Johnny Fourie and his influence on the development of the jazz guitar in South Africa.

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Supervisor: Prof Mary Rörich

Declaration

I declare that this dissertation/thesis is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Music in Performance in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

Jonathan Mark Crossley

27 Day of February, 2003

‘Johnny is one of the greatest guitar players of our epoch’ (John McLaughlin).

‘He is one of the greatest musicians in South Africa and is highly regarded by many musicians around the world’ (Deepak Ram).

‘One of the great cosmic guitar players on planet earth today’ (Clive Stevens).

‘I always had the utmost respect for Johnny Fourie's musicianship, he was very passionate about music and above all, he was a person that was devoid of any ego’ (Hennie Bekker).

‘Playing with Johnny was for me among the most rewarding musical highs. He is truly a national treasure and deserves far, far wider recognition both here and internationally’ (Avzal Ismail).

‘To this day, I continue to think of Johnny, whose picture adorns my living room, alongside the piano. When I recently visited him and he picked up the guitar to play along with me, the musical bonds were as strong as ever, and there was still that element of the unknown lurking just beyond our horizon’ (Robbie Payne).

‘Johnny caused quite a stir when he came to New York. Musicians were talking about him and listening to what he was doing’ (Morris Goldberg).

‘He has a tremendous youthful spirit and adventurous mind and I am fortunate and blessed to work with him’ (Wessel van Rensburg).

CONTENTS

1. Introduction

Johnny Fourie is one of a large number of jazz musicians who have played a considerable role in the development of jazz in South Africa, but yet remained relatively unknown. As a student of Fourie's I became deeply aware of his wealth of knowledge and while many people have received tuition from Fourie, there is no written documentation pertaining to what he teaches and the specific methods he employs. My aim for this study has been to provide a document that, with Fourie's consent, will provide insight into his life and technique.

Fourie's life is contained in the many events in which he performed, the various bands he played in, the individual musicians he worked with, and the students he taught. Therefore one of the main research methods for this report was to conduct many interviews, to provide, as far as possible, impartial insight into Fourie's life and work, and also to verify biographical events.

In any jazz performer there exist a large number of stylistic influences, and the report takes this into consideration. Any student of improvisation leans towards studying their favourite performers, and in later study, often the previous generation of performers that influenced them. Fourie's own playing style can be traced to American jazz musicians such as Tal Farlow, Jimmy Rainey and Bill Evans, British players such as John McLaughlin, Dave Goldberg and Ike Issacs, and South African players such as Allan Kwela, Sandile Shangwe, Cyril Magubane, Tienie Coetzer, Noel Stockton and Stan Murray. With such a strong mix of international and local influences, understanding Fourie's playing style is a complex issue. Many books have been written about the various American and

British performers mentioned above, but almost no literature is available on the South African performers.

A report has recently been completed on pianist Noel Stockton and this, along with the abovementioned lack of literature, served as further motivation and encouragement for this report. I am hopeful that many more will be written about our South African musical greats.

Both this report and Francois Potgieter's report on Stockton give equal weight to both technical and biographical components. The first part of this report is purely biographical, and gives listing of bands, events, and associations throughout Fourie's life. The second component has two parts. The first is an analysis of his current approach to re-harmonisation of jazz standards for guitar. The second is a documentation of the method which Fourie uses to teach his students improvisation.

The report also contains an appendix with three CD's, pictures and a full score. The CD's cover performances from 1959 through to the current day, and provide the reader with an opportunity to hear the various bands mentioned. Many of the recordings were of very poor quality, but efforts have been made to bring the quality level up. The photographs show some of the various bands throughout Fourie's life as well as verifying a number of associations. My hope is that Fourie's style and musical wealth can be passed on to other devotees.

Section 1

2. Biography

2.1 Formative Years (1937 – 1961)

Johnny Fourie was born Jan Carel Fourie in the Postmansburg district of Hay in the Western Cape on the eighteenth of May 1937. He was the eldest child of the three children born to Johannes Jakobus and Hester Sophia van Staden.

His earliest recollections involve his father leaving the family to fight in the Second World War when Fourie was three years old, only returning three years later. Fourie relates that 'my mother was a musician, she loved music and encouraged it. On her side of the family there were classical pianists and organists' (Fourie: 2000, 1). He also remembers that his mother was a 'free thinker' (Fourie: 2000, 1), and believes that this may have encouraged a strong interest in music which would ordinarily not have been nurtured in those surroundings. He holds his mother highly in regard to his development and recalls no specific contact with his father between the ages of seven and eighteen.

At the age of four Fourie had already expressed a desire to play the guitar, but his mother was either unwilling or unable to purchase him an instrument. He recalls making a guitar for himself out of a bent plank of wood and a piece of rubber. During this period Fourie remembers listening to his mother playing the accordion, performing songs from the war era and also many 'boeremusik'[1] songs. Fourie's parents separated when he was six years old and he sites this as

[1] Traditional Afrikaans style of music.

a major influence on his development. He recalls that his mother was bitter about the divorce and that, as a result, an extremely strong bond between mother and son was formed.

After the divorce Fourie's maternal grandparents cared for the family for the better part of two years, at which point they moved to Johannesburg. They lived in central Johannesburg briefly before moving to the East Rand town of Benoni, to be close to his maternal grandparents. Mrs Fourie worked in a factory as a seamstress and with this income was able to send her children to school, as well as to purchase a guitar for Johnny.

Fourie was a confident child, a trait he believes was encouraged by his mother's 'free thinking' (Fourie: 2001, 1), and was not adversely affected either by his surroundings or the situation between his parents. In Benoni he was introduced to films: he remembers particularly how, on a Saturday morning, one could slip in and watch movies for the better part of a day. 'I lived in that ''bughouse''[2]; the films were screened more than once and through repeated listening I came to know the songs from these films. I was able to sing them and play along on my guitar' (Fourie: 2000,1). The 'bughouse' was known for screening almost exclusively westerns and these films exposed Fourie to artists like Gene Autrey and the genre known as country or western swing. Later Fourie was able to go to theatres showing bigger Hollywood-style or, as he refers to them, 'Doris Day' films. The latter contained many of the famous swing pieces and swing ballads that were to become the staple of his later style.

In 1949 Fourie recalls hearing the George Shearing Quintet on the radio one evening, playing a number called *Little White Lies*. This is the first time he

[2] An inexpensive movie house.

remembers hearing instrumental or improvisatory jazz. It excited him so much that he went out to a bicycle shop[3], which sold 78 rpm shellac records and bought the album containing this recording. The track made such an immense impression on him that Fourie still recalls the personnel for that album: George Shearing on piano, Chuck Wayne on guitar, Marjorie Haymes on vibraphone, Vernel Fournier on drums and Denzil Best on bass. He took it home and had mastered the solos from the album by the same evening. From the ages of twelve to fourteen this was Fourie's primary method of learning jazz: he would play these albums over and over until he had mastered the solos from a variety of recordings. The performances were greatly varied but Fourie sites specific influences: the guitarist for the Nat King Cole Trio, Oscar Moore, influenced his chordal development on the instrument, while Barney Kessel's recordings are cited as being the 'first time I heard the guitar voicing chords with the melody and solos' (Fourie: 2000, 2).

This awakening interest in jazz guitar resulted in other players becoming prominent figures in his developing style, amongst them bebop[4] players such as Tal Farlow and Jimmy Rainey and protagonists of the cool[5] school such as Johnny Smith and Mundell Lowe. Other musical influences came from different sources, and include pianist Oscar Peterson, trumpeter Miles Davis, and later guitarists like Barney Kessel and Herb Ellis.

During his last year in school Fourie remembers listening to the 'great heroes' of Afrikaans music from that period, most particularly the Hendrik Susan band,

[3] Fourie recalls being able to purchase records at the bicycle shops.
[4] Style of jazz as pioneered by performers such as Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker and Bud Powell.
[5] A style of jazz from the 50's as pioneered on Miles Davis' recording 'The birth of the cool' from 1949, also represented by pianist Bill Evans and guitarist Jim Hall.

which featured Nico Carstens and Tini Coetzer on guitar. Fourie notes that at this point his ‘greatest aim was to play for Hendrik Susan’s band’ (Fourie: 2001, 1).

By this time his enthusiasm for music was such that at the age of fourteen or fifteen Fourie decided to drop out of school with the intention of playing music professionally. He achieved this by misleading his mother and enrolling to study a trade at the Benoni Engineering College, but this was only an excuse to allow him out of school. He recalls playing for a function at the Benoni Volkswagen offices at the time. These offices were owned by a man called Mac Civin who had his own Dixieland jazz band. This was essentially Fourie’s first professional engagement. After three months of studying at Benoni Engineering College Fourie was called into the principal’s office to sign obligatory indention papers which would have bound him to a five-year contract as a tradesman, but he refused and had to leave the college.

Fourie then (1952/1953) decided to move to Brixton, Johannesburg. He did so with his mother’s blessing and went to stay with another well-known musician, Flippie van Vuuren. When Nico Carstens and Tini Coetzer left Hendrik Susan’s band Flippie van Vuuren and Fourie took up the posts. Uri Ferraria was Susan’s singer at the time and he owned a club in the city. Ferraria broke away from Susan’s band and Fourie and Van Vuuren followed him, performing at Ferraria’s club roughly three times per week for a salary of R6 per week. Fourie finds this period amusing as ‘after learning to play George Shearing, here I was, working in the field, playing boeremusik. Uri would allow me to play one or two standards at the end of the set, like *A Foggy Day*’ (Fourie: 2000,1).

Later that year Fourie was offered a ‘big gig’ playing for a Christmas event with Susan’s band, substituting for Susan’s usual guitarist. Later Susan got a gig at

the Skyroof restaurant in Port Elizabeth. This gig was cocktail music, six nights per week. After two weeks Fourie was paid by Susan for the full month and then fired for 'playing too much jazz' (Fourie: 2000, 1). Fourie immediately took a train back to Johannesburg and, the same day he arrived, got a gig playing standards in an English night club. Ironically he got fired from this gig for having too limited a repertoire of jazz standards.

Fourie, now aged sixteen, spent the next six years playing and working in Johannesburg, with a brief period (approximately three months) in Margate playing for the Barry Sutherland Trio (Appendix A, Figure 1). During this time he worked for George Hayden roughly three times a week, playing standards. He also supplemented his income with studio work. He recorded with such luminaries as Spokes Mashiyana, The Manhattan Brothers (Disk 1 tracks 1 & 2), Miriam Makeba and Lemmy Special while working for Gallo studios (Appendix A, Figure 2). He also worked extensively with Nico Carstens. At the age of nineteen Fourie married Marion Albutt and his first child Deborah was born in the same year.

In 1961 Fourie got a gig playing on a boat en route to London. There was a three-day stop over in London, after which he flew back to Johannesburg. He says: 'What I saw in Soho forced me to leave in November on a boat destined for London with my wife, a baby and about two hundred rand' (Fourie: 2000, 1).

2. 2 First United Kingdom Period (1961 – 1966)

Fourie, with his wife and daughter, arrived in Earls Court, London, as he puts it, 'young and innocent, with a little suitcase' (Fourie: 2001, 2). The family moved into a bed-sitter and all their money was spent by the third day.

Every Monday in London many different musicians would meet in Archers Street, Soho, to informally exchange contacts, dates, sessions and party gigs. The second time Fourie went to one of these meetings, he came across a musician who had been to Johannesburg. He then introduced Fourie to an Eastern European violinist who needed a guitar player for a restaurant gig. These gigs were five nights per week at a venue called The Blue Boar Inn. Fourie had to dress in a Robin Hood outfit while supporting this 'gypsy' violinist.

Fortunately it wasn't long before Fourie was able to leave this gig. Through a South African friend, who was a roadie[6] for the Ray Ellington Quartet, it came to Fourie's attention that there might be a guitar position available in this quartet, as the current guitarist had an alcohol problem. The quartet had a forthcoming gig in Monte Carlo and Ellington booked a studio audition for him on a Tuesday morning at Dionley's rehearsal studios. At the audition the group put three charts[7] on the music stand and counted in. Fourie didn't even start: while he knew the standard *That Old Black Magic* well, he couldn't read the arrangement written on the chart. Although Ellington liked Fourie's guitar style, he insisted that he needed a player who could read music. Fourie was forced to return to his job at The Blue Boar Inn.

Ellington's band had a two-week long gig in Bournemouth, just prior to Christmas. Fourie's luck was about to change, as the replacement guitarist was released from the gig. Ellington's piano player persuaded him to try to use Fourie by offering him the opportunity to memorise the music. Ellington agreed and Fourie, with the piano player's help, set about memorising the guitar parts for

[6] A person who works for a group, setting up and packing the instruments.
[7] Or scores.

forty to fifty pieces. There were then daily rehearsals in preparation for a dance-hall gig in Thornton. Fourie's convincing performance at this gig led Ellington to offer Fourie the gig in Monte Carlo (Appendix A, Figures 3 and 4).

Playing with the Ellington band proved to be the turning point in Fourie's career. By touring around the United Kingdom for two years, Fourie's playing ability was recognised by the jazz public, as well as the press. The group played for a variety of different types of events in venues including dance halls, concert venues and even upmarket hotels. These gigs had both concert and background functions, sometimes taking the form of a single set and sometimes being just background music. The music was mostly arrangements of standards as played by the popular jazz artists of the time, such as Count Basie and George Shearing. The group consisted of Ray Ellington on drums and vocals, Johnny Fourie on guitar, Bruce Wayne on bass and Leon Cohen on piano. The popularity of this group was such that there were many radio and television appearances, and as a result of this Fourie received a significant amount of fan mail.

The recognition that Fourie received through his performances with the Ray Ellington group brought his playing to the attention of Ronnie Scott, owner and manager of the famous London-based jazz club, The Ronnie Scott Club. Scott approached Fourie to take up a residency there, and Fourie suggested a trio featuring guitar, piano and bass. Fourie was offered the post for five nights per week but Scott insisted on booking a rhythm section of bass and drums. The initial group featured Fourie on guitar, Jeff Hyne on bass and Benny Goodman on drums. When Fourie took this post he left the Ray Ellington Quartet. Interestingly, John McLaughlin, who was a close friend of Fourie's, took over the guitar post in the group and Fourie was responsible for teaching McLaughlin the

group's specific arrangements (Appendix A, Figure 13). McLaughlin says: 'I was working with a rhythm and blues band, which I was not very enthusiastic about and Johnny did not like his job at the time, so we just traded jobs' (McLaughlin: 2002, 1).

While working at Ronnie Scott's Fourie was exposed to numerous famous musicians and groups, many of whom were to be influential in the development of his style: Bill Evans, Jim Hall, René Thomas, Freddie Hubbard, Stan Getz, Roland Kirk and Sonny Rollins are just a few of the important names. The club would book famous American and European musicians for two-week residencies. Fourie was one of a number of resident bands and artists; Ronnie Scott had his own group as well, and this meant that when these groups were playing Fourie was free to play with other artists and at other venues. Later some players would come and sit in[8] with Fourie's band. Ben Webster, Johnny Hodges and Lalo Schifrin counted amongst these players.

