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# A Study of the Improvisational Style of Theodore "Fats" Navarro, 1949-1950

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## A Study of the Improvisational Style of Theodore "Fats" Navarro 1949-1950

by

Russell Zimmer

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A Study of the Improvisational Style of Theodore "Fats" Navarro

1949-1950

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University of Nebraska, 2016

Adviser: Darryl White

This study analyzes improvisatory techniques of Theodore "Fats" Navarro (1923-1950). Live improvised solos of the trumpeter from 1949-1950 were examined to better understand the improvisational style through the analysis of transcribed solos. Chapter one gives a brief overview of Navarro's brief professional career and why he was chosen as the subject of this study. Chapter two sets out the methodology for this study and reviews related literature to the study of Fats Navarro. Chapter three provides a brief background of each performance from which the transcriptions were selected. Chapter four identifies those aspects of his improvisation that occur often harmonically, rhythmically, and melodically. This chapter also identifies particular aspects of Navarro's improvisations that occur as anomalies. Excerpts are taken from each transcription to illustrate each concept discussed. The final chapter summarizes Navarro's playing based on the analysis of the selected transcriptions and also reiterates the lasting legacy that Navarro left on jazz trumpeters and the development of the bop style. The appendix includes complete transcriptions in their entirety of the selected solos discussed in this study.

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#### CHAPTER 1

#### INTRODUCTION

Although Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie were the originators of bebop, many young musicians such as Fats Navarro would emerge as specialists utilizing the bebop language of Parker and Gillespie. Navarro was not only proficient in the bebop language, but he was also an innovative figure in the development of bop trumpet playing. His technical precision and fluid melodic ideas made him a celebrated figure whose style many jazz musicians strove to replicate. Great jazz innovators have been the subject of numerous scholarly studies, most notably Thomas Owens' writings on Charlie Parker. However, Navarro's presence in these types of studies is often minimal.

Influenced by swing trumpeters Roy Eldridge and Charlie Shavers, as well as transitional trumpeters Dizzy Gillespie and Howard McGhee, Navarro developed a new way to approach jazz trumpet playing. His early loose swing-influenced style of playing gradually became more unyielding and concise as he strove for clarity of tone and technical perfection. Navarro's implementation of the bebop language gradually developed throughout his short professional career.

In his book *The Art of Jazz Trumpet Playing*, trumpeter John McNeil states, "From the standpoint of upbeat rhythmic emphasis, Fats Navarro was the first modern jazz trumpet player who owed little or nothing to the swing era." McNeil goes on to discuss that Navarro's accents in the eighth-note lines were modeled after Parker's and that he was "the first true bebop trumpet player." Even though Navarro has always lived in the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> John McNeil, *The Art of Jazz Trumpet Playing*, (Brooklyn: Gerard & Sarzin Publishing Co., 1999), 9.

shadow of Dizzy Gillespie, his relevance in a document of study deserves further exploration. A thorough analysis of Navarro's final performances would be of great benefit to other studies on his style and the development of bop trumpet playing that can later assist in jazz pedagogical methods. This document will illustrate Navarro's final musical development through a more organic environment without the restrictions of recording in a studio.

#### **BACKGROUND**

Theodore "Fats" Navarro was born on September 24, 1923 into a musical family. He was exposed to Cuban music on the radio growing up in his hometown of Key West, Florida. Both of his parents casually played music and his third cousin, Charlie Shavers, was a prominent swing trumpet player whose records Navarro would listen to exhaustively.<sup>3</sup> Although he had access to various instruments around the house such as a piano, saxophone and the cornet, he took a serious interest in the trumpet by the age of thirteen. While in high school, Navarro also took up the tenor saxophone, which allowed him to work with Walter Johnson's band in Miami during his summer breaks. He graduated from high school in 1941 and immediately headed north to Orlando to join Sol Albright's band as a trumpet player. Navarro left Albright's band to take formal trumpet lessons and eventually moved to Indianapolis to join Snookum Russell's band, which primarily toured throughout the Midwest.<sup>4</sup>

After two years touring with Russell's band, Navarro joined Andy Kirk's orchestra in 1943 and began his brief mentorship with their trumpet soloist, Howard McGhee.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Leif Bo Petersen and Theo Rehak, *Infatuation: The Music and Life of Theodore "Fats" Navarro*, (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 2009), 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> George Hoeffer, "The Significance of Fats Navarro," *Downbeat*, 27 January 1966, Vol.33 No. 2, 16.

Kirk's orchestra made it out to New York City in 1944. During this time Navarro made his first appearance at Minton's Playhouse in hopes of finding Roy Eldridge, Hot Lips Page, and Dizzy Gillespie. He soon replaced the solo chair in Billy Eckstine's band by recommendation of Gillespie, whom he replaced. After an eighteen-month stint with Eckstine's band, Navarro opted to stay in New York City in June of 1946.<sup>5</sup>

Having established himself in New York City, Navarro frequented Minton's Playhouse and other clubs on 52<sup>nd</sup> Street. Living in New York allowed him to join the small-group jazz bebop scene that was established by Gillespie and Oscar Pettiford (among others) a few years earlier. Navarro quickly became an important part of the New York "Fifty-second Street Jazz" scene. In a 1947 interview with Barry Ulanov, Navarro expressed that he must play in small bands, "You can't learn anything in big bands. I hope I never work in one again. There is no chance to really play, no progress." Despite this revelation, he would continue to acquire work in larger ensembles to supplement his income. Navarro also accepted other various jobs in 1948 that included a recording session with Benny Goodman in California. After recording only one side, "Stealin' Apples," he was replaced by trumpeter Doug Mettome, and returned to New York.

Being a part of the professional scene in New York City demanded his ability to play for hours in nightclubs and studios, which required a large repertoire of popular songs, blues melodies, and originals. Frank Tirro acknowledges that:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Scott DeVeaux, *The Birth of Bebop: A Social and Musical History*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 291.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Alyn Shipton, *A New History of Jazz*, (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group Inc, 2007), 367

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Barry Ulanov, "Fats Navarro," *Metronome*, November (1947): 19, 38-39.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Hoeffer, "The Significance of Fats Navarro," 17.

This style of development, where the musician was called upon to produce three to four hours of improvised music five to seven days a week, led to the development of a repertoire of melodic patterns, actually a collection of instrumental finger patterns related to keys and chords, which were generally unique to the individual and were called upon as "instant ideas" for the development of long-line, extemporaneous solos.<sup>10</sup>

Living in New York afforded him the opportunity to record with many great jazz musicians including Illinois Jacquet, Coleman Hawkins, Tadd Dameron, Oscar Pettiford, Stan Getz, Max Roach, J.J. Johnson, and fellow trumpeters Howard McGhee, Miles Davis, Kenny Dorham, and Dizzy Gillespie. Not only was Navarro an in-demand sideman, he began to compose bebop contra facts and record several albums as a leader with Savoy and Blue Note records. Despite all of his successes, jazz scholar Ross Russell suggests that Navarro remained a "badly underrated" musician during the course of his career due to his shy and subtle personality. 11

Navarro's reserved personality translated into his impeccable playing abilities and disciplined practice habits. Gillespie recalls Navarro as "the best all around trumpeter of them all. He had everything a trumpeter should have: tone, ideas, execution, and reading ability." Navarro may have been a better trumpet player than Gillespie, but jazz writer Whitney Balliett commented in his June 12, 1978 *New Yorker* article "Jazz: Fat Girl," that Navarro lacked the "italics and bold face that Gillespie always set himself up in. Gillespie liked to clown and blare and do the fandango up and down his registers." In contrast, Navarro was more subdued, focusing on sound and evenness throughout the registers. Balliett also mentions that Navarro "clothed the genuine departures from swing

<sup>10</sup> Frank Tirro, Jazz: A History, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company Inc., 1977), 274.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Ross Russell, "Brass Instrumentation in Bebop," *The Record Changer*, January (1949): 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Dizzy Gillespie, *To Be, or Not....To Bop*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 487.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Whitney Balliett, "Jazz: Fat Girl," *The New Yorker* June 12 (1978): 117.

inherent in bebop with elegance, logic and beauty" having the purest tone and displayed the perfect blending of ideas and technique." <sup>14</sup>

Despite Gillespie having been the greatest modern trumpeter of the 1940s, he could not compete with Navarro in certain aspects. Barry Harris points out that even though Navarro and Gillespie "were working in the same direction, their approaches to rhythm remained distinct." Navarro's nearly even eighth-note lines were gaining popularity by younger developing bop trumpet players such as Clifford Brown. Although they had their differences, bop scholar Ross Russell wrote that bebop trumpeters like Gillespie and Navarro "have further extended the range of the instrument. They have added to its virtuosity, speed of execution and brilliance. They have produced a trumpet tone which is lighter, rounder and more transparent." Even though Gillespie was at the forefront of bebop trumpet playing, Navarro evolved the style in a way many would soon follow.

Bebop was the perfect outlet for a private musician like Navarro. His youthfulness drew him toward the modern music that was "rebelling against the populist trappings of swing music." Ted Gioia further explains the innovations of the new music:

How these instruments were played underwent a sea change in the context of modern jazz. Improvised lines grew faster, more complex. The syncopations and dotted eighth-note phrasings that had characterized earlier jazz were now far less prominent. Instead, long phrases might stay on the beat for measures at a time, built on a steady stream of eighth or sixteenth notes executed with quasi-mechanical precision, occasionally broken by a triplet, a pregnant pause, an

<sup>15</sup> Jim Burns, "Theodore 'Fats' Navarro," Jazz Journal Vol. 21 No. 5 (1968): 12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Ibid 116

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Paul Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 127.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Russell, "Brass Instrumentation in Bebop," 21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Ted Gioia, *The History of Jazz*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 201.

interpolation of dotted eighths or whirlwind thirty-second notes, or a piercing offbeat phrase.<sup>19</sup>

The concept of playing long, consistent, and coherent phrases with "quasi-mechanical precision" intrigued Navarro and became an integral part of his style.

