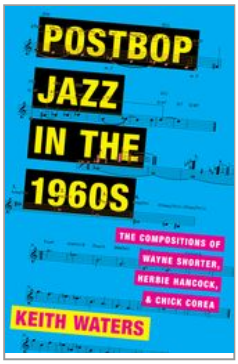

Postbop Jazz in the 1960s: The Compositions of Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock, and Chick Corea
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Herbie Hancock

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Abstract and Keywords

Hancock's postbop composition provided some of the signature sounds of the 1960s. "King Cobra" (*My Point of View*) relies on both major third and minor third axis progressions, often using a slash-chord vocabulary; several devices at the end of the form enhance its tonal and formal ambiguity. "Dolphin Dance" (*Maiden Voyage*) maintains an even heightened sense of tonal and formal ambiguity. It begins with major third axis progressions embellished through harmonic substitutions and elaborations; despite local harmonic cadences and goals, the composition suppresses a single-key orientation. "Jessica" (*Fat Albert Rotunda*) relies on a perfect fifth axis progression in its skeletal melody, and its horn scoring reveals significant details of Hancock's harmonic vocabulary and harmonic substitution techniques.

Keywords: Herbie Hancock, "King Cobra", "Dolphin Dance", "Jessica", jazz harmony, jazz melody, axis progressions, polychords, slash chords

Hancock's compositions provided some of the signature sounds of the 1960s, especially his funky jazz hit "Watermelon Man" (from Hancock's *Takin' Off*, covered by Mongo Santamaria and others) and his jazz standard "Maiden Voyage" (*Maiden Voyage*). He composed virtually all the compositions on his seven Blue Note recordings, as well as on a 1969 Warner Brothers release.[1] His first two recordings, *Takin' Off* (1962) and *My Point of View* (1963), were remarkable hard bop recordings. During his time in Miles Davis's second quintet (1963–1968), his compositional language and treatment of harmony and harmonic color expanded. *Empyrean Isles* (1964, for quartet) and *Maiden Voyage* (1965, for quintet) combined disparate influences such as Bill Evans, John

Coltrane, and (arranger) Gil Evans. These compositional aesthetics remained in his final two recordings for Blue Note, *Speak Like a Child* (1968, for sextet) and *The Prisoner* (1969, for nonet), both of which offset the improvisations with sculpted arrangements for larger instrumental groupings.[2] By 1969, Hancock signed with Warner Bros. Much of *Fat Albert Rotunda*, written for a television special (*Hey, Hey, It's Fat Albert*), relied on funky/soul jazz, presaging his move to jazz-rock **(p.56)** fusion in the 1970s. Nevertheless, two of its compositions maintained a postbop orientation, "Jessica" and "Tell Me a Bedtime Story."[3]

Hancock's postbop compositions maintain a decided openness that arises from different sources. Harmonic rhythm at times plays a role: individual chords may span four bars, sometimes in sequences of suspended fourth chords ("One Finger Snap," from *Empyrean Isles*; and "Maiden Voyage"). Pedal point harmonies arrange chords of shifting loyalty above stable bass pitches ("Little One" and "Dolphin Dance," both from *Maiden Voyage*). Aeolian progressions and harmonies derived from subsets of the ascending melodic minor collection (both discussed below) provide dense, colorful, and richly complex sonorities. Some of the compositions are single-section, without the repeating sections of song forms. The harmonic progressions offer different strategies in either fulfilling or avoiding expectations, sometimes in combination. For example, suspended fourth chords used as tonic or dominant harmonies allow harmonies to progress tonally but provide a degree of ambiguity, since the suspended fourth bleaches out the more active and goal-directed chordal thirds. Bass motions descend conventionally by half step or fifth, but in sequences of suspended fourth or other harmonies ("One Finger Snap" and "Speak Like a Child").[4] Evident melodic cadences are at times undermined by substitute harmonic resolutions. At the same time, the motivic structures of the compositions are compelling and lyrical. All of these factors contribute to the tantalizing combination of inevitability and ambiguity that characterize Hancock's compositions of the decade.

Hancock studied music composition while an undergraduate at Grinnell College. He acknowledged his fascination for "chord color in music," and described how Clare Fischer's arrangements for the vocal group the Hi-Los and Robert Farnon's orchestrations of popular songs had an early influence on his harmonic thinking.[5] He offered in an interview a brief glimpse into his compositional craft, stating "Compositionally, from a structural point of view, 'Watermelon Man' and 'Maiden Voyage' are probably **(p.57)** my two strongest pieces. I'm talking strictly about craft—the balance, the relationships that are working throughout the piece. They're almost mathematical."[6]

Hancock also described his working methods as often proceeding first from harmony, before turning to melody:

> One way I used to write, which was a suggestion from Donald Byrd when I first came on the scene in New York, was to start with some chords or a bass line. My harmonic senses are more readily available than anything I think. It's easier for me to find a series of chords that sparks my interest than it is to find a melody that will do the same. For me it's never just the melody—it's the harmonic environment that it's in. But once I get started, working from the harmony, the ball may bounce between the melody leading the chords or the chords leading the melody.[7]

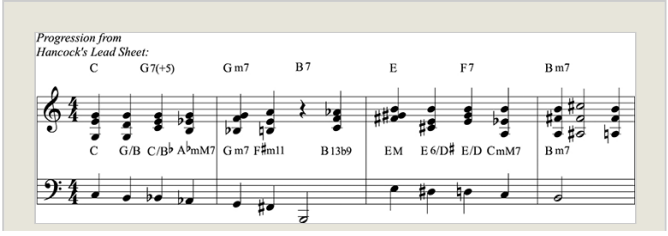
In this chapter I examine three Hancock compositions: "King Cobra" (*My Point of View*, 1963), "Dolphin Dance" (*Maiden Voyage*, 1965), and "Jessica" (*Fat Albert Rotunda*, 1969). Like those of Shorter, Corea, and others, Hancock's compositions, particularly those after 1963, transformed and challenged the traditions of hard bop, and offered postbop solutions for harmonic progression, harmonic vocabulary, form, and melodic and motivic structure.

Analysis 1: "King Cobra"

If it is useful to distinguish between Hancock's 1962–1963 hard bop compositions—which largely relied on tonal jazz procedures—and his later postbop ones, in some cases shared harmonic and compositional details blur the distinctions. For example, "Empty Pockets" (*Takin' Off*) and "King Cobra" (*My Point of View*) use tonic suspended fourth chords; "Alone and I" (*Takin' Off*) begins with a series of shifting harmonies over a bass pedal point. Yet in some of these earlier instances these ideas are put to more conventional use: "Empty Pockets" is a 12-bar blues, and "Alone and I" uses its extended pedal point as an introductory dominant, one that resolves to a tonic harmony when the song's melody begins.

(p.58) Another—perhaps less obvious—connection between the earlier 1962–1963 recordings and the later ones involves the use of M3 axes. Hancock explores that axis in two compositions from *My Point of View*, before returning to it again in "Dolphin Dance." As shown in Example 3.1, "The Pleasure Is Mine" begins with a 2-bar phrase that moves from C to E major. Here the composition moves along only two stages of the axis and does not continue to A♭, but the C-E stages connect directly and evidently in both the harmonic and melodic dimensions. The example includes the trumpet, tenor saxophone, and trombone parts, Hancock's chord symbols from his lead sheet, and I have provided chord symbols that reflect the horn and bass parts for mm. 1–4.[8]

"King Cobra" represents even a more committed progressive design, one intentionally designed to avoid harmonic clichés. "The chords in most jazz tunes flow in a certain