Fourie's band opened for the blind Roland Kirk and also for Sonny Rollins while they were performing at the club. When Fourie was opening for Roland Kirk he confesses: 'I was basically pretty shy and I would never (introduce) announce myself' (Fourie: 2002, 1). It was only after a full week of opening for Kirk that Fourie plucked up the courage to introduce himself, and when he spoke the blind musician recognised him from the announcements. Kirk said 'Hey man, how long have we been making this gig together? And we haven't talked. Is that good?' (Fourie: 2002, 1). Fourie realised that his shyness had been interpreted as racism. Fourie says: 'I came across as a white South African, not wanting to associate with the black Roland Kirk' (Fourie: 2002, 1). Fourie was later able to

[8] Playing as a guest

modify his group and make it into the guitar, bass and piano trio he originally wanted. The members of the group changed often over the four-year period.

During this time Fourie also met the British musician, Tubby Hayes, who asked Fourie to play for him. Fourie played for Hayes for roughly a year, touring round the UK when he wasn't working at the club. On one occasion when Sonny Stitt and J.J. Johnson were in town and Fourie was performing at Ronnie Scott's for Hayes, their rhythm sections came to the gig. Fourie recalls this as being quite nerve-wracking as 'Tubby played the head[9] of a blues in F twice, then went to the bar to drink, after having told me to solo. It was sink or swim' (Fourie: 2001, 2). While at Ronnie Scott's he worked with the jazz vocalist Mark Murphy and even South African pianist Chris McGregor. In fact Fourie had become so well known by the end of this period that many exiled South African musicians came to watch his gigs.

The period at Ronnie Scott's' club brought Fourie wide recognition in the UK, as well as his second child, Sean Fourie, who was born in 1963. Fourie was characteristically unaware of this recognition and, in fact musically unhappy. At this time players like Coltrane, Davis and Coryell were changing the face of jazz; bebop was no longer at the forefront. Fourie says he was on an 'eternal search for "the music". I was searching desperately for freedom in music and I was not happy with my current position' (Fourie: 2001, 2). Fourie felt that the music produced by these players was different and fresh and he felt compelled to change with the times. His current status and recognition seemed less important than the quest for 'the music'. Fourie says: 'after soul searching, the only choice was to go into the back room and discover this thing. In other words I gave up everything to come back to South Africa and study.' The day before he left to

[9] The melody of the piece, played before the solos.

return to South Africa Fourie made a recording for the BBC. This recording was a feature on his quartet for the Humphrey Littleton Jazz Show and show-cased Johnny Fourie, Gordon Beck on piano, Allan Ganley on drums and Freddy Logan on bass (Disk 1, tracks 3 & 4). After this return Fourie heard of a American *Downbeat* poll where he was rated as talent deserving wider recognition, but he was more concerned with achieving his musical goal.

2.3 First South African Return (1966 – 1968)

In the year prior to returning to South Africa, Fourie came to Johannesburg on holiday, and gave an interview on SABC radio. Asked to comment on the standard of local jazz musicians, he was not complimentary. On his subsequent return to South Africa he was not accorded the hero's welcome he might have expected. In the UK he was well known as one of the main players on the London scene, and that information had filtered back to South Africa. Fourie feels that this, along with his negative comments on radio, contributed to animosity from local jazz musicians.

The first year back in South Africa was filled with hardship. Fourie could not find work within his field and was taking any gig or session[10] he could get. Fourie admits that he 'never chased gigs': i.e. he waited for people to phone him for work (which might have also contributed to his lack of activity during this and later periods). However, work did come in - mostly in the form of sessions for the SABC and specifically for artists like Sam Sklair, Dan Hill and Art Heatly. He also worked for the conductor/agent Bob Adams as part of the supporting band for overseas touring artists.

[10] Going to a studio to work as guitarist on an artists album.

2.4 Second United Kingdom Period (1969)

Due to the continuing lack of work in South Africa and what Fourie felt was continuing resistance to him as a player, he decided to return to the UK. However when he arrived, things had changed there as well. There were new resident musicians at Ronnie Scott's and Fourie was hired only for some one-off gigs. The other main jazz venue in London, The Bulls Head, gave Fourie more regular employment.

The influence of John McLaughlin on Fourie's life and playing style can be seen at this stage, as can his influence on the UK jazz scene in general. Fourie recalls playing at The Bulls Head on his return, and specifically recalls McLaughlin coming to sit-in on one of his gigs. McLaughlin was busy developing the style of guitar for which he later became famous, a strongly modal style of playing, and Fourie was captivated by this new sound. Fourie recalls performing *Autumn Leaves* at The Bulls Head with McLaughlin playing this new style right 'over the top' of this traditional jazz standard.

Fourie did indirectly get work from McLaughlin during this period. The latter was playing everywhere and anywhere and often missed studio sessions for which he was booked, so Fourie was often called as his replacement.

Fourie found himself frustrated during this time, both musically and professionally, his main aim being to discover this 'new sound'. He could hear it in the music of Miles Davis, John Coltrane and now his friend John McLaughlin. However, he was hindered by lack of income-producing work and had to resort to taking any gig available. One of these was as part of the orchestra for the popular singer Lulu, whose real name was Marie McDonald McLaughlin Lawrie.

The piano player was the musical director for this series and was stylistically very conservative. While Fourie was exploring modality and altered scales, the director was refusing to let him play even the minor seventh chord. This group toured all through the UK playing at dance halls and clubs. What frustrated Fourie even more was that at many of the clubs they went to the local musicians were talking about McLaughlin.

During this time Fourie met and played with many South African exiled jazz musicians living in the UK. He didn't play any public events with them but had many jams[11] or rehearsals. These players included such South African luminaries as Johnny Dyani, Louis Moholo, Cecil Ricca and Selwyn Lessach, as well as UK. players John Stevens, Tony Oxley and Derek Bailey, with Bailey even asking Fourie to sit in teaching his students for a day. Fourie became friendly with Ricca and Lessach and was to play with them again when he later moved to New York.

Another source of income during this period came through a West Indian function organiser for whom Fourie played jazz at many private parties and functions.

2.5 Second South African Return (1969 - 1971)

Fourie returned to South Africa in late 1969. He and his family moved into a flat in Joubert Park, Johannesburg, and later to a townhouse/flat in Windsor Park, Randburg. While in Joubert Park Fourie befriended the crippled guitarist, Cyril Magubane. Cyril would come to Fourie's house nearly every day and would spend the day there playing. Fourie notes that these were not lessons but rather a sharing of ideas; his formal teaching would only commence later with Steve Eliovson.

[11] Informal type of rehearsal for enjoyment.

During the early 1950s Fourie had toured the then Southern and Northern Rhodesia with Nico Carstens. Hennie Bekker and Johnny Boschoff had a covers band[12] that was playing in one of the cities while Carstens was touring Rhodesia. Bekker recalls meeting Fourie, who by that point was already known amongst other musicians as an up and coming jazz star. Bekker was now in Johannesburg and had a similar group playing in the club Brett's inside the Criterion Hotel, Jeppe Street, Johannesburg. Fourie joined this band. At this point the group was playing mainly covers Tuesday through Saturday, but on Sundays they played jazz. Fourie became involved in this group primarily to explore the new sounds on the guitar. Through this music he became familiar with guitar effects such as the fuzz[13] box and wah-wah[14], and while the music itself was not exactly what Fourie wanted to play, the sounds intrigued him. (Disk 4, track 2)

Sean Fourie recalls this period in his life before he went to school (S Fourie: 2001). His father slept most of the day and played at night. He also remembers his father practicing until all hours of the morning, listening to and playing the sounds of Miles Davis and John Coltrane. Fourie was also exploring different sound sources and recording anything (dripping taps, traffic) onto a Sony two-track recorder, and then playing guitar over them. Three of these tracks can be heard on disc 4 of the appendix. One is a 6/8 waltz dedication called *Carol*-Anne, another is an arrangement of a Joe Pass standard, while the third is a dedication to Les Paul. All three are extremely dense soundfields, and are unfortunately the only record of a more avant-garde period in Fourie's life. Such explorations

[12] A group that plays versions of popular songs by other composers.
[13] An effect applied to electric guitar which distorts the sound.
[14] A type of frequency filter which alters the frequency of the sound as the player moves the pedal up and down.

encouraged his involvement with some South African free jazz[15] musicians. He worked with Selwyn Lessach, a musician with whom he would also work later in New York.

2.6 North American Period (1971 – 1974)

'I went to New York to play fusion' (Fourie: 2001, 4).

Fourie moved to New York to continue his explorations into the sounds that were coming from the fusion music of John McLaughlin and Miles Davis. 'The idea for New York was to be discovered, to join a 'name' band, and to get citizenship' (Fourie: 2001, 4). The search for this sound was primarily what Fourie felt at the time was a search for artistic freedom. 'The search came from trying to find freedom, freedom within and without the structure; this was the search for the Holy Grail' (Fourie: 2001, 4).

On arrival Fourie contacted the South African drummer Cecil Ricca, who was a close friend, and moved in with him at his apartment, 8th East 12th Street, Greenwich Village. Ricca, Fourie and, Selwyn Lessach had played together in London on Fourie's second trip there. Lessach was living in New York at the time and was very involved in the free jazz scene. Within Fourie's first week of arriving in New York he got a gig, through Lessach, with the free jazz musician, Noah Howard (Disc 4, track 4). This gig took place in a cathedral and was recorded for a New York radio station. Fourie recalls this piece, *Solar Systems*, as being 'an amazing type of organised chaos, and that was my introduction to New York' (Fourie: 2001, 4). (Disk 4, track 1)

[15] A new school of jazz as pioneered by saxophonist Ornette Coleman and John Coltrane which advocated improvisation free from chord structure.

Fourie also made immediate contact with his friend, John McLaughlin, and remembers going to the launch of McLaughlin's album *The Inner Mounting Flame* at the famous club, My Father's Place. While McLaughlin was busy with his own band and within roughly a week of the Noah Howard gig, Fourie was called to stand in for McLaughlin on the Charles Erland recording, *Intensity*. The album featured Charles Erland on organ, Hubert Laws on flute, Fourie on guitar and Billy Cobham on drums, as well as many other players. The pieces were long funk-based improvisations and called for Fourie's new improvisation techniques as well as the use of the fuzz box or distortion effect for guitar (Disk 1 track 10, excerpt).

Not long after that Fourie was recommended by Billy Cobham to Clive Stevens. Stevens' guitarist was leaving the group and Fourie took the post. Stevens says:

> I remember John as a very talented musician. He was recommended to me by the great American drummer/composer, Billy Cobham. I had just completed recording my first album *Atmospheres*, featuring John Abercrombie and Steve Khan on guitars, Ralph Towner on Keyboards/12 string guitar, Rick Laird on bass, and Billy Cobham on drums. I was looking for a guitarist to play live concerts with me, since neither Abercrombie nor Khan were available at the time (Stevens: 2001,2).

Fourie played in Stevens' band for roughly a twelve-month period and appeared at many famous jazz venues. Stevens' recalls gigs at My Fathers Place and The Chicken Box amongst others. The Chicken Box gig was roughly a week long. Stevens' regular bassist was not available for the gig so he booked the now famous 'Oregon' leader, Glen Moore. The band lived together on Nantucket island for the duration of the week and Fourie fondly recalls Moore's organic cooking (Fourie: 2002, 4).

During this period Fourie also remembers making ends meet by doing society and restaurant gigs, as well as odd jobs. Once a week he would go, with a drummer friend, and offload furniture at the docks for five dollars an hour. He also played once a week at the Continental Beach Baths in Manhattan. This famous gay venue had cabaret acts at midnight on Saturdays and Fourie recalls playing there for a period. From this gig Fourie got a call to audition for a three-month gig in the Bahamas, supporting Bette Midler with Barry Manilow. These two performers were still relatively unknown then and Fourie turned the gig down as he felt he was there to play Miles Davis and not cocktail music.

At this point certain venues in New York didn't allow drummers and this gave rise to duet and trio formats like the Nat King Cole Trio and The Tal Farlow Trio. For this reason Fourie played a lot with two pianists, one by the name of Bobby Leeman and the other (whose name Fourie cannot recall) was a past pianist for Buddy Rich. With Leeman Fourie played fender bass as well as guitar. These were restaurant or cocktail gigs at venues like Bradley's and while not significant, they do highlight Fourie's versatility and his developing love for smaller ensembles.

Working with musicians such as Billy Cobham, Clive Stevens, Rick Laird and others yielded immediate results for Fourie, such as a gig with Clive Stevens on Billy Cobham's recommendation. This type of 'grapevine' promotion brought Fourie to the attention of legendary pianist, Chick Corea. Corea called and 'told me that he wanted to form a band to do Weather Report[16] or John McLaughlin styled music' (Fourie: 2001,4). Fourie hadn't anticipated this kind of audition for at least two years and was excited by the prospect. The audition took the form of

[16] Legendary fusion band, headed up by pianist Joe Zawinul.

a rehearsal on four numbers, including *Spain* and *Matrix*. The personnel included Stanley Clarke on bass, Steve Gadd on drums, Chick Corea on keys and Johnny Fourie on guitar. The post went in the end to guitarist Bill Connors and not Fourie. Connors had an array of effects and processors; Fourie had none. Fourie feels this was one of the main reasons why he did not get the gig, but the opportunity nevertheless cemented his desire to stay in New York. There were only a select number of guitarists invited to audition and therefore he felt it was now possible to make it big in America, as well as achieve legal status. Fourie had originally come to America on a three-month visitor's visa and when he applied for an extension it was turned down. After this he was in the country illegally and therefore had all his gigs paid in cash so as not to be traced.

Fourie's daughter, Deborah, was at this point living with her husband Mick Jade in Toronto, and she suggested that Fourie come to Canada to try and get legal status there. Fourie felt that Toronto was close enough to get auditions and major gigs in New York. Jade arranged for a friend to meet Fourie in Vermont and drive him across the border at a point where there were no checks. In Toronto, Fourie found it much harder to meet musicians than he had in New York. In fact during his entire stay there he didn't make contact with any local players. He then decided to go north to the small town of Coe Hill and study or 'woodshed'[17] for roughly a year.

Fourie set out for Coe Hill but was picked up by the police hitch-hiking on the highway. The Canadian police gave Fourie three months to generate enough income to return home and suggested that he apply for legal status through the proper channels from South Africa. During this period he worked for a construction or renovations' company, first as a painter but he was promoted

[17] A term Fourie and Robbie Payne used to describe a period of personal study.

fairly quickly. However he fell and broke his heel bone and wrist and had to be hospitalised for a period. When Johannesburg's musicians heard of Fourie's problems they rallied to provide support for him. They collectively put together a benefit, held at The Branch Office, and raised funds to bring Fourie back to Sout Africa (Express reporter: 1974).

2.7 Final South African Return (1974 onwards)

1974-1979

Fourie returned to Johannesburg with his son Sean in January of 1974 and moved into a flat next to the SABC, in Auckland Park.

He immediately began playing for the band Profile. This band featured Hennie Bekker and Robbie Payne on keys at different times, Johnny Boschoff on bass, Tony Moore on drums, Lofty Schultz on tenor saxophone, Eric Norgate on trumpet and Johnny Fourie on guitar. These gigs took place at a club called The Branch Office which was owned by a Mr. Ziegler, who also owned the music chain store Look and Listen. The music was the same as at Bretts where from Tuesday to Saturday they would play popular music and on Sunday night jazz. Journalist Don Albert attended one of these gigs on the 6th of August 1973 and observed that the group must 'already be the best jazz-rock-funk group in the country' (Albert: 1973). Within a week the band was invited to play some gigs in Cape Town and it was at one of these that Fourie met his second wife, Val Daniel. Val moved to Johannesburg within three or four months to be with Fourie and this is one of the main reasons he decided not to return to America or Canada (Appendix A, Figures 5 and 6).

