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“GREAT” QUINTETS

OF

MILES DAVIS

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JURY APPROVAL PAGE

We certify that, as the jury, we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

“GREAT” QUINTETS OF MILES DAVIS

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Miles Davis, trumpetist, composer, innovator, and bandleader, led two quintets about a decade apart, once in mid-1950s, and mid-1960s. In later years, these bands became known as the “great” quintets of Miles Davis. The first “great” quintet of 1950s included John Coltrane, Red Garland, Paul Chambers, and Philly Joe Jones. The second “great” quintet had Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter, and Tony Williams. Both bands set the standards of their period and introduced innovations to jazz music; and despite their differences, the bands are being referred to as a continuation of each other.

This thesis aims to discover and explain the connections between the first “great” quintet, and the second “great” quintet, by means of their historical and musical analyses. By drawing parallels and remarking the distinctions of these two historic bands led by Davis, this thesis has a goal of establishing the reasons for the common perception on the two bands being each other’s continuation.

Keywords: Miles Davis, “great” quintets, hard bop, post-bop, innovation in jazz, experiments in jazz

ÖZ

MILES DAVIS'İN "GREAT" BEŞLİLERİ

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Miles Davis, trompetçi, besteci, yenilikçi ve grup lideri, 1950'lerin ve 1960'ların ortalarında, yaklaşık on yıl arayla iki farklı beşli yönetti. İlerleyen yıllarda, bu gruplar Miles Davis'in "great" beşlileri adı ile anılmaya başlandı. 1950'lerdeki ilk "great" beşli kadrosunda John Coltrane, Red Garland, Paul Chambers ve Philly Joe Jones'u barındırıyordu. İkinci "great" beşlide ise Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter, ve Tony Williams vardı. İki grup da kendi döneminin standartlarını belirledi, ve caz müziğinde yenilikler ileri sürdü; ve farklılıklarına ragmen, bu gruplar bir dereceye kadar birbirlerinin devamı olarak anılmaktadırlar.

Bu tez, grupların tarihi ve müzikal analizleri yoluyla, birinci "great" beşli, ve ikinci "great" beşli arasındaki bağlantıları keşfetmeyi ve açıklamayı hedeflemektedir. Bu tezin, Davis tarafından yönetilmiş olan bu iki grup arasında paralellikleri göstererek, ve farklarını belirterek, gruplar hakkındaki, birbirlerinin devamı olmaları algının sebeplerini ortaya koymak şeklinde bir amacı vardır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Miles Davis, "great" beşliler, hard bop, post-bop, caz müziğinde yenilikler, caz müziğinde deneyler

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Ahmet Ateş Şentürk

İzmir, 2024

TEXT OF OATH

I declare and honestly confirm that my study, titled "GREAT" QUINTETS OF MILES DAVIS and presented as a Master's in Art Thesis, has been written without applying any assistance inconsistent with scientific ethics and traditions. I declare, to the best of my knowledge and belief, that all content and ideas drawn directly or indirectly from external sources are indicated in the text and listed in the list of references.

Ahmet Ateş Şentürk
25.09.2024

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SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

SYMBOLS:

A-B-C…	Musical note names
I-II-III…	Chord/Scale degrees
min	Minor chord
maj	Major chord
dim	Diminished chord
aug	Augmented chord
(no symbol+number)	Dominant chord (e.g., F7: F dominant seventh)
♭	Musical flat symbol
♯	Musical sharp symbol
7-♭9-♯11-13	Chord/scale extensions (after a chord or degree symbol, e.g., A♭7♯11, IIm7)

ABBREVIATIONS:

FGQ First Great Quintet

SGQ Second Great Quintet

1. CHAPTER: INTRODUCTION

Miles Dewey Davis III (b. 1926, d. 1991), was a widely known trumpetist, composer, innovator, band leader and one of the most influential figures of jazz music. In pursuit of producing the constantly evolving musical concepts in his mind, Davis was appointed as the inventor of unprecedented concepts of playing jazz. This led to his fame as the creator of subgenres of jazz music. Davis has been known to create "cool jazz" in 1950s with the *Birth of the Cool* recordings he made in 1949. With his first "great" quintet, he was identified as (along with other musicians and bands such as Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, the Modern Jazz Quartet, Clifford Brown, Horace Silver, etc.) one of the pioneers of "hard bop" from some of the music writers in the mid-1950s, as well as scholars who studied the music of Davis. Waters (2011) writes, this first quintet's Prestige recordings "set the standard for hard bop improvisation and rhythm section accompanimental roles" (p. 14). *Kind of Blue* (1959) has established a modal approach to playing jazz; the second "great" quintet's albums have been proclaimed to pioneer "post-bop" (*E.S.P*, *Miles Smiles*, *Nefertiti*, *Sorcerer*) by restraining the uncontrolled flexibility of "free jazz" in mid-1960s, as well as "rock-jazz" (*Miles in the Sky*, *Filles de Kilimanjaro*)—which would be called "jazz fusion" eventually—by incorporating electric instruments (such as electric bass, Fender Rhodes) and straight-eight rock rhythms.

Davis has led crowded bands in various albums and projects, such as *Birth of the Cool* (1957), *Miles Ahead* (1957), *Sketches of Spain* (1960), *Bitches Brew* (1970) and so on. Those recordings undeniably achieved great success, influenced many musicians, and became subjects to scholar works (see for example Svorinich, 2015). But more than anything, Miles Davis is known for his works with his small groups. The sextet of *Kind of Blue* (1959), the quintet of *Miles Davis and the Modern Jazz Giants* (1959), the quintet/sextet of *Walkin'* (1957), and more.

Two other groups of Davis are the specific subjects of this thesis. The quintet of the mid to late 1950s, with John Coltrane (b. 1926, d. 1967) on tenor saxophone, "Red"

Garland (b. 1923, d. 1984) on piano, Paul Chambers (d. 1935, d. 1969) on bass, and "Philly" Joe Jones (b. 1923, d. 1985) on drums. And the quintet of the mid to late 1960s, with Wayne Shorter (b. 1933, d. 2023) on tenor saxophone, Herbie Hancock (b. 1940) on piano, Ron Carter (b. 1937) on bass, and Tony Williams (b. 1945, d. 1997) on drums. In scholar, and less formal writing that revolve around jazz; and surely, among the community of jazz performers, these two bands are recognized as the "great" quintets of Miles Davis. For the rest of this thesis, these bands shall be referred to as the first "great" quintet (FGQ), and the second "great" quintet (SGQ).

It is uncertain how and when exactly these bands happened to be called and accepted as the two "great" quintets. But why it happened has been shown in many works in writing, and the bands' influence can be exemplified through countless recordings. Indeed, attempting to explain the "greatness" of these bands is not the goal of this thesis. That would, in one way or another, display an easily falsifiable series of arguments that are bound to be mere subjective opinions.

The fact that both of Davis's quintets are so widely referred to as "great" suggests that they are perceived as the spiritual successor/predecessors of each other. Close examination of the quintets shows the striking resemblances on various instances. Both debut albums establish the band's sound, expanding it with the next ones. Both bands made six studio recordings each, with their last—few—ones displaying experimentation of a new approach to the music, with additions of new musicians, or instruments. As chapter two will demonstrate, both periods that surround their active years, respectively, presents shocking coincidences. And possibly, chronologically the first significant incident that interconnects the quintets is Davis's search for a replacement for Coltrane, which virtually triggered the formation process of the SGQ.

As music is a highly subjective artform like any other, there cannot be found an academic consensus that describes Davis's career as a whole. Especially for the SGQ years, and later. Some works despise that period (Schwendener, 1987), or at least assign a lower significance (see e.g., Baraka, 2009; Gleason, 1975). Others appoint those years as Davis's artistic high point (see e.g., Coolman, 1997; Svorinich, 2015; Waters, 2011; Yudkin, 2008). Although it should be mentioned that most of the former texts are either non-scholar criticisms, or works from humanities, and the latter ones are mostly works of jazz scholars, musicians, or both.

However, there is one characteristic in Davis's music, for which it can be safely said that there is a consensus, since even the most opposing texts agree on it. Davis's capabilities in bandleading: assembling groups that are exactly right for a specific approach, creating a space for musicians to bring out their individual qualities, and provide the freedom for them to develop. Almost all—if not all—the works above distinguish this aspect of Davis one way or another (see also Chambers, 1983, 1985; Coleman, 2014; Michaelsen, 2019). Some of them delve into this, claiming that Davis's music expects a "unique improvisational attention," and "invokes" sensitivity to all signifying elements of performance: performers, compositions, cues, and interactions between them (Smith, 2010). Therefore, the connection and the mutual "greatness" of these bands can possibly be attributed to how well these aspects were realized within them.

The goal of this thesis, then, is to determine the similarities and distinctions of the two bands, to explore the how and why—and possibly if—the two quintets are in a relationship of spiritual successor/predecessor. By means of examining the formation, and the music-making processes of the quintets, through the academic literature, musical analysis, and history of the bands.

1.1. Additional Descriptions

In the jazz world, it is common for musicians to be known by their nicknames than their full names or last names, for example, Charlie Parker as "Bird" and John Coltrane as "Trane." Similarly, Miles Davis is widely recognized simply as "Miles." A use he adopted and used in various contexts, such as album titles (e.g., *Miles Smiles*) and compositions ("Milestones," "Miles Ahead"), occasionally with a touch of humor. In acknowledgment of Miles Davis's distinguished legacy and the informal tradition he himself embraced; this thesis will refer to him as "Miles" from this point on. This departure from the standard academic practice of using surnames aims to honor the personal identity Miles himself favored. For all other individuals mentioned—and while citing any work by Miles Davis—the conventional format of full names or last names will be adhered to.

Following this informal tradition, in the thesis, there are other terms that are mostly used in the oral tradition of jazz. And some of them are being incorporated into

academic use. This thesis will embrace some of these terminology in order to be written in words of jazz practitioners. Conventionally, the correct word to mention a musical artwork is "piece," if not a more specific term, such as composition, sonata, aria, symphony, concerto, and so on. Jazz musicians, on the other hand, have been using the word "tune" more commonly, and sometimes "song." Most jazz standards were compositions in earlier film scores and popular "songs" that were popular in the USA. Older standards commonly come under the term "The Great American Songbook," which is a rather loose definition than a particular book.

Compositions of jazz musicians also became standards in the later years. These tunes can be called differently based on the period one is in. In 1939, for example, "Take the A Train" was an original composition, it was just released, but today it is a commonly known standard. Compositions under these conditions are commonly called a "tune" by the jazz musicians and writers from the early days of jazz. Therefore, this thesis will use the word "tune" while mentioning a jazz composition, when necessary.

"Rhythm changes" is another term that can be seen in this thesis. It is derived from a George Gershwin composition called "I Got Rhythm." Many jazz musicians composed tunes that use the progression, or the chord "changes" of "I Got Rhythm," and this tradition created the term "rhythm changes."

During the research stage of this thesis, I discovered that the significance of the FGQ's has been studied to a lesser extent than that of the SGQ. While shedding a light on this disparity is not the primary focus of this dissertation, the chapters analyzing the FGQ may provide approximate answers.

2. CHAPTER: FORMATION PROCESSES OF THE QUINTETS

Both bands of Miles Davis are commonly referred to as "great" quintets to point out their influential music, and the perception that the bands are akin to each other. In order to establish cross-referencing points in relation to the foundation of the two quintets of Miles, the following sections, "Miles in Development," and "Miles in Transition," are dedicated to the pivotal events just before the formation of the two quintets. They only examine the critical points in Miles's life leading to the formation of each ensemble. As the formation processes of the bands are quite similar, they will be told successively, therefore any musical analysis, and exploration of aesthetics will be omitted in this chapter.

Sections below will provide insights with the aim to draw parallels and distinctions between these transitional years that led to the formation of the first, and second "great" quintets.

2.1. Miles in Development (1940s-1954): From Bebop to *Birth*, and the Formation of the First "Great" Quintet

2.1.1. Charlie Parker Years, and Starting a Solo Career

At the time when Miles assembled the FGQ in 1955, he was already an accomplished musician. His tenure with Charlie Parker's band in the 1940s gained him recognition in the jazz scene. Both as a performer and a composer, with tunes Miles wrote and played with Parker's band, have now become jazz standards. Such as "Half Nelson," and "Milestones (Old)[1]." Miles writes, playing every night with Parker helped him to

[1] Miles wrote two separate tunes he called "Milestones," one for Charlie Parker's band, and another for his own album *Milestones* (1958). To prevent any confusion, the two are commonly referred to as "Old Milestones" and "New Milestones." One can say that the two compositions with the name "Milestones" represents different milestones for his music. "Old Milestones" stands as a perfect example of a bebop tune, both melodically and harmonically. The melody is composed of successive, fast-paced eighth notes and triplets that follow the harmonic structure with approach and passing tones from the full chromatic scale. The harmonic rhythm consists of one or two chords for every measure, and the chord progression is composed of chains of II-Vs, or substitutions for those chords. "New Milestones," on the other hand, representing his transition to a modal approach, has a minimalist melody that has only seven

record as a leader for the first time, with Parker playing the tenor saxophone for Miles's recording. These sessions were fully released in 1990 under the name *First Miles*, which includes four compositions of Miles, "Milestones," "Little Willie Leaps," "Half Nelson," and "Sippin' at Bell's;" "So I was busy in 1947," he notes (Davis & Troupe, 1990, p. 105). In the late 1940s and early 1950s, possibly unwillingly, Miles set off a new style that was later named "cool jazz." This was accompanied by distress caused by the racial inequality of the period.

Miles assembled a nonet to record the eleven tunes of *Birth of the Cool* (1957). The instrumentation of the nonet can be considered quite unusual. A French horn and a tuba, joining a more conventional list of instruments in jazz: trumpet, alto saxophone, baritone saxophone, trombone, piano, bass, and drums.

The compositions are almost exclusively written and arranged whether by the nonet members, and Gil Evans, who was the main arranger for these sessions. This was the first time Miles and Gil Evans, who was a white musician, were working together. They were aiming for a sound similar to Claude Thornhill's—who was also white—band (Davis & Troupe, 1990, pp. 117-118). Chambers (1983) writes, in 1950, Miles said Thornhill's was one of the best bands of the period (p. 94).

Miles thought that Thornhill's eighteen-piece band was "cumbersome," and he trusted that Evans could arrange the voicings to sound better than Thornhill with half of the instruments (Chambers, 1983, p. 98). Both Mulligan and Evans acknowledged that without Miles, the nonet's unique sound and style could not have been possible. "[Miles] was a complete leader," Evans said, and Mulligan said, "he took the initiative, and put the theories to work," and "the whole nature of interpretation was his;" Miles was the one who made the record deal and the concert dates possible (p. 99).

The nonet sessions of 1949-50 for *Birth of the Cool* (1957) that Miles recorded and arranged with Gil Evans, had figuratively gave birth[2] to a new approach that became widely popular, especially in the West Coast of the USA. Even though the full sessions

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different notes that are mostly statically repeat each other. And the harmonic structure can be simply explained with G-dorian and A-dorian modes.

