

The improvisational technique of Wes Montgomery on Smokin' at the Half Note

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## Abstract

Wes Montgomery is one of the most influential guitarists that continues to inspire the generations of musicians that followed his career. Alongside guitarists like Charlie Christian and Django Reinhardt, Montgomery's innovations constituted him as one of the godfathers in the jazz guitar world. His improvisational solos on the critically acclaimed album, *Smokin' at the Half note*, shows Montgomery and The Wynton Kelly Trio at the pinnacle of their musical abilities.

This study provides a biography of Wes Montgomery and the history of *Smokin' at the Half Note*. Interviews from Montgomery, jazz critics, and his peers of the time show the peaks and valleys that Montgomery endured to become a jazz guitar icon. Furthermore, there is an analysis of his solos on the album that highlights the use of his three-tiered improvisational approach. The review contains Montgomery's rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic methods that encompass all three tiers in his improvisations. The ideas in his solos directly translate to the comprehension of the Hard bop styles that stemmed from swing bands and Bebop groups. Additionally, there are written examples that show his techniques on the guitar such as chord voicings, scales, and physical techniques. Included are Montgomery's fingerings and theoretical concepts that are utilized by all jazz musicians.

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this document to Wes Montgomery and all the jazz guitarists who followed in his footsteps.

## Preface

When I arrived at Kansas State University, I met Dr. Wayne Goins, who is a world-renowned guitarist, writer, and musician. He immediately began to teach me concepts and ideas about jazz music and the music industry I had never considered in the past. Goins introduced me to Montgomery's album *Smokin' at the Half Note*. I had heard of Montgomery before, but had never explored that particular album as much as his other recordings. When I first listened to *Smokin' at the Half Note*, I was shocked by the way Montgomery used the guitar, and I wanted to learn how he achieved the phrasing he possessed. He performed with a sense of confidence I have never felt before in my own playing.

I listened to the album constantly and learned everything I could possibly execute from Montgomery's performance. From listening, I learned that one of the things I lacked in my improvisational skills was the ability to apply the techniques Montgomery used into my own performance. After being exposed to Montgomery's approach, whenever I had the chance to play music in a live or rehearsal setting, I constantly inserted Montgomery licks, phrases, and techniques into my solos. In my own practice, I relentlessly tried to sound like Montgomery in an attempt to further develop my personal way of improvising.

Dr. Goins encouraged me to write my ideas down on paper, and in doing so I noticed that I began to insert the Montgomery licks I had learned without thinking about them. They had become a natural part of my improvisational language, and I became more motivated. The newfound inspiration made me think back to the days when I first started to play jazz music. I would ask different teachers, jazz musicians, and guitarists how they play so well. They simply said, "Listen to records." I would listen to and learn songs off the recordings from a plethora of jazz guitarists and musicians, but my abilities were not improving like I had hoped. Although I

had learned the licks, the phrasing, and the ideas from these musicians, I never sounded like them.

It was only until I began writing about the album that I realized that the process is much deeper than to just “listen.” One must have the ability to absorb the music so thoroughly that the process of employing the Montgomery technique comes naturally. Consistent practice of learning his licks and improvisational methods allows a soloist to apply them during a performance. This thought process improved my musicianship to an entirely new level from what I had previously thought I could achieve. My solos became more structured with low and climax points while administering a balance of consonance and dissonance. Therefore, I collected all my thoughts and ideas about Montgomery’s solos to create this thesis paper.

There are many ways to analyze and approach Montgomery’s improvisational work. Everybody can have their own ideas and create their analyses that are either inspired by mine or another book, document, or report. This is the thought process I created to learn about Montgomery and use the information to improve my own sound. I believe that all aspiring guitar players—regardless of whatever level they begin—can achieve a higher degree of jazz improvisation using the ideas and methods I have proposed in my report.

# Chapter 1 - Biography

## Wes Montgomery

John Leslie “Wes” Montgomery was born on March 6, 1923, in Indianapolis, Indiana. His parents, Thomas Montgomery and Eufala Blackman, surrounded Wes and his siblings in music from a young age. Montgomery states, “My folks weren’t musicians, but they were singers... they were church people. There has always been music in my family.” (Huart, 2021, 2:48). His parents separated in 1931 when he was 8 years old. Montgomery and his two older brothers moved to Columbus, Ohio with their father while his younger siblings remained in Indiana. As a child, Montgomery was not particularly interested in music until his older brother, Monk Montgomery, gifted him with a four-string tenor guitar. Wes immediately began to practice because his brother saved \$13 during The Great Depression to purchase the instrument. Monk, who became a jazz bassist, reported that Wes was, “...doing a good job on guitar by the time he was twelve or thirteen.” (Ingram, 1985, p.11). Montgomery recalls the tenor guitar as a nuisance. He said, “I used to play tenor guitar, but it wasn’t really playing. I’ve really gone into the business since I got the six-string, which was like starting over.” (Ingram, 1985, p.11).

Montgomery moved back to Indiana at the age of 17 and married Serene Miles in February 1943. During this time, he attended a local dance where he heard a record of guitarist Charlie Christian for the first time. The recording was a Benny Goodman song titled “Solo Flight.” Montgomery admired Christian’s sound and immediately bought a six-string guitar the next morning. He stated, “I don’t know whether it was his melodic lines, his sound, or his approach, but I haven’t heard anything like that before. He sounded so good and it sounded so easy.” (Huart, 2021, 4:20). Monk and Wes would practice together frequently, playing their instruments all night (Ingram, 1985). Without any formal musical training, Montgomery learned

to recognize musical notes and chords by their sound. He was dedicated, but claimed he didn't want to pursue music. He originally believed that he had a gift for welding (*Wes Montgomery Interview and Performance Live on "People in Jazz" (1968) 2023*). He stated, "I didn't want to be a musician, but there was all that guitar looking at me." (Ingram, 1985, p.12). By the time he was 20 years old, he was consistently playing at local night clubs in Indiana. He would perform Charlie Christian solos in venues such as The Club 440, The 19<sup>th</sup> Hole, 500 Club, and others before returning to his day job. Montgomery's talent was quickly recognized, and he joined local bands like Four Kings and a Jack and the All-American Brown Skin Models.

In 1948, Montgomery received his first notable gig. The vibraphonist Lionel Hampton was touring through Indiana and saw Montgomery performing at a night club. Impressed by Montgomery's skills, Hampton hired him to join his band. Montgomery toured with Hampton for two years and drove to every venue due to his fear of flying on airplanes. His bandmates were stunned by the stamina Montgomery had to drive across the country during the day and perform at night. He also got the opportunity to play with many jazz musicians like Charles Mingus, Milt Buckner, and Theodore "Fats" Navarro.

Montgomery's years with Lionel Hampton didn't lead to anything big and he decided to return to Indiana in 1950. He returned to his regular lifestyle by working at P.R. Mallory's cafeteria and performing in the local night clubs (Finch, 2023). He would perform with groups such as The Eddie Higgins Trio and The Rodger Jones Quartet. Montgomery also formed his own groups alongside his brothers Monk and Buddy. Together, the Montgomery brothers created the Montgomery Quartet and The Johnson-Montgomery Quintet with saxophonist Alonzo "Pookie" Johnson.

In 1957, Monk and Buddy Montgomery moved to the west coast with the hope for success. They would form a group called The Mastersounds while Wes remained in Indiana to support his family. Still, Wes occasionally recorded with his brothers, and they made an album called *The Montgomery Brothers and 5 Others*. The album featured Wes on guitar, Buddy on Vibraphone, Monk on bass, Joe Bradley on piano, Paul Parker on drums, Freddie Hubbard on trumpet, Alonzo “Pookie Johnson, and Waymon “Punchy” Atkinson on tenor saxophone. In 1958, Wes joined another recording session with his brothers called *Montgomeryland*. Other than those few occasions, Montgomery stayed in Indiana and worked with a jazz organ trio that featured organist Melvin Rhyne.

In September 1959, Montgomery would receive the opportunity that he had been seeking for years. Saxophonist Julian Edwin “Cannonball” Adderley, pianists George Shearing, and Lennie Tristano were on a tour and performed at the Indiana Theatre. Montgomery attended the concert because he was a fan of both Adderley and Shearing. Montgomery invited them to his show at The Missile Room later that night. Adderley and Shearing accepted his invitation and arrived at the venue. Adderley was amazed by Montgomery’s playing and stayed for the entire performance. He immediately called Riverside Records producer Orrin Keepnews and encouraged the producer to sign Montgomery to the label. Adderley’s enthusiasm for Montgomery convinced Keepnews to see if the saxophonist’s excitement was authentic. Orrin Keepnews had heard of Montgomery previously from a jazz review article by Gunther Schuller entitled “Indiana Renaissance.”

Superlatives come much too easily in writing about Wes Montgomery. Yet all the well-chosen superlatives in the world—even an accurate description of his playing, could tell us only *what* he plays and very little about its intrinsic quality. This has to be

heard. Knowing this, I nevertheless feel obligated to write about Wes, because even a second-hand, inadequate report about a man of his caliber is better than none, and in a way almost has to be written, however inadequately (Ingram, 1985, p.21).

Keepnews instantly realized that Adderley's admiration for Montgomery was not exaggerated and promptly offered him a record contract. Montgomery travelled to New York a few weeks later to record his first album with Riverside Records. Montgomery brought Melvin Rhyne and Paul Parker to make an album entitled *The Wes Montgomery Trio: A Dynamic New Sound*. The album was received very well by critics after its release in 1959.

Montgomery and Keepnews went on to record notable albums such as *The Incredible Jazz Guitar of Wes Montgomery* in 1960 and *Full House* in 1962. Montgomery would receive notoriety on a national level for his work and was recognized as one of the top jazz guitarists in the country. Montgomery was pleased with the recognition from his listeners, but was not satisfied with the lack of profit he was receiving from his albums. Orrin Keepnews encouraged Montgomery by telling him, "Only a year or so ago, you were an unknown. You were a bum and broke. Now, you're a star and broke. That's real progress." (Keepnews, 2018).

In 1963, Montgomery would receive a taste of negative criticism towards his music. He recorded an album entitled *Fusion!: Wes Montgomery with Strings*. The album shows Wes taking a different direction in his music at the time. Montgomery plays jazz standards with an orchestra and took solos that contrasted with his previous albums. He was dismayed with the reception of the album.

The first time I recorded with strings, I was very disappointed with the critical comments I got. I don't know what's wrong with these people, unless they feel like music is nothing but hard sounds all the time. I mean, beauty comes in a lot of ways. To me, that was

the finest thing I'd done up to that time. If a person is going to be a critic or a listener, you can't just listen in one direction only; just like you can't hear one tempo all night long (Huart, 2021, 30:28).

