THE ORIGINS OF DAVID LIEBMAN'S APPROACH TO JAZZ IMPROVISATION

by

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Analysis

As a primary voice in jazz improvisation among the most elite in the genre, David Liebman's harmonic palette is one of extreme harmonic color as well as infection, style and nuance. Along with Steve Grossman, Joe Lovano, Jerry Bergonzi, and until recently Michael Brecker, Liebman is one of the main pioneers in the assimilation and unique creative use of the "John Coltrane School" of playing. Through Liebman's extremely articulate nature he thoroughly explained his harmonic vocabulary in his book *A Chromatic Approach to Jazz Harmony and Melody* and with my help thoroughly demonstrated all of his harmonic improvisation techniques in *How To Approach Standards Chromatically.*

Analysis of Liebman's extremely complex playing style will begin with first taking a look at the subtle yet extremely important characteristics of his playing. These characteristics involve certain articulation, portamento, glissando, and vocalization techniques found in the playing of the masters he studied most. Secondly, examination of Liebman's harmonic vocabulary will deal with cross-referencing certain phrases with that of jazz masters that influenced him the most in various stages of his development.

Style

As most musicians know or come to realize by a certain point of their development is that the basis of a unique sound does not come merely from the notes that are played. To develop one's identifiable style requires much thought along the lines of exactly *how* to play the notes. Considerations may include time feel, pitch bending,

articulation, and the ability to apply an overall personality to what is played. Ask any younger musician to sight-read part of a John Coltrane solo and this point is clearly illustrated. The notes can all be present and played accurately, however the student will hardly sound anything like John Coltrane! This may even be true of students that have been laboriously studying a particular player. Despite the months of work, they still fail to sound like the emulated player. As for Liebman's extremely chromatic tendencies, pianist Kenny Werner said it best when he became known describing that "if dissonant notes are played and the player embraces them as consonant, *the listener will also hear them as consonant!*" (Werner, 1996, p 87) This is precisely how most of Liebman's vocabulary appeals to listeners.

To leave these attributes and influences of David Liebman's playing out of this analysis would be greatly counter-productive. While I will focus later on his chromatic approach, much of what makes his chromatic approach sound "valid" is the way he plays the chromatic passages. The use of chromatic tones in jazz improvisation (or any genre in fact) creates a certain amount of tension.

In Liebman's playing, these tension notes are often accompanied by a certain style in which he plays them. Most often they are played with a more aggressive or biting tone and sometimes these tones occur on the extreme ends of the saxophone's range. On some instances Liebman will combine chromatic lines with more inside lines that give him a greater combination of harmonic possibilities.

Overtones/False Fingerings

One of the most effective stylistic devices that Liebman uses is his facility of the saxophone's overtone series or what is more commonly referred to as false fingerings. False fingerings result in the same note sounding as a fundamental fingering yet the tone color is drastically changed. Harmonics in the overtone series of the lowest five notes on the saxophone (Bb through D) are easiest to use for this, however any note can be used and the same relationship of harmonics apply. Use of harmonics are notated by a solid note head indicating the sounding pitch, while an "x" note head indicates the fingered note pitch on the saxophone. Liebman demonstrates this best on repetitive lines like this one from his solo on "Mr. P.C." (8th chorus):

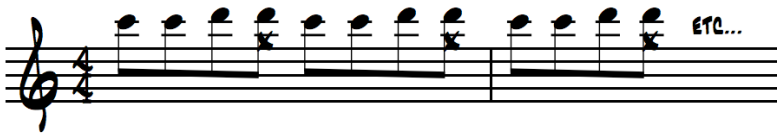

Fig. 1 – Liebman, "Mr. P.C." 8th Chorus

Here we can see the use of the note G indicated by an "x" used for the sounding note D, which would be the first note in the overtone series if a saxophonist fingers a G above the staff.

In addition to repetitive phrases, a more dramatic effect can be achieved by using the overtones or false fingerings in a melodic passage as demonstrated by Liebman here in his 7th chorus of "Mr. P.C." :

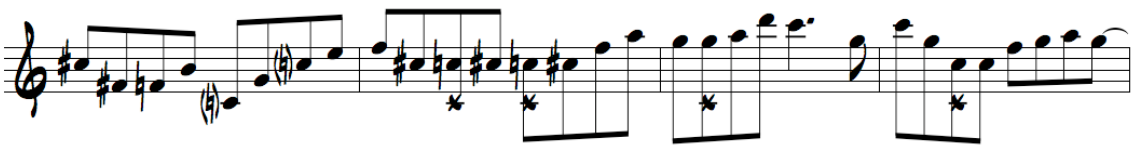

Fig. 2 – Liebman, "Mr. P.C." 7th chorus

In this example Liebman is using the first overtone of low C4/middle C (which is C5 in the middle of the staff an octave higher). In the third measure, he is using the same low C to play G an octave and a fifth higher.

David Liebman's most influential artist John Coltrane uses this technique in most of his solos. Among countless instances, his opening phrase to a 1962 solo of "Bye Bye Blackbird" uses this technique with the same overtone based on G:

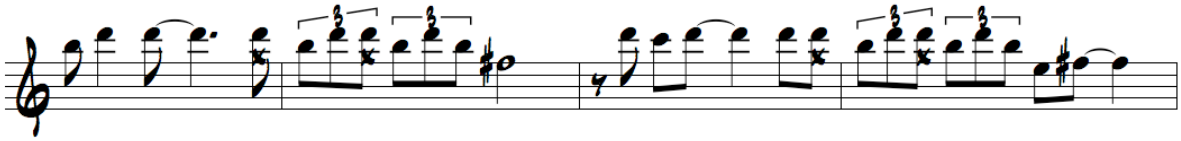

Fig. 3 – Coltrane, "Bye Bye Blackbird"

Later in Coltrane's same solo, he uses almost the identical phrase that Liebman used in his "Mr. P.C." solo from above:

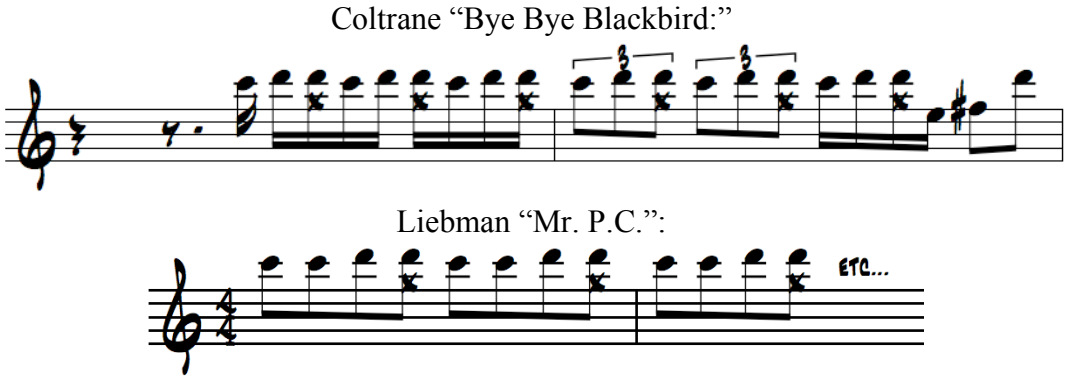

Fig. 4 – Coltrane/Liebman Comparison

By comparing the two examples above we can clearly see a nearly exact match of the technique used, not only in effect but in literal sounding pitches.