[2] Admittedly, there is a controversy regarding the origins of the cool style; however, the popularization of the style is commonly attributed to Miles (see, e.g., Tirro, 2009; Kirchner, 1995). Since it is not the goal of this thesis to deeply examine this topic, it is best to avoid the controversy and simply recognize Miles as one of the influential figures of this style, following the existing literature.

were not released until 1957, four of the tunes were released in 1949 and 1950 as 78 RPM records. And the musicians that played in these sessions, Gerry Mulligan and Lee Konitz, namely, and others like Stan Getz, and Dave Brubeck—who was also called as the creator of cool style by Tirro (2009)—had already adopted the "cool" attitude (pp. 27-28).

2.1.2. Backlash of Cool, and the Worst Year of Miles's Life

Cool jazz is commonly characterized with a "more relaxed or less aggressive approach," and is said to be "represented mainly by white musicians," which is opposing the aggressive and "hot" attitude of bebop (Shim, 2010). Miles complains about the term "cool jazz," as it was a made-up term in a way to represent the white musicians, as an alternative to "hot jazz;" music of the Black musicians "in white people minds," Miles writes (Davis & Troupe, 1990, p. 141).

The released recordings of the nonet gained popularity, especially among the Caucasian critics and musicians (Kirchner, 1995). Which overshadowed the African American musicians according to Miles (Davis & Troupe, 1990, p. 141). In 1951, a reader poll named "All Star Band" in the *Metronome* magazine picked Konitz (alto), Kai Winding (trombone), Stan Getz (tenor), Miles, and Max Roach (drums), which was quite upsetting for Miles. As he believed Parker, J. J. Johnson, and one of the "great black tenor players" should have been listed (Davis & Troupe, 1990, p. 141). Miles even finds it "funny" that Dizzy Gillespie was not listed instead of him (p. 141). The 78 RPM record of this "All Star Band" shows the only African American musicians in this group are Miles and Roach (Capitol Jazz Classics, vol. 6). The reader polls of 1953-54 in *Downbeat* and *Metronome* magazines pick Chet Baker for the best trumpetist of that year (Brofsky, 1983). Chambers (1983) writes, the poll that picked Baker acted as an incentive to get himself together, and notes that Baker himself was surprised to the poll, and said he was not "half the trumpeter Dizzy [Gillespie] was, or Kenny Dorham" (p. 176).

Miles appoints 1950 as the worst year of his life (Davis & Troupe, 1990, p. 141). After the nonet sessions, Miles went to France for a series of concerts, where he noticed the prejudice Black people encountered in the US was not existing in Europe; he felt accepted, he was "treated like a human being" (Davis & Troupe, 1990, pp. 125-126). When he was back in the US in late 1949, it became even harder for Miles. While he

was still together with Irene Birth, mother of his two children, Miles met singer Juliette Gréco in Paris and fell in love (pp. 126-129). Because of Miles's family life, and racism they would face in the US, they had to break up. Imitations of *Birth of the Cool* by white musicians "were getting the jobs," he wrote, and that he lost his discipline, and control of his life (p. 129). As a result of all the depressing events, Miles started to use heroin (p. 130).

Miles initiated the nonet sessions to show his sensitive nature and playing with Parker's "savageness and deep fire and emotion" was overpowering Miles (Chambers, 1983, p. 100). Additionally, Miles himself admitted that it was more to his liking to play in a relaxed manner at the time (Davis & Troupe, 1990, pp. 117-119). Miles says it was a "collaborative experiment" with musicians of all colors, and he did not care for their skin; Konitz was the best he could hire, and the arrangements of Mulligan and Evans were exactly what Miles wanted (p. 117). Considering the dichotomy between Miles's vision for collaboration and the repercussions he faced, it could be said that the grief he felt was at an all-time high.

Miles approves the fact that African American and Caucasian people are working together, and he identifies himself with strong, rebel figures, regardless of their skin color: such as Martin Luther King Jr., Marlon Brando, and James Dean (Davis & Troupe, 1990, pp. 197-198). Baraka (1997) writes, with the synthesis of two social concepts— "African American" and "American" in his words—Miles achieves to "express two parts of a single aesthetic." Tucker (2002) interprets Baraka's views as a "musical model for social integration."

Despite the wide recognition, and critical acclaim for *Birth of the Cool*, the album also faced harsh commentary in later years. Crouch (1990) wrote an unflattering review on the album, comparing it to television writing, and suggesting a separation from its African American roots. Kart (1970), also thought the album has a sound of a TV commercial, described it as a "transition to kitsch." Kirchner (1995), on the other hand, while admitting *Birth of the Cool* is a controversial recording, responds directly to Crouch and Kart; and provides proof of the influential achievements of the nonet, pinpointing various recordings that follows the instrumentation and sound of *Birth of the Cool*. Albums made by undoubtedly important musicians of jazz historiography: Thelonious Monk, Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers with arrangements of Cedar Walton, Wayne Shorter, and Curtis Fuller, Herbie Hancock, Konitz, Quincy Jones, and more

(Kirchner, 1995). Additionally, Miles wrote that *Birth of the Cool* drew inspiration from “black musical roots.” And even though they emulated Thornhill, his influence was Duke Ellington and Fletcher Handerson (Miles & Troupe, 1990, pp. 117-119).

As it was around the period when Miles became addicted to heroin, he could not be satisfied with his performances (Davis & Troupe, 1990, pp. 141-143). Chambers (1983) marks this period (1950-54) in Miles’s life simply as “Down” (p. 137). Miles was still able to produce influential music, recording with musicians such as Parker, Gillespie, Konitz, Mulligan, Sarah Vaughan, Sonny Rollins, Eddie “Lockjaw” Davis, as sideman or co-leader, and lead bands with various rhythm sections and horn players (pp. 137-179).

2.1.3. Recovery, and the Formation of the FGQ

In 1954, the media was considering Miles’s career at a collapse because of his addiction to heroin, but in hopes of recovery, he “embodied” the figure of boxer Sugar Ray Robinson, went home, and kicked the habit “cold turkey” (Feather, 1952; Klotz, 2019). Miles was too, into boxing and he was training in Robinson’s gymnasium, and it was the spirit of Robinson that helped Miles; he said, “if [Robinson] can win all those fights, I can sure break this motherfuckin’ habit” (Chambers, 1983, p. 176). In St. Louis, his hometown, Miles “laid down and stared at the ceiling for 12 days,” he explains, quitting without any help was akin to the worst case of flu one can ever experience (Crawford, 1961). Chambers (1983) writes, Miles went into a creative peak, and he was simply substituting one drug with another; “music is an addiction,” he said (p. 179).

Miles went back to New York in spring of 1954, looking to form a new band, regain his reputation, and get back to the scene after kicking his habit (Chambers, 1983, pp. 178-181). Miles began to record with much creative incentive, he worked with musicians he knew and worked with before, such as Sonny Rollins, Art Blakey, Percy Heath, J. J. Johnson, Milt Jackson, Thelonious Monk; as well as aspiring young musicians like Horace Silver, to whom Miles became a mentor and a teacher (Chambers, 1983, pp. 180-189). Miles composed and recorded new tunes such as “Weirdo” (Sid’s Ahead), and “Four.” This productive period just before the formation of the FGQ has been viewed as truly influential. For example, *Bags’ Groove* (1957), recorded in 1954, has the famous takes of “Airegin,” “Oleo,” “Doxy,” and “Bags’

Groove." *Walkin'* (1957), recorded in August 1955, was depicted as the "clarion call" for hard bop, and said to be the album that brought the blues, and "lyricism" back into jazz (Kofsky, 1970, p. 36; Gleason, 1975, p. 136).

Musings of Miles[3] (1955) is a quartet album with new faces. On piano, who would be the permanent member of the FGQ, Red Garland. Bassist Oscar Pettiford, and on drums, Philly Joe Jones, would become another member of the quintet. One prominent influence of this album was Ahmad Jamal, since "A Gal in Calico" and "Will You Still Be Mine?" are from Jamal's repertoire, and the medium-up playing is also said to be taken from him (Chambers, 1983, p. 200-201; Davis & Troupe, 1990, p. 190). Miles was impressed by Garland's similarity to Jamal, "he was giving me that Ahmad Jamal light touch," Miles wrote, and he encouraged Garland to play like Jamal (Davis & Troupe, 1990, p. 200).

In the summer of 1955, Miles was going to play at a new jazz club, Café Bohemia. Garland and Jones were present still, Sonny Rollins was on tenor saxophone, and by this time, bassist Paul Chambers was a new addition to Miles's sound. Miles met Chambers through alto saxophonist Jackie McLean, and despite his young age, he was already playing with musicians J. J. Johnson and George Wallington (Davis & Troupe, 1990, p. 192).

When Rollins left New York, they first rehearsed with John Gilmore, but "his sound wasn't what I heard for the band," Miles noted. Jones was the one who recommended John Coltrane for the band. In the early 50s, when John Coltrane and Miles worked together for the first time, Miles was disappointed with him; due to a lot of questions from Coltrane about what he should and should not play. Only after hearing him play to fill up for Sonny Rollins, Miles's thoughts on him changed and Coltrane's spot in Miles Davis quintet had become concrete (Davis & Troupe, 1990, pp. 194-200). In the fall of 1955, the band that is now called the First Great Quintet was formed.

2.2. Miles in Transition (1959-1965): Yearning, Searching, and the Formation of The Second Great Quintet

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[3] Possibly, *Musings of Miles* was not the original name for this album, since it was mentioned as *Miles Davis Quartet* both in Chambers (1983), and Miles's autobiography (1990), it is probably a reissued name. But the album cover I could access has the title *Musings of Miles*, therefore I opted to use it in the thesis.

2.2.1. Search for Stability after *Kind of Blue*

Between the release of *Kind of Blue* in 1959, to the formation of the SGQ in 1965, both Miles's private and professional life affected significantly. In August 1959, Miles was assaulted by a police officer in front of the infamous jazz club Birdland, just for standing there, and not "moving on" as the officer demanded, the incident epitomizes the racial injustices he faced, as he noted, "if you're black, there is no justice" (Davis & Troupe, 1990, pp. 238-239). His circumstances aggravated with repeated hospitalizations due to hip and throat issues; the loss of both parents in 1962 and 1964, respectively; and his separation from his wife Francis Taylor Davis, in 1964 (Davis & Troupe, 1990, Yudkin, 2008).

Lopes (2019) writes that in late 1950s and early 1960s, as a public figure, Miles was labeled as arrogant, angry, enigmatic, and even racist towards white people. As a person who had to deal with racism all his life, Miles was not surprised to these accusations, and he even acknowledged his demeanor; and he was determined to keep speaking up to the racism, to "Jim Crow America" (pp. 126-130). "Of course I'm angry," he said to Crawford (1961), and adds that he wishes racism to be obsolete, knowing that it would not be possible, and all he wants is a world of freedom, for all the Black people, and his children. Miles did not avoid reminding white people of their privileges, those they did not even noticed, and refused to act the way "the white people found appropriate" (Lopes, 2019, p. 123-125, Crawford, 1961). Additionally, the "angry" demeanor of Miles made him somewhat of a leader symbol in the African American communities, especially around art and music; Baraka (2009) described him as the "black prince" who transformed the black expression trough music (pp. 9-17).

Concurrently, the music world was being shaken in the early 1960s. Two musical happenings were affecting Miles's career. The advent of rock music, as The Beatles reached global fame, began to overshadow jazz. Miles expressed concern over statements such as "jazz is dead," as audiences gravitated towards rock, and Motown artists such as Stevie Wonder (Davis & Troupe, 1990, pp. 271-272). The second big hit was the emergence of the "new thing," or free jazz, pioneered by musicians such as Ornette Coleman, Cecil Taylor and Albert Ayler, the jazz scene itself started to be revolutionized. In the turbulent atmosphere the jazz world was in, it is possible to say

that Miles was envisioning a new direction for his music, which resulted in the formation of the SGQ.

Evidently, in these years Miles was in search of a new band, and most importantly a new saxophone player. After the departure of John Coltrane in 1960 to form his own band, reportedly, miles hired seven saxophonists (see Yudkin, 2008, p. 60). In addition to his search for a saxophone player, Miles worked with various musicians between 1959 and 1965. For example, a sextet comprising Sonny Rollins, J. J. Johnson, Wynton Kelly, Paul Chambers, and Jimmy Cobb was playing with Miles at his live events, and most of them were in the recordings from this era. Also, a quintet with Hank Mobley, Kelly, Chambers and Cobb was a steady, "working group" in 1961-1962 (Coolman, 1997, p. 10). When Kelly, Chambers and Cobb left the group to form their own trio, Miles went for a "temporary solution" with Frank Strozier, Harold Mabern, and George Coleman (p. 10). The most beneficial member in this particular band for Miles was the bassist Ron Carter, who eventually became the unwavering bassist of the SGQ.

For substitutes on saxophonists, George Coleman and Sam Rivers are the most notable, in the sense that the direction of music that Miles was embarked on. In the end, for his music's new direction, Miles found Coleman was not innovative enough, and Rivers, a bit too adventurous; he sought someone who experiments "with form," rather than without it (Davis & Troupe, 1990, p. 273).

During this period, studio recordings Miles made are notably sparse compared to other phases of his career. With only three albums in five years—*Someday My Prince Will Come*, *Quiet Nights*, and *Seven Steps to Heaven*—recorded between 1961 and 1963, the five-year period of 1960-1965 was the most futile phase of Miles up to this point. Yudkin (2008) remarks, regarding the fact that in the previous five years (1954-1959) swarmed with recordings for Miles with twelve albums in the studio, this era represented a "poor showing" for him (pp. 58-60).

Despite fewer recordings, these three albums could be interpreted as highly significant when examined; as evidently, they serve as a bridge between Miles's earlier music of 1950s and the mid-1960s albums made by the SGQ.

Quiet Nights (1963) was the last album Miles had co-produced with the composer and arranger Gil Evans. To their frustration, both Miles and Evans did not like how the album came out, Teo Macero, Miles's long-term producer, interfered with the

recording process of the musicians, changed how they would play; Miles writes that the album should not have released at all (Davis & Troupe, 1990, pp. 259-260). Even after almost twenty years, in 1982, Miles was still describing Gil Evans's music as his favorite, and Evans as one of his best friends (McCall, 1982).

Someday My Prince Will Come (1961), is the last recording Miles had worked with Coltrane (he only plays on "Someday My Prince Will Come" and "Teo"). Because of which, Yudkin (2008), with an interesting argument, considers this album particularly significant, and "impressive" out of the three, proposing it is evidence of Miles's longing for Coltrane still (p. 61). The argument Yudkin asserts is that Coltrane has influenced *Someday My Prince Will Come*. In the same month Miles recorded the album (March 1961), Coltrane had released his distinguished album *My Favorite Things*. Supporting his claim with the fact that both albums featured renditions of popular songs— "My Favorite Things" from the Broadway musical *The Sound of Music*, and "Someday My Prince Will Come" from Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*—played in 3/4 time signature, and the hiring of Coltrane for the title track (Yudkin, 2008, pp. 61-62).

Reflecting on Yudkin's insights and Miles's prolonged search for a saxophonist, one could speculate that Coltrane represented the metaphorical "prince" Miles hoped would return to his band someday. Years later Coltrane's passing away, Ralph Gleason (1975) suggested to Miles that he needed five tenor players, and Miles replied, "I *had* five tenor players once" (p. 139). The phrase "five tenor players" apparently implies Coltrane, as Gleason suggests. Miles himself once told Nat Hentoff that Coltrane's complex improvising style can be demonstrated as "explaining something five different ways," and this signature sound of Coltrane is what he is doing with any chord, "at any given time" (Chambers, 1983, pp. 252-253).

