IMITATION, ASSIMILATION, AND INNOVATION:
CHARLIE CHRISTIAN’S INFLUENCE ON WES MONTGOMERY’S
IMPROVISATIONAL STYLE IN HIS EARLY RECORDINGS (1957-1960)

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INTRODUCTION

Charlie Christian and Wes Montgomery’s influence has been, and continues to be, a present element in the development of today’s jazz guitarists. Guitarist Barney Kessel, who was able to meet and play with Christian, believed that “the music Charlie made changed the guitar world” and we “can see where all of the guitar players that came afterwards evolved from his fountainhead.”\(^1\) Montgomery heard other guitarists before Christian, but states those players, listing Django Reinhardt and Les Paul as two specifically, were not playing anything new, “just guitar.”\(^2\) It was hearing his first Charlie Christian recording that inspired him to become a jazz guitarist.\(^3\) Similarly, jazz guitarist Pat Metheny heard Wes Montgomery’s playing going beyond jazz and states that Montgomery left a “sonic residue that has pervaded all of music, not just jazz.”\(^4\) For jazz critic Ralph Gleason, Wes Montgomery was “the best thing that has happened to the

\(^3\) Adrian Ingram, *Wes Montgomery* (United Kingdom: Ashley Mark Publishing Co., 2008), 49.
guitar since Charlie Christian.”\(^5\) Jazz guitarist Jim Hall called Wes Montgomery “the rarest of all musicians, an innovator.”\(^6\) The general consensus by both critics and musicians is that Christian and Montgomery both possessed one important quality in jazz: originality.

The purpose of this study is to identify and examine significant improvisational traits that Wes Montgomery developed, consciously or unconsciously, as a direct result of his imitation and assimilation of Charlie Christian’s influence. It will also identify areas in which Montgomery innovated upon and developed from Christian’s foundation, resulting in his own original style. This study will involve a side-by-side comparison and analysis of both guitarists’ melodic treatment of dominant and dominant-seventh harmonies. Dominant harmonies will be the focus of this study in order to identify the ways both guitarists created melodies and tension over a common harmony in jazz.

The resulting analysis will be derived from select transcriptions of improvisations performed by both guitarists over a similar length of time. The Charlie Christian solos reviewed here are primarily derived from selections of his work in Benny Goodman’s small groups (1939-1941). The goal is to examine as broad a range of solos as possible taken from Christian’s brief, but influential, eighteen-month recording career.

The recordings made at the after-hours jam sessions held at Minton’s and Monroe’s in New York (1940-1941) will also be examined, but will not be the focus. The reasoning for this is that these recordings, made by jazz fan Jerry Newman, were probably not the solos Montgomery transcribed at first. The first official release of those

\(^5\) Gleason, 44.
\(^6\) Ingram, 45.
recordings was not until 1947 on VOX Records. Montgomery bought his first six-string electric guitar in 1943 and roughly eight months later he was playing Christian’s solos from memory in Indianapolis’ 440 Club at the age of 20. From 1948 to 1950, Montgomery was on the road with the Lionel Hampton Orchestra and then did not record again until 1957. From this time-line, Montgomery was probably not playing solos from Newman’s recordings in the 440 Club, but he may have transcribed some of the Christian solos by the time of his first small group recordings in 1957.

The Wes Montgomery solos that will be studied consist of his 1957 recordings with his brothers, Monk and Buddy, up to his first two recordings as leader for the Riverside label. The two Riverside recordings will be his 1959 debut *The Wes Montgomery Trio* and his critically acclaimed second album *The Incredible Jazz Guitar of Wes Montgomery* (January 1960). This represents roughly the same length of recording periods for both guitarists. Also included in this study will be two of Montgomery’s earliest recorded solos with the Lionel Hampton Orchestra in July of 1948. The solos are very brief, but provide some interesting insight into Montgomery’s sound five years after he first started playing six-string electric guitar.

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8 Ingram, 12.
9 *Down Beat Magazine* gave *The Incredible Jazz Guitar of Wes Montgomery* five out of five stars in 1960.
Need of the Study

Paul Berliner’s book, *Thinking In Jazz*, describes a jazz musician’s pursuit for originality as a highly valued goal. Berliner states that the judgments of the jazz artists’ contributions are based largely on their individuality and the uniqueness of what they are creating. He also writes that the evaluation of originality often corresponds to how well these artists move through the stages of imitation, assimilation, and innovation.\(^\text{10}\) As the jazz improvisers pass through these three stages, they begin to fashion their own identities, personal approaches to music, and group of followers.\(^\text{11}\) Berliner also states that originality is not easily obtainable and that only an elite few actually do pass from the imitative stage to innovator.\(^\text{12}\)

Jazz guitarist and avant-garde artist Derek Bailey echoes the process of moving through the stages of imitation, assimilation, and innovation in his book *Musical Improvisation: Its Nature and Practice in Music*. First, the musician needs to choose a master, then absorb the master’s skills through imitation, and finally develop an individual style and attitude from the foundation that has been laid.\(^\text{13}\) Bailey also states that too often a jazz musician is satisfied with the admiration he or she receives by being a good imitator and will omit the third step.

\(^{10}\) Paul F. Berliner, *Thinking In Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 273.

\(^{11}\) Berliner, 275.

\(^{12}\) Ibid., 276.

Jazz trombonist and educator David Baker writes that the jazz musician’s development can be broken down into three stages. The first stage is where the musician only plays things he or she has played previously. This will include memorized patterns and phrases, often called licks, they imitated from other sources. Second, the musician occasionally plays things he or she may not have played before in addition to the memorized patterns. The player is assimilating the memorized material with ideas of his or her own creation. Finally, the player constantly plays ideas that are new, drawing from the past knowledge to create originality.\textsuperscript{14}

Berliner, Bailey, and Baker all agree that at the beginning of the jazz musician’s development is a period of imitation from sources found in the past. Pat Metheny said the challenge musicians have for developing a voice in jazz is the need to “absorb and innovate upon past decades of creative artists.”\textsuperscript{15} How much of Wes Montgomery’s originality is rooted in his early devotion to Charlie Christian? How much is originality dependent upon a model from the past? Perhaps Wes Montgomery best answered these questions in the introduction to the 1968 method book examining his style, Wes Montgomery: Jazz Guitar Method:

Every musician, until he has mastered himself and his instrument, needs a model… No artist creates in a vacuum, totally isolated from all influences, he must recognize his dependence upon his surroundings and upon his heritage; he must study the styles of accepted masters… Young musicians play records of their


\textsuperscript{15}Niles, 151.
favorite musicians in order to absorb techniques and personal expressions… I wore out parts of Charlie Christian recordings.\textsuperscript{16}

Wes Montgomery states that beginning musicians need a model to imitate and “absorb” (assimilate) technique and expression. For Montgomery, Charlie Christian was one of his “accepted masters” whose improvisations Montgomery immersed himself in to absorb the techniques and expression he admired in Christian’s playing. From those techniques and expressions, Montgomery did not remain an imitator, but formed his own personal approach to sound, style, and technique. Adrian Ingram possibly summed it up best when he wrote that Montgomery’s compositions and improvisation’s were “logical extensions” of the numerous Christian solos he had mastered.\textsuperscript{17}

This dissertation is intended to show how those extensions (originality) are encouraged and facilitated through the imitation of models as found in Montgomery’s imitation of Christian. This examination will be useful to help identify distinct ways jazz students can use existing models for the development of creativity and originality in their own personal sound. It is the intent of this study to show the importance of the passage through the stages of imitation, assimilation, and innovation for the teaching of jazz improvisation.

\textsuperscript{17} Ingram, 50.
Review of Literature

Very little research exists examining how jazz artists develop an original voice using the steps of imitation, assimilation, and innovation. The research examining the connection between Wes Montgomery’s improvisational style to that of Charlie Christian’s is minimal.

Howard Spring, in his Master’s thesis (1980) on Christian’s improvisational style, examines various musical aspects of Charlie Christian’s playing. The majority of the thesis focuses on evidence of formulaic patterns Christian used to construct his improvisations. Spring concludes that Christian used various formulas, over tonic and over non-tonic harmonies, to build the majority of his solos.

Mark Antonich’s Master’s thesis (1982) also examines Charlie Christian’s improvisational style through select transcriptions. Antonich discusses various facets of Christian’s improvisational style, including his melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic approach, that are unique. The thesis includes sixteen transcriptions representing both Christian’s work with Goodman and his playing at the New York jam sessions. Antonich isolates key melodic phrases found in each solo, which he transcribes. The phrases are often over dominant-seventh harmonies, but there is no analytical information regarding their harmonic or melodic significance.

Finkelman examines a selection of melodic phrases played by Christian and identifies elements in these phrases that are unique to the Bebop genre. Finkelman does not make any connection between these phrases to any potential influence they may have had on Wes Montgomery’s approach to improvisation.

Clive Downs’ annotated bibliography (1993) can be used to locate many sources that include melodic and harmonic analyses of Charlie Christian’s solos. The sources Downs lists is comprised of theses, dissertations, books, and journals; some are no longer in print. Along with the sources of biographical information, Downs lists the titles of every solo transcribed, the date the recording was made, and a catalog number.

Robert Van Der Bliek’s Master’s thesis (1987), “Wes Montgomery’s Improvisational Style,” examines ways Montgomery built motivic continuity in his improvisations. Van Der Bliek examines Montgomery’s motivic development through formulaic usage (melodies), response to particular harmonies, chorus phrase, and schematics (the relationship between pitch, harmony, and rhythm).\(^\text{18}\) The thesis provides insightful analysis into Montgomery’s soloing style in relation to motivic continuity. The thesis includes six full transcriptions, but these solos are from recordings Montgomery did after January 1960. Van Der Bliek mentions that assimilation of other musical ideas and techniques are a part of the process of creating a unique solo.\(^\text{19}\) He does not elaborate on specific influences on Montgomery’s style or significant improvisational elements that Montgomery may have assimilated from Christian.


\(^{19}\) Ibid., 3.
Michael Denny’s Master’s thesis (1995), “The Influence of Charlie Christian on Four Modern Guitarists,” examines various stylistic ways Christian influenced Montgomery. Denny compares one solo transcription of Christian’s, “Wholly Cats,” to a transcription by Montgomery, “Missile Blues.” The transcriptions are both solos over a standard twelve-bar blues progression. Denny analyzes each solo for salient melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic aspects that are unique to each guitarist. Denny then discusses various ways that Montgomery’s melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic approach is similar and different from those of Christian’s.

Reno De Stefano’s PhD dissertation (1995), “Wes Montgomery’s Improvisational Style (1959-63): The Riverside Years,” is a detailed look into many aspects of Wes Montgomery’s playing. The dissertation does not examine ways Montgomery used imitation and assimilation, but focuses on Montgomery’s innovation. He states that the purpose of his dissertation is to determine specific constructive elements, distinctive techniques, and idiosyncratic traits that can be characterized in Montgomery’s playing.20 There is a detailed analysis of many musical elements of Montgomery’s playing including sound, harmony, melody, rhythm, and form/growth.21

Throughout the dissertation, De Stefano mentions general elements that Montgomery may have assimilated from Christian. The author states that Montgomery “inherited from Christian and the new wave of bop musicians, the fundamental vocabulary and techniques” associated with jazz beginning in the 1940s.22 There is a brief

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21 De Stefano, 8.
22 Ibid., 17.
study to find evidence of similarities between Montgomery and Christian’s style. In this study he examines two musical elements in Montgomery’s style that may have originated from Christian: twelve-bar blues and arpeggios.

De Stefano’s dissertation first discusses Christian’s influence on Montgomery’s approach to a twelve-bar blues. De Stefano wrote his Master’s thesis on the many influences in Montgomery’s approach to improvising and composing a twelve-bar blues. He states there is possible evidence that Christian’s playing may have had some impact on Montgomery. Christian’s improvisations display elements of call and response, riff patterns, and blues-inflected melodic lines which De Stefano also finds rooted in Montgomery’s playing. De Stefano’s conclusion is that it is “conceivable…that Wes many have initially absorbed some of the blues vocabulary and technique from Christian.”

The second aspect examined by De Stefano is how Christian and Montgomery used arpeggios in their improvisations. Montgomery’s innovative use of arpeggios is a large part of what De Stefano feels makes Montgomery so unique. To examine how much he was influenced by Christian, De Stefano compares Montgomery’s use of arpeggios to an analysis of a transcription of Charlie Christian’s performance on “Solo Flight.” De Stefano’s conclusion is that there is too much dissimilarity between the two guitarists’ grammar and syntax to draw any strong conclusion of influence from Christian on Montgomery. De Stefano does not directly address Montgomery’s approach to dominant/dominant-seventh harmonies, but it is discussed in broader terms in his

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23 De Stefano, 44.
24 Ibid., 51.
chapters on melody and harmony. De Stefano feels Wes Montgomery “inherited” the blues (its tradition and techniques) and linear streamlined melodies from Christian, but he feels Montgomery took much more from saxophone players like Charlie Parker, John Coltrane, and Sonny Rollins.\textsuperscript{25}

A considerable amount of books and articles have been written on the biographical and historical details of both Christian and Montgomery’s life. Peter Broodbent (1997), and Clive Goins (2005) have written biographies on Charlie Christian’s life that provide insights into Christian’s childhood, early musical development, and influences. There is no musical analysis in either of these biographies. The historical research will help place both guitarists’ work in the proper historical context.

Gunther Schuller’s book, \textit{The Swing Era} (1989), has an informative section on Charlie Christian. He includes a brief discussion of his early playing in Oklahoma City and Christian’s pre-Goodman years. He then focuses on Christian’s improvisational style by studying a number of solos played with the Benny Goodman Sextet. Schuller does not credit Christian with breaking any new ground “harmonically or rhythmically”; instead he feels the novelty was in Christian’s sound on the electric guitar.\textsuperscript{26} Like Spring, Schuller sees certain reoccurring melodic traits and note patterns that make Christian’s solos extraordinarily coherent.

\textsuperscript{25} De Stefano, 65.
The Montgomery bio-bibliography by Adrian Ingram, *Wes Montgomery* (1985), also contains informative historical information. It begins with Montgomery’s early life and discusses the importance of Christian’s influence on Wes Montgomery. The book briefly examines Montgomery’s recording years with Riverside, Verve, and A&M. There is a complete discography, list of transcription and method books, and a list of film footage in which Montgomery appears. It also contains an extensive bibliography of books, articles, journals, and interviews that feature Wes Montgomery.

There have been numerous publications of solo transcriptions focusing on both Christian and Montgomery’s playing. The books by Steve Khan (1978), Dan Fox (1988), Dan Bowden (1995), Wolf Marshal (2001), and Stan Ayeroff (2005) provide help in the study and comparison of both guitarists’ melodic and harmonic approach to dominant harmonies. Each published transcription will be examined for their accuracy with the original recording. Most of the authors provide some analytical analysis to accompany the transcriptions.

Many jazz and guitar periodicals have also been reviewed for this study. Both *Down Beat* and *Guitar Player* have contained numerous articles and transcriptions examining the guitarists’ lives and playing style. The most beneficial have been the interviews with the guitarists or other musicians that knew them. Two examples include Ralph Gleason’s 1961 interview with Montgomery and Barney Kessel’s 1982 interview recalling his meeting with Christian. Both provided unique and thoughtful insights into the lives and music of both guitarists.

Various electronic media has also been reviewed. The two documentaries by Gary Rhodes (1995 and 2006) contain interviews and historical perspectives detailing Charlie
Christian’s life and career. Leo Valdes’ website contains historical information addressing many aspects of Charlie Christian’s career, recordings, biographies, and transcriptions. The website is helpful in locating and obtaining sources, recordings, transcriptions, and various historical data.

**Methodology**

This dissertation will begin with a brief historical overview of the careers of Charlie Christian and Wes Montgomery. The following sections will examine and discuss evidence of imitation, assimilation, and innovation in the analysis and comparison of Christian and Montgomery’s melodic and harmonic approach to dominant functioning harmonies.

The examination and analysis of many of Christian and Montgomery solo transcriptions will be the focus of the research and analysis. This study will not focus on entire transcriptions, but on the melodic material each played over various dominant harmonies. The examination and comparisons will include a study of both guitarists’ approach to the dominant chords in the following harmonic progressions:

1. $V(7)$ – $I$ or $i$: *Dominant to Tonic Relationships*: An example (in the key of C major) is G7 resolving to C. This will include dominant-seventh chords with any upper extensions, altered or un-altered. Examples of upper extensions include ninth, eleventh, and thirteen chord tones. Examples of altered extensions include any flat ($b$) or sharp ($\#$) fifth or ninth, the sharp-
eleventh, and the flat-thirteenth. For a G7 chord the A is the ninth, C is the eleventh, and E would be the thirteenth.

2. \textit{ii(7) - V(7): Supertonic to Dominant Relationships:} An example of this progression (in the key of C major) is Dm resolving to G7.

3. \textit{Secondary Dominants:} These will include any five-seven of five (V7/V), five-seven of two (V7/ii), five-seven of three (V7/iii), and five-seven of four (V7/IV). An example of a V7/V (in the key of C major) is a D7 resolving to G.

4. \textit{Fully-Diminished-Seventh Chords:} This will include any diminished-seventh chord functioning as a harmonic substitution for a dominant-seventh chord. An example would include a Bdim7 resolving to C.

5. \textit{Tritone Substitutions:} Dominant-Seventh Chords that resolve down by a half-step. An example of a tritone substitution would include Db7 resolving to C.

6. \textit{V(7) – IV: Dominant to Subdominant Relationships.} An example of this progression (in the key of C major) would be G7 resolving to F.

The analysis will be divided into three sections. The second section will study evidence of imitation and assimilation of Christian’s style in Montgomery’s playing. An analysis and comparison of both guitarists’ approach to dominant related harmonies will be conducted for each solo transcribed. This section will locate similarities between Christian and Montgomery’s melodic vocabulary that include direct quotes (exact copies), similar harmonic approach, and similar melodic contour. Musical aspects being studied for each guitarist will include:
1. Scale choice  
2. Arpeggio usage  
3. Use of chromatic or non-diatonic pitches  
4. Formulas and Enclosures  
5. Harmonic substitutions  

The third section will study the ways Montgomery innovated upon Christian’s melodic treatment of dominant harmonies. The purpose of this section will be to examine the dissimilarities of Montgomery’s melodic vocabulary that may have originated from his assimilation of traits found in Christian’s playing. The various melodic aspects that will be discussed will focus on Montgomery’s development of new harmonic approaches to dominant harmonies. Examples of these harmonic approaches will include Montgomery’s unique treatment of scales, arpeggios, harmonic substitutions, and chromatic pitches in his improvisations.  

In addition to examining how imitation helps foster creativity, this study can be used as a pedagogical aid for jazz teachers. The way a student learns to play jazz continues to evolve. Jerry Coker writes that in the past a young musician acquired the skills needed to play jazz by attending jam sessions and going on the road with a professional jazz band. The musician had to learn by trial and error, even at the risk of making mistakes in front of a live audience.27 Both jam sessions and playing in a professional jazz band were central elements to both Christian and Montgomery’s musical development. But today many students learn jazz through academic studies at a

university, a high school, jazz camps, and in private lessons. Learning by trial and error in front of a live audience is not as common for these students as it was for Christian and Montgomery. Coker believes academic training in music theory and performance technique is important. At the same time he also states these tools do not guarantee an “interesting musical personality.”

Although this study does not guarantee an interesting musical personality either, it can be used to examine how imitation of past artists can be utilized in jazz pedagogy. For Montgomery, the imitation of Charlie Christian’s recorded solos played a vital part of his jazz education. Today, jazz students still have artists and recordings to imitate from just as Montgomery did. How Montgomery used the knowledge he gained through imitation to foster his own creativity can be incorporated in conjunction with a student’s study of the technical and theoretical aspects of jazz music.

Wes Montgomery exemplifies the importance of imitation of past masters in the jazz artist’s quest to be heard as an original voice. In a 1965 interview, Wes Montgomery stated that he really had no answer for a lot of things he did and hoped that “maybe somebody else can explain it better than [he] can.”

It is this dissertation’s intent to show how Montgomery evolved through the stages of imitation, assimilation, and innovation and how that contributed to his ability to create unique and inspiring improvisations.

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28 Coker, Improvising Jazz. 2.
29 De Stefano, xx.
Chronological List of Recordings Used for Study

Charlie Christian

- “Seven Come Eleven” with The Benny Goodman Sextet, recorded November 22, 1939
- “Honeysuckle Rose” with The Benny Goodman Orchestra, recorded November 22, 1939
- “Flying Home” with The Benny Goodman Sextet, recorded October 2, 1939
- “Shivers” with The Benny Goodman Sextet, recorded December 20, 1939
- “Gone With ‘What’ Wind” with The Benny Goodman Sextet, recorded February 7, 1940
- “Grand Slam (Boy Meets Goy)” with The Benny Goodman Sextet, recorded April 14, 1940
- “Wholly Cats” with The Benny Goodman Septet, recorded November 7, 1940
- “Benny’s Bugle” with The Benny Goodman Septet, recorded November 7, 1940
- “Breakfast Feud” with The Benny Goodman Septet, recorded January 15, 1941
- “Solo Flight” with The Benny Goodman Orchestra, recorded March 4, 1941
- “Guy’s Got to Go” recorded live at Minton’s Playhouse May 1941
- “Lips Flips” recorded live at Minton’s Playhouse May 1941

Wes Montgomery

- “Brant Inn Boogie” with The Lionel Hampton Orchestra, recorded June 21, 1948
- “Adam Blew His Hat” with The Lionel Hampton Orchestra, recorded July 1948
- “Bock to Bock” and “Billie’s Bounce” recorded December 30, 1957. Originally released on the album The Montgomery Brothers and Five Others (World Pacific WP 1240)

30 See Discography (page 204) for complete recording information.
• “Montgomeryland Funk” recorded April 18, 1958. Originally release on the album *The Montgomery Brothers- Wes, Buddy, and Monk Montgomery* (Pacific Jazz PJ 17)


• “West Coast Blues” recorded January 28. Originally released on the album *The Incredible Jazz Guitar of Wes Montgomery* (Riverside OJCCD-036-2).
CHAPTER 1

BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY AND MUSICAL DEVELOPMENT OF

CHARLIE CHRISTIAN

Life and Career

Charlie Christian was born in Bonham, Texas on July 29, 1916, but soon moved to Oklahoma City with his family around 1925. His father Clarence, a guitarist, lost his eyesight soon after they moved to Oklahoma City. Ralph Ellison, a writer and childhood friend of Christian, met the Christians in 1923. Ellison remembers Charlie would be a guide for his father as they strolled through white middle-class sections of Oklahoma and play serenades on request. Ellison recalls that Christian was never a member of the numerous local concert bands and orchestras in Oklahoma City, but the schools they attended offered extensive music appreciation programs and taught music theory beginning in ninth grade.

Guitarist T-Bone Walker also knew the Christians in Oklahoma City in the 1920s and states that he and Charlie dropped out of school, possibly by the ninth grade, and

33 Ibid., 37.
played in a group together. T-Bone remembers that he and Charlie would switch between playing bass and guitar. By 1934, Charlie was playing professionally with Leonard Chadwick’s group and later in Leslie Sheffield’s group, the Rhythmaires. It was during this time that Charlie began experimenting with guitar amplification. Several witnesses remember Charlie playing on stage with a microphone between his legs so his solos could be better heard during this time. It was in his brother Edward’s band that Charlie first began to make a name for himself as a teenager. In March 1935, Edward wrote in the Black Dispatch, a local newspaper, that Charlie “will make a good musician if he does not let the public swell his head.”

In 1936, Charlie joined Alphonso Trent’s band and began to tour regularly. It was in 1937, while he was touring with Trent, that he bought his first electric guitar, a Gibson ES-150. A young jazz guitarist named Mary Osborn met Christian while he was on tour with Trent in September 1938 in Bismarck, North Dakota. Osborn recalled that Christian’s sound on the electric guitar was like a saxophone. Christian’s playing and sound impressed her so much that Osborn went out to buy her own ES-150 the next day.

It was also in 1938 that a young saxophonist named Charlie Parker heard Christian in Kansas City. Parker recalls that Christian was the best of three guitarist on

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34 Broodbent, 28-19.
36 Broodbent, 45.
37 Ibid., 47.
38 Goins, 245
39 Mary Osborn would have a successful career during the late 1940s up to the 1980s as a guitarist/singer, performing and recording with her own trio and other jazz artists.
40 Broodbent, 62.
stage at the Roseland Ball Room. Parker found encouragement from the fact that Christian was only a few years older than him, but was playing at very a high level.\textsuperscript{41}

In March 1939, pianist Mary Lou Williams introduced jazz promoter and talent scout John Hammond to Charlie Christian. She called Christian the “best guitarist [she] ever heard.”\textsuperscript{42} After hearing Christian, Hammond tried to convince Benny Goodman to hire Christian, but Goodman was reluctant. At the time, Goodman was more interested in Floyd Smith, a guitarist who played an electric Hawaiian-style guitar. Hammond persisted and Goodman finally heard and played with Christian in August 1939. Christian was officially asked to become a member of the Benny Goodman Sextet promptly after. The original group included Christian on guitar, Goodman on clarinet, Fletcher Henderson on piano, Lionel Hampton on vibraphone, Arthur Bernstein on bass, and Nick Fatool on drums.\textsuperscript{43}

Christian would go on to record with Goodman in his small groups and orchestra with which he performed his signature feature, “Solo Flight.” By January 1940, after four and half months of working with Goodman, Christian was voted the number one jazz guitarist in \textit{Down Beat Magazine}’s Readers Poll.\textsuperscript{44} Christian would hold this title in \textit{Down Beat} for three consecutive years, and would continue to record with Goodman until Christian’s death on March 2, 1942 from complications with tuberculosis and pneumonia.\textsuperscript{45} While with Goodman, Christian recorded along side such influential jazz

\textsuperscript{41} Goins, 55.
\textsuperscript{42} Broodbent, 69.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 78.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 89.
artists as Count Basie (piano), Jo Jones (drums), Cootie Williams (trumpet), and one of Christian’s own personal influences, saxophonist Lester Young.  