In his book *The Birth of Bebop*, jazz scholar Scott DeVeaux discusses how bebopper's were interested in pushing their instrumental skills to their limits. DeVeaux states that, "In their fascination with technical virtuosity and harmonic complexity, fueled by an engaging combination of restless curiosity and guideless ambition, they were self-consciously progressive." Navarro's drive and ability to absorb musical characteristics he admired, allowed him to successfully acquire various qualities of the players he idolized. Whether it was the rich tone of Charlie Shavers or the syncopated phrases of Charlie Parker, Navarro combined these aspects inadvertently creating a new approach to bop trumpet playing. He was able to methodically combine the best attributes of his idols into a clear and precise manner. *Downbeat* writer Mike Levin said, "Navarro's choruses are a sample of how melodic and integrated some of the better bop men are learning to be." Roy Haynes recalls Navarro as being:

A spectacular musician because, in a time when some cats arrived on the scene with nothing, he came on with everything: he could read, he could play high and hold anybody's first trumpet chair, he could play those singing, melodic solos with a big, beautiful sound nobody could believe at the time, and he could fly on fast tempos with staccato, biting notes and execute whatever he wanted, with apparently no strain, everything clear. And every note meant something. You know there were those kinds of guys who just play a lot of notes, some good, some bad. Fats wasn't one of those: he made his music be about each note having a place and a reason. And he had so much warmth, so much feeling. That's why I say he had everything.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Ibid, 202.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> DeVeaux, The Birth of Bebop, 171.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Michael Levin, "No Bop Roots in Jazz: Parker," *Downbeat* September (1949): 12-13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Ibid, 284.

#### PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this document is to add to the minimal amount of scholarly analyses on Theodore "Fats" Navarro. This document will analyze and discuss characteristics of Navarro's improvisational style from previously unreleased live recordings that consist of multi-chorus solos. Most of his studio recordings have only allowed for limited improvisation, often consisting of primarily premeditated material. Jazz producer Tom Dowd states, "The most important function for anybody who tries to contribute to the recording of jazz artists and jazz performances is not to paint the picture, but rather to capture it."23 Whether good or bad, live recordings are able to truly capture a raw and authentic performance. The live recordings selected for this study were chosen because of the closeness to Navarro's death by which many jazz musicians of the time may remember him by. Navarro worked hard at achieving musical perfection, which is illustrated on his last studio album through the numerous takes of each tune.<sup>24</sup> His desire for perfection left him physically fatigued from the multiple takes of each tune. The selected live performances capture Navarro's pure tone and creative flow of melodic and harmonic ideas. Complete improvised solos were transcribed and analyzed for this document by the researcher.<sup>25</sup>

Jazz scholar Thomas Owens affirms that Navarro's style was "not a carbon copy of any one style" as he "took elements from the vocabularies of his predecessors and mixed

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Michael Jarrett, *Cutting Sides*, (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2004),

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Petersen and Rehak, *Infatuation*, 234.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Navarro's strained sound is apparent on the re-release of his final studio album that includes alternate takes of each tune, illustrating his diminishing tone quality.

them with elements of his own to create a distinctive style."<sup>26</sup> In this document, the researcher itemizes various elements from the transcriptions to expose Navarro's use of the bebop language. Performance techniques discussed in this study will be used for future writings on jazz improvisational methods by the researcher.

#### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Not until recently has there been an entire work written solely on Fats Navarro.

Research on Navarro is limited by virtue of his short professional career. Analysis of Navarro's melodic language is extremely limited.

**Books** 

The only full work dedicated to Navarro is *Infatuation: The Life and Music of Theodore "Fats" Navarro* by Leif Bo Peterson and Theo Rehak.<sup>27</sup> The writers performed thorough research in presenting a historic timeline of Navarro's personal life and professional career. Presented in chronological order, each chapter focuses on pivotal points in Navarro's career. Selected transcriptions are presented at the end of each chapter with a brief and often-vague description of Navarro's playing. Each brief analysis provides general observations on style and sound, using colorful descriptive language that would not be suitable in some academic circles. Although the authors acknowledge unnamed observers believe Billy Eckstine is the trumpet soloist on a recording of "Together," the authors claim that it is Navarro.<sup>28</sup> The researchers claim to hear Eckstine yelling "Navarrah!" during the trumpet solo, but it is not completely audible.<sup>29</sup> The solo

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Owens, *Bebop: The Music and Its Players*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 109.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Leif Bo Petersen and Theo Rehak, *Infatuation: The Music and Life of Theodore "Fats" Navarro*, (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 2009),

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> The recording in question is "Together" by Billy Eckstine and His Orchestra on February 12, 1945.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Petersen and Rehak, *Infatuation*, 77-78.

itself is too oriented in the swing style and shows minimal relation to Navarro's playing before and after this recording took place. Furthermore, some of the transcriptions have incorrect notes and minor notational issues such as dotted quarter-notes crossing beat three in the measure and incorrect notes in triplet ornamentations.

Nick Catalano's biography of Clifford Brown gives a thorough account of Brown's life and musical development. 30 Clifford Brown was truly a continuation of the Fats Navarro sound and concept. Although this book is solely on the life of Clifford Brown, his admiration of Navarro and mentorship is acknowledged through transcripts of Brown's interviews.

#### **Periodicals**

Several articles on the importance of Navarro were written before and after his death. He is mentioned honorably in the 1947 November issue of *Metronome* magazine and in the 1949 January issue of *The Record Changer*. <sup>31</sup> The latter stresses that Navarro was not better known due to him being heard very little outside New York City and that his studio recordings have seldom done him justice.<sup>32</sup>

Navarro earned himself several full articles twenty years after his passing in prominent jazz-related magazines. A 1966 article in *Downbeat* titled "The Significance of Fats Navarro" by George Hoeffer gives a brief history of his professional career and the impact he made in the bop trumpet world.<sup>33</sup> Jim Burns writes a similar article about

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Nick Catalano, Clifford Brown: The Life and Art of the Legendary Jazz Trumpeter, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>31</sup> Barry Ulanov, "Fats Navarro," *Metronome*, November (1947): 19, 38-39.
32 Ross Russell, "Brass Instrumentation in Bebop," *The Record Changer*, January (1949): 9-10, 21-22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> George Hoeffer, "The Significance of Fats Navarro," *Downbeat* 1966.

Navarro in the May 1968 issue of *Jazz Journal*.<sup>34</sup> However, Burns's article focuses more on Navarro's work and development with fellow bop trumpeters Howard McGhee, Kenny Dorham, and Miles Davis. Ross Russell wrote a full article devoted to Navarro in a 1970 issue of *Downbeat*. 35 This article also gives an overview of Navarro's professional career and his personal life. Lastly, Navarro's lineage is discussed in the 1978 New Yorker article, "Jazz: Fat Girl." The article discusses Navarro's influence on Clifford Brown, Booker Little, and Woody Shaw, all who would inevitably lead short careers and die tragically.

#### Dissertations

Scott Bauer's dissertation discusses the importance of structural targets in modern jazz improvisation.<sup>37</sup> He focuses on Navarro's major scale improvisational approach over the twelve-bar blues progression. Dr. Bauer inserts five key "primary structural target" areas over three sections of the blues form. He states that there are four different ways structural targets involve cadence points: direct resolution, anticipated resolution, delayed resolution, and non-functional resolution. <sup>38</sup> Through this method, Bauer analyzes how four contrasting trumpet players cadence each structural target of the form. Navarro's melodic content is discussed in a general way, as more emphasis is placed on how he specifically cadences each phrase. Unfortunately, the musical examples were poorly reproduced in the document, making it impossible to understand Bauer's analysis beyond the text.

Jim Burns, "Theodore 'Fats' Navarro," *Jazz Journal* Vol. 21 No. 5 (1968): 12-15.
 Ross Russell, "The Legacy of Fats Navarro," *Downbeat* Vol. 37 No. 4 (1970): 14-15, 33.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Whitney Balliett, "Jazz: Fat Girl," *The New Yorker* June 12 (1978): 116-120.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Scott Bauer, "Structural Targets in Modern Jazz Improvisation: An Analytical Perspective" (Ph.D. diss., University of California San Diego, 1994).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Bauer, "Structural Targets," 10.

Christy Dana's dissertation offers a brief analysis of a Fats Navarro transcription on "Anthropology." Dana gives a good overall description of Navarro's playing by capturing many elements of Navarro's overall improvisatory style based on the one transcription. However due to the fifty-year range of this document, Navarro is only one of twelve trumpet players receiving only four pages of analysis.

Related Jazz Analysis Books

Jazz Pedagogue David Baker, has written several books on the various aspects of jazz study from improvisation to pedagogy. He published a transcription series called "Giants of Jazz," where he presents dozens of self-transcribed jazz solos of various musicians from the 1940s to 1960s, including Navarro. <sup>40</sup> The styles books contain a brief timeline of the artist's musical careers and where they fall in the lineage of development within their instrument. Each transcription has a general checklist that gives the reader an overview of the solo. At the end of each transcription are selected ii-V7-I patterns. These selected cadential (and sometimes non-cadential) patterns are presented with no discussion or analysis of their function or relevance. Enharmonic notes are not always adjusted to match the chord symbol above a given phrase, taking away visual clarity of the phrase's function (e.g., showing a G-flat major triad over an F-sharp chord symbol).

Following the publication of his "Giants of Jazz" series, Baker created a three-volume method on how to play bebop.<sup>41</sup> These books are written for all instruments and systematically teach commonly seen utilizations of bebop scales, patterns, and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Christy Dana, "An Analysis of Selected Jazz Trumpet Improvisations on Gershwin's 'I Got Rhythm' Harmonic Progression, 1931-1987," (DM doc., Indiana University, 1995).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> David Baker, *The Jazz Style of Fats Navarro: A Musical and Historical Perspective, Giants of Jazz Series* (Hialeah, Florida: Studio P/R, 1982).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> David Baker, *How to Play Bebop* 3 vols, (Bloomington, IN: Frangipani Press, 1985).

embellishments related to the idiom. The material presented comes from years of studying transcriptions from numerous bebop musicians. Although the material is thorough on how to practice and understand the language, it is not characteristic of any one artist's particular style.