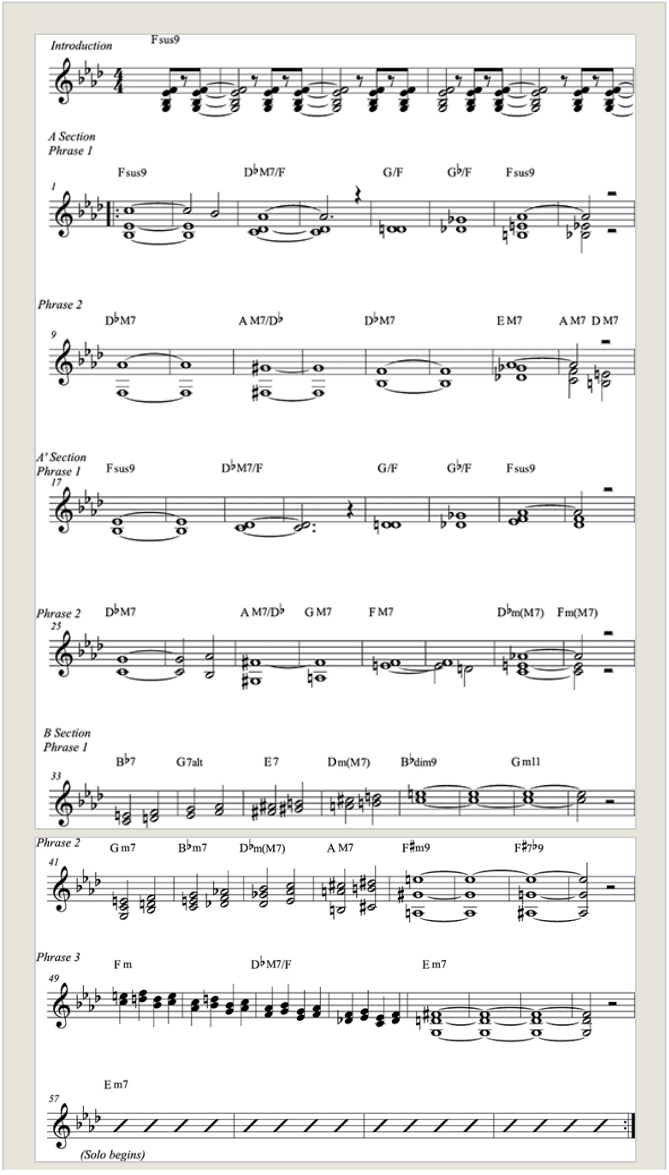


way,” Hancock acknowledged in the liner notes. “I wanted to expand the flow so that it would go in directions beyond the usual.”[9] Its A section uses a M3 axis within broader pedal point regions. Further, that axis participates in a larger compositional design, one that yields to a m3 axis later in the composition.[10] The M3 organization is clearest at the beginnings of the first two phrases in mm. 1–16. Example 3.2 contains an explanatory diagram. Example 3.3 indicates the larger dimensions of the M3 axis in the A and A′ sections.

Example 3.1. M3 Axis Progression (C-E) in“The Pleasure is Mine,” mm. 1–4 (voicings played by trumpet, tenor saxophone, trumpet)

(p.59)

(p.60)



Example 3.2. Explanatory Diagram with Chords and Accompaniment to “King Cobra” (Melody Omitted)

Example 3.3. M3 Axis Organization in the A Sections of “King Cobra”

A Section, Phrase 1			
Harmony	Fsus9	D♭M7/F	
m.	1	3	
A Section, Phrase 2			
Harmony	D♭M7(♯11)	AM7/D♭	D♭M7
m.	9	11	13

The opening progression (Fsus9-D♭M7/F) corresponds to an abstracted axis bass progression, but not an axis harmonic progression, since the harmonies are not the same quality. The opening harmony is a suspended fourth chord, while the second harmony is D♭M7/F (mm. 1–4). By themselves, these two harmonies loosely form a tonal progression (i-♭VIM7).[11] This avoids the more obvious harmonic axis shifts heard in “The Pleasure Is Mine” (or Coltrane’s “Giant Steps”): their color shifts rely on similar structure harmonies at a distance of four sharps or flats. Mm. 1–3 forms an Aeolian progression, since the second harmony (a first inversion M7 chord) may be heard as a subset of the F Aeolian collection.[12] As a point of comparison, Example 3.4 shows Hancock’s progression in relation to two hypothetical stages. The first provides a direct M3 harmonic axis progression of M7 chords. The second alters the first and third harmony to Fsus9. The third is Hancock’s progression. It introduces the pedal points that form the first inversion M7 chords.

Example 3.4. Comparison of Direct M3 Axis Progressions with Hancock’s “King Cobra”

Direct M3 axis	FM7	D♭M7	FM7	D♭M7	AM7	D♭M7
1st and 3rd chord altered	Fsus9	D♭M7	Fsus9	D♭M7	AM7	D♭M7
Hancock’s progression	Fsus9	D♭M7/F	Fsus9	D♭M7(♯11)	AM7/D♭	D♭M7
m.	1	3	7	9	11	13

(p.61) The example shows that the continuation into Phrase 2 (at mm. 9–16) marks a more evident commitment to the harmonic axis, as the harmonies move DbM7(♯11)-AM7/D♭-D♭M7. (In Hancock's 1964 lead sheet for trumpet, he omits the pedal point for the second chord in that progression, indicating merely D♭M7-AM7-D♭M7.)[13] Again this forms an Aeolian progression, with the AM7/D♭ a subset of the D♭ (or C♯) Aeolian collection.

The use of F and D♭ pedal points (as shown in Example 3.4) in Hancock's progression moves the bass through two steps of the axis (F and D♭), while the upper structure harmonies move through all three (F-D♭-A).Thus the characterization of the overall progression as based on a M3 axis is a broad one, given the reliance on pedal points, as well as the initial progression (Fsus9-D♭M7/F), which does not preserve the same quality harmonies.

Example 3.5 shows how mm. 17–32 (the A′ section) provide a varied repetition of mm. 1–16. Harmonically the first two phrases (mm. 1–8 and 17–24) are nearly identical. Yet the progression of second phrase of A′ (mm. 25–32) differs from mm. 9–16. The axis movement is most explicit at mm. 25, 27, and 29, as all harmonies are heard as root position (or first inversion) M7 harmonies along the D♭-A-F axis. The intermediate harmony of GM7 (m. 28), heard in a weak measure relative to its surrounding harmonies, fills in and passes between the upper structure chords AM7 (over D♭ bass, m. 27) and FM7(♯11, mm. 29–30).

Example 3.5. Elaboration of Axis Progression in Phrases 1 and 2 of A′ Section, mm. 17–32

A′ Section, Phrase 1						
Harmony	Fsus9	D♭M7/F				
m.	17	19				
A′ Section, Phrase 2						
Harmony	D♭M7(♯11)	AM7/D♭	GM7	FM7(♯11)	D♭m(M7)	Fm(M7)
m.	25	27	28	29	31	32

At the end of the A′ section (mm. 31–32) the final two harmonies return to D♭ and F, but now those axis bass pitches use different upper structure **(p.62)** harmonies, D♭min(M7) to Fmin(M7). The section therefore closes with the same M3 axis, but with the harmonic climate altered. These two harmonies provide a cadence to the A′ section. The lead sheet shows that the horn voicings in mm. 31–32 create an upper structure pedal point above the shifting bass. That is, the two chords preserve the same augmented triad above the changing bass pitch, as shown in Example 3.6.

Example 3.6. Cadential Progression at mm. 31–32 Share Similar Upper Structure

Harmony	D♭m(M7)	Fm(M7)
Upper structure triad	C, E, A♭	C, E, A♭
Bass	D♭	F
m.	31	32

Overall, M3 axis progressions provide a frame for the A and A′ sections. But “King Cobra” offers compelling and broader alternatives to more systematic uses of that axis. Further, intervening progressions elaborate and expand that frame through the use of different axes. Such designs appear at the ends of phrases, and provide alternative cadences. For example, mm. 5–6 (and 21–22) return to the tonic Fsus9 chord through GM/F and G♭M/F. Thus the upper structures move along a m2 axis.[14] Even less tied to conventional practice is the mm. 15–16 progression that closes the first A section. Here the harmonies progress through a P4 axis of common structure harmonies of EM7 AM7 DM7(♯11), with each including as a common tone the G♯/A♭ heard in the melody that ends the phrase.[15]

The B Section: m3 Axis and conclusion. In contrast to the A and A′ sections, the B section moves along a different axis. It appears most clearly at the two phrases at mm. 33–48, which express a m3 axis in the melody and bass. On the recorded performance, the move away from the rhythmic ostinato accompaniment and the use of bowed bass and cymbals further set into relief these two phrases. Example 3.7 provides the melodic and harmonic progression there, indicated as Phrase 1 and Phrase 2. In Phrase 1 (mm. 33–40), the melody moves through the octatonic (diminished) scale, filling **(p.63)** out the m3 axis motion (that m3 axis motion appears on downbeats of each measure).