In 1964, Riverside Records declared bankruptcy and shut down operations. Montgomery moved on to work with American producer Creed Taylor of Verve Records. In 1965, Taylor and Montgomery would record the live album *Smokin' at the Half Note*. *Smokin' at the Half Note* was very successful and would influence the next generation of guitarists after Montgomery's career had concluded. Guitarist Pat Metheny said, “[*Smokin' at the Half Note*] is the absolute greatest jazz-guitar album ever made. It is also the record that taught me how to play.”

(Montgomery et al, 1995). Jazz writer Stuart Nicholson wrote:

His style and sound became the role-model for subsequent generations of guitar players and can be heard; echoed in the playing of George Benson, Emily Remler, Bruce Forman, Pat Metheny, Mark Whitfield, Kevin Eubanks, and a host of others. These recordings go some way to illustrate why Montgomery turned the jazz world on its collective ear, the effects of which are still with us today (Nicholson, 2003).

After the 1965 album, Montgomery's music would drastically change from the hard bop style to a smoother sound—similar to the album *Fusion!: Wes Montgomery with Strings*. Creed Taylor created a formula that utilized Montgomery's signature octave technique. Montgomery was limited to stating the melody in octaves and playing shorter solos. Taylor organized the next album to have an orchestra support Montgomery with arrangements composed by Oliver Nelson. Montgomery and Taylor released the album *Goin' Out of My Head*. The album sold over one million copies and rewarded Montgomery with the financial success he desired. He even received a Grammy Award for 'Best Jazz Instrumental Album, Individual or Group' in 1967.



*Goin' Out of My Head* received mixed reactions as some people adored Montgomery's melodic playing with an orchestra. In the jazz community, critics looked down upon Montgomery's new sound and deemed the album to be background music. Jazz fans believed that Montgomery had stopped playing the music they were used to when he was with Riverside Records. The truth is that Montgomery consistently toured during his time with Verve—playing the hard bop style that jazz fans desperately wanted to hear in his albums. He was unsure of what his fans wanted from him. Guitarist Barney Kessel recalls:

I remember talking with Wes Montgomery when he was playing in a packed club. He wasn't bitter, just realistic. He said, 'See those people out there? They didn't come to hear me, they came to see me play one, two or three of my hit records, because when I decide to do a tune of mine or Coltrane's "Giant Steps" instead of "Goin' out of my Head," they get bored and start talking. In fact, they get very insulted because they drove 60 miles to hear "Tequila," so they can sing one part and show their friends they know what's happening. They're not here to see if I'm better this year than last, they're here to hear me perform like it was a record hop (Ingram, 1985, p.36).

Montgomery released his last album with Verve in 1967 called *California Dreaming*. The record received the same type of admiration and criticism from listeners. In the same year, he signed with A&M Records and released a cover album titled *A Day in the Life*. The album was very controversial to jazz critics and fans—dismissing the album, again, as background music. The audience at large loved the album. *California Dreaming* reached number one on the jazz charts and his renditions were being played on top-40 radio stations. Montgomery also earned another Grammy nomination for his cover of "Eleanor Rigby."

Montgomery would record the last album of his career called *Road Song* in May 1968. Only one month later, Montgomery passed away from a heart attack in Indiana on June 15, 1968. Verve Records released an album of preserved and edited tracks from the live session on *Smokin' at the Half Note* six months after his death. The album featured a set of new, live performances during Montgomery and the Wynton Kelly Trio's time at the Half Note club in 1965. Verve edited the live performances by overdubbing brass and woodwind arrangements, composed by Claus Ogerman, over Montgomery's solos. The album won Montgomery a Grammy Award for 'Best Jazz Instrumental Album, Individual or Group.'

### **History of Smokin' at the Half Note**

Verve Records released *Smokin' at the Half Note* LP in June 1965. The album featured The Wynton Kelly Trio with pianist Wynton Kelly, bassist Paul Chambers, and drummer Jimmy Cobb. The trio was also the rhythm section for Miles Davis's band on albums like *Kind of Blue* and *Someday My Prince Will Come*. Montgomery and The Wynton Kelly Trio have performed together previous to the 1965 album. Jimmy Cobb has toured with Montgomery and Melvin Rhyne two years before the release of *Smokin' at the Half Note* (Nicholson, 2003). Most notably, The Wynton Kelly Trio recorded a live album in Berkley, California on June 1962 called *Full House* (Montgomery et al., 1962).

The original release from 1965 contained five tracks. The first two songs, "No Blues" and "If You Could See Me Now" were recorded during the live session on June 24. The remaining three songs, "Unit 7," "Four on Six," and "What's New," were recorded on September 1965 at Rudy Van Gelder's studio in New Jersey. A few days after the June 24 session, Montgomery and the Wynton Kelly Trio recorded six additional live performances of the songs, "Willow Weep

For Me,” Portrait of Jennie,” “Surrey With the Fringe On Top,” “Oh! You Crazy Moon,” and “Misty.” The last recording, “Impressions,” was estimated to be recorded during the week of June 22 to June 27 (Goins, 2022a). The six tracks were not unveiled until three years after the original album’s release and there are countless other live recordings during the band’s week at the Half Note. Montgomery and his manager, John Levy, decided not to release some of the live tracks in order to increase the value of the unreleased recordings (Goins, 2022b).

The second version that featured six new live performances of the band was *Willow Weep for Me*. The album was released in December 1968 and contained a new live recording of “Four on Six.” The tracks “Willow Weep for Me,” “Portrait of Jennie,” “Oh! You Crazy Moon,” and “Misty” featured woodwind and brass arrangements composed by conductor Claus Ogerman (Montgomery, 2002). The arrangements were recorded in October 1968. Verve Records added the woodwinds and brass from the suggestion of John Levy (Goins, 2022a). According to guitarist Henry Johnson, Montgomery was satisfied with the overdubbed horns despite how jazz critics and fans perceived *Willow Weep for Me* (Goins, 2022b).

The third release featured the original five songs from the 1965 album, two new tracks, and the six performances from *Willow Weep for Me* without Ogerman’s arrangements. “Oh! You Crazy Moon” still contained the horn and woodwind sections in the recording. The third edition was released in 1976 and is titled *Verve Small Group Recordings*. The two new tracks called “James and Wes” and “Mellow Mood” featured percussionist Ray Baretto, drummer Grady Tate, and organist Jimmy Smith.

In 1988, *Smokin at the Half Note Vol 2* was released with the original *Smokin’ at the Half Note* tracks and the six recordings from *Verve Small Group Recordings*. “Oh! You Crazy Moon,” was the final song to have the horn arrangements removed of all the *Willow Weep for Me* tracks.

Two years later, a Japanese edition of *Smokin' at the Half Note Vol. 2* was released and has the same songs and changes. In 1995, Verve released a compilation album of Montgomery's career with Verve records. *Impressions: The Verve Jazz Sides* included two discs that contained a variety of Montgomery's hit records with Verve and remastered recordings from *Smokin' at the Half Note Vol. 2*.

Ten years after the release of *Impressions: The Verve Jazz Sides*, Verve released the sixth version of *Smokin' at the Half Note*. This 2005 version of the album contained the recordings from the original album and the second volume. The most notable aspect of the sixth rendition is the inclusion of the introductions given by host Alan Grant. Montgomery and the trio were performing for a radio show entitled "Portraits in Jazz". Grant is heard on this album speaking with Montgomery and the sound of the audience was more audible than the past iterations. In November 2021, Verve released their last, remastered version of the album called *The Complete Smokin' at the Half Note Vol.2*.

## Chapter 2 - Technique and three-tiered improvisation

Montgomery's distinctive sound came from the unique way he played the guitar. The main aspect of his playing that gave Montgomery his style was using the technique of plucking the strings with his thumb. Montgomery had Distal Hyperextensibility or a Hitchhiker's thumb (Huart, 2021, 21:00). He was able to execute alternate picking and play a variety of musical phrases. The thumb also allowed Montgomery to get a round and warmer tone that jazz guitarists aspire towards. The physical touch on the strings gave him a connection to the guitar and would emulate the phrasings of horn players and vocalists. No other jazz guitarist was producing a sound of Montgomery, and his right-hand technique came to him incidentally. Montgomery recalls the time he decided to use his thumb:

A pick seems to have a more of a piercing sound and sharper... and when I first started, I started with a pick, of course. Everybody else started with a pick and I liked my amplifier to be on because I found out when you practice without an amplifier for like two months and then you use an amplifier, you hear more noise than the notes. So, I said, "I'll break that habit," so I just used an amplifier all the time. But by doing that, I would go into the night practicing, but I forgot I was disturbing neighbors. So, then I thought, "Well, I have to cut down some kind of way," but I had my amplifier really cut down. If I cut down much more, I might as well not use it. So then, I set the pick on top of the amplifier and made it much of a rounder sound, softer... (Huart, 2021, 5:38).

The improvisational technique Montgomery used was his three-tiered improvisational approach. The first tier contains his single-note melodies. He would primarily use down-strokes with his thumb and occasionally used up-strokes on his single-note melodies. Montgomery also

had one of the best left-hand techniques on the guitar. He used a series of “hammer-ons” and “pull-offs” to perform rapid melodic lines in his improvisations (O’Rourke, 2015).

Montgomery’s octave solos were another aspect that belongs to his musical identity. While pianists used in the octaves in their solo prior to the guitarist, Montgomery was one of the first to use the technique (Huart, 2021). His octave choruses were an ingenious way for Montgomery to build the intensity that followed his single-note solos. The octaves gave his sound extra thickness that could cut through the volume of the band. Montgomery discovered his octave solos in an unusual way.

Well, I was tuning up one day and my guitar was always out of tune. I thought it was because I had a bad guitar at that time. I bought a lemon. Even the new ones, they just don’t stay in tune, so it was laid out like: it would be in tune down at the end (of the fretboard) but up here within this range (upper end of the fretboard), it would be out of tune. So, I used to take the first string and the third string and go like that (play those strings in octaves while moving up the fretboard) and found how close they were together and which one goes out. Then, I would tune up and so while doing that, I ran a scale. Accidentally, I was like, “Oh, that’s not too bad,” so then I put them together, and ran the scale again... After I played the scale, I went through it, so I think I’ll play a melody line... and I kept on until I got sore, so well I said, “Now I wanna play a solo lines with it,” which I couldn’t do at the time (*Wes Montgomery Interview and Performance Live on “People in Jazz” (1968)*, 2023, 15:58).

The third and final tier to his approach was his use of chordal solos. His chordal solos provided a climatic ending and is where Montgomery’s energy into the solo is at the highest point. He remained focused on the melodic content even while playing block-chords. The

harmonies Montgomery used portrayed the sound of a big band jazz ensemble, which reflects Montgomery's time with Lionel Hampton's band.