Seven Steps to Heaven (1963) was recorded in two separate sessions, with varying rhythm sections. The first was in April 1963 in Hollywood, with the band consisting of George Coleman on tenor, Victor Feldman on piano, Ron Carter on bass, and Frank Butler on drums. Although Feldman was the composer of "Joshua," and co-composer of the title track—the only originals from the album—the recorded versions of these tunes from the Hollywood band did not make it to the final release. The Hollywood quintet's reiterations of classic tunes, "Basin Street Blues," "I Fall in Love Too Easily," and "Baby Won't You Please Come Home," were released.

The second session was in May 1963 in New York. Substituting the piano and the drums with Herbie Hancock and Tony Williams, this—which comprises four musicians of the SGQ—versions of "Joshua," "Seven Steps to Heaven," and "So Near, So Far" ended up in the final version of the album.

2.2.2. Assembling The Second Great Quintet

By the time *Seven Steps to Heaven* was recorded, three-fourths of the SGQ had already been hired. After Paul Chambers left the band, bassist Ron Carter joined at the recommendation of Chambers. Miles watched Carter with Art Farmer's quartet, and "loved what he was doing" (Davis & Troupe, 1990, pp. 261-262). Tonny Williams, from Jackie McLean's band at the time, peaked Miles's interest. Miles was impressed by the way the seventeen-year-old drummer played, and he commented that after seeing Williams play for the first time, Miles knew Williams was going to be one of the greatest drummers ever (p. 262). Miles's first choice as a pianist was Feldman, but he refused, as his studio works were paying a lot, presumably. Miles, then, called Herbie Hancock, whom he had become acquainted with a year prior. Hancock was in Donald Byrd's band at the time, and Hancock gained the blessing of Byrd with an attitude of a real mentor: "If I stood in the way of you getting this job, I couldn't look at myself in the mirror" (Hancock & Dickey, 2014, p. 55). After eventually accepting to join Miles, Hancock (2014) narrates, the rhythm section got together in Miles's house the next three days, they played tunes from Miles's arsenal and rehearsed "Joshua" and "Seven Steps to Heaven" (pp. 56-58). Miles did not play with them for the most part, he was secretly listening to them from the intercom system he had in his house, and "they sounded too good together," as Miles wrote (Davis & Troupe, 1990, p. 263). Hancock (2014) writes, Carter oversaw these rehearsals. Miles sometimes played the opening notes of a tune, then left the room; his insight is that Miles adopted this approach to make the young players relaxed, as his presence could intimidate them (p. 58).

Miles displayed noticeable enthusiasm while playing with Hancock, Carter, and Williams. Miles's reflection on this rhythm section, "I knew right away that this was going to be a motherfucker of a group," is referring to just one day earlier of this recording; for a concert in France, he mentions "[Williams] made me play so much that I forgot all the pain in my joints" (Davis & Troupe, 1990, pp. 263-264). Yudkin

(2008) writes that Miles's performance is experimental on those tracks, and his "excitement is palpable (p. 62)." The rhythm section of the SGQ was now formed.

When Hancock, Carter, and Williams were accompanying any saxophonist, whether it was George Coleman, Sam Rivers, or Wayne Shorter, their approach markedly differed to their playing with Miles. One night at the bandstand, he had turned to Hancock and Williams, asking why they are changing the way they played (Hancock & Dickey, 2014). In an interview with Ben Sidran (1995), Hancock explains that their playing style could be "considered more toward the avant-garde," involving various rhythms and melodic figures that are not to be expected from a rhythm section of the time; they "would really open up" (p. 265). Hancock believes that Miles's prior accomplishments and established artistic style influenced the rhythm section to perform in a manner reflective of his earlier music (Sidran, 1995, p. 266). This approach, however, was precisely the opposite of what Miles had envisioned for his music. With this new quintet—that would be completed once Wayne Shorter joined—Miles aimed for an evolution, with unprecedented attitude and concepts to make music. When the band complied with Miles, and accompanied him the same way, Miles had problems finding what to play, he was "weaving and bobbing," trying to find a place, as it was not what he was used to (Sidran, 1995, p. 265). The discomfort generated by the new rhythm section was the very thing that Miles was seeking (Michaelsen, 2019). By the third day, Hancock says, now, he was the one "weaving and bobbing," as Miles already mastered this new approach. Miles said, "I don't wanna play any chords anymore," as soon as the set ended (Sidran, 1995, pp. 265-266).

The recruitment of Wayne Shorter to the quintet was a painful course of time for both Miles and Shorter. Years before Shorter joined the Miles Davis Quintet, in 1959, Shorter called Miles to ask if he could be the replacement for Coltrane, with the recommendation from Coltrane (Mercer, 2004, p. 93). Recalling the same incident, Miles writes that he got angry that Coltrane wanted to quit and recommended someone else, he said "If I need a saxophone player I'll get one!" before he hung up the phone on Shorter (Davis & Troupe, 1990, p. 246). In a 1995 interview with Coolman (1997), Shorter recalls an incident back in 1959 when he listened to the Miles Davis Sextet with Cannonball Adderley, Coltrane, and all the rest of the band; "I was listening to the power of *individualism* and *subjectivity*," Shorter says (p. 13).

In early 1964, at the point when Miles wanted to hire Shorter for his quintet, Shorter was now playing with the drummer and bandleader Art Blakey, and his band, The Jazz Messengers. Shorter did not want to leave Blakey's Jazz Messengers for ethical and artistic reasons. Mercer (2004) writes, because of the commitment Shorter made for Blakey's band, Shorter did not see appropriate to leave Blakey, thought it was rude to break promises. In addition, in Blakey's band, Shorter was the art director, and had the opportunity to play his compositions on stage and observe the reaction of the audience. Whereas in Miles's live events, they were still playing Miles's "playbook," tunes such as "Milestones," "My Funny Valentine," and "Kind of Blue," tunes he popularized, and made the audience "packing in the door" (Davis & Troupe, 1990; Mercer, 2004). Which was also an issue in the later years of the SGQ.

When Shorter ultimately left The Jazz Messengers in July of 1964, he said "I figured five years, that's enough for a cycle" (Mercer, 2004, p. 93). After the word got out, Miles told his agent, Jack Whittemore, and the members of the band to call Shorter, "so he was getting all these calls from everyone begging him to join the band," Miles writes (Davis & Troupe, 1990, p. 270). They were all very fond of Shorter's playing, and Miles noted that he knew the music would go in the right direction, so they all persisted (Davis & Troupe, 1990, p. 270). When Shorter finally called Miles, to inform him of his acceptance, the band was going to perform in Hollywood Bowl in a few days; Miles sent Shorter a first-class ticket to California as an incentive; they were going to perform the same day Shorter landed, with no time to rehearse (Mercer, 2004, p. 96). After Shorter's debut performance with the quintet, Shorter was in his hotel room, thinking how he had played; Miles called his hotel room, and just said "we're ready to record tomorrow," which was the best approval Shorter could hear (Mercer, 2004, p. 98).

After five long bothersome years that affected Miles in all aspects of his life, he had formed the band that would ensure realization of his new vision in his music.

2.3. Conclusive Review of the Formation Processes

When examined, it is possible to conclude that the periods leading to the formation of each "great quintet," are strikingly similar and coincidentally repetitive. When Miles was a young, aspiring musician, he became quite successful under the mentorship of Charlie Parker; he gained recognition, wrote new tunes, and felt accepted and

appreciated in the music scene. Then gained even more popularity with an influential album—*Birth of the Cool*—that would popularize a new style of jazz. Which was followed by a series of unfortunate events; the political—therefore musical—backlash of *Birth of the Cool*, Miles's struggle with heroin addiction, relationship problems, and more. Eventually, Miles's recovery of his habit and personal issues, and the formation of the FGQ. Before the formation of the FGQ, Miles worked with Gil Evans for the first time, and in the process forming the SGQ, they worked for the last time.

The successful years with the FGQ, again, led to an even more impactful recording, *Kind of Blue* (1959). This time, popularizing the modal style of the 1960s. Accompanied by another musical, political and health issues in the early 1960s, leading to the formation of the SGQ. As probably the most productive, and steady band of Miles, the SGQ catalyzed yet another approach to playing jazz. Lastly, the SGQ was followed by *Bitches Brew* (1970), which surpassed the achievements of the preceding quintet, keeping with the story of coincidences.

Even the assembly order of the bands is similar. Miles hires a tenor saxophonist, Rollins, in 1950s; Mobley, Rivers, and Coleman in 1960s, then ultimately decides on one prominent player, Coltrane and Shorter, respectively.

2.3.1. A Brief Look into Literature on Comparing the Quintets

While some authors distinguish the music of FGQ, appointing the late-1950s period as the high-point of Miles's career, others appoint the music of SGQ was Miles's artistic peak. And as expected, the majority of the texts do not seem to favor any one quintet, they rather simply convey their specific analyses and thoughts, while occasionally pointing out distinctions.

Amiri Baraka, as possibly the most biased author, viewed the SGQ as the "hip restatement" of what the FGQ did, and how it is a reminiscent of the "bluest," and the "blackest" period of Miles (Baraka, 1987; Baraka, 2009, p. 161). Indeed, while there are narrative similarities between the bands that could impose a sense of mirroring, the "great quintets" of Miles have reached exquisite musical achievements in their own unique ways. Calling one a mere "restatement" through the narrative lens would be diminishing to its significance.

To do justice to Baraka, the term "restatement" could be viewed from a perspective of Miles's innovative concepts. It can be argued that Miles was aiming for a quintet that would bring out the sound he was searching for, complementary to what he did with the FGQ. So, while forming each band, it could be said that Miles approached each band with a distinct artistic vision. When Miles had a vision for his performances, he expertly chose the correct musicians who could bring that vision to life—which was his trademark, too. Hence, with the SGQ once more, Miles had access to a small combo of musicians, with whom he could focus on the innovative and improvisational spaces Miles had provided, as well as encouraged. Without the restrictions of written-out arrangements, and limited space for initiative caused by a crowded group. By looking in this sense, the term restatement may very well be the accurate description for the SGQ.

Gleason (1995) writes, the FGQ "set the pattern for small band jazz in the late 50s and early 60s," and its influential impact can only be compared to Louis Armstrong Hot Five band (pp. 136-137). Quoting the composer Edgard Varese, "An artist is never ahead of his time but most people are far behind theirs," Gleason views both of the quintets are as influential as they make others "behind of their time" (p. 142).

Yudkin's (2008) analysis of *Miles Smiles* (1967) claims that the album established a new style that is now called "post-bop." And SGQ approached music making with an unprecedented attitude in all their six albums (p. 4). Coolman (1997) attempts to discover the reason for the "magic" of the SGQ, and how it affected the evolution of jazz as an art form. Others delve into specific recordings to unlock the mysteries of the music of Miles (see Brofsky 1983; Michaelsen, 2019; Smith, 1995; Waters, 2011).

3. CHAPTER: FIRST GREAT QUINTET

Miles Davis's First Great Quintet had been completely formed in late 1955, with the members being Miles on trumpet, John Coltrane on tenor saxophone, Red Garland on piano, Paul Chambers on bass, and Philly Joe Jones on drums. The band recorded six albums, performed countless live events, and made a significant impact on the jazz historiography. Gleason (1975) writes, the FGQ set "the pattern for small jazz bands" in the late 1950s (p. 136). When considered the fact that they played together actively for only one and a half years, in the course of three, the FGQ left an enduring legacy in a remarkably short period. This period of intense activity displayed their individual talents as well as their ability to work as a cohesive unit. Despite their interpersonal dynamics overflowing into the music, leading issues in their performances.

This chapter is dedicated to the history and the music of the FGQ, and it is divided into three main sections. (1) Briefly explaining the history of the quintet following the formation of the band. (2) Exploring the significance of the band members. And (3) the music and creation processes of the quintet.

3.1. A Brief Chronology of the FGQ

3.1.1. Prestige Years

After Coltrane joined, the band initially focused on live performances rather than to start recording immediately. First, the band was going to go on tour in Baltimore, Detroit, Chambers's hometown, Chicago, and St. Louis, Miles's hometown. Then back to New York to play at Café Bohemia, they started playing five to six days a week. Miles was in shock how "unbelievable" the music was, he felt the need to pinch himself to check if it was real. It was this band that made all the members stars and put Miles on the "map of the musical world" (Davis & Troupe, 1990, pp. 196-197).

The signature musical qualities of the FGQ are a collection of their collaborative experiences on the stage. Therefore, performing frequently held utmost importance to

develop the band's sound. By the time they were back in New York playing in clubs, Miles wanted to be in the studio with this new band.

The FGQ's first recording session was not for the band's debut album. When Miles was still obligated by contract to record four more albums for Prestige, he made an agreement with Columbia to start recording beforehand, only to release them after the Prestige contract ended. In October 1955, the band recorded "Ah-Leu-Cha" by Charlie Parker. This was the first studio recording of the FGQ, and it was included in *'Round About Midnight* (1957), the first Columbia album of the band. In November 1955, the band went to studio to record *Miles: The New Miles Davis Quintet*[4] (1956), the debut album of the FGQ. Miles writes in his autobiography, "for a long time everybody thought that [*Miles*] was the very first recording that this band made, since we had kept that first Columbia recording session secret (Davis & Troupe, 1990, p. 201)."

In *Miles*, the band recorded "There Is No Greater Love," "Just Squeeze Me," "How Am I To Know?," "Stablemates," "The Theme," and "S'posin." Miles indicates that this was a "nice" recording, but it was "nothing like" the albums that they were going to make later (Davis & Troupe, 1990, p. 201). Implying the later recordings with Prestige, *Cookin'*, *Relaxin'*, *Workin'*, and *Steamin'* albums that were released in a five-year period between 1956-1961.

The FGQ had to disband for an interim period after the session for *Miles*, for a throat operation that indirectly caused the whisper-like, raspy voice Miles famously had. After Miles's delayed recovery from the operation, the band got back together to continue to play live events. On May 11, 1956, the band was back in the studio to record about a half of the tunes from *Cookin'*, *Relaxin'*, *Workin'*, *Steamin'* albums. Such as "Woody'n You," "It Could Happen to You," "Four," "In Your Own Sweet Way," "Salt Peanuts." About a month later, they sneaked in another session for Columbia to record three more tunes for *'Round About Midnight* (Davis & Troupe, 1990, p. 203). On October 26, 1956, they recorded the last session Miles was obligated to Prestige. On this second session, they again recorded two albums worth of tunes. "Oleo," "You're My Everything," "If I Were a Bell," "Half Nelson," "Well, You Needn't," are a few from this session. This was the long-expected end of the Miles-

[4] Since the album cover of the album only contains the word "Miles," the name of this album is commonly recognized simply as *Miles*, therefore it will be referred to as such throughout this thesis.

Prestige collaboration. Miles was ready to go on and start to work with Columbia Records, it was his way into a broader audience, and economic prosperity (Davis & Troupe, 1990, p. 205). Coltrane was one of the reasons Miles was able to sign with Columbia. George Avakian, a Columbia executive, was impressed by Coltrane's sound and his "explosive harmonies" (Thomas, 1976, pp. 78-79).