The group Profile broke up after roughly six months over personal differences. The manager of The Branch Office asked Fourie if he would like to form another group and continue playing at the venue. This group was called The Sound Department and featured Robert Payne on keys, Chris van der Skyff on drums, Pikes Cronje and Johnny Boschoff on bass at different times, Desi Rae on vocals and Johnny Fourie on guitar. It functioned mainly as a modern jazz group with a focus on some of the current fusion pieces. However, the group was still required to play popular pieces during the week and for this reason Fourie included a vocalist in the line-up. Fusion pieces by Chick Corea, Billy Cobham, Jan Hammer and John McLaughlin formed the basic repertoire, along with popular vocal pieces of the time by performers such as Burt Baccarach and Barry Manilow. Fourie was really experimenting with instruments and sounds at this point, as was Robbie Payne. Ray Hopkins reviewed one of these gigs and wrote 'John himself crouches over a two-headed monster of a guitar, glittering with not six, not twelve, but a staggering eighteen strings, none of which he leaves unplucked. On his left Robert Payne faces an electric piano and a synthesiser …. which leaves no note unturned and no sound un-copied' (Hopkins: 1975) (Disk 1 tracks 11 & 12, Disk 2 tracks 1-7). Payne dates this group between November 1975 and April 1976, after which it split up due to personal differences between the players.

During his engagement at The Branch Office Fourie had become close friends with pianist Robbie Payne. At this point Fourie was working through David Baker's exercise book based on George Russell's influential lydian chromatic concept[18]. Payne began studying these concepts as well. After The Branch Office band broke up at the end of April 1976, Fourie chose to become a freelancer and the two friends began playing many gigs as a duet under the name 'Sound Department Two'. This duet, which was reminiscent of the duets with Bobby

[18] A improvisational method developed by George Russell. Featured in a book of the same name.

Leeman, was also an exploration of the lydian chromatic concept. Payne was also studying the playing of Bill Evans and was even composing music using the concept himself. This was the first time Fourie recalls involving himself in any serious technical study. Payne says:

> The two of us were woodshedding from May 1976 through mid 1977, in Judith's Paarl near Melville. He introduced me to the David Baker improvisational techniques, the scales of Nicholas Slonimsky, and of course George Russell's lydian chromatic concept. We got into major and minor modes, common and obscure pentatonics and various permutations and patterns that ultimately allowed us to play intricately woven melodies that might even have given Igor Stravinsky some sleepless nights (Payne: 2002).

Payne and Fourie later put a new band together featuring Payne on keys, Fourie on guitar, Tony Moore on drums, Eric Norgate on trumpet, Lofty Schultz on saxophone and Johnny Boschoff on bass. This was virtually the same line-up as The Branch Office band, with the exclusion of Hennie Becker. The band had the same arrangement with the club Bella Napoli to perform more popular numbers from Tuesday to Saturday, with jazz on Sundays. Payne and Fourie practised during the days for hours on end and often even after gigs, continuing into the early hours of the morning. Sean Fourie recalls his father arriving home in the early hours of the morning before he left for school, with Fourie either sleeping during the day or practicing (S Fourie: 2001). Fourie says of the rehearsals with Payne: 'For the first time I was asked to explain and talk about concepts. Payne and I were talking about and exploring these new concepts' (Fourie: 2001, 5). During this period Payne also recalls Fourie giving clinics/demonstrations for Gibson guitars. These demonstrations were performed using backing tracks.

Next came a group simply called 'The Band', which played at the President Hotel in Johannesburg central. It featured Izio Gross on keys, Johnny Boschoff on

bass, Tony Moore on drums and Eugene Havenga on vocals. The Band was trying unsuccessfully to get a record release, but the venue was not making money from the gigs and did not survive. Carlo Mombelli recalls going to watch that band when he was eighteen years old. It was a major inspiration for him. 'I used to make bootleg cassette recordings of this band which I would then take home to teach to my own "little band" '(Mombelli: 2001).

Up until this time Fourie had never had any desire to become involved with teaching and would never have done so at all if it had not been for two people. Fourie's son Sean and a young guitarist by the name of Steve Eliovson were the two main motivators. Sean was already learning to play the piano and exhibiting natural musicianship. Many guitarists and musicians had asked Fourie over the years to teach them, but he turned them down. Eliovson, however, would not give up. He came to see many of the bands at The Branch Office as well others and continually pestered Fourie until he agreed. Fourie devised two distinctly different approaches for Eliovson and Sean.

The approach he adopted for Sean was very 'hands-on' as his son was only twelve years old. Fourie would play a chord on the keyboard and then demonstrate the relevant scale or mode[19] for that chord. Sean was taught harmony and scale theory purely by aural association and this method was later used to teach the young members of the Johnny Fourie Band as well. Fourie adopted a more theoretical approach for Eliovson which was directly born out of the 'sharing' sessions with Robbie Payne.

[19] Traditional western classical music uses primarily the major, harmonic minor and melodic minor scales. Jazz improvisation uses other non-western scales as well as modes and variants.

Steve Eliovson was 'crazy about the playing of John McLaughlin' (Fourie: 2001, 5), but at this point was only able to play folk-style guitar in the manner of Bob Dylan. Fourie schooled Eliovson almost exclusively in the lydian chromatic concept, using the lydian, lydian augmented and lydian diminished scales. He also taught Eliovson to look at the concepts harmonically rather than in terms of scales. Eliovson proved to be extremely dedicated; he gave up his job, sold his car and began to practice for six hours a day (Fourie: 2001, 3).

Here once again one can recognise the profound influence of McLaughlin on Fourie's life. McLaughlin had changed direction, moved away from his Mahavishnu Orchestra's electric band style and deepened his involvement with the spiritual and musical aspects of traditional Indian music. In 1970 he had recorded an album called *My Goals Beyond* which was an exploration of the acoustic guitar. In 1975 he made the first of three albums with the group Shakti[20], containing three pieces of substantial length, the last of which was a 29-minute extended improvisation on the acoustic guitar. Shakti featured John McLaughlin on guitar, L. Shankar on violin, R. Raghavan on mridangam, T.S. Vinayakaram on ghatam and mridangam, and Zakir Hussain on tabla. McLaughlin heavily modified the guitar, adding an extra set of drone strings and even scalloping[21] the frets. These radical transformations along with their devotional implications are the main reasons that McLaughlin has proved to be a hugely influential figure in jazz guitar.

In 1978 when Eliovson was studying with Fourie, the latter was increasingly feeling the influence of a move towards acoustic performance. He and Eliovson were transcribing the Shakti pieces and composing their own music in a similar

[20] Shakti means creative intelligence , beauty and power.
[21] To scallop the frets means to carve out the area between two frets which allows for microtonal inflections on the notes.

style. They also modified their guitars similarly. Over the next three years Eliovson and Fourie played many concerts around Johannesburg and throughout the rest of the country, even presenting a concert for the Johannesburg Classical Guitar Society (Appendix A, Figure 10). Music critic for the Rand Daily Mail, Joe Sack writes of this concert:

> Johnny Fourie was spectacular. This master guitarist has a formidable and flawless technique. His work was stunning and included numbers from jazz greats such as Chick Corea, Stanley Clarke and Billy Cobham. His duet with Steve Eliovson, both playing acoustic metal string guitars, was sensitive and technically brilliant (Sack: 1979).

They also appeared at the Boulevard Hotel which was the only multi-racial hotel in Pretoria at the time and made a week long stay in Durban and Swaziland. The two made some recordings of their work together and later Eliovson made a demonstration recording at the SABC. Fourie didn't play on this demo recording. 'At this point I was becoming bored with the project. Remember, for me it was only about the music and not a record' (Fourie: 2002, 1). Eliovson went on to record with the German record label ECM records and made an album called *Dawn Dance*.

2.8 The Johnny Fourie Band (1979 – 1985)

While The Branch Office Band and later bands were playing, the sons of the various band members would often watch their fathers play. Chris Bekker (Hennie Bekker's son) writes: 'Some of my earliest memories are of seeing Johnny Fourie playing with my father at the old Criterion Hotel in Johannesburg, but more vividly than that are The Branch Office days' (C Bekker: 2001, 3). Both Sean and Chris say that their main desire at this point was to be able to play like their fathers. Chris recalls that Johnny Boschoff taught and helped them initially.

When Sean Fourie was due to go into his first year of secondary school, Fourie, at Sean's insistence, took him out of school to teach him music; 'I saw that all he wanted to do was play' (Fourie: 2002, 2). Sean was not allowed out of the house before two o'clock in the afternoon so as not to attract attention, and was either being taught music by Fourie or practicing during these hours. Chris says: 'Later on (around 13 years old), I used to hang out a lot with Sean Fourie and sit in on his lessons with his father. I learned so much just from being there because John had this way of explaining things that an unschooled 13-year-old could understand' (C Bekker: 2001, 3). Fourie was teaching Sean, and indirectly Chris, the basis of the lydian chromatic concept through demonstration. He even encouraged them to write their own music using the system.

The reasons for forming The Johnny Fourie Band are recalled differently by each member. Sean remembers convincing his father to start a band which would include his friends, while Chris recalls Fourie starting the band and including them. Whatever the truth, Fourie was devoted to Sean's development and chose to use the band as a vehicle for his and indirectly his friends' development. The group played mainly original music in a fusion style, composed by either Sean or Johnny Fourie, and didn't rehearse very long before their first gig. Chris comments:

> Our rehearsals were like practical music lessons: i.e. John would take a song and give us many examples of what scales and approaches to use, but always let us make our own decisions. He always gave us the freedom to explore by not limiting our solos to a set amount of bars or choruses. I remember our rehearsals without drums best as these were the most difficult for me, as part of the rhythm section, not having a drummer there was very exposing but ultimately gave me the confidence to totally trust my sense of time (C Bekker: 2001,3).

The development of The Johnny Fourie Band is significant in that while it was a functioning and performing band, Fourie had to teach the young musicians many things, so the group became the birthing ground for Fourie's teaching style. As mentioned above, the main approach was the hands-on demonstration of chords and their related modes. Fourie recalls being exceptionally hard on Sean during these rehearsals and Chris says 'He was never soft on us and always demanded the very best from us, after all he didn't have to play with a bunch of kids'(C Bekker: 2001,3). While this strong-handed approach delivered outstanding results within the context of the band, it may not have worked in the context of private tuition. Fourie says that none of his private students ever stayed for more than three or four lessons as they often felt that all he taught was scales.

While Fourie encouraged his young band members to create and play their own music, he also exposed them to different musical styles and impressed upon them that young musicians in South Africa were not listening. He included in their repertoire pieces by Weather Report, The Mahavishnu Orchestra and Chick Corea. Before the formation of the JFB band, when the boys were roughly thirteen years old, they had their own group and were already playing their own versions of many of these pieces. Some of the first JFB gigs took place at a venue called Baker Street at the Oxford Hotel in Johannesburg, a small hotel in Pretoria called Die Spens, and the Chelsea Hotel in Hillbrow. In March of 1982 JFB gave a concert at Wits University which Chick Corea attended (Fourie: 2001, 5). Corea, who was on tour in South Africa, advised Fourie after the gig to 'stick with his young band, and don't let it break up' (Fourie: 2001, 5).Critic for The Star, Don Albert writes of the event:

> JFB weren't quite up to their normal standard and I had the feeling they had a slight dose of nerves, but they finished the first set with a tribute to a man who

> was in the audience and probably the reason for the case of jitters – Chick Corea. It was in his honour that they played one of Corea's best-known compositions, "*Spain*" (Albert: 1982).

After roughly a year of performing at various venues, the band began negotiations to take over the venue at the Oxford Hotel and changed the name from Baker Street to The JFB Club. The club was a collective effort including most of the people in and involved with the band; the percussionist and painter Romeo Avalino hung a number of his paintings in the club, while Val Fourie controlled the books. Fourie and his brother Danie rebuilt and redesigned the interior. They didn't pay rental for the venue; while they made money from the entrance fees, the bar profits were paid to the hotel. The club featured the JFB band playing five nights a week from Wednesday to Sunday, performing their mix of original fusion and versions of famous contemporary fusion pieces (Appendix A, Figure 8). Don Albert attended the launch of the JFB Club and wrote:

> Master guitarist Johnny Fourie has just opened his own jazz room. What used to be Baker Street in the Oxford Hotel , Rosebank, is now JFB and what a reformation….. In the heat of improvisation, sometimes exuberance and over enthusiasm take over – but I would rather have that than lethargy (Albert: 1983).

What distinguished this band from previous ones was that it didn't compromise on the choice of music. Fourie insisted that they performed at top level every evening. The regular gigging and consistent practice was paying off. At the SABC Contemporary Music Festival in 1983 the band took the headliner slot and played well.

> JFB concluded the day, and here was the difference between a working band and a studio outfit…. (they) play with a relaxed assurance and confidence in the knowledge that they know the repertoire and their fellow musicians'

> nuances as well. This allows them to relax on the beat and experiment; even if they goof they know everything will resolve itself. It's comfortable but exploratory as well (Albert: 1983).

While the JFB Club created an ideal situation in many ways, Sean feels that the band weren't always reaching the right audiences, or specifically the ones interested in jazz. He also recalls the band becoming very well-known amongst the white jazz audiences, as essentially 'everyone else was playing ABBA' (S Fourie: 2001). An obvious choice for the band would have been to take their music away from the 'white ABBA listening audiences' into the townships, but Sean says that they 'weren't exposed to or allowed into the townships' so as 'to become aware of the scene' (S Fourie: 2001).

The JFB club also featured other artists such as Allan Kwela and Victor Ntoni. Carlo Mombelli recalls playing there with John Davies' Rare Earth Ensemble. The JFB club lasted for roughly a year until the band broke up. Both Sean and Chris feel that their youth was the main reason for the break up, while Fourie feels it was due to lack of recognition as well as financial pressures. Sean says 'We were getting lazy. Johnny was not interested in "slackness" and so he disbanded' (S Fourie: 2001). Fourie suggests that they were just waiting for a manager to take on the band and run with it. 'We were playing great music, the group was a musical evolution but we needed someone to promote it' (Fourie: 2002, 1).

During this period Fourie was also involved in an SABC recording which featured a touring American brass quintet. This quintet, under the leadership of Bob Zotolla, recorded with Fourie, Johnny Boschoff, and Tony Moore (Disk 3 tracks 6 & 7).

2.9 1984 Onwards

During the band's existence Fourie had continued to play other gigs. He had done a large number of sessions for television and radio and was teaching more as well. Chris, Raymond and Sean started a band called Adverse Additions with the guitarist Costa Nicolai, who was also a student of Fourie's. This band played the same kind of music as JFB, but didn't last long. Fourie was also playing a guest slot with Carlo Mombelli, Andrè Steenkamp and Ricky Anandale at the Tudor Rose Restaurant in Sandton, as well as for small events such as concerts for the Johannesburg Jazz Society.

There were also appearances at a venue called Spats in Sandton with the Dave Lithans Trio. Lithans was later released from this gig and, as had happened at The Branch Office, Fourie was asked to stay on with a band of his own. He put together a line-up featuring Stan Jones on piano, Neill Ettridge on drums, Duke Makasi on saxophone, George Wolfaart and Denis Lalouette alternating on bass, and himself on guitar (Appendix A, Figure 7). This group played from Tuesday to Sunday and performed jazz standards as well as some fusion pieces. The band at Spats also brought on many guests, including American jazz clarinettist Peanuts Hucko during September of 1984 (Albert: 1984).