Many of Montgomery's solos follow the order of the three-tiered approach, but he was not opposed to mixing two tiers together. He would add octaves that are mixed into his single-note melodies. In his octave solos, he would include aspects of his chordal approach. Integrating the tiers allowed Montgomery to change the texture of his sound. Another defining factor in Montgomery's playing was his rhythmic variations. His play on polyrhythms and the use of different time signatures allowed his soloing to move over the bar-line. The results of playing over the bar-line are delayed resolutions and superimposing different chords over the outlining harmony of a song.

While Montgomery identified himself a self-taught musician, he claims to have received some tips from a local guitarist, Alex Stevens (Mullins, 2018). Otherwise, Montgomery had learned everything he knew from Charlie Christian's solos without any formal music training. He did not know how to read music, but he learned to discern notes and chords by their sound. A common misconception about Montgomery is that he did not know music theory. Theory is not a defining factor for an improviser or a musician, but there is evidence that he did have theoretical knowledge. The phrases and ideas he possessed to improvise over the songs on *Smokin' at the Half Note* should be enough evidence that Montgomery's solos weren't a byproduct of luck. A video on YouTube surfaced in December 2011 entitled "Watching The 'Man' Wes Montgomery." (*Watching The "Man" Wes Montgomery - Medium.M4v*, 2011). The video footage shows Montgomery in 1965 using music theory to teach Dutch pianist Pim Jacobs how to play a tune entitled "The End of a Love Affair." He guided the pianist through the song, played the melody, and listened to the chords Jacobs was using. Montgomery would stop

frequently to give him directions and correct the harmony. He would identify the key and where the tonal centers would change.

Montgomery's improvisational technique left his successors in awe of his sound. He continued the traditions of Charlie Christian and Django Reinhardt and established himself as a quintessential jazz guitarist for many musicians. His three-tiered approach demonstrates how to construct a solo and apply it to a performance.



## Chapter 3 - Song analyses

This chapter contains an overview of the original five songs on the *Smokin' at the Half Note* released in 1965 (Montgomery et al., 1965). The first two tracks, “No Blues” and “If You Could See Me Now,” are live recordings at the Half Note Club in New York City in June 1965. The other three songs were recorded at the Van Gelder Studios in New Jersey in September 1965. The three titles were “Unit 7,” “Four on Six,” and “What’s New.”

### Ledger

All harmonic and melodic notations are based on Carl Brandt and Clinton Roemer’s book entitled *Standardized Chord Symbol and Notation (A Uniform System for the Music Profession)* (Brandt and Roemer, 1976, p.7-13) and Shawn Salmon’s dissertation, “Imitation, Assimilation, and Innovation: Charlie Christian’s Influence on Wes Montgomery’s Improvisational Style in his Early Recordings (1957-1960)” (Salmon, 2011, p.13-14). The report will include examples and transcriptions with the following symbols and chord markings. See Table 3-1.

**Table 3-1 Ledger**

Symbol	Definition
“#”	Indicates a raised function, such as a sharp 9 <sup>th</sup> (#9).
“b”	Indicates a lowered function, such as a flat 5 <sup>th</sup> (b5).
“Maj”	Indicates major. Used when followed by a numeral “7,” “9,” “11,” or “13” to indicate the presence of the interval of a major Seventh.
“-7”	Indicates a minor seventh chord such as G <sup>-7</sup> .
“Dim”	Indicates diminished chord quality.
“7”	Indicates the presence of a, major, minor, dominant, half-diminished, and fully diminished 7 chords such as G <sup>7</sup> or Gdim <sup>7</sup> .
“Alt”	Indicates altered chord tones such as the b5, #5, b9, and #9.
“I or i”	Roman numeral analysis to indicate the tonic major or minor chord of a diatonic key.

“II or ii”	Roman numeral analysis to indicate the second major or minor chord of a diatonic key.
“III or iii”	Roman numeral analysis to indicate the third major or minor chord of a diatonic key.
“IV or iv”	Roman numeral analysis to indicate the fourth major or minor chord of a diatonic key.
“V”	Roman numeral analysis to indicate the dominant chord of a diatonic key.
“VI or vi”	Roman numeral analysis to indicate the sixth chord of a diatonic key.
“ii-V”	A chord progression in Roman numeral analysis indicating that the ii chord is resolving to the V chord.
“A”	Indicates the verse section of a song structure.
“B”	Indicates the bridge section of a song structure.

## No Blues

“No Blues” (titled “Pfrancing”) is the first song on the album written by Miles Davis which first appeared on the Miles Davis Sextet’s album *Someday My Prince Will Come* (Drotos, 2023). The album was released in 1961 under Columbia Records and featured musicians Wynton Kelly, Jimmy Cobb, and Paul Chambers (who also performed with Wes Montgomery on *Smokin’ at the Half Note*) during their time with Miles Davis. Alongside the Wynton Kelly Trio, saxophonist Hank Mobley appears on the track “Pfrancing,” recorded on March 7, 1961, in Columbia Records’ 30th Street Studio in New York City.

“Pfrancing” (“No Blues”) is an extended 12-bar blues performed in the key of F with a medium swing tempo as opposed to the up-tempo rendition on *Smokin’ at the Half Note*. The composition reflects a standard 12-bar blues, but the harmony is altered with the use of the  $\flat\text{III}^7$  and the  $\flat\text{VI}^7$  in measures eight and nine. The song starts off with Wynton Kelly playing the melody for the first chorus followed by Miles Davis and Hank Mobley with a call and response

take. The original recording features Wynton Kelly, Miles Davis, Hank Mobley, and Paul Chambers as soloists. The first solo is taken by Wynton Kelly with two choruses followed by Miles Davis with five choruses. Wynton Kelly returns with another solo of two choruses which is then followed by Hank Mobley who takes four choruses. Paul Chambers takes a solo consisting of three choruses with a final return of Wynton Kelly's two choruses—before returning to the main melody to end.

The track “No Blues” on the album *Smokin' at the Half Note* was performed for the live audience at the Half Note Club. Also, in the key of F, the song begins with Wynton Kelly performing the main melody in an up-tempo style. Montgomery enters with the first solo with twenty-four choruses. The solo features all his techniques including his three-tiered improvisational approach. He begins the solo with a steady series of eighth note lines; establishing a solid feel for the overall sound. About halfway through his solo, Montgomery begins to feature his octave technique which builds the energy. The octaves flow into his chordal solo of the main melody two choruses later. The reintroduction of the main melody sounds as if Montgomery is about to end his solo; instead, he continued with chordal embellishments around the melody, which included all the elements of his three-tiered improvisational approach. This is followed by Wynton Kelly on the piano with a twenty-chorus solo followed by Paul Chambers with a nine-chorus solo. Both solos are accompanied by Montgomery where upon he establishes a canvas for Chambers and Kelly to improvise. Montgomery returns with another two-chorus interlude in octaves which concludes the eleven-minute performance.

### **If You Could See Me Now**

“If You Could See Me Now” was composed by Tadd Dameron who wrote the song for vocalist Sarah Vaughan (Dameron & Sigman, 2012). The song was released in 1946 featuring

Vaughan singing the lyrics written by Carl Sigman for Musicraft Records (“If You Could See Me Now (1946)”, 2012). Since 1946, “If You Could See Me Now” has become a jazz standard performed by a plethora of musicians like Bill Evans, Dizzy Gillespie, Chet Baker, Wes Montgomery and more. Dameron’s composition was eventually inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 1998. The original recording is a jazz ballad with an ‘AABA’ popular song form in the key of A $\flat$  with no solos except for the trumpet introduction. Sarah Vaughan’s vocals and Sigman’s lyrics are the main feature with the rhythm section and strings as accompaniment.

The version of “If You Could See Me Now” on *Smokin’ at the Half Note* appears as the second song on the album and was performed for a live audience, like “No Blues.” Their version remains in the key of A $\flat$  and begins with a dramatic introduction that subtly hints to the main melody. Kelly then enters melody as Montgomery quietly accompanies him with the harmony in the background. Wynton Kelly performs his own take on “If You Could See Me Now” with many embellishments. After the melody, Montgomery enters with his one and a half chorus solo with mainly eighth note and sixteenth note lines in double-time feel. He reaches the height of his solo in the beginning of his second chorus featuring his octave technique. At the end of Montgomery’s solo, they take the bridge out with Wynton Kelly returning with the melody. They conclude the song with a brief tag and a dramatic intro that reflects the introduction to the song.

## **Unit 7**

“Unit 7” is a jazz standard composed by bassist Sam Jones for Cannonball Adderley and Nancy Wilson’s album *Nancy Wilson/ Cannonball Adderley* in 1962 under Capitol Records (Adderley et al., 1962.). The original version features alto saxophonist Cannonball Adderley, Nat Adderley on cornet, drummer Louis Hayes, pianist Joe Zawinul, and bassist Sam Jones. The song has an ‘AABA’ form in the key of C. The song is an up-tempo swing tune with the ‘A’

sections being a 12-bar blues and the ‘B’ section in a straight eighth note Latin style. The twelve-bar blues in the ‘A’ sections is altered in measure nine with a  $\flat$ VIMaj<sup>7</sup> chord.

The Wynton Kelly Trio and Wes Montgomery’s rendition of “Unit 7” is one of the *Smokin’ at the Half Note* songs to be recorded in Van Gelder Studios and is one of the most notable recordings of the song. Their version remains in the key of C and begins with Montgomery playing the main melody to Kelly’s accompaniment. The main melody features a call and response between Montgomery and Kelly in the form of the twelve-bar blues. The ‘B’ section kicks straight into the Latin style with Montgomery taking over the melody before returning to the theme of the ‘A’ section. Wynton Kelly follows the melody with his two-chorus solo with Montgomery accompanying him. His comping only contains two-note chords that outline the harmony while giving Kelly the freedom to improvise without interruption. Montgomery then enters with his four-chorus solo while following his three-tiered improvisational approach. His first two choruses are made up with single-note eighth note lines, followed using octaves. His octave solo uses repeated rhythmic motifs in the beginning of the third chorus. In the fourth chorus, Montgomery reaches the height of his solo and he enters his chordal stage, where he performs a different rhythmic motif with alterations in meter. After his solo, Montgomery returns to the melody with a tag on the last four measures of the final ‘A’ section to end the song.

### **Four on Six**

“Four on Six” is an original composition written by Wes Montgomery, released in 1960 on one of Montgomery’s most revered albums, *The Incredible Jazz Guitar of Wes Montgomery* (Montgomery et al., 1960). According to Dirk Laukens of *Jazz Guitar Online*, the term “Four on Six” refers to a 4/4-time signature rhythm being superimposed over a 6/8-time signature

(Laukens, 2017). The original of the song features pianist Tommy Flannagan, bassist Percy Heath, and drummer Albert Heath. “Four on Six” is a sixteen-bar form in the key of G minor, alternating to the relative B $\flat$  major. The song begins with a riff constructed of fifths that outline the harmony of the form.