A contract with Columbia caused accusations against Miles that he became a sellout, leaving his jazz roots to make more money, and become mainstream. Miles does not find an issue in making more money or reaching a broader audience. The recordings he made with Columbia proved much creative incentive, reached millions of sales while not losing artistry. Later, with albums that were sitting on the edge of the avant-garde, and then transitioning to fusion, Miles's career under Columbia shows that a record company would not stop a musician's development just because they were a more mainstream company (Davis & Troupe, 1990, pp. 205-206; Smith, 2010).

3.1.2. First Years with Columbia

After Miles signed with Columbia Records, FGQ recorded two more albums as the whole band, and in one of them, *Milestones* (1958), the band was joined by Cannonball Adderley. Miles was excited about working with Columbia, so he had already started to record his first album a year prior. In the fall of 1956, all the tracks for *'Round About Midnight* were completed. The album consisted of originals of his peers and mentors, "'Round Midnight," "Ah-Leu-Cha," and "Tadd's Delight;" along with jazz standards and traditional songs, "All of You," "Bye Bye Blackbird," and "Dear Old Stockholm." After the recording sessions for *'Round About Midnight*, the band took its first hit. Miles was unhappy with the drug and alcohol use within the band, it was affecting their performances frequently. Followed by a series of conflicts, the FGQ was basically disbanded for the first time in 1957. Miles went to France to record his film score album *Ascenseur pour l'échafaud* (1958).

3.1.3. Beginning of the End: *Milestones*

When he was back in the USA in early 1958, the quintet was regrouped to record *Milestones* (1958). Miles's dedication to progress led to his fame as an innovator. But this dedication also means his whole career is filled with separations of his bands. For sometimes progress requires fresh blood, and sometimes the current group of people

would not meet the expectations of the new approach. For example, when Garland was asked about Miles's later music—the SGQ, *Bitches Brew*, and fusion era—Garland replied, "that's not for me" (Lyons, 1983, p. 144).

As we will see once more in this thesis, Miles signals these separations when he is on the brink of change. Miles starts to experiment with other instruments or musicians, with a musical vision in mind, and more than once, this results in the disbandment of his current group (Yudkin, 2008, p. 65). Miles composed a tune named "Milestones" two times. The first one was while he was still under mentorship with Charlie Parker. Which is commonly referred to as the "Old Milestones." The title track of *Milestones* (1958) is a completely different composition, which is now commonly known as the "New Milestones." In a way, these tunes act as turning points in Miles's music, as the name suggests. The album *Milestones* takes a leap into the modal harmonic region, the first change that signals the ending. Addition of Cannonball Adderley, being the second.

Adderley's blues-grounded approach, and playing capabilities were praised by Miles in the previous years (Davis & Troupe, 1990, pp. 192-193). Miles was looking for a fresh[5] sound in the band, and the contrast comprised of Adderley's blues, Coltrane's unique approach to harmony where he could play "three chords at once," and Miles's mellow and silky sound was appealing to him (Davis & Troupe, 1990, pp. 220-221).

Milestones has a track list which in itself conveys the signals Miles's transition. A traditional song, "Billy Boy," which is played as a piano trio. "Two Bass Hit," a composition of John Lewis and Dizzy Gillespie, who represent Miles's previous endeavors, and the bebop era of jazz. Two compositions of innovative composers of the era, "Dr. Jackle" by Jackie McLean, and "Straight, No Chaser" by Thelonious Monk. Lastly, two of Miles's compositions, the title track, and "Sid's Ahead."

Milestones is the last recording that included all members of the FGQ. They were either fired, or left the band, pursuing their own careers in the following years. Coltrane

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[5] "Fresh" is used as a somewhat slang term that one comes across in multiple texts about Miles Davis's music. In addition to the original meaning, "fresh musician" here can be explained as "ready to produce music that they are not conditioned to make." Additionally, the word can be seen in depictions for Miles's music, sound, ideas, etc. See Kirshner (ed.) (1997), pp.14, 32, 84, 182, 235 (contributions from multiple authors); Mercer (2004), p. 109; Goodman (1981) (interview); Yudkin (2008) p.7.

and Garland formed their own groups, Chambers and Jones played with many artists and led their own bands occasionally. Except Garland, all members appeared on different recordings of Miles, but never as a group again.

One other reason for the quintet's end was probably the effects of drug use among the band members. Coltrane and Jones were probably the biggest threats to the continuity of the band; the two were having conflicts with Miles all the time (Chambers, 1983, p. 253). They were abusing drugs more than many of the jazz musicians of the time. Along with Chambers, who had an indulgence in alcohol, in addition to drugs.

They were affecting personal relationships in the band. But Miles would not hold their habits to their face as long as the music was still "happening." And he writes that he understood the suffering they were going through, since he was once an addict himself (Davis & Troupe, 1990, p. 209). Despite everything, Miles once said to Nat Hentoff that he would not care if Jones showed up to a show with one arm, and with loss of brain functionality, "he's got the fire I want," Miles adds (Rosenthal, 1993, p. 51).

Then, Jones started missing shows or leaving the bandstand to throw up, or made the band lose jobs. Coltrane was zoning out during concerts and club events, because of the use of heroin, and watching Coltrane "nodding" on the bandstand, not playing, made Miles truly upset about him and band's performance. By now, the music was not happening anymore (Davis & Troupe, 1990, pp. 209-213). Jones and Miles became best friends while the band was together, and Miles writes that because of that, firing Jones was the most upsetting (Davis & Troupe, 1990, p. 214).

Even then, both Jones and Coltrane were fired and re-hired by Miles before too many months passed, first in late 1956, and in 1958, to record *Milestones*. Jones and Coltrane were the best foils for Miles, their idiosyncratic musicianship was just what Miles needed in his band. The intensity and power of their performance "counterbalanced" lyricism of Miles (Chambers, 1983, p. 253). Coltrane could play as five saxophonists at the same time; his technical abilities enabled him to play endless strings of notes, together with his unique approach, he was "pushing the limits" of harmony.

3.2. FGQ Members' Effect on the Music

Miles tried to come up with new ways of carrying his bands' music forward. He pushed his band members to play in a different way, suggested new approaches. He provided

new concepts when he thought it was time for a change, he even disbanded his bands when he decided that a certain group of players were not producing the music as he envisioned. He did not want to be stuck in the same musical space. Miles wanted his players to be fresh, and they all needed to find their voice in the band themselves. Thus, the performers were frequently challenged, and always expected to provide interesting musicianship.

For instance, in his autobiography, while Miles was telling the story of *Milestones* (1958)—just before the era of the first quintet was coming to an irreversible end—Miles wanted the music to be “freer, more modal, more African and Eastern, less Western (Davis & Troupe, 1990, p. 220).” After France, they regrouped with the addition Adderley. Miles’s understanding of pushing the musicians to a next, or a newer level are depicted by himself:

> “I wanted them to go beyond themselves. See, if you put a musician in a place where he has to do something different from what he does all the time, then he can do that—but he's got to think differently in order to do it. He has to use his imagination, be more creative, more innovative; he's got to take more risks. He's got to play above what he knows—far above it—and what that might lead to might take him above the place where he's been playing all along, to the new place where he finds himself right now—and to the next place he's going and even above that! So then he’ll be freer, will expect things differently, will anticipate and know something different is coming down. I’ve always told the musicians in my band to play what they know and then play above that. Because then anything can happen, and that’s where great art and music happens (Davis & Troupe, 1990, p. 220).”

He explains, as wonderful as Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie’s works were, their style of playing “real fast notes and chord changes,” their way of hearing the music, was in 1944, not ‘57. Their ideas were already accomplished incredibly (Davis & Troupe, p. 221). Hence, the music had to go in a new direction. Collier (1978) emphasizes Miles’s sparse playing style in the FGQ period as he started to use more space in his solos. Remarking Miles’s whole and half note use in “Oleo” and “Blues by Five,” and adds that he plays more long notes “than any other major jazz figure in ‘Tadd’s Delight’” (p. 430). According to Coltrane (1960), even in 1955 Miles was looking for a change in his music:

> "While I was in the band," Coltrane said, "I found Miles in the midst of a new stage of musical development. It seemed that he was moving to the use of fewer and fewer chord changes in songs. He used tunes with free-flowing lines and chordal direction. I found it easy to apply my own harmonic ideas . . . I could play three chords at once; but if I wanted to, I could play melodically. Miles's music gave me plenty of freedom (Coltrane, 1960; Feathers, 1984, p. 110)."

Miles was frequently remembered as leaving space for musicians to develop their sounds, he was encouraging and enabling innovative actions. The following sections will focus on the FGQ members one at a time. How the members of the band contributed to the development of the FGQ.

3.2.1. Red Garland

Red Garland's significance in the FGQ is depicted variously. Coker (1975) writes, his contemporaries such as Bud Powell, Thelonious Monk, and Horace Silver were using the root note of chords at the bottom of their voicings most of the time. Regardless of playing with both, or just their left hand. Red Garland omitted the root note almost entirely, therefore began a new approach to jazz piano voicings, and to his successors, broadening the possibilities of the piano accompaniment (pp. 40-41).

On a contrary point, Miles himself writes about speaking to Red Garland about how he should get inspired from, or even emulate Ahmad Jamal's harmonic and rhythmic ideas: "he was giving me that Ahmad Jamal light touch, and a little bit of Errol Garner." (Davis & Troupe, 1990, pp. 190-200). Indeed, any of –or simultaneously both— these depictions may be accurate. Chambers (1983) indicated that it could have been Garner who inspired Jamal also, but the innovations in jazz piano in the 1950s have been established by Garland; mostly because of the improvisational space provided to Garland by Miles (p. 219).

Garland's playing has influenced jazz players through generations. In today's time, jazz pianist Peter Martin teaches about Garland's accompanying style in his online jazz education program Open Studio. Martin explains, Garland's "four-and two-and" approach is pushing the band forward rhythmically, and the anticipated harmonies makes the audience's ears ready for what is to come (Open Studio, 2021).

Figure 3.1. Rhythmic Example of Garland's "four-and two-and" Accompaniment.

Source: Author

One reason Miles hired Garland was that he was into boxing, like Miles was (Davis & Troupe, 1990, p. 190). And Miles often associates music with boxing himself. Boxing requires a bouncy movement of the feet to avoid punches easily. Miles may have expected Garland's light touch, and his anticipated accompaniment style would create the feeling of bouncing in his music. Miles remarked Garland's avoidance of showing off, and his capability to create a feel of floating: he said to *Jazz Review*, "the reason I like Red Garland and Bill Evans is that when they play a chord, they play a *sound* more than a chord (Hentoff, 1958)."

3.2.2. Paul Chambers

Paul Chambers was only twenty years old when he joined the FGQ. Alto saxophonist Jackie McLean had told Miles about Chambers, how he was the new talent in New York (Davis & Troupe, 1990, p. 192). Before Chambers was twenty-five, he had recorded with a few of the most celebrated actors in jazz historiography, and he was already one of the most influential figures among bassists. Chambers recorded with Bud Powell, Sonny Rollins, Jackie McLean, Hank Mobley, Wynton Kelly, Cannonball Adderley and more. The recordings that shaped John Coltrane's solo career all included Chambers's sound, such as *Blue Train* (1958), *Giant Steps* (1960), and *Lush Life* (1961). In *Giant Steps*, Coltrane devoted his minor blues, "Mr. P.C." to Chambers. Needless to say, Chambers was able to make record deals with all these musicians thanks to his performance with the FGQ of Miles.

Soon enough, Chambers became one of the innovators among the jazz bassists. One particular novelty of Chambers's playing was that he did not always play the root note on the first beat, and that made him play more linear "walking" bass lines. Omitting skips and focusing stepwise motion in the bassline strengthened the feel of walking, whether it was diatonic, or chromatic passing and approach tones.

In "Oleo," Miles plays the first eight measures of the head melody solo, then only Chambers joins in with a walking bassline. Already in the mm. 2-3, he plays the third-degree notes of Cm7, and G7 chords. In both cases, Chambers do not land on the root note to keep playing linear. "Oleo" being a "rhythm changes," traditionally the chord

progression would go to Fm7-B♭7 on m. 5, and E♭maj7-E♭min7 (or E♭maj7-E♭dim7) on m. 6, specific to "Oleo." Since there is no piano accompaniment, Chambers possibly implied an alternative harmony. Fm7-B♭7 progression on m. 5 is substituted with B♭7. The E♭-E♮-F-A line on m. 6 could be interpreted variously. The most likely option would be an F7 chord that Chambers plays the seventh degree on the first beat, used E♮ as a passing tone, played the root and the third to resolve to B♭maj7. The second option can be a B♭7 chord that was played in mm. 5-6. This is a common substitute for mm. 5-6 in a rhythm changes tune to establish a blues approach. The bassline could also imply a chord around E♭ altered scale. While it would be as easy to conclude the E♮ as a passing tone, and A♮ as the fifth of E♭dim7, it can be seen as an altered scale line also. Chambers seems to be aiming for the resolution to B♭maj7 directly on m. 7. Which can mean that an E♭7♭9♯11 chord could be the result of a blues approach; since I-IV-I resolution is a common one in blues.

Figure 3.2. Chambers's Bassline on "Oleo" in *Cookin'*, mm. 9-24.

Source: Author

B sections of a rhythm changes tune is conventionally played as a chain of dominant seventh chords, starting on the III7 of the initial tonality. But here on m. 9, Chambers sits on A♮, going into F♯, the third of D7, to imply a IIm-V7 progression.

All throughout the recording of “Oleo,” Chambers is the only one playing accompaniment during the A sections, hence he is the only one implying the chord progression. Indeed, the harmonic structure of a rhythm changes tune was engraved in the mind of any jazz musician of the period, but using the bass as the only harmonic information was not particularly a common practice then. One notable exception was Gerry Mulligan and Chet Baker’s “piano-less” quartet, a few years prior. But in that instance, Mulligan and Baker often joined in with the bassist and played simple melodies outlining the harmony.

While acknowledging the fact that Chambers was playing very much in the frame of a standard “rhythm changes,” a proposition can be made that this was the first time Miles was experimenting with a sound that he would introduce with the SGQ. The sound in *Miles Smiles* (1967), is somewhat similar, where the pianist Herbie Hancock omits playing unless he is soloing, leaving the harmonic information only to bassist Ron Carter.

In Chambers’s arsenal, there was also his exquisite use of double stops, even when there was a pianist present. It would possibly allow him to introduce a harmonic expansion, variety in sound, and rhythmic freedom. On “You’re My Everything,” Chambers plays a passing line, keeping an open string D as pedal, and plays a descending line on top, G-F♯-F-E-E♭-C♯, back to D, and a G-D double stop. This line resolves to a Cm7-F7 IIm7-V7 progression to B♭maj7 on the second A section. As a part of the deep understanding amongst the players, Garland immediately switches to fewer voice chords and plays sparsely.

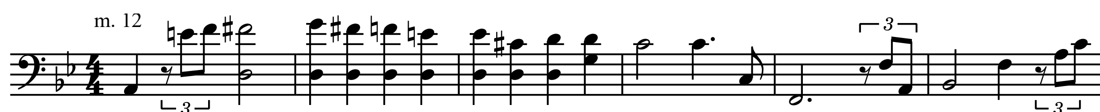

Figure 3.3. Chambers’s Bassline on “You’re My Everything,” mm. 12-17.

Source: Author

Chambers could play intensely, double stops, double-time lines and triplet fills between the chords. But Miles also appraised Chambers’s use of space, saying, “Paul Chambers, incidentally, has started to play a new way whereby he can solo and accompany himself at the same time—by using space well” (Hentoff, 1958). Chambers’s bass line on “You’re My Everything” proves Miles’s comments. While

accompanying the band, Chambers plays complementary melodic lines on the top of his bassline, acting as a countermelody to the soloist, or the melody.