Prior to this The Johnny Fourie Band had played alongside Carlo Mombelli's first band in the Lion Lager Jazz Competition (Appendix A, Figure 9). It was here and also in the gig that Mombelli played at the JFB club with John Davies' Rare Earth Ensemble that Mombelli's bass playing came to Fourie's attention. After a month at Spats Fourie decided to offer Mombelli the position of bassist at the club. Mombelli remembers he initially turned down the offer, but changed his mind when Fourie said to him 'You only get one chance' (Mombelli: 2001). Mombelli

says of these gigs: ‘In my life that was for me the most important gig I have ever had. It was my Berklee College of Music’ (Mombelli: 2001). During the breaks Fourie used to help or coach Mombelli, offering suggestions and corrections. Mombelli has never taken a lesson on bass guitar and has never officially had lessons under Fourie but doesn’t hesitate to call Fourie his only teacher. Mombelli remembers patrons of the venue throwing peanuts at the band on one occasion. Fourie put his guitar down, picked up the peanuts and returned them to the bowls of the people that threw them. While comical, this response also reflects Fourie’s belief that all that is important is the music. When asked how he managed to get these gigs without pandering to the audience at all, Fourie doesn’t have an answer. He says repeatedly that he was on a ‘musical evolution’ (Fourie: 2002, 4), and that the gigs were just short term opportunities to play publicly. He never made any real effort to sustain them. The gig only lasted six months and roughly a month before the end of the Spats gig drummer Ettridge left the band to go up to Sun City and was replaced by Kevin Gibson.

After the Spats gig Mombelli embarked on a two-month period of intense practice which temporarily damaged his hand. During this period Mombelli was writing music and decided to form his own band, ‘The Abstractions’. This band initially featured Johnny Fourie on guitar, Joe Runde on second guitar, Carlo Mombelli on bass and Tony Moore on drums. Romeo Avalino also played with the band for a period and at one stage the group had two drummers (Mombelli: 2001).

The Abstractions played complex and modern jazz inspired by the sounds of the German ECM label. Fourie believes this group was extremely important, both to him and to the South African jazz scene. While the JFB band had been free and uncompromising, Abstractions took what they were learning to a new level. The

'heads'[22] of the pieces were often complex and detailed, while the improvisatory sections offered a lot of freedom to the soloist and were not limited in length. Critic for The Star, Ruth Becker, commented: 'The solos are not the predictable parade of individual instruments trotting out clichéd phrases that say nothing in particular. Instead one instrument leads the discussion, pursued, rather than accompanied by the others' (Becker: 1986). Fourie loved playing in Mombelli's band; he 'felt honoured to play such great compositions' (Fourie: 2002, 3). Don Albert describes the sound of the music as 'a viable European alternative to American mainstream jazz … a chamber music approach rather than swing and funk, impressionistic soundscapes rather than a succession of solos, adagio rather than presto' (Albert: 1986), while Sibohan Patterson says: 'What makes Abstractions so special is not so much the proficiency of the players, as the compositions themselves and the way the band performs them on-stage' (Patterson: 1986). Fourie also changed his instrument for The Abstractions from the standard solid body electric guitar to a Casio guitar synthesiser: he felt that the new sounds clearly changed his playing style. 'You can't just play it like a guitar, you have to adapt your playing style' (Fourie: 2002, 3). However, he didn't play the instrument for long. Pat Metheny and other players were using the synclavier[23]. Fourie sold his instrument, waiting for the time when he could afford the synclavier.

Mombelli was as passionate about performance as practice, playing on one occasion at the Oxford Hotel to just one person. Fourie confirms that Abstractions was the only band that rehearsed as much as he and Eliovson had done previously. The group recorded and released their debut album during 1986 and did a number of television specials as well (Disk 3 tracks 8 & 9). Mombelli

[22] The melodic, written or opening part of a piece which occurs prior to the solo sections.
[23] A extremely expensive and advanced music synthesiser, as heard on Pat Metheny's album *Secret Story*.

had endeavoured to ‘make the band work in South Africa’ (Mombelli: 2001) but even though it played an enormous number of gigs and achieved great critical acclaim, Abstractions did not have public support. Mombelli then decided to move overseas, where audiences were already exposed to the most modern and advanced styles of jazz.

A highlight of 1988 was Fourie’s tour with the American jazz organist and keyboardist Richard ‘Groove’ Holmes (Disk 3 track 2). Holmes’ individual style on the keyboard made it unnecessary to have a bass player in the band. Holmes’ band featured Barney Rachabane on saxophone, Fourie on guitar, Vic Higgans on drums and Holmes on keyboards. The group rehearsed and made a first recording which also featured Pops Mohammed on piano. Later for the countrywide tour Higgans was replaced by Lulu Gontsana on drums. Roy Christie writes of the album *African Encounter*: ‘This is a good example of Afro-American music with the combination of mbaqanga and North American jazz. Fourie turns in two superb solos’ on “*Mannenburg*” and “*Barney’s Groove*”’ (Christie: 1998).

At this time the keyboardist Avzal Ismail and drummer André Steenkamp were playing in a band called Rush Hour. Ismail recalls Fourie coming to guest with the band during the latter half of 1998, later joining the group. The group played at various venues between 1998 and 1990. Fourie and Ismail left this band during 1990 due to musical differences. ‘It was then (1990) that I spoke to Johnny about the idea of putting a really musically rewarding band together, and we decided to ask Neill Ettridge to play drums, as Neill and Johnny had worked together with a project of Carlo Mombelli's. Trevor Don-Jeaney was the bassist of choice and Light Years was born’ (Ismail: 2002,1).

This group was also intent on playing advanced music and played their debut gig at a venue called Fat Cats in Rosebank, Johannesburg. Ismail says: 'We played music that stretched us to the limit' (Ismail: 2002,1). Fourie recalls the group as playing pieces that were influenced by Chick Corea. In 1990 the group opened a series of concerts titled 'Jazz at the Civic' at the Civic Theatre in Johannesburg. Don Albert and Anthony Yoko, hosts of the series, chose the group as they were the 'latest and most talked about current jazz group' (Roodepoort Reporter: 1990). Fourie played with the group for about two years before he and Don-Jeany left, with Ettridge and Ismail continuing. Ismail talks of this group and Fourie with much emotion: he says 'Playing with Johnny was for me among the most rewarding musical highs. He taught me so very much about music and life, and it is an honour for me to know him and to work with him' (Ismail: 2002,1).

Also during 1989 Fourie was involved in a jazz guitar festival concert at the Belém restaurant in Johannesburg. Fourie was the headliner for the event with the rhythm section comprising Lionel Martin on piano, Denny Lalouette and Kevin Kruger on drums. The show also featured other jazz guitarists such as Jo Runde (Abstractions), Joe Moretti, Blackie Stewart, Allen Kwela, Otis Real, Mike Slavin, Tony Rudner, Jethrow Butow and Peter Rossouw (The Star: 1989).

In this period Fourie was again revisiting the duet format in a number of concerts with guitarist Joe Moretti (Disk 3 track 1). Moretti, originally a rock guitarist, met Fourie in 1964 in England when he was playing with the band, 'Jethouse'. This group featured Moretti as well as McLaughlin on guitar and Moretti was introduced to Fourie by McLaughlin. Moretti moved to South Africa in 1980 and used to see Fourie at various recording sessions or transcription recordings[24] at

[24] The SABC used to make 'transcription' recordings of many prominent South African artists. These were primarily for broadcast as opposed to commercial purposes.

the SABC. In 1986 Fourie and Moretti recorded a transcription album entitled *The Two Jays*. While the duet existed for almost ten years, their performances were concentrated in the period from 1986 to 1990. Highlights include a series of concerts for Des and Dawn Lindbergh, The Marc Maingard Concerts in Cape Town as well as concerts in Durban during 1990. This duet was known for outstanding arrangements and a high level of mutual respect. Moretti describes Fourie as 'An incredible guitar player, with an ability to just about play anything. He is an extension on the concepts of Jimmy Rainey and Tal Farlow' (Moretti: 2002).

During 1989 Fourie also took part in a showcase in Cape Town for the guitar builder, Marc Maingard. Maingard, together with guitarist Nick Carter, arranged two concerts featuring the country's best contemporary and classical guitarists performing on his instruments. Maingard was a follower of Fourie's playing and always attended his Cape Town concerts. Fourie was naturally included in the line-up for this showcase. The performers included Jethrow Butow, Nick Carter, Marc Maingard, Tessa Ziegler, David Hewitt, Joe Moretti and Johnny Fourie. Maingard, like many other people in the guitar world, had heard much of Fourie's ability and reputation and feels that for him Fourie's 'reputation was validified by this concert' (Maingard: 2002). During this concert Fourie performed on a hand-made arch-top jazz guitar which now belongs to another Fourie devotee, Jimmy Dludlu.

In 1990 pianist Wessel van Rensburg formed a band called Tone Colours featuring Fourie on guitar, Phil Holder on saxophone, Ernest Mothle on bass, Lloyd Martin on drums and van Rensburg on piano. Van Rensburg met Fourie while he was studying at the Pretoria Technikon jazz department in 1989 and

feels that Fourie was ‘the one person who opened my mind with regard to jazz harmony and improvisation’ (Van Rensburg: 2002).

In 1991 The Sun International Group and The Jazz Foundation worked together to produce a concert called ‘One night’s journey through jazz’ (Appendix A, Figure 11). The show aimed to display as many styles as possible, including blues, ragtime, swing, fusion and afro-jazz. Twenty-two of the country’s finest musicians were featured, including Fourie, Darius Brubeck, John Davies, Prince Lengosa, Winston Mankunku, Duke Makasi and Abigail Kubeka amongst others. The concert was conducted by Victor Ntoni, and provided audiences with what was probably a first opportunity to hear an all-star, all races, South African line-up of this size. Roughly six thousand people came to see the show; Jovial Rantao called it ‘the biggest session in the southern hemisphere in quite a while’ (Rantao: 1991).

Fourie’s memories of the 1990s are less tied to one group or club date. During this decade he worked as a freelancer for a large variety of people. Many of the gigs during this period were for companies, corporate events and private parties, and thus have not been documented, although there were highlights. Fourie believes that his focus in the 1990s was dominated by two things: firstly his new job as a `teacher at the Pretoria Technikon Jazz Department; and secondly the formation of the Short Attention Span Ensemble.

This group was originally formed as a backing band for the vocalist Kate Normington, who was at time performing in a show at The Johannesburg Civic Theatre. The band was initially put together by Glen Veal and Sean Fourie and featured Veal on bass, Sean Fourie on keys, Barry van Zyl on drums and Johnny

Fourie on guitars. Due to the quality of interaction between the players the group continued to work together.

Later the group was booked by Henry Shiells to play at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown. Shiells had also booked the British saxophonist Dave O'Higgans to play with another band headed up by Gerry Spencer who was married to vocalist Ester Miller (Disk 3 tracks 10 & 11). Spencer asked the group if they would allow O'Higgans to play a few numbers with them during their gigs; they agreed and O'Higgans subsequently came to a number of rehearsals. Fourie remembers O'Higgans on first appearance as being a 'clean cut English gentleman' (Fourie: 2002, 2), but was extremely impressed with his playing. O'Higgans loved playing with the group and the group with him; he subsequently became good friends with the members and joined the band.

This group was playing a wide mix of repertoire, from Michael Brecker compositions to material from Brecker's fusion group Steps Ahead, as well as originals by both Fouries. Fourie was already moving back towards including jazz standards in his own repertoire and this was further cemented when O'Higgans joined the band. O'Higgans is well known in England as an interpreter of standards, and as he and Fourie shared that love, many jazz standards crept into the groups repertoire. The group also worked with the vocalist Michelle Maxwell during part of 1993. After roughly two years Veal left the group and was replaced by bassist Trevor Don-Jeany, with whom Fourie had previously worked in Ishmail's band Light Years. The band was fairly active for the first number of years, performing a variety of club dates. They toured the Eastern Cape, performed at the Spier Festival and had a number of television and radio appearances. They were also regulars at the 206 Club in Louis Botha Avenue, Johannesburg, and at the Oppikoppi Music Festival. However, due to the nature

and value of the relationship with O'Higgans, they eventually only gigged when he came out from England to visit.

Some of the highlights with O'Higgans include: The Cape Town Waterfront, February 1993; The Barn in Port Elizabeth, March 1993; at Rumours and The Windybrow Theatre, March 1993; 'Beyond British Bop' at Kippies, December 1993; With Shawn Phillips at Pretoria University, July 1994; 'Suite Sting' at the Napac Playhouse, May 1994; Theatre Rendezvous, March 1993; Jazz On The Lake, Johannesburg, September 1994; Nedbank Summer Soirée, Johannesburg, June 1994; Theatre Rendezvous, Pretoria, February 1997; Spier Festival, Cape Town, March 1997. The group also released their debut CD *Fingerprints Of The Gods* during 1996. Gwen Ansell of The Star wrote of the disc: 'Out of a team of strong, accomplished players you notice the guitar. Johnny is no fast thrash kid. He plays like Miles played the horn. He has a lot to say, but chooses the fewest words possible. And there's a syncopation in his phrasing which is unmistakeably from here, not there' (Ansell: 1997).

In the periods when the Short Attention Span Ensemble was not active, Fourie began doing jazz gigs again. After many years of pursuing the fusion style and all the scalic permutations, Fourie observes: 'I started to feel the need to get back to harmony, the fusion thing was getting a little tired' (Fourie: 2002,6). Fourie was performing at a wide variety of venues and with a wide variety of performers. Some highlight performances across this period include the following: The Technikon Pretoria Big Band Concert in 1992, The Green Dolphin in Cape Town in February 1993, live recordings at the SABC studios in Sea Point in May 1993, and a concert with Jack van Poll in 1993. The latter was an impromptu session at the Indaba Hotel in Fourways, Johannesburg. It featured Fourie, van Poll, Neill Ettridge and Otis Real (bass), performing jazz standards of van Poll's choice.

The presence of such an excellent pianist proved a catalyst for some great music. ‘Under the leadership of such a talented and experienced pianist the trio played with exceptional vigour and intensity’ (Inside Showbiz: 1993).

Other highlights include a joint concert with the Transvaal Philharmonic Orchestra, Bruce Cassidy, Abigail Kubeka and George Lee in February of 1994; Various gigs at Jargonelles in Johannesburg with George Lee 1994; a concert with Gilbey Karno in Augsburg Germany in 1994; The JPS Indian Ocean Jazz Festival with Joe Delew in 1996; a cabaret concert called ‘A Rose Between The Teeth’ in Randburg, 1997; a Guitar Summit, held at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown during 1998, a duet concert with guitarist Errol Dyers at the Klein Karoo Kunstefees in 1999, duet concerts with Wessel van Rensburg at De Niro’s in Sandton, 1999, various concerts with Carlo Mombelli’s ‘Prisoners Of Strange’ from 1998.

This move back to jazz standards was further cemented when Fourie took up his post at the Pretoria Technikon in 1992. He began teaching students the standard repertoire, and was in his private time embarking on another period of serious study. Fourie began actively immersing himself in books written by jazz guitarists Pat Martino, Frank Gambale and Joe Pass. While the emphasis in both the Gambale and Martino books was linear, Fourie’s approach to their application and study was primarily harmonic. The other books by Martino, Creative Force Parts 1 & 2, and Quantum Guitar Concepts, are strongly harmonic in their focus. Fourie saw these methods as a way to communicate his harmonic knowledge to his students more clearly, to clearly convey to them the complex developments in his style. In 1993 Fourie was already working out these theories: ‘People here don’t understand the complexities of the harmonic knowledge that I have worked

out. They look for obvious things like flashy gimmicks and clichés' (Fourie in The Star: 1993).