Example 3.7. B section, m3 Axis in Melody and Bass

B Section Phrase 1	m3 axis in melody						
Melody	E (F)	G (A♭)	B♭ (B)	C♯ (D)	E		
Harmony	B♭7	G7alt	E7	Dm(M7)	B♭dim9		Gm13
	m3 axis in bass			break in bass axis	return to bass axis		
m.	33	34	35	36	37		39
B Section Phrase 2	m3 axis in melody		Same m3 axis, new octatonic collection				
Melody	E (F)	G (A♭)	B♭ (C)	C♯ (D♯)	E		
Harmony	Gm7	B♭m7	D♭m(M7)	AM7	F♯m9	F♯7(♭9, ♯11)	
	m3 axis in bass			new m3 axis in bass			
m.	41	42	43	44	45	47	

Yet the descending bass motion at mm. 33–40 does not move exclusively through the m3 axis. It begins systematically by cycling downward through the m3 axis via dominant harmonies (B♭7, G7alt, E7), inverting the ascent in the melody. At m. 36 the bass motion abandons the axis, but regains it at mm. 37–40 with the motion from B♭ to G. The departure at m. 36 avoids a more predictable D♭7 harmony, although the replacement Dm(M7) harmony may be heard as sharing a similar upper structure (the upper structures are virtually identical in the case of Dm13(M7) and D♭7♯9/b13). The use of Dm(M7) evokes the D♭7 axis harmony while avoiding the more-predictable move in the bass. The result forms an upper-structure progression.[16]

Hancock's 1964 lead sheet indicates the harmonies at mm. 37 and 39 as slash chords, C/Gm and C/B♭m.[17] This creates a type of upper structure pedal point: the upper triad holds while the harmony beneath shifts. I hear the m. 39 harmony as Gm13 (more or less consistent with Hancock's slash chord notation), but the m. 37 harmony as B♭°7 with added ninth, C (differing from Hancock's CM/B♭m notation since it excludes the F of the lower structure B♭m). Nevertheless, the two harmonies still preserve C major within their upper structures, retaining C major as an upper structure pedal point.

(p.64) Example 3.7 further shows that second phrase of the B section also relies on the m3 axis in the melody and bass. As in mm. 33–40, the melodic pathway at mm. 41–48 creates an octave ascent that begins and ends on E, with m3 axis pitches occurring on the downbeat. However, note the path changes at mm. 43: there the melodic line migrates to another octatonic (diminished) collection, one that preserves the same axis pitches on downbeats, as shown by the figure. Meanwhile, the bass motion also migrates from one axis to another. Mm. 41–43 progress G-B♭-D♭, preserving minor mode harmonies moving in parallel motion to the melody. At mm. 44–48 the axis shifts in the bass to A-F♯, now in contrary motion to the melody.[18]

The harmony at mm. 47–48 (F♯7♭9♯11) resolves to Fm(M7) at m. 49–51, providing the composition's first and only functional dominant harmony (as V′): that is, it is the only dominant harmony whose bass resolves directly down by fifth or half step. The infrequency of functional dominant harmonies illuminates an evident postbop strategy. Yet the harmonic endpoints of Phrases 1 and 2 of the B section (see Example 3.7) animate a broader turnaround strategy (Gm13 at mm. 39–40 and F♯7(♭9, ♯11) at mm. 47–48). If camouflaged through the chord-to-chord motion, the goals of both phrases suggest a functional progression in F, with Gm13 standing in for ii7, and F♯7(♭9, ♯11) substituting for V.[19]

Heard in terms of their final chords, then, the B section Phrases 1 and 2 participate in the resolution to Fm(M7) at mm. 49–51, with the mm. 47–48 F♯7(♭9, ♯11) effecting the resolution directly. The Fm(M7) recalls the same harmony heard at the end of the A′ section (m. 32). Its return here contributes to

the F centricity of the composition, with F appearing in two guises: Fsus9 at the beginnings of Phrases 1 and 2 in the A and A′ sections, and Fm(M7) at mm. 32 and 49–51.

As shown in Example 3.8, Phrase 3 includes a 4-bar segment (mm. 49–52) notable for its melodic design, which reverses the E to E octave ascent heard twice before in the B Section’s Phrases 1 and 2. It forms a melodic descent that initially elaborates the F melodic minor collection. Further, the Fm(M7) harmony yields to one more Aeolian progression at m. 51, as the harmony moves to D♭M7/F. **(p.65)**

Example 3.8. B Section, Melody and Harmony to Phrase 3

Melody	E (F) D (E) C (D) B♭ (C)	A♭ (B♭) G (A♭) F (G) E♭ F	F♯	Solos begin	Top of Form
Harmony	Fm(M7)	D♭M7/F	Em9	Em9	Fsus9
m.	49	51	53	57–60	1

Yet the tonicized return to F at m. 49 participates in the composition's final twist, one that challenges its sense of tonal arrival. Rather than returning to the top of the form at m. 53 and providing tonal continuity, there is a downshift that undermines the F tonal center. The half-step motion down to Em9 at mm. 53–60 provides the flash point for the piece's harmonic and formal ambiguity. The downward motion to Emin9—and its expanded harmonic rhythm of 8 bars—sound as a new point of resolution, aided by the melodic overlap as the melody continues into the downbeat of m. 53 (there the chromatic motion F-F♯ in the melody sounds in contrary motion to the F-E in the bass). In addition, the solos begin midway (at m. 57) through this 8-bar E minor section. By consistently beginning at m. 57, the solos overlap with the beginning of the form, creating a sense of formal circularity. And the end of the form avoids any turnaround progression. There is merely a tonal upshift back to F at m. 1. It works against the gravitational pull heard at the downward E arrival at m. 53. The upward half-step resolution back into m. 1 creates a dizzying and curious tonal effect, one that seems to defy gravity.[20]

"King Cobra" provides ambitious alternative compositional designs. At a broad level, a M3 axis frames the A and A′ sections, while the m3 axis frames Phrases 1 and 2 of the B section. Additionally, ends of phrases in the A and A′ sections use m2 and P5 axes to create alternative turnarounds. Finally, the end of the form closes with a half-step resolution to E minor that compromises the F centricity and launches the solos, enhancing the harmonic and formal ambiguity. Throughout, there is a determined avoidance of functional dominants, with only one dominant harmony, which resolves by half step (at mm. 47–48). Certainly there are clear hard bop references, such as the blues scale melodic opening heard in Phrase 1 of **(p.66)** the A and A′ sections. Yet the formal ambiguity, pedal point constructions, Aeolian progressions, and use of axes in place of more-conventional tonal progressions offered Hancock multiple postbop techniques, ones that his later compositions continued to explore.

Analysis 2: "Dolphin Dance"

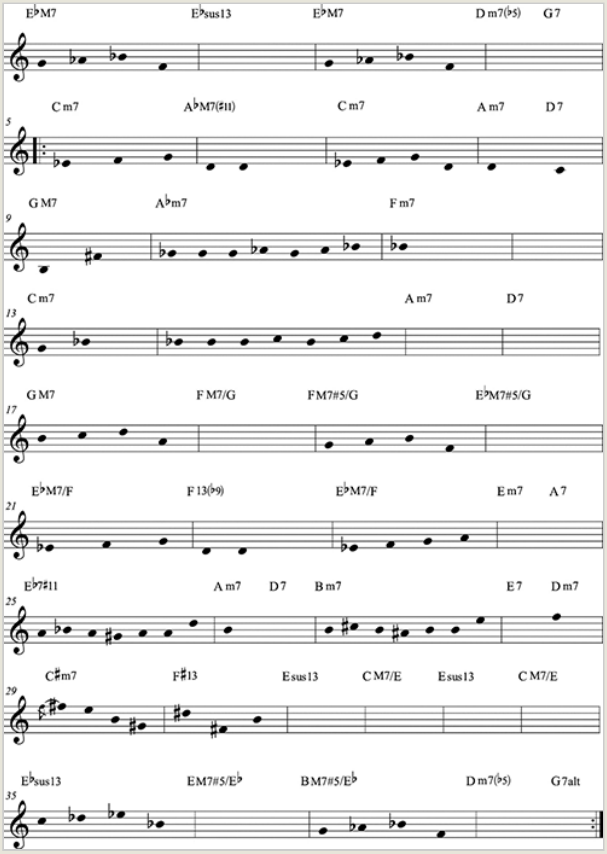
The compositional ideas of "King Cobra"—the M3 axis, shifting pedal point harmonies, and Aeolian progressions—form an important point of departure for "Dolphin Dance." And, more generally, ideas of formal circularity, those that worked to erase the formal boundaries at the top of the form, became worked out even more thoroughly in "Dolphin Dance." It begins as a 38-bar composition, yet once initially stated the final four bars (mm. 35–38) return not to mm. 1–4, but link each time to m. 5. Therefore the initial head statement lasts 38 bars, but the improvised sections last 34 bars. In a sense mm. 35–38 provide an alternative to mm. 1–4, but they offer different harmonies and severely challenge the sense of formal return. The result is a circular flow, enhanced by the tonal flow that suspends the effect of a single underlying tonic. If "King Cobra" provides enough cues to support its F centricity, "Dolphin Dance" in contrast consistently migrates without alighting long enough anywhere to

support the same type of tonal centricity. The result is a composition that is richly ambiguous, both formally and tonally. But the evidently lyrical and motivic melody, and the use of locally functional harmonic progressions along with other harmonic designs, all contribute handily to an unruffled ambience that masks the composition's deeper ambiguities.