Hal Galper recently wrote a method book to help the improvising musician practice the concept of forward motion and jazz phrasing. 42 Galper's book refers back to the music of Bach and how bebop innovators utilized similar techniques of phrasing and melodic line development. Navarro's phrasing coincides with Galper's overall theme of creating non-functional melodic content to create forward motion, serving as a great resource for this document.

#### Summary of Literature

Through this literature review, there is virtually no written material that analyzes and discusses Navarro's improvisational style or implementation of the bebop language. Research exists that discusses Navarro's life and impact on the development of bop trumpet playing as well as texts on the bebop language. There has yet to exist a document exclusively dedicated to Navarro's use of the bebop language. This detailed analysis of Navarro's style will help contribute to knowledge in this field.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Hal Galper, *Forward Motion: From Bach to Bebop, A Corrective Approach to Jazz Phrasing* (Petaluma, CA: Sher Music, 2005).

#### CHAPTER 2

#### **METHODOLOGY**

In order to reach an acceptable summary of Navarro's improvisational style from 1949 to 1950, a number of live recordings have been analyzed to expose melodic tendencies in addition to other characteristic features. This information has been categorized in such a way that can be used as guidelines for musicians and scholars interested in learning and better understanding his style. Navarro's long improvised eighth-note phrases read like an exercise in first species counterpoint because of his diligent use of guide tones over the root of each harmonic change. This made the transcription process relatively simple and easily obtainable for analysis.

Fifteen trumpet solos were transcribed and analyzed from the two live recordings: Norman Granz Jazz at the Philharmonic Live at Carnegie Hall 1949 and the Charlie Parker Quintet Live at Birdland 1950. Out of the fifteen total solos analyzed, eight were chosen for this document, four from each performance. The solos selected were those that spoke most directly to the researcher and that demonstrated Navarro's strongest technical and improvisational abilities. Solos were taken from compact disks and in some instances slowed down to ensure accuracy. John McNeil and the playback of music notational software verified accuracy of the transcriptions.

Chord symbols above each measure indicate the standard chord progressions of each tune, which also tends to be Navarro's point of reference. Enharmonic spellings are used in the transcription to alleviate confusion of non-harmonic pitches based on

common extensions of dominant harmony. All transcriptions are presented in concert pitch with no accidentals in the key signature regardless of the key of the tune.

It is the researcher's intent to further study Navarro's recorded output to create a method of jazz improvisation based on his playing style. Many jazz pedagogical books exist that create rules that govern how a specific idiom is played based on various individual players' styles without discussing how any one specifically uses those rules.<sup>43</sup> This document will serve as part of future works by the researcher on Fats Navarro.

#### **DEFINITION OF TERMS**

Accented passing tone – When a non-diatonic pitch is played on the beat leading to a diatonic pitch.

*Chord Progression* – A succession of two or more chords that have harmonic coherence, especially a pattern used repeatedly in the same form. 44

Chordal Outline – A series of three or more chord tones typically played in thirds depending on its inversion.

Contrafactum – A vocal work in which a new text has been substituted for the original one. The substitution of new texts in preexisting works was common through the 16<sup>th</sup> century, was restricted to fewer genres in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, and, in art music, largely disappeared in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In jazz, a contra fact consists of a newly composed melody over previously composed harmony

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Such books include David Baker's "How to Play Bebop" Vol. 1-3, which are based off of numerous transcriptions of various bebop specialists.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Berry Kernfield, editor. *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz, Vol. 1, A-K* (London: Macmillan Press Limited, 1988), 208.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Don Michael Randel, editor, *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1986), 200.

Digital Patterns – Pitches that following a reoccurring numerical sequence (e.g., 1-2-3-5 based in a specified tonality).

Embellishment – That element in music which is decorated rather than structural, and which in particular includes both free ornamentation and specific ornaments, whether indicated by notes or signs in the notation or left to be improvised at the discretion of the performer. 46

*Enclosure* – two or more notes that closely surround a targeted note, from a step above and a half step below.

*Ghost note* – A weak note, sometimes barely audible, or a note that is implied rather than sounded.<sup>47</sup> Often notated with an "x" in place of a note head.

*Guide tone* – In jazz theory, the defining qualitative notes of a triad or seventh chord; the third and/ or seventh scale degree.

*Jazz clichés* - Commonly utilized melodic and rhythmic motives characteristic to the jazz idiom that are not necessarily based off a melody of a song.

Range – The span of pitches between the lowest and highest notes played in the improvised solo.<sup>48</sup>

Targeting – Refers to specific harmonic and melodic material that embellishes a note.

Tritone substitution – One of the most commonly used chord substitutions in the jazz idiom. When one chord, usually a dominant seventh chord, is substituted for another dominant chord an augmented fourth away. These two chords share the same guide tones (third and seventh pitches) and provide a similar dominant function.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> Stanley Sadie, editor, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Vol. 6* (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1980), 150.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 425

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Leonard Feather, New Grove Dictionary of Jazz, (New York: Horizon Press, 1960), 680.

*Upper Extensions* – Notes in a chord that continue upwards in thirds from the seventh (i.e., ninth, eleven, and thirteenth).

#### CHAPTER 3

#### **OVERVIEW OF PERFORMANCES**

### NORMAN GRANZ'S JAZZ AT THE PHILHARMONIC CARNEGIE HALL CONCERT FEBRUARY 11, 1949

In the month leading up to the Jazz at the Philharmonic tour "send-off" concert, Navarro was in the studio recording with the Metronome All Stars. The Metronome All Stars included fellow colleague Miles Davis and Navarro's idols, Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker on January 3, 1949. This recording session happened to be Navarro's first time recording with Davis, Gillespie and Parker. Gillespie, Davis, and Navarro can be heard trading eight bar phrases during the solo section on the tune "Overtime," in which Gillespie could not discern one trumpeter from the other.<sup>49</sup>

Navarro was in the studio again on January 18, 1949 with the Tadd Dameron Big Ten where they recorded two sides at Capitol Sound Studios in New York City. Shortly thereafter, through referral from mentor Howard McGhee, Navarro was hired on for a cross-country tour with the Norman Granz Jazz at the Philharmonic group. Navarro would later tell McGhee that he did not like the gig saying "they didn't treat me right, Maggie…"<sup>50</sup>

Keeping to the small group jam session format, the melodies are all played in unison, focusing on the soloist's improvisational abilities. The octet consisted of Navarro on trumpet, Charlie Parker and Sonny Criss on alto saxophone, Flip Phillips on tenor

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Dizzy Gillespie, *To Be, or Not....To Bop*, First University of Minnesota Press edition, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 487.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Peterson and Rehak, *Infatuation*, 239.

saxophone, Tommy Turk on trombone, Hank Jones on piano, Ray Brown on bass, and Shelly Manne on drums. The second set was in a traditional quintet format that included Navarro, Coleman Hawkins on tenor saxophone, and the same rhythm section. Having recorded together before, Norman Granz felt that pairing Navarro and Hawkins without the other horns was one of his more inspired notions, "as Navarro's uncanny equilibrium blends perfectly with Hawkins more dramatic emoting."

Overall, Navarro's performance is executed with flawless precision. He employs long, connected phrases with seamless chord substitutions outshining the other horn players through his technical and harmonic execution. His even tone, clear articulation, and time feel is best illustrated on this performance. Gillespie's influence is apparent through Navarro's use of ghost notes that emphasizes a heavier sense of swing, the overall small timbre of his sound, and the occasional expansive leap into the upper register.

Each tune follows the solo order of Phillips, Turk, Parker, Navarro, Criss, and Jones. Navarro plays three solo choruses on each tune, outshining the other members of the ensemble. Although there was several other tunes performed and recorded that night, this re-release contains all of the tracks that include Navarro except for a ballad featuring Hawkins. In a rare ballad performance, Navarro is featured on "The Things We Did Last Summer" by Sammy Cahn and Jule Styne. Navarro's use of pitch bending and heavy vibrato on this ballad does not reoccur during the other tunes. It is apparent that some of the soloists such as Flip Phillips try to appease the crowd by playing repeated

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Bob Blumenthal, "Norman Granz' J.A.T.P.," CD Insert, 1949.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> Navarro played three solo choruses on each tune except during his feature "The Things We Did Last Summer."

ostinato syncopated patterns and "honking" on the saxophone. However, Navarro doesn't seem interested in entertaining the audience in a similar way with high note shrills.

The selection of transcriptions comes from the 2002 digitally re-mastered Pablo Records release, PACD-5311-2. The chosen transcriptions are either from or based on tunes from the Great American Songbook. An overview of each tune from which the transcriptions originate are shown in the table below:

Table 3.1

Title	Beats per Minute	Key	Form	Tune Origins
"Leap Here"	232	Concert Bb Major	AABA 32 bars	The changes to "Perdido"
"Ice Freezes Red"	212	Concert Ab Major	ABAC 32 bars	Based on the changes to "Indiana, Back Home In"
"Stuffy"	166	Concert Db Major	AABA 32 bars	Based on the changes to "Perdido"
"Lover, Come Back to Me"	253	Concert Ab Major	AABA 64 bars	Original

It is important to note that the bridge section of "Leap Here" is identical to the bridge on George Gershwin's "I Got Rhythm." However on each of his choruses

Navarro, along with the rhythm section, appear to outline a ii-V7-I progression leading to the subdominant over the first four measures of the bridge. The traditional "I Got Rhythm" bridge is heard behind all the other soloists. For this reason, the first four

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> A cycle of four secondary dominant chords that leads back to the tonic over the duration of eight measures.

measures of the "Leap Here" bridge have been modified to coincide with the harmony the ensemble is playing during Navarro's choruses.