Throughout the development of his teaching style, in practice sessions with Sean Fourie, Robbie Payne and others, as well as in the more structured sessions with Steve Eliovson, the primary focus had been to convey the information within Russell's lydian chromatic concept. Fourie had not made any substantial attempts to pass on his harmonic thinking. Through his work at the Technikon as well as his studies of the Martino books, Fourie began to formulate a method for teaching this material. He also began work on his specific re-harmonisation techniques, as analysed in Section 2 below. These techniques were not really new developments, but rather a formalisation of previous ideas, and reflect Fourie's explorations in the playing styles of Tal Farlow and Bill Evans. In 2002 Fourie completed a recording with Carlo Mombelli and Kevin Gibson, which explores solo renditions of his re-harmonisations of a number of jazz standards in an album entitled, *Solo, Duet & Trio*. Section 2 of this report is an analysis of the harmonic processes that Fourie has developed throughout his career. The analysis deals with his current treatment of the jazz standard, *My Foolish Heart.* The treatment is included on disc 4 of the appendix.

At the time of this writing he is conceptualising a second album of re-harmonisations and also hopes to put together new fusion outfit within the next two years. Fourie is excited about the developments in jazz guitar in South Africa. Through his teaching at Pretoria Technikon, as well as the work of various other teachers, the number of technically adept young players is on the rise. He is also encouraged that some of his students are not sticking to conventionality, a trait that was prevalent throughout his life.

Section 2

3. Tutors

3.1 Harmony tutor using *My Foolish Heart*

Jazz or improvised music is an art in flux. As the performer-composer lives his or her life, the performer develops continuously and the ability to improvise grows and changes. Every recording heard, every article read becomes food for further development and artistic creation. Therefore, within a harmonic reading of Fourie's treatment of the jazz standard *My Foolish Heart* (the full score is included in appendix B), it is important to note that this represents a current position. A current rendition can be heard on Disk 4, track 6. This rendition dates to a year after the transcription and so features a few changes. Fourie has made it clear that this harmonic concept is still a developing one, one which will develop further as his study continues.

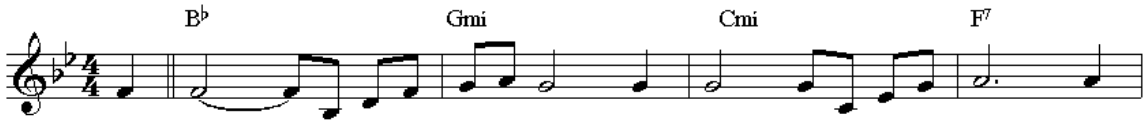
In his introduction to the book A Chromatic Approach To Jazz Harmony And Melody Dave Liebeman states: 'The concepts described here necessitate an expertise in jazz basics. More specifically, that means the mastery of scales modes, chords, arpeggios etc' (Liebeman: 1991, 9). Fourie uses processes that represent extensions of conventionally accepted harmonisation techniques. The purpose of this section is not to give a 'lesson' in basic jazz harmony but rather it presumes a certain amount of knowledge on the part of the reader. This analysis presumes that the reader has a desire to extend the harmonic precepts already known and used.

In Fourie's harmonisation of *My Foolish Heart* there are many harmonies that take what one might call a 'second listening'; they may seem unusual at first but on second listening warm to the ear. Unlike the harmonic developments of the Second Viennese School, this kind of treatment should not be viewed as a departure from, but rather as an extension of, jazz conventions. The process seeks not to break away from harmony, as in the free jazz movement, but rather to build on and extend the existing harmonic language as evidenced in the re-harmonisations of players like Bill Evans.

My Foolish Heart started like many jazz standards, as a popular theme song from a movie. Fourie recalls hearing this piece when he was still at school (Fourie, 2001, 2). The possibilities for extension within it really came to Fourie when he heard its treatment by jazz guitarist Tal Farlow and more specifically on the recording *Bill Evans, live at the Village Vanguard*. Evans treated the piece in many different ways during his career and to take any one transcription would give just a snapshot of his harmonic language. One of these 'snapshots' has become the standardised set of harmonies used by jazz musicians, but it is important to note that these are already extensions from the basic original.

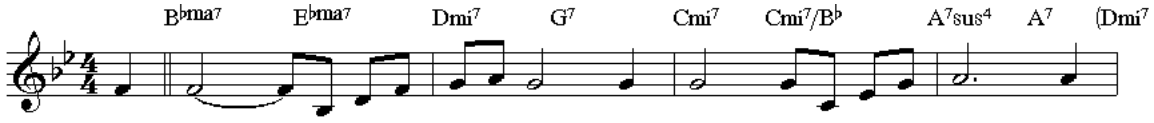
The original four bars:

Example 3.1



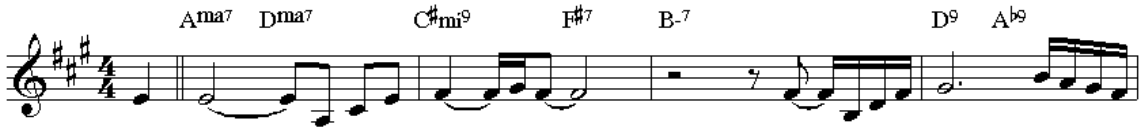
Evans' first harmonic treatment:

Example 3.2



Evans' piano solo transcription:

Example 3.3



John McLaughlin and Fourie jointly explored *My Foolish Heart* during their time spent together in London by listening to Tal Farlow's and Bill Evans' arrangements. A version of this exploration can be heard as the last track on John McLaughlin's recording, *John McLaughlin Electric Guitarist*. This version displays harmonic influences from Bill Evans and technical influences from Tal Farlow. The guitar is strung with extremely heavy-gauge strings to achieve what would normally be impossibly low notes. This was inspired by Tal Farlow's lowering of the tension on the bass strings of the guitar, thereby achieving more interesting chords. The lowering of the pitch of the bass string took the guitar into registers which emulate the piano, and also displaced the bass notes far from the upper parts. The primary approach, then, for harmonising the melody is one that will achieve interesting or unusual bass and inner voice movement.

The piece has both a ‘great melody and harmonic structure that easily lends itself to re-harmonisation’ (Fourie: 2001, 3). Fourie states that ‘the harmony that I learnt from intensely listening to the Bill Evans recording influenced my ear to play it in certain ways in the past and has also directly influenced my current harmonic treatment of the piece’ (Fourie: 2001, 3). The influence of the saxophone on the way that guitarists ‘solo’ over a given set of chord changes is well acknowledged, but the influence for this type of harmonic treatment definitely comes from the piano. Fourie felt that at that point harmonies such as those played by Evans’ were often considered ‘beyond guitar players’ (Fourie: 2001, 3).

As a student of the jazz guitar one may ask why one should re-harmonise a standard such as *My Foolish Heart*. The commonly used transcription in itself already poses some very difficult harmonic progressions. Fourie’s answers this by saying ‘I would immediately do this so as to achieve good voice-leading’ (Fourie: 2001, 3). Fourie sites voice-leading, above all other technical devices, as the prime reason for the alterations. Many of the specific chord choices are applicable to the guitar only. Often Fourie will name a chord not by its technical name but according to its visual shape on the instrument.

Jazz guitarists devote a great deal of energy to the study of soloing, or playing over harmonic changes in a linear manner. This sometimes results in a neglect of the study of harmony. ‘Through the years I have found (with exceptions) that there is a pre-occupation with the linear “thing” and a neglect of harmony. To be able to play jazz one must develop the ability to hear the chords away from one’s instrument’ (Fourie: 2001, 3). Every student of jazz devotes much time to the study of scales, modes and lines on their instrument, but Fourie argues that this is often done at the expense of harmony, making incorrect substitutions

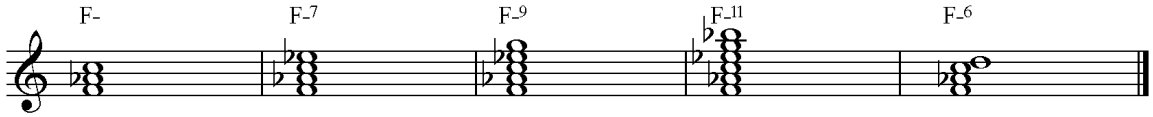
inevitable. He observes that ‘If a student has a strong knowledge of the harmonic devices and no linear [scalic] background, it will be very hard for that student to play an incorrect note. If you intimately know the chord structure, you will be able to accurately choose the correct notes to play’ (Fourie: 2001, 3). Before one can talk about playing ‘outside the changes’ it is important to know that the ability to play truly ‘outside the changes’ can only be acquired through a strong knowledge of the harmonic possibilities. Fourie remarks that ‘by deeply studying a piece like *My Foolish Heart*, you will have an in-depth insight into jazz harmony and you will develop an ingrained knowledge’ (Fourie: 2001, 3).

Fourie uses a variety of harmonic substitution methods. These processes include basic chord embellishment, tritone substitution, back cycling and semitone precession, different inversions and non-traditional voice leading.

3.2 Basic embellishment

This is when the basic chord is embellished by the addition of upper structures: i.e. the seventh, ninth, eleventh or thirteenth (Example 3.4).

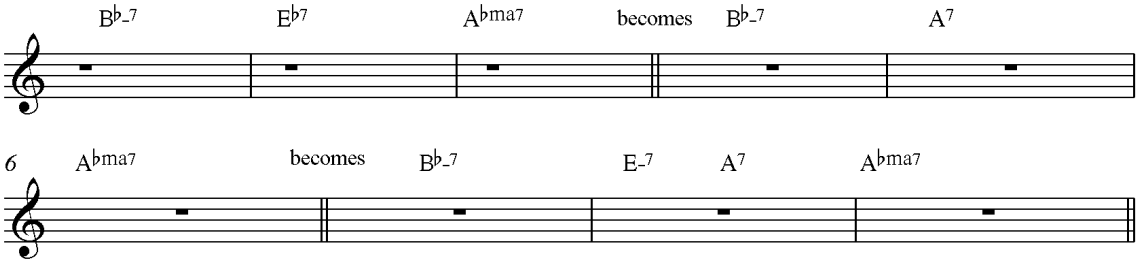
Example 3.4



3.3 Tritone substitution

This allows the player to substitute any dominant seventh chord for another dominant seventh chord with its root a tritone above, for example (Example 3.5):

Example 3.5

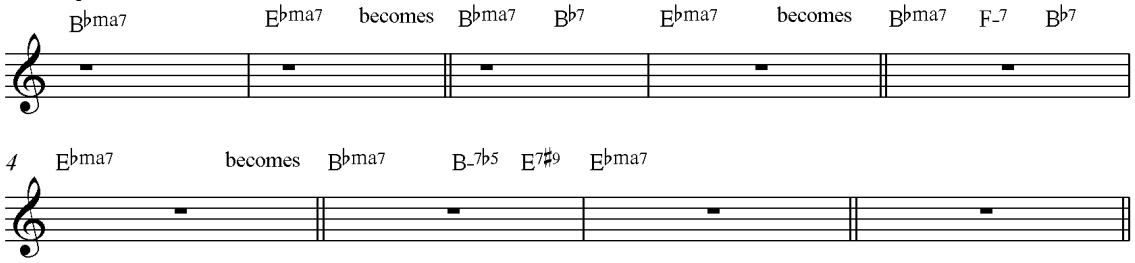


With tritone substitution, as with the other techniques, the melody must always be considered. For example, if the Eb7 chord had the fifth, Bb as the melody note, then the tritone substitution, A7, would have a flattened ninth, the Bb. Or if the Eb7 had a ninth as the melody, F, then that would change the A7 chord into A7#5. Fourie also uses tritone substitution for any chord type, even dissimilar chord types.

3.4 Back cycling

This is when an existing chord is not altered, but rather is preceded by a cadential or ii-V chord movement. Once again the melody must be considered. For instance, if the Bbma7 chord had the major seventh as the melody note, and that note was a whole note, then the back cycling progression would have to be moved into the next bar. In the last portion of the example below, we find the tritone substitutions for the back cycling progression. The Bb7 chord is substituted with E7 and then the relevant ii chord is placed before it. Note the inclusions of alterations (Example 3.6):

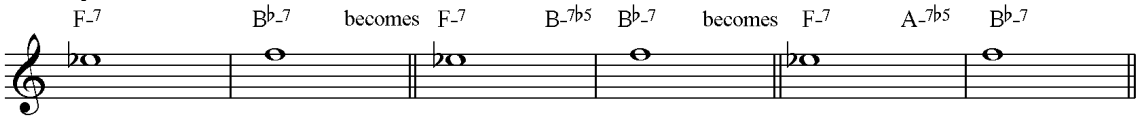
Example 3.6



3.5 Semitone precession

This allows any chord to be preceded by any other chord of the same chord quality (e.g. major or minor), with its root either a semitone above or below the given chord. The melody must at all times be considered, thus affecting alterations to the chord (Example 3.7).

Example 3.7



3.6 Good inversions

This means that the arranger should make sure that the inversions accommodate the melody and do not unnecessarily duplicate chord tones.

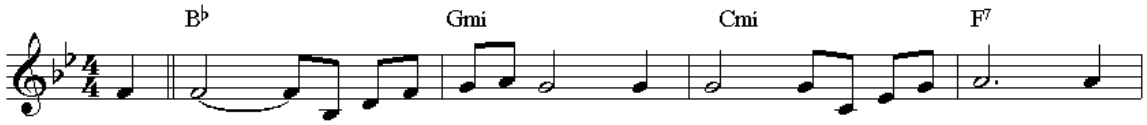
3.7 Voice Leading

This process is probably the most unusual. Conventional voice leading dictates that when moving from one chord to the next, the voices in the chord should make the smallest possible movements, avoiding leaps. Often when Fourie uses chromatic approach or passing chords the voices move, in letter name, in

semitones. However, even though the letter name movement is in semitones or tones, often Fourie chooses to displace them across an octave. For example, C-C#-D can read as a minor ninth up and a major 7th down. While this is not voice leading in any traditional sense, Fourie perceives it as such, so the term proves useful for this study.