An explanatory diagram for "Dolphin Dance" appears as Example 3.9. It is a single-section composition with three broad subsections: mm. 1–17 (with active harmonic motion and two main melodic motives); mm. 17–24 (a descending series of expanded bass pedal points beneath a return to the opening motive), and mm. 25–34 (an ascending sequence to a qualified cadence). The additional four measures at mm. 35–38 replace mm. 1–4. They restate versions of the opening motive, and provide a 3-bar pedal point along with (at m. 38) a harmonic link to m. 5. Therefore mm. 35–38 are formally ambiguous: they can be heard both ending the head and as beginning a new chorus. (The original recorded performance ends with a vamp on the mm. 30–34 progression.)

(p.67)

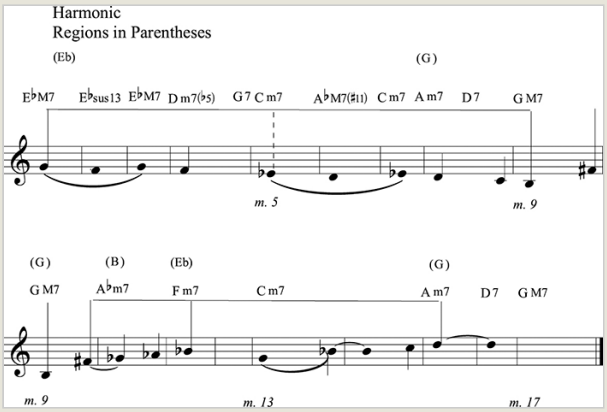
Mm. 1–17, Melody. The opening motive—a four-note melody—is one of Hancock's most compact, lyrical, and memorable. It returns throughout the composition, preserving generally the original shape and rhythm while altering the pitches (and frequently the intervals). Its use as a melodic reference point possibly explains some of the allure of replacing song forms with single-section compositions: they allow an ongoing sense of motivic **(p.68)** continuity and development and avoid the evident repetition of the 8-bar sections of AABA and ABAC forms.



Example 3.9. Explanatory Diagram for "Dolphin Dance"

During mm. 1–17 we hear two different lyrical motives. The opening 2-bar motive and its three varied restatements (mm. 1–9) link to a different 4-bar

motive at mm. 9–16. That motive is heard twice, with its repetition keeping the rhythm and shape of the original. As Example 3.10 shows, the skeletal melody for both segments elaborates largely stepwise motion. The first 8-bar segment moves downward, and the second 8-bar segment progresses upward. Beneath the lyricism of mm. 1–9 the skeletal melody creates the descending stepwise melodic progression of G-F-E♭-D-C-B. And the motives at mm. 9–16 elaborate an ascending stepwise progression, beginning with F♯/G♭, and through G♯/A♭, B♭ (elaborated by G), C, to D.



Example 3.10. Stepwise Skeletal Melody and Key Regions in “Dolphin Dance,” mm. 1–17

Both stepwise motions share the same boundary interval of a m6, although the intervallic construction of each differs. (Mm. 9–16 form a whole tone ascent.) Additionally, they share another feature. Each stepwise m6th clearly marks its M3rd midpoint. At a 4-bar level the opening pitches of mm. 1, 5, and 9 descend through G-E♭-B. During mm. 9–16 the primary pitches link F♯/G♭ (mm. 9–10), B♭ (mm. 11–14), and D (mm. 15–16). We can appreciate the melodic balance between the two 8-bar segments: the first progresses downward a m6th and the second progresses upward a m6th, and both emphasize the M3 midpoint. As a result of that midpoint, the **(p.69)** melody expresses two different M3 axes (G-E♭-B, mm. 1–9, F♯-B♭-D, mm. 9–16), axes that are filled out through stepwise motion.

Mm. 1–17, Harmony. If the melodic structure of these 8-bar segments expresses these axes, in what ways does the harmonic progression participate? At mm. 1–9, the melody outlines three steps of the axis (G, E♭, and B), but the larger harmonic outline only progresses through two—mm. 1–9 begin with E♭ major (corresponding to the G of the melody) and end with G major (corresponding with B of the melody). At mm. 9–17, the melody moves to a different axis, with three giant steps (F♯, B♭, and D). There the harmony merely begins and returns to G major, without intervening B major or E♭ major harmonies. Throughout the opening 17 bars, then, the harmonies only inconsistently support the M3 melodic axes through appearances of E♭ and G major at significant arrival points of mm. 1, 9, and 17.

But it is possible to hear the overall harmonic progressions at mm. 1–17 as cooperating in an E♭ major-G major-B major harmonic axis. To do this requires a view of substitute and elaborative harmonies, ones that replace a more evident

and obvious M3 harmonic cycle. Such a view leads to harmonic *regions* rather than a direct successions of M3 progressions. For “Dolphin Dance,” regions extend to 1) *substitutions*: relative minor harmonies that stand in for major harmonies, and 2) *elaborations*: harmonies that embellish major harmonies and their relative minor substitutions.

My argument here is that harmonic regions of a M3 axis (the major keys of E♭, G, B, E♭, and G) in mm. 1–17 guide the underlying harmonic organization. In some instances the major keys are replaced entirely by their relative minor *substitutions*. In some instances the primary harmonies (and their minor key substitutes) use *elaborations*. Further, the harmonic regions do not circulate in rhythmically regular fashion (that is, they do not necessarily appear every two or four bars). As a result—and in contrast to regularly circulating and direct M3 axis progressions—the M3 harmonic axis of mm. 1–17 of “Dolphin Dance” is subterranean. While the melodic dimension more explicitly reflects two M3 axes, the harmonic progressions explore a single M3 axis in a less explicit way. The following discussion will suggest how, beginning with mm. 1–9.

Example 3.11 indicates the individual harmonies, the axis motion of the melody, and the two harmonic regions heard in mm. 1–9. The opening seven measures use both substitutions and elaborations work to express its E♭ major region. In addition to E♭M7 at mm. 1 and 3, the relative substitute, C minor, appears tonicized in mm. 5, and reappears at m. 7. Further, both E♭ major and its substitute C minor use elaborations. In each case, the **(p.70)** elaborating harmonies (indicated by the chords in parentheses) are flanked by the primary harmonies. At m. 2, E♭sus13 (or D♭M7/E♭) elaborates E♭M7. Similarly, in m. 6, A♭M7(♯11) elaborates C minor. The role for both those elaborating harmonies is the same: in each case, they provide a harmony for a melodic neighboring tone—E♭sus13 supports the melodic pitch F (a neighboring tone to the G in mm. 1 and 3), and A♭M7(♯11) supports the melodic pitch D (a neighboring tone to the E♭ of mm. 5 and 7).

This E♭ major region of mm. 1–7 then progresses to a new region of G major through a ii-V cadence (m. 8).[21]

Example 3.11. Harmony, Melody, and M3-related Harmonic Regions in mm. 1–9

Chord	E♭M7 (E♭sus13) E♭M7 D-7♭5 G7	Cmin (AbM7♯11) Cmin	Am7 D7 GM7
Skeletal Melody	G	E♭	B
Harmonic Region	E♭ major (mm. 1—4)	E♭ major (mm. 5—7)	G major (m. 8—9)

Example 3.12 indicates the harmonic regions of mm. 9–17. Those measures both begin and end in G major. Through substitutions and elaborations, the intervening progressions support harmonic regions of B major and E♭ major. Here those substitute minor harmonies replace and fully stand in for those major keys. The progress of those harmonic regions corresponds to the progress of the F♯-B♭-D melodic axis pitches. At mm. 9–10 the melodic move to F♯ serves as a common tone link between G major and to A♭ minor. That A♭ minor harmony substitutes for B major, whose region is served only by that harmony.

As the melody proceeds upwards to B♭ the harmony shifts to F-9 and C-9. Within is a slight echo of mm. 7–8, with A♭ minor to F minor (mm. 10–12) a transposition of the Cm7 Am7 progression at mm. 7–8. Yet the outcome is different: a direct transposition of mm. 7–9 would have yielded A♭m7-Fm7-B♭7-E♭M7. Rather than take that pathway, the A♭m7-Fm7 progression at mm. 10–12 instead moves to C minor at mm. 13–♭14, the relative minor substitute of E♭. Thus the E♭ major region uses the C minor harmony as well as the preceding F minor harmony (mm. 11–12), which acts as a prefix elaboration of C minor, much as the A♭M7(♯11) harmony at m. 6 elaborated C minor at m. 7. Finally, as the melodic activity steps from B♭ to D (mm. 13–16), the harmonic activity moves from the E♭ region to another G major region, which is tonicized conventionally. Thus the intervening harmonic **(p.71)** regions of B major and E♭ major are served only through relative minor substitutions and their elaborations.