#### CHARLIE PARKER QUINTET LIVE AT BIRDLAND

#### MAY 15, 1950

"Fats Navarro was THE bebop trumpet player, if not THE definitive bebop musician of all time." – Mike Baillie<sup>54</sup>

Despite Navarro's declining health at this time, his performance with the Charlie Parker Quintet at Birdland in New York on May 15, 1950 continues to illustrate his tremendous melodic abilities. The "Bird & Fats" Charlie Parker Quintet Live at Birdland 1950, Cool & Blue compact disc release from 1992 contains previously unreleased live material.<sup>55</sup> The CD insert lists the recording as taking place on June 30, 1950, but we now know that this date is not correct.<sup>56</sup> In 2009, another private recording surfaced that includes Navarro playing at a Miles Davis Jam session at Birdland on the date in question, June 30, 1950.<sup>57</sup> Scholars such as Petersen and Rehak, now believe that the most accurate date for the Parker performance is the night of May 15, 1950. The later Birdland recording exposes a very ill Navarro a week before his death.

This Charlie Parker Quintet features Parker on alto sax, Navarro on trumpet, Bud Powell on piano, Curley Russell on Bass, and Art Blakey on drums. There was a personnel change to accompany vocalist Chubby Newsome, who was scheduled to perform that same night. "Cool Blues" was performed with the new rhythm section that

Mike Baillie "Bird & Fats," CD Insert, 1992.
 Charlie Parker, Bird & Fats Live at Birdland, Charlie Parker, alto saxophone, quintet; Cool & Blue -CD103, [1950].

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> Peterson and Rehak, *Infatuation*, 281.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Miles Davis, *Birdland Jam Session June 30*, 1950, Miles Davis, trumpet, and others; Rare Live Recordings RLR 88644, [2009].

included Walter Bishop on piano, Tommy Potter on bass, and Roy Haynes on drums.

Parker plays the only ballad of the night with Newsome on "Embraceable You."

On this May 15, 1950 performance, Navarro avoids the extreme upper register utilized at Carnegie Hall the prior year. The lack of upper register may have been due to his declining health as some scholars have suggested. However, his long phrasing and musicality is still evident with his range reaching above high C. It is difficult to accurately compare his tone between the two performances due to the differing recording quality of each performance. Despite the low sound quality on this Birdland recording, Navarro's tone appears to be just as consistent as before.

Navarro plays on medium swing, up-tempo, and Latin tunes during this performance. He is heard on eight tunes total: "Wahoo," "The Street Beat," "Dizzy Atmosphere," "Ornithology," "Little Willie Leaps," "Cool Blues," "A Night in Tunisia," and "Out of Nowhere." Navarro takes as little as one chorus on "Ornithology" to as many as four choruses on "The Street Beat." Although he doesn't have any issues keeping up on fast, up-tempo tunes such as "Little Willie Leaps" and "Dizzy Atmosphere," he decides to take only two short choruses. He plays four choruses on "The Street Beat" and one chorus on the slowest tune of the performance, "Out of Nowhere." Navarro is featured on "A Night in Tunisia" in which he plays in a very controlled and reserved manner. It is important to note that this recording of "A Night in Tunisia" was released on several compilation albums and has become one of Navarro's better-known recordings

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Peterson and Rehak, *Infatuation*, 281.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Especially compared to the Miles Davis Jam Session at Birdland a month later, where Navarro's tone seems to weave in and out of clarity and volume.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> It is interesting that Navarro only takes one solo chorus on "Out of Nowhere" being that his contrafact of the same tune, "Nostalgia," was recorded years before and was familiar with the harmony.

along with his studio work. Table 2 below provides a brief overview of the tunes selected for analysis:

Table 3.2

Title	Beats per Minute	Key	Form	Tune Origins
"Ornithology"	247	Concert G Major	ABAC	Based on the changes to "How High the Moon"
"The Street Beat"	248	Concert Ab Major	AABA	Based on the changes to "I've Got Rhythm"
"Wahoo"	204	Concert Bb Major	AABA	Based on the changes to "Perdido"
"Cool Blues"	209	Concert C Major	ABC	Twelve-bar blues

#### **CHAPTER 4**

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF FATS NAVARRO'S STYLE

Described by jazz writer Barry Ulanov as "bop's most elegant performer", Fats Navarro managed to master the music's harmonic complexity by his mid 20s.<sup>61</sup> His playing can be analyzed and categorized in a variety of ways. This analysis will focus on several key elements of Navarro's improvisatory style based on selections from the recordings listed above. Mike Baillie described the Birdland performance as "an intensely emotional listening experience that demands a special thesis or treatise." Although the overall group's performance is not the subject of this study, Navarro's high level of musicianship and contribution to the performance will be made apparent.

#### **ENCLOSURES AND FORWARD MOTION**

The driving force of Navarro's improvisatory style is his embellishments of chord tones. The primary type of embellishment utilized is that of the enclosure. Navarro's enclosures appear in various forms and rhythmic locations within the measure. The most commonly used enclosure utilizes two eighth notes on the beat before a targeted chord tone. The enclosure surrounds a chord tone on the previous beat as shown in Figure 4.1:



Figure 4.1 One beat diatonic enclosure beginning from above, then from below

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> Barry Ulanov, *A Handbook of Jazz* (New York: The Viking Press, 1960), 203.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> Baillie, "Bird and Fats," 1992.

This enclosure is diatonic within the key to which it is resolving (C major in the example above) and is enclosing the root of the tonic harmony. Enclosures often begin from a whole step above and resolves from a half step below. Whether stand-alone or within the context of an extended phrase, Navarro's use of enclosures most often occurs on beats two and four. These enclosures create a strong harmonic gravitational pull toward chord tones on strong beats one and three. <sup>63</sup>

A chromatic enclosure creates an even stronger pull toward the targeted note. It is approached from a half step above and a half step below, the smallest interval in Western music. Figure 4.2 shows the Db and B natural surrounding and resolving to the root of the tonic harmony, C.



Figure 4.2 One beat chromatic enclosure beginning from above, then from below The non-diatonic chromatic pitches do not necessarily serve any harmonic function.

David Berkman explains the importance of these non-functional pitches in his book *The Jazz Musician's Guide to Creative Practicing*:

Chromatic approach notes were an important bebop innovation. They inject a strong element of chromaticism into change playing. Chromatic approach notes are short visits to sounds outside of the chord scale, that resolve back to notes in the given chord scale.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> David Berkman, *The Jazz Musician's Guide to Creative Practicing* (Petaluma, CA: Sher Music Co., 2007), 44.

Although not as common, a diatonic enclosure from below to above appears across the selected transcriptions. Figure 4.3 shows a B that leaps up to a D, which resolves down by a whole step resolving to the root of the harmony. Unlike the diatonic enclosure in Figure 1, this enclosure is not seen in a chromatic form in the selected transcriptions.



Figure 4.3 Diatonic enclosure beginning from below then from above

In addition to Navarro's use of one-beat enclosures, he also uses what can be categorized as two-beat enclosures. These enclosures are often seen beginning on either beats one or three that resolve to beats one or three. An example of this is shown in C major:



Figure 4.4 Two beat enclosure to the third scale degree

This commonly seen two-beat enclosure is seen primarily targeting the major third scale degree of the harmony. It descends stepwise from a minor third above the targeted note and then from a whole step below that ascends chromatically. This gesture is often seen embedded in a longer line of other melodic material. Although the ending of the line would imply a delayed resolution by a beat from two notes below, it is most often seen as a complete unit. A smaller fragment of this type of enclosure is shown in Figure 4.5:



Figure 4.5 Two-beat enclosure with the first eighth-note omitted

This reduced two-beat gesture is often seen as a means of beginning a phrase.

Surrounding a chord tone in this manner creates forward motion two beats before the resolution is achieved. Jerry Bergonzi, jazz saxophonist and current faculty member at the New England Conservatory, talks about these types of melodic gestures that target important chord tones:

Approach notes are notes that frame a target note. The note that is the target can be any chord tone and is usually played on the beat but can also sound very effective when played off the beat. The approach to the target can be a single note that steps up or down to the target or there can be a grouping of notes that approach the target note. The approach notes frame the target as a picture frame would. 65

Navarro's approach to eighth-note based lines can be described as "framing" the harmony. Strategically implementing enclosures on weak beats helps create a firmly based framework to his intended harmonic resolutions.

Although these diatonic and chromatic enclosures help to create a sense of forward motion, they can also create a strong sense of resolution. Navarro strategically uses one-beat enclosures on weak beats two and four to target chord tones on strong beats one and three. Hal Galper explains this concept in his book *Forward Motion: A Corrective Approach to Jazz Phrasing*:

The release beats of a bar ("one" & "three" and the "on" beats of every quarternote) are the strong beats of the bar. The tension beats of the bar ("two" & "four" and the "ands" of each quarter-note) are the weak beats of the bar. The release

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<sup>65</sup> Bergonzi, Inside Improvisation Series Vol. 6, (West Germany: Advance Music, 1992), 53.

tones of a chord scale are the root, third, fifth & seventh. They are the strong tones of the chord scale.<sup>66</sup>

Navarro illustrates his awareness of this harmonic concept throughout these performances. His ability to constantly create tension and release is the driving and harmonically grounding force of all his extended phrases.

Navarro's solo on "Leap Here" shows his use of forward motion and the connectability that these enclosures can have shown in measures 29-31:



Figure 4.6 Fats Navarro's solo on "Leap Here," ms. 29-31

Beats three and four in measures 29 and 30 utilize the same type of two-beat enclosure leading to the third of the vertical harmonic change at the beginning of each measure. These two enclosures are linked together by a partial scale in measure 30 on beat one that leads to a one-beat chromatic enclosure of the root on beat two. Here one can argue that Navarro was anticipating  $F^7$  tonality by targeting the third scale degree on the downbeat of measure 30 during the second half of measure 29 and Bb major sonority in measure 31 on beats three and four of measure 30.

Navarro again uses this two-beat enclosure to creatively outline the  $C^{7(b9)}$  harmony in measures 118-120 on "Ice Freezes Red":

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> Galper, Forward Motion, 48.



Figure 4.7 Fats Navarro solo on "Ice Freezes Red" ms. 118-120

The beginning of the phrase starts with a descending chromatic leading tone. The first part of the line is based on the progression's home key of F minor starting on the fifth scale degree. Beats one and two of measure 118 are a diatonic version of the two-beat enclosure leading to Bb (the third of the ii half-diminished chord or seventh of the V7 chord). The last two beats of measure 118 and first two beats of measure 119 utilize the same two-beat enclosure. Beats three and four of measure 119 also uses the same type of enclosure by displacing the octave after reaching the targeted guide tone, E. Displacing the octave helps to create more melodic contour. Measure 118 and 119 contain what can be analyzed as four two-beat enclosures that outline the C7 tonality on beats one and three in both measures.