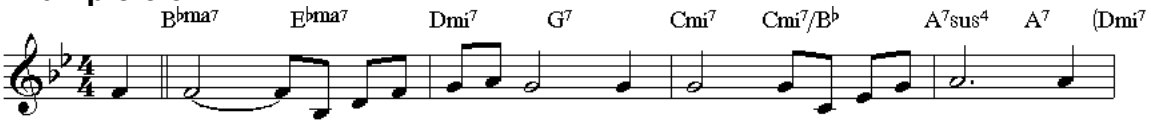
If we refer back to the earlier example of the basic chords:

Example 3.8



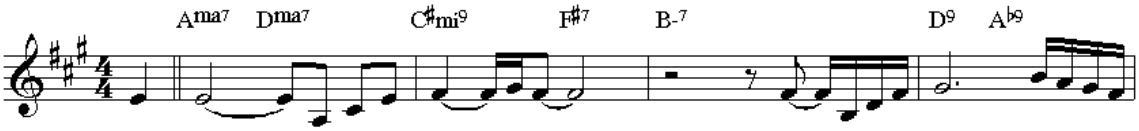
we can see already how the commonly used Bill Evan's version is an extension:

Example 3.9



In bar one, the Ebma7 chord is added. In bar two we have a ii – V7 cycle in C minor which is an example of back-cycling. In bar 4 we have the A7 chord substituted for the F7 chord, which anticipates a move to the key of D minor:

Example 3.10

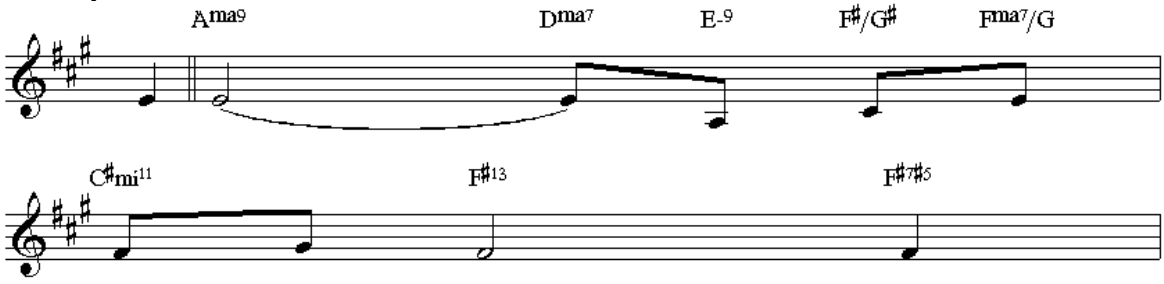


In this slightly later transcription, which is now in the key of A major, the only difference is in bar four. The arrival key in bar five would be C# minor, which is approached with the G#9 chord. Evans' precedes the G#9 with its tritone substitute of D9, with the melody note of G# or Ab giving us D9b5.

Fourie's version of *My Foolish Heart* is an extension of this thinking, and he often chooses to place a chord with every melody note. This heightens the tension-release aspects of the harmonic progression via a great deal of voice movement and his specific concept of voice leading. He also makes plentiful use of semitone precession, and by the use of specific inversions within these additions, achieves a lot of semitone voice leading.

In bars one and two we see the same outlines as Evans used but with added chords:

Example 3.11



1-2

The F#/G# chord on beat four has the function of an A11 chord and can be seen as an extension of G#7. This chord is the five of C#mi11, which occurs on beat one of bar two. The Fma7/G creates chromatic voice leading between the three

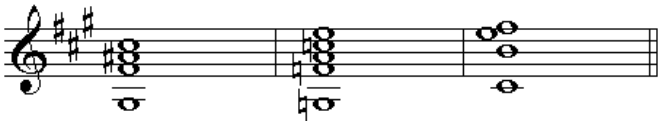
chords. If spelt in a table the movement as sounded with Fourie's voicing is seen as (Figure 3.1 and Example 3.12):

Figure 3.1 Chromatic voice leading in letter names:

F#/G#	Fma7/G	C#mi11
C#	E	F# (melody)
C#	C	B
A#	A	B
F#	F	C#
G#	G	C#

In notation:

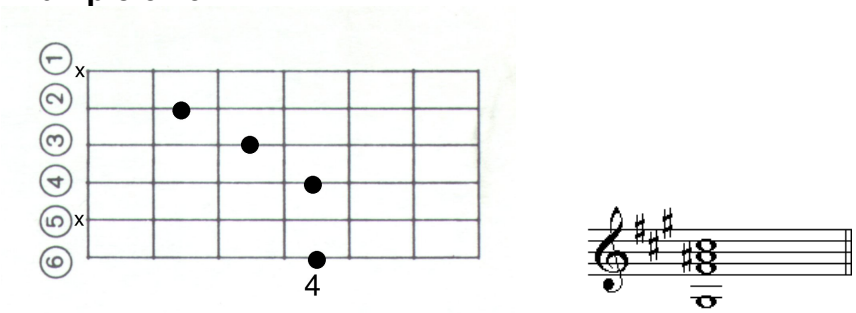
Example 3.12



This type of voice leading is prevalent in many of Fourie's chord choices and voicings. In the above table one can see the voice leading as small semitone or tone movements. However, it is important to remember that Fourie often displaces these over an octave or more. The A# may be in one octave, with the A natural an octave above, than returning to the previous octave for the B. While strictly speaking this is non traditional voice leading, or may even well fall outside the terms definition altogether, Fourie does not regard it as such.

The specific choices in chord shapes[25] are also relevant to the voice leading. For example on the F#/G# chord Fourie uses the following:

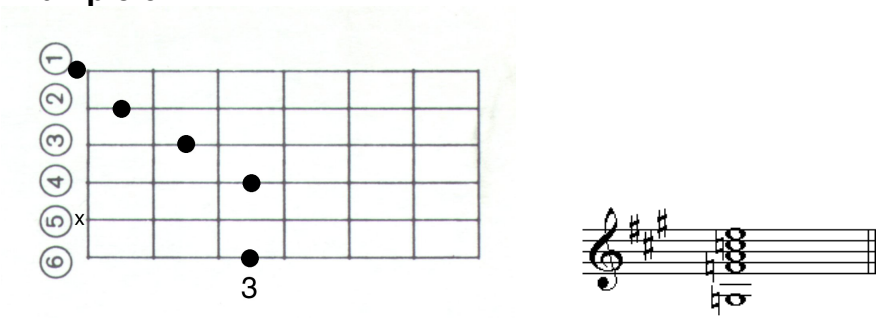
Example 3.13



F#/G#

Which is visually the same shape that he uses for the Fma7/G chord with the addition of the open e string, giving us a view on his use of slash chords for chromatic movement:

Example 3.14

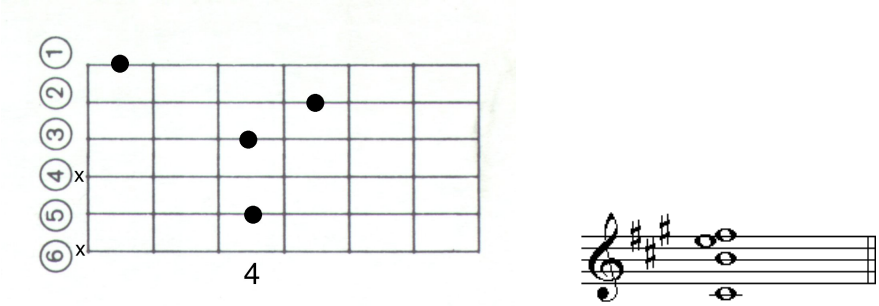


Fma7/G

[25] The visual shapes used by guitarists for chords on the neck.

Which resolves to C#mi:

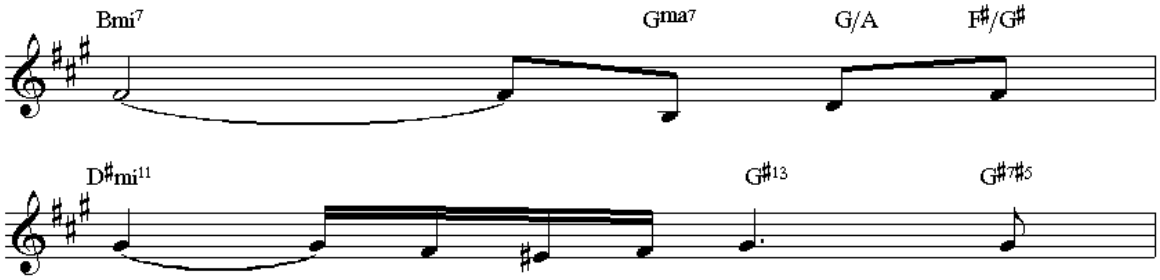
Example 3.15



C#mi11

In bar two he creates chromatic voice movement by going from a F#13 to a F#7#5, which gives us the D# to D to D at the beginning of bar 3:

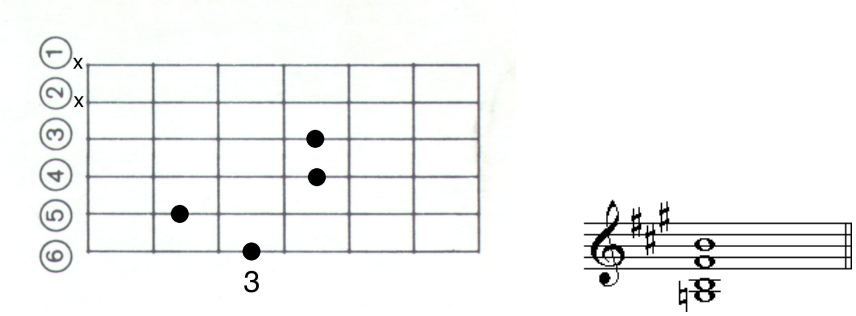
Example 3.16



3-4

Fourie uses a standard voicing for the Bmi7 chord, although he sometimes omits the third in favour of the ninth, giving us a voice leading of D# to D to C# in the Bmi9 chord. He chooses an interesting voicing for the Gma7 chord:

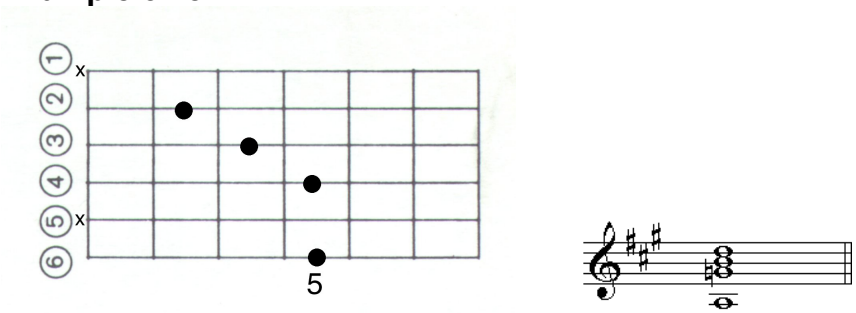
Example 3.17



Gma7

Which resolves to the G/A chord by G to a in the lower voice, F# to G in the lower middle and a static B on the third string:

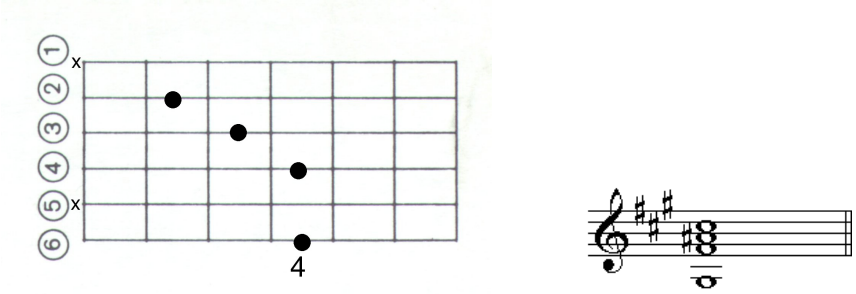
Example 3.18



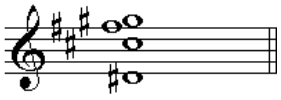
G/A

And then chromatically down one fret to F#/G#, before resolving to D#mi11. This resolution means that, apart from the octave leaps that result from Fourie's chord shape choices, the only letter name that changes is the third of F#/G# (A#) becoming the root of D#mi11. However, octave leaps are large, and the position shift on the neck produces an illusion of chord movement:

Example 3.19



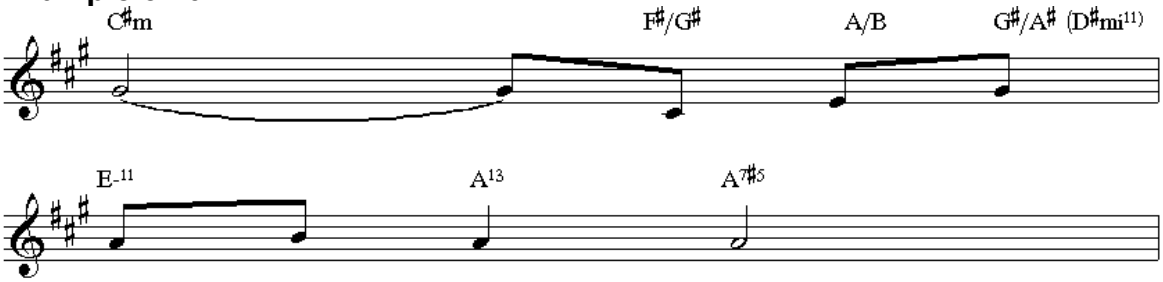
F#/G#



D#mi11

On beat two, bar four Fourie ornaments the melody with a figure that was not part of the original melody, but was introduced to the melody by Evans. He then uses the same movement as in bar two, playing first the G#13 chord and then G#7#5 to cadence to C#mi in bar five:

Example 3.20



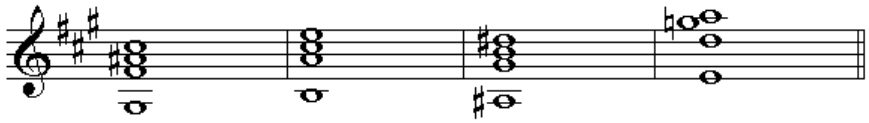
5-6

On beat four of bar five the chord A/B serves the same purpose as the F#/G# chord in bar one – a dominant approach to the E-11 in bar six. Once again Fourie disguises this movement with chromatic voice leading on the weak beats. Some of the voice leading in these chords is highly chromatic (Figure 3.2 and Example 3.21).

Figure 3.2

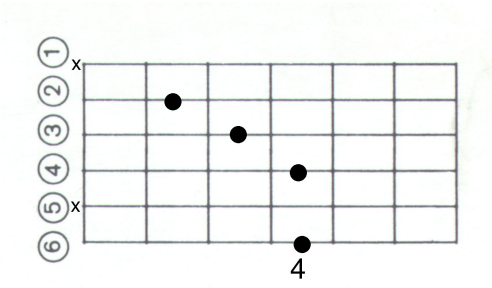
F#/G#	A/B	G#/A#	Emi11
A#	B	A#	B
G#	A	G#	A
C#	C#	C	B

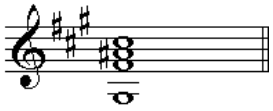
Example 3.21



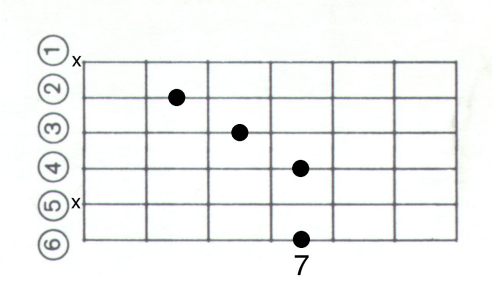
The chord shapes chosen again give the illusion of more movement, through octave displacement, and actually disguise some of the chromaticism:

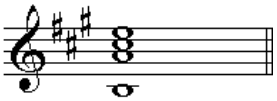
Example 3.22



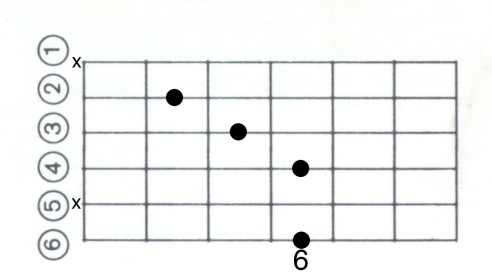


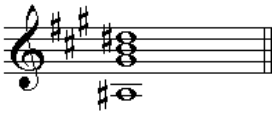
F#/G#



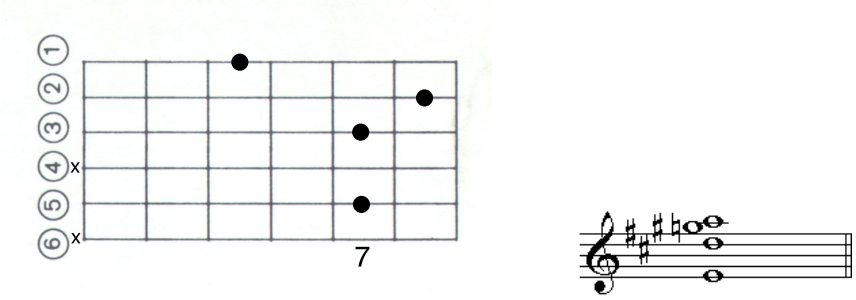


A/B





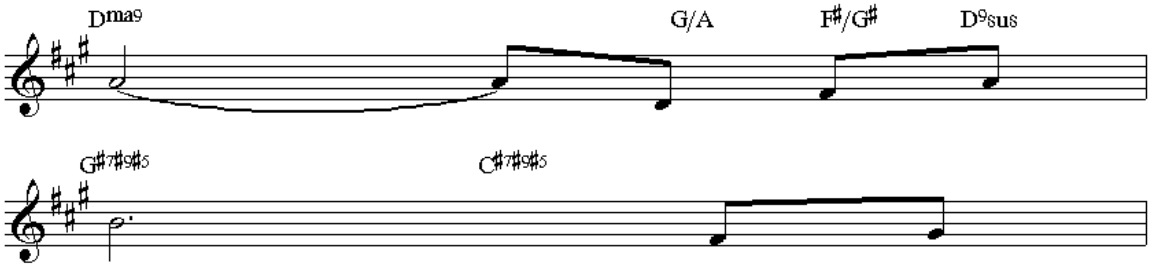
G#/A#



Emi11

The A13 in bar six moves to the A7#5, similar to bars two and four, leading to D major in bar seven:

Example 3.23



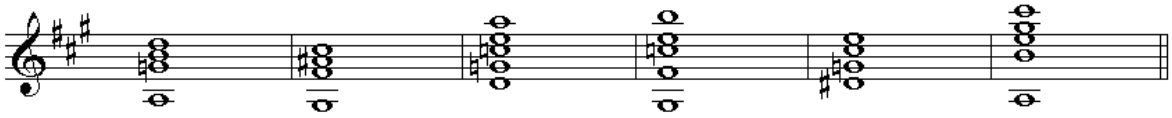
7-8

The F#/G# chord on beat four is not resolved on beat one of the following bar as previously, but cadences to another dominant chord on beat three of bar eight to another dominant chord C#7#9#5. The G/A chord and the D9sus chord are related as dominant (G/A) to tonic (D9sus), however the D9sus chord also functions as a tritone substitution approach for the Ab7#9#5. They both contain many common notes, as do all the chords in this sequence (Figure 3.3 and Example 3.24).

Figure 3.3 Common notes in chord sequence

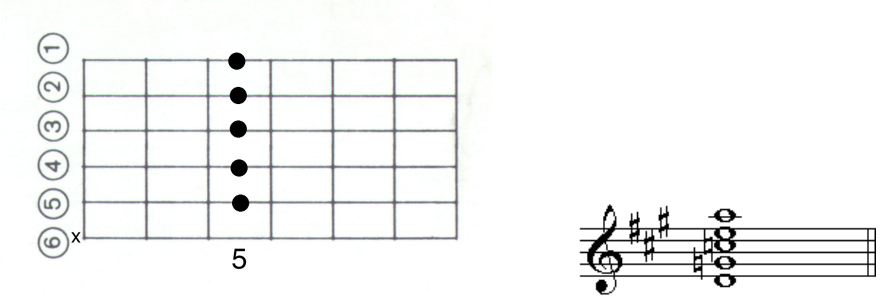
G/A	F#/G#	D9sus	G#7#9#5	C#7#9#5	Ama9(bar9)
G	F#	G	F#	E#	E
D	C#	C	C	B	B
A	G#	A	G#	A	A

Example 3.24

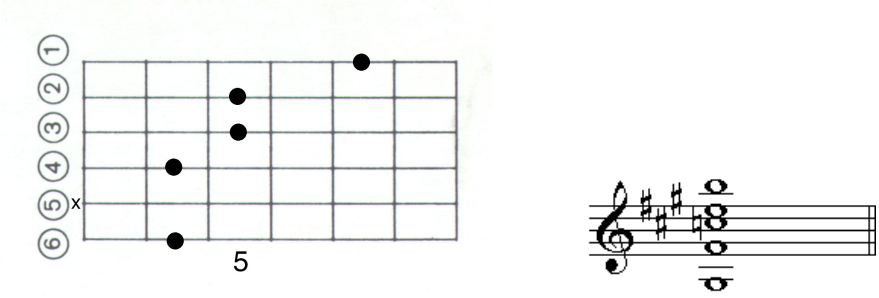


There is much chromatic movement in these two bars which is further exaggerated by the dominant relationships between some of the alternate chords. The chord shapes are also slightly different. The D9sus shape has the A natural at the top of the chord while the G#b7#9#5 has G# in the bass. This displaces the chromatic voice movement across two octaves:

Example 3.25



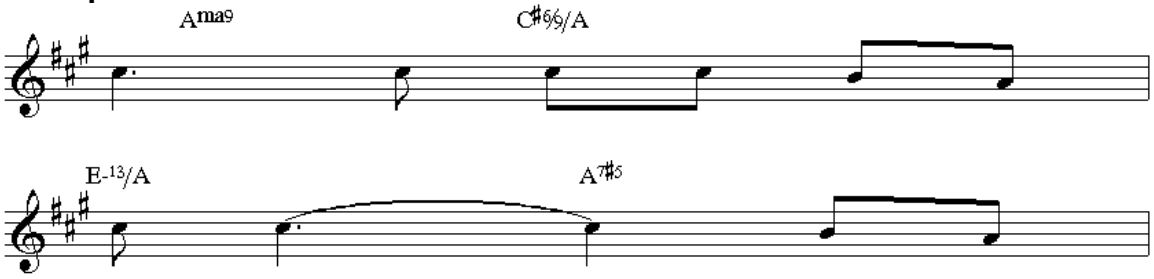
D9sus



G#7#9#5

The chromatic resolution to A major shifts to a higher position on the neck. This allows Fourie to employ a new device. He pedals the next two bars over an open A string, and offsets the chromatic movement against this pedalled note:

Example 3.26



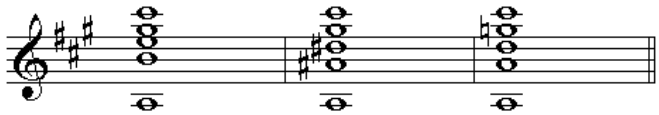
9-10

The note movements are (Figure 3.4 and Example 3.27):

Figure 3.4 Voice leading

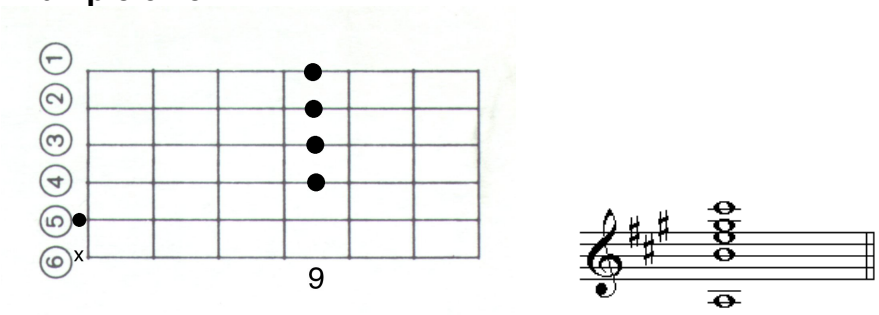
Ama9	C#6/9/A	E-13/A
C#	C#	C#
G#	G#	G
E	D#	D
B	A#	A
A	A	A

Example 3.27

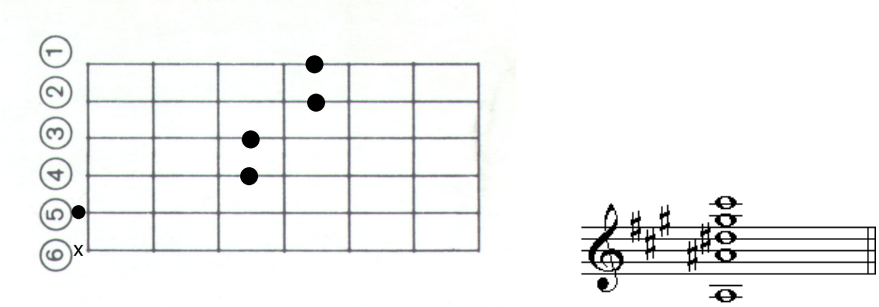


The shapes Fourie chooses for this bar mean that the voice movements above are kept in the same register and not displaced:

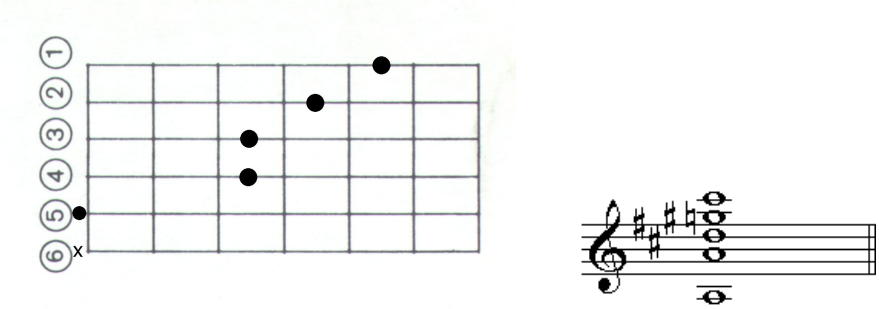
Example 3.28



Ama9 / A (open 5th string)



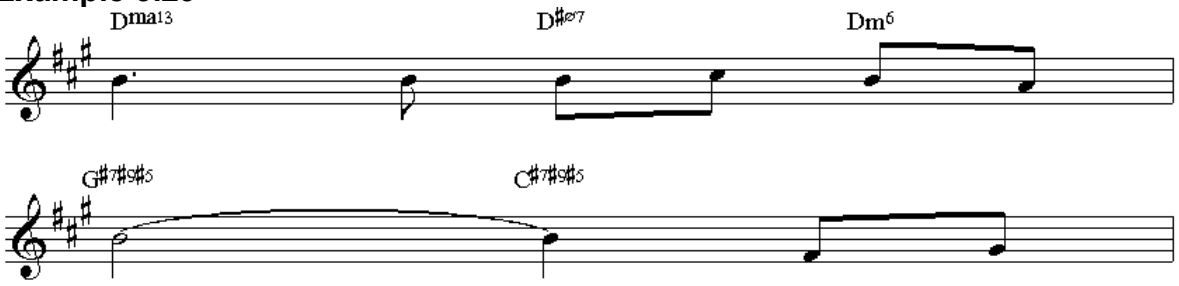
C#6/9/A (open 5th string)



Emi13/A (open 5th string)

Although Fourie omits the root of the Emi13/A chord he still views it as an Emi chord. This is because the destination chord at beat one of bar eleven is Dma13, and the E-mi moves to the dominant A7#5 as an approach ii V progression in D major:

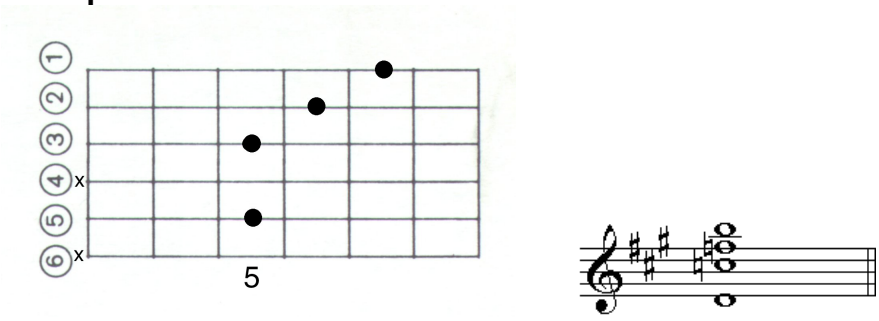
Example 3.29



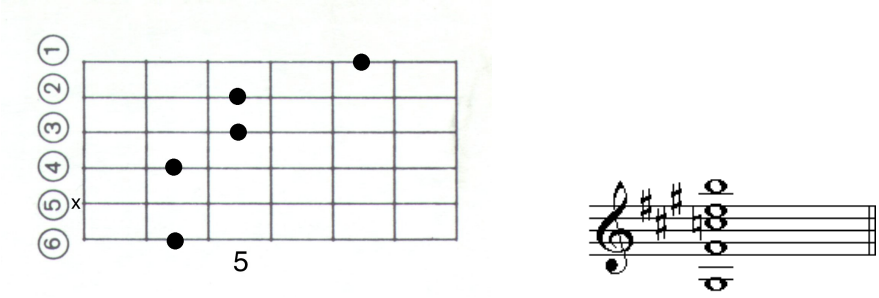
11-12

The D# half diminished chord on beat three can be seen as an A13b5 chord with the flattened fifth in the bass and the natural ninth in the melody. This sets up a resolution to the Dm6 chord on beat four. Between the Dmi6 and the G#7#9#5 we have two common voices, B and C, the third of Dmi6 moving to the sharpened fifth of G#9#9#5, with the roots falling a flattened fifth from D to G#:

Example 3.30



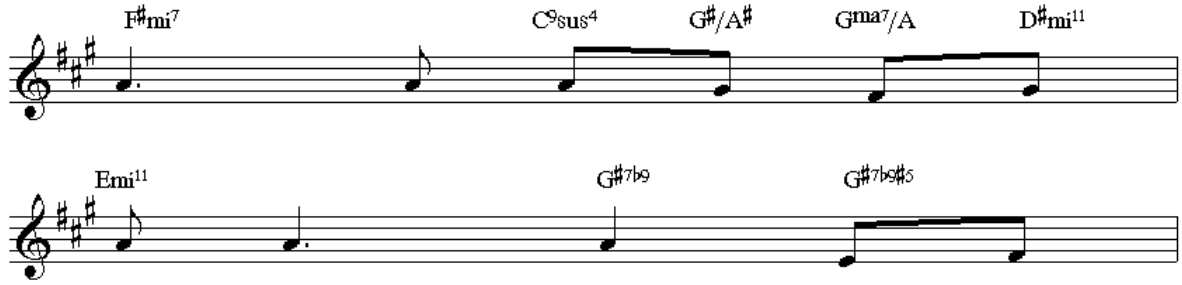
Dmi6



G#7#9#5

The resolution chord on beat one of bar thirteen is F#mi7, and is approached by the dominant C#7#9#5 on beat three of bar twelve. The G#7#9#5 serves as a substitute for G#mi7b5, and adds chromatic passing notes:

Example 3.31



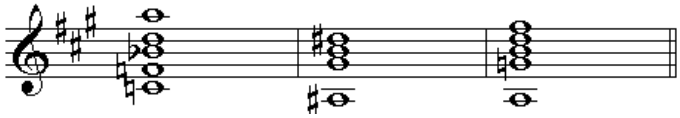
13-14

The progression C9sus, G#/A#, Gma7/A, D#mi11 to Emi11, is chromatic, but uses common notes as well as stepwise movement to create flow. Fourie uses the same device as in bar 3 for the approach to Emi11 in bar fourteen. The Gma7/A has the same notes as the resolution chord, Emi11, with the only difference being the E in the bass of Emi11. The D#mi11 chord is a simple semitone approach to the Emi11. The two chords approaching Gma7/A have chromatic voice leading (Figure 3.5 and Example 3.32).