Example 3.12. Harmony, Melody, and M3-related Harmonic Regions in mm. 9–17

Chord	Gmaj	A♭ minor	(F minor)	C minor	A-7 D7	GM7
Melody	F♯		B♭		D	
Region	Gmajor	B major	E♭ major		G major	
m.	9	10	11	13	15—16	17

In summary, mm. 1–17 use two broader melodic axes: G-E♭-B (mm. 1–9) and F♯-B♭-D (mm. 9–17), with the first descending and the second ascending. The first occurs regularly, every four bars, while the second occurs less regularly, appearing 2 + 4 + 2 bars. At the same time, those melodic axis pitches appear with a single (E♭-G-B-E♭-G) harmonic axis. That harmonic axis is significantly less evident than the melodic axes: it progresses through those key regions with the aid of substitutions and elaborations. The pacing of harmonic regions is less systematic than that of the melodic axis.

These measures make clear how Hancock very broadly interprets M3-related melodic and harmonic motions by avoiding overly predictable (or rhythmically systematic) axis progressions. Thus although the composition explores some symmetries of the M3 axes, the pacing of those events is neither symmetrical nor regular. Yet the main effect of the harmonic regions is clear. The upward direction of the axis harmonic regions, each moving four steps sharpward in tonal space, helps motivate the composition's ever-brightening effect as it progresses through these measures.

Mm. 17–25. Mm. 17–25 return to the opening melodic motive, even including a rhythmic and pitch rhyme between m. 5 and m. 21. Yet in comparison to mm. 1–9, the stepwise downward progress of the skeletal melody moves more quickly, progressing B-A-G-F-E♭-D each measure between mm. 17–22. Further, mm. 17–25 relies on longer bass pedal points beneath shifting harmonies. These pedal points descend stepwise downward from G (m. 17) to F (m. 21) en route to E♭ (m. 25, interrupted by an intervening motion at m. 24).

The melody at mm. 17–18 transposes that of mm. 1–2. Similarly, the mm. 17–18 harmonies (GM7 and Gsus13) transpose the mm. 1–2 harmonies. But the exact transposition of melody and harmony ceases afterwards. The G pedal continues and the following harmonies create movement in the inner voice. The suspended fourth of m. 18 moves upwards by half-step to form a ♯11 above the bass at m. 19. These two harmonies (FM7/G and **(p.72)** FM7♯5/G) provide a variation on a more traditionally functional progression. Example 3.13 indicates how Hancock's upper structure harmonies might relate to a more functional progression, as an expanded ii chord in a C major context.

Example 3.13. Comparison of Hancock’s mm. 18–19 Progression with More Conventional Progression

Hancock’s progression mm. 18–19	FM7/G (Gsus13)	FM7♯5/G		
More conventional progression	Dm9 (ii)	Dm9(♯7)	Dm9	G7 (V)

Rather than realizing this tonal context, however, “Dolphin Dance” instead maintains the G pedal point, establishing a sound world of a sus chord (m. 18) along with its half-step displacement (m. 19). The upper structure of the following harmony (E♭M7♯5/G, m. 20) transposes downward by whole-step the upper structure of the FM7♯5/G of the previous measure. Yet since the bass does not move similarly down by step, the resultant chord with bass provides a dense and colorful harmony.[22]

If unusual, the m. 20 E♭M7♯5/G nevertheless participates in the sound world of sus chords and half-step displacements. That m. 20 harmony links to the following chord, E♭M7/F. But rather than the progression E♭M7♯5/F to E♭M7/F, the inner voice half-step motion of ♯5-5 (B to B♭) takes place while the bass shifts from G to F. This provides another layer of displacement, now in the bass, which delays the arrival of F, as shown by the comparison between Hancock’s progression and a hypothetical one more in line with mm. 18–19 (Example 3.14).

Example 3.14. Comparison of Hancock’s mm. 20–21 Progression with Hypothetical Progression

Hancock’s progression mm. 20–21	E♭M7♯5/G	Fsus13 (= E♭M7/F)
Hypothetical progression	E♭M7♯5/F	Fsus13 (= E♭M7/F)

The Fsus13 harmony at mm. 21 and 23 is itself embellished with F13(♭9) at m. 22. That harmonization participates with the melody, with the embellishing melodic D as a neighboring pitch to the E♭ that appears at **(p.73)** mm. 21 and 23. In comparison with more conventional tonal progressions, there is a reversal of roles here. In that conventional tonal context, Fsus9 embellishes (by delaying) an F7 harmony, which often results in a resolution of that F7 harmony to B♭. Here, however, it is the dominant harmony (F13♭9) that embellishes the Fsus9 harmony. Thus while some of the chord-to-chord activity maintains ties to tonal progressions, there is a shift in orientation. The result here makes the sus chord primary and the dominant harmony secondary and elaborating. And any tonal obligations of those progressions (such as a resolution to B♭ following Fsus9 and F13b9) remain deliberately unmet.

Mm. 25–38. The arrival on E♭ in the bass at m. 25 might suggest the opening path of the skeletal melody at mm. 1–5, since the entire section moves the bass from from G (mm. 17–20), through F (mm. 21–23) to that E♭. It might also suggest a M3 axis, but that view skews the overall tonal orientation of the section. It also ignores the Em7 A7 progression at m. 24, which participates in that orientation. As the following diagram shows, mm. 24–26 supports G major, using a secondary progression (E-7 A7), a tritone substitution harmony of the preceding A7 harmony (E♭7(♯11), the V′/V indicating the tritone substitution), and a direct ii-V progression (A-7 D7, m. 26). The E♭ in m. 25 does not form a

bass arrival point for G-F-E♭: instead it participates (as a secondary V′ chord) in a G major tonality.

And certainly a longer-range view of mm. 17–26 could suggest that the entire passage from mm. 17–26 elaborates G major. Following the opening GM7 sonority and expanded G pedal (mm. 17–20), the F pedal at mm. 21–24 elaborates ♭VII7 (as V′/vi in G). That F pedal point then yields to the harmonies at mm. 24–26 that further set up the promise of G major, as Example 3.15 shows.

Example 3.15. G Major Tonal Orientation of mm. 24–26

	E-7 A7	E♭7(♯11)	A-7 D7
G major	ii/V V/V	V′/V	ii-V
m.	24	25	26

Yet G major does not return as the form continues to unfold. Instead, a series of ascending ii-V motions progress upward by step, with the melody initially following upward by sequence. Following m. 26 (implying G), the harmony sequences up by step twice. The first sequence provides a standard cadential ploy by suggesting ii-V of ii (B-7 E7, mm. 27–28): jazz standard compositions typically return that progression back to ii-V en route to the **(p.74)** tonic harmony (Am7 D7 Bm7 E7 Am7 D7 G). An upward sequenced stepwise ii-V progression (mm. 29–30, C♯-7 F♯7, following the passing harmony of D-7) is less common in jazz standard compositions, but in those instances suggest ii-V of iii. In those compositions (as in Lee Morgan's "Ceora," mm. 13–15, which moves to iii or in Neil Hefti's "Shiny Stockings," mm. 13–15, which moves to III) that sequence delays the ultimate cadence to I.

But in contrast to those standard-tune examples, "Dolphin Dance" does not move downward and fulfill those tonal obligations by returning to G major. Instead the three ii-V sequences now settle on a cadence at the last of them. This cadence (mm. 29–31) illustrates a postbop aesthetic choice. In this case, an evident or conventional move in one dimension is paired with a less-conventional move in another. At mm. 29–30, the melody executes a familiar melodic cadence, one that implies B major (with the melodic D♯ at m. 30) capped by a conventional 5-1 melodic close. At the same time, the C♯m7 F♯7 progression also implies an arrival on B. However, the bass pitch works against the grain of that convention by resolving to E rather than an expected B.

If the bass does not cooperate by realizing those conventions, there is yet a sense in which the upper structure of the harmony more closely realizes them. The result is an upper structure progression. That is, the upper structure of Esus13 includes the pitches of Bm9, fulfilling the expected pathway (although consistent with B minor rather than B major). At the same time, the bass thwarts the expectation of B. The upper structure progression provides a degree of

familiarity to the unusual cadence, but operates at one level of remove from the more predictable B arrival in the bass. Thus melody and upper structure harmony operate in a more conventional tonal manner, but the bass pitch does not.

That cadence launches a 4-bar segment at mm. 31–34, and the result creates a metrical reorientation. Mm. 25–30 retrospectively form a 6-bar phrase, the only portion of the composition that departs from 4- and 8-bar sections. Mm. 31–34 then provide another 4-bar pedal point plateau that alternates Esus13 and CM7/E. This Aeolian progression (due to the use of the first inversion M7 harmony) sounds as an ending gesture here. If a familiar progression heard in other Hancock compositions (compare with mm. 1–4 of "King Cobra" discussed above),[23] it appears in those other compositions more typically as an opening, rather than closing, gesture.