**Charlie Christian, Jam Sessions, and the Bebop Movement**

A major part of Charlie Christian’s musical life and development happened at the after-hours jam sessions Christian would perform late into the night. Charlie and his brother, Edward, would frequently sit-in at many of the predominantly white clubs in Oklahoma City beginning around 1934. It was at The Hole, Rhythm Club, and Goody Goody Café that Christian would play with some the Southwest’s best Western Swing musicians of the day.

It is no surprise that in 1941 Christian was drawn to the after-hours jam session in New York. Minton’s Playhouse on West 118th Street and Monroe’s Uptown House on West 133rd Street would be frequent spots Christian would be found after his regular performance with Goodman at the Pennsylvania Hotel. It was here that Christian’s creativity was able to pursue greater depth and be surrounded by likeminded young musicians. A young jazz fan named Jerry Newman recorded many of these late-night sessions on a portable recorder. The recordings Christian made in the Goodman-led groups often limited him to one to two choruses, but on Newman’s recordings Christian takes chorus after chorus. These jam sessions put no limitation on his imagination and

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46 Simon, 67.
47 Goins, 91.
creativity. Christian was free to take any number of choruses he needed to develop a solo. It was the Minton’s jam sessions that Christian performed with trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie, pianist Thelonious Monk, and drummer Kenny Clarke, all of whom would go on to be highly influential artists of the Bebop moment.

Jazz guitarist John Scofield is quoted saying that he “loves the fact that the modern movement seems to have been started by an electric guitarist.” Scofield recalls Miles Davis telling him that he believed that Christian was the original instigator of the Bebop movement.49 One of the musicians who played with Christian at Minton’s was drummer Kenny Clarke. Clark recalls that it was at Minton’s that he first heard the word “bebop” and Christian was first to use it. He claims that Christian and Gillespie would use it while scat singing ideas to other musicians. He also states that Christian helped write many original bebop tunes.50

Gunther Schuller writes that Christian’s playing at the time of the recordings at Minton’s seemed “relentlessly creative, endlessly fertile, and is so in a way that marks a new stylistic departure.” Schuller goes on to state that Christian “signals the birth of a new language in jazz, which even [Charlie] Parker did not have as clearly in focus at the time.” Schuller also writes that Christian’s solos seem to be more streamlined melodically at the jam session.51 Christian sounded freer at Minton’s and not as bound to the underlying chord changes as with Goodman. Christian’s solos at Minton’s also

49 Broodbent., 10.
50 Ibid., 116.
displayed a higher degree of chromatic passing tones and chord substitution.\textsuperscript{52} It is these qualities that will also be found in Montgomery’s playing nearly twenty years later.

There is no direct evidence that Wes Montgomery listened to the recordings made at Minton’s, but many of the melodic and harmonic traits of Christian’s playing are found in Montgomery’s. The VOX label released the first recordings made by Jerry Newman in 1947. In 1948, Montgomery was on the road with Lionel Hampton. Whether Montgomery was able to purchase these recordings during his time in Hampton’s band and learn these solos as he admitted to doing with Christian’s recordings with Goodman is unknown.

**Charlie Christian and Creativity**

“Where did [Charlie Christian] come from?” was the question asked by Minton’s manager Teddy Hill and is still being asked today.\textsuperscript{53} For Teddy Hill this question was in response to his own astonishment of Christian’s unique voice that he heard night after night at Minton’s. The answer to this question is that Christian came from the Southwest during a time when a unique blend of blues and country was taking shape. Jazz historian Gunther Schuller states that Christian is responsible for bringing Southwestern blues to modern jazz “and more.”\textsuperscript{54} Did Christian have models that he himself imitated, assimilated, and innovated upon? This question is not the focus of this study, but it is a topic that will briefly be examined.

\textsuperscript{52} Schuller, 577.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 563.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 564.
Psychologists Dacey and Lennon divided the factors that contributed to an individual’s creativity into five sources. These sources included biological (I.Q.), personality (temperament), and cognitive traits (memory). It is in the final two circumstances, micro-societal and macro-societal, that might give the most insight into the conditions that fostered the uniqueness of Charlie Christian.

Dacey and Lennon write that micro-societal circumstances can range from the individual’s relationship with his or her family and friends to the type or size of home the individual lived in. Christian came from a very musical family. His father played guitar and bass, his mother sang, brother Edward played piano, and brother Clarence played the violin. Gary Rhodes, in his documentary on Christian’s life, feels Christian drew on his whole family for his training.

The fifth source, macro-societal circumstances, includes the type of neighborhood, level of education, and economic status. It is these macro-societal conditions that might have had the most influence on Christian. William Savage, author of The Singing Cowboy and All That Jazz, credits Christian’s abilities to the musical environment he was exposed to in the Oklahoma/Texas region. Savage believed Christian was exposed to a unique mix of country, swing, and blues music that resulted in an “ideal

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56 Dacey, 11.
58 Dacey, 11.
set of conditions” for Christian to develop his voice.\textsuperscript{59} The Texas/Oklahoma region was a melting pot of Southwestern blues guitar, classical music, and country music. In addition, Oklahoma was considered to be a “crossroads” for many musical experiences and influences, all of which played a key roll in Christian’s development.\textsuperscript{60} Oklahoma City was also a frequent stop for many of the traveling jazz bands from surrounding cities like Kansas City. It was from these traveling bands that Christian probably first heard live performances from Count Basie, Walter Page, Ben Webster, and Lester Young.

Christian’s biggest influences from this region of the country might have come from western swing guitarists such as Eldon Shamblin, Leon McCauliffe, and Bob Dunn. Bob Dunn is believed to be the first guitarist to apply a homemade pick-up onto his guitar and play an “electric guitar” as early as January 1935.\textsuperscript{61} Goins states that it is these Western Swing guitarists that were more prominently played on local Oklahoma radio stations than current jazz guitarists, like Django Reinhardt or Eddie Lang.\textsuperscript{62}

Christian’s interaction with western swing guitars is recounted by guitarist Les Paul in recalling his first meeting with Charlie Christian in 1938. Paul was playing in New York with his trio on a coast-to-coast radio broadcast of \textit{The Chesterfield Hour}. One night he visited his mother after a broadcast and she was not too enthusiastic about his program. She then proceeded to turn on the radio to hear Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys (Shamblin and McCauliffe both played for Bob Wills) broadcasting out of Tulsa, Oklahoma. Paul’s mother told him he needed to go there because this music was

\textsuperscript{59} Dacey, 103.
\textsuperscript{60} Goins, 104.
\textsuperscript{61} Schuller, 564.
\textsuperscript{62} Goins, 123.
impressive. Les decided to travel down to Tulsa to hear the band. In Tulsa he found Bob Wills playing at a local establishment and was invited to sit in with the band. While on stage, Paul could see a young black man staring at him from the front of the stage. At the set break the man asked for Paul’s autograph and introduced himself as Charlie Christian. Christian then proceeded to ask if he could play for Paul. Paul was so impressed with Christian’s playing that he invited him up to sit in with the Playboys as well.

This story reveals a number of things that may give some background into Christian’s early guitar influences. First, he probably did not know Les Paul would be there, so he must have been there to enjoy Bob Wills and his band. He did know of Les Paul and respected Paul enough to ask for his autograph. Christian was also confident enough in his own playing to spontaneously sit-in with Paul and the band. This shows that Christian was aware of other well-known jazz guitarists outside of the region. It also reveals that Christian was an impressive guitarist in 1938, the year before joining Goodman, and he did play with white Western Swing bands at least once. It is not known whether or not Christian imitated Shamblin or McCauliffe, but it is not unreasonable to assume that Christian was influenced by their music. Christian and the Western Swing guitarists shared similar use of the guitar as a single note instrument and used it to create a steady flow of musical ideas.

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65 Goins, 123.
The degree to which Christian imitated and assimilated other artists is beyond the scope of this study, but there is evidence that Christian, like Montgomery, did have a period of imitation and assimilation that would have contributed to his own creativity. Guitarist Mary Osborn first heard Christian in South Dakota in 1938. She remembered he was playing Django Reinhardt’s solo on “St. Louis Blues” note for note on stage. It stood out to her because she also was learning that solo. Another account of Christian’s possible use of imitation and assimilation is from Jimmy Maxwell and Jerry Jerome (both members of the Goodman band with Christian). They both recounted that they would often hear Charlie singing Lester Young solos on bus rides. Jerome also recalls that Christian would buy every new Count Basie album that would come out and play or sing along with all of them.

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66 Broodbent, 65.
67 Ibid., 274.
CHAPTER 2

BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY AND MUSICAL DEVELOPMENT OF

WES MONTGOMERY

Life and Career

John Leslie Montgomery, nicknamed Wes, was born on March 6, 1923 in Indianapolis, Indiana. Like Christian, Wes came from a musical family. His oldest brother, Thomas Jr., played drums, Charles (nicknamed Buddy) played the electric bass, and William (nicknamed Monk) played vibraphone and piano. Wes Montgomery was twelve-years old when his brother Monk bought him a four-string tenor guitar for $13 at a pawnshop.

The tenor guitar was no stranger to jazz when Wes Montgomery was playing it. Guitarist Tiny Grimes used it as his primary instrument throughout his career in the 1940s. Also influenced by Christian, Grimes would go on to perform and record with bebop pioneers Charlie Parker and Art Tatum. Monk Montgomery recalled in an interview

69 Ibid., 8:10.
that Wes was able to play on his tenor guitar very well and watched Wes entertain other kids in his neighborhood at the age of thirteen.\textsuperscript{71} Wes Montgomery’s foundation on the tenor guitar might be one of the factors that contributed to his rapid mastery of the six-string guitar a few years later.

One factor that is unknown is how Wes Montgomery tuned his tenor guitar. Traditionally, the tenor guitar is tuned in fifths, like a banjo, CGDA, but it is not uncommon to tune the tenor guitar in fourths, DGBE, like a six-string guitar.\textsuperscript{72} No reference as to which tuning Wes Montgomery used is available, but from Montgomery’s impressive abilities on the six-string guitar after only playing it a few months leads to the assumption that he favored tuning his tenor guitar in fourths.

Montgomery purchased his first six-string electric guitar shortly after he and his wife Serene were married in 1943. Montgomery states in an interview with Ralph Gleason that his interest to play, “like all other electric guitar players,” was because of Charlie Christian.\textsuperscript{73} He goes on to state that he listened to other guitarists before Christian, but for Wes they were not playing anything new, “just guitar.”\textsuperscript{74} The first recording of Christian’s he heard was “Solo Flight” with the Benny Goodman Orchestra. From then on Wes was a follower of Christian and as Montgomery would later state “[he] didn’t look at nobody else.”\textsuperscript{75} Montgomery would later admit that he had other influences

\begin{footnotes}
\item[71] Ingram, 11.
\item[73] Gleason, 44.
\item[74] Ibid., 44.
\item[75] Ibid. 44.
\end{footnotes}
besides Christian including Miles Davis, Frank Sinatra, Nat Cole, and Tony Bennett. Saxophonists John Coltrane and Sonny Rollins also were contributing influences on Montgomery. Montgomery called Coltrane “[a] sort of God” and would slow down Coltrane’s landmark recording “Giant Steps” to study it better. In an interview given in *Melody Maker* in 1960, Montgomery admits that he never planned on becoming a musician, but it was Charlie Christian who inspired him above everyone else. Montgomery’s passion for Charlie Christian can best be heard in Montgomery’s own words:

[Charlie Christian] said so much on the records that I don’t care what instrument a cat played, if he didn’t understand and didn’t feel, and really didn’t get with the things that Charlie Christian was doing, he was a pretty poor musician—[Christian] was so far ahead.

For approximately the next eight months after purchasing his first six-string electric guitar, Wes Montgomery immersed himself in the study of Charlie Christian. Montgomery would stay up late into the night transcribing Christian solos note-for-note. Unlike many guitarists, Montgomery did not use a pick to pluck the strings but rather his thumb. Montgomery told British jazz entrepreneur Ronny Scott that he first started practicing late in the night with his new guitar and amplifier with a pick. His family members would complain that they could hear him practicing all throughout the house while they tried to sleep. So he began to use his thumb to muffle the sound. Wes

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76 Ingram, 50.
77 Ibid., 50, 53.
78 Ibid., 49.
79 Gleason, 44.
discovered he was more comfortable playing with his thumb as a result and never went back.\textsuperscript{80} In an interview with Gleason, Montgomery stated that he tried to play with a pick for two months because he was not satisfied with the speed his thumb allowed him to play with. At the same time, Montgomery did not like the tone of his guitar when he played with a pick. As Montgomery told Gleason, he liked the tone of his guitar with his thumb, but liked the technique with the pick (particularly the speed the pick allows). In the end, he decided to just “be cool” and the thumb won out.\textsuperscript{81}

Montgomery’s imitation of Christian was good enough for bandleader Mel Lee to hire him as the guitarist in his band at Club 440 in Indianapolis. It was at these performances that Wes would play the Christian solos he had memorized for the audience each night. Montgomery recalled one embarrassing night in which he received such a big response from the audience that they would not let him get off the stage without an encore. Unfortunately he didn’t have anything else to give them beyond the Christian solos he had just played.\textsuperscript{82} Montgomery was still in the imitation and assimilation stages.

Montgomery would not stay stuck in Christian’s shadow for long. From 1943 to 1948, Montgomery would spend his days working various jobs to support his family and then playing into the late hours of the night in Indianapolis jazz clubs such as the 500 Club, Keys Supper Club, and the 19\textsuperscript{th} Hole.\textsuperscript{83} Monk Montgomery remembers listening to his brother practice long into the night with Christian solos. He remembered hearing Wes practicing and could hear his brother “sharpening” his mind and beginning to shape the

\textsuperscript{80} Wes Montgomery, \textit{Wes Montgomery: Live in ’65},” DVD (Reelin’ In The Years Productions LLC. Naxos of America, 2007)
\textsuperscript{81} Gleason, 45.
\textsuperscript{82} De Stefano, 36-37.
\textsuperscript{83} Ingram, 12.
direction he wanted to go.\textsuperscript{84} What Monk might have been hearing was Wes’s transition of the material being imitated, learning the traditions that Christian has laid before him, and assimilating these traditions into Wes Montgomery’s own vision and musical fabric.

In May 1948, Wes Montgomery’s dedication to Christian would pay off again, landing in a gig playing with vibraphonist, drummer, and bandleader Lionel Hampton. Hampton, who played with Charlie Christian in Goodman’s small groups, was impressed with how well Montgomery’s playing resembled Christian’s. It is worthy to note that Hampton hired Montgomery despite the fact that he could neither read music or chord notation.\textsuperscript{85} There has even been some speculation that Montgomery had perfect pitch, also known as absolute pitch.\textsuperscript{86}

Montgomery would only stay with Hampton’s band for two years and return home in 1950. Montgomery was terrified to fly and would often drive all night to meet up with the band for their next performance. During his time with Hampton, Montgomery made a number of recordings, but was never featured in his small groups. Montgomery admits that he relied heavily on what he learned from his Charlie Christian transcriptions.\textsuperscript{87}

For the next seven years Wes Montgomery returned to his routine of working a job during the day to support his family and performing in various Indianapolis jazz clubs at night. Wes would not record again until December 30\textsuperscript{th} 1957, when his brothers Monk

\textsuperscript{84} Jazz Profiles, 8:45.
\textsuperscript{85} Ingram, 12.
\textsuperscript{86} DeStefano, 36. Perfect or absolute pitch involves the listener possessing the ability to identify the chroma (pitch class) of any isolated tone and/or identify the correct key a piece is in.
\textsuperscript{87} Ingram, 12.
and Buddy, would ask him to be a guest with their new group The Mastersounds. On one of the session in Indianapolis was also a young trumpet player named Freddie Hubbard, playing on his first recording. The recording was released as “The Montgomery Brothers and Five Others.” Wes Montgomery had one feature, a blues called “Fingerpickin’,” that was later released as a single. Monk Montgomery remembers that “Fingerpickin’” received more play on the radio than the album.⁸⁸

Wes would continue to record with his brothers from 1957-1959 and continue to play club dates in Indianapolis. His reputation as a leading jazz guitarist was growing in Indianapolis as Wes Montgomery continued to develop his skills, sound, and voice. In a May 1958 issue of Jazz Review Magazine, critic Gunther Schuller wrote an article titled “Indiana Renaissance.” In the article Schuller states that Wes Montgomery was “an extraordinary, spectacular guitarist.” He would continue by saying how impressively Montgomery built his solos by first starting with single-note lines, then octaves, and ending with block-chords.⁹⁹ This three-tier process of building a solo would become a Wes Montgomery signature part of his own personal style and voice. Montgomery would not use this technique on every solo, but displays it most prominently on “Missile Blues” (The Wes Montgomery Trio: A Dynamic New Sound, October 1959) and “West Coast Blues” (The Incredible Jazz Guitar of Wes Montgomery, January 1960). Charlie Christian did not use the three-tier solo technique used by Montgomery, although Christian did

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⁸⁸ Jazz Profiles, 17:22.
⁹⁹ Ingram, 21.
combine single-notes with block-chords on occasion, most notably on his recording of “Stardust.”

In 1959, Montgomery was working as a welder during the day and performing at night. His performance schedule would begin at the Turf Bar from 9pm, ending at 2am, and then he would end the night at the Missile Room from 2:30-5 am. It was on September 7, 1959, at the Missile Room, that pianist George Shearing and saxophonist Cannonball Adderley would walk in to hear Montgomery’s trio perform. Adderley was so impressed that he left the club after the first set to call Orrin Keepnews, producer of Riverside Records, to tell him that this new talented guitarist needed to be signed. Keepnews flew out from New York to Indianapolis to hear Montgomery himself. After hearing Montgomery at the Turf Bar, Keepnews became an “instant convert” and signed Montgomery to a standard union contract.

Montgomery’s first album for Riverside was The Wes Montgomery Trio. The album was recorded on October 5, 1959 with Melvin Rhyne on organ and Paul Parker on drums. Both Mel Rhyne and Paul Parker were members of Montgomery’s original trio performing in clubs in Indianapolis. The material they recorded on the album represented a typical set from the trio’s club performances. The album received mixed reviews from jazz critics, but it began to spread Montgomery’s reputation among the jazz community.

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90 Christian recorded “Stardust,” a Hoagy Carmichael composition, several times with the Benny Goodman Sextet. The solo being referenced was recorded on October 2, 1939.

91 Jazz Profiles, 18:54.

92 Jazz Profiles, 20:40.
The recognition enabled Wes to obtain steady work as a full-time musician and he was able to quit his day jobs.  

Wes Montgomery’s second album, *The Incredible Jazz Guitar of Wes Montgomery*, captured international attention from both musicians and critics. The album would receive a five-star review in *Down Beat Magazine* (the highest number possible) and help Montgomery win the magazine’s 1960 International Critics Poll for Artist Deserving Wider Recognition. For the album, Riverside hired veteran jazz pianist Tommy Flanagan with Percy and Albert Heath to play bass and drums. Of the eight tracks recorded, four were Wes Montgomery originals, including “West Coast Blues,” “Four on Six,” and “D-Natural Blues.”

Montgomery would record nineteen albums, both as leader and sideman, with Riverside from 1959-1964. In 1964 Riverside went bankrupt and Montgomery signed with Creed Taylor on Verve Records. He would record four albums in two years on the Verve label. Taylor began to have Montgomery record in more commercial settings, using larger ensembles and hiring arrangers like Don Sebesky and Oliver Nelson to enhance the recordings for a wider audience. Montgomery’s fourth album, *I Think I’m Going Out of My Head* (the title song was originally recorded by the pop group Anthony and the Imperials), earned him his first Grammy Award.

In 1966 Montgomery moved with Taylor to Herb Albert’s new label A&M and recorded his final three albums. Despite commercial success, many musicians and critics found Taylor’s format had limited Montgomery’s improvisations. Eventually his solos

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93 Ingram, 23.
94 Ibid., 23.
95 Ibid., 34.
would simply be a statement of the main melody played in Montgomery’s signature octave style. This fortunately was not the case in Wes Montgomery’s live performances. Jazz critic Gary Giddins recalls seeing Montgomery at a jazz festival in Kansas City during his A&M period. He remembers he and other people began to leave as Montgomery set-up, expecting Montgomery would be playing music from his Verve and A&M recordings. To the audiences’ surprise, Montgomery played an outstanding straight-ahead set that put everyone back in their seats.\(^96\)

On June 15, 1968 Wes Montgomery died of a heart attack at the age of 45. Like Montgomery’s idol, Christian, Wes was able to leave behind an extremely creative and influential legacy in a very brief career. In nine years, Montgomery would become the model for a new generation of guitarists to imitate and emulate. In an interview with pianist Marian McPartland, Pat Metheny admits that he won a *Down Beat Magazine* guitar contest at the age of 14 by “basically copying a Wes [Montgomery] solo.”\(^97\)

Metheny would not be alone in his imitation of Montgomery. Mike Stern recalls transcribing many solos of Montgomery recordings, particularly *Smokin’ at the Half Note* (recorded in 1965 on Verve).\(^98\) *Smokin’ at the Half Note* was the one straight-ahead, non-commercial, album on Verve and many believe it was one of Montgomery’s best. It was called “perfect” by Jim Hall and “the greatest jazz guitar album” by Pat Metheny.\(^99\) This album may also indicate that Montgomery was continuing to develop as an innovator,

\(^{96}\) Jazz Profiles, 49:12.


\(^{99}\) Jazz Profiles, 39:27.
despite the lack of improvisation time being allowed on his recordings with Verve and A&M. Guitarist Jim Hall sums up Montgomery’s career simply by stating that “he kind of left the old guys behind, which made him that more exciting.” Although Montgomery left the “old guys” behind, he did not develop without them. Imitation of the old, particularly Charlie Christian, was a fundamental aspect of Montgomery’s musical source for creativity and originality.

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CHAPTER 3

STYLISTIC TRAITS OF CHARLIE CHRISTIAN OVER DOMINANT-SEVENTH HARMONIES

Charlie Christian’s impact and influence on jazz can partly be accredited to his originality. What the musicians, both guitarists and non-guitarists, heard from Christian was new and compelled them to incorporate what Christian was playing in their own sound. Five different musical elements will be examined that will help give insight into Christian’s approach to dominant-seventh harmonies. The five elements are Charlie Christian’s use of scales, arpeggios, use of chromatic pitches, formulas and enclosures, and harmonic substitutions. These elements will then be used in comparison to Wes Montgomery’s approach to dominant-seventh harmonies.

Scales

Christian’s use of scales over dominant harmonies was mainly focused around the Mixolydian scale or mode. The Mixolydian mode is a major scale starting on the fifth note. For example, G Mixolydian contains the same notes of the C Major scale. Jazz
musicians used the Mixolydian mode over dominant harmonies because it resembles the major scale with one exception: the lowered seventh scale degree. The Mixolydian contains a major triad with a lowered seventh (as found in dominant-seventh chords) as well as a natural-ninth (second), eleventh (fourth), and thirteenth (sixth) [Example 1].

Example 1

Christian rarely plays a Mixolydian scale in its entirety without some chromatic passing tones, but uses fragments of the scale to help propel his melodies forward. Christian often favors playing the scale from the root\textsuperscript{101} of the chord down to the fifth as in “Breakfast Feud,” “Shivers,” and “Benny’s Bugle” [Examples 2, 3, and 4].\textsuperscript{102}

Example 2

Example 3

Example 4

\textsuperscript{101} Because of the close relationship between scales and harmonies in jazz analysis, “the root” will be used in place of tonic or one (1) when referring to scale degrees.

\textsuperscript{102} Transcriptions for “Breakfast Feud” were from the composite recording found \textit{The Smithsonian Collection of Classic Jazz, Volume II}, Smithsonian Collection Recordings, RD 03302, 1987. The recording contains five choruses of Christian soloing on “Breakfast Feud” from various recordings between 1940 and 1941.
Several compositions played by Christian with the Benny Goodman Sextet were based on short phrases or melodic “riffs” over fairly static harmonic progressions. “Air Mail Special,” “Seven Come Eleven,” and “Flying Home” all follow the same formula. They are all in 32-bar AABA form with the A Sections containing a simple riff over a tonic harmony. The B Sections were often a set of dominant chords leading back to the tonic. Goodman often improvised the B Section of “Flying Home” and “Seven Come Eleven.” Christian is also credited as co-composer for these compositions as well.