On *Smokin' at the Half Note*, the group takes the song considerably faster than the original recording, but remains in the key of G minor. Like “Unit 7,” “Four on Six” was recorded in the studio. Their version begins with the same introduction riff and entrance of the melody. The only difference is in the fifth bar where Montgomery plays a chordal passage in a rhythmic pattern. The rhythmic pattern is played in unison by all members of the group instead of the melodic line used in *The Incredible Jazz Guitar of Wes Montgomery*. After the main melody, Montgomery starts off the solo section with simple motifs and melodies that outline the harmony. His first three choruses follow the initial phase in his three-tiered technique. On the fourth chorus, he begins to build the energy of the solo with octaves while keeping a simple and catchy melodic approach. He does not, however, go into a chordal solo; instead, he keeps his solo shorter than the others before yielding to pianist Wynton Kelly. Kelly takes a six-chorus solo with Montgomery accompanying him before Paul Chambers performs his solo using his bow. The ensemble begins trading choruses with drummer Jimmy Cobb before Cobb begins his full solo. After, they return to the introduction and main melody with a tag of the introduction riff where Montgomery performs another short solo in octaves to end the song.

### **What's New?**

“What's New?” is a jazz ballad composed by Bob Haggart and lyricist Johnny Burke (Haggart and Burke, 2019). Originally, Haggart composed the song under the title “I'm Free” for trumpeter Billy Butterfield during their time together with Bob “Bing” Crosby and his orchestra.

The group recorded the instrumental version of “I’m Free” the same day Haggart composed the song in 1938. The year after, the publishers expressed their excitement for the potential of “I’m Free” to be a vocal piece. Johnny Burke was hired to create the lyrics for the song and the title changed to “What’s New.” The vocal rendition became a success for the Crosby Orchestra and vocalist Teddy Grace. Since then, “What’s New” became a popular jazz standard performed by many jazz musicians and ensembles.

The original song is a jazz ballad with an ‘AABA’ popular song form in the key of A $\flat$  major. The ‘A’ sections begin in A $\flat$  major, to A $\flat$  minor, and resolves to A $\flat$  major at the end of the section. The ‘B’ section reflects the same harmony as the ‘A’ section, but moved up by an interval of a fourth. The Wynton Kelly Trio and Wes Montgomery play their rendition of the song in the key of C major. Their version begins with Montgomery playing the melody after a short piano introduction from Wynton Kelly. Montgomery plays the main melody in octaves until Kelly’s solo—where the rhythm section moves to a double-time feel with Paul Chambers still establishing a ‘two’ feel. Montgomery lays out during Kelly’s solo, providing a change in texture from the previous songs on the album. Wynton Kelly ends his solo after one chorus and the band prematurely moves to the ‘B’ section for Montgomery’s solo. Montgomery’s solo is played with octaves instead of beginning with a single-note passage. His solo on “What’s New” is the shortest on the album as he only takes the ‘B’ section before bringing back the melody in the second ‘A’ section. The band returns from the double-time feel and continues with the original ‘two’ feel from the beginning.

## Chapter 4 - Single-note melodies

One approach to understanding a musician's improvisation is establishing the source material or melodies from which they can create their own responses. Jazz musicians often analyze others' solos to reveal techniques and style to better define their own and employ similar strategies rather than focusing on reproducing note-for-note facsimiles. The first aspect to learn from Montgomery's single-note solos is to understand how he builds an entire solo from small phrases.

### Scales

In the first track, "No Blues," Montgomery relies on simple melodies that highlight the F blues and major pentatonic scales. In the first chorus, he utilizes the major third, moving from the minor third of the blues scale to create a blues influenced sound used by Charlie Christian and Blues musicians.

Figure 4-1: "No Blues" Chorus 1

The figure displays two lines of musical notation for the first chorus of "No Blues." The first line consists of three measures. The first measure is labeled with an F7 chord and is identified as the F Major Pentatonic scale. The second measure is labeled with a Bb7 chord and contains a triplet of notes. The third measure is labeled with an F7 chord and is identified as the F Blues scale. The second line starts at measure 8 and includes a D7 chord, a G-7 chord, and a section labeled "Solo Continues...." which is identified as the F Major Pentatonic scale. This section includes a C7 chord with a "Minor 3rd-Major 3rd Blues" annotation and an F7 chord with a "Minor 3rd-Major 3rd Blues" annotation.

In his fourth chorus of "No Blues," Montgomery purposely steps "outside" of the changes by superimposing a G<sup>7</sup> chord over a G<sup>-7</sup> chord by using the B-natural in the first



measure of Figure 4-2. The major third (B-natural) can sound harsh over a minor chord, but Montgomery puts little emphasis on the major third by placing it on an offbeat of his phrase. The following measure is where he purposely applies dissonant notes to the harmony. He superimposes a C $\flat$  major scale over the C $^7$  chord which employs many of the altered tones in a dominant chord. This technique is called Side-slipping. According to jazz guitarist and composer, Jens Larsen, he states that Side slipping is, "...taking the harmony that is there already and shift it up or down a half-step to have a chord sound that has a few common notes and therefore will sound far away from what is being played behind you." (Larsen, 2016). Montgomery provides the  $\sharp 9$ ,  $\flat 9$ , 7 $^{\text{th}}$ ,  $\sharp 5$ ,  $\flat 5$ , and 3 $^{\text{rd}}$  of C $^7$ . The common notes that the C $\flat$ , or B, major scale have in common with the chord tones of C $^7$  are the 3 $^{\text{rd}}$  (E-natural) and the 7 $^{\text{th}}$  (B $\flat$ ). The altered notes such as the  $\flat 9$ ,  $\sharp 9$ ,  $\sharp 5$ , and  $\flat 5$ , are the uncommon notes that make his phrase sound "far away" from the harmony being played by Wynton Kelly. He uses the C $\flat$  major scale to resolve to the 5 $^{\text{th}}$  of F $^7$  (C-natural).

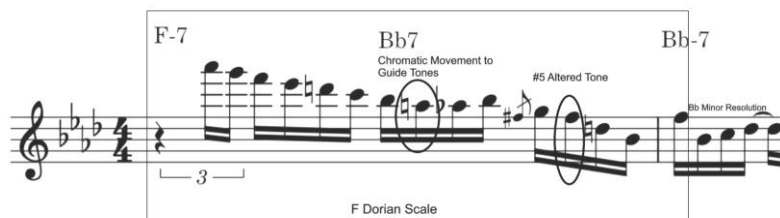
**Figure 4-2 "No Blues" Chorus 4**

The image shows a musical staff in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The notation is divided into two measures. The first measure is labeled 'G-7' and contains a melodic line starting on G4, with a blue dot on the first note (G4). The second measure is labeled 'C7' and contains a melodic line starting on Bb4. Below the staff, there are two boxes: 'Implied G7' under the first measure and 'Cb Major Scale' under the second measure. The final note of the second measure is labeled 'F7'.

Montgomery also chose diatonic phrases to enforce the harmonic movement of a song. The chord progression moves to the key of E $\flat$  in the middle of the 'B' section on his first chorus of "If You Could See Me Now." The phrase begins with a ii-V chord progression in E $\flat$ . He implies the key change by utilizing the F *Dorian* mode in the first two beats of the lick. The F

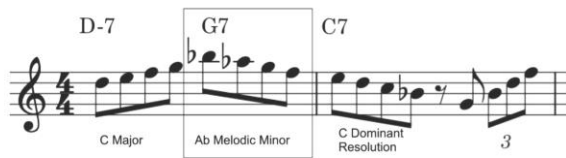
*Dorian* mode clearly shows that Montgomery is playing over the F minor chord. The third beat of the measure shows the resolution of the B $\flat$ 7 chord. The V7 chord is where Montgomery decides to diatonically step “outside” with chromatic movement to the guide tones as well as inserting an altered tone to the B $\flat$ 7. Montgomery uses the dominant chord as a spot to create tension before the resolution in Figure 4-3.

**Figure 4-3 "If You Could See Me Now" Chorus 1**



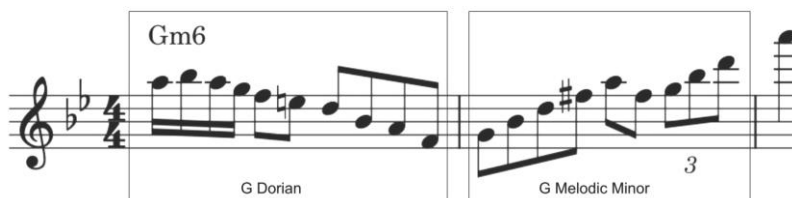
Another way to create a strong sense of dissonance over a dominant chord is using the melodic minor scale. Similar to Side-slipping, the melodic minor contains all of the altered extensions over a dominant chord. In figure 4-4, Montgomery utilizes the melodic minor in the bridge of his first chorus on “Unit 7.” The first two beats of the figure show Montgomery addressing the D-7 chord by ascending the C major scale—starting on the second scale degree. This initial, diatonic phrase establishes the tonal center of the harmony and where the chords are going to resolve. The third and fourth beats of the phrase are over the G7 chord and Montgomery uses the dominant chord as a point to create dissonance. He uses the melodic minor scale a half-step above the G7 chord to create the desired musical tension. Many jazz soloists use the melodic minor in a similar way. Moving the scale up produces the altered 9<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> tones of a dominant chord and allows the phrase to move chromatically to the resolution.

**Figure 4-4 "Unit 7" Chorus 1**



On “Four on Six,” Montgomery demonstrates two different ideas to approach a minor six chord. The minor six chord is found in many styles of music and specifically used in minor blues progressions. “Four on Six” predominantly uses a G-<sup>6</sup> chord in the form which allows a soloist to insert the blues sound. Montgomery, however, utilizes the *Dorian* mode and melodic minor scale. The *Dorian* mode is justified because of the raised sixth degree. The E-natural in G *Dorian* emphasizes the quality of the chord as opposed to the Blues scale. In the second measure of Figure 4-5, Montgomery uses the G melodic minor scale by ascending with a G-<sup>7</sup> arpeggio. The presence of the F<sup>♯</sup> and B<sup>♭</sup> indicates the quality of melodic minor.

**Figure 4-5 "Four on Six" Chorus 3**



## Harmonic structures

Montgomery frequently experiments with the upper structure of chords to highlight the extensions above the seventh. The extensions include the 9<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 13<sup>th</sup> scale degrees of a diatonic key. Usually, melodic phrases revolve around the guide tones—the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. Instead, he uses the extensions as the main feature for his phrases.

