by D. DeMota

C1A1  F

Gm7  C7  F

C1A2  F  F#dim7

Gm7  C7  F
I Want to be Happy (1949 w S. Stitt)

C2 A3 F

G m7 C7 F
I'll Keep Loving You

Bud Powell 1949
Transcribed by Dave DeMotta

I'll Keep Loving You
I'll Keep Loving You (solo piano)
I'll Keep Loving You (solo piano)
I'll Keep Loving You (solo piano)
Indiana

Indiana (solo, right hand)

Bud Powell 1947
Transcribed by D DeMotta

C1A1  F   D7   G7

Gm7   C7   F   F7

C1B  Gb   F

G7   Gm7   C7

C1A2  F   D7   G7

Em7b5  A7   Dm  (A7)

C1C  Dm   A7   Dm   B dim7

F   D7   Gm7   C7   F   Gm7   C7
Indiana

C2A1 F

Gm7 C7 F

C2B Bb

F (D7)

G7 Gm7 C7

C2A2 F

Em7 A7 Dm

(A7)

C2C Dm A7 Dm

Bdim7

F D7 Gm7 C7

F Gm7 C7
Ornithology

C3B   Ebmaj7   Ab7   G7   C7

B7   E7   A7   Ab7

C3C is the head out
Parisian Thoroughfare

Parisian Thoroughfare (solo piano version)

Bud Powell 1951

Transcribed by Dave DeMotta
Parisian Thoroughfare
Parisian Thoroughfare
Parisian Thoroughfare

C1B

C1A3

C2A1
Parisian Thoroughfare

HA1 (head out)

HA2

HB
Reets and I

Reets and I

as played by Bud Powell 1953
Transcribed by D. DeMotta

Introduction

\begin{music}
\begin{staff}
\MidiCtempo 300
\clef bass
\key G\flat
\time 2/4
\relative G\flat#
\G7\ E7\ A7\ B7\ C7\ D7\ E7\ G7\ A7\ B7\ \\
\\end{staff}
\end{music}

HA1

\begin{music}
\begin{staff}
\MidiCtempo 300
\clef bass
\key G\flat
\time 2/4
\relative G\flat#
\F7\ D7\ G7\ C7\ F7\ D7\ G7\ C7\ \\
\\end{staff}
\end{music}

\begin{music}
\begin{staff}
\MidiCtempo 300
\clef bass
\key G\flat
\time 2/4
\relative G\flat#
\F7\ D7\ G7\ C7\ A7\ E7\ D7\ \\
\\end{staff}
\end{music}
Reets and I

C2A2  Fmaj7  D7  G-7  C7  Fmaj7  A7  G-7  C7

C2C  B-7  E7  A-7  D7

G-7  (C7)  A7b5  D7

G7  C7  Fmaj7  A7  G7  Gb7 to head out
Sonny Side

Sonny Side (solo, right hand only)  
Bud Powell, 1949  
Transcribed by D. DeMotta
Strictly Confidential

Bud Powell 1949
Transcribed by D. DeMotta
Strictly Confidential
Strictly Confidential

C2A3 is head out
Sure Thing

Bud Powell, as played by Powell and George Duvivier, 1953
Transcribed by Dave DeMotta
Sure Thing

B.P.

G.D.

31

B.P.

G.D.

36
Sure Thing
Sure Thing
Tempus Fugit

C1B

C1A3
Tempus Fugit
Un Poco Loco

Un Poco Loco

Bud Powell 1951
Transcribed by D. DeMotta

Introduction

D-11 G\(^7\) G-11 G\(^7\) G-11 G\(^7\) Cmaj7\(^11\)#15

HA1

Ebmaj\(^7\)\(^11\) Dbmaj7\(^11\) Gbmaj7\(^11\) Cmaj7\(^11\)

Ebmaj\(^11\) Dbmaj7\(^11\) Gbmaj7\(^11\) Cmaj7\(^11\)

A-9 D13 A\(^6\) G9 Db13
Un Poco Loco

solo (not over form)
Wail (introduction)

Bud Powell 1949
Transcribed by D. DeMotta
Wail (solo)
Wail
Wail

to head out
Discography


Bibliography


Buchler, Michael. “‘Laura’ and the Essential Ninth: Were They Only a Dream?” *Em Pauta* 17/29 (2006): 5-25.


Gillespie, Dizzy, with Al Fraser. *To Be, Or Not...To Bop.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979.


https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=24Idm1axQYc.