Vocalization

In many instances Liebman adds vocalization to his notes to build intensity or to climax a solo. In some cases this may be a slight coloration of the note(s) or in other

cases could be more voice that is heard than anything else. This is a very dramatic effect that is most clearly displayed using notes of the highest range of the saxophone ("palm keys" or altissimo). Vocalization can be sung using the same pitch played, the same pitch an octave lower, or a different pitch altogether. Each variation will produce slightly different results.

In a conversation with Liebman, he describes the use of vocalization in the upper and altissimo register as a way to separate the different registers of the saxophone. The very low register has a specific sound, especially when playing in the mid register and then suddenly drop to a series of low notes. The altissimo register can do the same if treated properly. Some saxophonists have dazzling technique in the upper register and can make it sound like any other register. Liebman decides to color the altissimo register with his voice so that the high notes take on a character of his/her own much like the low register. (Vashlishan, 2008)

We can see Liebman's use of this in many instances like this one taken from his solo on "Mr. P.C.":

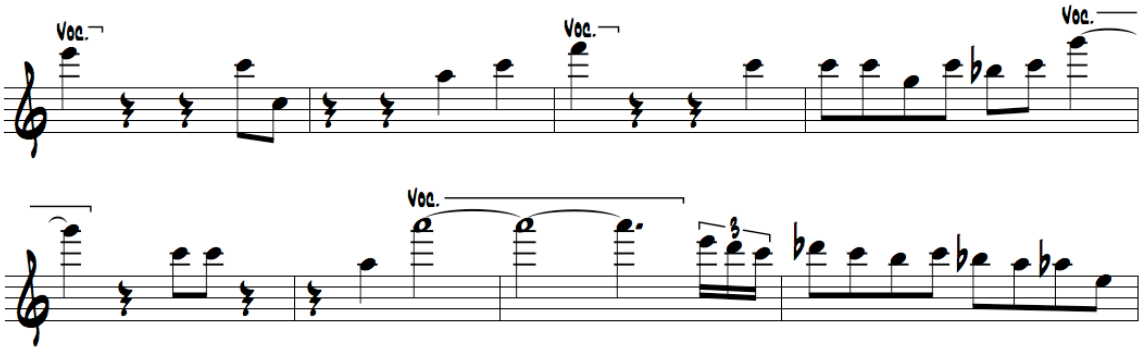

Fig. 5 – Liebman, "Mr. P.C."

Note how all of the vocalizations occur on high and/or altissimo (above normal saxophone range which is high F) notes.

Coltrane's use of vocalization also takes place around the same general range. This example is taken from the 25th chorus of Coltrane's solo on "Impressions" taken from the *Live At The Village Vanguard* 1961 recording. Here, he uses vocalization on altissimo notes B, A, and G. Liebman's solo from above uses vocalization on altissimo notes A, G, and F.

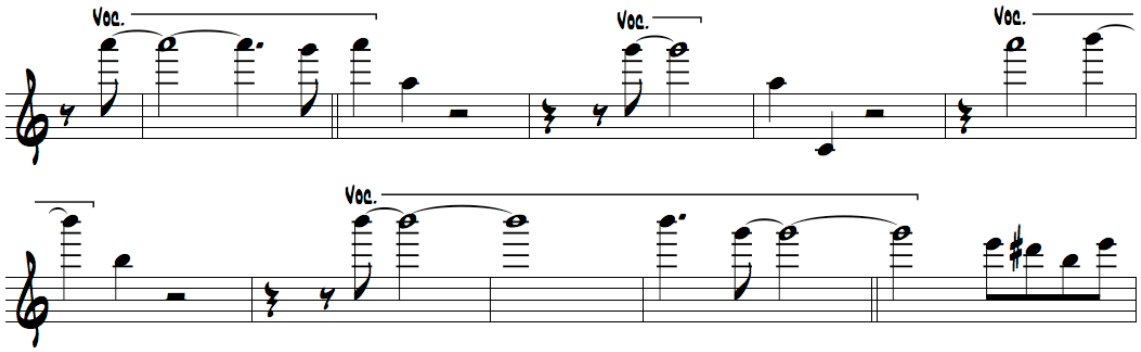

Fig. 6 – Coltrane, "Impressions" excerpt

Portamento/Glissando

In chapter seven of the DVD *David Liebman Teaches and Plays* that was filmed in 1995 at the Jamey Aebersold Jazz Camp Liebman describes that one expressive device in particular that he developed from John Coltrane was portamento. This is the musical term used to describe sliding from one note to the other instead of using excessive lip bending. This is commonly referred to as glissando, but when combined with the lip however, a surprisingly smooth sweep can be achieved that transforms the technique into a portamento. This is a very expressive technique that Liebman (and of course Coltrane) uses all of the time. In Liebman's second improvised chorus of "I Concentrate On You," he demonstrates this technique when moving from a high F down to C:

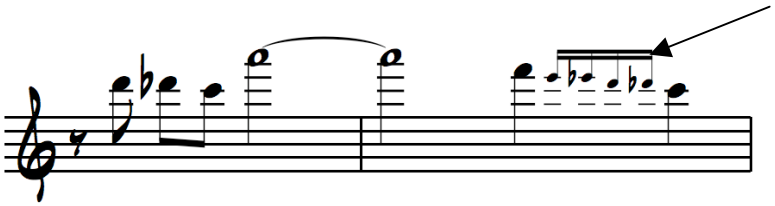

Fig. 7 – Liebman, "I Concentrate On You" (solo)

The sound of this example can only be achieved by the way it is notated, for simply dropping the lip would not give nearly the same result nor would it give the player a reasonable avenue to land on the C. There are other places however, where the lip could be used but the portamento gives the improviser a much clearer, easier, and more defined way of expression. In the same tune, Liebman demonstrates this best when he is interpreting the melody:

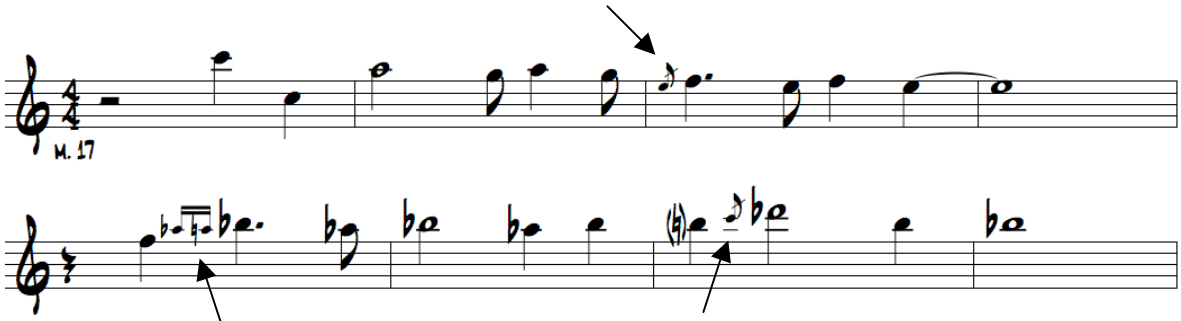

Fig. 8 – Liebman, "I Concentrate On You" (melody)

In John Coltrane's "Blues To You" solo on the recording *Coltrane Plays The Blues*, he demonstrates this technique as well. It is important to note that in most cases both Liebman and Coltrane use the portamento in the higher range of the saxophone, but not necessarily the altissimo register as stated before in the description of a vocalization. The following example is taken from Coltrane's solo at the beginning of his fourth blues chorus:

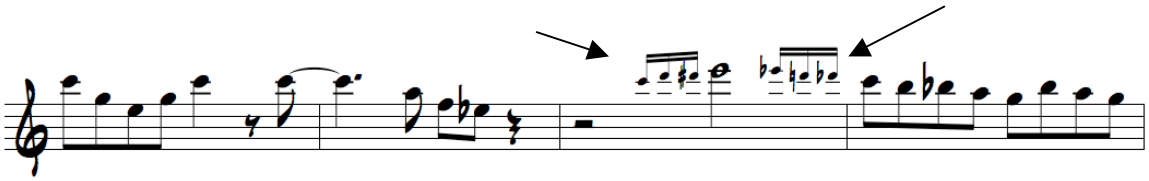

Fig. 9 – Coltrane, "Blues To You"

In the figure above Coltrane is using the portamento much like the Liebman in figure A7; moving from one note to the next that is at least a third away. This next example shows how Coltrane is using the portamento much like Liebman does in figure A8. This is taken from the same solo in the fifth chorus:

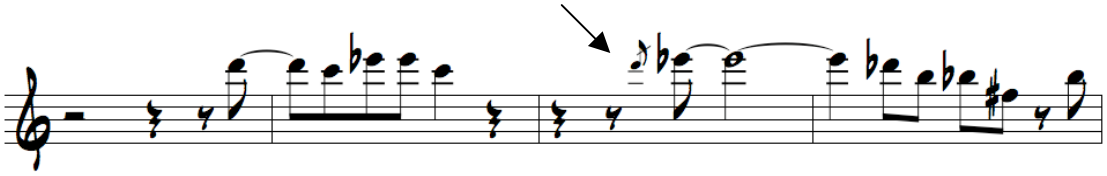

Fig. 10 – Coltrane, "Blues To You"

Themes and Repetition

The bridge between analysis of style and harmony will be an examination of the similarities between Liebman and Coltrane in terms of thematic development, especially during the beginning and climax of their solos. While this is not purely harmonic, it brings us a bit closer to Liebman's harmonic approach. There are numerous instances in Liebman's (as well as Coltrane's) playing where he uses a short phrase repeated a number of times. This will either happen in the beginning of a solo, at some point in a solo for a short period, or will occur as a repeating motif used throughout a solo. The next examples show the first measures of several different Liebman solos. Here we can see the simple melodic phrase present in the first chorus of Liebman's "Milestones" solo:

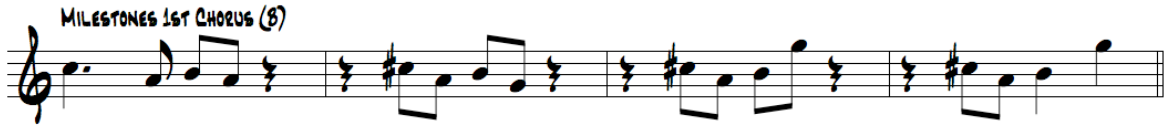

Fig. 11 – Liebman, "Milestones" excerpt

In the same solo, he presents another melodic phrase during his second chorus:

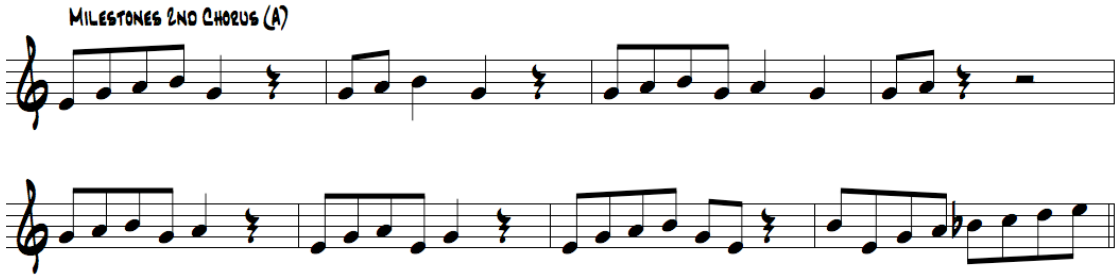

Fig. 12 – Liebman, "Milestones" excerpt #2

In the opening eight measures of Liebman's solo on "Mr. P.C.", he continues to use the same basic pentatonic language to form to compose his thematic phrase:

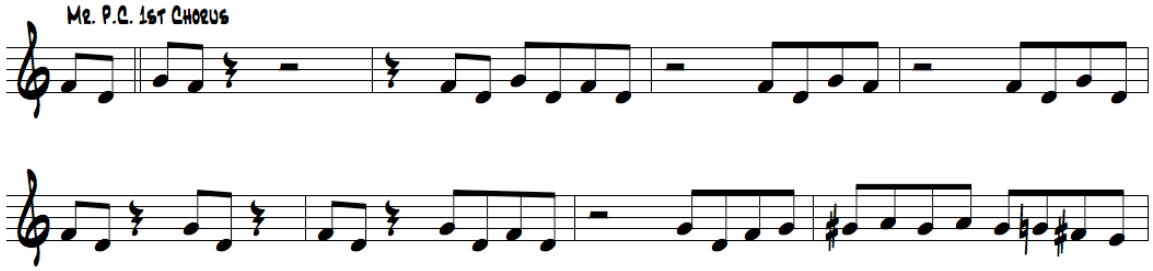

Fig. 13 – Liebman, "Mr. P.C." 1st chorus

In another solo nearly from nearly ten years earlier, Liebman composes his opening theme in the same pentatonic manner on the Donald Byrd composition "Fancy Free" taken from the Elvin Jones recording *Live At The Lighthouse*:

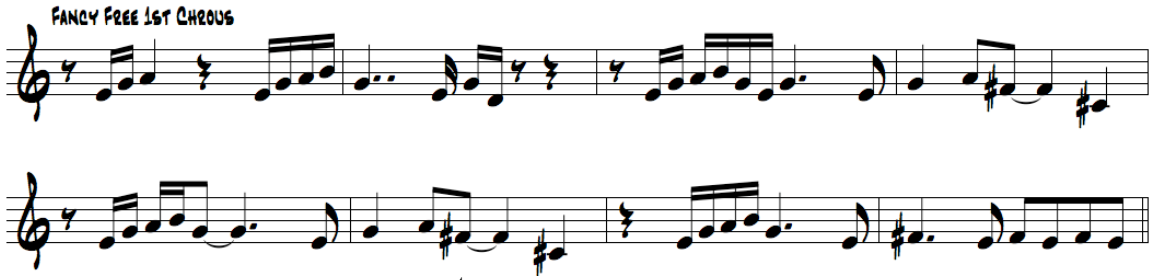

Fig. 14 – Liebman, "Fancy Free" 1st chorus

Finally, another solo by Liebman on *Caravan* shows us the same opening theme technique that was used in all of the examples shown above. The only difference here is that the notes change a bit more based on the harmony of the tune (which I have not included here purely to emphasize the similarities and simplicity of his lines).