One of Montgomery’s soloistic “mannerisms” is his use of the minor eleven arpeggio. The minor eleven arpeggio includes the root note, minor 3<sup>rd</sup>, the 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> degrees. He

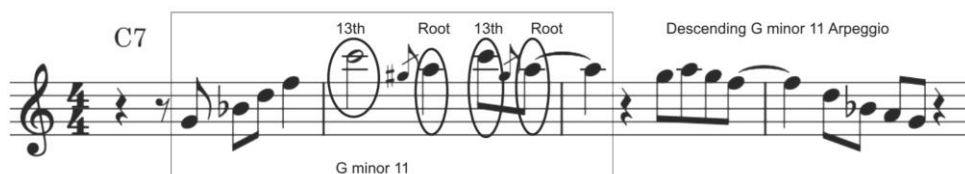
favors the sound of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> by making those tones stand out in his phrases. Emphasizing extensions and pitches is often used in a modal approach. In “Four on Six,” Montgomery plays a near, straight G-<sup>11</sup> arpeggio. He leans on the 11<sup>th</sup>, like a suspended chord, before resolving to the 5<sup>th</sup>. The extensions provide a different way to suspend and resolve phrases that sound more sophisticated than relying on the guide tones.

**Figure 4-6 "Four on Six" Chorus 1**



In “Unit 7,” Montgomery begins his opening statement with a G-<sup>11</sup> arpeggio, as seen in “Four on Six.” The phrase is over a 12-Bar Blues chord progression in the key of C; therefore, the G-<sup>11</sup> has a different implication compared to “Four on Six.”. Montgomery uses the arpeggio over a C<sup>7</sup> chord. Each scale degree in G-<sup>11</sup> provides the 5<sup>th</sup>, dominant 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, and the root note of C<sup>7</sup>. In Figure 4-7, he highlights the root note and the 13<sup>th</sup> of the tonic. In broader terms, Montgomery is utilizing the minor sound starting a fifth above the chord being played. He resolves the phrase in the following measure by descending the G-<sup>11</sup> arpeggio.

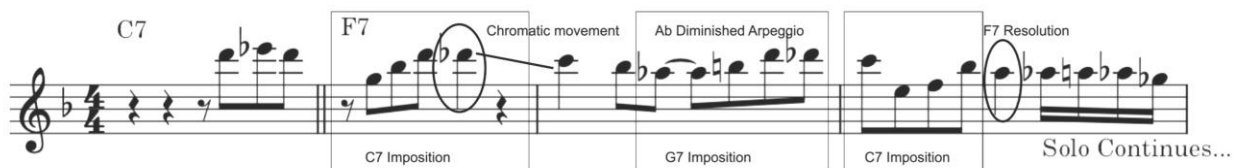
**Figure 4-7 "Unit 7" Chorus 1**



Montgomery had a fondness for the ii-V chord progression. Many of his compositions like, “Four on Six,” contain portions of ii-V cycles. With that, Montgomery takes his sentiment for the progression in his solos. In “No Blues,” Montgomery imposes a G<sup>7</sup> and C<sup>7</sup> sound over the

F<sup>7</sup> chord of the blues. Figure 4-8 begins in the last measure of Montgomery's third chorus over a C dominant. When the harmony returns to the top of the form in the fourth chorus, he remains in C dominant by imposing a G minor arpeggio as seen in Figures 4-7 and 4-6. In the following measure, Montgomery resolves the C dominant phrase and imposes a G dominant chord through an A<sup>b</sup> diminished arpeggio. The A<sup>b</sup> diminished resembles a G<sup>7b9</sup>, which allows Montgomery to resolve into another phrase in C dominant. In the final bar of Figure 4-8, Montgomery finally resolves to the F dominant sound. These ideas provide a sound that allows for a proper balance of the musical tension and resolution of a phrase. Montgomery and many jazz improvisers use the balance of dissonance and consonance as a way to play over the bar-line (Coker, 1991).

**Figure 4-8 "No Blues" Chorus 4**



### Compositional organization

Improvisation relates to the idea of immediate composition. A soloist has a small amount of time to organize their intentions and each phrase must be sonically translated contemporaneously. Jazz musicians overcome that by revolving around simple ideas. Montgomery represented the rule in this case as his solos maintained a sense of calculation in their creation and delivery. He arranges solos through techniques such as (a) call and response, (b) polyrhythmic timing, (c) motivic development, and (d) variation of themes.

In "If You Could See Me Now," Montgomery begins his solo outlining the harmony in a clear manner. The first four measures of his solo alternates between an A<sup>b</sup>Maj<sup>7</sup> and a D<sup>b</sup><sup>7</sup> chord. Since the song is a ballad, the slow tempo gives Montgomery plenty of time to play many of his

phrases in double-time feel. In the first chorus, he organizes his rhythmic ideas into two measure sections. In the first two measures of Figure 4-9, Montgomery starts with an idea based on sixteenth notes and thirty-second notes. The following two measures are where he changes the rhythmic approach by playing a phrase based on sixteenth note triplets. The harmony changes to a descending series of a ii-V chord progression and Montgomery performs his idea based only on 32<sup>nd</sup> notes. His organization of each sub-section gives is an adequate technique to construct interesting solos.

**Figure 4-9 "If You Could See Me Now" Chorus 1**

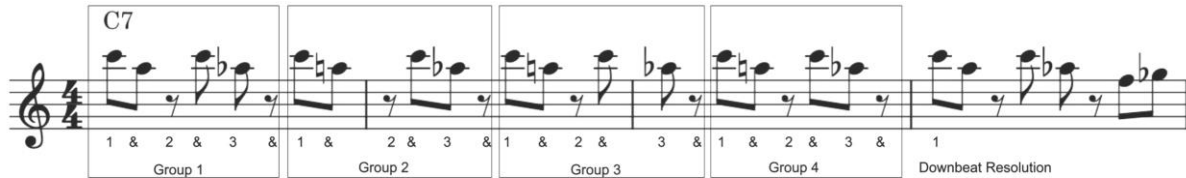
The musical score for Figure 4-9 is divided into four staves, each with a different background color and containing specific musical information:

- Staff 1 (Red background):** Shows the first two measures. The first measure is labeled with the chord  $AbMaj7$  and the second with  $Db7$ . The music consists of sixteenth notes and thirty-second notes. A label below the staff reads "Phrase 1: 16th Notes and 32nd Notes".
- Staff 2 (Green background):** Shows measures 3 and 4. Measure 3 is labeled  $AbMaj7$  and measure 4 is  $Db7$ . The music features sixteenth note triplets. A label below the staff reads "Phrase 2: 16th Note Triplets".
- Staff 3 (White background):** Shows measures 5 and 6. Measure 5 is labeled  $C-7$  and measure 6 is  $B-7$ . The music consists of 32nd notes. A label below the staff reads "Phrase 3: 32nd Notes".
- Staff 4 (Blue background):** Shows measures 7 and 8. Measure 7 is labeled  $E7$  and measure 8 is  $Eb7$ . The music consists of 32nd notes. A label below the staff reads "Solo Continues...".

On "Unit 7," Montgomery begins his second chorus with a phrase with only three notes, C, A, and Ab. He is highlighting the root note, C, and alternates from the root to the 13th and the #5 of the  $C^7$  chord. He repeats the idea for four bars, but the interesting aspect of the phrase is in the rhythm. He is imposing a 3/4-time signature over the 4/4 time making the phrase feel like the downbeat lands in odd places of a measure. The phrase is played in 4 groupings of 3/4 time because 4 measures in 3/4 allows the downbeat to land on beat 1 on the fourth bar. Montgomery

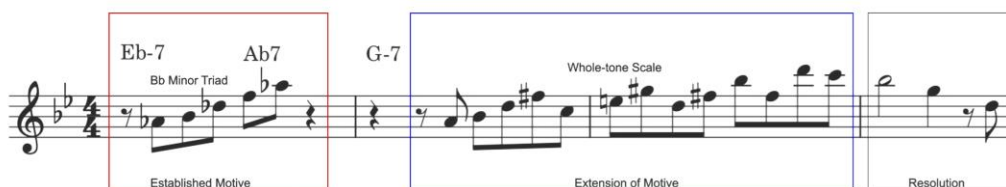
doesn't continue with the same ideas in the previous 'A' sections with a series of eighth note lines that focuses on outlining the harmony. He takes a more rhythmic approach making a simple three-note phrase sound compelling in Figure 4-10.

**Figure 4-10 "Unit 7" Chorus 2**



In his own composition, "Four on Six," Montgomery shows his ability to create motives and develop them from a small phrase into a larger one. In Figure 4-11, he starts off with a small theme using an ascending B $\flat$  minor arpeggio. He continues by developing that theme with a series of ascending augmented major triads that move in whole steps. The presence of the F $\sharp$ , G $\sharp$ , A $\sharp$ , and the whole step movement are indicative of the whole-tone scale. Montgomery superimposes the whole-tone sound not to follow the harmony, but to project the unique sound of the scale as a contrast to the passages in G minor he had initially performed. Montgomery is ignoring the G minor for that moment and delays the resolution of the phrase.

**Figure 4-11 "Four on Six" Chorus 1**



Another approach that Montgomery takes to expand upon themes and motives is through call and response. Call and response is a technique used in many big band jazz ensembles. His use of the call and response is most likely an influence due to his early exposure to big bands and his time with Lionel Hampton. On "Four on Six," he establishes the call phrase in a high register

which highlights the 9<sup>th</sup> and the 11<sup>th</sup> of G minor and plays the response melody in the lower register. He repeats the call and response theme twice before ending with the call phrase a fourth above.

Montgomery continues to expand upon the call and response theme with a similar theme but as the harmony changes, the call and response is adjusted. He uses variation to adapt to the harmonic changes by taking the same ideas used over the G-<sup>7</sup> chord—diminishing the length of the phrases and taking an arpeggiated approach. Notice how Montgomery kept the utilization of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> of the chord in the shorter “call” phrases, which hints back to the previous theme. He uses a shorter response using a triad to highlight the descending ii-V chord progression.