Gunther Schuller credits Christian in bringing this “riff-tune” idea of composing to the Goodman Sextet, but also feels it may have been abused, causing a stagnation in Christian’s playing later. It is this style of composition that Schuller feels help give rise to bebop.\footnote{Schuller, 570.}

An example of Christian using the Mixolydian scale as a theme which he develops over the course of a solo is found in “Air Mail Special” (also titled “Good Enough To Keep”). In “Air Mail Special,” a composition in which the A Section does not move from a tonic C major chord, Christian crafts his opening A Section statement with thoughtful precision. Christian opens with a syncopated statement on C, followed by a long melodic phrase base around notes of the C Mixolydian scale. He finishes the phrase by using the same Mixolydian lick in a slightly extended rhythmic version [Example 5a]. Christian ends the A Section, leading into the bridge, with a return statement of the same Mixolydian lick [Example 5b]. Christian’s use of this small melodic fragment to help him development his solo, but at the same time bring thematic unity to his solos.
Example 5

Christian plays the scale in its entirety without chromatic passing tones in both of his solos with the Benny Goodman Big Band. In “Solo Flight,” recorded March 4, 1941, Christian plays the G Mixolydian scale over a G7 chord descending from the root of the chord (G) down an octave [Example 6]. He then resolves from the G to the tonic of the C major chord in the next measure.

Example 6
One of Christian’s earliest featured solos with the Goodman Big Band was on November 22, 1939. Charlie Christian improvised on an arrangement of Fats Waller’s “Honeysuckle Rose,” playing the Ab Mixolydian scale over the Ab7 chord [Example 7]. In this instance, Christian starts on the fifth (Eb) instead of the root (Ab) and ascends to the seventh (Gb) before descending to the root (Ab).

Example 7

In all the examples examined, Christian starts his scale passage on either the root or fifth of the Mixolydian scale and descends from the root to the fifth or the root. On “Guys Got to Go,” a solo recorded at Minton’s, Christian descends from the seventh of the G Mixolydian to the root. “Guy’s Got to Go” is different from the other examples in that Christian anticipates the change to the G7 harmony by a beat and a half. These types of anticipations give Christian’s solos greater forward momentum and show that Christian was hearing the harmonic changes before they occurred [Example 8].

Example 8
The other scale that Charlie Christian plays over dominant harmonies is the chromatic scale. Christian’s use of chromatic pitches is one of his most distinct characteristics. Mark Antonich states that Christian uses passing tones and chromatic passing tones in his scales as contrapuntal devices in his improvisations.\textsuperscript{104} Examples of Christian’s usage of chromatic pitches in his improvisations will be addressed later. Christian uses the chromatic scale, utilizing all twelve pitches, on a few occasions and most often over dominant harmonies.

At the bridge of “Air Mail Special,” over a C diminished chord, Christian begins on the third (Eb) and descends the chromatic scale, using a three-note rhythmic syncopation to create melodic continuity [Example 9].

Example 9

\begin{align*}
\text{Air Mail Special, chorus 1, m.17-20}
\end{align*}

On “Breakfast Feud,” Christian uses the chromatic scale over an F7 leading back to Bb7 and resolving on the Bb [Example 10]. On beat three of measure eighteen Christian leaps from Eb up to D. Christian may have chosen these pitches to leap to because he was anticipating the Bb7 and wanted to emphasize the flat-seventh to third

\textsuperscript{104} Mark Antonich, “The Jazz Style and Analysis of the Music of Charlie Christian, Based Upon an Examination of His Improvised Solos, and the Various Components of His Playing” (Master’s of Music Theory thesis, Duquesne University, 1982), 19-20.
resolution that occurs in a dominant (V) to tonic (I) and supertonic (ii) to dominant (V) resolutions.

Example 10

Jazz musicians have utilized half-step resolutions in improvisations with great efficiency. Jerry Coker dedicated a chapter to the “7-3 Resolution” in his book *Elements of Jazz*. Coker writes that the “primary reason for utilizing the 7-3 resolution (besides the fact that it sounds logical and good) in improvised melodies is to increase our change-running efficiency.”\(^{105}\) Christian’s use of the 7-3 resolution was very apparent in his improvisations as well as Montgomery’s. A reason that Christian chooses to leap to the D before the change to the Bb7 chord may have been that Christian was anticipating the change to Bb7 in measure eighteen.

In the third chorus of “Breakfast Feud,” Christian again uses the chromatic scale briefly over the Bb7 [Example 11]. He begins on the Bb and chromatically descends to the F. Christian uses melodic syncopation by changing chromatically on the off-beats to give his lines forward momentum.

\(^{105}\) Coker, *Elements of Jazz*, 20. “Change-running” refers to the improviser’s ability to outline a harmonic progression during an improvisation.
Example 11

Charlie Christian did not seem to use any modes from the melodic or harmonic minor scale, nor is there substantial evidence that he used the diminished scale. Christian does not seem to be breaking any new ground with his use of the Mixolydian scale and chromatic scale, but does seem to favor specific approaches to creating melodies with them, especially with the Mixolydian. Christian’s use of chromatic passing tones with scalar melodies shows far greater originality and will be discussed later.

**Arpeggios**

Christian’s improvisations heavily favored the use of arpeggios to outline the underlying harmonies as well as create new harmonies. De Stefano examined Christian’s solo on “Solo Flight” and found that Christian played thirty-five arpeggios in a solo that was ninety-two measures long.\(^{106}\) Authors Spring, Ayeroff, and Finkleman wrote about Christian’s use of arpeggios in their examination of Christian’s use of formulas to construct his improvisations. The authors’ research indicates that Christian used “pattern-forms” derived from localized finger patterns on the guitar to help organize his solos.\(^{107}\)

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\(^{106}\) De Stefano, 47.

\(^{107}\) Spring, 35.
The studies conducted by Spring and the other authors have stated that arpeggios are a part of Christian’s pattern-forms and are regularly played over recurring harmonies.

Christian frequently starts a phrase with an arpeggio beginning on the root of the chord as in “Benny’s Bugle” (see Example 4). When Christian does play an arpeggio from the root, it is limited to the tonic (I) chord of the progression, often at the beginning of a chorus, and may also include an added sharp-ninth leading into the third. Two examples of this are in the opening melodies to “Gone With ‘What’ Wind” and “Seven Come Eleven” [Examples 12 and 13]. In both examples Christian does not simply run the arpeggio, but strings it out, using syncopation and rests.

Example 12

Example 13

Christian would also arpeggiate diminished seventh chords from the root when they were a part of the song’s harmony. In “Air Mail Special” the bridge begins on a Cº and descends by half-steps to the chords Bº and Bbº (which is serving as a substitution
for an Eb7 chord), resolving into an Ab7 and finally to the G7. Christian plays two choruses on this particular recording and plays nearly the exact same melody in the same location in both choruses [Examples 14a and 14b].

Example 14a

Example 14b

One of the only other compositions in which a diminished harmony is a part of the tune is in “Solo Flight.” Christian arpeggiates a C#º up from C# in measures eight, twenty-four, seventy-two [Examples 14c, 14d, 14e] and once from the third (E) in measure thirty-six [Example 14f].

Example 14c

Example 14d

Example 14e

Example 14f
Christian favored specific approaches when using diminished harmonies played over dominant-seventh chords. Christian was fond of starting on the third of a dominant chord and ascending a diminished or half-diminished triad or seventh chord. This allowed Christian to emphasize the third, fifth, and flat-seventh, as well as the upper-extensions like the ninth and thirteenth. Spring, in his dissertation, calls this one of Christian’s “non-tonic formulas.”\textsuperscript{108} Christian will start on the third of the dominant-seventh and continue up to the fifth and seventh. Christian will either end his ascent on the ninth or leap up to the thirteenth, fifth, or third of the chord. [Example 15]. This formula allows Christian to emphasize upper chord tones like the flat-seventh, ninth, and thirteenth without playing the root.

Example 15

![Example 15](image)

What Christian is harmonically doing is treating the dominant-seventh chord as a triad over a bass note. For example, in “Seven Come Eleven” the harmony is an F7 chord, but Christian is outlining an A minor seventh with a flatted fifth, also called an Am7(b5) or half-diminished-seventh chord [Example 16]. In this example Christian leaps to the thirteenth (D) after playing the ninth (G). The D is also the third of the next chord.

\textsuperscript{108} Spring, 69.
measure’s chord, a Bb7. Again, Christian’s melodies seem to indicate that he is anticipating the changes in the harmonies by a few beats, giving his lines a sense of greater intensity and movement.

Example 16

Finkelman cites Christian’s recording of “Seven Come Eleven,” particularly the bridge, for his use of accented chromatic passing tones, harmonic anticipations, and extensive use of upper-chord tones, all “hallmarks of Charlie Christian’s style.”

In “Gone With ‘What’ Wind,” Christian uses this super-imposition of the diminished and half-diminished arpeggio over a IV chord (F7) each time it occurs in both choruses. In measures four and five, Christian descends an Am7(b5), beginning on the third (C), and voice-leads in to the A an octave lower by a half-step (Bb) [Example 17a]. The descending arpeggio implies a Cm7, the ii of F. Christian is again using the 7-3 voice leading technique discussed by Coker. Both times Christian leads into the A (the third of F7) from a half-step above (Bb). In measure seventeen, Christian descends by scale steps from the Eb (also the third of Cm and seventh of F7) to the Bb before ascending an Am7(b5) arpeggio on the downbeat of measure eighteen [Example 17b]. He then descends an Am7 arpeggio on beat three of measure eighteen. Christian’s change of the

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Eb to E on beat four is signaling he is anticipating the C7 chord (the tonic) in the next measure. This is one example of Christian’s ability to craft melodies with smooth voice leading, upper-chord extensions, and implied harmonic substitutions. These three techniques appear to occur fluently throughout Christian’s improvisations.

Example 17a

Example 17b

In “Solo Flight,” Christian approaches the third (B) of G7 by a half-step above (C) in measures twenty-five into twenty-six [Example 18a]. He arpeggiates a Dm7 chord on beat three of measure twenty-five and connects the C into the B on the downbeat of measure twenty-six. All though the Dm7 is not played in measure twenty-five, Christian seems to be implying the Dm7 and plays a 7-3 resolution into measure twenty-six. He plays a similar melody in measure seventy-three, but plays a passing Db on beat two, which enables the B (the third of G7) to be placed on beat three, a strong beat [Example 18b]. Christian then plays a B diminished triad and not a full half-diminished seventh chord. Regardless of whether the harmony is a ii-V7 or simply V7, the 7-3 resolution seems to be a melodic device that Christian has made a part of his own vocabulary.
Christian sequences the half-diminished arpeggio over the Eb7 and Ab7 in the bridge of “Honeysuckle Rose” [Example 19]. Each time Christian approaches the third from a half-step above.

Christian’s use of the diminished and half-diminished arpeggios over dominant-seventh chords is also heard repeatedly in the Minton’s jam sessions recordings. In “Guys Got to Go” Christian arpeggiates an F#° chord over the D7, approaching the third (F#) from a half-step above. In all of the examples so far Christian has always started the arpeggio on a downbeat, but in measure fifty he syncopates the F#° triad, playing F# on the off-beat of four [Example 20].
Example 20

In measures nineteen to twenty of “Lips Flips” Christian plays the D#m7(b5) over a B7 with no half-step approach note [Example 21a].

Example 21a

In measure forty-eight of “Lips Flips,” Christian does not use a half-step approach note and anticipates the F#7 by playing an A#º arpeggio a measure early [Example 21b].

Example 21b

Christian would also descend the diminished arpeggio starting on the ninth or third. This approach emphasizes the ninth, flat-seventh, fifth, and third chord tones.
[Examples 22a and 22b]. This technique is not as frequent as the ascending approach and Christian will frequently insert a chromatic passing tone such as a flat-fifth, third, or second.

Example 22a

Example 22b

The majority of the examples show that Christian did prefer to approach the third by a half-step above before outlining either a diminished or half-diminished seventh chord starting on a strong beat. Whether it is called a “pattern-lick” or “formula,” the use of diminished and half-diminished arpeggios over dominant-seventh harmonies was a part of Christian’s melodic vocabulary. Finkelman states that Christian’s use of the half-diminished chords over V7 chords was one of Christian’s most distinctive stylistic aspects. He goes on to state it was also a foreshadowing of techniques used by bebop artists.\(^{110}\)

There is evidence that Christian would vary from his own formulas and innovate upon previously assimilated material. An indicator that Christian was still developing his own sound is that most of these exceptions to the formulas are found in later recordings, particularly the ones taken at the jam sessions at Minton’s.

Use of Chromatic Pitches

Christian’s use of chromatic and non-chord tones in his improvisations was abundant and may be one of the features that attracted artists like Montgomery to imitate him. Chromatic passing tones allowed Christian to connect his phrases and give greater length to his melodies. The chromatic notes that Christian regularly favored over dominant harmonies included the natural-seventh, the flat-fifth, and flat-second scale degrees. Christian used both the flat-seventh and second scale degrees with such frequency that it might suggest that he saw these notes not just as passing tones, but as a new type of scale. In a way, these notes created a new scale that would fit his improvisations more effectively.

Jazz educator David Baker would address the usage of these passing tones in a series of pedagogical books on bebop improvisation. Baker states that the players of the early twenties attempted to use chromatic passing tones to make their “improvised lines flow more smoothly.” For Baker, jazz musicians from the past, naming Lester Young and Coleman Hawkins as examples, date themselves through their “somewhat arbitrary or random use of chromaticism.” Baker states that the bebop musicians, specifically Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie, were the first to follow or develop a set of governing “rules” to how they used chromatic notes in their scalar passages. Baker calls these scales “bebop” scales because of their frequent use by bebop musicians like Parker and Gillespie.112

111 Baker, 40.
112 Ibid., 40.
Jazz saxophonist and educator Jerry Coker credits Baker with the discovery, name, and use of the bebop scales (Coker calls it the Bebop Lick) through Baker’s analysis of Bebop Era solos. Coker also writes that the bebop scale lick evolved naturally throughout jazz history and has not been studied academically until recent years.\textsuperscript{113} Christian used these scales, as well as other chromatic devices to be addressed later, in nearly every solo examined for this study. If the use of chromaticism, in particular the bebop scale, evolved over time culminating in the bebop musicians, then Christian was at the center of this transitory event.

Mark Levine devotes an entire chapter in his jazz theory book to the bebop scales. He defines them as “traditional scales (the Ionian, Dorian, and Mixolydian modes of major scale and the melodic minor scale) with an added chromatic passing note.”\textsuperscript{114} Levine also writes that the bebop scales were an “evolutionary step forward from traditional seven-note scales.” Levine has found evidence of the use of the bebop dominant scale (a dominant scale with both the natural and lowered seventh) in Louis Armstrong’s playing as early as 1927. Levine also states that they became used with greater frequency by the 1940s.\textsuperscript{115}

The four bebop scales cited by Baker and Levine are the bebop dominant, bebop Dorian, bebop major, and bebop melodic minor. Of these four, Christian used the dominant, major and Dorian bebop scales with regularity. The dominant is the Mixolydian mode with both the natural and lowered seventh [Example 23a]. The major

\textsuperscript{115} Levine, 172.
bebop scale is an Ionian mode with an added raised fifth scale degree [Example 23b]. The Dorian contains both the lowered and natural-third [Example 23c]. When the scale begins on a chord tone on a downbeat the chromatic passing note allows for all the chord-tones to fall on the strong beats. Christian, as will be examined, does not seem to be concerned with this and will frequently have non-chord tones on a strong beat when playing a bebop scale. Christian also favored the flat-fifth and flat-second when he would play the dominant bebop, particularly when he descended the scale.

Example 23a  Example 23b  Example 23c

Christian was using the bebop scale with great regularity as early as his first recordings with Goodman in 1939. Christian’s use of chromatic passing tones was examined by both Spring and Finkelman in the context of Christian’s reoccurring patterns. Spring found that Christian mostly used chromatic passing tones, either between the fifth and third or third and root, to help with “metrical constraints.” In other words, Christian used these chromatic tones to allow for stronger chord tones to be placed on stronger beats of a measure, often placed on the downbeat.

Finkelman builds on Spring’s formula research and Christian’s use of chromatic passing tones in his article titled “Charlie Christian and the Role of Formulas in Jazz

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116 Spring, 69.
Improvisation.” Finkelman believes that Christian’s use of chromatic tones are closely associated with common finger positions found on the guitar. Set finger positions allow the guitarist to associate specific finger placement with specific pitches. Depending on the placement of the fingers in relation to the neck and frets, the guitarist’s ordering of notes may change, allowing a desired arpeggio or scale to be played with greater facility. Finkelman believed that Christian used these positions to create sets of formulas (melodies) to be played over specific chord tones. These positions could have allowed Christian to organize his melodies around the formula associated with each position. In addition, each position allowed Christian ample access to half-step resolutions to chord tones like the flat-seventh to the sixth, sharp-second to the third, and flat-second to the root.

Finkelman found a number of patterns used in Christian’s approach to chromatic pitches as well. He writes that the natural-seventh was always used by Christian as either a passing tone descending from the root to the flat-seventh or used in an appoggiatura. Appoggiaturas will be discussed with greater detail later in the chapter. The sharp-second (or flat-third) was almost used exclusively as a pick-up to the natural-third. Finally, Finkelman found the flat-second was almost always used with the natural-second and root in a descending pattern. Spring, Antonich, Ayeroff, and Denny corroborate Finkelman’s findings in their research of Charlie Christian.

In “Wholly Cats,” a blues in G, Christian uses the dominant bebop scale in measure fifteen, over a G7. Christian begins on the fifth (D) of the G Mixolydian and

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118 Ibid., 164.
descends, playing the natural-seventh (F#) followed by the flat-seventh (F) on beat four.

Christian does not begin the bebop scale on the strong beat, but on the off-beat of four. Christian does not continue descending, but leaps to the ninth (A) on the downbeat of measure sixteen. Christian arpeggiates a Dm (also the ii chord) with a passing Db into the C and resolving to the third (B) [Example 24]. The phrase makes use of both chromatic passing tones and 7-3 leading tones (the C, seventh of Dm7, resolves to B, the third of G7).

Example 24

![Example 24]

Christian’s uses the dominant bebop scale over every dominant chord in the bridge of “Flying Home” [Examples 25a and 25b]. Each time Christian does play the natural-seventh over the dominant chord it is on the downbeat and resolves to the flat-seventh on the syncopation. This off-beat resolution gives Christian’s line an added element of tension and drive.

Example 25a

![Example 25a]
Other chromatic elements in “Flying Home” include a Dbm triad in measure eighteen. The Dbm emphasizes the fourth (Ab), flat-ninth (Fb), and flat-seventh (Db) of the Eb7. In measure twenty-one Christian begins to descend an Am7(b5) arpeggio, beginning on the root (A), and inserts the Gb passing tone to connect to the root, which he then descends on the dominant bebop scale. In measure twenty-three Christian also emphasizes the F#, the sharp-fifth of Bb7. These chromatic pitches not only add tension, but also allow Christian to connect phrases creating continuous eighth-note melodies up to three and four measures long.

Christian used the bebop scale in a number of melodic variations. In “Grand Slam” Christian used it fairly independently in measures fifteen and sixteen, starting on the third (A) and ending on the flat-seventh (Eb) of F7. But in measure seventeen, Christian disguises the bebop scale by alternating between the natural- and flat-seventh and the third (D) on beat three of the Bb7 [Example 26]. Christian also approaches the root of the Bb dominant bebop scale by the flat-second (B) in measure seventeen. Finally, Christian anticipates the F chord by two beats in measure eighteen by playing an A natural on beat three. Measure eighteen could be analyzed as the first four notes of the F Dorian bebop scale with both the natural- and flat-third.
Christian uses a similar alternating melodic technique while using the dominant bebop scale in “Solo Flight.” Christian, over a G7, descends his own modified bebop scale, adding a passing flat-second (Ab), but this time alternates octaves on the root (G). He then plays the major seventh (F#) on beat four. The melody ends with Christian descending to the flat-seventh (F) on beat one and resolving to the E, the third of the tonic (C) [Example 27a]. Christian anticipates the tonic chord by nearly a whole measure.

Christian often will break-up the bebop scale by alternating the moving notes with a stationary note like the root or third. Although he does not mention Christian, Jerry Coker refers to this technique as “CESH” or Contrapuntal Elaboration of Static Harmony.\footnote{Coker, Elements of Jazz, 61.} The “static harmony” is often a single harmony note that will remain constant throughout the melody. The “contrapuntal elaboration” refers to another member

\begin{example}
\begin{music}
\begin{musicstaff}
\putmolenote{5}{G7}
\putmolenote{5}{Gb7}
\putmolenote{5}{F}
\end{musicstaff}
\end{music}
\caption{Solo Flight, chorus 1, m. 15-16}
\end{example}
of the chord or melody, usually the seventh or fifth, that will be in motion. Jazz musicians will often use CESH in their improvisations and compositions. It can be used over both minor and major harmonies like the ii, V or ii-V combination. A classic example of CESH is found in Dizzy Gillespie’s composition “Bee-Bop” [Example 27b].

Example 27b

It is in “Solo Flight,” the recording that Montgomery discovered Christian’s playing, that Charlie displays a wide variety chromatic content. In measure five, Christian again plays his variation on the dominant bebop scale, adding a passing flat-second (Ab), over the G7. He also, just as in Example 27a, plays the major seventh on beat four, resolving to the F on beat one of measure six [Example 28a]. In the pick-up to measure nine Christian begins on the fifth (D), adds a passing flat-fifth (Db), and moves chromatically from the fifth to the third (B) [Example 28b]. He then arpeggiates up a Bm7(b5) on beat two of measure nine. In measure ten, Christian ends the phrase with a G dominant bebop scale with the flat-second (Ab) acting as a passing tone.
Example 28a

Example 28b

One note that does stand out in Example 28b that is not typical in Christian’s melodies is a sharp-eleventh (C#) in measure nine. The C# is not serving the purpose of a chromatic passing tone as Christian uses it on the downbeat of measure nine. De Stefano states that the omission of the eleventh (or fourth) was “typical of Charlie Christian’s grammar and syntax.” This makes the appearance of not just the fourth, but the raised fourth scale degree so intriguing. The raised fourth is found in both the Lydian mode (fourth mode of the major scale) and Lydian dominant (fourth mode of the melodic minor scale). The Lydian dominant is similar to the Mixolydian with the exception of the raised fourth scale degree. Mark Levine states that jazz musicians often think of the raised fourth as a “modern sound,” but the raised fourth can be heard as early as 1935 in Richard Rodger’s composition “Little Girl Blue.”

\[120\] De Stefano, 47.
\[121\] Levine, 65.
The sound of the sharp-eleventh (raised fourth) may not have been new, but it was not used frequently enough in Christian’s improvisation to be recognized as one of his major stylistic traits by either Spring, De Stefano, Schuller, or Finkelman. It is possible that Christian meant to play a D (the fifth) and made a mistake. What leaves room for doubt is that Christian plays another sharp-eleventh (G) in measure sixty-one [Example 29]. In measure sixty-one, it could be that Christian simply made a mistake and he actually intended on playing an F to complete the descending Db6 arpeggio he began on beat three. It is also possible that Christian was anticipating the change to C7 and was playing a G° triad over the C7 to emphasize the flat-ninth sound as a color tone.

Example 29

![Musical staff with Db7, G°, and C7 chords]

Solo Flight, chorus 4, m.61-62

In both occurrences the sharp-eleventh is not a chromatic passing tone, because Christian does not approach and resolve the note by a half step. The sharp-eleventh simply may be the note of choice for these particular melodies. An argument for it being the intended pitch is that this recording of “Solo Flight” was made on March 4th, 1941, and is such one of Christian’s final recordings before his death. Christian had been playing at Minton’s with other young jazz musicians associated with the Bebop Era like Dizzy Gillespie and Thelonious Monk for nearly a year before this recording. It is
possible that these musicians were using the sharp-eleventh regularly and Christian was beginning to assimilate it into his sound as well.

In addition to the dominant bebop scale, with and without the flat-second, Charlie Christian also favored the flat-fifth as a chromatic passing tone (Example 29, measure sixty-two). He often incorporated the flat-fifth as a passing tone with a descending arpeggio playing the ninth, seventh, or fifth. An example of this has already been seen in “Wholly Cats” (see Example 24), as well as in measure sixty-two of “Solo Flight.” Christian uses this technique several more times throughout the course of “Solo Flight.” At measure seventy-three, Christian descends from the seventh (F) of G7 and ascends a Bº arpeggio on beat three [Example 30a].

Example 30a

Christian uses the flat-fifth (Db) as a passing tone in measure thirty-eight of “Solo Flight,” but also plays a unique chromatic half-step sequence in measure thirty-seven. Christian approaches the pitches E, B, and G all from a half-step below before playing the A [Example 30b].
Example 30b

Christian combines several techniques in measures seventy-nine to eighty-two of “Solo Flight.” He begins with a CESH motive using the dominant bebop scale, partially descends the Mixolydian mode in measure eighty and sequences a Gm7 arpeggio over both the G7 and C7 [Example 31]. Christian seems to have anticipated the harmonic change from G7 to C7 by a full measure, emphasizing the Bb in his arpeggio in both measures eighty-one and eighty-two. Spring states that two of the ways Christian created tension was by outlining a different harmony than what was the given underlying one and using repetition. Christian does both in this example of “Solo Flight.” He first plays the Gm7 arpeggio, with a passing Gb, in measure eighty-one. He repeats it in measure eighty-two, on beat two, and resolves the melody to the root of F on the downbeat of measure eighty-three.