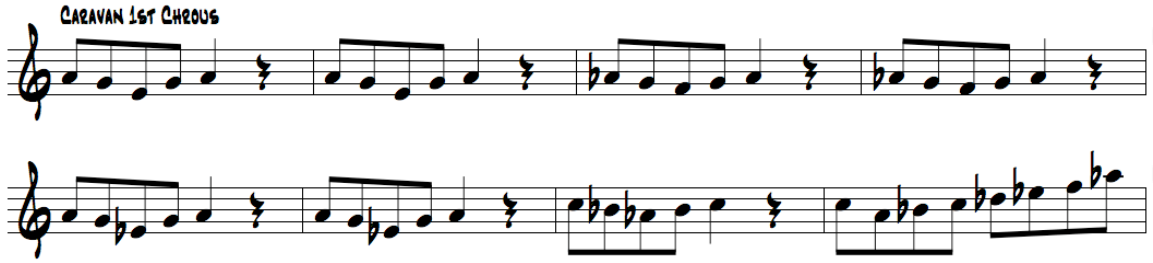

Fig. 15 – Liebman, "Caravan" excerpt

Upon looking for musical sources to confirm my assumption that Liebman's melodic tendencies were derived from Coltrane, one does not have to look far to find plenty of material in Coltrane's "Impressions" solo.

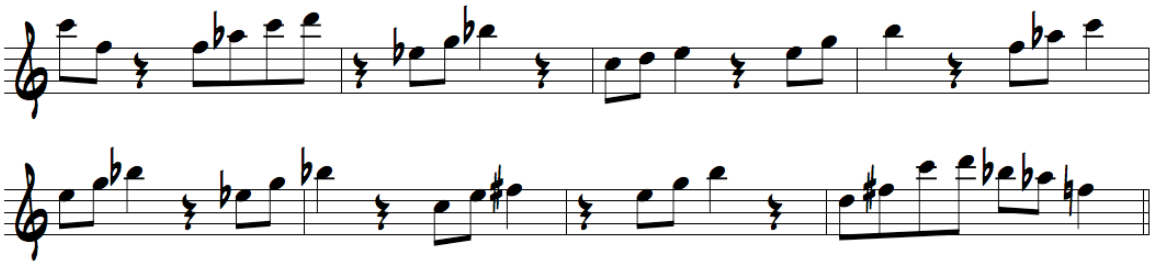

Fig. 16 – Coltrane, "Impressions," *Live at The Village Vanguard 1961*

This being one example among many in this solo, Coltrane would often repeat small rhythmic phrases but change certain notes slightly. This portion above was taken from the "B" section of his 6th solo chorus.

Harmony

The complex harmonic vocabulary that David Liebman has developed is one that is admired by many. As mentioned in previous chapters, Liebman witnessed Coltrane's playing first-hand, absorbed his vocabulary and developed a career and unique sound based on what he learned. When referring to the Elvin Jones *Live At The Lighthouse* recording where Liebman and Steve Grossman documented their post-Coltrane influence

with Jones (who was Coltrane's primary drummer in the later half of his career), musicians have said:

> "This record is an example of the next generation of Coltrane fanatics..." – George Garzone, saxophonist

> "Referring to patterns that Trane had worked out, Steve and David's lines were so great." – Pat Labarbera, saxophonist

> "...Liebman and Grossman raised the bar for what could be accomplished on the saxophone after assimilating the musical language of John Coltrane..." – Chris Potter, saxophonist

(Wettre, 2005)

With these testimonials in mind, I set out to ask Liebman about his influences. I explained that I was aware of Coltrane and to answer my assumptions he agreed "yes, that's it." When I asked what other saxophone influences and suggested players like Sonny Rollins, Joe Henderson and others, he responded "yeah, I admired him as a saxophone player, but for the influence you're looking for it was [Col]Trane." (Vashlishan, 2008) He acknowledged trumpeter Miles Davis for his use of space, but not for anything that really dealt with harmony. According to Liebman "with Miles it was more about the *how* than the *what.*" In this quote, Liebman refers to Davis' exceptional time feel and sound, all set against his simple, sparse yet evocative harmonic language. Based on this interview with Liebman, I had no choice but to look to John Coltrane for the bulk of my harmonic reference.

David Liebman's Harmonic Concept

Pages 17 through 29 of Liebman's *A Chromatic Approach to Jazz Harmony and Melody* depict a great deal of harmonic tools that one can use to expand their harmonic palette. As Liebman states, "to convey the fullest array of human emotions the artist should have an entire panorama to choose from in his or her area with the minimum of limitations." (Liebman, 1991, p 171) And with this, an entire panorama he gave his readers. The following is a brief summary of the different harmonic devices he uses taken from *A Chromatic Approach...* as well as from *How To Approach Standards*, (2006) which I collaborated with Liebman to write. Accompanying each method is a solo excerpt from John Coltrane showing how all of Liebman's techniques were displayed in Coltrane's playing.

Upper Structures

This technique involves playing on the upper extensions of a chord using a chord-on-chord mindset. For example, playing "E7" over a Dmaj7 chord to expose the 9^{th}, #11, and 13 of the Dmaj7 and is probably the simplest form of "chromatic" thinking. This is very apparent in Coltrane's "Impressions" solo mentioned previously. In this case, Coltrane plays clear melodic phrases in A7 and Bb7 tonalities over the E-7 and F-7 harmonies respectively to create the 11^{th} and 13^{th} sounds. Note the clear triads and strong resolutions to both A and Bb:

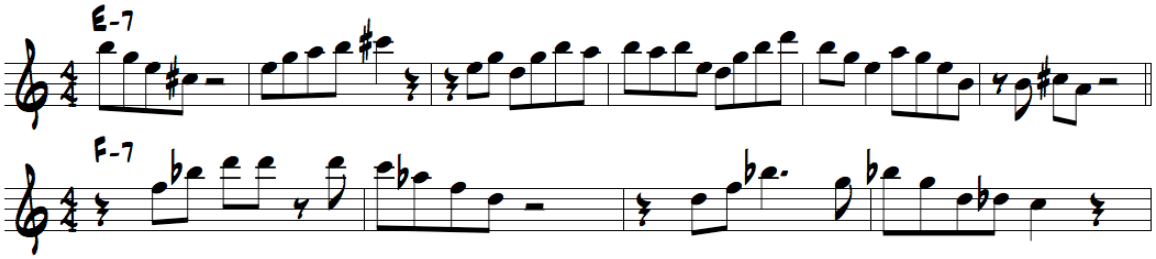

Fig. 17 – Coltrane, "Impressions" excerpt

Tritone Substitution

A more commonly known substitution in the jazz world, the tritone relationship utilizes the more colorful notes in a chord by playing over its closely related neighbor which happens to be a tritone away. For example when playing C7, F#7 (both chord and scale) may be substituted for an easier way of playing the 7th, #11, #5, #9, and b9. These colorful perhaps more "outside" notes are the regular notes to the F#7 scale. In most cases when Coltrane plays a bit more colorfully, he is drawing upon the tritone. Some great examples of this are scattered throughout "Blues To You" on the recording *Coltrane Plays the Blues.* This particular example is from his 2nd chorus:

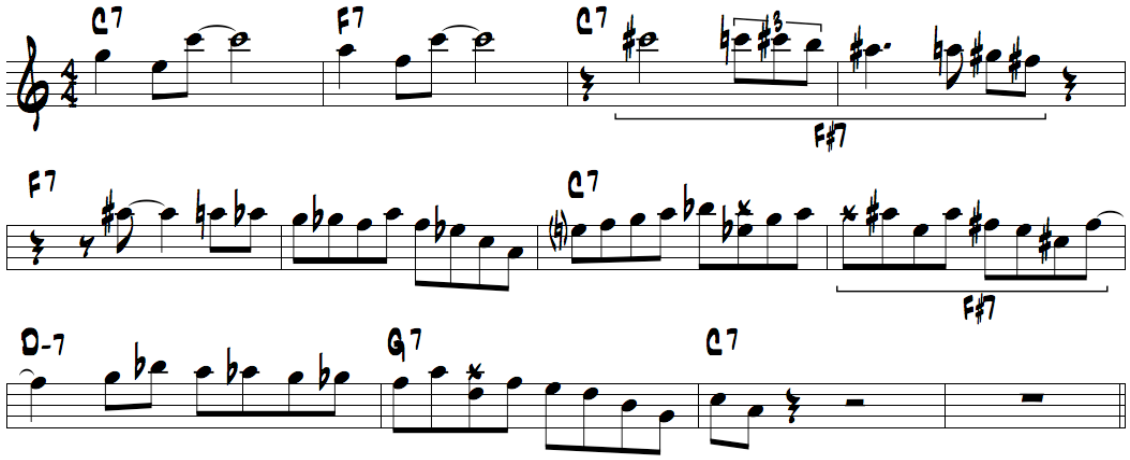

Fig. 18 – Coltrane, "Blues To You" 2nd chorus

Coltrane Substitution

This is of course self explanatory to many musicians, and utilizes the progressions that Coltrane made famous on his *Giant Steps* recording and many others. The important feature about this technique is to use it on other tunes than "Giant Steps" or "Countdown" to create more harmonic interest. Coltrane developed his series of harmonic superimpositions by experimenting with key centers moving in thirds. His classic "Countdown" progression takes a simple D-7 G7 Cmaj7 progression and develops his sequence **D-7** Eb7 Abmaj7 B7 Emaj7 **G7 Cmaj7**, which still resolves to the same Cmaj7 chord and uses D-7 and G7 as strong anchor points. Liebman's progressions differ from Coltrane's in that instead of definite functional harmonic choices, Liebman chooses to experiment with similar root movements of thirds and fourths, which can be clearly seen in the example from "Countdown" shown above.

This example is from Liebman while using Coltrane substitutions on "Take the A-Train." Notice Liebman's clever use of common tones between superimpositions indicated by overlapping brackets:

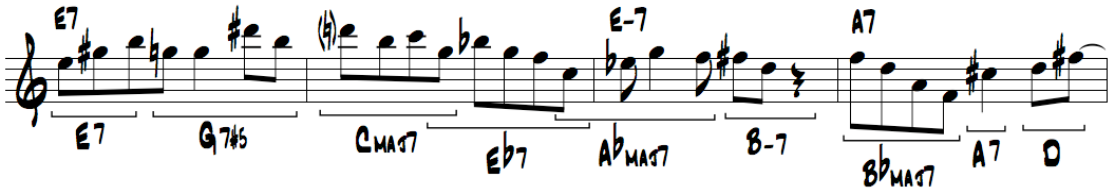

Fig. 19 – Liebman, "Take The "A" Train"

While this example is taken from Coltrane's "Blues To You" solo mentioned earlier using some of the very same progressions moving to C:

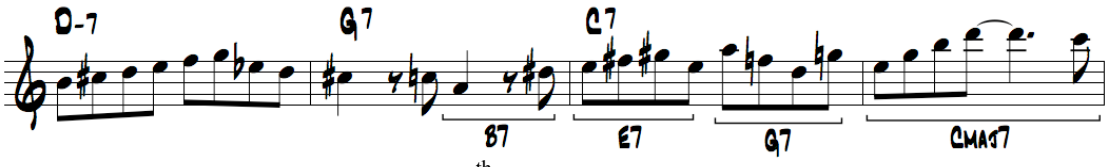

Fig. 20 – Coltrane, "Blues To You" 17th chorus

Side Slipping

This technique involves simply playing either a half step above or below the current chord change. If the progression reads C-7 F7, then a reasonable side slip would be to play either B-7 E7 or C#-7 F#7. The more important issue here as well as with the next technique discussed here is to be able to resolve the superimposed line back to where the original change resolves. This is very important for the sake of tension and release. Liebman states, "In any artistic process, tension and release are guiding factors. It is the yin-yang principle put to practice, implying opposites." (Liebman, 2003, p 37) This is a whole blues chorus from Coltrane's solo on "Chasin' The Trane" from the *Live At The Village Vanguard* 1961 recording during a particularly dissonant moment, however notice his resolution half way through (Cmaj7, measure 6) and at the end of the chorus to justify all of his side-slipping:

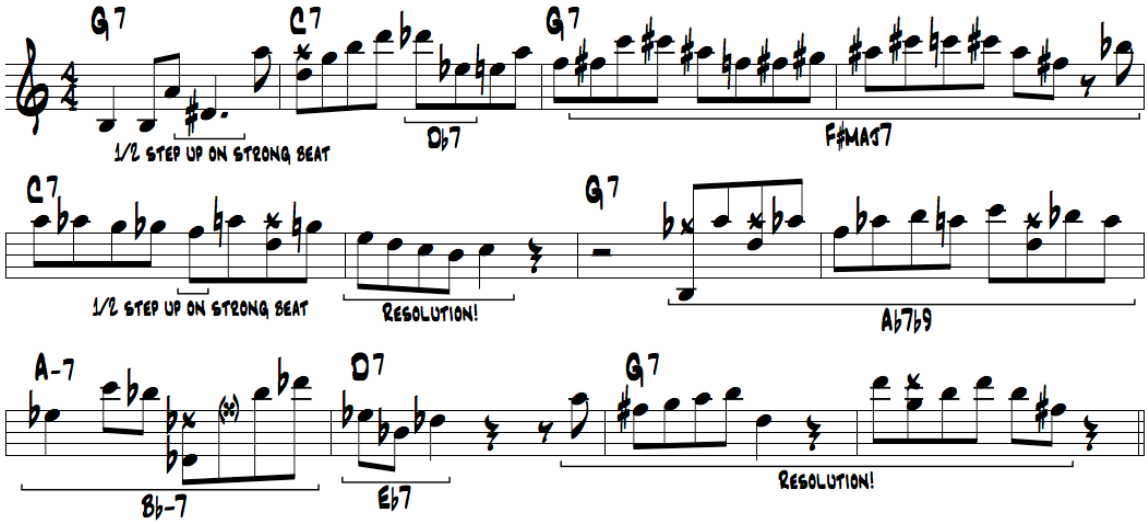

Fig. 21: Coltrane, "Chasin' The Trane"

An interesting example of how Liebman uses side-slipping is shown in this phrase to his solo to "Bye Bye Blackbird." Note how literally plays this ii-V progression up a half step.

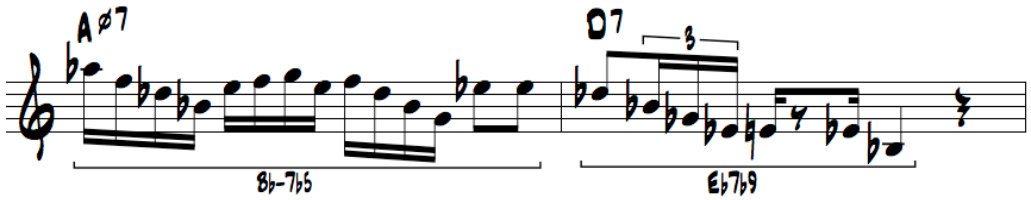

Fig. 22: Liebman, "Bye Bye Blackbird"

Foreign Progression/Polytonality

This technique is very similar to side-slipping, but instead of moving only a half-step away from the original key any interval is used. Whether it is a minor 3rd, 5th, whole step, etc. this technique works best when the player resolves back to the original key. A good example would be to play F-7 Bb7 over the progression D-7 G7. By using this substitution in particular, the F-7 and Bb7 are covering certain upper extensions and colorful notes in the original D-7 G7 progression that the improviser may not come upon as easily when thinking of the original progression.