**Figure 4-12 "Four on Six" Chorus 2**

The musical score for "Four on Six" Chorus 2 is presented in two staves. The first staff shows a sequence of call and response phrases. The first call phrase (red) is over A-7b5 and D7b9 chords. The first response phrase (blue) is over a G-7 chord. The second call phrase (red) is also over A-7b5 and D7b9 chords. The second response phrase (blue) is over a G-7 chord. The third call phrase (red) is over A-7b5 and D7b9 chords. The third response phrase (blue) is over a G-7 chord. The fourth call phrase (red) is over A-7b5 and D7b9 chords. The fourth response phrase (blue) is over a G-7 chord. The fifth call phrase (red) is over A-7b5 and D7b9 chords. The fifth response phrase (blue) is over a G-7 chord. The second staff shows a sequence of short call and response phrases. The first short response (blue) is over a C-7 chord. The first short call (pink) is over an F7 chord. The second short response (blue) is over a Bb-7 chord. The second short call (pink) is over an Eb7 chord. The third short response (blue) is over an A-7 chord. The third short call (pink) is over a D7 chord. The fourth short response (blue) is over a Bb-7 chord. The fourth short call (pink) is over an Eb7 chord. The fifth short response (blue) is over a Bb-7 chord. The fifth short call (pink) is over an Eb7 chord. The sixth short response (blue) is over a Bb-7 chord. The sixth short call (pink) is over an Eb7 chord. The seventh short response (blue) is over a Bb-7 chord. The seventh short call (pink) is over an Eb7 chord. The eighth short response (blue) is over a Bb-7 chord. The eighth short call (pink) is over an Eb7 chord. The score ends with "Solo Continues..."



## Chapter 5 - Octaves

The second tier of Montgomery's improvisational approach is his ability to create melodies in octaves. His use of octaves astounded the jazz guitar community and became one of the defining factors in his style. He inspired many guitarists like George Benson, Pat Martino, and Emily Remler to utilize octaves in their solos.

The incredible aspect about Montgomery's use of the octaves is his effortless facilitation around the fretboard. He would play his octaves with his index finger on the lower note and his ring finger or pinky finger on the higher note. If the lower note of the octave started on the sixth string, he would place his ring finger on the fourth string, two frets above the lower note. The same technique applies to the fifth and third strings. If the lower note started on the fourth string, Montgomery would place his pinky on the second string three frets above the first. The same idea applies to the third and first strings. The fourth and third strings are separated by an intervallic distance of a third which changes the layout of one's finger placement for octaves. In his right hand, Montgomery uses his thumb to strum, striking most of the strings in the process. The two notes in the octave will ring out while he mutes the unused strings with the bottom part of his fingers in his left hand. Figure 5-1 shows how one would play a F major scale in octaves with Wes Montgomery's technique.

**Figure 5-1 Octaves in F Major**

									Ring	Ring	Ring	Ring	Ring	Ring	Ring	Ring
<b>T</b>									6	8	10	6	8	10	12	13
<b>A</b>	Ring	Ring	Ring	Ring	3	5	7	9	10	3	5	7	3	5	7	9
<b>B</b>	3	5	7	1	3	5	7	8	Index	Index	Index	Index	Index	Index	Index	Index
	1	3	5	Index	Index	Index	Index	Index	Index	Index	Index	Index	Index	Index	Index	Index

### Rhythm

Since Montgomery is playing with two registers simultaneously, his phrases have an emphasis on rhythm and syncopation. Improvising octaves with a stream of eighth notes can be a challenge due to the limitation of using two fingers at once. Montgomery’s phrasing moves towards the rhythmic content by utilizing longer note values, staggered rhythms, and space to achieve melodic clarity. In the first few choruses of Montgomery’s single-note solo, there are longer lines with eighth notes, triplet figures, and sixteenth note runs. His octave solos contrast with his single-note portions, but the intensity and energy remain or increases.

**Figure 5-2 "No Blues" Chorus 8-9**

Montgomery’s solo in “If You Could See Me Now” is an exception to how he would improvise in octaves. Since the song is a slow ballad, Montgomery can play a steady stream of eighth note and triplet melodies. He built his entire solo based on 16th notes, 32nd notes, and 16th note triplets. Even with the use of octaves, Montgomery is still able to improvise in the double-time feel established in his single-note solo.

**Figure 5-3 "If You Could See Me Now" Chorus 2**

## Motives, themes, and variations

Another Montgomery “mannerism” contains short, rapid rhythmic phrases followed by a repeated note. He establishes a theme, over the F<sup>7</sup> chord, with the repetition of the D-natural note followed by a triplet figure in a D *Phrygian* mode position. When the harmony moves to the B<sup>b</sup><sup>7</sup> chord, the same theme is varied by moving the pitches down a fifth. The variation is an exact transposition and highlights the same chord tones—as each chord changes.

Figure 5-4 "No Blues" Chorus 10

The musical score for "No Blues" Chorus 10 is presented in three staves of guitar notation. The key signature is one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 4/4. The first staff begins with a rest followed by a triplet of eighth notes (D, D, D) over an F7 chord, with fingerings (13), (13), (13). This is followed by a triplet of eighth notes (D, C, B) over an F7 chord, with fingerings (11), (9), (7), (13), (13). The second staff continues with a triplet of eighth notes (B, A, G) over an F7 chord, with fingerings (13), (13), (13), and then a triplet of eighth notes (F, E, D) over a Bb7 chord, with fingerings (11), (9), (7), (13), (13). The third staff features a triplet of eighth notes (C, B, A) over a Bb7 chord, with fingerings (11), (9), (7), (13), (13), and then a triplet of eighth notes (G, F, E) over a D7 chord, with fingerings (11), (9), (7), (13), (13). The score concludes with the text "Solo Continues..."

Montgomery executes a similar idea in his octave solo on “What’s New.” He plays his solo in a double-time feel like “If You Could See Me Now.” The beginning of Figure 5-5 begins with the repeated note (G<sup>b</sup>) to establish the motive. He develops the motive by playing a sixteenth note triplet figure that corresponds to the phrase in Figure 5-4. Montgomery follows the harmony closely and relies on the guide tones by diatonically moving the motive down by whole steps.

**Figure 5-5 "What's New" Chorus 1**

The image shows a musical staff in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats. The melody is divided into three sections:
 

- Motive:** The first measure, starting with an Eb-7 chord. It features a triplet of eighth notes (G4, Ab4, Bb4) followed by a quarter note (C5).
- Motivic Development:** The next two measures, starting with an Ab7 chord. The melody continues with the triplet motif, then moves to a DbMaj7 chord in the second measure.
- Resolution:** The final measure, resolving the harmonic progression.

### Harmonic approach

When Montgomery begins his third chorus on “Unit 7,” he incorporates chordal elements with his octave ideas. He creates a call and response with the octave notes as the call phrase. The response is a chord stab in between the octaves. He alternates the chord stab between a G<sup>-7</sup> and a C<sup>9</sup>. Another way to comprehend the chordal aspect is to view the G<sup>-7</sup> as a C<sup>7</sup>sus. Montgomery takes the same concept and transposes the chords up an interval of a fourth. The harmony returns to the tonic and is followed by an A<sup>7</sup> chord where Montgomery resolves the measure with an A<sup>7</sup>#5.

**Figure 5-6 "Unit 7" Chorus 3**

The image shows a musical staff in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats. The melody is divided into three lines, each showing a call and response pattern:
 

- Line 1:** Call (C7 chord) - Response (G-7/Csus7 chord) - Call (C7 chord) - Response (C9 chord) - Call (C7 chord).
- Line 2:** Response (G-7/Csus7 chord) - Call (C7 chord) - Response (C9 chord) - Call (A7 chord) - Response (C-7 chord) - Call (C7 chord).
- Line 3:** Response (F7 chord) - Call (C7 chord) - Response (C9 chord) - Call (C7 chord) - Response (A7#5 chord) - Solo Continues...

The harmony on “Four on Six” is simple in the ‘A’ sections. When approaching the ‘B’ section, the tonal centers move quickly. The harmonic rhythm of the ‘B’ section is in half notes and Montgomery has two beats to address the changes. He adjusts by ignoring the ii chord of each measure and prioritizes the V<sup>7</sup> chord by outlining all its chord tones. He uses the 3rd, root note, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> of each dominant chord in the descending ii-V progression. Montgomery replaces the 5 with a #5 of the Eb<sup>7</sup> chord, providing variation to his sequences. Montgomery also highlights the 11<sup>th</sup> of the D<sup>7</sup> chord. The 11<sup>th</sup> in that measure works well because G-natural is the 7<sup>th</sup> of the preceding A-<sup>7</sup>. He directly addresses each change with an anticipation of the G-<sup>7</sup> resolution at the end of the phrase. Rhythmically, Montgomery keeps the theme simple—as the phrase is played with only quarter notes.

**Figure 5-7 "Four on Six" Chorus 3**

The musical notation shows a descending ii-V progression in 4/4 time, starting with a C-7 chord and ending with an Ab7 chord. The chords and their notes are as follows:

- C-7:** 3 (finger), Root (C), 7 (finger), 5 (finger)
- F7:** 3 (finger), Root (F), 7 (finger), 5 (finger)
- Bb-7:** 3 (finger), Root (Bb), 7 (finger), #5 (finger)
- Eb7:** 11 (finger), Root (Eb), 7 (finger), #5 (finger)
- A-7:** 11 (finger), Root (A), 7 (finger), #5 (finger)
- D7:** 11 (finger), Root (D), 7 (finger), #5 (finger)
- Eb-7:** 5 (finger), 7 (finger), 3 (finger)
- Ab7:** 3 (finger), Anticipation for G-7

## Chapter 6 - Chordal solos

Montgomery's chordal solos consist of common chord voicings that many guitarists, past and present, continue to utilize. Montgomery commonly uses three and four-note voicings. His chordal solos often omit the root note and contain harmonic substitutions that fit with the harmony of the song. The main type of chords Montgomery uses in his solos are "Drop 2" voicings. A "Drop" voicing is when a pitch of a chord, built upon thirds, is dropped down an octave (Laukens, 2014). "Drop 2" voicings are chords that drop the second highest pitch of a seventh chord while the other pitches remain in their original register. These chords fit well on the fretboard and are introduced to beginner and intermediate guitarists. Montgomery uses these chords to focus on creating a melody with the highest pitch of a particular voicing. The top note can easily be heard above the other pitches of a chord shape and the volume of the other musicians in a group. Each inversion of a "dropped" voicing provides melodic movement as the layout of the chord changes.

Montgomery also explores the use of chord substitutions in his solos and accompaniment. His use of substitutions allows him to move melodically while playing chords and to generate tension against the harmony. Chord substitutions share common chord tones and imply a similar harmonic function to the original chord that is being substituted. This technique is used to move away from the sound of a repeated chord progression and to create a new harmonic direction. Figures 6-1 and 6-2 show different Drop 2 guitar voicings with their differing chord qualities and inversions.