The final four bars (mm. 35–38) precede the opening solo and subsequently replace mm. 1–4 once the opening head is stated. Prior to the **(p.75)** functional ii-V cadence at mm. 38 (Dm7♭5 G7, connecting to C minor at m. 5), the bass downshifts from E to an E♭ pedal point as the melody provides two variations on the opening 4-note motive. At mm. 34–35 this creates motivates contrary motion between bass (E-E♭) and melody (B-C). (This is similar to the contrary motion heard in "King Cobra" at mm. 52–53: there the bass also progresses down and the melody up by half step: see the discussion earlier in the chapter.)

Although these four bars serve as a substitute for the opening four bars, the harmonies here are decidedly less conventional. For example, at m. 2 E♭sus13 was an elaborative harmony (for E♭M7 at mm. 1 and 3), but at m. 35 the E♭sus13 chord is the opening harmony, one that provides the point of departure for the following harmonies of EM7♯5/E♭ and Bmaj7♯5/E♭ (mm. 36 and 37).[24] These pedal point harmonies are subsets of the melodic minor collection: EM7♯5/E♭ is a subset of a mode of D♭ melodic minor, Bmaj♯7/E♭ of A♭ melodic minor. Their appearance in "Dolphin Dance" shows Hancock's expansion of harmonic resources by mid-decade that now includes these additional pedal point harmonies related to the ascending minor mode collection. While Hancock's vocabulary had already expressed more-conventional uses of modes of melodic minor harmonies—particularly with altered dominant chords[25]—the melodic minor-related sonorities of "Dolphin Dance" evoke that familiar collectional sound, but one detached from a more functional tonal context.

The harmonic progress at mm. 30–38 (with E pedal point, E♭ pedal point, then Dm7♭5 G7, which connects to the m. 5 C minor) coincides with the harmonic progressions of some other Hancock compositions that similarly alternate downward bass motion by half step and by fifth. In these situations the bass

proceeds as it would in more-conventional tonal contexts, but often with less conventional upper structure harmonies.[26]

In sum, mm. 1–17 explore M3 axes through both melody and harmony. This is more evident and systematic in the melodic dimension. It is less so in the harmonic dimension, given the use of harmonic regions that involve substitute and elaborating harmonies. Mm. 17–24 explore pedal point harmonies over G and F as the opening motive returns. Mm. 25–30 set up a qualified cadence (to Esus13) through a sequence of ascending ii-V **(p.76)** motions, and mm. 30–38 stage two pedal points (progressing E to E♭), the second using harmonies related to modes of the ascending melodic minor collection. Following the ii-V motion at m. 38, the form then bypasses the original mm. 1–4 and connects to m. 5.

The memorable and lyrical compact melodic motives of “Dolphin Dance” serve longer, ongoing, and largely stepwise melodic lines during much of the composition. Each are subsets of scalar collections: the skeletal pitches of mm. 1–9 (these are the downbeat pitches, and include the passing C of m. 8) progress G-F-E♭-D-C-B (subset of C melodic minor), those of mm. 9–16 progress F♯/G♭-A♭-B♭-C-D (a subset of the whole-tone collection), and mm. 17–24 consists of the line B-A-G-F-E♭-D, which then returns upwards to A via the same collection (a subset of C melodic minor). The ascending ii-V sequences of mm. 25–30 do not participate in a scalar collection, but the melody of the final four bars (mm. 34–38) rely on the pitches of an A♭ diatonic collection.

More significantly, these longer melodic contours shape the composition’s overall balance. Melodically, the first two 8-bar segments are balanced: downward motion of a m6th (mm. 1–9) precedes upward motion of a m6th (m. 9–16). Less exact, but still complementary, is the largely downward melodic motion of mm. 17–22 followed by the upward sequential motion of mm. 25–30.[27] That upward sequential motion places the melodic high point of the composition at F♯ at m. 29.

If “King Cobra” challenged established principles of jazz composition through formal circularity and harmonic ambiguity, “Dolphin Dance” extended those challenges. Since the four bars at mm. 35–38 replace the opening bars, the opening mm. 1–4 harmonies never return, creating circularity by eroding the sense of return to the top of the form.[28] The 6-bar phrase at mm. 25–30 also offsets the clear 4- and 8-bar sections throughout the rest of the composition, enhancing that circularity. **(p.77)** Further, despite a number of conventional harmonic progressions, there is no overall sense of a global tonic to the composition. Instead, there are merely successions of harmonic regions and pedal point plateaus, creating stations that are tonicized to greater or lesser degrees. The opening E♭ major harmony never returns. (During the out head on the recorded performance, the horns play the mm. 1–4 melody against the mm. 35–38 chords.) The recorded performance ends with a vamp over the two E

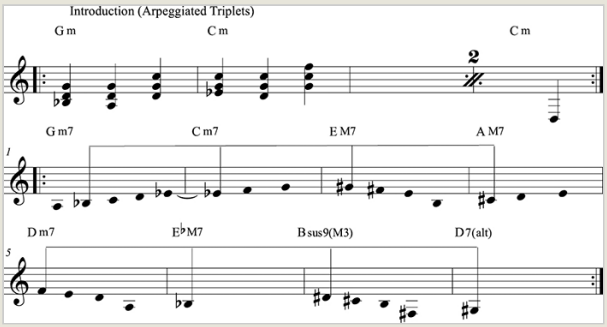
pedal point harmonies at mm. 31–34. Thus the composition avoids a single and unequivocal tonic.

In addition to its formal and harmonic ambiguity, “Dolphin Dance” is significant for other reasons. It is one of several Hancock compositions to explore a M3 axis in subtle ways. Further, during the pedal points in the bass the shifting harmonies are formed through sus chords, Aeolian progressions, and non-standard harmonies derived from melodic minor collections. In addition, it combines those pedal point harmonies with more standard tonal progressions. Its appearance in fake books has virtually guaranteed its ongoing use by jazz players. In many ways “Dolphin Dance” is one of Hancock’s most compelling compositions of the 1960s, due to its slowly unfolding lyrical melody supported by a richly diverse palette of harmonic colors.

Analysis 3: “Jessica”

“Jessica” appeared on Hancock’s 1969 recording *Fat Albert Rotunda*.[29] If less formally ambitious than “King Cobra” or “Dolphin Dance”—it consists of a repeated 8-bar form—“Jessica” still maintains a strongly lyrical and harmonically adventurous profile. It also is systematically grounded in an intervallic axis, here the perfect fourth. Some of Hancock’s earlier compositions worked out that P4 axis in the harmonic dimension, either with direct P4 motion (the A sections of “Theme From Blow Up,” recorded with Bobby Hutcherson, progress Emaj-A7alt-Dsus), or more indirectly (“Little One” is based primarily on pedal point harmonies over the bass motion of F-E♭-B♭).[30] Instead, “Jessica” explores the P4 axis in the melodic dimension. The axis does not appear as foregrounded on the note-to-note level as in compositions such as Wayne Shorter’s “E.S.P.,” “Witch Hunt,” **(p.78)** or “Speak No Evil.” But clearly that intervallic axis was of deep interest to postbop composers,[31] and Hancock subtly embeds it into the composition in sophisticated fashion.

An explanatory diagram, including the Introduction, appears as Example 3.16. Even the repeated two-measure introduction is given over to the P4 axis. The first measure of the introduction (over G minor) begins with an arpeggiated triad on the first beat, which then yields to an arpeggiated P4 chord (A-D-G) on the second beat. This harmony is then transposed by a P4 on the final beat of the measure (to D-G-C). This first measure of the introduction is then *itself* transposed by a P4 during the second introductory measure (as is the harmony, which moves from G minor to C minor). The introduction therefore pursues the P4 relation on several levels: the first measure contains a P4 chord and its P4 transposition, the following measure then transposes the previous measure by P4.



Example 3.16. Explanatory Diagram for "Jessica" Showing P4 Axis Melody

The melodic structure of the entire composition further explores this axis. As the beaming in Example 3.16 suggests, the melody embellishes an ongoing ascending P4 (or descending P5) motion, with axis pitches occurring once per measure. The axis is expressed in two lines (mm. 1–4 and 5–8). The first line, occurring between mm. 1–4, connects B♭, E♭, G♯, and C♯. (All of these pitches begin on the downbeat with the exception **(p.79)** of the first pitch B♭, which is delayed by A.) At the same time, the chord qualities shift. Since the first two harmonies are minor and the second are major, the progression avoids a mechanical sequence of common structure harmonies. Example 3.17 includes the axis melodic pitches, two hypothetical progressions (the first consisting of a consistent sequence of minor harmonies, the second a consistent sequence of major harmonies), and Hancock's progression. Hancock's progression moves from the first hypothetical line to the other (as shown by the harmonies in bold in the example). As a result, each pair of chords (mm. 1–2 and 3–4) involves a P4 axis motion (G to C, mm. 1–2; E to A, mm. 3–4). Thus the melody proceeds consistently through the axis while the progression avoids a systematic harmonization. The contrapuntal foundation between melody and bass is consistent, however, with the bass and melodic axis pitch preserving parallel tenths during the entire 4-bar passage.