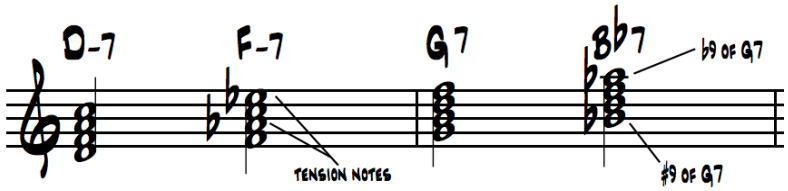

Fig. 23: Foreign Progression (Liebman, 1991, p 19)

The key to using this technique effectively is to experiment with different keys and determining which give the sound of the line more or less harmonic tension. While keys closer to the original may sound rather dissonant, others that are further away may sound more consonant. Liebman's constant emphasis on the importance of tension and release makes this one of his most effective harmonic tools.

Modal

The modal technique is rather simple yet gives interesting results. Modal compositions generally consist of either one or two chords, such as Miles Davis' "So What" or John Coltrane's "Impressions" (mentioned earlier). To prevent a rather stale sounding vocabulary on an improvisation of any length, one can develop their own set of arbitrary chord changes to play over. This is most interesting when examining Liebman's suggested changes on "Impressions" in *How To Approach Standards Chromatically* for some of his suggested changes match Coltrane's implied changes on his 1961 solo on "Impressions." Using five choruses of suggested chord changes to superimpose over "Impressions," Liebman proposes to use the following changes for the "A" (E-7) sections: B7, C7, F#7, A7, Eb7, Fmaj7 and D7 among others. For the "B" (F-7) sections he suggests Ebmaj7, Bb7, and G-7 among others (Liebman, 2006, p 105). Surprisingly, Coltrane displays all of these with the addition of Cmaj7(#11) in "Impressions" solo from the 1960's: (following page)

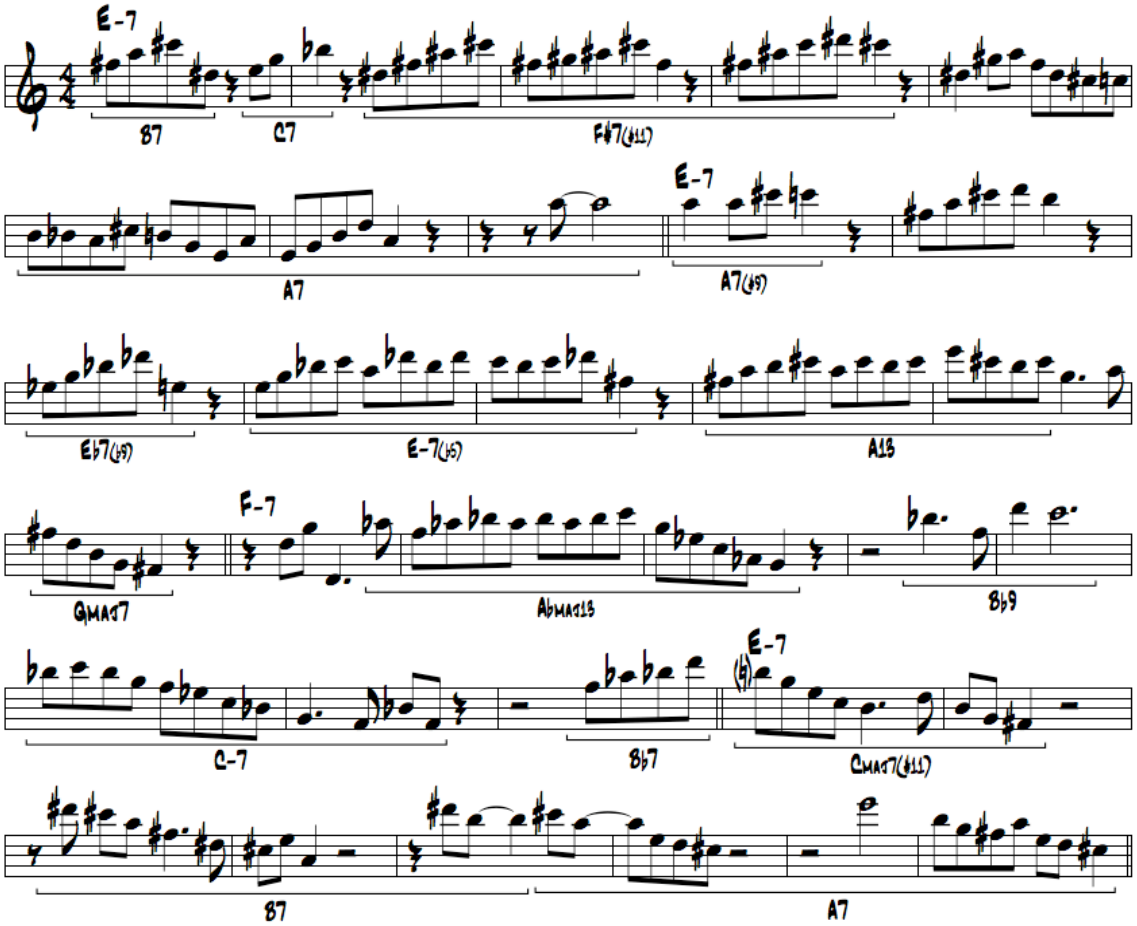

Fig. 24: Coltrane, "Impressions" 7th chorus

Same root/Different quality – Modal Mixture

This can best be described as simply changing the quality of the chord you are playing, but keeping the root. In the above diagram we can see this displayed as well as the modal superimpositions when looking at measures 11-13:

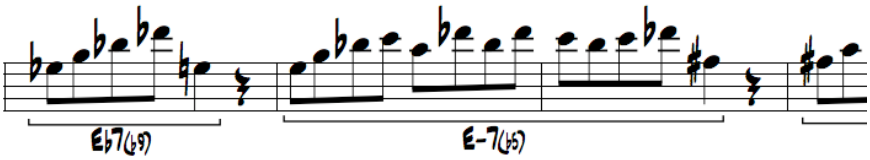

Fig. 25: Coltrane, "Impressions" 7th chorus excerpt

While the current chord at this point is E-7, Coltrane is choosing to alter the quality of the "-7" by changing it to b7(b9) and -7(b5) while still keeping the center of "E." This may

also be done the opposite way by changing the root but keeping the same quality, which happens in Figure 24 in measures 22 and 23. While this line may be interpreted a number of ways, it is entirely possible that Coltrane was thinking C-7 based on the melodic shape.

Fingering Tendencies

Many of the harmonic devices used by both Coltrane and Liebman are thought of in a very conscious manner and worked out; we know this through the publication of *A Chromatic Approach to Jazz Harmony and Melody* for Liebman and of the references to Coltrane's Giant Steps in Nicolas Slonimsky's Thesaurus of Scales and Melodic Patterns. However, there are some instances where the habit of finger memory takes control.

Fingering tendencies are common with any instrument when the player ends up playing a favorable phrase enough times to the point where it becomes type of "last resort" or in some cases the logical first choice when pressed for time at fast tempos. This is noticeable in both Liebman and Coltrane's playing, typically in faster situations. Regardless the harmony occurring at the time, both play the same sequence of notes descending from around A to F on the saxophone. This fragment of connected chromatic notes rarely happens in other registers. If it does, the frequency is much lower. Due to the positions of certain notes on the saxophone's fingerboard, the notes used in the following examples fall in the most comfortable mid-range of the instrument. The finger sequence required to execute these phrases is very comfortable and uses keys that are very close to the hand's natural position.