Example 31

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\[\text{Example 31}\]

\[\text{Example 30b}\]

\[\text{Spring, 90.}\]
Christian used the major bebop scale to utilize the raised fifth (or flat-sixth) passing tone in his improvisations on a number of occasions. In “Gone With ‘What’ Wind” and “Wholly Cats” Christian uses the chromatic passing raised fifth between the sixth and fifth chord tone [Examples 32a and 32b]. Finkelman states that the use of the sixth scale degree was a common practice of Swing Era musicians.¹²³ Finkelman found that Christian’s use of the motion 6-b6-5 was common at cadential points such as V-I or ii-V-I, but he would also use it on a stationary tonic chord as in Examples 23a and 23b.¹²⁴

Example 32a

Example 32b

Formulas and Enclosures

One of Christian’s most favored chromatic notes was the raised second or lower third. Christian primarily uses it in two contexts. The first has been encountered earlier (see Examples 12 and 13) in Christian’s playing of major arpeggios starting on the root. Spring classifies this as his “Second Tonic Formula” (R-b3-3-5).¹²⁵ The second context is what Spring classifies as the “core” of his “First Tonic Formula” (5-4-b3-3-R or 5).¹²⁶

¹²³ Finkelman, Annual Review of Jazz Studies, 190.
¹²⁴ Finkelman, Jazzforschung, 166.
¹²⁵ Spring, 60.
¹²⁶ Ibid., 36.
This formula specifically targets the third of the chord by surrounding it with the pitch a half-step above and below it. Spring adds that Christian would approach the core with various prefixes like a scalar descent from the seventh.\textsuperscript{127} He states that he suspects the formula to have evolved out of the blues scale and his Southwest background. He discovered that it is mostly played over tonic functioning harmony and often used at the end of a phrase. Spring also found that it does not appear as frequently used during the bridges of tunes that contain extended cycle-four dominant harmony.\textsuperscript{128} Finkelman categorizes the 5-4-b3-3 movement also as the “core” of his “Formula I.”\textsuperscript{129} He writes that it is used most frequently over tonic harmonies, over blues progressions, and the “A” sections with similar harmonic progressions like in Gershwin’s “I Got Rhythm.”\textsuperscript{130} The 5-4-b3-3 pattern appears at least once in all fourteen Charlie Christian solo transcriptions examined for this study.

The 5-4-b3-3 formula allows Christian to momentarily delay the resolution of the melody to a strong chord tone. In classical music the term used to describe this technique is called an appoggiatura. Jazz educator Richard Lawn describes an appoggiatura as a non-harmonic tone that is derived by a leap and resolved by step, usually in the opposite direction, to a chord tone.\textsuperscript{131} He states that it is “a useful embellishment in the Bebop style.”\textsuperscript{132}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{127} Spring, 61.  
\textsuperscript{128} Ibid., 68.  
\textsuperscript{129} Finkelman, \textit{Annual Review of Jazz Studies}, 164.  
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., 164.  
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., 77.
\end{flushright}
Jerry Coker calls the use of the 5-4-b3-3 formulas as an enclosure. His definition of an enclosure is a “linear or melodic device in which an object note is approached by both the upper and lower leading tones.” He goes on to state that the upper tone is one-half step above the objective note and the lower leading tone is one-half step below the objective note. Enclosures are different from appoggiaturas in that the objective note is not surrounded by notes a half step both above and below in an appoggiatura. Coker does acknowledge that appoggiaturas are “close to being an enclosure,” but believes they do not meet the specific requirements to be called this term. Coker also gives specific enclosure examples from jazz artists ranging from Louis Armstrong to Charlie Parker to Chick Corea, showing that enclosures have been a part of jazz musicians’ sound before and after Christian played them. Christian uses both enclosures, as Coker defines them, and appoggiaturas.

As discussed by Spring and Finkelman, Christian uses this brief melodic figure as a formula very regularly in his improvisations. It appears to be, like the use of the chromatic passing tones and half-diminished arpeggios, that enclosures are a part of Christian’s melodic fabric or his musical vocabulary. Musicians often refer to these formulas or patterns as part of their vocabulary, ideas, and licks. As Berliner explains, these licks depend on the artist’s treatment of the material and can range from simple formulations as a repeated pitch or short rhythmic figure to elaborate melodic phrases. Examples of this formula in its purest form are found in “Flying Home,” “Benny’s Bugle,” and “Honeysuckle Rose” [Examples 33a, 33b, and 33c]. Christian uses

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133 Coker, *Elements of Jazz*, 50.
134 Ibid., 50.
135 Berliner, 102.
the same formula five times in “Benny’s Bugle,” each time over the Bb7. In contrast, Christian only uses it once in both “Flying Home” and “Honeysuckle Rose.” Why Christian used the formula so frequently in “Benny’s Bugle” is not known. It might have been used so many times because it is a blues progression and the other two are not, but Christian does not use it as frequently in other blues like “Wholly Cats” and “Breakfast Feud.” It is possible Christian simply was using it as a unifying thread in “Benny’s Bugle” to emphasize the feeling of the blues. In all three examples Christian’s focal point is the third of the chord. The sharp-second in all three examples help to bring emphasis to the third. “Honeysuckle Rose” does not follow the 5-4-b3-3 formula exactly. Instead, he approaches the fourth (Gb) of Db by leaping down to it from the seventh (C).

Example 33a

![Example 33a](image)

Example 33b

![Example 33b](image)
Example 33c

The 5-4-b3-3 enclosure acted as a foundation from which Christian was able to build. Christian often would add variety to the way he approached and finished the melody that contained this formula. In “Six Appeal” Christian approaches the fourth (F) with a chromatic passing tone from the fifth (G) and then continues up from the third (E) of C7 with an Em7(b5) arpeggios [Example 34]. Essentially, Christian combines three melodic building blocks in one phrase.

Example 34

Christian used his enclosure formula in conjunction with several other of his melodic and chromatic techniques, including scalar, arpeggio, and chromatic passing tones, to create extended eighth-note phrases. Christian’s chromatic devices were used to connect phrases across harmonies, enhanced by a consistent balance of tension and
release. Spring states that it was Christian’s use of these formulas and licks that allowed him to play unique phrases that resulted in a new direction in jazz improvisation.\textsuperscript{136}

In “Shivers,” Christian uses a slightly modified enclosure to help create an eight-measure phrase of nearly continuous eighth notes. It is not an enclosure in the strictest sense because he leaves out the fourth and plays 5-#2-3 over the Ab [Example 35]. He then continues with a leap of an augmented fifth from Eb to B. In measure fourteen he continues the phrase by approaching the chord tones of the ninth (Bb) and sixth (F) by a half-step above, similar to Example 30b in “Solo Flight.”

Example 35

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.8\textwidth]{example35.png}
\caption{Shivers, chorus 1, m. 13-14}
\end{figure}

In “Breakfast Feud” Christian creates a six bar phrase at the beginning of his chorus over Bb7 [Example 36]. He begins on the third (D) of Bb7, leaping from the fifth (F) to the ninth (C), incorporating both the flat-second (Cb) and flat-sixth (Gb) to chromatically lead into an enclosure of the third (D) in measure nine. In measure ten, he plays a Bbº7 arpeggio over a Bb7, emphasizing the altered chord tones sharp-second and flat-fifth. In measure eleven, he descends from the root as he did in measure eight, into another enclosure of the third (D). He leads into the IV chord by descending a Bb9 arpeggio, with a passing flat-second, into a Bb that resolves into the Eb7.

\textsuperscript{136} Spring, 98.
The enclosure of the third via the raised second was one of Christian’s signature licks, but he also used this technique to delay the resolution to other chord tones as well. He avoids enclosing the third almost completely in “Solo Flight.” Instead, he seems to be anticipating the V-I resolution to C by enclosing the sixth (A) in measure fifty-seven [Example 37a]. Later in the same phrase, he encloses the third (F) of Db7 by whole-steps instead of the half-steps or an appoggiatura [Example 37b]. Christian uses an appoggiatura in his final chorus to surround the flat-seventh (Bb) of C [Example 37c].

Spring and Finkelman’s exact 5-4-#2-3 formula is not used in this form once in the entire recording. This possibly shows that Christian favored certain formulas, but did not rely on these formulas to be the core of all his improvisations.
Christian uses an appoggiatura in “Guy’s Got to Go” to surround the third (E) of C7, but does not follow the traditional formula [Example 38]. Instead he resolves to the third of C7 on the downbeat of measure twenty-two via the fifth (D) and seventh (F) on beat four of the G7 in measure twenty-one. This appoggiatura provides a strong 7-3 voice leading melody. Christian then encloses the ninth of C7 by whole-steps in measure twenty-two, creating an enclosure sequence.
In “Seven Come Eleven” Christian anticipates the V chord by using an appoggiatura to surround the root of Eb7 in measure twenty-four. He follows this by enclosing the third (C) of the Ab chord [Example 39a]. In measures twenty-nine to thirty-two, Christian gives the impression of a plagal cadence (IV-I) by outlining a Db triad and resolving it back to a tonic Ab in measure thirty-one. Christian uses an appoggiatura to surround the root (Db) in measures twenty-nine into thirty and chromatically approaches the F via the E-natural, which could be analyzed as the #2-3 of the Db chord. He ends the chorus with a 5-#2-3-5 in measure thirty-one and leaps down to the root and flat-seventh (Gb) of Ab in measure thirty-two [Example 39b].

In both Examples 39a and 39b, Christian used variations in rhythms and rests to add diversity to techniques that enabled him to add more chromaticism and tension to his melodies. Christian skillfully used chromatic pitches to delay resolutions, create tension, extend phrase lengths, and imply other harmonies.
Harmonic Substitutions

Lawn defines harmonic substitution as “changing and/or adding chords to a progression to create added interest and dissonance.” Michael Denny wrote in his thesis that harmonic substitution does not seem to be a facet of Christian’s playing. Although it was not a central facet in Christian’s playing, harmonic substitutions were not absent.

One of Christian’s preferred substitutions was to replace the tonic (I) with the submediant (vi). For example, he would outline an Am triad over a C chord. The two chords share two common tones, C and E, but the submediant emphasizes the sixth (A) over the tonic chord. He favors this substitution the most over the tonic of a blues progression as in “Breakfast Feud” and “Grand Slam” [Examples 40a and 40b]. Christian also substitutes the Gm with a G diminished triad, changing the natural-third (B) to a flat-third (Bb) in measure sixteen of “Breakfast Feud” [Example 40c]. He often resolves the sixth up to the root when he does use a submediant substitution over a tonic chord.

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137 Lawn, 111.
The second type of harmonic substitution Christian would often imply was adding a ii (supertonic) before a V (dominant). Levine states that most jazz standards written in the 1920s and 1930s favored V-I progressions. Adding the ii was one of the first reharmonization techniques used by musicians of the 1930s. One of the clearest examples of how Christian inserts a ii chord over a V is in “Benny’s Bugle” [Example 41a]. Over the F7 Christian descends G-Eb-C-Bb. This can be analyzed as a 9-b7-5-4 over the F7, but it is also the 5-b3-R-b7 of Cm7. Christian then resolves the Bb into the A and ascends an Am7(b5) arpeggio. The Bb to A implies a 7-3 leading tone resolution that strongly suggests Christian was thinking ii-V in this measure. This implied ii-V leading tone resolution occurs with some regularity in nearly all of Christian’s solos. By using this substitution, Christian displays smooth voice leading and puts emphasis on the ninth (G), an upper chord extension.

Example 41a

Christian plays a similar ii-V substitution in “Solo Flight” and “Lips Flips” [Examples 41b and 41c]. Both times Christian descends a ii7 chord over the V7 and then

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139 Levine, 260.
ascends a half-diminished seventh chord from the third (B) of the G7 chord. Christian uses the implied 7-3 voice leading technique across the barline in both examples as well.

Example 41b

In “Lips Flips” Christian delays the Ab7 chord by outlining the tonic (Db) to start the phrase. He then descends a Ebm7 from the Bb, into a 7-3 resolution on the downbeat of measure forty-six, and up a Cm7(b5) arpeggio [Example 41c].

Example 41c

Christian’s implication of a ii-V substitution did not always involve a full arpeggation of a ii7 chord; often it could be more subtle. In “Honeysuckle Rose” Christian starts on the flat-seventh (Gb) instead of the ninth (Bb) of the Ab7, which is also the flat-third (Gb) of Ebm7 [Example 42a]. Christian then leads into the Cm7(b5) chord via the 7-3 voice leading.
Example 42

Christian would also use a scalar descent, starting on the flat-seventh (Eb) of the dominant chord, to imply a ii-V substitution. The Eb can also be perceived as the flat-third of the ii chord (Cm7). In “Gone With ‘What’ Wind,” beginning on beat three of measure seventeen, Christian starts on the flat-seventh (Eb) of the F7 and descends to the third (A) [Example 42b].

Example 42b

Example 43 is a fine example of Christian’s use of several harmonic substitutions to create interesting melodies. He begins by hinting at a ii7 substitution in measure seventeen, leading into Am7(b5) in measure eighteen. He then plays an Am triad, a submediant substitution, on beats three and four of measure eighteen to anticipate the C7 chord in measure nineteen.

Another common substitution in jazz is called a tritone substitution. This can occur over any dominant-seventh harmony. A dominant-seventh chord may be replaced
by another dominant-seventh whose root is a tritone, or augmented fourth, away from the root of the original chord. For example a G7 may be replaced with a C#7. Both share the chord tones F and B, which are the third and flat-seventh of C#7 and flat-seventh and third of G7. Although Christian does not use this substitution with regularity, it is present on at least one solo examined for this study.

In measure twenty-one of “Wholly Cats” the chord is an Am7 (the ii of G) that resolves into the V (D7). Christian clearly outlines an Eb7 triad and also uses the Eb7 bebop scale to resolve to the seventh (C) of D7 [Example 44]. Christian plays what jazz theorist Richard Lawn calls “chord quality substitution.” Christian first changes the Am7 to an A7, changing the chord’s quality from minor to dominant. He then applies a tritone substitution to A7 and outlines an Eb7 chord.

Example 44

\[ \text{Example 44} \]

\[ \text{Am7} \quad \text{(Eb7)} \quad \text{D7} \]

Wholly Cats, chorus 2, m.21-22

\[ 140 \text{ Lawn, 118.} \]
Concluding Remarks

Charlie Christian’s approach to dominant-seventh harmonies included a range of techniques. His scalar approach favored the use of the Mixolydian mode and sometimes the chromatic scale. One of his most commonly used arpeggio techniques was to ascend a half-diminished seventh or diminished triad starting on the third of the dominant chord. This allowed Christian to accentuate the chord tones 3-5-b7-9. Christian made great use of a wide range of chromatic tones in his improvisations, using both passing tones, half-step sequences, and enclosures. Christian could be seen as one of the earliest users of the chromatic passing tones associated with today’s “bebop scales.” His enclosure of the third scale degree by surrounding it via the fourth and sharp-second was a staple in Christian’s vocabulary. Finally, Christian seemed to be on the forefront of harmonic substitution. He favored submediant substitutions over tonic and often expanded a V-I progression into a ii-V-I. He also seemed to have some knowledge of tritone substitutions. Christian also creatively incorporated multiple techniques to maximize harmonic and melodic tension by using anticipation, repetition, and sequences.

As research done by Spring and Finkelman have suggested, Christian did seem to favor specific pattern-forms or formulas over recurring harmonies. This does not diminish the impact these solos had on other jazz artists. Thomas Owens’ dissertation on Charlie Parker found that Parker too relied heavily on reoccurring formulas.141 Finkelman suggests that Christian did not approach his improvisations as isolated ideas pieced within the context of a solo, but these formulas were a part of Christian’s mode of

operation and thinking.\textsuperscript{142} Regardless, Christian’s impact was considerable on the jazz guitar community. Just hearing “Solo Flight” was enough to capture Wes Montgomery’s imagination and motivated him to pursue a career in jazz.\textsuperscript{143}

\textsuperscript{142} Finkelman, \textit{Jazzforschung}, 163.
\textsuperscript{143} Ingram, 49.
CHAPTER 4

STYLISTIC TRAITS OF WES MONTGOMERY INFLUENCED BY

CHARLIE CHRISTIAN

Charlie Christian’s influence on Wes Montgomery’s improvisations will be
examined now through a process of comparisons between the two guitarists’ approaches
to dominant harmonies. Similar to the manner that Christian was examined in the
previous chapter, so will Montgomery’s use of scales, arpeggios, chromatic pitches,
enclosures and formulas, and harmonic substitutions be analyzed. Each of these five
categories will be examined through the lens of how Montgomery’s imitation and
assimilation of Christian’s solos lead to innovation. Imitation and assimilation will be
studied through a comparison of the two guitarists’ similarities in approach and usage of
these five categories. The innovation will be shown in the differences between the two
guitarists and the elements that Montgomery added to make his improvisations unique.
Montgomery admitted that he learned jazz guitar largely through imitation. Montgomery stated that “every musician, until he has mastered himself and his instrument, needs a model.” Montgomery has referred to Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Frank Sinatra, and Tony Bennett as all significant influences. He called Coltrane “sort of a God” and stated that he slowed Coltrane’s 1959 recording of “Giant Steps” down to 16 rpm to study it better. The album *Giant Steps* was released in early 1960, the same year as Montgomery’s *The Incredible Jazz Guitar of Wes Montgomery*. It is probable that Coltrane’s “Giant Steps” influence is present in Montgomery’s recordings after 1960, but they will not be examined for this study. Montgomery also states that his approach to developing a melody thematically was influenced by saxophonist Sonny Rollins. But Charlie Christian was Montgomery’s primary influence. Montgomery states that he heard Christian on a recording of “Solo Flight” and “didn’t look at nobody else.” Although he admitted listening to other guitarists, it was Christian’s solos that Montgomery learned note-for-note off the recordings. Berliner states that the jazz musician’s combination of elements learned from a mixture of models mask the soloist’s retrospective characters and increases the interest of the solo. He goes on to state that a mixture of models vastly

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144 Stewart, 5.
145 Ingram, 50.
146 Ibid., 53.
147 Ibid., 53.
148 Gleason, 44.
expands the improviser’s applications for creative invention.\textsuperscript{149} It is these other models, mixed with Christian’s, which also helped to facilitate Montgomery’s innovations.

The timetable for Montgomery’s period of imitation, assimilation, and innovation is not exact. Montgomery began playing a six string electric guitar in 1943, then after eight months of transcribing Christian’s solos he was hired by Mel Lees. At that time, Montgomery states he could only play the Christian solos he had memorized.\textsuperscript{150} In May of 1948, five years after hearing “Solo Flight,” Montgomery was hired by Lionel Hampton to play guitar in his band. Montgomery made a few recordings with Hampton during this time, mostly recorded live from radio broadcasts, but left the band in 1950. Wes would not record again until December 1957. From 1957 to 1959 Montgomery still could not afford to live solely off being a professional musician. It wasn’t until his first record deal, in October 1959, with Orrin Keepnews’ Riverside label that Montgomery was able to fully commit to living as a professional musician.\textsuperscript{151} How long Montgomery would continue to transcribe Christian solos during this fourteen to sixteen year period of development is not known. Montgomery’s development was also not completely a result of his imitation of Christian’s solos, but Christian’s influence was one of Montgomery’s strongest ties to jazz’s deep traditions.

Paul Rinzler writes that most who study jazz learn through absorbing the traditions of jazz through imitation of past artists.\textsuperscript{152} From imitation of past artists, like Charlie Christian, jazz musicians are able to absorb key stylistic traits like vocabulary,

\textsuperscript{149} Berliner, 182-183.
\textsuperscript{150} De Stefano, 36.
\textsuperscript{151} Ingram, 23.
phrasing, and tone. In jazz it is generally not acceptable to remain at the level of imitation, but it is the jazz student’s enthusiasm for past jazz artists that help encourage tradition. This is shown in Montgomery’s straightforward passion for Christian’s playing. Montgomery has commented in multiple interviews that he would not have even gone into music if it were not for Charlie Christian.

Berliner expands on the benefits of imitation, stating that it helps students to absorb elusive musical attributes and experience periodic breakthroughs of self-awareness. Berliner also states that as the student absorbs and reproduces the phrase heard on the records, so too does the student begin to cultivate the ability to precisely imagine ideas and immediately recreate them. This may explain much of what contributed to Montgomery’s ability to take what he imitated and add his own voice to it. Montgomery did not learn to read music and admits that “[he did not] know the chords from seeing their names on paper.” It was only after hearing the chords that he was able to “get the idea.”

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153 Rinzler, 94.
154 Ingram, 49.
155 Berliner, 198-199.
156 Ingram, 45.
Wes Montgomery with Lionel Hampton

During Montgomery’s two years in Hampton’s band, he admitted relying heavily on what he learned from his study of Charlie Christian solos. Although Montgomery is not featured significantly in many of the recordings during this time, two records from live broadcasts in July of 1948 give some insight as to Montgomery’s sound.

The first solo is from July 1, 1948 during a live radio broadcast in Geneva, New York. Montgomery receives eight bars in the middle of the big band arrangement of “Adam Blew His Hat” [Example 45].

Example 45

Like Christian, Montgomery’s use of scales in these few bars are not overwhelming and he seems to favor arpeggios. Over the minor harmonies, Cm7 (measure one) and G#m7 (measures five to six), Montgomery plays a descending Dorian mode, the diatonic second mode of the major scale.

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157 Ingram, 12.
Montgomery’s use of arpeggios are more numerous and reflect more similarities to Christian. Christian often approached dominant harmonies as a triad over a bass note. Montgomery frequently arpeggiates up from the third of the dominant chord and outlines a diminished triad or half-diminished seventh chord (similar to Christian in Example 16). Montgomery begins in measure one over a Cm7 by arpeggiating an EbMaj7 chord over the Cm7. Montgomery is treating a given harmony as a triad over a bass note, allowing him to emphasize more of the upper chord extensions. This is similar to how Christian approached dominant chords. The notes of EbMaj7 when played over Cm7 become the third (Eb), fifth (G), minor seventh (Bb) and ninth (D).

The majority of dominant harmonies come in at measures six through nine, with a progression of dominant harmonies moving around the cycle of fourths, beginning with a C#7 leading to the D7. In measure seven, over the F#7-B7, Montgomery outlines an EMajor7 arpeggio with a passing chromatic D-natural to the C# [Example 45a]. Over the F#7, Montgomery plays all upper chord extensions beginning with the sixth (D#), flat-seventh (E), ninth (G#), and eleventh (B). Over the B7 he plays the third (D#), flat-third (D), and ninth (C#). The passing chromatic pitch of the D between the D# and C# is a common Christian technique (see Example 10) Montgomery might have added into his own vocabulary.

Example 45a
In measure eight Montgomery anticipates the resolution to the D7 by outlining a D triad over the E7 and A7. [Example 45b] Along with his use of anticipating the resolution of a harmony, Montgomery displays another signature Christian trait by playing the flat-third (or sharp-second) to chromatically lead into the third of D (see Examples 13 and 14a through 14e).

Example 45b

A final point of interest in “Adam Blew His Hat” that is similar to Christian involves the chromatic notes in measures three (Bb6). In measure three Montgomery plays what appears to be an appoggiatura of the lowered second (B) of Bb6 [Example 45c]. He then resolves to the Bb on beat three and then plays the third (D) and fifth (F) of a Bb triad. This resembles Christian’s technique of enclosing notes, except Christian favored strong chord tones like the third (see Example 33). Montgomery, like Christian, does not shy from playing chromatic tones on strong beats to create tension in his solo.

Example 45c
The second solo that prominently features Wes Montgomery with the Lionel Hampton Orchestra is “Brant Inn Boogie,” recorded live on July 21, 1948. “Brant Inn Boogie” is a blues in C. Montgomery is given one and a half choruses to solo over [Example 46].

Example 46

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\begin{music}
\score{\newStaff{\z\C7 \C7 \G7 \D7 \G7 \C7 \G7 \C7 \G7 \D7 \G7}}
\end{music}
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Brant Inn Boogie, Wes Montgomery with the Lionel Hampton Jazz Orchestra, Recorded July 21, 1948

“Brant Inn Boogie” contains several elements that could be traced back to Montgomery’s study of Christian’s playing. The first is the prominent use of the raised second (or flat-third) to the third that occurs in measures two to three and measure fourteen [Example 46a and 46b]. In Example 46b, the raised-second (Bb) to natural-third
(B) occurs over the C7, in the context of the melody in which Montgomery is anticipating
the change to the G7 chord by three beats.

Montgomery also makes use of three other techniques favored by Christian,
which are the dominant bebop scale, enclosures/appoggiaturas, and harmonic
substitution. In measure four, Montgomery descends a G dominant bebop scale, playing
both the lowered and natural-seventh, starting on the fifth (D). Montgomery plays the
scale in its entirety, ending on the D on the downbeat of measure five [Example 47].

In measure fourteen Montgomery uses a G⁰ triad as an appoggiatura to surround
the root of C7. Montgomery uses the Bb and Db to surround the C on beat two [Example
48]. In addition, the Bb-B-C-D on beats three and four, could be also analyzed as an
ascending C dominant bebop scale. This one measure exemplifies how Montgomery was
beginning to assimilate multiple techniques that are associated with Christian’s vocabulary.

Example 48

Montgomery uses harmonic substitution briefly in measure seven over the G7 to end his phrase. He ends on the root (G) on beat one, but quickly plays a D triad, inserting a V-I resolution. The F# and A could also be seen as another appoggiatura that surrounds the G [Example 49].