A melodic fragment from "Rifftide" further illustrates Navarro's use of one and two beat enclosures with the addition of outlining harmony and scale fragments shown in measures 55 and 56:



Figure 4.8 Fats Navarro's solo on "Rifftide" ms. 55-57

Navarro plays scale fragments and outlines  $C^7$  on beats one and three in measure 55 with enclosures on beats two and four in measure 55 and 56.

Less common are Navarro's usage of one beat enclosures on beats one and three. One example is seen in measure 47 of "Ornithology" where he diatonically surrounds the third of the harmony on beat one and an anticipated flatted thirteenth of  $D^7$  on beat three:



Figure 4.9 Fats Navarro's solo on "Ornithology" ms. 45-48

A chromatic enclosure on beat one is also seen in measure 87 on "Ice Freezes Red" that surrounds the third of the  $C^7$  harmony on beat two:



Figure 4.10 Fats Navarro's solo on "Ice Freezes Red" ms. 87-88

Navarro outlines C dominant tonality on beats two through four of measure 87 and continues on beat one of measure 88. He delays the resolution from beat one to beat two in measure 87 while outlining four beats of dominant harmony, displacing the harmonic outline by a beat. Offsetting harmony in such a manner further helps to create a sense of melodic forward motion in a phrase by crossing the bar line. The continuation of the dominant outline further delays the resolution of the root F by use of an enclosure on beat one of measure 88.

Navarro occasionally uses another two-beat eighth note enclosure that is fully chromatic. Starting with the major seventh (leading tone) on a downbeat, the line ascends to the natural ninth followed by what would be a typical one beat chromatic enclosure beginning from above. This is illustrated twice in one phrase on "Lover, Come Back to Me" shown in Figure 4.11 below:



Figure 4.11 Fats Navarro's solo on "Lover, Come Back to Me" ms. 65-70

The first occurrence appears on beats one and two of measure 66 and the other on beats three and four in measure 68. Although both examples contain the same pitches in different octaves, they serve a different harmonic function over the harmony.

A final look at Navarro's use of combining these different enclosures is illustrated in measures 52-57 on "Ornithology":



Figure 4.12 Fats Navarro's solo on "Ornithology" ms. 52-57

Navarro's use of enclosures in this passage begins with a two-beat enclosure to the third of F major on beats three and four in measure 52. He then utilizes a one-beat diatonic enclosure from above then from below to the root of F major on beat two of measure 53. Following a 1-2-3-5 digital pattern on beats three and four of measure 53, the root of F major is again enclosed on the downbeat of measure 54 and approached from below then from above. Measure 55 uses the same rhythmic pattern as measure 54. The minor third of F minor (Ab) is enclosed from above on beat one of measure 55. The fifth of Bb<sup>7</sup> (F) is chromatically enclosed from above on beat four in measure 55. Navarro then treats the

fifth of Bb<sup>7</sup> as a one and a half-beat enclosure to the raised 11<sup>th</sup> (E) on beats one and two of measure 56. The E also serves as a chromatic enclosure from above then from below to the root of Eb major in measure 57.

Through use of enclosures, Navarro temporarily displaces the bar line in measures 54 through 55 by delaying the resolution. He often delays resolutions by implementing a diatonic enclosure of the root or third on the downbeats of harmonic change. Enclosures appear in large quantities throughout the selected transcriptions and provide clear harmonic and cadential direction as well as obscuring clarity throughout the selected improvisations.

### **FOUR-NOTE GROUPS**

Many of Navarro's phrases can be analyzed as groups of four notes. These groups can be combined in a variety of ways to create a seamless line of eighth notes. Many of these note groups or cells can be defined as a small collection of pitches that are cast according to a specific intervallic structure or fixed pitch classes. This section of the analysis will expose the most common four-note motives used throughout the selected transcriptions. Amongst these note groupings are embellishments of chord tones, digital patterns, chord outlining, chromatic runs, and use of partial dominant and major bebop scales.

Though it is likely that Navarro was not thinking in terms of four-note groupings, the majority of his eighth-note based lines can be analyzed in this manner. These "cells" are often interchangeable dependent upon which chord tone is being targeted. Although not all lines are affixed to a strict four-note group pattern, two consecutive scale,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> Paolo Susanni, *Music and Twentieth-Century Tonality: Harmonic Progression Based on Modality and the Interval Cycles.* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 129.

chromatic, or chord tones typically connect them. Although some of the digital patterns occur more often than others on certain transcriptions, most appear only a handful of times during each solo. Some other four-note groupings consist of two chord tones preceded by two scale tones, suggesting a possible change in harmonic direction targeting specific chord tones providing a clear cadence. He varies his use of scale fragments by implementing triplets and other rhythmic variations of the same sets of pitches.

Several of Navarro's four-note groups outline the notes of a triad or seventh chord. These chord outlines are exploited in all inversions with four consecutive eighth notes typically starting on a downbeat. Outlining harmony is the clearest way of making tonal implication. In regards to chord outlining, jazz guitarist and educator Bert Ligon says that, "outlines are harmonically specific lines which connect chords through guide tones. The structural simplicity of the outlines allows the improviser/ composer much room for developing them in their own personal way." Navarro uses guide tones to anchor his lines in and outside harmony in his own personal way, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

### **DIGITAL PATTERNS**

Each transcription in this study shows the reoccurring use of digital patterns, which provide a conceptual way to develop ideas in melodic and motivic improvisation. Typically, Navarro's digital patterns span less than an octave and are sequential in nature. The most common digital pattern utilized is 1-2-3-5, referring to the scale degrees over its key center. Jerry Bergonzi states that "a grouping of four notes creates what is called a tetra-chord and this particular grouping (1-2-3-5) is one of the most natural sounding

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> Bert Ligon, *Jazz Theory Resources*, (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2001), 224.

melodies that can be played on a chord."<sup>69</sup> Navarro uses this "natural" sounding tetrachord in a major tonality and most often based on the corresponding harmony illustrated, for instance in measure 49 on "Rifftide":



Figure 4.13 Fats Navarro's solo on "Rifftide" m.49

The 1-2-3-5 pattern is also be based on different chord tones besides the root. Several instances occur where a major 1-2-3-5 pattern based off on the third of a Dorian chord and the seventh on the dominant chord such as on beats three and four in measure 80 on "Ice Freezes Red":



Figure 4.14 Fats Navarro's solo on "Ice Freezes Red" ms. 80-81

The inversion of this pattern (5-3-2-1) is also common and is seen in both major and minor chords. The pattern is shown descending in minor on beat four of measure 32 leading into measure 33 in Figure 15, followed by an G<sup>7</sup> dominant bebop descending scale fragment to be discussed later.



Figure 4.15 Fats Navarro's solo on "Cool Blues" m.32-33

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> Jerry Bergonzi, *Inside Improvisation Series Vol. 1*, (West Germany, Advance Music, 1992), 8.

Figure 4.15 shows an uncommon application of this descending pattern beginning on a weak rather than a strong beat. Starting the four note digital pattern on a weak beat displaces the harmonic rhythm and creates dissonance on beat one of measure 33 instead of employing a consonant tone.

Another commonly occurring digital pattern is 2-7-1-2. This four-note, two-beat pattern is often seen starting on beats one or three as a means of initially delaying the resolution to the root. It could be argued that the beginning of this pattern is a stand alone one-beat diatonic enclosure of the root. However, this four-note group appears at least once in each of the selected transcriptions making its occurrence an integral part of Navarro's melodic language. Figure 4.16 shows a descending minor 5-3-2-1 pattern followed by a 2-7-1-2 pattern in measure 41 on "Ornithology."



Figure 4.16 Fats Navarro's solo on "Ornithology" m. 41

Although not necessarily a digital pattern, a four eighth-note chromatic descent from chord tone to chord tone is often utilized. This descending motive begins on a strong beat and is most often seen descending from the major third to the root of the major harmony. A four-note chromatic ascent also occurs beginning on the leading tone to the major third that then leads to the fifth scale degree on the next strong beat.

#### BEBOP SCALE USE

Navarro makes clear use of what have now been categorized as bebop scales. A major bebop scale is a major scale with an added lowered sixth in addition to its natural sixth scale degree. A dominant bebop scale is a dominant scale with an added raised

seventh in addition to its lowered seventh. Although most of his eighth-note based lines can be conceptualized in four-note groups, only a few instances occur where Navarro plays any scale from root to root without the disruption of any type of embellishment. Navarro's use of bebop scales is apparent and used primarily in four-note descending fragments such as 1-7-6-b6 for major and 1-7-b7-6 for dominant.

A total of four complete dominant bebop scales appear throughout the selected transcriptions. Two are found in "Ice Freezes Red" at the end of his solo during the melody (measures 29 and 32) and another at the end of his third solo chorus in measure 129. The fourth occurrence is in "Ornithology" in measure 95. In each instance, the dominant bebop scale starts from its root at the beginning on beat one and ascends throughout the measure to reach the octave at the beginning of the following measure. In each instance the scale is a part of a longer phrase that precedes it. Two nearly complete descending major bebop scales appear in measure 77 on "Ornithology" and measure 95 in "Wahoo." The scale begins on the root and descends throughout the measure. Instead of resolving to the root, the line deceptively resolves a half step above the root, which then becomes the major third of the following harmony.

Navarro most commonly uses fragments of the major bebop and dominant bebop scales. In Figure 4.17, he begins a descending line using the first four notes of the Ab major bebop scale during "The Street Beat" in measure 19 on beats three and four. Immediately following in measure 20 is an implied V7 where Navarro utilizes the upper portion of the Eb<sup>7</sup> dominant bebop scale before enclosing the third of Ab major, C on beat three.



Figure 4.17 Fats Navarro's on "The Street Beat" ms. 19-21

He then resolves the line on beats three and four in measure 20 by a chromatic descent from the major third to root as mentioned in the previous section.

