

Louis Armstrong on Struttin' With Some Barbecue

Transcribed by Miguel Gorodi

Ab

5 Ab F7

9 Bbm Eb7 Fm

13 Bb7 Eb7

17 Ab

21 Ab7 Db 3 3

25 Db Dbm Ab F7

29 Bbm Eb7 Ab

Analysis

Major 6 material with bluesy chromatic-approaches to the 3rds. The b3s are used both as pick-ups (off the beat, less harmonic weight) and on beats (more harmonic weight) combined to add extra punch to the syncopation. Notice the tri-tone interval between the 6th and b3; Armstrong uses this frequently.



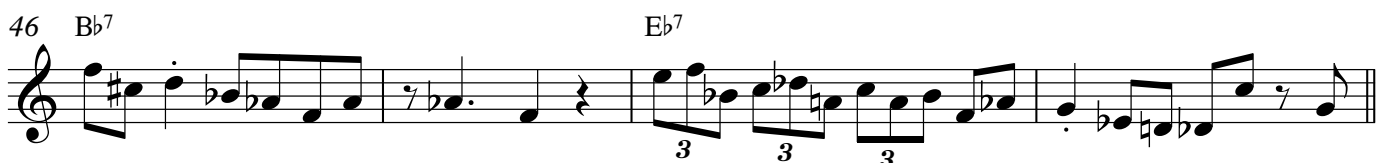
Hip beat 4 pickup which, when in the context of rhythm section hits on 2+4, results in a sort of temporal ambiguity. Amrstrong never in doubt though. Notice how he uses the 9th (highlighted red) on chord VI as a chord extension rather than a passing tone.

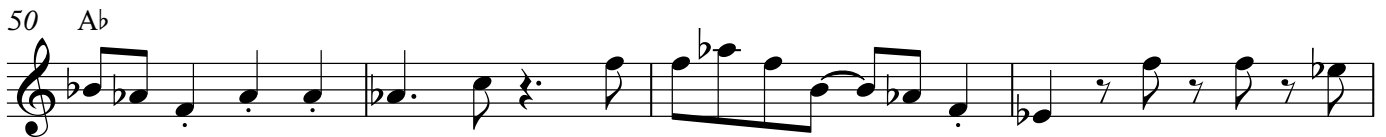


Beautiful and sophisticated use of chromatic-approaches to chord tones that embellish the voice-leading (highlighted green). We can interperate that 9th over the dominant as a chord extension or as a delayed 5th from the previous chord (to prolong the tension before harmonic resolution), but either way we *feel* the sense of movement or weaving in-and-out, and *hear* the harmonic colour.



How to comprehend or explain this explosion!?! Armstrong casually throws this virtuosic triplet phrase in - imagine listening to it having never heard Coltrane, Parker, Dizzy or Tatum, nevermind having the aural imagination to hear it, the technical facility to play it, and the audacity to choose to! It happens in a thrilling whirlwind when I listen to it, but to try to understand it in a way that I could play something similar, I imagine he is super-imposing the dominant chord's respective iim7 chord and chromatically approaching the chord tones from below. He follows this with that passing maj7 to the b7 (aka the bebop scale!) then leaps up a maj7 interval like he was Kenny Wheeler (note, Armstrong loved to make this leap from the b7 up to the 13 on dominant chords)





Targetting that 13th as an extension of the dominant chord, and there's that maj7 leap up from the b7th to the 13th again.



Phrases that hang off those consecutive dotted crotchets. Cross-rhythmic melody. You can tell he is in complete control of the original harmonic rhythm by how where he places the movement of his voice-leading. Also notice how much he uses 9ths as extensions rather than passing notes.