Example 49

Montgomery also combines the melodic devices of appoggiatura, harmonic substitution, and bebop scales in the closing of “Brant Inn Boogie.” In measure seventeen, over the D7, he substitutes the IV chord (C7) on beat three [Example 50]. This was a common blues technique to play the V then IV into the tonic (I) during the last four bars of a blues. Although the bass and piano do not play the C7, Montgomery inserts it.
Montgomery encloses the C in measure seventeen via the D and B and then arpeggiates up the flat-seventh (Bb). He plays the C dominant bebop into the C in measure eighteen, which he then continues chromatically to the D on beat two. This could be an example of Montgomery combining both the C and D dominant bebop scales in succession. He anticipates the G7 a measure early, similar to how Christian would often anticipate chord resolutions.

Example 50

Examples 48, 49, and 50 are all possible evidence that Montgomery was using techniques he absorbed through his imitation of Christian, but at the same time assimilating them to create new melodic ideas of his own.

Another technique that both Christian and Montgomery used frequently in their improvisations is sequences. Montgomery made great use of this technique throughout his career and “Brant Inn Boogie” is no exception. He begins his first full chorus in measure nine and uses a scale Christian nearly never used, the anhemitonic pentatonic scale. The pentatonic scale is a five note scale derived from the major scale that avoids half steps. Lawn states that pentatonic scales have been used in the construction of
numerous African and Latin American folk music. In measures nine through twelve Montgomery uses the G minor pentatonic (relative minor of the Bb major pentatonic) [Example 51]. The pitches are G, Bb, C, D, F or root, minor third, fourth, fifth, flat-seventh of the G minor scale. All five pitches (G, Bb, C, D, F) work well over the I (tonic) and IV (subdominant) chords. Montgomery uses a repeating rhythmic ostinato to create a sequence over four bars.

Example 51

![Example 51](image)

These rare examples of Montgomery’s playing in 1948 while with the Lionel Hampton big band show that Montgomery was applying melodic techniques that could be credited to his imitation and assimilation of Charlie Christian’s playing. Even at this fairly early stage, Montgomery was not a Christian clone in any way. Montgomery was already using techniques like enclosing chord tones, chromatic pitches, and harmonic substitutions in new configurations. Montgomery also was using a Christian staple of playing the sharp-second before the third, as well as using sequences and anticipating chord resolutions. Montgomery would leave the Hampton band in 1950 and return to Indianapolis to continue working with his organ trio in the jazz clubs of the city. Montgomery would not be heard on a recording for nearly eight years after this. During

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158 Lawn, 16.
this time Montgomery would continue to build on the material he imitated from Charlie Christian and continue to assimilate these techniques into a new Wes Montgomery vocabulary.

Scales

Montgomery recordings between December 1957 to January 1960 shared some similarities to Christian’s use of scales but there are also several distinct differences. Like Christian, Montgomery rarely played complete scalar passages and seemed to favor more arpeggio-focused melodies. Christian and Montgomery used the Mixolydian mode over dominant harmonies, but Montgomery incorporates other modes of the major scale as well. Unlike Christian, Montgomery made frequent use of the minor pentatonic scale, the diminished scale, and modes from both the melodic minor and harmonic minor.

Montgomery plays a complete Bb Mixolydian scale over the Bb7 in “West Coast Blues” [Example 52]. He begins on the sixth (G), ascends to the root (Bb), and resolves to the root of Bm7 in measure 7. With Montgomery starting on the G, the scale sounds like the Phrygian mode with all the strong chord tones (root, third, fifth, and flat-seventh of Bb7) falling on the strong beats in this phrase.

Example 52
In “Airegin” Montgomery almost plays a complete G Mixolydian scale with no alterations in measures forty-six to forty-seven. He begins on the third (B) of G7 and descends down to the root (G), but he does not play an F (flat-seventh) [Example 53]. Just as in example 52, all of chord’s main chord tones (root, third, fifth) fall on the strong beats of this phrase.

Example 53

A harmonic technique Montgomery displays in his use of scales that shows he was possibly expanding on Christian’s foundation is the use of what Coker calls harmonic generalization. Coker defines this technique as when an improviser uses one scale to accommodate two or more chords of a progression.\(^\text{159}\) Christian would also generalize a two measure phrase if it was a ii-V progression as simply the V (see Example 30b). It is possible that Montgomery was introduced to this technique through Christian, but the compositions in Christian’s day were not always as harmonically active as in Montgomery’s.

Montgomery uses a similar harmonic generalization technique in a chord progression in “Missile Blues.” Montgomery plays an Eb Mixolydian scale in measure 159

\(^{159}\) Coker, *Elements of Jazz*, 45.
twenty over the Bbm7-Eb7. He appears to be treating the entire measure simply as an Eb7, beginning on the Eb on the pick-up to measure twenty [Example 54].

Example 54

![Musical notation](image)

Missile Blues, chorus 2, m.20

In “Yesterdays” Montgomery seems to be generalizing measures thirteen and fourteen as just an F7 chord by playing an F Mixolydian scale over both the F7 and Bb7 chords [Example 55]. Over the F7, in measure thirteen, Montgomery begins on the strong chord tone of the flat-seventh (Eb). On beat three he appears to be anticipating the Bb7 by starting his scalar melody on the root Bb. In measure fourteen the harmony changes to a Bb7 but Montgomery does not change to Bb7 Mixolydian and instead plays an A-natural and not an Ab. The A-natural is found in the F Mixolydian scale. He then treats measures fifteen and sixteen as an A7(b9) chord. Montgomery appears to favor the melody over outlining the exact harmonic specifications of a composition. What Montgomery creates is a scalar melody that builds and releases the harmonic tension in a way that is uniquely his own.
Example 55

This passage is also unique in that Montgomery continues with a scalar melody over the Em7(b5)-A7 and uses a scale that Christian does not use: the harmonic minor. Rick Lawn states that the fifth mode of a harmonic minor scale is ideal over dominant harmonies with the altered chord extensions of a flat-ninth and sharp-fifth.\textsuperscript{160} Beginning in measure fifteen, Montgomery descends a D harmonic minor scale starting on the A-natural. Montgomery seems to be treating measures fifteen and sixteen as an A7 with the altered tones of the flat-ninth (Bb) and flat-thirteenth (F). Although the flat-ninth was common in Christian’s playing, the flat-thirteenth was not. Montgomery is adding to his own vocabulary, branching away from Christian’s influence. Montgomery’s use of the harmonic minor scale is not as common as other scales making this occurrence in “Yesterdays” unique.

Montgomery expands upon Christian’s playing in his use of scales in ways that seem to combine his use of harmonic generalization with other modes. On some occasions, it appears that Montgomery creates a melody around the Dorian mode (second mode of the major scale) instead of the Mixolydian when improvising over a ii-V progression. Because the Dorian mode contains both the minor third and minor seventh,

\textsuperscript{160} Lawn, 40.
it is associated with minor seventh chords. It also contains the upper chord extensions of the natural-ninth, eleventh, and sixth.

In “Billie’s Bounce,” Montgomery plays the same figure twice over a Gm7-C7 progression [Example 56]. Montgomery begins on the F into the G and ascends up to the F, but both times skips the E. The consistent skip of the E, the third of C7, gives the impression that Montgomery might be generalizing the ii-V as just the ii and plays a scalar melody that resembles the Dorian mode.

Example 56

The opposite occurs in measure thirty-nine, over an Am7-D7, in that this time Montgomery seems to be generalizing the V chord. He does play the third (F#) of D7, but skips the C (flat-seventh) [Example 57]. Both Examples 56 and 57 contain the same missing pitch over a C7, the E. The missing note is either the third of C7 or sixth of Gm7.

Example 57
Montgomery’s use of scales in his improvisations included two modes from the melodic minor, the fourth (Lydian dominant) and the seventh (altered scale). The melodic minor is almost completely identical to the major scale with the exception of the melodic minor scale containing a minor third. Levine states that the melodic minor scale provides the improviser with greater melodic and intervallic possibilities. Montgomery appears to have been familiar with the sounds of the melodic minor scale and use them to great effect.

The Lydian dominant is identical to the Mixolydian with the exception of a raised fourth scale degree. The raised fourth scale degree was used by Christian (see Examples 28b and 29) and was not uncommon to jazz musicians before Montgomery. Montgomery did use the sharp-eleventh more frequently in his arpeggio playing. A clear instance in which Montgomery played a Lydian dominant scale is in “D-Natural Blues.” In measure seventeen, over a G7, Montgomery begins with the leading tone (F#) and continues up the G Lydian dominant scale, into an F7(#5) arpeggio [Example 58].

Example 58

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161 In classical theory, the ascending melodic minor scale consists of a minor third and natural-sixth and seventh scale degree. The descending melodic minor scale is identical to the Aeolian mode (sixth mode of the major scale).

162 Levine, 57.
The seventh mode of the melodic minor scale is referred to as the altered scale or diminished whole-tone. The altered scale contains a natural-third and flat-seventh, similar to the Mixolydian, but that is the end of the similarities. The altered scale contains both the flat and sharp-ninth, sharp-eleventh (or flat-fifth), and flat-thirteenth (or sharp-fifth) [Example 59]. It is also referred to as a diminished whole-tone scale because it begins like a diminished scale and ends like a whole-tone scale.\textsuperscript{163} Altered chord extensions were not new to jazz musicians during Montgomery’s day. Christian regularly used chromatically altered chord extensions in his playing. Montgomery and Christian both favored these altered tones in their use of arpeggios, but Montgomery does show a few instances in which he uses them in scalar melodies.

Example 59

In “Ecaroh” Montgomery plays an F altered scale over an F7 in measure eighteen. He begins on the sharp-fifth and descends the altered scale, playing both the sharp-ninth and flat-ninth, and ending with an enclosure of the third (D) of BbMaj7 [Example 60]. The only note of the altered scale Montgomery does not play is the sharp-eleventh (B).

\textsuperscript{163} Levine, 71.
In “Missile Blues” Montgomery descends the D altered scale from the flat-seventh (C) to enclose the fifth (D) of the G7 [Example 61]. In this example, Montgomery does play every altered chord tone over the D7.

Another scale used by jazz musicians to emphasize altered chord tones is the diminished scale. The diminished scale is an eight-note scale, also known as the octatonic scale. It is constructed from a reoccurring series of alternating whole and half-steps. These reoccurring half-steps provide four strong resolutions within the scale.\(^\text{164}\) When the scale begins with a whole-step it is associated with fully-diminished seventh chords. When the scale begins with a half-step, sometimes referred to as an inverted diminished scale, it is associated with altered dominant harmonies. Like the altered scale it contains the third and flat-seventh, as well as the sharp- and flat-ninth, and flat-fifth (or sharp-

\(^{164}\) Lawn, 37.
eleventh). The difference between the two scales is that the inverted diminished (also called the half-whole diminished scale) contains both the natural-fifth and natural-sixth scale degrees [Example 62]. Another characteristic of the diminished scale is that all chord constructions inherent in the scale duplicate after every minor third. For example, the half-whole diminished contains a C7, Eb7, F#7, and A7 chord with a flat- and sharp-ninth, flat-fifth, and natural-thirteenth.\(^{165}\) Although Christian did use these chord tones in his arpeggios, he never played them in a way that represented a scale.

Example 62

Like Christian, Montgomery mainly used the altered tones found in the diminished scale in his arpeggio melodies, but there are a few examples of Montgomery playing the diminished scale. In measure sixty-six of “Airegin,” Montgomery plays a C diminished scale, starting on the natural-thirteenth, into measure sixty-seven. He ends his melody with an enclosure of the root of the Cm7(b5) chord [Example 63].

\(^{165}\) Baker, *Jazz Improvisation*, 36.
Other scales that Montgomery favored that do not seem to be rooted in Christian’s influence were the minor pentatonic scale and blues scale. He frequently used them in conjunction with harmonic generalization in a blues progression. The minor pentatonic scale has been discussed earlier in the analysis of “Brant Inn Boogie” (see Example 51). The blues scale is derived from the minor pentatonic and adds chromatic passing tones between the natural-third and flat-fifth [Example 64].

In “Bock to Bock,” one of Montgomery’s first recordings after his days with Lionel Hampton, Montgomery opens his solo with a melody based on the Db minor pentatonic. The A section is a simple minor progression revolving around the tonic (Dbm7) and dominant chord (Ab7). The A7 chord acts as a tritone substitution for an Eb7, also acting as a V7 of V. Montgomery seems to be generalizing the first five bars as simply Dbm7 [Example 65].
Montgomery, similarly as he did in the first chorus, begins the second chorus of “Bock to Bock” with the Db minor pentatonic scale over the first five bars. This time Montgomery plays the melody in what would become one of his signature techniques, playing in octaves [Example 66].

Gunther Schuller writes about Montgomery’s solos being constructed in three tiers: first single notes, then in octaves, and finally in block chords. Schuller writes that Montgomery rarely varied from this three-tier pattern and it brings strong dramatic effect to the solo. He also states that the octave technique did not compromise the content of Montgomery’s solos.\textsuperscript{166} It seems Montgomery is about to use this three-tier technique in “Bock to Bock,” but instead returns to single notes in measure thirty-eight and stays with

\textsuperscript{166} Ingram, 21.
them for the remainder of the solo. Montgomery does ever not state when he began playing in octaves, but he recalls that he discovered the technique while tuning his guitar. Octaves were a challenge for Montgomery and he remembers practicing them use to give him headaches. He also states that it took a lot of time to develop both octaves and block chords into his playing.\(^{167}\)

Montgomery uses the E minor pentatonic scale in measure twelve of “Bock to Bock” over the A7 and Ab7. The pentatonic scale works well over the A7, emphasizing the flat-seventh (G) and natural-fifth (E), and also producing colorful altered tones over the Ab7. The B, A, and D serve as the sharp-ninth, flat-ninth, and flat-fifth of the Ab7 [Example 67].

Example 67

\[\text{Example 67}\]

In “Billie’s Bounce,” recorded at the same session as “Bock to Bock,” Montgomery uses the F blues scale to help construct a melody he will use as a theme to be repeated and developed. In measures one and two Montgomery plays a melody over the tonic (I) and subdominant (IV) chord built entirely from the F blues scale [Example 68a]. Montgomery responds to the melody in measures five into eight, continuing to use the F blues scale. The second blues scale melody is more developed and ends on the flat-

\(^{167}\)Gleason, 44.
fifth (B) of the F7. De Stefano notes that Montgomery has a natural inclination for the flat-fifth when using the blues scale [Example 68b]. Finally, Montgomery briefly comes back to the melody he played in measures one and two in measures seventeen and eighteen [Example 68c]. Using the blues scale over multiple harmonies of the blues is not uncommon. Mark Levine states that the blues scale is a unique scale in that it can be played over the I, IV, and V chords of the blues. The use of the blues scale, particularly over the blues, is a unique feature in Montgomery’s playing that is not prominent in Christian’s work.

Example 68a

Example 68b

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169 Levine, 233.
Montgomery more often favored using the blues and pentatonic scale to begin and end his choruses. In “West Coast Blues,” a blues in the key of Bb, Montgomery begins his sixth chorus playing a melody using the Bb blues scale. As in “Billie’s Bounce,” Montgomery extends the scale over both the tonic (I) and subdominant (IV) chord [Example 69]. Montgomery uses the scale to play a motive that begins in measure one hundred forty-two and he continues to develop it using rhythmic variations up to measure one hundred forty-eight.

In “D-Natural Blues” Montgomery mixed the D blues scale with a Charlie Christian quote over the final six bars of the second chorus. In his improvisations, Christian would frequently play a melody consisting of the root, sharp-second, third, and fifth; often he would end on the root an octave above. It was so frequently used Spring
labeled it Christian’s “Second Tonic Formula.” An example of Christian playing this melody is in “Gone With ‘What’ Wind” (measure one of Example 12), “Seven Come Eleven” (measures two and three of Example 13), and measures seven through ten “Benny’s Bugle” [Example 70].

Example 70

![Benny's Bugle, mb. 1, m. 7-10]

The C# in “Benny’s Bugle” (Example 70) could be analyzed as the flat-third of the blues scale, but the rest of the melody does not suggest Christian was using this scale. Christian seemed to utilize this raised second for the bluesy affect it would evoke.

Christian repeats the motive in measure seven, again over the F7, using the harmonic generalization technique, and finally playing the C# in measure ten as part of an enclosure. Christian appears to be anticipating the final Bb7, a technique he and Montgomery both shared. It is this formula that would be the foundation for a melody in “D-Natural Blues.”

Montgomery borrows several techniques found in Christian’s “Benny’s Bugle” melody into his own. Montgomery’s melody in measures eighteen to twenty-five is repeated, developed, and used over several different harmonies. Though Christian’s influence is present, Montgomery does not copy Christian exactly. Montgomery begins in

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170 Spring, 60.
measure eighteen, on beat two, with a descending D minor pentatonic scale [Example 71]. Montgomery states the R-#2-3 theme in measure nineteen and moves the theme up the octave in measure twenty. Montgomery plays the R-#2-3 motive eight total times in this phrase. De Stefano states Montgomery often uses the blues scale to create fragmental motives. De Stefano also writes that Montgomery will frequently repeat a blues pattern for development in his solos. This example in “D-Natural Blues” is a strong representation of Montgomery’s ability to use Christian’s inspiration to build a motive and develop it across seven measures and six different harmonies.

Example 71

In measure twenty-four, Montgomery plays a melody resembling Christian’s “Second Tonic Formula” (R, #2, 3, 5, 6, R), in “D-Natural Blues.” It is paired next to a melody Christian played in his improvisation on “Seven Come Eleven” [Example 72].

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171 De Stefano, “Wes Montgomery’s Improvisational Style,” 147.
Both Christian and Montgomery arpeggiate a major triad with an added sixth, both include a chromatic sharp-second leading into the third, and both have rhythmic similarities.

Example 72

Montgomery’s use of the minor pentatonic and blues scale in his improvisations are an example of how present assimilation of Christian’s influences are in Montgomery’s work. Montgomery blends melodies from Christian with his own unique voice and vision. Montgomery did use the Mixolydian scale, but also incorporated modes from the melodic minor, diminished, and minor pentatonic scale to assimilate together and begin to innovate new melodic terrain. Also present in Montgomery’s playing is Christian’s influence in repetition, variation, and development to create tension and release in improvisations.

Arpeggios

Arpeggios were a very dominant source for both Christian and Montgomery in their improvisations. Montgomery’s use of arpeggios is discussed at length in De
Stefano’s PhD dissertation. De Stefano writes that Montgomery not only favored triads in his improvisations, but also four, five, and six-note chordal structures.\(^{173}\) De Stefano also states that Montgomery had a strong inclination to play chordal structures that were based on ascending thirds.\(^{174}\)

One of the strongest resemblances between Montgomery and Christian might be Christian’s use of diminished chords over dominant harmonies (see Examples 15 and 16). Christian favored playing either a diminished triad or half-diminished arpeggio up from the third of the dominant to outline the third, fifth, flat-seventh, and ninth of the dominant chord. This technique was something Montgomery uses as well.

In “Montgomeryland Funk” Wes Montgomery plays an Am7(b5) arpeggio over an F7 chord on beat three and a Dm7(b5) over the Bb7 in measure five [Example 73]. Montgomery’s arpeggio usage does not copy Christian exactly, but adds upon Christian’s foundation. In measure four, over the Cm7-F7, Montgomery continues to arpeggiate up to the D (ninth of Cm7). From the D Montgomery descends a scalar run that incorporates the flat-second (Gb). The closest analysis is that Montgomery is playing a Bb harmonic minor scale in measure four. By measure five, Montgomery plays the third (D) of Bb7 on beat one and arpeggiates up using the notes of a D° triad. One added Christian technique that Montgomery displays is the 7-3 voice leading resolution displayed in measures four and five. This technique has been discussed earlier in Christian’s playing (see Examples 41a, 41b, and 41c) and seems to be a feature that Montgomery has also incorporated into

\(^{173}\) De Stefano, “Wes Montgomery’s Improvisational Style,” 115.
\(^{174}\) De Stefano, “Wes Montgomery’s Improvisational Style,” 118.
his own harmonic vocabulary. Montgomery arpeggiates from the third of the F7 and Bb7 on the strong beat of each chord.

Example 73

In “Missile Blues” Montgomery uses the 7-3 voice leading technique in conjunction with arpeggiating chords from the third over a ii7-V7 progression. Over the Bbm7 Montgomery arpeggiates a Db major triad, emphasizing the third, fifth, and flat-seventh. He then connects the flat-seventh (Ab) of Bbm7 into the third (G) of Eb7 and arpeggiate up a Gm7(b5) chord [Example 74]. Christian, in the transcriptions studied for this research, does not arpeggiate a major triad from the third of a minor chord in any of his solos. This is a technique that Montgomery possibly added to his own vocabulary via another source or his own discovery. This technique builds upon the triad over the bass note technique that Christian utilizes over dominant chords. This might have been something Montgomery explored over other chords. Montgomery’s melody emphasizes strong voice leading and chord extensions. These qualities were part of Christian’s playing as well, but Montgomery has found a new approach to achieve these results.
In “Missile Blues,” over a ii7-V7 progression, Montgomery arpeggiates an Ebm7 chord, beginning this time on the root, and then leads from the flat-seventh of Ebm7 (Db) into the third (C) of Ab7 [Example 75]. He then arpeggiates a Cm7(b5), enclosing the root of Ab7 on beat four. Montgomery, just as Christian would, anticipates the Ebm7 and Ab7 to build tensions and give his melody forward momentum. Montgomery also utilizes the enclosure and appoggiatura technique found in Christian’s playing to surround the chord tones. Montgomery’s use of enclosures will be further discussed later in the study, but in both Examples 74 and 75 the fifth and flat-seventh of the minor chord naturally surrounds the third of the dominant chord.

Montgomery repeats this lick two more times throughout the course of his solo on “Four on Six.” In the pick-ups to measure thirty-seven, Montgomery plays an Eb triad over the Cm7 and an Am7(b5) over the F7 [Example 76a]. Finally, leading into measure
seventy-three, Montgomery hints at a C7 chord by playing the Em7(b5) arpeggio on beat three over the Gm7 [Example 76b]. Just as Montgomery does in measure twenty-four of “Four on Six” (Example 75), he begins on the root and clearly arpeggiates an Em7(b5) on beat two. This arpeggio melody not only emphasizes the upper chord tones of the dominant chord, but also provides smooth 7-3 voice leading.

Montgomery innovated upon Christian’s technique of arpeggiating a diminished triad or half-diminished chord over a dominant harmony by arpeggiating a fully-diminished seventh chord as well. Christian’s use of diminished triads have been shown in Examples 18b, 19, and 20. Charlie Christian only used diminished triads and half-diminished seventh chords and does not use the fully-diminished seventh. The diminished seventh chord is divided symmetrically with all four notes being a minor triad apart. In addition, each note of the chord is also the root of a diminished seventh chord.\(^{175}\)

Montgomery began to incorporate the fully-diminished seventh in his playing along with the half-diminished seventh chord. De Stefano found in his study that Wes Montgomery varied his use of the diminished chord over dominant harmonies and was not as

\(^{175}\) Fº7 contain the same four notes as Abº, Bº7, Dº7.
consistent as he was with other harmonic approaches.\textsuperscript{176} The fully-diminished seventh chord arpeggiated from the third of a dominant chord contains the third, fifth, flat-seventh, and flat-ninth.

Montgomery does use a diminished triad over a C7 in his solo on “Brant Inn Boogie” (see Example 48), but begins it on the fifth (G) of the C7, emphasizing the fifth, flat-seventh (Bb) and flat-ninth (Db) and uses it to enclose the root of the C7. Montgomery’s use of the diminished seventh chord over dominant harmonies is not apparent until his first recordings as a leader.\textsuperscript{177} This may be an indication that Montgomery was still assimilating the diminished seventh arpeggio into his own vocabulary.

Montgomery uses the diminished seventh chord in “Ecaroh” in a manner similar to how he used the half-diminished chords in Examples 74 and 75. In “Ecaroh” he arpeggiates an Eb triad over a Cm7 in measure seventeen, surrounding the third (A) of F7, and then arpeggiates up an Aº7 chord [Example 77]. In both Examples 74 and 75, Montgomery plays a half-diminished seventh chord, but here plays to a fully-diminished seventh to emphasize the flat-ninth (Gb). Montgomery seems to be anticipating the F7 in measure eighteen.

\textsuperscript{176} De Stefano, “Wes Montgomery’s Improvisational Style,” 143.
\textsuperscript{177} The Wes Montgomery Trio: A Dynamic New Sound (1959); The Incredible Jazz Guitar of Wes Montgomery (1960).
Montgomery plays an A°7 over an F7 chord again in “Airegin.” He combines this with several techniques found in Christian’s playing as well. In measures twenty-four to twenty-six Montgomery appears to be treating all three measures as an F7 chord, ignoring the Bbm7 [Example 78]. He begins in measure twenty-four by descending the F bebop scale, then enclosing the A (possibly anticipating the F7) on beat three, and arpeggiates the A°7 chord up almost two octaves between measures twenty-five and twenty-six.