Example 3.17. Comparison of Hancock’s Progression with Two Hypothetical P4 Axis Progressions

Melodic Axis	B♭	E♭	A♭/G♯	D♭/C♯
Hypothetical Progression 1	**Gm7**	**Cm7**	Fm7	B♭m7
Hypothetical Progression 2	G♭M7	C♭M7	**EM7**	**AM7**
Hancock’s Progression	Gm7	Cm7	EM7	AM7
m.	1	2	3	4

Mm. 5–8 provide two variations on the melodic motive heard mm. 3–4. Further, these measures again express a P4 axis of F, B♭, E♭, and A♭, as shown in Example 3.18. Its beginning pitch (F) does not continue where the mm. 1–4 axis left off (C♯), but its following pitches (B♭-E♭-G♯) echo the first three pitches of the mm. 1–4 axis. The bass itself continues its own P4 axis that began in m. 3 and continues until m.5, linking E, A, and D.

Example 3.18. Melodic Axis and Harmonic Progression of mm. 5–8

Melodic Axis	F	B♭	D♯	G♯
Hancock’s Progression	Dm7	E♭M7	Bsus13 (with 3rd)	D7(alt)
m.	5	6	7	8

The harmonic progression at mm. 5–8 moves more freely than at mm. 1–4. While mm. 5–6 offer the same chord qualities (m7 and M7) **(p.80)** heard in mm. 1–4, the m. 7 harmony involves a sus chord with a major third in the melody.[32] The final D7alt offers a functional dominant (and another P4 axis motion in the bass) back to the G minor harmony at the top of the form. Despite the flexible harmonic progression, the bass/melody counterpoint alternates 3rds (m3 between D/F at m. 5, M3 between B/D♯ m. 7) and 5ths (P5 between E♭/B♭ m. 6, dim5 between D/G♯ m. 8).

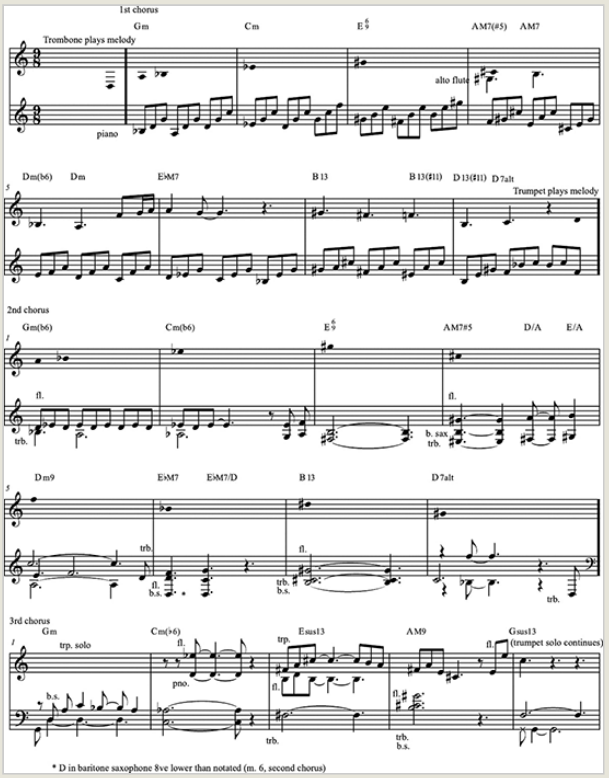
The contrapuntal organization has an effect on the varied motives heard at mm. 3–4, 5–6, and 7–8, each of which begins with a M3 or m3 between bass and melody. Those motives that begin with bass/melody M3 use a whole step between their first two pitches (m. 3 G♯-F♯-E-B; m. 7, D♯-C♯-B-F♯), and the motive that begins with bass/melody m3 uses a half step between its first two pitches (m. 5, F-E-D-C). In each case, this allows the motive to accord with the harmonic environment.

For “Jessica,” the skeletal melody provides a P4 axis in two linear strands, at mm. 1–4 and 5–8. That melodic axis is worked largely through metric downbeats. The harmonies progress more freely. Perhaps another way to hear the dimensions of bass and melody is through a role reversal: if P4 axis motion (i.e., descending fifth motion) enacts characteristic tonal moves in the bass, here those moves are transplanted from the bass to the melodic dimension. Regardless, the composition, like others of the decade, explores the P4 axis, with that axis woven subtly into the fabric of the composition.

Yet considering “Jessica” simply as an 8-bar composition does little to address the details of the 4-horn arranging heard on the *Fat Albert Rotunda* recording. Example 3.19 is an explanatory diagram that includes the harmonizations of the opening two head choruses (which also return at the end), as well as the following four measures that set up the trumpet solo. The scoring, for trumpet, alto flute, trombone, and baritone saxophone, is harmonically rich, and contains a number of subtle harmonic movements, characteristic harmonies, and reharmonization techniques not evident from the explanatory diagram of Example 3.16.

(p.81)

The trombone plays the melody during the first chorus, accompanied by the arpeggiating figure in the piano. The alto flute's countermelody at mm. 4–8 is stated initially below, then above the trombone. During the second chorus, the trumpet provides the melody, at first accompanied by flute and trombone, with the baritone saxophone added to the texture during mm. 4–8. The third chorus launches the trumpet solo. (The horn writing continues through a fourth and beginning of the fifth chorus, in dialogue with the piano solo. Those portions are not included in Example 3.19.)



Example 3.19. Explanatory Diagram with Chords and Accompaniment to "Jessica" (Melody Omitted)

(p.82) The explanatory diagram of Example 3.19 at times assigns more than one harmonic label to each measure to account for inner voice pathways. M. 4 of the first chorus notes the F-E motion (played by the piano) by AM7(♯5) to AM7. The same harmony in m. 4 of the second chorus likewise includes an E♯, which then moves upward to F♯. Measure 7 of the first chorus accounts for the F♯-E♯ pathway (in both the piano and flute) by the addition of ♯11 to the B13 label. Additionally, the character of the D7 harmony in the following measure (m. 8, first chorus) changes, from D13(♯11) to D7 altered by the addition of ♯9 (F) and ♭13 (B♭) in the piano.

One notable characteristic of the harmonic color arises from frequent use of ♭6 (particularly shifts between ♭6 and 5) on minor-chord harmonies. For example, in m. 5, first chorus, the alto flute line moves from B♭-A over the D minor harmony. At mm. 1–2 of the second chorus, the effect intensifies, as flute oscillates between D-E♭ over the G minor harmony. At the same time, the chromatic motion in the trombone alights on A♭ over the following C minor harmony. The A♭ is again strongly present in the C minor harmony in the following chorus (m. 2, third chorus), enhanced by the minor ninth D-E♭ played by piano and flute. Hancock's piano improvisation is often flecked by this ♭6 Aeolian color over the minor-chord harmonies.

The examples discussed above maintain bass pitch and overall chord quality in each chorus despite the shadings of harmonic color. Additionally, the diagram reflects particular tactics for reharmonization, by transforming either the bass or chord quality. At m. 6, second chorus, the bass moves from root (E♭) to the major seventh (D). In m. 3 of the third chorus, the chord quality shifts: rather than E6/9 (as heard in the earlier choruses), the horn voicings reflect Esus13. The shift to a dominant-type harmony (with suspended fourth) effects more-directed motion to the following A major harmony. Finally, m. 5, third chorus, the harmony is heard as Gsus13, replacing the D minor harmonies heard earlier in that measure. The replacement Gsus13 harmony is cognate to D minor, since it preserves an upper structure of Dm9.[33]

Overall, the recorded version is harmonically sumptuous. A comparison with the three-horn writing of his earlier “King Cobra” shows some similar traits, particularly the contrasts between open and closed voicings. However, the writing in “Jessica” offers freer independent lines, and significant voice-crossings among the four horns. Even if the large 60-bar framework of “King Cobra” is distilled to miniature size with the 8-bar one **(p.83)** of “Jessica,” the written choruses of “Jessica” are significantly and fluidly reworked, showcasing a remarkable palette of harmonic colors.