Navarro plays a common bebop clichés based off of the dominant bebop scale seen on beats one through three in measure 18 on "Leap Here":



Figure 4.18 Fats Navarro solo on "Leap Here," ms. 16-19

His use of bebop scale fragments are embedded into his long phrases, making their utilization sound natural and less contrived

It is also important to note his use of accented passing tones, which displace the harmonic rhythm by placing chord tones on the upbeat. Figure 4.19 shows a common approach to the descending dominant bebop scale by an ascending accented passing tone in measure 36 from "Wahoo":



Figure 4.19 Fats Navarro solo on "Wahoo," ms. 35-36.

Instead of leading up to the harmony's fifth scale degree on the downbeat of measure 36, Navarro delays the D, further delaying resolution. Note that he is using the F dominant bebop scale over G<sup>7</sup> in measure 36 in Figure 4.19 above. His use of harmonic generalization will be addressed later in this chapter.

## **QUOTES AS MELODIC MATERIAL**

The great players always give homage to their predecessors by recalling certain things that they did. They give it in appreciation and in understanding of the validity of their predecessors. Being able to quote from songs and solos is always part of a mature artist because he's aware of the contribution of others and its impact, how valid it is. Something that is really valid is timeless. – Arthur Rhames in Paul Berliner's "Thinking in Jazz." <sup>70</sup>

The practice of incorporating melodies from other tunes during an improvised solo was common practice in the bebop era. Throughout his short career, Navarro would quote various melodies from musicals, children's songs, and other jazz tunes. Peterson and Rehak have identified such melodies throughout the various transcribed solos in their book *Infatuation*.

Charlie Parker's "Cool Blues" riff melody shown in Figure 4.20 is the most quoted throughout both performances.<sup>71</sup>



Figure 4.20 "Cool Blues" melody riff

The melody line is centered on the fifth scale degree outlining C Ionian major tonality. The tune itself is played during the second set of the Birdland performance. It is performed in the trumpet key of D major and is the only recording of Navarro ever playing the tune. There are several instances where Navarro cleverly uses part of this melody as the beginning of a longer phrase. The first measure of this melody is seen quoted in measure 33 on "Leap Here" and in measure 27 on "Wahoo," both in the trumpet key of C. The quote also appears in measure 13 on "Ornithology" in the key of G

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> Paul Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 103-104.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> Charlie Parker, *Bird & Fats Live at Birdland*, Charlie Parker, alto saxophone, quintet; Cool & Blue - CD103, [1950].

Ionian major. In each of these instances only the first measure is utilized before other melodic material is played. The first note of the second measure is used to connect to other melodic material that is often related to a four note grouping as discussed above.

Another frequently quoted melody fragment is from Fats Waller's "Honeysuckle Rose" (1929):



Figure 4.21 "Honeysuckle Rose" opening motive

This melodic gesture is repeated three times over the first three measures of the melody on each of its "A" sections. The melody line begins on the fifth scale degree of the major key on beat one and resolves to the major 3<sup>rd</sup> scale degree on beat three. Breaking up the stepwise motion of a descending phrase, Navarro uses this four-note motive to provide add melodic contour. The quote appears most often over dominant chords beginning on its root such as on "Lover, Come Back to Me" on beats one and two in measure 92.

Several uses of the "Honeysuckle" quote appear during Navarro's solo on "The Street Beat." The four-note motive appears embedded between many other four-note groups as in measure 115 and measure 119. Navarro creatively sequences this idea in his first chorus of "The Street Beat" in measures 21 and 22:



Figure 4.22 Fats Navarro solo on "The Street Beat" ms. 21-22

Here Navarro sequences the four-note motive three times outlining a Ab major scale on strong beats creating more melodic contour to the overall descending structure of the line. Another common melodic motive that appears throughout the selected recordings is from the Jule Styne and Sammy Cahn ballad, "The Things We Did Last Summer." The opening statement of the melody is shown in Figure 4.23:



Figure 4.23 "The Things We Did Last Summer" opening phrase

Similar to the first measure of the "Cool Blues" melody, "The Things We Did Last Summer" is completely diatonic to its major key and begins and ends on the fifth scale degree. Navarro typically uses this melodic quote fragment at the end of a phrase, always playing the third beat for at least a quarter-note length in duration. This motive is seen on "The Street Beat" in measures 61 and 74 both in Bb major. It is seen again in measure 81 on "Ornithology" in A major. He also utilizes this quote in the middle of a fifteen-bar phrase in measure 43 on "Leap Here," shown in Figure 4.24 the next section.

#### LONG PHRASING AND HARMONIC GENERALIZATION

The majority of Navarro's improvisations consist primarily of eighth-note based lines that typically span over eight measures in length on the selected recordings. The exception to this would be "Cool Blues" where Navarro primarily plays in four-bar phrases, matching the its harmonic form. He is able to connect and alternate what could be analyzed as four-note groups as mentioned above to create a seamless flow of eighth notes. An example of his long phrasing and harmonic generalization is shown from "Leap Here":

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> Jule Styne and Sammy Cahn, *The Things We Did Last Summer*, performed by Fats Navarro and Norman Granz' Jazz at the Philharmonic 1949, PACD 5311-2, 2002, compact disc.



Figure 4.24 Fats Navarro's solo on "Leap Here" ms. 33-48

This nearly sixteen-bar phrase begins his second chorus on "Leap Here." The line begins with the "Cool Blues" quote in measure 33 followed by a chromatic descent from the third to the root of Bb Ionian major in measure 35. The chromatic descent leads to a four-note chordal outline of Bb major seven in measure 35. He outlines the turnaround (secondary dominant harmony) in measure 36 utilizing the flatted ninth over G7 followed by a segment of the dominant bebop cliché (as shown in Figure 4.18) on beats one and two in measure 37. He continues with the 2-7-1-2 digital pattern on beats three and four of measure 37 followed by a four-note diatonic ascending scale fragment on beats one and two of measure 38. Instead of chromatically descending as in the previous half of the "A" section, he ascends chromatically on beats three and four in measure 38 starting from lowered third (Db) leading him to the 5<sup>th</sup> scale degree of the tonic. Measures 37 through the beat two of measure 39 are based in a Bb Ionian tonality rather than outlining the ii7-V7 progression illustrating Navarro's use of harmonic generalization of the chord progression.

Navarro outlines a I-VI-ii7-V7 progression in measures 39-40 that leads to a Charlie Parker bop cliché in measures 41-42, outlining a clave rhythmic pattern. The upper accents at the beginning of this line create the first half of a 3-2 clave rhythmic pattern. The phrase's longest note duration in measure 43 follows a brief melodic quote of "The Things We Did Last Summer." Navarro concludes the extended line with a short chromatic sequence on the dominant chord in measure 46 that resolves to chord tones of the tonic. This line spans just under two octaves and provides clear harmonic implications that could be heard when played separate with the rhythm section. Thomas Owens states that Navarro's "nearly continuous flow of eighth notes garnished with occasional accents between the beats is also a Parker trait." Hal Galper further talks about this type of clear synchronized playing in his book *Forward Motion*:

When synchronized, the "on" beats of the bar and the chord tones have a natural emphasis within them that are enhanced. The emphasis 'spells out' the chord tones of the changes. When the chord tones (basic or superimposed) are synchronized with the 'on' beats of the bar, the chord changes are being 'spelled out' by the melodic line. The melodies become so strong that even without the chord being played behind them, you can hear the movement of the chords as they progress through a tune. <sup>76</sup>

## USE OF SUBSTITUTION AND SUPERIMPOSITION

Harmonically jazz has moved in a remarkably short time – less than half a century from the simplest sort of chord structure to the most complex. It has achieved its present harmonic breadth through augmenting and diminishing and inversion, through alterations of a serious kind and of the most frivolous – the merely ornamental. Jazz harmonies have in recent years reached the point where little that can be achieved in the superimposition of sound upon sound is foreign to jazz. The superimposition of sound upon sound is foreign to jazz.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> Owens, *Bebop*, 109.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> The "3" of the 3-2 clave being on pitches F-Eb-D.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> Owens, *Bebop*, 110.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> Galper, Forward Motion, 48-49.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> Ulanov, A Handbook of Jazz, 67.

The use of altered harmony and chord substitution came about from jazz improvisers as a means of creating more colorful sonorities and complex harmony. Chord alterations can also create a stronger pull in cadential harmony by use of non-diatonic pitches. Navarro's improvised solos were primarily tonal during these live recordings, as was the case throughout his short recording career. His playing was so well grounded in tonal harmony that any non-tonal implication was intentional and is worth investigating. Navarro can often be heard resolving to the sharp eleven on a major chord such as in measure 51 on "Leap Here" and measure 52 on "Wahoo." The first appearance of a harmonic substitution is in measure 50 on "Leap Here" where Navarro plays the "Honeysuckle Rose" motive in E, a tritone away from the Bb<sup>7</sup> harmony:



Figure 4.25 Fats Navarro's solo on "Leap Here" ms. 49-51

Analysis of the bridge further reassures that he was not playing the regular changes on the first four measures.<sup>78</sup> The transposed motive is approached by a chromatic enclosure on beat 4 in measure 49. He utilizes a similar substitution on the bridge of the following chorus:



Figure 4.26 Fats Navarro solo on "Leap Here" ms. 81-83

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> The standard harmony over the first four measures of the bridge being two bars of A7(V7/VII7) followed by two bars of E7 V7/III7) in concert key.

The superimposition is approached by a leading tone to the new root. Navarro outlines an E major triad on the each of the first three beats of measure 82 while the third beat also serves as a chromatic enclosure to the root of the original harmony. The substitution is outlined over three beats, temporarily displacing the harmonic rhythm. Analyzing the notes of measure 82 vertically shows Navarro playing the #11, b13, b7, #9 on the first two beats. This chord alteration appears twice out of three choruses on "Leap Here" suggesting that it was a concept on which he was working on. The tritone substitutions utilized through "Leap Here" are slightly different however, illustrating his spontaneous sense of harmonic awareness of playing a tritone away and eighth-note lines based on the alterations of dominant harmony.