Here are a few examples from Coltrane's playing taken from various recordings of different time periods:

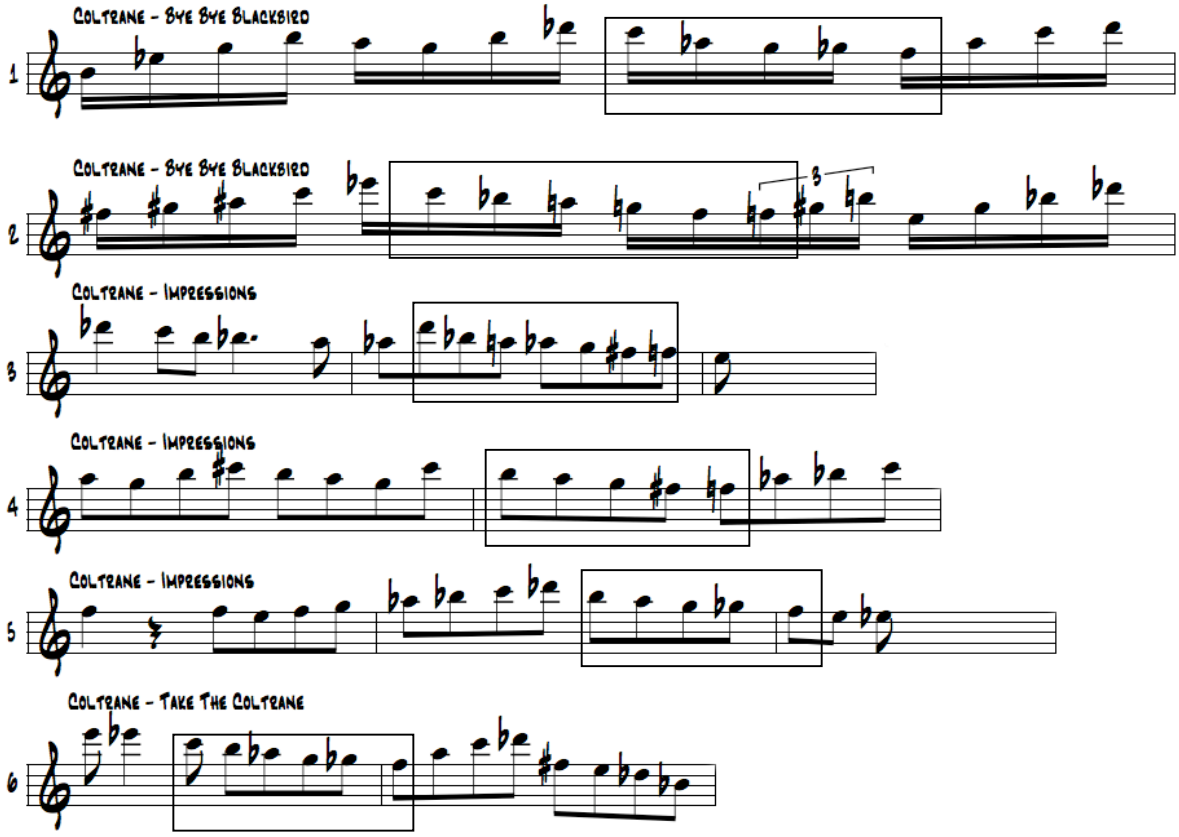

Fig. 26: Coltrane, fingering tendencies

Notice the incredible similarity between Coltrane's fingering tendencies and Liebman's by examining these few examples from various time periods of Liebman's playing. Clearly one way to develop such common fingering habits in such a variety of situations would be by religiously practicing the solos and language of a particular player that usually played the same things in the same areas of the saxophone. The examples of Liebman from the Donald Byrd composition "Fancy Free" are from the *Live At The Lighthouse* recording in 1972, literally during the time period when Liebman and Steve

Grossman were incredibly absorbed in the language of John Coltrane. This is clearly reflected because examples of this fingering habit occur many times per tune:

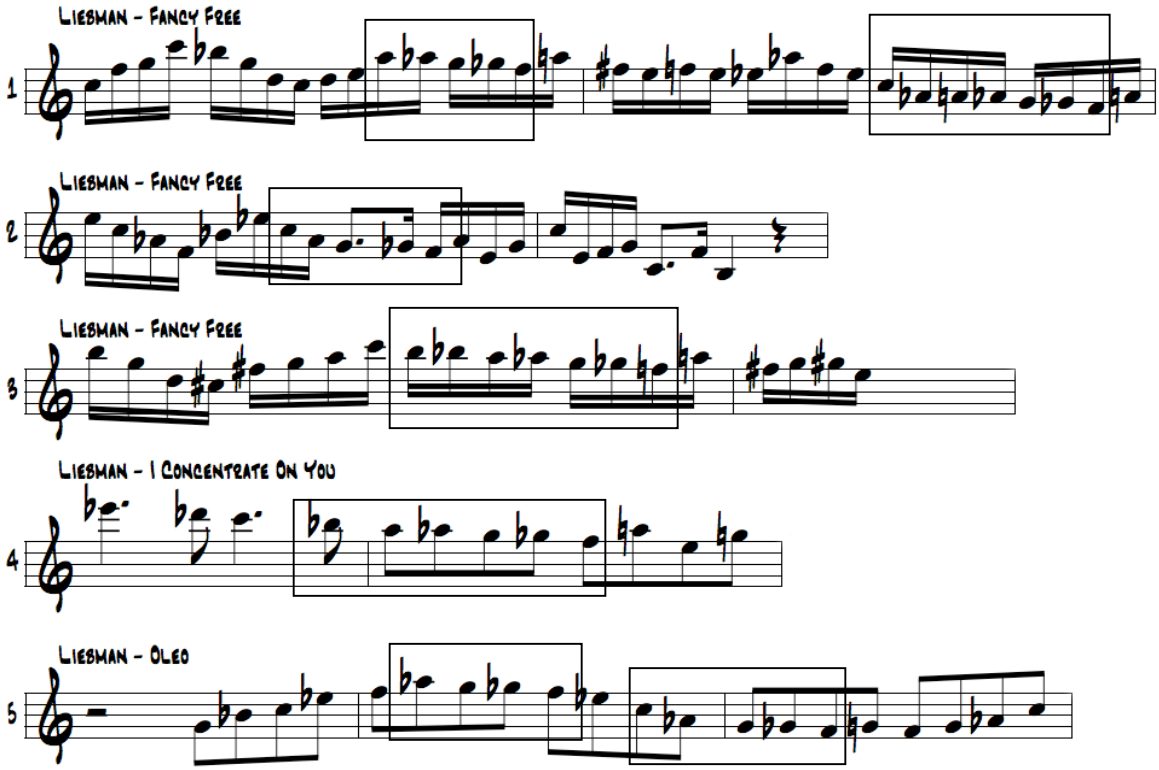

Fig. 27: Liebman, fingering tendencies

In Jamey Aebersold's *Scale Syllabus* (1982) Liebman plays various examples using only notes from a particular scale corresponding to the chord that is played. On some occasions, he does not hold entirely true to the scale and says in the introductory notes that "I hardly used any chromatic passing tones, except in the fast versions I would occasionally use my G# between the notes G and A." (p. ii) This further proves that these examples in particular are fingering habits for Liebman based upon intensive study of Coltrane's lines.