“King Cobra” marked for Hancock an important compositional advance, with designs that deliberately challenged more traditional ones. M3 and m3 axes broadly structure a composition with formal ambiguities toward the end of the form, provided by the E minor harmonic arrival (mm. 53–60) that undermines the overall centricity of F. In “Dolphin Dance” formal ambiguities are amplified, given that the progression at mm. 34–38 replaces the opening progression at mm. 1–4, and the composition unfolds without articulating a global sense of tonic. Both are extended single-section compositions. “Jessica,” an 8-bar single-section composition, uses a smaller compositional frame and uses a P4 axis to shape the melodic lines, with an arrangement that offers shifting perspectives on the harmonic progression.

The melodic language in these (and other Hancock) compositions is expansive. This is no doubt due to many features, not least of which involve longer melodic skeletal lines that lie beneath the compelling melodic motives. In mm. 1–17 of “Dolphin Dance,” two motives create skeletal stepwise melodic lines, ones that fill in the M3 axes; in “Jessica,” the P4 melodic axes provides a thread through the composition. Hancock’s harmonic language is equally expansive, arising through many sources: expanded pedal point harmonies (creating Aeolian and other progressions), use of sus chords, and progressions that at different times access, transform, or avoid the successions of tonal jazz. These offer just a few of Hancock’s significant contributions to postbop composition in the 1960s. **(p. 84)**

Notes:

(1.) His recording *Inventions and Dimensions* (1963) was largely improvised in the studio. Ron Carter composed “First Trip,” heard on *Speak Like a Child*.

(2.) Hancock acknowledged the influence of Gil Evans on *Speak Like a Child*, stating, “*Speak Like a Child* was directly from Gil Evans. . . . When I planned *Speak Like a Child* I tried to get a sound that approached Gil’s textures with the least number of instruments.” Quoted in Gil Goldstein, *Jazz Composer’s Companion* (Rottenburg, Germany: Advance Music, 1993), 115.

(3.) Hancock recorded several of his original compositions with the Miles Davis Quintet. With one exception (“Madness,” from *Nefertiti*, 1967), Hancock also recorded these same compositions as a leader. For details on the Davis Quintet versions of “Little One,” “Riot,” and “Madness,” see Keith Waters, *The Studio Recordings of the Miles Davis Quintet 1965–68* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

(4.) For more on those processes in the two compositions, see chapter 6.

(5.) Hancock’s comment on “chord color” taken from liner notes to *My Point of View*, reprinted in the liner notes to *Herbie Hancock: The Complete Blue Note Sessions* (B2BN 7243 4 95569 2 8), 10. His comments on Fischer and Farnon are from Len Lyons, *The Great Jazz Pianists: Speaking of Their Lives and Music* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1983), 272.

(6.) Lyons, *Great Jazz Pianists*, 275.

(7.) Gil Goldstein, *Jazz Composer’s Companion* (Rottenburg: Advance Music, 1993), 114.

(8.) Library of Congress Copyright Deposit Ep 190686, dated April 14, 1964.

(9.) Reprinted in the liner notes to *Herbie Hancock: The Complete Blue Note Sixties Sessions* (B2BN 7243 4 95569 2 8), 18.

(10.) I discuss “King Cobra” in Keith Waters, “Modes, Scales, Functional Harmony, and Nonfunctional Harmony in the Compositions of Herbie Hancock,” *Journal of Music Theory* 49, no. 2: 333–57.

(11.) In fact, it is possible to regard all of mm. 1–8 as an expanded tonal progression over the F pedal point, with G/F (m. 7) as V/V and G♭/F (m. 8) as ♭II (or V′, a substitute for V).

(12.) Hancock uses a similar Aeolian progression (Fsus to D♭M7♯11/F) as the opening progression to the improvisational chords of “Little One” (from *E.S.P* and *Maiden Voyage*); see Keith Waters, *The Studio Recordings of the Miles Davis Quintet, 1965–68* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 95–109. In both

“King Cobra” and “Little One” the first—more open sounding—sus chord moves to a denser second harmony. The opening harmonies to “Cantaloupe Island” (Fm7 to D♭9) are similar, but adhere more to hard bop practice—there is no extended pedal point, and the D♭9 acts as a conventional elaboration of the F minor tonic.

(13.) Library of Congress Copyright Deposit Eu 190686, April 14, 1964. Since Hancock’s lead sheet is for B♭ trumpet, I have transposed his chords up a step to concert key here.

(14.) This progression is similar to that heard mm. 5–6 of the jazz standard “On Green Dolphin Street.”

(15.) Notice that the AM7 corresponds to the chords heard during improvisation: the horn writing during the head features a chromatic passing fourth (C-F) that links D♭-G♭ to B-E there.

(16.) And from a chord/scale perspective, both Dm(M7) and D♭7alt may be said to rely on the same underlying scalar collection: an ascending D minor melodic scale.

(17.) Perhaps the more accurate term is “polychord,” since Hancock represents the lower structures (below the slash) as minor triads—B♭m and Gm in each case—and uses a triangle following C to represent the common upper structure C major triad. In contrast to the term “polychord,” “slash chord” typically refers to a chord over a single bass pitch, rather than over a triad.

(18.) To be clear, the axis motions described here are bass axis progressions rather than harmonic axis progressions, since the harmonies are not all the same quality.

(19.) The octatonic melody in both phrases also contributes, more abstractly, to a functional harmonic design. The octatonic melody of Phrase 1 (E-F-G-A♭-B♭-B-D♭-D-E) may be heard to imply G7 (V7/V), and the final pitches of Phrase 2 (B♭-C-C♯-D♯-E) to imply C7 (V7). Such a technique appears in some of Hancock’s improvisations. See Keith Waters, “Blurring the Barline: Metric Displacement in the Piano Solos of Herbie Hancock,” *Annual Review of Jazz Studies* 8 (1996): 19–37: it shows how mm. 9–12 of Hancock’s first F minor blues chorus in “The Eye of the Hurricane” relies on those two octatonic collections to imply V7/V and V.

(20.) In a broader sense, the bass/melody counterpoint throughout this section seems to play an important role as well. The contrary motion leading into m. 53 (bass F-E and melody F-F♯) reverses at the top of the form via Hancock’s comping: the Em9 to Fsus9 harmonic progression is supported by F♯-F motion in the upper voice of the piano.

(21.) The overall progression at mm. 1–9 has some structural similarities to “The Pleasure Is Mine” described above—the bass progression moves through vi en route to a cadence to the new key a major third above.

(22.) It is possible to hear both the FM7♯5/G and E♭M7/♯5/G as subsets of a melodic minor mode, with the first chord referring to D melodic minor, and the second chord to C melodic minor.

(23.) The improvisational harmonies for Hancock’s composition “Little One” use a similar opening progression by beginning with Fsus7 and D♭M7♯11/F.

(24.) Hancock also uses the same pair of harmonies in mm. 7–8 of “Little One.” See Waters, “Modes, Scales,” 348–50.

(25.) For example, one way to express that collection involves the right hand alternation of E♭ and D♭ triads above a G7altered chord stated in the left hand.

(26.) See Chapter 6 for discussion of this technique in Hancock’s “One Finger Snap” and “Speak Like a Child,” as well as in Wayne Shorter’s “Nerfertiti.

(27.) These ideas of balance return to the Hancock quotation presented earlier in the chapter: “Compositionally, from a structural point of view, ‘Watermelon Man’ and ‘Maiden Voyage’ are probably my two strongest pieces. I’m talking strictly about craft—the balance, the relationships that are working throughout the piece. They’re almost mathematical.” Quoted in Lyons (1983), 275.

(28.) The question of where the form “begins,” then, is ambiguous after the opening head statement. During the recorded performance, the saxophone and piano solos begin m. 35 (over the E♭ pedal point). But Carter’s accompaniment frequently continues the texture of the previous measures by breaking up the time at mm. 35–38, and moves to walking bass accompaniment at m. 5. Harmonically, too, the E♭ pedal point is part of a larger downward process begun by the E pedal (mm. 30–34) and continued through the cadence to C minor at m. 5—in that sense, m. 5 sounds as a clearer “top of the form” arrival point.

(29.) Hancock recorded “Jessica” again in 1977 in a live performance with the V.S.O.P. Quintet (Columbia 34976).

(30.) See Waters, *The Studio Recordings*, 96–97.

(31.) And earlier, of course: Carisi’s “Israel” uses it melodically in mm. 9–12.

(32.) This is a similar chord to the one heard in “Theme from Blow Up” described earlier, which included a Dsus13 chord with F♯ in the melody. The chord is voiced sometimes as simply B13: see the discussion below of the four-horn arrangement.

(33.) During the piano improvisation, bassist Buster Williams uses some of the same reharmonizations, keeping D in the bass over the E♭M7 harmony (at 2:06), and using G against the D minor harmony (at 2:45).