Figure 3.4. Miles and Chambers's Lines on You're My Everything, mm. 16-19.

Source: Author

Indeed, the credit of pioneering improvised bass solos goes to Jimmy Blanton, who played with Duke Ellington in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Blanton was playing solos with an arco and his fingers (see *The Jimmy Blanton Era 1939-1941*, 1988). Chambers is also famous for his fierce solos. Along with Charles Mingus, he was one of the very few bassists who played solos with an arco in his period. On "My Funny Valentine," in the *Cookin'* album he also plays accompaniment with arco.

Other innovative aspects of Chambers's basslines have been exemplified also. On "Blues by Five," for instance, Berliner (1994) writes how his accompaniment conveys motivic development throughout a chorus, and the bassline acts as a countermelody, and Chambers's basslines features chromaticism (pp. 607-608). In the given example, Chambers's second note for every bar is a half-step up from the first, which results in the bass playing extensions of the chords on the weak beats. He plays ♭9s, ♯9s, and major sevenths in dominant seventh chords, and a major seventh in Cm7 (p. 608). Chambers also "personalizes" common walking bass patterns, and uses them to imply alternative harmonies (Berliner, 1994, p. 611).

3.2.3. "Philly" Joe Jones

Miles has a habit of calling the drummers the "fire" of the music, and Jones was possibly the first drummer to be called that way. "Philly Joe was the fire" who was making the music happen, Miles writes, Jones was able to anticipate Miles's playing (Davis & Troupe, 1990, pp. 199-200). Chambers (1983) writes, joining the FGQ carried Jones "to the top rank of modern jazz drummers," with musicians like Art

Blakey, Kenny Clarke, and Max Roach (p. 220). Jones became inspiration for jazz drummers through generations, one of whom was Miles's drummer in the late 1960s, Jack DeJohnette, he said that Jones was "making it happen" during the FGQ performances (p. 221).

Berliner (1994) writes that precomposed lines or riffs can add interest to the music and can help the soloists to use them as anchors, and do not miss there they are in the form. And vice versa, a rhythm section member can adapt a figure from the soloist as an accompanying riff (p. 383). Jones was hitting a rim-shot on the fourth beat during Miles's solos, highlighting the phrases with a laudable break; this interaction became a "classic routine," and the rim-shot was now being called as the "Philly lick" (Berliner, 1994, p. 385; Chambers, 1983, p. 221). Jones made the "Philly lick" famous, it was copied by other artists and played by the FGQ many times (p. 385). Years later, recalling the period, Jones once said, "most bandleaders and drummers, they have a marriage. We feel each other and know each other. I know everything he's going to do. (…) A lot of times Miles would say, 'Don't do it with me, do it after me'" (Chambers, 1983, p. 221). Because Jones could anticipate everything Miles was going to play, and he could join in to the same accents with him.

For a long time, Jones was the main drummer who contributed to the development of Miles's music, and his career. Possibly it was Jones's sound that Miles was hearing in his mind when he thought of drums. After Jones left the band permanently, Miles "listened for" a piece of "Philly Joe in all the drummers" he had (Davis & Troupe, 1990, p. 200).

3.2.4. John Coltrane

Coltrane had idolized and had a chance to play with the jazz heroes of his youth. Such as Johnny Hodges, the prominent alto saxophone sound of Duke Ellington's band and the swing era, and Lester Young on tenor, with Count Basie's band (Coltrane, 1960).

Coltrane's first instrument was an alto saxophone, but when he switched to tenor, the instrument that he initially wanted as a child, he was now in need of new inspirations. "On tenor I found no one man whose ideas were so dominant as Charlie [Parker]'s were on alto," Coltrane writes. Therefore, he was inspired by all the "good" tenor players he could have found, and learned from all of them, some of which never have

recorded (Coltrane, 1960). The others that Coltrane names are Lester Young, Ben Webster, and Coleman Hawkins.

In 1950, he was hired by Dizzy Gillespie, and dismissed after about a year, due to Coltrane's drug habit (Brown, 2010, p. 8). Two most significant musicians of the bebop era, Parker and Gillespie, hired and mentored Miles and Coltrane, which in itself seems to be a cosmic call for them to play together. Kofsky (1970) writes, Coltrane and Miles are among the very few innovators of jazz "who have been able to generate more than a single innovation" (p. 21).

When John Coltrane and Miles worked together for the first time in the early 1950s, Miles was disappointed with Coltrane; reportedly, he asked a lot of questions about what he should and should not play. Only after hearing him play to fill up for Sonny Rollins, Miles's thoughts on him changed and Coltrane's spot in Miles Davis quintet become concrete (Davis & Troupe, 1990, p. 195). After joining Miles's quintet, Coltrane was "finding his voice, refining his sound, and revealing his conceptions" (Thomas, 1976, p. 76). John Coltrane and Miles were the same age, and Coltrane did not record as a bandleader until 1957, so it was not until playing with Miles for two years. Even as early as 1947-1948, Coltrane thought Miles would extend the "boundaries of jazz," and wanted to work with him (Coltrane, 1960).

When Coltrane was playing fast arpeggiations in his solos, which might sound like a glissando even, he was actually superimposing three chords in the space for one, running through their scales and arpeggios. A technique he developed in the freedom given to Coltrane by Miles. In order to squeeze all the notes of those three chords, he was playing the triplets and sixteenth notes in groupings of five and seven (Coltrane, 1960). Therefore, Coltrane approached his aesthetic problem with a technical solution, and it generated a result of both aesthetic and technical, which revealed one of the key elements of Coltrane's unique sound.

Coltrane was devoted to his friendships, and he was mentioned as a gentle, sweet person when he was not performing (Thomas, 1976, pp. 75-76; Davis & Troupe, 1990, pp. 209, 223). When the FGQ was recording their debut album, *Miles* (1956), Coltrane persuaded Miles to include a composition of his friend Benny Golson "Stablemates," which has an interesting 14-8-14 measure ABA form (Thomas, 1976, p.76). Golson's

composition played on a Miles album helped Golson to be known as a composer (p. 77).

"I have got to keep experimenting," Coltrane (1960) wrote. Possibly unknowing to the legacy he would leave for the world, he was looking to the future optimistically and regarded to the "great heritage" of the music, and the "giants of the past." By the time he died in 1967, John Coltrane had become one of the most influential and innovative musicians of jazz history.

3.3. Music of the FGQ

The goal of this section is to explore the music making processes of the FGQ, which might differ based on the conditions of the era. Such conditions can be listed as matters related to the arts directly, musical traditions, artists' hunger for innovation, development level of the recording technologies, and more. They can also be around the political and economic conditions, racism, view on musicians, recording companies' shares on musicians, Jim Crow USA, the list can go on. While the latter list is not the purpose for this thesis, those situations will be avoided if it does not involve directly to the creative courses of the FGQ.

During this period, Miles was taking in all the music around him, they recorded compositions of his peers such as Thelonious Monk, Jackie McLean, Sonny Rollins. Contemporary European composers such as Ravel and Khachaturian were a few of the newest inspirations of Miles. In an interview, Miles told Nat Hentoff:

> "I think a movement in jazz is beginning away from the conventional string of chords, and a return to emphasis on melodic rather than harmonic variation. There will be fewer chords but infinite possibilities as to what to do with them. Classical composers—some of them—have been writing this way for years, but jazz musicians seldom have" (Hentoff, 1958).

As Miles was still recording his older compositions like "Four," "The Theme," "Half Nelson," and "Tune Up;" he wrote a few of new ones such as "Milestones," and "Sid's Ahead." "Milestones" is a composition based on modal harmony. "Sid's Ahead" is a variation on the traditional blues, which uses a I7-V7-♭VI7 progression throughout. Another FGQ original was "Blues by Five," to which both Garland and Miles were credited as the main composer in various sources.

A stronger side of Miles was in his live performances with his new quintet. Below, the effects of FGQ's live performances on their Prestige recordings will be examined.

3.3.1. Live Arrangements in the Prestige Recordings

The repertoire in the last four Prestige albums, *Cookin'*, *Relaxin'*, *Workin'*, *Steamin'*, came solely from their sets that were played live on club dates and concerts. They did not depend on precomposed arrangements like the Modern Jazz Quartet, but they did not also have to learn complex compositions on the recording day, as the SGQ did. Playing the same repertoire each night resulted in a variety of arrangements that came together live. The band did not figure out those arrangements in the rehearsals, they rather played the tunes over and over again, "refining each number with little touches" every night (Gleason, 1975, p. 140). Philly Joe Jones once said, recalling this period, "by playing the tunes every night in a certain way, it becomes an arrangement, actually a better arrangement than if it had been written out" (Berliner, 1994, p. 385). Collier (1978) writes, the Prestige recordings resemble FGQ's "day-to-day" performances, they recorded the tunes that they were most used to playing (p. 431). So, these albums appear as if one went to a jazz club in 1956 to see Miles Davis Quintet. This was the main reason for the Prestige recordings could be completed in only two sessions.

Miles encouraged the behavior of playing without rehearsals, performing on the spot with all his bands. He asked the new musicians if they "knew the tunes." Miles's request of his band members can be seen in multiple sources. During the first breakup of the FGQ, Miles called Coltrane back to the band, writing he "couldn't risk having [musicians] who didn't know the tunes," and Coltrane was the only tenor player who did (Davis & Troupe, 1990, p. 195). Just before the SGQ was going to perform for the first time, in the backstage, Miles asked Wayne Shorter, "you know my music?" to which Shorter replied, "yeah, I know it" (Mercer, 2004, p. 97).

Indeed, one cannot confirm decisively whether any of these examples were precomposed, or they were developed during the live performances of the band. However, the scholar works on the subject, and the history of the band's breakups indicate that there were a lot less live performances after Miles signed with Columbia. Therefore, it would be fairly safe to assume that the majority of the arrangement elements found in Columbia albums were precomposed, if not improvised. It would

be equally safe to assume the opposite about the Prestige albums. Most of them were developed after continuously performing the repertoire.

3.3.1.1. Examples of the live arrangements and interactions

Maybe one of the most apparent examples of these so-called arrangements is in the introductions of the tunes. Red Garland seems to be playing piano introductions frequently, and considering how often they were performing, some of the introductions must have been so inherent to Garland. Because there are multiple occasions that he plays close to identical introductions on different tunes.

The piano introduction on “There is No Greater Love” in *Miles* can be heard as two sections. The first one being a melody followed by a series of parallel minor chords, going up and down chromatically. This part can also be recognized as the first part of the introduction of “Bye Bye Blackbird” in *‘Round About Midnight*, with slight changes. The parallel movements are almost identical in both recordings, both in voicing and rhythm, in their own tonalities. And the second section, a single note followed by a chromatic fall of major seventh chords, from the fourth degree to the tonic, can also be heard exactly the same as on “You’re My Everything” in *Relaxin’*.

On “Blues by Five” and “Bye Bye Blackbird,” Garland and Jones were locked in many times, accenting the same subdivisions of a beat, and they develop “shoutout” patterns (Berliner, 1994, pp. 639-641). These seemingly out of nowhere arrangements are coming from all the nights the two played and listened together.

While accompanying, both Garland and Chambers took “harmonic liberties” to create a divergence from the expectation, playing out of the chords, then they converge again, resolving the small tension they had created. They were also affecting each other’s harmonic approach by suggesting a substitution, sonically, and the two reacted to each other in several ways, altering the harmony on the spot (Berliner, 1994, pp. 643-648).

In *Cookin’*, on the Sonny Rollins composition “Airegin,” they play a vamp as an introduction, and the second A is replaced by this vamp throughout the record. Jones is playing accented eighth notes—with the fast tempo around 290 bpm—on the hi-hat, over Chambers and Garland’s whole note triplets, creating a polyrhythm of three-over-eight.

Jones

Chambers

Fm7 G♭7 Fm7 G♭7

Garland plays the roots on one,
and chords where indicated

Figure 3.5. Introduction of "Airegin" in *Cookin'*

Source: Author

Monk's "Well, You Needn't" in *Steamin'* is played as unison by Miles and Coltrane, an octave apart. But starting on the B section, they play the melody one after the other, creating a rhythmic displacement of the melody.

the last measure of
A section

Miles Davis

Rhythmic displacement by Miles

John Coltrane

correct place and rhythm of the melody

Miles goes
back to A, one beat early

Miles Davis

sim.

the melody of A

John Coltrane

sim.

Coltrane omits repeating notes to limit clashing

correct place and rhythm of the melody

Figure 3.6. The B section of "Well, You Needn't"s Head Melody.

Source: Author

There are moments of arrangement decisions taken in the studio that we can hear in the recordings. One of these is happening during the recording of "You're My Everything." This example summarizes two of Miles's abilities. First, managing his band exactly to his vision. And second, knowing their own capabilities, strong sides, and what to expect from them.

On the remastered version of "You're My Everything," which Prestige released in 2005, we get to hear a fraction of the studio conversation the FGQ had. Garland introduces the tune with a series of rhythmic arpeggios, a few measures in, Miles lets

out a whistle to stop everyone. “Play some block chords, Red,” Miles says. Some moments later, when they were ready to play, Miles reminds him, “block chords, Red.” Since we cannot know exactly what was on Miles’s mind when he said the words, one can propose deductions based on the result of that suggestion.

Miles likes Garland’s “light touch” on the keyboard, as it reminded him of Ahmad Jamal. Miles might have thought Garland could let out his ability to “play a sound” with the “block chords, Red” suggestion. The introduction Garland played prepares the listener harmonically. Garland’s feel, touch, and the atmosphere he produced for the ballad could have affected the rest of the band to be inspired and play according to Garland’s inciting introduction.

Figure 3.7. Red Garland’s Introduction on “You’re My Everything.”

Source: Author

Garland plays conventional block chords with his left hand as inversions of the chords, while playing parallel fifth voicings all through with his right hand. As the steady block chords form a strong harmonic foundation, the movement in the right-hand flows on top as a melody. Keeping the same voicing results in some clashes in the chords, as shown in the second beat of m. 1, C-C♯ on A♭13 chord. However, the uninterrupted

parallel fifths make it sound like the ♭9 interval consonant. If one would play the same section with a doubled C♮, it would disrupt the flow.

Miles and Coltrane play the head melody of Dizzy Gillespie's "Salt Peanuts" a tritone apart in the *Steamin'* album. The harmony of the A section is around a Imaj7-IV7 progression, similar to a blues. The rest of the band keeps the original progression, but when the tritone-up melody is introduced, a whole-half octatonic scale could explain all the notes in this version of melody. The I-IV progression can now be interpreted as a static Fdim7 pedal, which might debatably signal the modal approach of Miles in the later years.

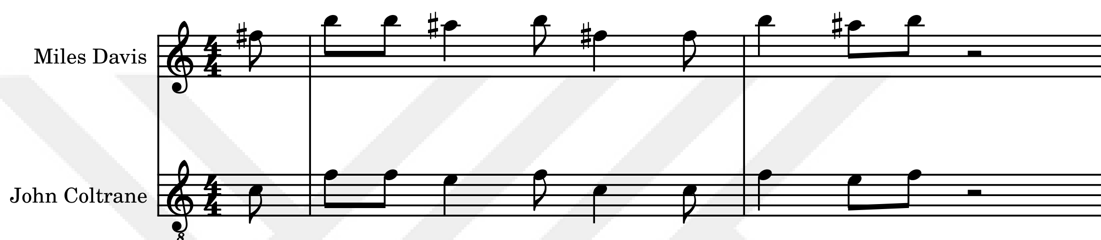

Figure 3.8. Opening Measures of "Salt Peanuts," Played by Miles and Coltrane.