Rhythm

One of Liebman's most refined, unique, and extensive improvisational techniques is his rhythmic approach. Unlike many improvising saxophonists, Liebman's rhythmic vocabulary does not consist mostly of eighth notes. Traditionally in jazz improvisation, long strings of eighth notes are used to convey a strong sense of both harmony and tempo. Liebman however, uses rhythm as a form of tension and release much like he describes in his various harmonic techniques. As mentioned earlier, Liebman attributes much of his rhythmic approach to drummer Bob Moses, a drummer who was his first real jazz partner and who he developed the "Free Life Communication" with. (Fisher, 1996, p 13)

Heavily influenced by free jazz, Moses played over the bar lines and across the top of the form. (Liebman, 1996, p 70) Playing with a drummer like Moses caused Liebman to naturally fit into this way of stretching and squeezing phrases that carries over to when he is playing with a drummer with a more direct and stated pulse. When his lines are combined with a more straight-ahead drummer, a very interesting elastic and fluid effect is achieved and has become a result that few saxophonists use as well as Liebman.

Contributing to Liebman's rhythmic approach was Miles Davis, his employer in the mid to late 1970's. Instead of showing Liebman a way to play notes in a rhythmic fashion, Miles showed him it was possible to use silence just as effectively (if not more) than when playing notes. Liebman has noted Miles' playing on "Gingerbread Boy" as being a particularly inspirational recording. (Vashlishan, 2008) Of course, Miles' playing became even more sparse and rhythmically oriented in the mid-late 1970s when Liebman held a spot in his band. This constant exposure undoubtedly influenced him permanently.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

This project was greatly important as a thorough examination of the aspects of Liebman's playing that have particularly influenced me. My relationship with Liebman has grown for over ten years now, and throughout those years I have become very comfortable with and awestruck by certain techniques that he uses (not to mention his unbelievable technical ability on the saxophone). As stated in the introduction, my main course of action was originally to focus only upon his chromatic approach to improvisation, but quickly became engrossed in his stylistic traits, most of which I can hear in my playing from time to time.

The link to Coltrane almost exclusively came after the I began researching Liebman, and through personal discussions with him where we both decided what was most important to cover. Upon looking through and listening to the Coltrane recordings that are included here, it was surprising how easy it was to find references to nearly all of his techniques that he describes in his various publications. While other saxophonists of Coltrane's time may have used similar harmonic techniques, the most accentuated stylistic concepts that Liebman uses regularly are nearly all reflected in Coltrane's playing.

Analysis of Liebman's style resulted in finding the major expressive devices such as overtones, portamento, vocalization, themes and repetition and rhythm. The link between Coltrane and Liebman became apparent when studying similarities in their use of harmonics/overtones. Each used these very effectively to articulate notes and add

additional tone color to their improvised lines. Noticeable in almost all Coltrane solos, portamento was a great link between the two players. While this technique is evident in many saxophonists' playing, Liebman's reference to Coltrane is particularly obvious when listening to their recordings. Liebman even references Coltrane's use of portamento in his lecture at the Jamey Aebersold Jazz Camp (1995).

The techniques of vocalization and repetition, clearly both Coltrane influences, are abundant in several Liebman solos as well as countless Coltrane solos. The most important reference to these techniques occurred in Coltrane's "Impressions" solo from the 1960s recording *Live at the Village Vanguard* that was mentioned throughout the paper.

Harmonic analysis revealed many interesting conclusions. I decided to mostly refer to the same Village Vanguard solo of Coltrane's to draw my main points together. Using the harmonic devices set forth in *How To Approach Standards Chromatically* (Liebman, 2006) and *A Chromatic Approach To Jazz Harmony and Melody* (Liebman, 1991) I had a solid base of how Liebman explains his harmonic playing. Coltrane's Village Vanguard solo reflected these techniques in many different instances. "Upper Structures" in particular is interesting because most of Coltrane's solo is developed using the upper extensions of the minor 7^{th} chord. For tri-tone and Coltrane substitutions I found it very useful to examine Coltrane's solo on "Blues To You" from the classic recording *Coltrane Plays The Blues* that Liebman also referred to as one of his most influential Coltrane solos. (Vashlishan, 2008) "Side Slipping" is apparent in many cases as well, for Coltrane is known for this and inspires many players to experiment with

playing "out," which is essentially the result of both "Side Slipping" as well as "Foreign Progressions."

Also in *How To Approach Standards Chromatically* (2006) Liebman lists many examples of how he superimposes his own chord progressions over a modal composition like "Impressions." I was very surprised to find instances in Coltrane's "Impressions" solo utilizing nearly all the superimpositions to which Liebman refers.

The harmonic technique that was most interesting to me after years of absorbing Liebman's language and style was "fingering tendencies," which I even notice in my own playing. After playing and transcribing extensive Liebman solos, I have noticed the same fingering tendencies described in this paper appear in my playing. This can possibly be attributed to the fact that there are many instances where Liebman uses the phrases shown here, much like Liebman played Coltrane's phrases where these tendencies are also abundant.

While my main point of this project is not to illustrate Liebman as a "clone" of Coltrane, I can see many ways that he exhibits superior learning skills from his youth and an incredible ability to use the traits and stylistic characteristics of a major jazz icon to develop his own unique style in the same way as other great saxophonists like Michael Brecker, Steve Grossman, Bob Berg among others.

Suggestions for Continued Research

While the information represented here depicts a clear framework describing David Liebman's approach to chord changes and certain modal/free settings, it is far from a complete examination of Liebman's entire approach as a musician. The techniques presented here were selected based upon my personal experiences and interests about

Liebman, as well as many important tools that I have gained as a musician from listening to and studying him. Many other projects can be generated from the extensive musical background that Liebman possesses (which I chose to omit to enable me to concentrate on more specific techniques). These include: the influence of later Coltrane and free jazz on both his compositional style as well as his improvisational style, his compositional style based on his extensive interest in the music of Bartok, Charles Ives, Debussy, Stockhausen, Ravel, Stravinsky along with many others, and the influence of pop music on his playing based on his interest of Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder, Elvis Presley, Joni Mitchell, and The Beatles. (Liebman, 1996, p 206)

Perhaps the most extravagant and interesting technique to me among these additional topics is Liebman's rhythmic approach. As described briefly in this paper, his approach to rhythm is one that differs from many other saxophonists in that he has developed a very elastic sense of time and rhythm. Although extremely hard to transcribe at times, possible analysis could include comparisons between Liebman and other saxophonists or musicians on other instruments, examination of his interpretations of melodies, and his use of space.

The knowledge I have gained from studying Liebman both harmonically and stylistically is incredibly valuable. Through this analysis I have gone deeper into the aspects of his playing that have attracted me the most over the past ten years. The more I learn about him as a musician, saxophonist, and person I can easily anticipate many more years of priceless enlightenment to come.

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David Liebman

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The Opal Hearted Aboriginal, 1979 ENJA #3065

Tribute to John Coltrane, 1987 EPIC

Besame Mucho, 1993 Red Records #123260

Miles Away, 1994 Owl/Universal Music Jazz France #9824584

Return of the Tenor: Standards, 1996 Double-Time Records #109

John Coltrane

Live at The Village Vanguard, 1961 Impulse! #232

Coltrane Plays The Blues, 1962 Atlantic Records, 2004 Rhino #8122737532

Live European Tour 1962, 2001 Artistry/MPS #701

Duke Ellington and John Coltrane, Impulse! #166, Universal #9077