Montgomery plays the A°7 arpeggio over an F7 in measure forty, but begins on the root of F7 in measure thirty-nine and then arpeggiates the A°7 on the downbeat of measure forty. Montgomery ends with a chromatic line up to the root, which resembles an ascending dominant bebop scale [Example 79].
In “Missile Blues” Montgomery plays a B⁷ arpeggio as part of a sequence over a G7 chord in measures sixty-three and sixty-four [Example 80]. In measure sixty-three he descends an FMaj⁷ arpeggio, which emphasizes the chord tones of the sixth (E), eleventh (C), ninth (A), and flat-seventh (F) of the G7. Without a B, the third, the G7 sounds unresolved or suspended, changing the G7 to a Gsus7 chord. In measure sixty-four he descends the B⁷, emphasizing the fifth (D), third (B), flat-ninth (Ab), and flat-seventh (F) of the G7. Montgomery continues his theme of descending arpeggios in measures sixty-five and sixty-six. The sequence ends in measure sixty-six with Montgomery arpeggiating down an EbMaj⁷ chord beginning on the ninth (D) over the Cm7 into the F7. He ends the sequence by enclosing the D, which appears he is anticipating the change to the Bm7 in measure sixty-seven.
The use of the diminished arpeggio in single-note melodies is one of the characteristics that differentiate Montgomery’s playing from Christian’s. It is clear that Montgomery had assimilated Christian’s use of the half-diminished seventh chord over dominant harmonies, but innovated upon that foundation. Montgomery incorporated the diminished chord in a way that Christian did not. This amalgamation of Christian’s foundation and Montgomery’s innovation led to the creation of a new harmonic color. Though it is simple, the flat-ninth is a chord tone that adds more tension to the melody, creating a greater release as well.

One of Montgomery’s most frequent arpeggios over dominant harmonies was a major seventh chord beginning with the flat-seventh of the dominant, as well as a major seventh arpeggio over minor seventh chords starting from the flat-third. It is in this technique that it is possible to see Montgomery innovating upon Christian’s foundation. Just as Christian favored the half-diminished seventh chord built beginning with the third of the dominant, Montgomery favors the major seventh chord over the dominant, which emphasizes the upper chord tones of the flat-seventh, ninth, eleventh, and thirteenth. When played over a minor seventh chord the major seventh would emphasize the flat-third, fifth, flat-seventh, and ninth of the chord. Montgomery might even add the ninth to the arpeggio to add an extra chord tone.

An example of Montgomery’s use of a major seventh built on the third of the minor ii chord is seen in measures nineteen of “West Coast Blues.” Here Montgomery arpeggiates an EbMaj9 over a Cm7 [Example 81]. He begins on the Eb and arpeggiates up to the F. This produces the chord tones of the third (Eb), fifth (G), seventh (Bb), ninth (D), and eleventh (F) of the Cm7. He continues into an interesting half-step sequence.
emphasizing the altered chord tones on the strong beats of the F7, continuing the sequence into the BbMaj7. Sequencing half-steps is also found in Christian’s solos, particularly in “Solo Flight” (see Example 30b) and “Shivers” (see Example 35). Montgomery ends the phrase by playing an Abm9 over a Db7 in measure twenty-two.

Example 81

Montgomery seems to have had integrated this harmonic technique as early as his days with Lionel Hampton. In “Adam Blew His Hat,” Montgomery arpeggiates an EbMaj9 chord over the Cm7 to start his solo. Then in measure seven, over the F#7, Montgomery arpeggiates an EMaj7 chord leading into the B7 chord. The seventh (D#) of the EMaj7 arpeggio is also the third of B7 (see Example 45).

In “Bock to Bock” Montgomery plays nearly the identical melody over an Eb7 on two occasions. The first occurs in measure twenty-one, where he arpeggiates a DbMaj9 chord on beat two [Example 82a]. The DbMaj9 leads one to believe that Montgomery is treating the Eb7 more like a ii-V progression, hinting at a Bbm7 chord over the Eb7. The DbMaj7 over the Eb7 provides the chord tones of the flat-seventh (Db), ninth (F), eleventh (Ab), thirteenth (C), and root (Eb). Montgomery resolves the arpeggio from the root down to the seventh and finally leaps a major sixth down to E-natural, the flat-ninth of Eb7. Large leaps like this are not uncommon in Montgomery’s playing. Montgomery
begins this melody with an enclosure, a melodic device strongly favored by Christian, to
surround the Db on beat two.

Example 82a

Montgomery again plays a DbMaj9 arpeggio over the Eb7 in the second chorus of
“Bock to Bock” as well [Example 82b]. It is played on beat two, but not preceded by an
enclosure. He descends from the root (Db) in measure fifty-three to the flat-thirteenth
(Cb) in measure fifty-four and Montgomery ends on the flat-ninth (E). Example 82b is
different from Example 82a in that Montgomery actually plays the third (G) over the
Eb7, but it is more a pick-up to the sharp-ninth (Gb).

Example 82b

In “West Coast Blues” Montgomery plays an ascending major seventh arpeggio
over Ab7, Bb7, and E7 to create a six-measure melodic sequence. Over each dominant
chord, Montgomery begins on the sixth as a pick-up note leading into the seventh of the major seventh arpeggio [Example 83]. He then plays a descending quarter note line, each time with grace notes. The quarter note line is not harmonically the same each time, but close. Montgomery uses the major seventh chord in conjunction with rhythmic variety to create thematic unity over these six measures. Measures thirty-one and thirty-two are different from measures twenty-seven to thirty in that the harmony is a ii-V progression (Bm-E7) and not just a dominant chord for two bars. A DMaj7 over the Bm7 gives the chord tones of the flat-third (D), fifth (F#), flat-seventh (A), and ninth (C#). Then over the E7, Montgomery includes a G#, the only third over a dominant in the entire line.

Example 83

Montgomery uses major ninth arpeggios in measures eighty-nine and ninety of “West Coast Blues” to create a unique melody over the Cm7-F7 progression. Over Cm7, Montgomery arpeggiates an EbMaj9, beginning on the root, and uses the F and D to surround the Eb of the F7 chord in measure ninety [Example 84]. Over the F7 Montgomery arpeggiates another EbMaj9 chord, an octave higher, and resolves the line on the flat-seventh (Eb) of F7. Montgomery seems to use the major seventh (or ninth) arpeggio to generalize a dominant or ii-V progression in multiple choruses of “West
Coast Blues.” It is one of the closest examples of a “pattern” or “formula” that could be associated with Montgomery’s improvisational vocabulary.

Example 84

Montgomery’s use of the major seventh arpeggio as a thematic device is best exemplified in his solo over “Satin Doll.” He uses a major seventh arpeggio as the building block for his melodies over ii-V progressions thirteen times in the first chorus alone. It is also played in the context of a call and response manner in which he will first ascend and then descend the same arpeggio with a similar rhythm.

Montgomery begins the solo with a four-bar call and response sequence that reflects the harmonic movement of Ellington’s composition. He begins in measure one over the Dm7-G7 with the E (the seventh of FMaj7) as a pick-up note to the F. Montgomery then ascends the FMaj7 chord. Harmonically Montgomery is playing the ninth (E), flat-third (F), fifth (A), and flat-seventh (C) of the Dm7. The E and D over the G7 are harmonically the thirteenth and fifth of G7. His answer in measure two is a near mirror opposite, but begins on the flat-seventh (C) [Example 85a].

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Example 85a

In measure three Montgomery essentially plays a GMaj7 arpeggio over the Em7-A7 in a similar rhythmic pattern as he did in measure one. In measure four Montgomery concludes his four-measure call and response by descending an Em triad into an enclosure of the third (C#) of A7 on beat three. Then Montgomery begins as if he was going to continue with this call and response theme in measure five by arpeggiating a CMaj7 over the Am7, but continues playing a six measure phrase that contains new melodic material [Example 85b].

Example 85b

Montgomery returns in measures thirteen and fourteen to a call and response melody constructed using the chord tones of a CMaj9 over the Am7-D7 and a CbMaj9 over Abm7-Db7. It is both harmonically and rhythmically similar to the melody
Montgomery establishes in measures one and two, but develops the triplet rhythm a little more in these measures [Example 86].

Example 86

![Musical notation](image)

Satin Doll, chorus 1, m. 13-14

Montgomery uses a sequence of major seventh chords over the ii-V progression beginning in measure twenty-five that is similar to his melody in measures one through four [Example 87]. This time, he ascends and descends the CMaj7 over the Dm7-G7 and then repeats it exactly in measure twenty-six. Montgomery continues the melodic call and response in measures twenty-seven and twenty-eight, except he uses a GMaj7 over the Em7-A7 progression. He ends the sequence in measure twenty-nine, playing a CMaj7 over an Am7-D7, but does not repeat it in measure thirty over the Abm7-Db7. Instead he ascends a CbMaj9, but resolves into the CMaj7 in measure thirty-one using another half-step resolution to the chord tones, similar to what he (and Christian) had shown in earlier examples (see Example 81).
Example 87

Montgomery does not play a third over any of the dominant chords for six measures, but still clearly outlines the harmony of the composition. This is due to the strong melodic sequencing and the harmonic resolution of the 7-3 voice leading between measures twenty-six into twenty-seven and twenty-nine into thirty. He also gives his improvisation a broader feeling of unity in that he begins with a simple melodic statement, which he develops over the course of the thirty-two bars. The listener is constantly brought back to material heard at the beginning of the solo.

De Stefano states that in “Satin Doll” Montgomery chooses a number of motives to develop, using devices such as sequencing, repetition, and transposition throughout his improvisation. These techniques for building improvisations were also common in Charlie Christian’s improvisations. De Stefano also believes that Montgomery’s frequent use of arpeggios in his improvisations was because arpeggios are easy to play on the guitar’s fret board. Authors such as Spring, Finkleman, and Ayeroff have stated that Christian’s arpeggio playing was a result of “forms” or patterns of notes that align

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179 Ibid., 181.
themselves comfortably on the guitar’s fret board as well. Montgomery never saw or sat down with Christian in person, so it is not possible that Montgomery ever witnessed Christian’s finger placement on the guitar. The similarities in finger placement on the fret board might not be a result of imitation and assimilation, but merely the logical finger approach that a guitarist naturally gravitates towards.

Montgomery would also arpeggiate the subtonic (ii chord) over the V7 chord to create a suspension over the dominant chord. There does not seem to be a definitive pattern to Montgomery’s choice of starting pitch and he varied it between ascending and descending the arpeggio. The chord tones of the subtonic over a dominant chord are not very different from Montgomery’s use of major seventh chords starting on the seventh of the dominant. As discussed earlier, a major seventh arpeggio, beginning on the flat-seventh of the dominant, outlines the chord tones flat-seventh, ninth, eleventh, and thirteenth. The minor ii chord gives nearly all the same chord tones over the dominant chord except it also adds the fifth.

An example of this technique is on display in “D-Natural Blues” where Montgomery begins the second chorus by playing an Am11 arpeggio over the D7 [Example 88]. He begins with an anticipation in measure twelve, beginning on the A and arpeggiating up Am11 chord over the D7. By beat three of measure thirteen it is difficult to tell if Montgomery is thinking Am11 or CMaj7. Either way, Montgomery does not

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181 FMaj7 over a G7= F (flat-seventh), A (ninth), C (eleventh), E (thirteenth).
182 Dm7 over a G7= D (fifth), F (flat-seventh), A (ninth), C (eleventh).
play the third (F#) of the D7 the entire measure, giving the sense of the dominant suspending harmony for that measure.

Example 88

In “Montgomeryland Funk” Wes Montgomery places an Fm7 over the Bb7 in measure twenty-six. He begins on the F before dipping down to the C and back to F to continue the arpeggiation of the Fm7. In the larger context of the phrase, it appears Montgomery may not be thinking Fm7, but rather Fm pentatonic over both the F7 and Bb7 [Example 89]. From the pick-ups to measure twenty-five through twenty-six, Montgomery consistently adds a Bb to the notes of the Fm7, which would make the notes F, Ab, Bb, C, and Eb all a part for the F minor pentatonic scale.

Example 89

Montgomery begins the third chorus of “Missile Blues” by playing a Dm11 over the G7 and C7. It begins in measure twenty-four with a clear Dm7 as a pick-up into the
G7 of measure twenty-five. Montgomery continues up in measure twenty-five to the G, the eleventh of Dm, and then descends the entire Dm11 [Example 90]. He again ascends the Dm7 leading into the C7 at measure twenty-six. Montgomery adds an interesting twist in measure twenty-six in that he inserts a few chromatic pick-up notes before the E and D, but still ascends a Dm9. The ninth (E) of Dm7 is the third of C and it is here that Montgomery briefly stops playing notes from the Dm11 chord. Montgomery descends a Dm7 over the G7 in measure twenty-seven to again create a harmonic suspension over the dominant chord.

Example 90

In “West Coast Blues” Montgomery plays a minor seventh chord over dominant harmonies on multiple occasions, but incorporates them in some intricate phrases. He begins in measure eleven to use a harmonic substitution, playing a Gm7(b5) over an Ebm7. In measure twelve Montgomery then descends an Ebm7 arpeggio over an Ab7 beginning on Eb (fifth) of the Ab7 [Example 91a]. This melody suggests that Montgomery is actually approaching the Ebm7 as an Eb7. Measure thirteen begins with Montgomery descending from the fifth (A) of Dm7. Montgomery resolves the Dm7 in measure thirteen in a very Christian-like manner, by anticipating the G7 with a 7-3 resolution to the B. Finally, Montgomery jumps up from the B to the G and then encloses
the F on beat two. The use of playing a minor seventh over dominant chords appears only in Montgomery’s solos, but everything else in this four bar phrase can be traced back to techniques used by Christian.

Example 91a

In measure twenty-two of “West Coast Blues,” Montgomery ascends an Abm9 arpeggios as an anticipation to the Db7. The Abm9 outlines the fifth (Ab), flat-seventh (Cb), ninth (Eb), eleventh (Gb) and thirteenth (Bb) of the Db7 [Example 91b]. Without the presence of the third over the Db7 the harmony is suspended and the Db7 sounds more like a Dbsus13 chord. Montgomery resolves this suspension by descending the Gb7 triad, beginning on Gb and ending with an enclosure of the third (Bb).

Example 91b

The focal pitch of the phrase in measure twenty-two is the high Bb. Montgomery then answers this phrase in the next measure by ending the arpeggio on the low Bb. In
measure seventy, Montgomery approaches the Db7 and GbMaj7 much the same as he did in measures twenty-two and twenty-three. He ascends an Abm triad in measure seventy but adds the Bb as a passing tone. He then encloses the fifth (Db) of GbMaj7 then descends the GbMaj7 arpeggio down to the major seventh (F) [Example 91c].

Example 91c

Montgomery’s frequency of the minor chord super-imposed over dominant harmonies does not lead to any exact patterns. He appears to have this technique firmly in his vocabulary, but uses it in a way that is not as predictable as Christian’s vocabulary could be. This is a part of Montgomery’s innovation, in that he takes what is a part of the past and reconstructs it in his own voice. Montgomery did use the half-diminished chords in the same way Christian did, but Montgomery also used fully-diminished chords, as well as major and minor seventh chords over dominant harmonies to emphasize more chord tones, suspend harmony, and create even greater tension than Christian did.

De Stefano makes the argument that there are “inherent differences in syntax” between Montgomery and Christian in their use of arpeggios.\textsuperscript{183} He also states that Christian favors diminished chords and suspensions over basic harmonic progressions,

\textsuperscript{183} De Stefano, “Wes Montgomery’s Improvisational Style,” 48.
while Montgomery only uses these devices “once in a while.”\textsuperscript{184} Although De Stefano is correct that Christian and Montgomery have differences, they also have strong similarities. It would be difficult to state that Montgomery used diminished arpeggios over dominant chords only once in a while. Although they do not appear numerous times throughout Montgomery’s improvisations, diminished arpeggios are present in nearly all solos examined. Montgomery innovated upon Christian’s foundation by not just playing half-diminished seventh chords, but also using the fully-diminished seventh chord as well. Montgomery also used major seventh chords over dominant harmonies to create long harmonic suspensions.

### Use of Chromatic Pitches

Montgomery seems to have assimilated several of Charlie Christian’s characteristics in the use of chromatic pitches in his improvisations. Both Christian and Montgomery make great use of the natural-seventh, flat-fifth, and flat- and sharp-ninth. Christian and Montgomery also use bebop scales over dominant harmonies. Montgomery’s use of chromatic pitches branches from Christian’s in several ways, but most distinctly in Montgomery’s freer approach to chromatic pitches as color tones. Christian seemed to have a number of set chromatic melodies that would reoccur in his solos. Montgomery does not appear to be as predictable or repetitive, unless he is repeating the notes in the context of a sequence.

\textsuperscript{184} De Stefano, “Wes Montgomery’s Improvisational Style,” 51.
Both Christian and Montgomery use the dominant and major bebop scales in their improvisations. The dominant bebop scale appears as early as Montgomery’s improvisation over “Brant Inn Boogie” in measure four, where he plays a G dominant bebop over a G7 (see Example 47). He also plays a C dominant bebop scale in measure fourteen (see Example 48). But Montgomery does not use it in the context of long scalar passages as often as Christian does. Using the bebop scale in smaller fragments appears to be Montgomery’s way of taking Christian’s use and modifying it to make it unique to Montgomery’s own voice.

In measure seventeen of “Bock to Bock,” Montgomery briefly plays a Db dominant bebop scale. He begins on the root (Db) and chromaticly plays down to the flat-seventh (Cb). From the Cb he jumps down to the ninth (Eb) to play an Ebm7 arpeggio to emphasize the ninth (Eb), eleventh (Gb), and thirteenth (Bb) of Db7 [Example 92a].

Example 92a

Montgomery then returns to this brief figure in measure twenty-two, but this time he plays the same pitches (Db, C, Cb) over an Eb7 [Example 92b]. He resolves this line into an Em7, playing a B on beat one of measure twenty-three. In measure twenty-two, Montgomery is either playing a Db dominant bebop over an Eb7 or (more likely) playing an Eb major bebop scale. As discussed in Example 23b, the major bebop is a major scale.
with a passing raised fifth scale degree. In the context of measure twenty-two, that is exactly what the Cb is over the Eb7.

Example 92b

Montgomery plays a G dominant bebop over a G°7 chord in measure thirty [Example 92c]. Again, it is very brief in that he only plays the root (G), seventh (F#/Gb), and flat-seventh (F) until he resolves into the fifth (E) of A7. In all three occurrences, the dominant bebop scale is less of a scale and more of a passing chromatic pitch.

Example 92c

Montgomery does play a Gb dominant bebop as a full scale in measure twenty-seven. Here the harmony is the tonic Dbm7, but Montgomery appears to be treating the measure as a ii-V progression Dbm7-Gb7 [Example 92d]. Montgomery does not connect the scale in the next measure by a step, but instead jumps from the Eb to the C#, the third of A7, in measure twenty-eight.
In “Montgomeryland Funk,” Montgomery uses the dominant bebop scale on two occasions. The first is in measure fifteen over an F7, playing the root (F), seventh (E), flat-seventh (Eb), and back to the root [Example 93a]. This lick seems to be a part of a larger chromatic line, beginning in measure fourteen. Over the Bb7 Montgomery plays a chromatic scale down from the Eb to Ab. The end of this measure is essentially repeated at the beginning of measure fifteen, connecting the two measures in an almost call and response manner.

In measure twenty of “Montgomeryland Funk” Montgomery plays a descending scalar line using the D dominant bebop scale beginning on the root of D7. He plays a portion of the dominant bebop scale, root (D), seventh (C#), flat-seventh (C), but also plays the flat-sixth (Bb) into the fifth (A). He then continues the line from the flat-ninth
(Eb) to the root (D) and ends with a 7-3 resolution into the third (Bb) of the Gm7 [Example 93b]. This measure contains several melodic traits that can be traced to Charlie Christian’s stylistic foundation. In addition to the bebop scale and 7-3 voice leading resolution, Christian was fond of playing the flat-sixth to fifth and flat-ninth to root (see “Breakfast Feud” Example 36).

Example 93b

In “Missile Blues” Montgomery makes frequent use of the dominant bebop scale throughout the first chorus. The scale begins on beat three in measure four over the G7 in what appears to be an anticipation of the C7 chord. At measure five he descends the C dominant bebop over the C7, beginning on beat one [Example 94a]. Montgomery leaps down to the ninth (D) after playing the flat-seventh (Bb).

Example 94a
In measure nine Montgomery plays a D dominant bebop scale on beat four leading into the flat-seventh (C) of the D7 chord in measure ten [Example 94b].

![Example 94b](image)

Finally, in measure eleven Montgomery plays a brief chromatic line that contains both the natural-seventh (Eb/D#) of the dominant bebop and sixth (Db/C#) [Example 94c]. The Db leads into the C of the Am7 and helps the line achieve a smooth half-step resolution from a dominant chord into a minor chord.

![Example 94c](image)

Montgomery plays a bebop scale only two more times for the remainder of the nine choruses total he plays during “Missile Blues.” In the second chorus he plays an E bebop scale briefly over the Bm7. Montgomery appears to be treating the Bm7-E7 progression in measure nineteen as simply an E7 [Example 95a].
Example 95a

Montgomery does not play another dominant bebop scale until measures seventy and seventy-one. In these two measures it is done rather playfully over a two measure ii-V (Am7-D7) progression. Montgomery plays the D on beat four of measure seventy and then rests nearly two beats to play the Db into the C. He resolves the melody with a strong 7-3 resolution into the G7 in measure seventy-one [Example 95b].

Example 95b

All five examples in “Missile Blues” have Montgomery using the dominant bebop scale in descending motion and he never continues the scale farther than the flat-seventh. This showed that Montgomery was breaking away from how Christian used the dominant bebop scale. Christian often used them in long, extended scalar lines. Montgomery used bebop scale as more of a brief chromatic passing tone to help generate smoother transitions to chord tones from which he could arpeggiate. Jazz historian Leonard Feather
views the use of passing notes in jazz improvisation, which Christian was doing with
great proficiency, as an advancement of the Bebop movement.\textsuperscript{185}

In “West Coast Blues,” Montgomery plays both the dominant and major bebop
scales in his improvisation. Montgomery often favors descending the dominant bebop
scale from the root down to the flat-seventh and then returning up to the root again or
even the second. This takes place in measure eight over the E7 in which he descends on
the downbeat from the root (E) to the flat-seventh (D), only to return to the root (E) again
[Example 96a]. He appears to be anticipating the change to Bbm7 by playing the Bb on
the “and” of beat three. In measure nine he descends chromatically from the third (Db) of
Bbm7 to the root. Using the flat-second as a chromatic passing tone was a device used by
Charlie Christian as well (see Examples 25b and 26).

Example 96a

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{example96a.png}
\end{center}

Montgomery repeats this melodic approach in measure thirty-seven over the Dm7
in either anticipation of the change to G7 a measure early or simply using a harmonic
generalization to treat measure thirty-seven as G7. Montgomery begins the melody on the

68.
root of the G7 and descends to the flat-seventh only to return up to the root again
[Example 96b].

Example 96b

Montgomery plays the same melody over the E7 as he had in measure eight in measure one hundred twenty-six, except this time he is using his octave technique [Example 96c]. Just as Montgomery had in measure eight, Wes anticipates the Bbm7 chord on beat three by playing the Db and Bb.

Example 96c

Montgomery plays a variation on his bebop scale lick in measures seventeen to eighteen. Montgomery anticipates the F7 a beat early and instead of returning to the root of F7 he jumps to the ninth (G) [Example 97]. It appears Montgomery has a melodic theme in his usage of the dominant bebop scale. He consistently descends from the root to the flat-seventh, but will then jump up to the root or another chord tone.
In measure one hundred thirty of “West Coast Blues” Montgomery uses the major bebop scale to play the same melodic shape as he had with the dominant bebop in measures eight and thirty-seven (see Example 96b). Over the Ab7, Montgomery starts on the F (sixth) and descends chromatically to the Eb (fifth) to jump up to the F before ending on the Db (fourth) [Example 98a]. Playing the major bebop over dominant chords was also found in Christian’s solos. In “Breakfast Feud” for example, Christian arpeggiates up Gm7(b5) over an Eb7 to then descends the major bebop starting on the sixth (C) [Example 98b].

Montgomery also appears to use the dominant bebop scale in conjunction with the blues scale in “West Coast Blues.” In measures sixty-seven, over the F7, Montgomery descends an F dominant bebop scale and does not return to the root after playing the flat-
seventh, but continues to descend the blues scale [Example 99a]. Although the E and Eb are a part of the F dominant bebop scale, they are also a part of the Bb blues scale. It appears that this melody, beginning in measure sixty-seven, is a combination of both the Bb blues and F dominant bebop. This use of the blues scale not only adds a distinct “blues” texture to the melody, but also provides an effective release of tension in measure sixty-nine, when he resolves the D-natural into the BbMaj7. Montgomery repeats this Bb blues/bebop scale lick in measure one hundred thirty-eight over an F7 resolving to a BbMaj7 once again. In both examples Montgomery also incorporates a signature Christian motive of playing R-#2-3 played on a tonic chord (see Examples 12 and 13) [Example 99b].

Example 99a

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West Coast Blues, chorus 3, m. 67-69
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Example 99b

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West Coast Blues, chorus 6, m. 138-139
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Montgomery appears to favor the Bb blues and minor pentatonic scale throughout “West Coast Blues.” In measure one hundred sixty-two, again over an F7, Montgomery
descends a Bb minor pentatonic scale [Example 99c]. The chromatic pitches that the Bb minor pentatonic emphasizes over the F7 are the root (F), flat-sixth (Db), flat-seventh (Eb), sharp-ninth (Ab), and eleventh (Bb). Montgomery resolves the melody using the R-#2-3 motive. This motive was used so much by Christian that Spring would label this melody as the “Second Tonic Formula” in his study of patterns used by Christian.\(^{186}\) It appears that Montgomery had assimilated this technique into his own vocabulary as well. More on these formulas in Montgomery’s playing will be discussed later. This use of the Bb pentatonic and blues scale is also a type of harmonic generalization technique discussed earlier that Montgomery appears to apply on occasion.