Source: Author

3.3.2. Precomposed Arrangements

After the FGQ started to work with Columbia, there were seemingly less live arrangements that came together on stage. Based on the complexity and execution of the newer arrangements give the impression that they were precomposed. This can be supported with the lack of scholar works that claim the Columbia albums include these live arrangements. The FGQ was still performing the tunes in the Columbia albums on stage, but apparently, most of the arrangements in those albums were precomposed, or thought-out beforehand. In *'Round About Midnight* (1957) for example, this can be seen through more precomposed arrangements, remarkably slower tempos, and a repertoire comprised of simpler compositions such as "All of You," "Bye Bye Blackbird," or "Dear Old Stockholm." And an exact opposite approach in *Milestones* (1958), with much more complex tunes such as "Dr. Jackle," tempos that are faster than any previous Miles recording, more originals such as "Sid's Ahead," a blues-rooted tune with variations on the form, and "Milestones," showing Miles's incline towards modal harmony.

Miles is known for altering the music tailored to the strongest sides of the musicians, to bring out the best result a certain group of musicians could display. It could be proposed that Miles arranged the repertoire to the best of his own prowess in *'Round About Midnight*. In 1955, when Miles performed "'Round Midnight" in the Newport Jazz Festival, his solo marked his "comeback" to the jazz scene after he was labeled as a heroin addict and got him critical acclaim. When the FGQ plus Cannonball Adderley recorded as a sextet for *Milestones*, this time the music was altered to the best of the two saxophone players. While the FGQ was disbanded in 1957, Miles was planning the band of *Milestones*: "I had this idea (…) of expanding the group from a quintet to a sextet, with [Coltrane] and [Adderley] on saxophones. Man, I could just hear that music in my head and I knew (…) it would be [great]" (Davis & Troupe, 1990, p. 217).

Regardless, the first example of a precomposed arrangement will be given from a Prestige album, *Relaxin'*. On "Woody'n You," Miles and Jones trade sixteen measures of solos after the piano solo. After drums, the band introduces a new, twenty-four measures long melody written as a substitute for the final head, that encompasses the two A and B sections. They play the last A to finalize the tune.

Figure 3.9. The Out-head of "Woody'n You," Composed by the FGQ.

Source: Author

Garland and Jones play a riff towards the end of Coltrane's solo on "Tune Up." This rhythmic figure is apparently precomposed, since Garland and Jones start playing it simultaneously, and the riff is played multiple times on various points of the form.

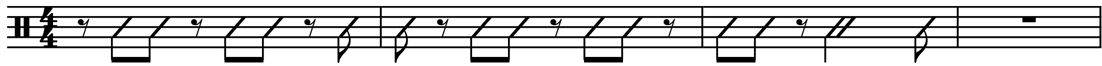

Figure 3.10. The Riff Played on Coltrane's Solo on "Tune Up."

Source: Author

On "'Round Midnight" in *'Round About Midnight*, the band plays a shoutout pattern before heading into the solos. These rhythmic figures were possibly a mixture of precomposed sections and arrangements that had come together on stage.

Figure 3.11. Shoutout Pattern at the End of the Head Melody of "'Round Midnight."

Source: Author

This shoutout measures has unconventional rhythmic divisions of dotted eighth notes and sixteenth notes. The band plays this pattern in a double-time feel, and they possibly count these rhythms in dotted quarter notes and eighth notes. And the following improvisation of Coltrane is also played in double-time.

The music making process of the FGQ can be summed up with a combination of (1) the experience they have accumulated during the live performances, which made them anticipate each other. (2) Each member's idiosyncratic qualities and unique approach to the music of 1950s, and (3) Miles's vision, and his ability to realize the potential capabilities of the band members.

The next chapter will examine the musical processes of the SGQ, similar to this chapter. How the bands came together, their way of music making shows how interconnected these bands were, and it is the continuation of the progressive vision that Miles had throughout his life.

4. CHAPTER: EXTRASENSORY PERCEPTION: SECOND GREAT QUINTET

This chapter will explore the creative processes implemented by the SGQ. It will attempt to explain the band's endeavors in "becoming a unit," their approach to composition, performance, and other potential avenues to enhance the music that arose within the group.

Delving into the methods that the SGQ conducted to produce their innovative, stylistic, and complex music is, in itself, a cumbersome task, one that has been the sole focus of entire dissertations (See, for example, Coolman, 1997; Coleman, 2014). Therefore, elucidating the creative methods of the SGQ within the scope of this thesis presents its own set of challenges. Nonetheless, for this thesis to fulfill its purpose, it is imperative to thoroughly examine these processes in the relevant areas, at least.

Navigating the intricate web of creative processes within the SGQ is complex, as each facet—be it experimentation in improvisation, compositional innovations, or collaborative dynamics—interweaves with the others. Thus, attempting to assign an order of importance to these elements proves elusive. This posed a problem of how to create a more coherent narrative that would effectively convey these processes.

Ultimately, as a solution, I propose dividing these courses of creative incentives into three main categories. (1) Collaborative aspects of SGQ. How the members of the band became a "musical unit," as Miles predicted. Compared to the continuation of the First Great Quintet that lasted for only one and a half years with seven studio recordings, the SGQ stayed as a constant for more than four years, with six studio recordings. Which gave the band a lot more time to get to know each other both personally and musically, and more opportunities to develop the musical innovations that they are making together. (2) Interactions and experimentations of the band, whether individually or as a collective. (3) Compositional aspects. The fact that the SGQ recorded almost only originals that have been written within the group, by itself is a

stance of inventiveness for Miles. While he composed all throughout his career, he did not record an album with only originals before.

4.1. "E.S.P.": Becoming a Unit

Miles writes, even a group of highly skilled musicians can only become a great band if they are willing to work and play together (Davis & Troupe, 1990, p. 273). And Miles was already convinced that a band with Shorter, Hancock, Carter and Williams could "work as a musical unit" (p. 273). As much as Miles cherished the "power of individualism" in his bands, he also believed an excellent band would demand "sacrifice and compromise from everyone" (Coolman, 1997, p. 13; Miles & Troupe, 1990, p. 273).

Miles and the SGQ adopted various methods to function as a cohesive unit, often achieving a level of communication that seemed almost telepathic, like extrasensory perception (E.S.P.). Naming the debut album of the SGQ *E.S.P.* (1965) was obviously a product of this high level of non-verbal communication the band had. Wayne Shorter emphasized this telepathy in an interview for the *Jazz Improv*, recalling a conversation with Miles: "Miles asked me, he said, 'Do you ever get the feeling that you can play anything you want to play?' And before I answered, he said, 'I know what you mean'" (Shorter, 2000). Yudkin (2008) writes, there was "unanimity in this group," more so than in families (p. 6).

Another aspect that solidified their unity is the excessive amount of time they spent playing together, and discussing in depth how the performances went. Shorter had joined the band about a year after Hancock, Carter, and Williams started to play with him. During that year—1964—the band performed in clubs and concerts very often, potentially pushing the limits of human capabilities. Ron Carter recalls that the band was playing about seven hours a day (they played two events each day), after the performances, the rhythm section spent the rest of the night in cafeterias, "trying to figure out what took place," they discussed the things that they could improve (Carr, 1998, p. 190). Hancock believed "the group's defining quality was trust, and acceptance," and whatever unfolded musically was "supposed to happen," and it was their responsibility to find your place in that intricacy (Mercer, 2004, p. 100). To emphasize the unprecedented quality of the music the band made, Hancock also stated

that they were “stepping into darkness,” but they had confidence in one another because they were all in it together (Coolman, 1997, p. 20).

The SGQ fostered a culture of mutual musical discovery; with members eagerly sharing the new sounds they had encountered. They spent considerable time together, not only discussing performances but also sharing the music they were currently listening to. As the youngest, and perhaps the most enthusiastic—with a fiery youth, I presume—member of the band, Williams was always searching for new music. Hancock writes that Williams had introduced to him contemporary composers such as Karlheinz Stockhausen, Alban Berg, John Cage and Paul Hindemith (Hancock & Dickey, 2014, p. 104). Miles himself—even in late 1950s with the FGQ—was into contemporary through-composed music, he told various interviewers that he was listening to “all of them,” in addition to the mentioned ones, he named composers such as Béla Bartók, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Aram Khachaturian, and Frédéric Chopin (Hentoff, 1958; Manwar, 1980; Sidran, 1995, p. 10). The SGQ, then, was constantly in pursuit of new musical inspirations. And when such ideas presented themselves, they absorbed and involved them in their practice.

With the aim of revealing the potential musical excellency Miles envisioned in his band members, Miles adapted the music to their individual qualities. As he had accomplished earlier with the FGQ; giving Coltrane the space and freedom to play as five saxophonists at once, or calling “block chords, Red,” out to Garland, as Miles would know Garland could establish the genuine and warm setting for “You’re My Everything.”

For instance, when the SGQ played the tracks from Miles’s previous albums on stage, Carter noticed they played them at a faster tempo every night. He then describes what he presumes Miles was trying to achieve:

> “When the song got faster, I think Miles was able to hear the changes more better-connected at a certain speed, and more active Herbie became harmonically, and more rhythmically active Tony became. The song seemed to be more effective. [Inaudible] the [chord] changes (…) were easier at a speed that is almost twice as fast (…) as the LP was. We were still discovering ways to play those tunes” (Wilkinson, 2021, 0:09:45).

The approach of playing at a higher tempo is evident even in the earliest live recordings of the quintet. In *Four and More* (1966, recorded in February 1964), when Shorter was not yet in the band, the quintet with George Coleman, Hancock, Carter, and Williams plays the tunes from former recordings at a substantially faster tempo. Miles's composition "Four"—which already is a fast-swing, played initially by the FGQ—displays a prime example. Williams begins with a drum introduction at approximately 260 bpm, and when Miles introduces the head melody, he plays even faster than Williams, pushing the beat forward. This was followed masterfully by the rest of the band, and they reached a pace of approximately 295 bpm. A considerable amount of high tempo is also demonstrated in the first ever recording that the SGQ made, *Miles in Berlin* (1965). The title track of *Milestones* (1958) for example, from the sextet album of the FGQ and Cannonball Adderley, is played at a tempo of approximately 320 bpm. Compared to its pace of around 250 bpm in the original recording, the jump is tremendous.

Thus, one more process of musical improvement can be determined here. Miles could have taken into consideration the individual strengths and inner dynamics of the band members to make the merits of the music higher. Undoubtedly, throughout his career, Miles consistently identified the individual strengths of his band members and utilized them to enhance the music. Examples derived from Miles's previous recordings demonstrate this. In *Kind of Blue* (1959), Wynton Kelly and Bill Evans played alternately. For *Someday My Prince Will Come* (1961), Hank Mobley and John Coltrane played on different tunes, and for "Someday My Prince Will Come," both tenor players recorded, while Mobley was in the initial band, Coltrane recorded overdubs with Miles in a separate session (Davis & Troupe, 1990, p. 252). In *Seven Steps to Heaven* (1963), the standards recorded by the older generation musicians, who played more traditionally, and the originals from the youngster band (Tony Williams and Herbie Hancock) ended up in the release. The inner dynamics also came from the interactions between the band members, and their collaborative interactions between the "source" as Michaelsen (2019) described, and Miles played into these strengths of musicians throughout his life.

The band members utilized diverse approaches to inspire each other toward superior music-making. They were not timid in criticizing each other, they openly offered and received feedback to enhance their collective performance. Miles recalls Tony

Williams critiquing his lack of practice; the assessment was justified by Miles, and he agreed with Williams that he needed to practice more (Davis & Troupe, 1990, p. 273). In contrast, sometimes Miles even encouraged the band members to not to practice the repertoire, "he wanted it fresh," as Wayne Shorter explained (Goodman, 1981). As their playing became more "extrasensory," they sought new ways to surprise each other, continually evolving their approach. Hancock (2014) writes, one year into performing with the SGQ, they noticed that they had gotten too comfortable, and they "figured out a formula for making it work." Surely, a formula was the opposite of what they were aiming for. They started to come up with new ways to "get the challenge back in." Tony Williams proposed a method which he named "anti-music" (p. 92). Which brings us to the next creative process used by the SGQ that will be explored.

4.2. Interactions, Experimentations, Anti-Music

Since there is not a systematic and controlled environment for testing out a hypothesis, experimentation here is not in the scientific sense. The term comprises the novel artistic endeavors by the SGQ members, to achieve unprecedented advancements in music.

The SGQ had run experiments to bring their musical capabilities to the next level. When they had ideas, Miles did not stop them in any sense, instead, he simply adapted himself to the new approach from his young sidemen. He would not be "the one weaving and bobbing," as mentioned in the "Miles in Transition" (Sidran, 1995, p. 265-266). In late 1965, the band had a two-week engagement at the jazz club Plugged Nickel in Chicago, and that's when Williams introduced his idea of "anti-music" to try out in those live events. All the members except Miles accepted this proposal, since they did not mention to Miles what they had planned (Michaelsen, 2019).

4.2.1. Improvisational Experiments

The concept of "anti-music" for Williams was to do the most unexpected thing musically, such as to stop providing any rhythmic information in one moment, initiating free improvisation, or playing solely reactive to any one member of the band (Hancock & Dickey, 2014; Michaelsen, 2019).

These "anti-music" experiments comprised of seven sets performed over four nights and were recorded live by Columbia. They were initially released in Japan by CBS-

Sony in 1976 and later in the United States by Columbia in 1982. These recordings were fully released as *The Complete Live at the Plugged Nickel 1965* by Sony in 1995. In his analysis, Michaelsen (2019) examines these experiments from an interactional perspective, suggesting that musicians "project" improvisational "utterances" onto each other, creating an "interactional narrative." These interactions occur through "interventions," where one musician intervenes in the course of another's musical path, altering what could have been played; thus, a new "stream" is created, an interaction is formed. Michaelsen also discusses the band's relationship to source material, such as a melody of a jazz standard, and parallels musical concepts with those in language, using terms like "utterance" to compare jazz improvisation to conversation. This comparison suggests that, like conversation, musical improvisation fosters interaction among group members.

One of the tunes the band performed at Plugged Nickel was "Agitation," a Miles Davis composition recorded in the quintet's debut album *E.S.P.* It was performed two times on different nights at Plugged Nickel, the take that will be examined is the one performed in December 23's second set. "Agitation" is one of the very few originals of the SGQ that was performed live, mostly as an opening tune of a set (Waters, 2011, p. 84).

But on this night of 1965 in Plugged Nickel, "Agitation" was not yet a regular opening tune; instead, it was played between two standards that were previously recorded by the FGQ. During the applaud for "All of You," without any sonic cue (e.g., a count-in with a finger snap), Miles immediately starts playing the opening phrase of "Agitation" with an excitable attitude. Altering the melody, Miles plays G-F-C-D-E♭, using a perfect fourth of F-C; instead of the stepwise motion in the album version that was played as A-G-F-E♭-D-E♭ (Figure 1). In contrast to the album version, he does not use his mute and uses a rather aggressive tone. With a forward feeling of the beat, and faster than the recording. And in the album, "Agitation" has a two and a half minutes long drum solo as an introduction.