**Figure 6-1 Major, Minor, and Dominant Guitar Voicings**

**C Major 7: Root on E**      **C Minor 7: Root on E**      **C Dominant: Root on E**

T	8	12	1	5	8	11	1	5	8	11	1	5
A	9	12	4	5	8	12	3	5	9	12	3	5
B	8	10	2	7	8	10	1	6	8	10	2	5
	8	12	3	7	8	11	3	6	8	12	3	6
	Root	1st	2nd	3rd	Root	1st	2nd	3rd	Root	1st	2nd	3rd
	Inversion	Inversion	Inversion	Inversion	Inversion	Inversion	Inversion	Inversion	Inversion	Inversion	Inversion	Inversion

**C Major 7: Root on A**      **C Minor 7: Root on A**      **C Dominant: Root on A**

T	5	7	13	13	3	6	11	13	5	8	11	13
A	4	8	9	12	3	6	8	12	5	8	9	12
B	5	9	10	14	3	6	10	13	5	7	10	13
	3	7	10	14	3	6	10	13	3	7	10	13
	Root	1st	2nd	3rd	Root	1st	2nd	3rd	Root	1st	2nd	3rd
	Inversion	Inversion	Inversion	Inversion	Inversion	Inversion	Inversion	Inversion	Inversion	Inversion	Inversion	Inversion

**C Major 7: Root on D**      **C Minor 7: Root on D**      **C Dominant: Root on D**

T	12	3	7	8	11	3	6	8	12	3	6	8
A	12	1	5	8	11	3	6	8	12	1	5	8
B	10	4	5	8	10	3	6	8	10	2	5	8
	10	2	5	8	10	1	6	8	10	2	5	8
	Root	1st	2nd	3rd	Root	1st	2nd	3rd	Root	1st	2nd	3rd
	Inversion	Inversion	Inversion	Inversion	Inversion	Inversion	Inversion	Inversion	Inversion	Inversion	Inversion	Inversion



**Figure 6-2 Diminished and Half Diminished Guitar Voicings**

The figure displays two sets of guitar voicings. The top set, labeled 'C Half Diminished', shows three roots: E, A, and D. For each root, it provides the Root Inversion, 1st Inversion, 2nd Inversion, and 3rd Inversion. The bottom set, labeled 'C Diminished', also shows three roots: E, A, and D, with the same inversion structure. Each chord is represented by a musical staff with notes and a guitar tablature (TAB) staff with fret numbers.

### Chord substitutions

In the chordal solo on “No Blues,” Montgomery is combining his octave tier with the chordal tier of his improvisational approach. He repeats the note, F, to jump to the melody note of a chord. Montgomery establishes a motif with the harmony by moving diminished 7<sup>th</sup> chords by half-steps. The chromatic movement in the chords makes the melody note rise and fall chromatically. The diminished chords are used as chord substitutions that can be justified to fit the harmony of “No Blues” with the altered notes of a dominant chord. Notice how some of the chords have multiple functions in different parts of Figure 6-3. An A diminished 7<sup>th</sup> is used as an F<sup>7</sup>b9 over a F<sup>7</sup> chord and a D<sup>7</sup>b9 when the harmonic changes move to a D<sup>7</sup> chord. The diminished chord is a unique tool for improvisors that encompasses many different functions, especially for dominant chords.

Figure 6-3 "No Blues" Chorus 12

The musical score consists of six staves of music in 4/4 time, featuring a variety of chords and chordal textures. The chords are annotated as follows:

- Staff 1: F7, Cdim7 (F7 b9), Bdim7 (F7 #9 #11 13), Bbdim7 (Bb7 #9 #11 13), Adim7 (F7 b9), Abdim7 (Bb7 b9)
- Staff 2: Gdim7 (C7b9), Gbdim7 (F7b9), Bdim7, F7 #9 #5, Bb7 9 13
- Staff 3: Bb7, F7 #5 #9, Bb7 9 13, Abdim7 (Bdim7), Cdim7 (F7 b9)
- Staff 4: F7, Bdim7 (F7 #9 #11 13), Bbdim7 (A7b9), Adim7 (D7 b9), Abdim7 (G7 b9)
- Staff 5: G-7, Bdim7 (G7 b9), Fdim7 (G7b9), C7, Edim7 (C7 b9), Cdim7 (F7 b9)
- Staff 6: F7, Bdim7 (G7 b9), Bbdim7 (C7b9), Adim7 (F7 b9), F7 Resolution Solo Continues...

In Montgomery's solos, he would delay resolution of a phrase and sustain a  $V^7$  chord. By omitting the  $I^7$  chord, he is playing over the bar-line and utilizing a technique called the Bar-line shift. The Bar-line shift is when a soloist, "... arrives at a given chord late, sometimes a whole measure late, or earlier than the given placement." (Coker, 1991, p.83). A late resolution of harmony provides tension in places where the listener would not expect. In "No Blues," Montgomery holds a  $C^{7\#9}$  chord in the first measure of his 17<sup>th</sup> chorus. He resolves the  $C^7$  with a root-less  $Db^{7\#9}$  on beat four which is the tritone substitution of the tonic. He continues by moving the dominant  $\#9$  chord chromatically upwards and resolves the  $Bb^7$  with another tritone substitution in the following measure. Montgomery proceeds with the chromatic movement of

the chordal passage and ends the phrase with a D half-diminished chord over the B $\flat$ <sup>7</sup>. D half-diminished can be used as a B $\flat$ <sup>9</sup> chord without the root note (B $\flat$ ). It is important to note that all the chords in Figure 6-4 do not contain the root note.

**Figure 6-4 "No Blues" Chorus 17**

The musical notation for Figure 6-4 consists of two staves in 4/4 time. The first staff shows measures 1 through 4. Measure 1 has a C7 chord. Measure 2 has an F7 chord. Measure 3 has a B $\flat$ 7 chord. Measure 4 has an F7 chord. The second staff shows measures 5 through 8. Measure 5 has a G7 #9 chord. Measure 6 has a D7 13 chord. Measure 7 has an F7 Alt chord. Measure 8 has a Ddim7 chord. Annotations include: (F7 b9) (Delayed F Resolution) under measure 3; (D7 #9) (B $\flat$ 7 9 #5) under measure 6; Eb7 #9 (Tritone Substitution of B $\flat$ 7) and E7 #9 (Delayed B $\flat$  Resolution) under measure 7; and F7 #9 (Delayed F Resolution) and G $\flat$ 7 #9 (Tritone Substitution of C7) under measure 8. The final chord in measure 8 is labeled 'Solo Continues...'. The key signature has one flat (B $\flat$ ).

## Chord-melodies

Like a pianist, Montgomery uses the highest pitch of a chord voicing as the melody. The chord tones underneath provide a thicker texture than the single-note and octave tiers. He would create a chord melody by using chord inversions, substitutions, and repeated pitches over harmonic changes. In “Unit 7,” Montgomery is alternating between a G $^{-7}$  and C<sup>13</sup> in the ‘A’ section. With that, Montgomery repeats a C-natural above the chords as the melody note. The repetition of the melody note can become monotonous, so the main aspect to listen for is the inner line movement of the harmony. Between G $^{-7}$  and C<sup>7</sup>, G $^{-7}$  is built with an F-natural and C<sup>7</sup> contains an E natural. In essence, Montgomery is suspending the third of the C<sup>7</sup> by approaching it with a G $^{-7}$ . The same idea is repeated over the IV<sup>7</sup> (F<sup>7</sup>) chord in the fifth bar of the section.

Montgomery uses a C<sup>-7</sup> chord to suspend the third (A-natural) of the F<sup>7</sup>. In the following measure, Montgomery approaches the F<sup>7</sup> with a C<sup>7</sup> altered chord, producing a V<sup>7</sup> to I harmonic movement.

When the harmony of the “A” section moves to the <sup>b</sup>VIMaj<sup>7</sup> (A<sup>b</sup>Maj<sup>7</sup>), Montgomery uses an upper harmonic extension of the A<sup>b</sup>Maj<sup>7</sup> with an E<sup>b</sup> major triad. The E<sup>b</sup> major triad provides the 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> degrees of A<sup>b</sup>Maj<sup>7</sup>. This change allows the top pitch to move more melodically as opposed to the repeated C-natural in the beginning of the phrase. Over the G<sup>7</sup> in the following measure, he uses the harmonic structure that lies within an A<sup>b</sup> melodic minor scale. In previous figures, Montgomery is known to use the melodic minor scale over a dominant chord in his single-note solos. He uses that idea in a chordal manner by playing an A<sup>b</sup>-9 chord, without the root note, over a G<sup>7</sup>. The A<sup>b</sup>-<sup>9</sup> manipulates the G<sup>7</sup> chord into an altered dominant. The G<sup>7</sup> altered is used to resolve to a CMaj<sup>7</sup> in the following two measures, which Montgomery purposely changes to create a stronger resolution.

**Figure 6-5 "Unit 7" Chorus 4**

The musical score for "Unit 7" Chorus 4 is presented in three staves, each in 4/4 time. The first staff (measures 1-4) features a C<sup>7</sup> chord above the first measure. A green line labeled "Repeated Top Pitch Melody" connects the top notes of the first four measures. Chord annotations below the staff include G-7, C13, G-7, G-9, C13, G-9, C13, G-9, G-9, C13, and C7#5. The second staff (measures 5-8) starts with an F<sup>7</sup> chord above the first measure. Chord annotations include C-7, F9, C-7, C7 #5 #9, F9, F7 b9, G-9, C13, G-9, C13, and D Major Triad (Passing Chord). The third staff (measures 9-12) features a green line labeled "Top Pitch Melodic Movement" connecting the top notes of the first four measures. Chord annotations include Eb Triad (AbMaj9), C Minor Triad (AbMaj7 No Root), G7 #9 13 (Ab Melodic Minor Structure), G7 b9 13, G7, G7 b5 b9, CMaj7, A7 #5, C Major Triad, and Db9 (Tritone Substitution of G7).

In the 'B' section of Montgomery's chordal solo on "Unit 7," he takes a more melodic approach. He relies on triads and chord substitutions to allow movement in the melody line. He begins with a F major triad in first inversion which resembles a D-7 chord without the root note. He moves the triad to the second inversion to raise the melody pitch. He continues this technique throughout the whole section. Notice Montgomery inserting triads as substitutions and Drop 2 chords with the inversions. Since Paul Chambers is establishing the root note of the harmony in his basslines, Montgomery omits the root in many of his harmonic structures. One can translate these ideas and create chord melodies in solos and add harmony to head melodies of standards.