Example 99c

![Example 99c](image)

Although Montgomery uses the dominant and major bebop scale in his improvisations, he seems to vary the amount he uses them. In “Four On Six,” Montgomery uses the bebop scales sparsely compared to “West Coast Blues.” Both “Four on Six” and “West Coast Blues” are recorded on the album *The Incredible Jazz Guitar of Wes Montgomery*. In measure twenty-three Montgomery uses it in a long, complex melody in which several techniques are combined. Montgomery used the D dominant bebop scale in “Four on Six” similarly as he did in “West Coast Blues” in that

\(^{186}\) Spring, 60.
he descends from the root to the flat-seventh and back up to the root again [Example 100a]. Like Christian, Montgomery used a chromatic passing note between the root and flat-seventh to connect melodic fragments into long phrases that cover several measures and several harmonic changes. In measures twenty-two to twenty-four, Montgomery uses other techniques that can be found in Charlie Christian’s vocabulary, including an enclosure, a 7-3 resolution, and a half-diminished seventh chord over dominant harmonies.

Example 100a

Montgomery only uses the dominant bebop scale once more in “Four On Six” at measure one hundred thirty-three over an F7 [Example 100b]. As in Example 100a, Montgomery uses other Christian influenced devices such as the 4-#2-3 enclosure (measure 133) and #2-3 resolution (measure 134). The F dominant bebop scale is used in conjunction with a 7-3 resolution between the F7 and Bbm7 in measure one hundred thirty-four.
A noticeable difference between Wes Montgomery and Charlie Christian’s approaches to the bebop scales is that Christian often used other chromatic passing tones in conjunction with the bebop scale. Christian frequently added a passing flat-second into the root and then continued with the seventh into the flat-seventh (see Examples 25b and 26). This is an aspect of Christian’s playing that Montgomery does not seem to have assimilated into his own sound. Montgomery does make frequent use of altered upper chord tones, particularly the ninth, in his melodies but not in the same melodic shapes as Christian. Montgomery seems to be just as comfortable using the flat-ninth as both a passing tone and a melodic color tone.

In “Billie’s Bounce,” Montgomery uses a passing flat-second as a chromatic passing tone to the root in both measures five and eighteen, both over a Bb7 [Examples 101a and 101b]. He also uses the flat-second as a non-passing tone in measure twenty over a D7. In measure twenty Montgomery uses the flat-second (Gb) in a melody featuring a sequence of half-steps outlining an F triad in measures twenty-two into twenty-three [Example 101c]. Montgomery anticipates the change from C7 to F7 by a beat to begin the half-step sequence. Using anticipations and sequences were traits found in Christian’s playing as well.
Montgomery’s use of a flat-second, or sharp-ninth, in “Bock to Bock” has been discussed earlier in Examples 67 and 82a. In both examples Montgomery has the altered ninth as a melodic color tone and not as a passing tone. Another example is in measure ten of “Bock to Bock.” Montgomery emphasizes the flat-second (B) in measure ten as a color tone, playing the Bb over the A7 on the downbeat before resolving to the root [Example 102].
Montgomery would also use multiple altered upper extensions in his melodies. Many of the chromatic pitches he would use are found in the altered scale and the half-whole diminished scale, although Montgomery did not play them in a scalar melody. An example of Montgomery using multiple altered upper extensions in a non-scalar melody is found in “Airegin.” Montgomery begins his melody on an F7 playing the flat-second (Gb), sharp-second (Ab), down to the flat-sixth (Db), fifth (C) and resolving on the third (A) [Example 103]. All the notes except the natural-fifth (C) are tones within the altered scale.

Example 103

Montgomery seemed to play more freely with his chromatic tones than Christian did. Christian did use chromatic pitches for color on occasion, but more often favored these pitches as passing tones to be resolved into strong chord tones. Montgomery does not seem as concerned with resolving to strong chord tones and will even end his phrases on the chromatic tone.

Montgomery emphasizes the flat-second (B) in measure forty-four of “Airegin” as a color tone over the Bb7 [Example 104]. This example is unique in that Montgomery plays both the flat-second (B) and natural-second (C) in the same measure.
Example 104

A chromatic upper extension that Montgomery made frequent use of in his improvisations was the raised fourth or sharp-eleventh. Christian did use the chord tone as well (see Examples 28a and 29), but it was not a note that was used as frequently in his improvisations. The two prominent times that the sharp-eleventh does occur in Christian’s improvisations were both in “Solo Flight,” the Christian solo that captivated Montgomery and inspired him to become a jazz guitarist. This unique color tone found almost exclusively in Christian’s playing in “Solo Flight” might have impacted Montgomery’s vocabulary in a strong way. The sharp-eleventh would become one Montgomery’s most frequently used color tone.

In “Billie’s Bounce” Montgomery ends his phrase in measure seven on the sharp-eleventh (B) over an F7 [Example 105a]. He also begins his melody on the B in measure twenty-five over the F7 as a pick-up note to the fifth (C) [Example 105b].

Example 105a

Example 105b

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187 Gleason, 44.
He also plays a B over an F7 in measure thirty-one as well as the sharp-fifth (C#) [Example 105c]. It is possible that Montgomery is actually playing a B7, a tritone substitution for the F7, in this measure. Montgomery emphasizes the E-natural, the fourth of B7 (also the major seventh of F7), and encloses the ninth (C#) of B7 (or sharp-fifth of F7). Further examples of Montgomery’s use of tritone substitutions will be discussed later in this chapter.

Example 105c

As discussed when examining Christian’s use of the sharp-eleventh, the Lydian dominant (fourth mode of melodic minor) is similar to the Mixolydian with the exception of the raised fourth. Montgomery appears to be playing the A Lydian dominant in measure twenty-eight of “Bock to Bock.” [Example 106].

Example 106
Montgomery plays the Lydian dominant scale in measure seventeen of “D-Natural Blues” over a G7 chord. He begins with the F# as a pick-up into the root (G) and then continues to ascend the entire G Lydian dominant up to the F-natural. He then arpeggiates an F7(#5) chord on beat three. The C# is used in the context of an enclosure of the fifth (D) on beat four [Example 107].

Example 107

In “Four on Six” Montgomery uses the sharp-eleventh as a key melodic focal point in a sequence of ii-V chords. Montgomery’s phrase references the original melody of “Four on Six” in which Montgomery emphasizes the sharp-eleventh [Example 108a]. Beginning in measure sixty-nine, over a Cm7-F7 progression, Montgomery begins his sequence by playing only the third and fifth over the minor, then ends on the sharp-eleventh of the dominant. He repeats this sequence of notes over the Bbm7-Eb7 and Am7-D7. He begins to anticipate the chord changes beginning in measure seventy into seventy-one until it appears that he is playing the major seventh (D) over the Ebm7 chord [Example 108b]. This phrase not only builds tension by sequencing the sharp-eleventh over four ii-V chord changes, but he also uses rhythmic diminution, anticipation, and syncopation to heighten tension and propel forward momentum. Montgomery uses
melodic simplicity to build a sequence over four ii-V chords, making the sharp-eleventh the key chromatic chord tone that binds the phrase together.

Example 108a

Example 108b

Montgomery uses the sharp-eleventh in the context of a simple, but harmonically adventurous, melody in “Ecaroh.” He begins in measure nine over the FMaj7 by playing the major seventh (E), the sharp-root (F#), and ninth (G). He then plays the same three notes again over the Bb7 in measure ten. The pitches over the Bb7 now become the sharp-eleventh, sharp-fifth, and thirteenth. He continues to play the E, F#, and G in measure eleven on the FMaj7, but on beat four plays a G# or the sharp-ninth.

Montgomery ends the phrase in measure twelve over the B7 by playing the E (eleventh), F# (fifth), and G# (thirteenth) over the B7 [Example 109]. The F# and G#, which are chromatic chord tones over the FMaj7, become the fifth and thirteenth over B7. He resolves the line on the root (B) and flat-seventh (A) in measure twelve.
Example 109

This phrase in “Ecaroh,” as in “Four on Six,” is an example of how Montgomery constructs an extended melody out of very few notes. Montgomery’s melodies go beyond anticipating a chord change, as Christian frequently does. Montgomery constructs phrases that use anticipation, sequences, and chromatic pitches to emphasize melodic continuity over accurately outlining each chord of the progression. Montgomery’s improvisations do not seem bound by the individual chords per measure, but are focused on creating melodies that build and generate tension to be resolved at just the moment Montgomery hears it resolving.

Like Christian, Montgomery used the flat-fifth and sharp-fifth (or flat-sixth) in his improvisations as a passing tone. Christian used the sharp-fifth as a passing tone, found also in the major bebop scale, on a number of occasions (see Examples 30a, 30b, 32a, and 32b). Montgomery uses these pitches as chromatic passing tones as well, except not as often as Christian would.

One example of Montgomery using the altered fifth as a passing tone is in “Four on Six.” In measure eight Montgomery plays a descending line with a sharp-fifth (E) as a chromatic passing tone over the Ebm7-Ab7 [Example 110]. The melody also features a 7-3 voice leading resolution that was also common in Christian’s playing.
Another departure for Montgomery from Christian’s use of chromatic pitches was in Christian’s use of CESH (Contrapuntal Elaboration of Static Harmony). Examples of the CESH technique were examined in Christian’s solos in “Solo Flight” (see Examples 27a and 31). As stated earlier, Christian would use the CESH technique to break-up the dominant bebop scale by alternating a stationary note with the root, seventh, and flat-seventh. This exact usage of CESH with the dominant bebop scale does not appear in any of Montgomery’s early solos.

Montgomery does use the CESH technique briefly in “Ecaroh.” Over the D7 in measure thirty Montgomery alternates between the static fifth (A) and the sharp and natural-eleventh until resolving to the flat-seventh (F) of the Gm7(b5) in measure 31. In measure thirty-one, Montgomery alternates between the A, Bb, and resolves to the Ab. Finally, Montgomery briefly implies a CESH motive to end the phrase [Example 111]. This example is more representative of Montgomery’s approach to building his solos in small motives that become linked together to form thematic chains of melodic phrases.
Whether the decision to underutilize the CESH technique was conscious or not cannot be known. This technique was used with some regularity in Christian’s solos and had to have been imitated by Montgomery while he transcribed them. All that is certain is that Montgomery never fully assimilated Christian’s CESH into his own vocabulary, so these techniques never became dominant in his own playing.

Montgomery’s use of chromatic pitches shares many similar qualities with Christian’s, but Montgomery has several unique differences. Both Christian and Montgomery make frequent use of the bebop scale, particularly the dominant bebop scale, but Montgomery does not incorporate the flat-second with the dominant bebop as was Christian’s habit. Montgomery seems to be branching from Christian’s foundation in his exploration of the use of chromatic pitches as a means of color rather than simply a way to connect phrases together. Montgomery made far greater use of the sharp-eleventh in his melodies and often made the sharp-eleventh the focal point of his melody as in “Four and Six.” Montgomery also used multiple altered chord tones, like both the sharp-and flat-ninth, together in his melodies to heighten melodic tension. Finally, the melodic technique known as CESH, which was used by Christian, does not appear as often in Montgomery’s improvisations.
Charlie Christian still appears to be a strong influence in Wes Montgomery’s uses of anticipation, syncopation, and sequences to create his melodies. Montgomery’s use of chromatic pitches seem to be bolder, in that Montgomery is not as methodical with outlining the underlining harmony of an exact chord. He focuses on the chromatic pitches to not just add tension to a chord tone, although he does this as well, but stretches them to add tension to the entire melody.

**Formulas and Enclosures**

One of Christian’s most dominant melodic techniques used in his improvisations was formulas and enclosures. These techniques, particularly the enclosures, appear to have had a great influence on Montgomery’s playing. De Stefano states the main influence on Montgomery’s playing was Christian’s use of “long, clean eighth-note phrases consisting of harmonic extensions,” which became the “underlying essence” of Montgomery’s style. As for the use of formulas, De Stefano states there are “syntactical” differences between Montgomery and Christian, particularly in his comparison of Montgomery’s work on the Riverside label and Christian’s solo on “Solo Flight.” De Stefano states that there are very few similarities between Christian’s formulas and Montgomery’s melodies.

Christian’s formulas as discussed by Spring are present in Montgomery’s solos. Montgomery used several of Christian’s melodic patterns, particularly enclosures in his

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188 De Stefano, “Wes Montgomery’s Improvisational Style,” 49.
189 Ibid., 50-51.
improvisations. In all but one solo examined for this study, Montgomery uses some form of an enclosure in his improvisation. Spring’s “Second Tonic Formula” (R-b3-3-5) was used by Montgomery in a number of his early solos. Spring’s “First Tonic Formula” (5-4-b3-3), an enclosure, is used but not always in the exact same manner. It is in the enclosure that Montgomery seems to have innovated the most. Not only does he enclose the third of a chord, but will surround nearly any note of the chord.

As Christian did, Montgomery used the techniques of enclosures and appoggiaturas. The earliest evidence of Montgomery’s use of these techniques has been examined in both “Brant Inn Boogie” and “Adam Blew His Hat.” In “Adam Blew His Hat” Montgomery uses an appoggiatura to surround the flat-second (B) before resolving to the Bb of a Bb6 (see Example 45c below). In “Brant Inn Boogie” Montgomery has a longer solo, so he uses this technique more. Montgomery uses an appoggiatura to surround the root of the G7 in measure seven (see Example 49 below) and root of C7 in measure fourteen (see Example 48 below). He also uses an appoggiatura to surround the flat-seventh (C) of the D7 in measure 17 (see Example 50).

From *Adam Blew His Hat Solo:*

Example 45c
From *Brant Inn Boogie Solo*:

**Example 48**

![Example 48](image1)

**Example 49**

![Example 49](image2)

**Example 50**

![Example 50](image3)

In Example 48 from “Brant Inn Boogie,” Montgomery appears to be anticipating the G7 chord in measure fourteen by playing Spring’s “Second Tonic Formula” R (G)-b3 (Bb)-3 (B)-4 (C)-5 (D) on beat three. Montgomery adds the fourth (C), but the core of the formula (R-b3-3-5) is still very much present.

Spring’s “Second Tonic Formula” appears in “Montgomeryland Funk” in measure three inside a Dm7 over an F7 [Example 112]. Montgomery appears to be outlining a Dm7, beginning on the C (flat-seventh) on beat one, but on beat two he plays the R (F)-b3 (Ab)- 3 (A)-5 (C). Montgomery inserts Christian’s formula inside a minor seventh arpeggio that is superimposed over a dominant harmony. It is these small
differences that constitute innovation in Montgomery’s uses of material assimilated through imitation. It is not an exact replica, but something new within something that already existed.

Example 112

In “West Coast Blues” Montgomery ends a phrase with Spring’s “Second Tonic Formula” and begins the next with the “First Tonic Formula.” Montgomery has a near direct quote of a melody Charlie Christian played in “Benny’s Bugle.” In “Benny’s Bugle,” beginning in measure seven, Christian plays the “Second Tonic Formula” (R-b3-3-5) over the Bb7 and F7 and concludes the line with the “First Tonic Formula” (5-4-b3-3-5) in measure ten [Example 113a]. Despite the name, these formulas are not limited to tonic chords.

Example 113a
Montgomery uses both the first and second formula in a phrase in “West Coast Blues.” In measure seventy-two, Montgomery anticipates the change to Bb7 by playing the “First Tonic Formula” on beat three. Montgomery then plays “Second Tonic Formula” over a Bb7 in measure seventy-three [Example 113b]. These formulas were staples in Christian’s vocabulary, the same vocabulary that Montgomery imitated night after night while transcribing his mentor’s work.

Example 113b

Another example of Montgomery quoting Christian occurs in “Missile Blues.” Montgomery uses the main melody from “Air Mail Special” in the second chorus of his improvisation [Example 114a]. It is not an exact replica and there are a few key differences that Montgomery incorporates, but it is safe to say that Montgomery is quoting Christian’s melody with a few added twists. The original melody is from “Air Mail Special” during the A sections over a simple tonic C chord. Although Jimmy Mundy and Goodman are given composer credits with Christian for “Air Mail Special,” it is believed Christian was the true composer of this tune.\(^{190}\)

Montgomery uses Christian’s melody to begin his second chorus of “Missile Blues” in measure thirteen. Montgomery shows his innovation by taking the melodic

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\(^{190}\) Goins, 305.
content and used it in a different harmonic setting. Montgomery does not quote Christian’s melody exactly, but adds his own touch. Montgomery adds the sharp-second (flat-third) before the natural-third, making the melody resemble the “Second Tonic Formula” (R-b3-3-5). Montgomery finishes the phrase in measure seventeen with the “First Tonic Formula” (5-4-b3-3-5), enclosing the third (E) of the C7. Just as in “West Coast Blues,” Montgomery combines two Christian influences to create a unique melody all his own. Montgomery uses Christian’s melody to mold his phrase, changing Christian’s original with slight alterations in rhythm and pitch, into something unique.

Example 114a

![Music notation](image1)

Air Mail Special, melody, m. 1-4

Example 114b

![Music notation](image2)

Missile Blues, chorus 2, m. 13-17

Jazz musicians have used quotes in improvisations since the beginning, so the act of quoting another composition is not new. Coker states that often they were used for “humorous interjection” or simply by accident as a result of playing a few successive
notes that also are in a familiar melody. The improviser’s mind/ear is reminded of the melody and proceeds to complete it, resulting in a quote.\textsuperscript{191}

Montgomery’s melody over measures thirteen to sixteen is not an exact quote of “Air Mail Special,” but both share a similar melodic shape and rhythmic contour. It could be called a paraphrase of Christian’s melody.\textsuperscript{192} It is the differences between Montgomery’s melody in “Missile Blues” and Christian’s “Airmail Special” that give insight into Montgomery’s use of assimilation of the past into innovation. Johnson-Laird states that uniqueness in style can be dependent upon the idiosyncratic biases in choosing alternatives.\textsuperscript{193} The differences between the two melodies indicated the alternatives that Montgomery used to create a new, original melody from Christian’s foundational melody.

The “First Tonic Formula” (5-4-b3-3) was highly favored by Christian and it appears to have been assimilated and innovated upon by Montgomery. This formula has been also defined by jazz educators like Baker and Coker as an “enclosure” of a target note. Although Christian’s favorite target note was the third, he did enclose other notes of the chord. This practice of enclosing other notes was the innovation that Montgomery developed the most, by making his enclosures have more variety and unpredictability.

In addition to the examples in which Montgomery plays the “First Tonic Formula” (see Examples 113b “West Coast Blues” and 114b “Missile Blues”), Wes

\textsuperscript{191} Coker, \textit{Elements of Jazz}, 68.


Montgomery also plays the Christian enclosure formula 5-4-b3-3 in measure twenty-six of “Billie’s Bounce” [Example 115]. Montgomery uses rests and syncopation to break up the line between the Eb (fourth) and C# (flat-third). The formula is still present, but hidden inside rhythmic alterations that create a new level of tension and release.

Example 115

One of the slight changes that Montgomery makes to Christian’s enclosure formula is adding the natural-second before the flat-third, making the formula 5-4-2-b3-3. This occurs twice in “Montgomeryland Funk.” In measure three, over the F7, Montgomery follows up the enclosure by arpeggiating up from the third (C) of an Am7(b5) chord [Example 116a]. Combining the enclosure of the third with an arpeggiation of the half-diminished chord was a technique also favored by Christian (see Example 34).

Example 116a
The second time Montgomery plays the modified enclosure formula in “Montgomeryland Funk” is in measure seventeen. He begins on the fifth (F) of Bb7 and descends 5 (F)-4 (Eb)-2 (C)-b3 (Db)-3 (D)-5 (F) [Example 116b].

Example 116b

Montgomery’s use of Christian’s enclosure formula in “West Coast Blues” was discussed in Example 113b, but enclosures are present throughout the improvisation. Montgomery actually opens his very first phrase with another amalgamation of Christian’s two formulas. Montgomery starts in measure one, over the tonic Bb7, with a slightly altered version of the “Second Tonic Formula” changing it from R-b3-3-5 to R-b3-3-4-#4-5 [Example 117a]. From the fifth (F) he then leads into the “First Tonic Formula” (5-4-b3-3) and concludes the phrase by playing an appoggiatura to surround the third (C) of Ab7 on beat one of measure three.

Example 117a
Montgomery plays two appoggiaturas in rapid succession in “West Coast Blues” to conclude a brief phrase in measure thirty-eight. Montgomery begins with an appoggiatura to surround the fifth (D) of G7 followed by an appoggiatura that surrounds the third (B) [Example 117b].

Example 117b

![Example 117b](image)

In measure forty-nine, Montgomery begins with the “Second Tonic Formula” over the Bb7. The melody begins with R (Bb)-b3 (C#)-3 (D) before jumping to the sixth (G) and the fifth (F). He continues with a variation on the “First Tonic Formula” by playing 5-R-4-b3-3-R. Montgomery then descends a Gm triad, starting on D in measure fifty [Example 117c]. Descending the vi chord over tonic was something Christian played in his solos (see Examples 40a, 40b, and 40c). It is the minor additions and changes that help Montgomery make his voice heard above the Christian under-tones.

Example 117c

![Example 117c](image)
Where Montgomery seems to have innovated the most in his use of enclosures and appoggiaturas was in his ability to surround not only the third, but any note he desired.

Montgomery uses enclosures to create an extended sequence over the Db7, beginning in measure forty-nine of “Bock to Bock” [Example 118a]. Montgomery alternates between enclosing the third (F) and fifth (Ab) of the Db7. He continues this sequence into the GbMaj7 by enclosing the fifth (Db) and third (Bb), but ends the phrase enclosing the sixth (Eb) on the downbeat of measure fifty-two.

Example 118a

Montgomery creates another extended phrase in “Bock to Bock” using a sequence of appoggiaturas and enclosures beginning in measure fifty-eight. Montgomery sequences down a third after playing his target note to begin his next appoggiatura or enclosure [Example 118b]. Montgomery surrounds a wide variety of target notes including the third, fifth, ninth, and eleventh.
Example 118b

Montgomery uses an appoggiatura to surround the root of Dbm7 on the downbeat of measure thirty-two of “Bock to Bock” [Example 118c].

Example 118c

In “Billie’s Bounce” Montgomery uses the sharp-eleventh (F#) as part of an appoggiatura to surround the fifth (G) of C7 in measure thirty-four [Example 119a].

Example 119a

Twice in “Billie’s Bounce” Montgomery surrounds the ninth of an F7 chord by surrounding the ninth by whole-steps instead of half-steps. In measure nine Montgomery
establishes a brief sequence using half-steps and concludes the sequence surrounding the ninth (G) on beat four via whole-steps [Example 119b]. In measure fifteen, the whole-step enclosure is not a part of a sequence, but rather an isolated lick [Example 119c].

Example 119b

Example 119c

Montgomery incorporates the same enclosure technique via whole steps in “D-Natural Blues” in measure eighteen. He creates a brief sequence by surrounding the ninth (A) and root (G) of the G7 [Example 120a].

Example 120a
Earlier in the same chorus Montgomery begins measure fifteen by enclosing the flat-seventh (C) on the downbeat, then plays an appoggiatura to surround the ninth (A), and ends using his whole step technique to enclose the root (D) [Example 120b]. It was very rare to find Christian using the enclosure formula more than once per phrase. Montgomery constructs an entire phrase using enclosures as his melodic foundation.

Example 120b

Montgomery surrounds a variety of target chord tones throughout his improvisation on “Airegin.” Montgomery encloses the third using his variation on Christian’s “First Tonic Formula” twice. The first time is in measure twelve over a C#m7-F#7 progression. Montgomery’s modification is adding the natural-second (G#) before the flat-third (A) [Example 121a]. This appears to be a standard alteration to Christian’s formula and could be seen as part of Montgomery’s personal vocabulary (see Example 18).

Example 121a
Paul Berliner states that the most elaborate changes in a jazz improvisers’ vocabulary commonly occur when a student deliberately varies phrases learned from imitating a mentor. Through these variations the student begins to add his or her own personal marks.\textsuperscript{194} The variation on Christian’s “First Tonic Formula” may have been a result of exactly what Berliner is discussing. It is subtle, just one note, but that one note now becomes a whole new melodic entity that can be imitated and innovated upon by other improvisers.

In measure forty-one of “Airegin” Montgomery begins over the Bbm7 by ascending the Bb Dorian bebop scale until he lands on the Eb (flat-seventh) on beat one of F7. On beat two Montgomery descends using his modified “First Tonic Formula”: 5 (C)-4 (Bb)-2 (G)-b3 (Ab)-3 (A)-R (F) [Example 121b]. Just as in earlier examples, Christian’s formula is at the core, but Wes Montgomery is in the modifications.

Example 121b

Montgomery uses this same enclosure technique to enclose the root of Cm7(5) in measure sixty-seven. He then follows this up with a delayed appoggiatura surrounding the root of F7 in measure sixty-eight. Montgomery plays the C and Eb on beat three of

\textsuperscript{194} Berliner, 131.
measure sixty-seven. He then rests a beat before playing the flat-ninth (Gb) into the root (F) in measure sixty-eight [Example 121c].