Figure 4.1. Opening Measures to Head Melody of “Agitation” in *E.S.P.* and *Plugged Nickel* Recording.

Source: Author

Miles’s immediacy is followed by Hancock and Williams at the same time, after Miles played only five notes. Carter then joins with a G pedal point, similar to the recording. Michaelsen (2019) writes, the written parts to “Agitation” are “fragmentary and sparse,” with a descending phrase over the G pedal point on the bass, and a “loose C Aeolian harmony.” After Miles presents the head melody, he starts improvising around the head, and plays a repeated D (as tremolo), to an E♭, and rests on C a couple of times. After a fast-paced circular phrase, he brings back the D-E♭-C line again and descends from that C, reiterating the melody, this time stretching it by going down to A♭. This phrase was echoed by Carter, but from E♭ descending an octave to E♭ in C Aeolian, which Carter uses to initiate an “interactional narrative,” as Michaelsen (2019) would call it.

In his autobiography, Miles mentions both Paul Chambers and Ron Carter as “anchors” of his bands (Davis & Troupe, 1990, pp. 222, 273, 276). And Carter here, anchors down the whole band with a rhythmic shift. He pauses for two beats; and starts to alter the feel from a quarter note walking bass line to a dotted quarter note feel, as if it is a Latin style, later stretching more to a three-over-four polyrhythm (Figure 2). G’Froerer (2009) writes, in their performances were changes in the overall “feel” of the tempo—shifting between rubato, double time, and triple time. These changes were used to enhance the emotional and expressive impact, often occurring during solos or pivotal moments in a piece (p. 37).

Figure 4.2. Ron Carter's Bassline on the *Plugged Nickel* Version of "Agitation," starts around 01:00 in the recording.

Source: Author

In that short amount of time, the rest of the band picks up the suggestion. Miles, Carter, and Williams start to play half-time together, and the initial aggressive style changes to a medium tempo swing. With Miles now phrasing his lines as in the bebop tradition: laid-back and emphasizing the triplets. They did not only change the tempo, but they also altered the whole style they were playing; with Williams playing simple quarter notes on his ride cymbal, Carter and Hancock accompanying in a more traditional fashion. Miles switches to the half-time feel with a with a melodic line, and an on-point blues phrase, accenting off-beats, and the blue note G♭ (Figure 3).

Figure 4.3. Miles's Solo in "Agitation," Switch to Half-time Feel.

Source: Author

After around a minute, the band goes back to the original tempo, this time with a cue from Miles. He imitates the melody in the initial up-tempo feel, and again, the rest of the band follows immediately.

While this particular moment in the recording might not be an exemplary display of "anti-music," it provides significant insight on the quintet's views of interplay. Even though the band agreed upon Williams' suggestion, they still exercise caution and remain attuned to the tiniest cues to engage with each other.

Trumpeter Freddie Hubbard asked about the "out" notes that Miles chose to play in his solos, Carter responded that the chords were not precomposed; the rhythm section played certain chords to "allow them ["out" notes] not to work." Carter adds that Miles always managed to find the harmony that was imposed (Wilkinson, 2022, 0:20:20).

4.2.2. Structural Experiments

There can be seen experiments regarding the conventional forms of jazz, as early as in *E.S.P.* (1965). The album does not yet contain many of the "celebrated facets" that are correlated with the SGQ, such as a "time, no changes" composition (Waters, 2011, p. 83). Instead, *E.S.P.* is brimming with challenges against the traditional 32, or 12-measure forms. Miles was interested in stretching limitations in conventional jazz forms, even in the late 1950s. "There will be fewer chords but infinite possibilities as to what to do with them," Miles said, "classical composers—some of them—have been writing this way for years, but jazz musicians seldom have" (Hentoff, 1958).

"Mood" has a 13-measure "circular" form that uses a bass ostinato throughout the recording (Waters, 2011, p. 84). Although "Agitation" was initially recorded in a relatively stable form, it was performed live without any visible form other than the occasional reiterations of the melody. It is "relatively stable" since there are four measure sections in the melody, but the performers vary the lengths of these sections freely (Waters, 2011 p. 119). "Eighty-One" is a 12-bar blues that uses sus4 chords instead of the traditional dominant chords, which was criticized as "a deviation from the blues" by trumpeter Kenny Dorham in the *Downbeat* magazine (Dorham, 1965).

Ron Carter's composition "R.J.," has a highly unique form of nineteen measures, which is divided into equally unique phrases of 5-5-4-5 measures. The quintet adds one measure for the head, probably to keep the triplet phrase in the pick-up measure (m. 15 in Figure 4). Then they improvise over nineteen measures throughout the solo sections. The odd number of measures require substantial proficiency from the soloists

and the rhythm section; they even add one and a half beats in the first chorus of the piano solo (Waters, 2011, pp. 83-84, 119).

Figure 4.4. Head Melody of “R.J.” by Ron Carter

Source: Author

Waters’ (2011) analysis of “R.J.” suggests the odd-numbered phrases “posed clear impediments” for Hancock (p. 119). However, when the last chorus of Shorter is listened to, it can be said that the final phrases by Shorter hints a continuation to the next chorus. With a fast sequence of two-note phrases of A-C, D-F, B♭-A♭, G-B♭, that are seemingly a beginning of a circular motion that uses parallel minor thirds (Figure 6). Thus, this circular motion might have caught Hancock off-guard that resulted in his compelling start of his solo, which caused the band to add one and a half beats to adjust.

Figure 4.5. Closing Phrase of Shorter’s Solo on “R.J.”

Source: Author

The Second Great Quintet's bold experimentation with jazz forms, as evidenced in their album *E.S.P.* reveals a profound commitment to innovation. By challenging conventional structures and embracing unique compositions like Ron Carter's “R.J.,” the quintet demonstrated a willingness to push musical boundaries. Through their explorations, they not only expanded the sonic possibilities of jazz but also highlighted their collective virtuosity and collaborative spirit.

4.2.3. Interaction and Improvisational Experiments in *Miles Smiles*: “Orbits” as an Example Case Study

After recording the debut album of the quintet, *E.S.P.* (1965) in January of that year, the band could not find the opportunity to make a studio recording for almost two years. Miles’s health issues had returned, and his slow recovery from the surgeries hindered the band’s progress. Even for most of the live events they had to play with different bassists, as Carter was unavailable for other commitments (Yudkin, 2008, pp. 66-67). There are only three live recordings from this twenty-one-month period, and one of them—the Plugged Nickel recordings—was left to collect dust on the shelves for a long time.

During this time, Shorter, Hancock, Carter and Williams went to the studio both as leaders and sidemen. Some of the albums from this interim period featuring the quintet’s members are now considered as milestones in jazz. And for several occasions, they were featured in each other’s albums. Hancock’s *Maiden Voyage* (1965), and Shorter’s *The Soothsayer* (1979—recorded in March 1965), featured Carter and Williams. Williams played with Shorter and Hancock for *Spring* (1966). Thus, the band members got more used to playing with each other in this period. Waters (2011) writes, “the interim period was one of the most fertile for the other quintet members” (p. 125).

Finally in October of 1966, the SGQ was together again in the studio, and they recorded *Miles Smiles*. Miles picked possibly the oddest repertoire for the album. Since it has three tunes that were recorded before, and are not originals for the band, in contrast to *E.S.P.* and all five other albums by SGQ. Shorter’s “Footprints,” which was already composed for Miles; when he requested a composition from Shorter “to play at gigs” (Mercer, 2004, p. 118). Shorter recorded “Footprints” only eight months prior for *Adam’s Apple* (1966), and featured Hancock on piano. Eddie Harris’ “Freedom

Jazz Dance," which, interestingly, featured Ron Carter on bass in the original recording. And Jimmy Heath's "Gingerbread Boy." Yudkin (2008) writes, Miles's selection of these tunes "provided the perfect opportunity for [Miles] to demonstrate how radically new was his conception of the music" (p. 70). Indeed, "Footprints" and "Gingerbread Boy" are some of the few tunes the band performed live.

Miles Smiles was recorded in two sessions without any second takes[6]. Miles was investigating "spontaneity and discovery," so the first take that the band could "get through" the melody, ended up being the one used in the recording (Hancock & Dickey, 2014, p. 54). Yudkin (2008) mentions that even though there are several "blemishes" on the album the band's fiery energy, immediacy and dangerous approaches made up for them, and even strengthened the effect that Miles was trying to achieve; it was part of the "spirit of music" (pp. 6-7). Chambers (1985) writes, the fact that *Miles Smiles* features "previously unrehearsed music" is audible through the album, at least "more obviously than most Miles Davis recordings" (p. 99). When Trumpeter Freddie Hubbard said to Ron Carter that the band "had to be rehearsing a lot," Carter responded by explaining that in the five years he was in the quintet, the band had four or five rehearsals in total. "All those hard tunes?" Hubbard asks; and Carter's reply is effectively shedding light on the SGQ's studio work: "Most of them were done at the studio, (…) we never saw them before we got to the studio" (Wilkinson, 2021, 0:07:23). Hancock (2014) writes, "Miles believed that if you rehearse a song too much, you stifle the creative moment" (p. 54).

The act of smiling was something Miles particularly avoided, at least while he was performing. Yudkin (2008) remarked this by naming his first chapter "Miles Siles?" Miles's attitude towards the audiences was criticized; turning his back on stage, "refusing to smile," and in contrast to his predecessors such as Dizzy Gillespie, he did not "made an effort to entertain his listeners" (Goodman, 1981). Baraka (2009) remarks on his serious demeanor on stage, and its negative connotations that came with it (pp. 10-12).

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[6] It could look like a discrepancy that *Freedom Jazz Dance: The Bootleg Series, vol. 5* (2016) shows titles such as "Circle (take 5)." These denominations regard the fact that the band was still learning the pieces of music while recording in the studio at the same time. As Hancock (2014) suggested, on these early takes the band could not "get through the melody." A note in order to eliminate any confusion regarding "second takes."

The SGQ members always searched for ways to broaden each other's musical pallets, introducing new music that was out of their comfort zone, making "anti-music," or playing electric instruments such as the Fender Rhodes, or an electric bass (in *Miles in the Sky*). "Miles kept pushing me to explore my limits," Hancock writes, and in the upcoming weeks the band would record *Miles Smiles*, Miles said to him, "Herbie, stop using your left hand" (Hancock & Dickey, 2014, p. 94). Which was quite shocking to Hancock, "it was a revelation," he writes, omitting his left hand made his right hand freer, and it eliminated his tendency to lean towards a more traditional style of playing (pp. 94-95). Also, it would mean Hancock could not impose a harmonic structure to any tune they were playing. There was not a chordal instrument anymore; trumpet, saxophone, and piano all playing single lines, and Miles already did not want to play around chords anymore. When the time came to record "Orbits," then, Hancock was no different than a horn player, he waited for his turn to solo and stepped back.

It can be heard in the *Bootleg Series* that in the first takes of "Orbits," Hancock was playing chords with his left hand. When they stopped, Miles reminded Hancock of what he wanted from him: "Hey Herbie, get out of there! Would you don't play nothing?" (Davis, 2016, 03:38). And in a take when Hancock played the piano only in his solo, Miles directly praises Hancock, "That's it, Herbie. That's cute (…)" (Davis, 13:29).

Indeed, there can be seen "blemishes" in the ensemble, as Yudkin (2008) suggests (pp. 6-7). The quintet was exploring an untouched part of the ocean of improvisational music, creating a new musical space, stimulating the extra sensory perception. In "Freedom Jazz Dance," for example, there is the famous false start by Miles. Although, one can propose there is a possibility that Shorter could have been the one who missed a cue for starting; Ron Carter and Miles are starting together while Shorter is not playing (Hancock does not play until the last note of the melody).

"Orbits" has a reputation for having an obscure structure for the full length of the tune. In numerous analyses and observations, it has been interpreted variously, and the analyses tend to be contradictory. Chambers (1985) suggested that even if one repeatedly listens to it, "Orbits" has "structural secrets" that are kept concealed, and he evaluates the three solos are "apparently unrelated in mood, style, and melody (pp. 99-100). Waters (2011) writes in response to Chambers' assessments, claiming "Orbits" proves one of the best cases of "motivic improvisation for the entire

ensemble," and it is "one of the primary examples of 'time, no changes'" compositions (pp. 142, 153). Which is an approach to jazz soloing where the performers are playing in a set tempo, (provided mainly by Ron Carter for the instance of "Orbits," since Williams is playing more freely), and they do not follow a precomposed harmonic structure, or a chorus. According to Yudkin (2008), while "Orbits" is avoiding a "conventional form," he also proposes there are choruses that are being manipulated via stretching and stagnating in real time by the performers. Since Herbie Hancock acts as a horn player for the full extent of the tune, the harmonic information is restricted, by means of assigning the information only to Miles, Shorter and Carter. Perhaps, this resulted in opposing analyses of the harmonic structure, even how many measures the melody is.

There are three studies that examine "Orbits" in detail. Jeremy Yudkin's (2008) book, *Miles Davis, Miles Smiles, and the Invention of Post-Bop*, Steven Strunk's (2005) article in *Journal of Music Theory*, "Notes on Harmony in Wayne Shorter's Compositions, 1964-67," and Keith Waters' (2011) book, *The Studio Recordings of the Miles Davis Quintet, 1965-68*. These three studies are intertwined in ways that they all support and contradict each other's claims knowingly or not. Which already is in parallel with the obscure nature of "Orbits." So, this section is aimed at explaining Shorter's "Orbits" from different perspectives; and attempts to generate a coherent analysis filtered through these three studies.

In the various interpretations of the head to "Orbits," the sheet music provided is considerably different in all of them. Waters (2011) provides Shorter's copyrighted sheet music, which starts with four measures of 6/4 before changing into common time, and 2/4 on m. 12 (pp. 143-144). Yudkin's (2008) version, and the one in *Real Book*, are in 4/4 all throughout the tune. I will be providing a sheet of the melody that is transcribed from the recording, and in the style that is given in the *Real Book* (Figure 7). As the number of measures are the same in all three sources, the melody is written in 4/4 time signature for consistency.

Figure 4.6. Melody of "Orbits" in *Miles Smiles*.

Source: Author

Strunk (2005) and Yudkin (2008) interpret the time signature as if it were in 4/4; Strunk further elaborates the opening melody of the tune implies a harmony that is based in, and around F major. Yudkin (2008) suggests the note C is the "melodic goal," and harmonically, the key is "orbiting" around F (pp. 73-74). Waters (2011), providing the lead sheet written by Shorter, analyzing the first few measures as written in 6/4; and he opposes Strunk's interpretation directly, explaining further that the bass does not imply a F major harmony. The contradictory views of "Orbits" are exemplary of its obscure nature.

Db-Gb-Db-C phrase (m. 22) indeed suggests a gravitation towards C, as the phrase comes to a rest on C—as well as multiple times in the melody. Waters (2011) depicts the relationship between C and F as separate tonal centers (pp. 144-145). While the "harmonic goal" may very well be F in the introduction measures[7], and the opening head, Waters (2011) writes, Carter's bassline does not follow that harmonic implication in the final melody (p. 146). Among the three thorough studies of "Orbits," only Waters takes the bass into consideration as an indicator of harmony.