Another example of Navarro's use of a tritone substitution over a dominant chord appears in measures 15-16 and measures 81 in "Ice Freezes Red":



Figure 4.27 Fats Navarro solo on "Ice Freezes Red" ms. 80-82

Notice the similar shape of the tritone substitution in measure 81 to the example in Figure 4.27. Navarro outlines A major tonality over the Eb<sup>7</sup> that then resolves to Ab major. He begins the substitution with an accented passing tone, which is also the root of the original harmony. The "and" of beat one through beat two in measure 81 follows a similar shape to the "Honeysuckle" motive. He then descends from the third of the A major scale on beat three leading to a chromatic enclosure of the root, Ab major.

Analyzing each note against the original harmony, Navarro employs the root, b9, #9, #11,

b7, b13 and major third. In total this includes the root, both guide tones (3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>), and all the alterations of a dominant chord in one measure and within one octave.

Another tritone superimposition is utilized at the end of the first solo chorus on "Cool Blues":



Figure 4.28 Fats Navarro solo on "Cool Blues" ms. 9-12

Navarro begins measure 10 in Figure 4.28 by outlining the harmony on the first beat. He then proceeds with a descending Db major pentatonic scale on beats two through four. Employing the major pentatonic scale in this manner creates dominant alterations of a b9, b13, #11, and #9 over the underlying harmony. Similar to the superimposition in measure 81 on "Ice Freezes Red" (Figure 4.27), Navarro manages to play guide tones along with all the dominant alterations within one measure. The descending line resolves to the nearest chord tone (5<sup>th</sup>) a half step away on the downbeat of measure 11.

Navarro's use of strictly employing altered pitches over dominant harmony appears during "Ornithology" on beats three and four in measure 24:



Figure 4.29 Fats Navarro's solo on "Ornithology" ms. 23-26

Navarro outlines a fully diminished seventh chord on beats one and two on measure 24 just as he did in measure 14 of the same tune. On beats three and four Navarro plays the upper extensions: #9, b13, #11 in a manner than could appear as C# minor digital pattern

(1-4-3-1), which is also based out of E major, a tritone away from Bb. Navarro proceeds to delay the resolution of the tritone substitution by outlining an Bb augment triad over the Eb major chord in measure 25. This concept of delaying resolution is further discussed by Hal Galper by stating that "playing across the bar line and resolving late is another great device as it gives the improviser another tool. It has the effect of sounding horizontal and it creates tension by extending the resolution." He purposely does not resolve to Eb major by continuing to play in Bb dominant harmony.

A shorter use of substituting harmony a tritone away is shown in the fourth measure of his second chorus in "Cool Blues." 80



Figure 4.30 Fats Navarro's solo on "Cool Blues" ms.15-17

Measure 16 contains a continuation of the line that precedes it and continues with an accented passing tone on beat one in the dominant scale. Navarro then plays a commonly seen descending digital pattern (5-3-2-1) in F#, a tritone away from  $C^7$ . The descending digital pattern is approached and resolved by half step creating smooth linear motion. It is important to note that the last two notes of the 5-3-2-1 digital pattern (beat four in measure 16) also create a chromatic enclosure of the root of  $F^7$ .

Two similar instances of tritone substitutions appear during "The Street Beat."

The first is at the end of the improvised bridge during the melody in measure 8:

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> Galper, Forward Motion, 116.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup> Take note of the accented passing tone on beat one of measure 16 (A#).



Figure 4.31 Fats Navarro's solo on "The Street Beat" ms. 7-8

Navarro plays a 5-3-2-1 digital pattern beginning on the downbeat of the second measure of the Eb<sup>7</sup> tonality in the key of A major. He plays an ascending four-note scale fragment from the fifth of the Eb<sup>7</sup> on beat two in measure 7, followed by a one-beat chromatic enclosure that leads to the new implied harmony of A major (a tritone away).

The second instance of a tritone substitution on "The Street Beat" appears in the same structural location during his first full chorus in measure 40:



Figure 4.32 Fats Navarro's solo on "The Street Beat" ms. 39-41

Navarro ascends with a similar Eb<sup>7</sup> dominant scale that then allows him to enclose the top pitch of the original digital pattern as in measure 8. He quickly makes the decision to disrupt the descending digital pattern using chromaticism to target the root of the tritone substitution. An A major triad is played in the second half of measure 40. Navarro continues to play three more choruses without using any other tritone substitutions for the remainder of the solo.

A unique harmonic implication appears during the second chorus of Navarro's solo on "Rifftide." In measures 46-48, Navarro deliberately suggests Ab minor tonality over an initially implied  $F^7$  with a pick up to measure 47:



Figure 4.33 Fats Navarro's solo on "Rifftide" ms. 46-49

Navarro implies dominant harmony by use of tritone substitution in measure 46-47 to create a stronger pull to the upcoming Bb<sup>7</sup> in measure 49. He outlines Ab minor harmony by playing a 1-2-3, 5-3-2-1 pattern starting in measure 46. Beat 3 of measure 47 continues with a descending scale fragment in the same tonality.

Although it is visually clear on the transcription that the beginning of the melodic line is based out of Ab minor, one can assume that Navarro was utilizing a melodic line based out of harmony a tritone away. In this case, suggesting B major over the F<sup>7</sup> for more than a measure. Although there is no clear indication of an implied B triad over F, all the pitches in measure 47 belong to B major. Hal Galper says "any two musical ideas can go against each other as long as each of them has musical integrity." Although Navarro does not clearly implement this superimposition vertically, the linear movement is played with a heavier articulation than the rest of the solo.

Stepping away from Navarro's use of tritone substitutions, a brief superimposition based out of flatted sixth harmony appears at the end of the first "B" section of Navarro's solo on "Ornithology" measure16:



Figure 4.34 Fats Navarro's solo on "Ornithology" ms. 13-16

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<sup>81</sup> Galper, Forward Motion, 154.

Navarro starts this phrase with the "Cool Blues" motive on measure 13. The line leads into a four-note scale fragment followed by an ascending diminished outline from the major third to the flatted ninth. He then connects the end of the diminished outline chromatically downward into another four-note digital pattern outlining the upper part of a A minor triad on beats one through three in measure 15. This melodic shape, descent by leap then stepwise up, is then sequenced in the following measure where he outlines Bb<sup>7</sup> harmony starting a tritone away (Ab) on the downbeat. Navarro uses a chromatic enclosure on beat four of measure 15 to surround the dominant seventh of the implied harmony on the downbeat of measure 16. This is an uncommon instance where Navarro implies minor sixth (bVI7) over a dominant harmony. Analyzing the pitches of the Bb<sup>7</sup> outline over the D<sup>7</sup> harmony results in an altered harmony of #11, #9, #5 with the "E" being the common tone between the two and no guide tones present.

Navarro also plays out of flatted sixth major harmony on the second chorus of "Ornithology" at the end of the "B" section in measure 48.



Figure 4.35 Fats Navarro's solo on "Ornithology" ms. 47-49

In measure 48, he chromatically approaches the root (Bb) and lowered seventh (Ab) from below emphasizing the altered pitches. One could argue that Navarro was also targeting upper extensions of the chord: b13 and #11. However the clear outline of the Bb<sup>7</sup> over D<sup>7</sup> in the previous chorus would suggest otherwise.

Another instance of using alterations through digital patterns is shown on "Cool Blues" in measure 70:



Figure 4.36 Fats Navarro's solo on "Cool Blues" ms. 69-71

On beats one and two of the G7 chord Navarro employs two quarter notes representing the b13 and #9 followed by a descending 5-3-2-1 digital pattern in Db major. As seen earlier, Navarro utilized the last two notes of a descending 5-3-2-1 pattern to enclosure the following pitch, in this case beat four of measure 70 encloses the D on the downbeat of measure 71. Again, we see a 2-7-1-2 digital pattern that on beats one and two in measure 71.

The concept of a tritone substitution is similar to that of a Neapolitan sixth chord in western theory. Reference instructor of Jazz Improvisation at the Julliard School of Music, John Mehegan stated in his 1962 book, Jazz Rhythm and the Improvised Line, that "the only authentic 'substitute' chord is the chromatic substitute for the circle of fifths (bIIIx for VIx), the so-called 'augmented fourth substitute." The use of this "augmented fourth substitute" became more and more common as the bebop language was developing. It allowed for a means of creating more complex functional harmonic movement. From this analysis, the tritone substitution was the most common type of superimposition used by Navarro. Although some of the same types of superimpositions appeared at the same location in each chorus, none of them was exactly the same

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>82</sup> The Neapolitan sixth chord is a first inversion major triad built a half step above the tonic key. It often precedes the dominant chord and functions as a subdominant chord in the cadential progression IV-V-I.
<sup>83</sup> John Mehegan, *Jazz Rhythm and the Improvised Line*, (New York: Watson-Guptill Publications), 11.

suggesting Navarro's greater harmonic awareness and not simply utilizing a "lick" he had been working up.

### REOCCURRING RHYTHMIC PATTERNS

In addition to Navarro's eighth-note line phrasing, many rhythmic ideas occur throughout the selected transcriptions. One of the most common reoccurring rhythms is the diatonic ascent of three quarter notes proceeded by two eighth notes. The motive always begins on beat one and usually at the beginning of a phrase:



Figure 4.37 Fats Navarro's solo on "The Street Beat" ms. 113-115

This rhythmic motive serves as a beginning for an extended phrase to follow. The quarter notes are given more emphasis through harder accents each time the line is employed. The motive is utilized three times in "Ice Freezes Red," the third time being embedded in an extended phrase that precedes the second occurrence. This motive is seen either ascending in a scalar fashion or as an ascending triad most often beginning on the fifth. The example in Figure 4.37 shows the motive starting on the 5<sup>th</sup> with an ascending Ab major pentatonic scale. This motive seems to be a way for Navarro to add rhythmic contrast to his use of continuous eighth notes. Thomas Owens recognizes this motive in several Gillespie recordings stating "it follows a rest of several beats, while he (Dizzy) prepares for this dramatic high-note entrance." Earlier recordings of Navarro find him utilizing this motive in a similar dramatic high-note approach, but Navarro quickly descends after a brief moment in the upper register on the selected performances. A

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>84</sup> Thomas Owens, *Bebop: The Music and Its Players*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 106.

fragment of the previous rhythmic commonly utilized is shown in measure 25 from "Cool Blues" in Figure 4.38:



Figure 4.38 Fats Navarro's solo on "Cool Blues" ms. 25-26

Figure 4.38 shows the first two beats of the motive omitted and Navarro reframing from a dramatic high note entrance as Owens described above.