Example 121c

Montgomery’s use of the modified “First Tonic Formula” is used prominently throughout “Ecaroh” over both dominant and tonic harmonies. On beat three of measure fifteen, Montgomery appears to be playing the “First Tonic Formula” over the C7. He plays G (5)-F (4)-Db (b3), but then resolves to the C (the fifth of FMaj7) on beat one of bar 16. From the fifth (C) of the FMaj7 Montgomery plays his modified “First Tonic Formula,” adding the natural-second (G) before the flat-third (G#) before resolving the phrase [Example 122a]. Montgomery breaks up “First Tonic Formula” to be used over the dominant and tonic chord creating a unique melody all his own.

Example 122a
Montgomery encloses the third (D) of BbMaj7 in measure nineteen and plays the modified enclosure formula on beat three of the F7 [Example 122b]. Montgomery begins in measure eighteen with a descending scalar run using the altered scale to emphasize the sharp-fifth (C#), sharp-ninth (Ab), and flat-ninth (Gb) over the F7. As noted earlier, the use of both the sharp- and flat-ninth in a scalar run was not found in Christian’s playing. It appears to be an innovation that came into Montgomery’s playing through his own creativity or from another source.

Example 122b

In measures twenty-one to twenty-two, Montgomery uses his modified version of Christian’s enclosure formula to surround the sixth (C) of Ebm7, but he also uses a simple enclosure to surround the flat-seventh (Gb) of Ab7 [Example 122c]. Because the chord in measure twenty-one is an Ebm7, it appears Montgomery is either anticipating the change to Ab7 as Christian often would do, or merely is disregarding the Ebm7 and treating both measures as an Ab7.
Example 122c

Montgomery encloses the third of the tonic FMaj7, but this time varies his own formula slightly. He appears to be anticipating the FMaj7 chord beginning on beat three of the Bb7 in measure twenty-six [Example 122d]. If analyzing the notes as part of the FMaj7, Montgomery plays 5 (C)- 4 (Bb)- R (F)- #2 (G#)- 3 (A). It is as if Montgomery has found a new way of combining both the first and second tonic formulas. Montgomery begins with the 5 (C)- 4 (Bb) descent found in the “First Tonic Formula,” aiming to enclose the third (A), but then plays R (F)- #2 (G#)- 3 (A) from the “Second Tonic Formula.”

Example 122d

In measures six to seven, over the Bbm7-Eb7, Montgomery encloses the third of Eb7, but then leaps to the E-natural (flat-second) into the root (Eb) and flat-seventh (Db) [Example 122e]. The flat-second as a chromatic passing note was common in Christian’s playing (see Example 36). The E-natural allows Montgomery to resolve into the AbMaj7
using the 7-3 voice leading technique that Christian often employed in his solos. Again, Montgomery is combining several techniques that could have been a result of his assimilation of Charlie Christian’s solos. The end result is not a duplication of Christian’s vocabulary, but a re-formulation of the vocabulary to create Wes Montgomery’s own distinct voice.

Example 122e

It appears from this analysis that Montgomery did imitate and assimilate the “First” and “Second” tonic formulas that Spring identifies in his study. These formulas became valuable building blocks upon which Montgomery would innovate. Although they are not used extensively in every solo, they do occur prominently in Montgomery’s early recorded solos. This strongly suggests that Montgomery was not immune to the influences he was absorbing through imitating Christian’s improvisations. Montgomery does not merely imitate, but adds variations to enclosure patterns to extend the harmonic tension that the patterns create. Montgomery also uses enclosures and appoggiaturas as melodic building blocks to create impressive extended sequences. Christian’s formulas are present, but Montgomery’s innovation comes through in not only his deviations from the core formula, but also the context in which he uses them. Christian mainly uses
enclosures to end phrases on strong chord tones. Montgomery uses them to create and extend phrases that continually build harmonic tension for several measures at a time.

**Harmonic Substitution**

Montgomery’s use of superimposing chords to create tension and emphasize upper extensions was discussed in the earlier “Arpeggio” section. Those techniques can also be seen as a type of harmonic substitution in many ways as well. This section will focus on the harmonic substitutions that originated in Christian’s playing to see if and how Montgomery imitated and innovated upon them.

One of the main substitutions used by Christian was adding or changing chords to create interest and dissonance. Montgomery also appears to have incorporated this element of Christian’s playing into his own sound. Montgomery does not regularly play the submediant (vi) as a substitute for the tonic (I), nor does he add the supertonic (ii) before the dominant (V) as often as Christian does. On the contrary, Montgomery will often disregard the supertonic and treat both measures as a dominant chord (see Examples 91a and 91b). Montgomery does play the submediant (vi) over a tonic major chord on occasion as in “West Coast Blues” (see Example 117, measure fifty) and “Satin Doll” in measure fifteen [Example 123]. Montgomery outlines an Am triad (vi) over the CMaj7, resolving on the root in measure sixteen.
What Montgomery does incorporate into his playing with a fair amount of regularity is tritone substitutions. Although Christian did not pioneer this technique, nor did he use it every solo, it does appear in his playing (see Example 44). As Montgomery has shown in earlier examples, he often gravitated to the techniques Christian used with less frequency, and it was these techniques that Montgomery gravitated to more in his own playing.

Montgomery hints at a tritone substitution in “Billie’s Bounce” over the F7 in measure thirty-one. The melody is interesting in that he plays the major seventh (E) on beats one and two, but also emphasizes the D# (the third of B7 or flat-seventh of F7) and the B (the root of the B7 or sharp-eleventh of F7) [Example 124].

In “Montgomeryland Funk,” Montgomery inserts a tritone substitution for the tonic chord in measure sixteen. He plays a B Mixolydian scale over an F7 chord
[Example 125]. This scale produces the altered tones of the sharp-fifth (C#), sharp-eleventh (B), sharp-ninth (G#) and flat-ninth (F#). The line flows smoothly into the fifth (F) of the Bb7, which then becomes his modified version of Christian’s “First Tonic Formula”: 5-4-2-b3-3-5.

Example 125

In “Missile Blues,” Montgomery substitutes an Eb7 for the Am7(b5) in measure thirty-three. In essence Montgomery is performing two substitutions: first changing the quality of the chord from Am7(b5) to A7 and then playing Eb7 as a tritone substitution for A7. The melody begins in measure thirty-two over the Bbm7-Eb7. Then in measure thirty-three Montgomery plays the Eb and G (root and third) as well as a Db (flat-seventh) on beat one to hint that he is still thinking Eb7 [Example 126a]. Finally, Montgomery encloses the B, the sixth of D7, on beat one of measure thirty-four.

Example 126a
Montgomery performs a similar substitution in “Four on Six” as to the one in “Missile Blues” over an Am7. In measure sixty-two, Montgomery outlines an Eb7 over the Am7, indicating another chord quality substitution combined with a tritone substitution [Example 126b]. He also anticipates the Gm7 of measure sixty-three by playing a 7-3 resolution on beat four of measure sixty-two.

Example 126b

Another example of Montgomery using a tritone substitution occurs in “D-Natural Blues.” This time, Montgomery appears to not only use a substitute for the V chord but also the ii. In measure sixteen the chord is the tonic D7. The melodic line Montgomery plays hints at either GbMaj7 or Ebm7. On beat three Montgomery plays a descending melody that suggests an Ab7 [Example 127]. One analysis of measure sixteen could be that Montgomery is playing an Ebm7-Ab7 (ii-V) to replace the Am7-D7. Montgomery precedes the Ab7 with its corresponding ii chord just as Christian often did (see Example 41). This time the V (Ab7) is also a tritone substitution. Montgomery appears to have combined Christian’s technique of adding the ii before the V in conjunction with a tritone substitution to create a unique, tension filled ii-V melody.
Montgomery used tritone substitution in addition to other harmonic techniques, including anticipations, delay, and harmonic generation to alter the harmonic fabric in his improvisations. On occasion Montgomery would also play a phrase that is difficult to fit into any category. One example of this occurs in measure twenty-eight of “Missile Blues.” Two possible explanations for what Montgomery is playing is either an Ab Aolean or a B Locrian mode over a G7 chord [Example 128]. The scales provide all the altered upper extensions, including the flat- and sharp-ninth, natural-fifth, and flat-thirteenth but also the major seventh. Although the Gb, or major seventh, on a G7 chord is considered “wrong” it does not detract from the quality of the melody. Regardless if the major seventh was intended or a mistake, Montgomery creates a tension-filled line that resolves fluently into the C7.

Example 128
Montgomery uses this same technique, playing a minor chord a half step above the given harmony, in measure twenty-two of “Satin Doll.” Over the Am7 chord, Montgomery plays a Bbm7 and an F# triad that resolves the major seventh (C#) into the flat-seventh (C) of D7 [Example 129].

Example 129

This technique Montgomery uses in “Missile Blues” and “Satin Doll” might fall into the category of what Jerry Coker calls “side-slipping” or “outside playing.” Coker describes this as an event in a solo where the improviser deliberately plays out-of-the-key for the sake of creating tension.195 This technique is not found in Christian’s playing but it is found in the playing of many of Montgomery’s contemporaries, like saxophonist Cannonball Adderley and John Coltrane. This was an element that Montgomery may have been incorporating into his own vocabulary via another influence. It is the combination of side-stepping and playing an arpeggio up from the third of the dominant that Montgomery used to create a new melodic approach found in measure twenty-two of “Satin Doll.”

195 Coker, Elements of Jazz, 83.
A frequent side-step device that Montgomery favored was to approach chord tones from either a half step above or below, regardless if the note was “in” or “out” of the given harmony. This technique has been encountered in “West Coast Blues” (Example 81), “Satin Doll” (Example 87) and “Billie’s Bounce” (Example 101c).

In “Missile Blues” Montgomery uses this technique in measure twenty-five of “Missile Blues.” Montgomery precedes each note of a G triad by a half step below. By doing this Montgomery incorporates an F# triad over a G7. [Example 130a]. These dissonant notes become part of a sequence emphasizing tension and release.

Example 130a

Montgomery uses the same technique over the G7-E7 in measure fifty-seven in the fourth chorus of “Missile Blues.” This time Montgomery descends from the root of a G triad and precedes the G, D, and B again by the note a half step below them [Example 130b].
Example 130b

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{G7} & \quad \text{E7} & \quad \text{Am7} & \quad \text{D7} \\
\text{\#1} & \quad \#2 & \quad \#3 & \quad \#4
\end{align*}
\]

Missile Blues, chorus 4, m. 47

It is possible that this technique was assimilated from Christian because Christian does use this half-step approach on occasion as well (see Example 30b). Montgomery used this technique more frequently to weave in and out of the harmonic foundation and create sequences of harmonic tension throughout many of his solos.

Montgomery’s assimilation and innovation on Christian’s harmonic substitution devices seem to be most centralized around the use of the tritone substitution. This technique appears very sporadically in some of Christian’s later recorded solos, but Montgomery appears to have taken notice. Montgomery also appears to be exploring ways to step outside the given harmony by deliberately playing chords a half-step above or approaching chord tones a half-step away. Montgomery used these harmonic devices to re-harmonize or play outside the given harmony, while continuing to be focused on creating strong melodies.

**Approach to ii-V Progressions**

Montgomery appears to have also been influenced by Christian’s use of the 7-3 voice leading resolution over ii-V progressions. Christian often outlined the minor ii chord that would resolve via the flat-seventh into the third. Christian would then ascend
from the third with a diminished triad or half-diminished seventh arpeggio. Many of the compositions that Christian improvised over did not incorporate the ii-V progression, but Christian gives the impression of superimposing the ii chord over the V chord. These techniques were examined in earlier Examples 41a, 41b, 41c, 42, and 43.

**Previous Examples of Charlie Christian’s ii-V Patterns Using 7-3 Resolution**

**Example 41a**

Benny’s Bugle, chorus 1, m. 21

**Example 41b**

Solo Flight, chorus 3, m. 25-26

**Example 41c**

Lips Flips, chorus 2, m. 45-46

**Example 42**

Honeysuckle Rose, chorus 1, m. 23-24
These similar melodic approaches to the ii-V progression also appear in Wes Montgomery’s solos. De Stefano states that Montgomery often allows the seventh of the first chord to resolve into the third of the second chord when the root movement was a fourth.\textsuperscript{196} Often Montgomery descends the minor chord, but after outlining the minor chord Montgomery varies what would happen next. Montgomery most frequently would leap up to the root or another chord tone after he resolved the flat-seventh into the third.

In “Bock to Bock” Montgomery descends the Em7 from the fifth (B) and connects into the third (C#) of A7 by the flat-seventh (D) of Em7 [Example 131]. Montgomery does not ascend the half-diminished chord, but instead jumps to the root (A).

Example 131

\textsuperscript{196} De Stefano, “The Blues in Wes Montgomery’s,” 54.
“Bock to Bock” utilizes a tritone substitution as part of the composition written by Buddy Montgomery, Wes Montgomery’s brother. “Bock to Bock” has the final cadence resolving to the tonic (Dbm) by the progression A7- Ab7 [Example 132a]. The A7 can be analyzed as a tritone substitution for Eb7. Montgomery resolves by a half-step between these chords in the exact same way twice. He resolves the flat-seventh (G) of A7 into the flat-seventh (Gb) of Ab7 on beat three creating a flat-seventh to flat-seventh resolution. Montgomery connects the flat-seventh of A7 into the flat-seventh of Ab7 again in measure forty-four of the second chorus as well [Example 132b].

Example 132a

![Example 132a](image)

Bock to Bock, chorus 1, m. 7

Example 132b

![Example 132b](image)

Bock to Bock, chorus 2, m. 44

In “Montgomeryland Funk” Montgomery descends from the fifth (G) of Cm7 in measure twenty-eight and resolves into the third (A) of F7 via the flat-seventh (Bb). This is nearly identical to what Christian played over the F7 in Example 41a. Montgomery puts in his own touch by jumping up to the flat-ninth (Gb). From the Gb of the F7 chord,
Montgomery leads into the Bb7 using another 7 (Eb)-3 (D) resolution in measure 29 [Example 133].

Example 133

Christian favored beginning on the fifth of the minor chord when he would use a 7-3 resolution. Montgomery does not seem to have a standard starting pitch when he descending from the minor chord. He does descend from the fifth (A) in “West Coast Blues” in measure five over the Dm7. [Example 134]. Another common trend appears to be that Montgomery favors jumping up after he resolves the seventh into the third to another note of the chord.

Example 134

Montgomery uses the 7-3 resolution in measure one hundred four of “Four on Six,” but instead of jumping up to a chord tone, he continues down to the flat-seventh (Gb) of Ab7 [Example 135].
Example 135

In measure thirty-two of “Satin Doll,” Montgomery descends an Em7(b5) from the flat-fifth (Bb) and resolves into the third (C#) of A7 before leaping up to the root [Example 136].

Example 136

These examples of Montgomery’s use of the 7-3 resolution to outline a ii-V progression shows a strong resemblance to Christian’s approach to superimposing the ii chord over the V. Montgomery’s assimilation of Christian’s technique of descending the minor ii chord with the flat-seventh resolving into the third of the dominant (V) is present in nearly every solo examined for this study. Montgomery innovated upon this technique by varying what he would play after the resolution, but the 7-3 voice leading is at the core of his melodies. Small variations built upon Christian’s foundation appear to be a key factor contributing Montgomery’s ability to innovative and design his unique voice in jazz.
Concluding Remarks

Wes Montgomery’s approach to dominant harmonies through the use of scales share many similarities to Christian’s approach. One strong similarity was that Christian and Montgomery both used the Mixolydian mode over dominant harmonies. Montgomery differs from Christian in that Montgomery also used modes from the melodic minor scale, the harmonic minor scale, the half-whole diminished scale, and pentatonic scales to create melodies with greater chromatic tension.

Arpeggios were a key element in both Christian and Montgomery’s melodic content for improvisation. Like Christian, Montgomery would arpeggiate a half-diminished chord up from the third of the dominant chord to emphasize the ninth. But Montgomery would also arpeggiate a fully-diminished seventh chord to emphasize the flat-ninth as well. Montgomery would also arpeggiate up a major triad beginning on the third of the minor ii chord. He would then connect the flat-seventh into the third of the dominant for smooth voice leading. Montgomery favored arpeggiating a major seventh chord build beginning with the flat-seventh of the dominant. The major seventh chord would emphasize a suspend harmony over the dominant tonality. At the core, both Christian and Montgomery used arpeggios to create tension and emphasize upper harmonic extensions in long phrases of eight-note melodies.

Christian’s influence on Wes Montgomery’s use of chromatic tones through the utilization of both the dominant and major bebop scale is present in every solo examined for this study. Montgomery also explored greater chromatic tension by featuring the flat-and sharp-ninth, sharp-eleventh (or flat-fifth) and flat-thirteenth (or sharp-fifth) with more
frequency in his melodies. In Christian’s solos, the sharp-eleventh was used as a color
tone only a few times. In Montgomery’s playing, it became a focal point in several of his
melodies and compositions.

Christian’s use of formulas, in particular the use of the enclosure, are present and
even directly quoted by Montgomery in several improvisations. But Montgomery goes
beyond quotes to create formulas that are distinct and new. The formulas that are so
signature to Christian’s playing are re-shaped by Montgomery with minor additions,
creating formulas that have become associated with Montgomery’s own personal voice.

Harmonic substitutions were not one of the most dominant aspects of Christian’s
playing, so Montgomery’s exposure to these techniques from his mentor appears to be
limited to a few instances. Montgomery did make use of the tritone substitution on a
number of occasions. This was a technique that was briefly seen in a few of Christian’s
last solos. The use of the side-step in Montgomery’s improvisation was an innovation that
appears to have come from an influence other than Christian. Montgomery skillfully used
the side-step technique to weave in and out of the harmonic chords of the composition to
create greater tension and release.

Montgomery appears to have assimilated several other key jazz traditions found
in the improvisations of his mentor Charlie Christian. The traditions included sequences,
anticipation and delaying resolutions, harmonic generalization, and 7-3 voice leading
resolutions. These traditions became the foundation for Montgomery to build his own
musical devices, creating new traditions to be assimilated by other aspiring guitarists.
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION

Much of Wes Montgomery’s originality can be traced back to his imitation and assimilation of Charlie Christian’s vocabulary. One author wrote that Montgomery was the result of a combination of the blues with traditions found in Charlie Christian.\(^{197}\) Christian’s traditions were an important aspect in Montgomery’s development. Paul Rinzler writes that jazz traditions are the foundation and are meant to provide a repository for possibilities yet to be discovered by the improviser.\(^{198}\) Montgomery acquired these traditions through a total immersion in Christian’s work. The traditions Montgomery assimilated into his improvisations laid the foundation that helped guide his approaches to dominant harmonies. Imitation and assimilation allowed Christian to be present but not standing next to Montgomery in every improvisation.

Wes Montgomery spoke on the importance for imitation as a tool for learning jazz improvisation in an interview. Montgomery states that the guitar is such a hard instrument that someone else has to help the student “get something” out of the guitar

\(^{198}\) Rinzler, 132.
because “it’s hard to get something on your own.” Montgomery recognized that a guitarist cannot create out of nothing, but is in need of other sources to help provide material to build from. Montgomery goes on to say that “a cat will listen to what [another] cat is playing and think he can do that, but he won’t study on how long that cat’s been playing.” Montgomery knew it was not enough to think he could do what Christian was doing; Montgomery had to physically do it himself. Hence, he learned the solos note for note. Montgomery then states as the period of imitation progresses “the beginning player will hear a little difference in his playing, and that little inspiration is enough to go further.”

In the two 1948 recordings with Lionel Hampton, Montgomery was already displaying several of Charlie Christian’s inspired techniques including enclosures, chromatic passing tones, as well as using sequences and anticipations to create tension in his improvisations.

Montgomery’s choice of scales over dominant harmonies included not only the Mixolydian scale, like Christian used, but also modes from the melodic and harmonic minor. Montgomery also used the half-whole diminished scale and altered scale to emphasize the flat- and sharp-ninth together, which was something Christian did not use. Also, Montgomery branched from Christian in utilizing the blues and pentatonic scales to create long melodic phrases over multiple chord changes.

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200 Ibid., 161.
Montgomery and Christian both used arpeggios as a primary melodic and harmonic vehicle in their improvisations. Christian favored arpeggiation of a half-diminished seventh chord, beginning on the third of the dominant. This allowed him to emphasize the third, fifth, flat-seventh, and ninth of the chord. Montgomery copies this technique in multiple solos, but also adds to it. Montgomery appeared to be exploring new ways to use arpeggios to not only emphasize the chord tones, but to add greater chromatic tension. He did this by changing the half-diminished to a fully-diminished chord to emphasize the flat-ninth. Montgomery also uses arpeggios to suspend the harmony of a chord, sometimes for a number of measures, by playing a major seventh chord starting with the flat-seventh of the dominant. This technique was unique to Montgomery’s vocabulary and is not found in Christian’s.

Montgomery shares many similarities with Christian in their use of chromatic pitches. Both played chromatically altered upper extensions, like flat- and sharp-ninth, flat-fifth, and even flat-thirteen in their melodies. The differences occur in Montgomery’s freer approach to his use of chromatic pitches. Montgomery uses them to not only create long strands of eighth-note melodies, but short phrases of chromatic color tones that are developed over time. Christian’s use of chromatic pitches were frequent but predictable. Montgomery was more adventurous, often playing notes that might be considered wrong over the given harmony in order to develop his melody fully.

The bebop scales, particularly the dominant bebop scale, were an important melodic device for Christian and can also be found in Montgomery’s work. Christian regularly used them to connect long scalar melodies across several measures. Montgomery deviated from Christian in that he preferred to only use a few key notes of
the scale. His most frequent melodic approach was to play the dominant bebop scale from
the root down to the flat-seventh and then leap up to another chord tone and continue his
phrase.

Formulas and enclosures were some of Christian’s most influential vocabulary on
Montgomery. Montgomery used and would quote Christian’s “First” and “Second Tonic
Formula” in his improvisations. Montgomery adds some of his most significant
differences to these formulas. Montgomery would change the formula by adding one key
note to the formula or enclosing a different chord tone other than Christian’s preferred
third. The creativity is not only in Montgomery’s deviations from Christian’s core, but in
the context of which he uses the formulas. Montgomery sequenced these formulas to
create extended phrases and develop them over the course of an entire chorus.

Montgomery and Christian both use the tritone substitution in their solos as a
harmonic substitution. Montgomery uses it with more frequency, but tritone substitution
is not a prime device in his musical vocabulary. Christian’s aptitude to approach chord
tones a half-step away would become one of Montgomery’s most frequent harmonic
devices. Montgomery would regularly use the device to create half-step sequences that
weaved in and out of chromatic tension. Montgomery expands this device of playing
harmonies outside the given composition by using the harmonic technique of side-
slipping.

One of Montgomery’s strongest resemblances to Christian is in his use of the 7-3
voice leading resolution over ii-V progressions. Christian and Montgomery would
descend the minor ii chord, as an arpeggio or a scale, and resolve the flat-seventh into the
third of the dominant almost identically. Montgomery broke from Christian slightly in
that he would often jump up to a different chord tone, where Christian frequently arpeggiate up a half-diminished seventh chord from the third or continued down scalarly.

Montgomery’s unique innovations were as much a result of his departures from Christian’s approach to dominant harmonies as they were a result of his imitation of Christian. Montgomery’s innovations were also a result of direct and indirect influences from sources like his brothers, musicians in Lionel Hampton’s band, and life growing up playing jazz in Indianapolis. Montgomery’s creativity was not a result of one event but the culmination of inspirations that were present throughout his unique and gifted life. Guitarist Pat Metheny sums it up in saying that “Wes defined his own time through a sound that could only be of his time.”

A long period of time had passed between “Brant Inn Boogie” (1948) and “Billie’s Bounce” (1957). It is reasonable to assume Montgomery was adding a lot of “little” differences during these years to the Charlie Christian melodies he had imitated. These differences became a part of Montgomery’s music vocabulary. Much of what can be credited in Montgomery’s solos as innovation was not a result of complete changes to Christian’s work, but slight alterations or incorporation of new material with old. Montgomery did not create his melodies from nothing, but transformed, added to, and re-shaped assimilated ones until they were no longer recognizable as reproductions of the past. These alterations were the creative seeds that helped Wes Montgomery innovate upon the traditions he had assimilated. Montgomery’s little changes have become new traditions to inspire future guitarists to imitate, assimilate, and innovate.

\[201\] Niles, 18.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


**DISCOGRAPHY**

*Transcriptions from the following recordings and tracks were used for the musical examples.*


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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Solos 4-5 recording date unknown</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Tracks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Brant Inn Boogie”</td>
<td>June 21, 1948</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Adam Blew His Hat”</td>
<td>July 1, 1948</td>
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<th>Tracks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Bock to Bock”</td>
<td>December 30, 1957</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Billie’s Bounce”</td>
<td>December 30, 1957</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Montgomeryland Funk”</td>
<td>April 8, 1958</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Missile Blues”</td>
<td>October 5, 1959</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Satin Doll”</td>
<td>October 5, 1959</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Yesterdays”</td>
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<td>“Ecaroh”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Airegin”</td>
<td>January 26, 1960</td>
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<tr>
<td>“D-Natural Blues”</td>
<td>January 26, 1960</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Four on Six”</td>
<td>January 26, 1960</td>
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<tr>
<td>“West Coast Blues”</td>
<td>January 28, 1960</td>
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