**Figure 6-6 "Unit 7" Chorus 4**

The musical score for "Unit 7" Chorus 4 is presented in two staves of music. Above the first staff, four chord labels are placed: D-7, G7, E-7, and A7. Below the first staff, a series of chord descriptions are listed: F Major Triad 1st Inversion, F Major Triad 2nd Inversion, D7 b9 Imposition, Passing Chord, D-7 (9) 3rd Inversion, B diminished Triad G7 Substitution, E Minor Triad 2nd Inversion, Passing Chord A7, Passing Chord Bb7 Imposition, C# diminished Triad A7 Substitution, and F# Minor Triad 2nd Inversion. Above the second staff, four chord labels are placed: D-7, G7, E7, and A7. Below the second staff, a series of chord descriptions are listed: F Major Triad 1st Inversion, F Major Triad 2nd Inversion, Passing Chord, B diminished Triad G7 Substitution, Passing Chord, D-7, G Minor Triad E7 #9 b5 Substitution, F# Minor Triad A13 Substitution, F Minor Triad D7 #9 b5 Substitution, and E Minor Triad G13 Substitution. The score concludes with the text "Solo Continues..."

## Chapter 7 - Conclusion

Although cut short, Montgomery's famous career contains a large amount of musical information that beginner, intermediate, and advanced jazz guitarists can utilize. One does not need to use the exact notes in Montgomery's solos. Improvisors embody the origins of his musical techniques to integrate the fundamental jazz vocabulary of our predecessors into their solos. Daniel Lee in his report entitled "Emily Remler: Product or Prodigy?" explained how learning jazz phrasing is like learning a new language.

It is a necessary part of jazz education that learning the basic jazz language comes from listening to, and attempting to imitate, the jazz vocabulary of the past masters. Just as an infant learns to talk by listening to its parents and copying the sounds they hear; budding jazz students listen to music and musicians they wish to emulate and do whatever they can to achieve those sounds. It is a natural and necessary part of the journey (Lee, 2014, p.32).

The relationship between jazz music and language can seem intimidating, especially to newer improvisors. Soloing, however, in style can be broken down into three simple segments and will make the learning process more streamlined.

The first step is to find a jazz solo with a phrase or idea that is subjectively compelling. Find which recording, album, and artist the lick is being implemented. Background knowledge is important because it may give clues on how to approach the sound. This report provides a plethora of Montgomery's ideas that you can find in the *Smokin' at the Half Note* album. One must learn the sound by ear and gain the ability to sing the riff at a slow or medium tempo, with and without the recording. The singing portion of learning a musical statement is not used to improve one's vocal ability, but to ingrain the selected riff into the aural mind. In essence, if you are unable to sing the phrase, you cannot perform it.

The second step is to discover how to play that idea on the instrument by ear. Applying the singing portion of the learning process to the instrument helps the player assimilate the aural mind to the hands and limbs. This phase relates to a child speaking a coherent word or sentence for the first time—simply by listening and attempting to recreate what they hear. Once the phrase is learned on the instrument, one must have the ability to transpose the riff in all tonal centers. Not only will the sound stabilize in one's memory, but a musician will learn to adapt to many other jazz standards they come across.

The third step is what this report entails the most. One must analyze and evaluate the origins of the phrase. A musician must question the performer's overall thought process. Investigate where the phrase came from in terms of a scale, harmonic structure, style, etc.... This report provides many possible theories on Montgomery's thought process, but one is not limited to only one mindset. All musicians can create their own concepts that will help the individual to understand a phrase in their own way. With that, a musician can innovate a musical idea by adjusting certain characteristics of a lick. For example, one could move a lick to a different register, adjust individual pitches to fit different chord qualities, or re-create a whole new phrase based on the original technique.

There are many different strategies to learning the jazz language, but I believe this is the way the masters became legends in the jazz community. The learning process can be applied to any style of music and a musician can sound more sophisticated by referencing the past in a suitable manner. The licks, phrases, ideas, and sounds of our predecessors are often praised by the musicians of today because they reflect the appropriate style. Montgomery's solos contain an abundance of material that embodies the blues and jazz language, and anyone can transfer his techniques into their own sound.





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## Appendix A - Selected discography

Below is a table of Wes Montgomery's discography as a leader and sideman.

### Leader

**Table 0-1 Recordings by Wes Montgomery**

Album	Artist	Record Label	Reference Number
The Wes Montgomery Trio: A Dynamic New Sound (1959)	Wes Montgomery	Riverside Records	RLP-1156
The Incredible Jazz Guitar of Wes Montgomery (1960)	Wes Montgomery	Riverside Records	0888072307902
Movin' Along (1960)	Wes Montgomery	Riverside Records	RLP-9342
SO Much Guitar! (1961)	Wes Montgomery	Riverside Records	RLP-382
Full House (1962)	Wes Montgomery	Riverside Records	RCD-30129-2
Guitar on the Go (1963)	Wes Montgomery	Riverside Records	RLP-9494
Fusion!: Wes Montgomery with Strings (1963)	Wes Montgomery	Riverside Records	OJCCD 368-2
Boss Guitar (1963)	Wes Montgomery	Riverside Records	OJCCD-261-2
Portrait of Wes (1966)	Wes Montgomery	Riverside Records	99986
Bumpin' (1965)	Wes Montgomery	Verve Records	UCCU41012
Smokin' at the Half Note (1965)	Wes Montgomery with the Wyton Kelly Trio	Verve Records	829 578-2
Goin' out of My Head (1966)	Wes Montgomery	Verve Records	V6-8642
Jimmy and Wes: The Dynamic Duo (1966)	Wes Montgomery with Jimmy Smith	Verve Records	V6-8678
Tequila (1966)	Wes Montgomery	Verve Records	831 671-2
California Dreaming (1966)	Wes Montgomery	Verve Records	827 842-2
A Day in the Life (1967)	Wes Montgomery	A&M Records	75021 0816 2

Down Here on the Ground (1968)	Wes Montgomery	A&M Records	CD 0802
Road Song (1968)	Wes Montgomery	A&M Records	CD 0822
Willow Weep For Me (1966)	Wes Montgomery	Verve Records	V6-8765
Smokin' in Seattle: Live at the Penthouse (2017)	Wes Montgomery with the Wynton Kelly Trio	Resonance Records	HCD-2029

### Sideman

**Table 0-2 Recordings with Wes Montgomery**

Album	Artist	Record Label	Reference Number
Work Song (1960)	Nat Adderley	Riverside Records	RLP-1167
Cannonball Adderley and the Poll Winners Featuring Ray Brown and Wes Montgomery (1961)	Cannonball Adderley	Riverside Records	RS 9355
A Good Git-Together (1959)	Jon Hendricks	Pacific Jazz Records	WP-1283
West Coast Blues (1960)	Harold Land	Jazzland	JLP 20
Kismet (A Jazz Interpretation by the Mastersounds) (1958)	The Mastersounds	World Pacific Records	PJ-1243

## Appendix B - Selected video recordings

Below is a list of video recordings about Wes Montgomery.

1. Wes Montgomery, TV show in Brussels, Belgium, April 4<sup>th</sup>, 1965 (Colorized).  
[\[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PbGGP\\_YGAi4&t=202s&ab\\_channel=ebjazz93\]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PbGGP_YGAi4&t=202s&ab_channel=ebjazz93)
2. Wes Montgomery- Here's That Rainy Day- Live London 1965  
[\[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-iVgONy8kMY&ab\\_channel=saag111\]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-iVgONy8kMY&ab_channel=saag111)
3. Wes Montgomery, Live at The BBC Studios, March 25<sup>th</sup>, 1965. (In Color)  
[\[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L8V0eYLBiJ0&ab\\_channel=ebjazz93\]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L8V0eYLBiJ0&ab_channel=ebjazz93)
4. Wes Montgomery at 26 Years Old  
[\[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7V8JnISFYc8&ab\\_channel=jacksonwheeler\]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7V8JnISFYc8&ab_channel=jacksonwheeler)
5. Wes Montgomery, VPRO Studio, Hilversum, Holland, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1965 (colorized)  
[\[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RyV6ijU9HK4&ab\\_channel=ebjazz93\]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RyV6ijU9HK4&ab_channel=ebjazz93)
6. George Benson on first learning about Wes.  
[\[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GNgdmnuXGR0&ab\\_channel=FurtherWesBound\]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GNgdmnuXGR0&ab_channel=FurtherWesBound)
7. Wes Montgomery Live in Hamburg 1965  
[\[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mygyWbgcZ50&ab\\_channel=Standel\]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mygyWbgcZ50&ab_channel=Standel)
8. The Genius of Wes Montgomery  
[\[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L4-KJu4czaQ&ab\\_channel=RickBeato\]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L4-KJu4czaQ&ab_channel=RickBeato)
9. George Benson Wes Montgomery thumb technique  
[\[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mTry3HN89p8&ab\\_channel=MBP\]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mTry3HN89p8&ab_channel=MBP)
10. Pat Metheny digs deep into what made Wes Montgomery great  
[\[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VnstFslb5Y0&ab\\_channel=FurtherWesBound\]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VnstFslb5Y0&ab_channel=FurtherWesBound)
11. The Chord Solos of Wes Montgomery- Techniques and Concepts

[\[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3sDG1Hs-ZbA&ab\\_channel=RickBeato\]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3sDG1Hs-ZbA&ab_channel=RickBeato)

## Appendix C - Additional books and documents

Below is a list of additional books and documents about Wes Montgomery.

Dunskus, O. (2020). *Wes Montgomery: His Life and his Music* (First). Books on Demand.

Gunderman, Richard. (2020). *Indy Beacons: Wes Montgomery, a Modest King of Jazz*.

Indianapolis Business Journal. <https://www.ibj.com/articles/wes-montgomery-a-modest-king-of-jazz>.

Iannapolo, Robert. (2018). *Verve: The Sound of America. Association for Recorded Sound*, 49(1). Google Scholar.

Komara, Edward. (2016). *Wes Montgomery: One Night in Indy/Art Pepper Quartet: Live at Fat Tuesday's. Association for Recorded Sound*, 47(2). Google Scholar.

Larsen, J. (2018, June 30). *3 Reasons Why Wes Montgomery is Amazing and Worth Checking Out. Jens Larsen*. <https://jenslarsen.nl/tag/wes-montgomery-four-on-six-guitar-lesson/>.

Levy, J., & Hall, D. (2000). *Men, Women, and Girl Singers: My Life As a Musician Turned Talent Manager*. Beckham Publications Group Inc.

May, L. (2005). *Early Musical Development of Selected African American Jazz Musicians in Indianapolis in the 1930s and 1940s. Journal of Historical Research in Music Education*, 27(1), 32. Google Scholar.

Ratliff, B. (2005, February 25). *Pat Metheny: An Idealist Reconnects with His Mentors. The New York Times*, 1.

Tarkington, B. (2020, May 13). *Paying Tribute to Wes Montgomery's 'Smokin' at the Half Note'. Jazz Guitar Today*. <https://jazzguitartoday.com/2020/05/paying-tribute-to-wes-montgomerys-smokin-at-the-half-note/>.