The majority of Navarro's phrases begin within two beats of each harmonic structural point of the form. Most often there is a three eighth-note note pick up leading into the next structural phrase. These notes are seen as chromatic descending enclosures or as a major diatonic scalar ascent from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the root.

Another reoccurring rhythmic idea appears at the end of the first chorus on "Ornithology" in measures 21-22 and in measures 29-30:

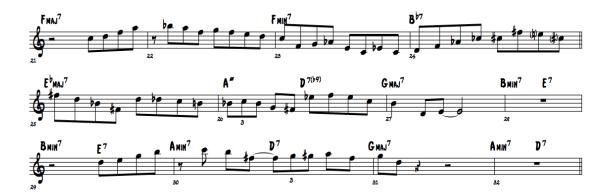


Figure 4.39 Fats Navarro's on "Ornithology" ms. 21-32

He begins a four-note group on beat three of measure 21 outlining an ascending major triad starting on the fifth with an added sixth scale degree between the fifth and the root

(5-6-1-3). The motive continues into the next measure (22) on the "and" of beat one reaching the fourth scale degree, which resolves downward to the third. Navarro first plays this motive in F major and then sequences it up a whole step to G major. While four-note partial pentatonic groups occur throughout the selected transcriptions, this example illustrates a slightly longer reoccurring melodic idea.

### SUMMARY OF STYLE

Although it is difficult to fully encapsulate the essence of Navarro's improvised solos through description, the melodic concepts discussed in this analysis provide insight into his thought process. Navarro's organic improvisatory style is evident through the selected live recordings because they illustrate his variation of the bebop language in real time. Despite some repetitive material on "Lover, Come Back to Me" and "Leap Here," Navarro provides the listener with familiar ideas through new methods of employment on each chorus. Jazz scholar Thomas Owens states in volume 1 of his Charlie Parker dissertation "the master player will continually find new ways to reshape, combine, and phrase his well-practiced ideas."

Navarro creates rhythmic variation through his use of accents and different harmonic implications. His use of upper line accents was made apparent in measure 41 and 42 in Figure 4.24. This line was directly inspired by Charlie Parker and temporarily creates a 3-2 clave rhythm. Jazz guitarist and educator Bert Ligon says that, "music is heard and conceived in a linear manner and should be studied in the same way."<sup>86</sup>

Navarro often manages to make all the harmonic changes as soon as they appear while

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>85</sup> Thomas Owens, "Charlie Parker: Techniques of Improvisation, Vol I," (PhD diss., University of California Los Angeles, 1974).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>86</sup> Ligon, Jazz Theory Resources, 18.

maintaining connectivity through linear motion. Navarro's phrase endings vary to long and short notes on and off the beat. His sustained note endings often end on the ninth, thirteenth, or raised eleventh scale degrees of the chord. Whether played on or off the beat, shorter note endings typically consist of a chord tone within the triad of the harmony.

In addition to Navarro's use of quotes as melodic material, he incorporates fragments of the major pentatonic scale to create short melodic ideas of his own. Such pentatonic ideas appear during the opening eight bars of his solo on "Wahoo" and in measures 85-91 on "Cool Blues." These short melodic pentatonic riffs aid in preventing overuse of the bebop language and free him from the rigidity of always outlining harmony.

In regards to Navarro's use of range, he infrequently expands above a high C (B-flat 5) while playing an extended phrase, however, he briefly reaches the extreme upper register in "Rifftide" and "Leap Here." The peak of his range is often at the beginnings of phrases, which then quickly returns to the middle register of the horn. He rarely plays lower than a concert Bb below the staff (Bb3) and the majority of his playing stays in the middle of the staff.

Navarro's playing on these two performances illustrates his move toward implementing nearly even eighth notes and incorporating irregular accents pertinent to the bebop era. His slurred and legato-tongued lines combined with even tone made his playing style and sound more accessible to younger jazz trumpet players. His harmonic

sophistication and technical mastery influenced many trumpeters to follow, particularly Kenny Dorham and Clifford Brown.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup> Dana, "Analysis of Selected Jazz Trumpet Improvisations," 102.

#### CHAPTER 5

#### **CONCLUSION**

Jazz scholar John Mehegan states, "the basic problem of jazz improvisation is to abandon the melody and build an improvised line on the elements of the chords in a tune." Not only was Navarro able to abandon the melody and create coherent improvised lines, he was proficient at creating new harmonic implications over preexisting harmony in a systematic manner. This analysis shows how harmonically aware and methodical Navarro's performance practice was. Despite all the various characteristic bebop devices Navarro utilized during his improvisations, he did not necessarily view it as such. He did not like the term "bebop" and referred to it as modern music. Navarro saw the music as playing a series of chord progressions where he strove to create a perfect melody, "chord progressions right, the melody original and fresh-my own."

Jazz pedagogue Dan Hearle says that "an understanding of principles of voicing and connecting chords is important not only to writers and keyboard players but to improvisers as well." Navarro implemented triads, seventh chords, and altered dominant harmony in many inversions, implying his awareness of chord voicings. His ability to outline harmony in all inversions and upper extensions with various types of embellishments permitted him to connect melodic content with seamless variation. Gillespie graciously takes credit for his influence on the young bebop trumpet players in the 1940s stating that, "a style of playing is only the way you get from one note to another, since the same notes are there for everybody. How you get from one note to

<sup>88</sup> Mehegan, Jazz Rhythm and the Improvised Line, 53.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>89</sup> Ulanov, Barry, "Fats Navarro," *Metronome* 19 (November 1947): 38-39.

another is the style."<sup>90</sup> Although Navarro was greatly influenced by Gillespie's harmonic language and ability, he had developed his own distinctive bop style.<sup>91</sup>

Though most of the selected transcriptions are in commonly played keys, Navarro was equally proficient in all keys. In his autobiography, Jimmy Heath recalls seeing Navarro and Coleman Hawkins play at the Zanzibar. Navarro was late returning from a set break and the band had started playing a tune that was normally in Ab major.

Intending on tricking Navarro, the group played the tune a half step up in A major (B major on trumpet). Initially thinking he was out of tune, Navarro realizing the prank begins improvising in the new key, including the melody and out-chorus. Navarro's ability to play in all keys was greatly admired by Coleman Hawkins. 92

Navarro's legacy lives on through many bop-oriented trumpeters that succeeded him. While still alive, he was admired by established trumpeters such as Harry James. <sup>93</sup> Navarro had also become a role model for young and upcoming trumpet players such as Clifford Brown who did not want to become another "Dizzy clone." Art Farmer was also listening to Navarro as he was not interested in trumpeters that came before him. <sup>95</sup> Cornetist Warren Vache, admitted his admiration of Fats Navarro despite being heavily influenced by Louis Armstrong, Bix Beiderbecke, Rex Stewart and other jazz

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<sup>90</sup> Gillespie, To Be, or Not....To Bop, 487.

<sup>91</sup> Gillespie, To Be, or Not....To Bop, 369.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>92</sup> Jimmy Heath, *I Walked with Giants: The Autobiography of Jimmy Heath*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010), 51.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>93</sup> Peter J. Levinson, *Trumpet Blues: The Life of Harry James*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 210.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>94</sup> Nick Catalano, *Clifford Brown: The Life and Art of the Legendary Jazz Trumpeter*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 35.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>95</sup> John La Barbera, "The Meaning of Art" An interview with Art Farmer," *ITG Journal* Vol. 21, No.2 (December 1996): 40.

traditionalists.<sup>96</sup> Modern jazz trumpeter Tom Harrell acknowledges that Navarro had a sound that was real vibrant and uplifting

Navarro's ability to master the bebop language developed by Gillespie and Parker earned him a high level of respect in the jazz community and fostered a growing sense of tradition among bebop musicians. <sup>97</sup> Unfortunately, like many jazz musicians of the time, Navarro's life would be short. It is unclear whether he started using heroin before or after his tuberculosis diagnosis. The unpredictable life style of a professional jazz musician in the late 1940s with the addition of a death sentence made it difficult for Navarro to stay optimistic of his future. The last recording to surface of Navarro was a week before his death on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1950 at Birdland in a Miles Davis-led jam session. John McNeil stated in a recorded conversation that the concert was set up as a benefit to help fund Navarro's medical bills. <sup>98</sup> During the performance, Navarro attempts to play his signature long phrases, but doesn't seem to have the energy to muster up much more than a measure at a time. His tone was raspy and muffled and pitches were indefinite. His death a week later on July 6, 1950 was only the beginning of a decade of tragic events that would redirect the course of the music.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>96</sup> Royal Stokes, *The Jazz Scene: An Informal History from New Orleans to 1990*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 226.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> Guthrie P. Ramsey, Jr., *The Amazing Bud Powell: Black Genius, Jazz History, and the Challenge of Bebop*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 172.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>98</sup> John McNeil, recorded conversation with the author, February 25, 2016.

## **APPENDIX**

Fats Navarro Solo On:

# Leap Here

Recorded 2/11/1949 Pablo PACD 5311-2







Fats Navarro Solo On:

## **Ice Freezes Red**

Recorded 2/11/1949 Pablo PACD 5311-2









## Lover, Come Back to Me

Recorded 2/11/1949 Pablo PACD 5311-2









#### Rifftide

Recorded 2/11/1949 Pablo PACD 5311-2







## Wahoo

Recorded 5/15/1950 Cool & Blue CD 103







Fats Navarro Solo On:

#### **Street Beat**

Recorded 5/15/1950 Cool & Blue CD 103











# Ornithology

Recorded 5/15/1950 Cool & Blue 103







## **Cool Blues**

Recorded 5/15/1950 Cool & Blue CD 103







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