After the presentation of the head, all three improvisational sections from Miles, Shorter, and Hancock are unambivalently apart from a traditional form of jazz solo. The durations of the solos are 76, 74, and 68 measures respectively, any of these lengths does not seem to be a repeated chorus. Apart from implying the melody occasionally, they do not follow a precomposed harmonic structure.

Yudkin (2008) writes that both Miles and Shorter's solos are "more than two choruses," implying a form which was stretched and manipulated by the soloists (p. 74).

Williams closely followed all three soloists. He accompanied with a steady swing, while occasionally introducing an irregular pattern on the cymbal. These irregular patterns are more present in Shorter's solo, as Shorter plays freer than Miles as he is the composer of the tune, Williams gets more opportunities to interact with him (Yudkin, 2008, p. 74).

The last ten measures to the melody of "Orbits," are possibly the most significant for the case of interactions between the soloists. These measures are played and altered by Miles, Shorter, and Hancock for the final parts of their solos (Figures 7-12). After Miles, both Shorter and Hancock complement the closing phrases of the soloist they are following. One can say the interaction was initiated by the melody in the first place. And indeed, Miles has a history of playing around the head melody for the ends of his improvisations (Day, 2010). The repeated phrase on the last four measures, two dotted quarter notes followed by an eighth note to a long note, are rhythmically quite

[7] mm. 1-9 for Yudkin (2008) and *Real Book*, mm. 1-7 for Waters (2011), simply the first 36 beats from both perspectives.

memorable, and the rhythmic pattern is also introduced in the previous measures (mm. 17-18).

Towards the end of his solo, Miles played an altered version of the closing measures of "Orbits" (Figure 7). At the start of his solo, Shorter "nods" to Miles's finishing phrases (Figure 8), which was followed by Hancock later, his opening statement is also a "nod" to Shorter (Yudkin, 2008, p. 74). Shorter, then, initiated and finished his improvisation echoing the melody, as did Hancock.

There are a multitude of examples in jazz history that demonstrate musicians complementing each other's solos (Day, 2010). Although this is not a custom, it is one of the diverse practices of the improvising musician who interacts with others.

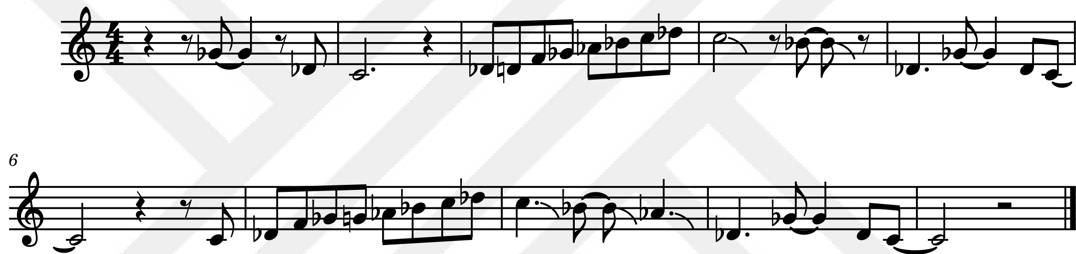

Figure 4.7. Last Ten Measures of Miles's Solo on "Orbits"

Source: Author

Figure 4.8. Opening Measures of Shorter's Solo on "Orbits"

Source: Author

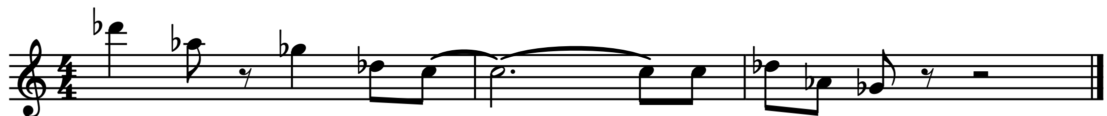

Figure 4.9. Shorter Quotes the Melody of "Orbits" in his Solo, at 02:02.

Source: Author

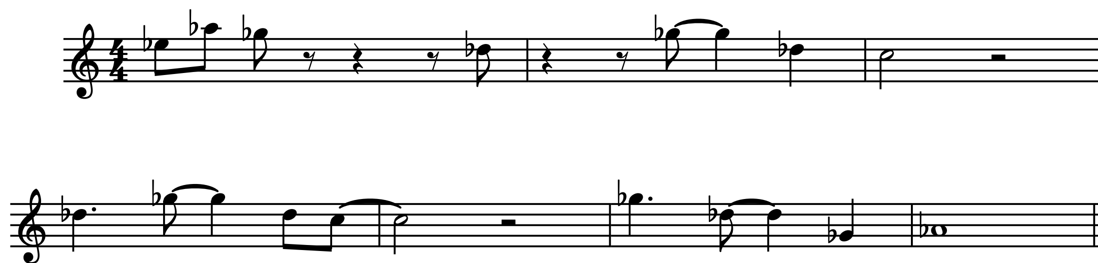

Figure 4.10. Last Measures of Shorter's Solo on "Orbits."

Source: Author

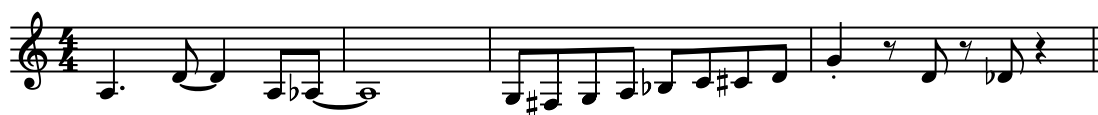

Figure 4.11. Opening Measures of Hancock's Solo on "Orbits."

Source: Author

Figure 4.12. Last Measures of Shorter's Solo on "Orbits."

Source: Author

One more possible way to reveal the nature of "Orbits" is to look at the session reels of *Miles Smiles*, *Freedom Jazz Dance: The Bootleg Series, Vol. 5* was released in 2016 as a part of the *Bootleg Series* of various recordings of Miles. The band does not talk excessively as they are in "Freedom Jazz Dance" session reel. But in the fragmentary speaking in the recording, there are hints of a form, at least in the melody.

Carter asks the group, "the chords start at 'A' right?" possibly referring to the sheet music in front of him. And Hancock responded by demonstrating, "whenever it says (sings the melody on mm. 18-22)." "Start at the chords, the G minor," Miles says (Davis, 04:55). At 06:45, they reach m. 14, and Carter and Williams start playing a stable swing rhythm. As they did in the released take in the album. Therefore, one can

say the melody on m. 14 is the latter "A." But Hancock is singing the melody on m. 18, and Waters (2011) puts a "Gmin?" on m. 18 on the lead sheet (p. 143). Then, if "the G minor" Miles refers to is m. 18, there might not be any written chords over the melody before m. 18. However, Water's (2011) lead sheet has a "CMaj?" on m. 14 (p. 143). And a C major chord is also quite justifiable. Carter is playing a walking bass line, with the notes C-D-E-G (a common way to imply a major chord, the degrees 1-2-3-5) on m. 14, and C-C♯-D-D♭ on m. 15, going back to C. However, the melody notes on m. 14 are D-F♯-B♭-D♭, to C on m. 15. Which can impose a C dominant chord with a flat nine, and a sharp eleven.

4.3. Compositions

Miles employed a mode of composing that prioritizes the performers, imagining beforehand how the musicians would approach the tune, and writing accordingly. Miles emphasized the importance of composing music tailored to the specific ensemble at hand; stating in an interview "when you write for yourself, your ego takes over." Further elaborating, Miles explains falling in love with your own writing could detrimentally impact the music; he remarked that, including himself, musicians would make fools of themselves by believing any of their compositions are "that good (Saunders, 1975)."

Miles explained the construction processes of the compositions of the SGQ in an interview with drummer Arthur Taylor. After one of the members writes a tune, Miles usually goes through a variety of alterations to some extent: he adds chords, and/or a bass line, differs some of the phrases, provides a more adventurous time signature, or "spread it out or space it," as Miles puts it (Taylor, 1968)."

Mercer (2004) writes, Miles usually performed "surgical reconstruction" on majority of the compositions of his sidemen, but for Shorter's tunes, he usually limited himself only to "minor cosmetic changes (p. 101)." "Wayne is a real composer," Miles notes, Shorter's compositions did not need to be changed in most cases, then Miles points out Shorter's addition expedited the creation process of the band (Davis & Troupe, 1990, pp. 273-74). Shorter's contributions can be discerned simply by examining through the albums of the SGQ. Shorter is, with sixteen compositions, the most prolific composer of all six albums of the band. "Wayne was the idea person," Miles writes,

“the conceptualizer of a whole lot of musical ideas we did” (Davis & Troupe, 1990, p. 273).

One of these “surgical reconstructions” was explained by Hancock in an interview, he recalled when Ron Carter brought his composition, “Eighty-One”:

> I remember when Ron Carter brought in the song “Eighty-one” for the E.S.P. album. Miles took the first two bars of melody notes and squished them all together, and he took out other areas to leave a big space that only the rhythm section would play. To me, it sounded like getting to the essence of the composition (Lyons, 1983, p. 274).

This incident was noted as the reason for Miles is credited as a cowriter of the tune (Waters, 2011, p. 10).

5. CHAPTER: CONCLUSION

There can be found parallels in the performing styles of both bands. To compare individual qualities of performers, this thesis shall define and assign an aspect to explain these qualities. They are to be taken as opposite terms, which we will call straightforwardness vs elasticity: how free a band member, or a group of members in reaction and interaction. This aspect will attempt to reveal answers to the connection between the quintets.

Elasticity refers to the musicians that are open to fluctuation when a new approach is introduced, their style of interaction and adaptation is in a fluid-like state that they can reshape their whole style constantly. Straightforwardness is for the musicians that they display reactions minimally, if at all, and when they interact, they do it while confined within the frame of their individual style/approach. Neither of these terms does not involve a musician's inclination towards taking the initiative for interaction in performance, or innovation. These aspects do not claim to be a way to determine a qualification of musicianship, or to designate any kind of labelling on any individual musician. They would rather describe a way of performance approach by musicians.

In both quintets, the rhythm sections are not to be mentioned as straightforward or elastic as a whole. But interestingly, they seem to be mirrored in a sense. The piano-drums duo in the FGQ, Garland and Jones, are working as one unit. They incorporate their "worked out" routines to interact with the rest of the band (Berliner, pp. 383-385). Both as a section, and their individual style of keeping a steady, but exciting motion that is pushing the whole band, displaying a straightforward approach.

Their other rhythm section member Chambers, however, shows elasticity in the context of FGQ. Indeed, he often joins in with the exciting forward motion that he himself is a part of. But Chambers was a bassist in the mid-1950s, who keeps avoiding the roots on the first beat, plays countermelodies, implies alternative harmonies, and

sometimes deliberately stays out of the routines and arrangements to add contrast to the music, which would make him shine as a performer with elasticity.

Correspondingly, mirroring piano-drums section of the SGQ, Hancock and Williams, are the two players showing elasticity in that rhythm section. Hancock and Williams too, work as a unit, like Garland and Jones. But they do it in the completely opposite direction: by never being together. When Williams implies a quadruple time on a ballad, for example, Hancock may introduce a slower tempo or leave the stage to Williams by omitting accompaniment entirely. Individually, Williams displays greater elasticity, constantly introducing new concepts and retracting them all the way in a moment.

Among all the adventurousness, this time Carter would be the one who stands out as straightforward. Playing a consistent, never resting walking bassline on "Orbits," for example, is the constant that enables the freedom to other performers, rendering their experimental interactions meaningful. Of course, there could be situations where Carter may play in a different direction than his bandmates, playing fast double-time when Williams plays half-time, or playing a descending minor ninth-sharp fourth figure throughout "Freedom Jazz Dance," when Williams plays triplet feel fast swing. But still, mostly he does that in a constant way again.

Additionally, a musician may well be straightforward or elastic outside of their performance, but with their approach to music. When in this sense, now it becomes a key factor if the musician is prone to innovation or not. Red Garland, for instance, can be considered straightforward in both cases. As he does not prefer to alter his style of playing jazz after his departure from FGQ. Which can be seen in his later works; also, in the interview in 1978, he mentions Art Tatum and Bud Powell as his main influences still (Lyons, 1983, pp. 146-147).

As one of the elastic players in FGQ, Paul Chambers can fall into this category with Garland. After FGQ, and possibly *Kind of Blue*, it is hard to say that he departed from his direction. Indeed, one should acknowledge that he did not record as a bandleader after 1960 and went to the studio rarely until he passed away in 1969.

On the opposite end of this spectrum, more than a few members of each quintet can be listed. John Coltrane immediately assembled his own band after his departure with the FGQ, and ultimately with Miles in the early 1960s. He picked up the ideas he cultivated

with Miles's bands and set to harvest. Development of his harmonic innovations in *Giant Steps* (1960), the continuation of modal playing on his own terms in *My Favorite Things* (1961). With his legendary quartet with McCoy Tyner, Jimmy Garrison, and Elvin Jones, stepping into the avant-garde in his unique spiritual approach in *A Love Supreme* (1965). Free jazz recordings including two drums, two tenor saxophones (e.g., *Meditations*, 1966), two basses (e.g., *Om*, 1968), with additions to the quintet, such as Pharoah Sanders and Rashied Ali. Until his passing in 1967, elasticity was one of the main attributes of Coltrane.

Miles was described as a musician who assigns "change" as his actual style, and change being held on to, religiously (Chambers, 1983, p. 3; Schwendener, 1987). Which is attempted to be established in the whole of this thesis. Hence, Miles's views of music were through change, and elasticity. He took decisive actions in several ways, to make sure to stay in that manner.

If we go back to straightforwardness/elasticity in performance, two of the three horn players of the bands, Miles, Coltrane, and Shorter, display a performance approach outside of the expected. The expected, supposedly, would be a fluid, flowing approach that can be considered as elasticity of the horn players, which is often true. Shorter, while being an unpredictable composer and performer, is within the expected. Always communicating with the rhythm section, suggesting new ways to improvise, and quoting another bandmate.

In his own context, however, Coltrane, with his superimposed chords, complicated arpeggios on various rhythmic groupings and specific goals to achieve in Miles's band; displays a quite straightforward performance aspect. Overlooking his initial elasticity in musical conceptions, in the FGQ years, Coltrane is one of the most straightforward musicians of the band.

And lastly, Miles Davis, is a person in his musicianship, a walking dichotomy. Miles decides on an approach for a specific band, a project, an album; and makes his sound the voice of that style. Miles is a musician who is a straightforward performer, in his own elastic ways. In the Prestige recordings, Miles is one straightforward phenomenon. But in *Milestones* for instance, he becomes this another straightforward musician, displaying elasticity in his various appearances. While showcasing elasticity in all SGQ recordings.

Miles, in the end, is the enabler of freedom in innovative jazz musicians. His quality to pick the right personnel for the right vision and tailoring the music to the select group of musicians, is the "great" quality of Miles Davis. When he assembled the four-fifths of the FGQ, in one live event where Miles heard Coltrane's sound, the band became a set group after that point. When he lost his quintet, he searched for another Coltrane, and in the process, gained the notion that he did not want to play chords, and found himself in the path of Coltrane while searching for him, and made six recordings filled with experimentation with intention. In conclusion, the two bands did become a continuation of each other, in a sense of continuity of progressive vision, assembling correct ensembles, with unique approaches they introduced to their respective periods.

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7. APPENDICES

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