Figure 3.5 Chromatic voice leading:

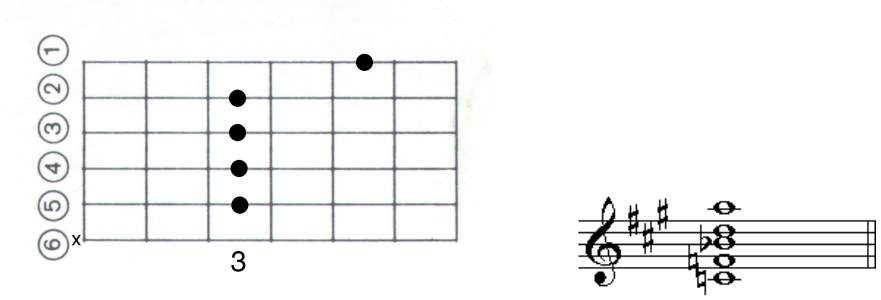
C9 (13) sus	G#/A#	Gma7/A
A	G#	A
D	D#	D
Bb	A#	B
C	C	B

Example 3.32

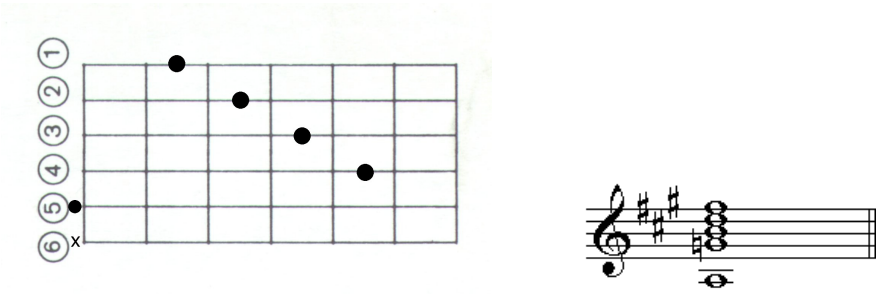


Fourie uses the same shape for G#/A# but two different shapes for C13sus and Gma7/A (note the open A string on Gma7/A in Example 3.33).

Example 3.33



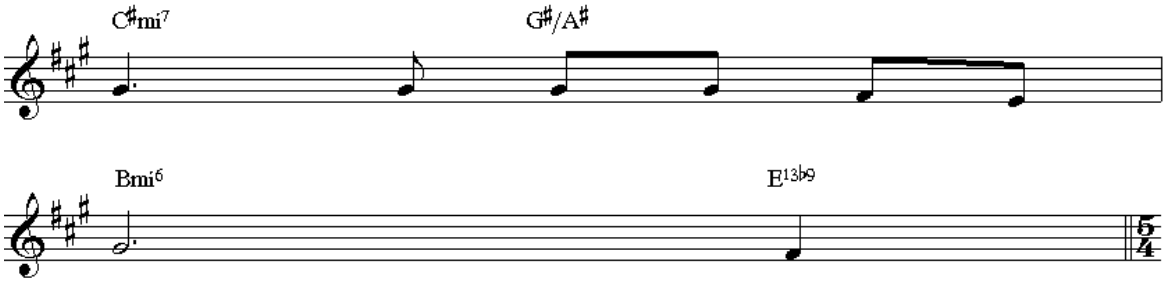
C9 (13) sus



Gma7/A (open 5th string)

Beats three and four use the same approach as in bars two and four, the dominant seven is sounded and then the fifth is raised; G#7b9 moves to G#7b9#5 and resolves to C#mi7:

Example 3.34



15-16

The sequence occurring in bars 15 and 16 exhibits another of Fourie's approaches. He often views the functional relationship between two chords in a variety of different ways and regards many of the slash chords (e.g. G#/A#) as being ambiguous. The G#/A# chord is ambiguous and can serve a number of functions.

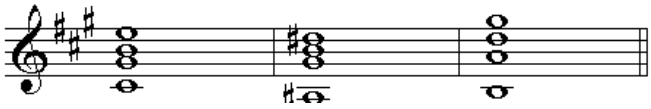
If we view this progression in a table, the voice leading is as such (Figure 3.6 and Example 3.35):

Figure 3.6

C#mi7	G#/A#	Bmi6
B	A#	B
E	D#	D
C#	C	

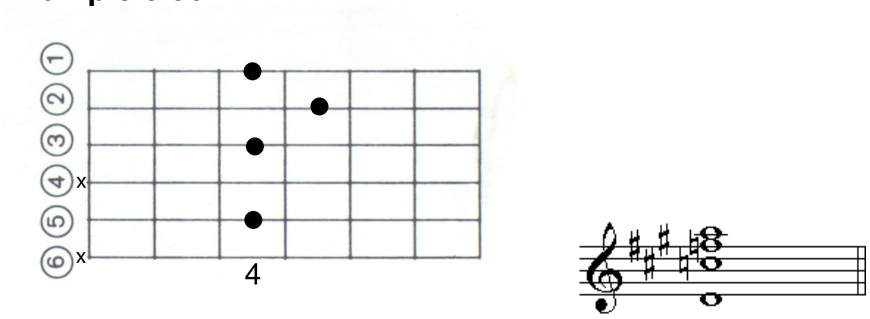
G# G# G#

Example 3.35

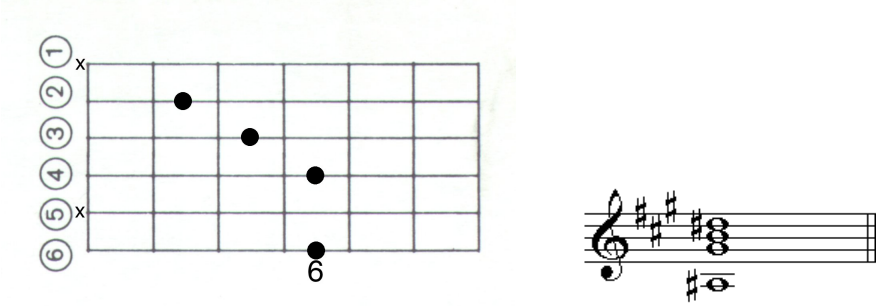


These small voice movements indicate a type of semitone precession, but back cycling is also present. If Bmi6 is taken as chord one, then C#mi7 can be viewed as chord two of Bmi. The dominant seventh chord for Bmi6 is F#7 and if we take its tritone substitute we have C7. The chord tones of G#/A# are G#, C, D# and A#, and can be viewed as parts of a C7#9#5 chord with the third omitted. This results in a standard ii, V, I progression to B minor. Fourie argues a case for both approaches but constantly affirms the importance of his ear in the choices made. The explanation above, however, is extremely important: as a guitarist one would not necessarily choose these particular substitutions due to the nature of the chord shapes:

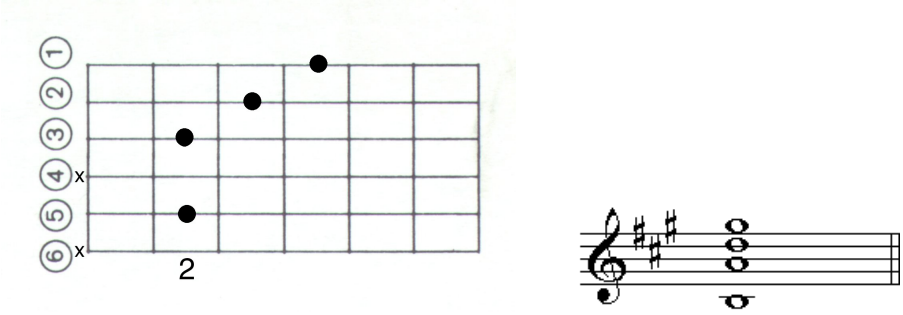
Example 3.36



Dmi7



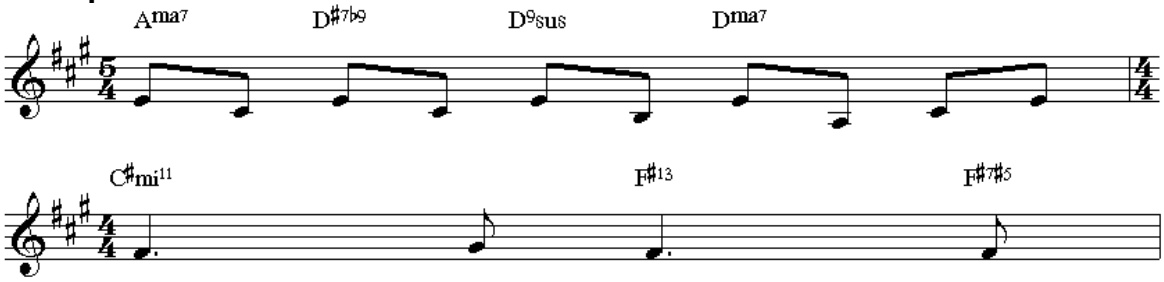
G#/A#



Bmi6

Although Fourie indicates E13b9 on beat four of bar sixteen, he first sounds the chord with a standard ninth, and then lowers the ninth as an approach to the melody note on beat one of bar seventeen:

Example 3.37

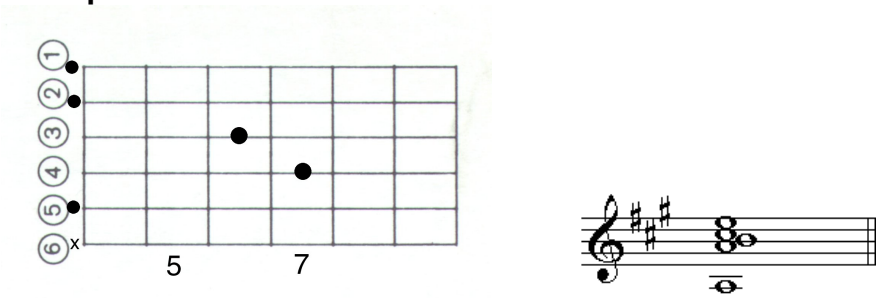


17-18

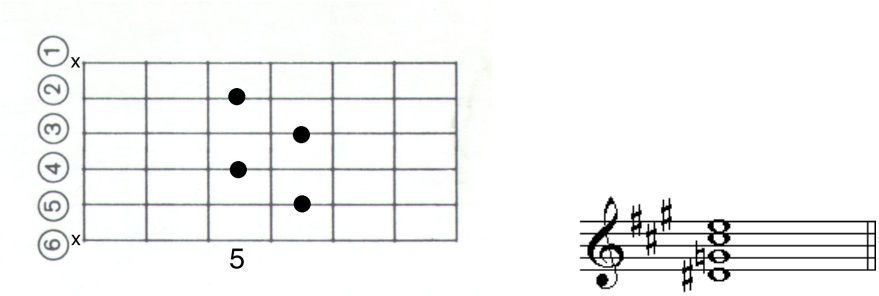
Bar seventeen is the recap of the theme, but Fourie alters this bar slightly. He extends the melody to create a 5/4 bar, and back cycles to the Dma7(9). The

D#7b9 on beat two is a tritone substitute for A7 that would be the dominant of Dma7. However D9sus on beat three delays the resolution with two notes, G and C, which resolve respectively to F# and C# on beat four. The chord shapes gravitate around the fifth fret, once again allowing small chromatic movements:

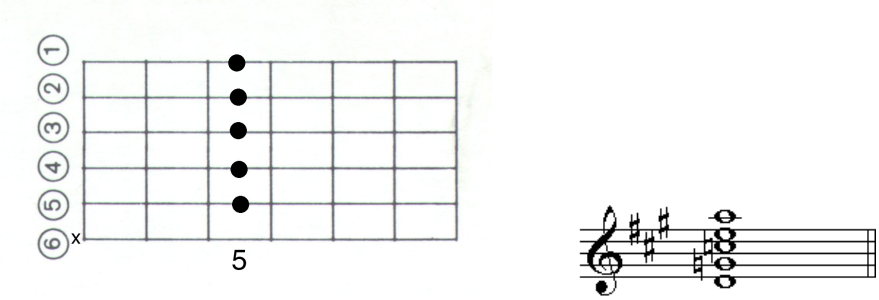
Example 3.38



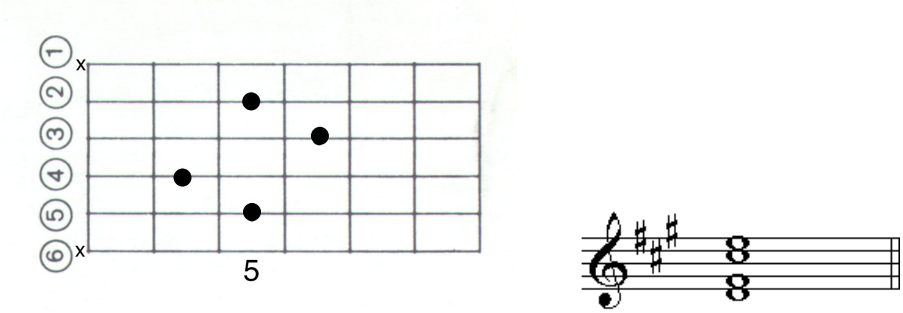
Ama7



D#7b9



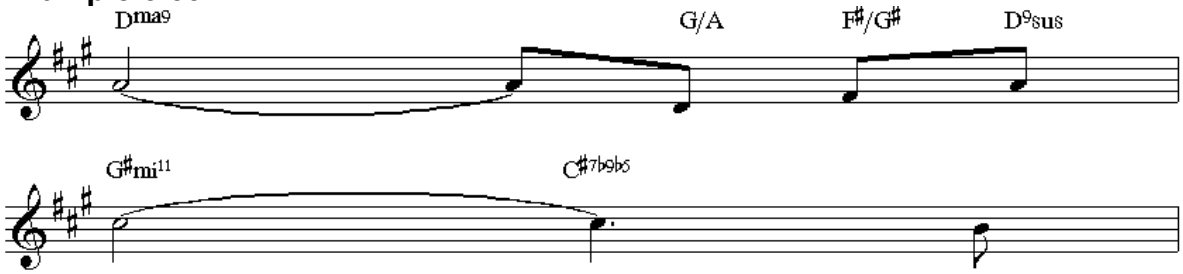
D9sus



Dma9

The following seven bars, eighteen through twenty-four, are an exact repeat of bars two through eight, with the exception of bar twenty-four which has G#mi11 instead of G#7#9#5:

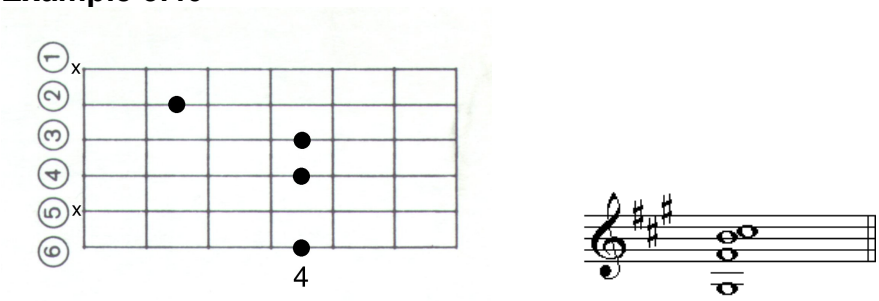
Example 3.39



23-24

Here Fourie chooses G#mi11 as he wishes to strongly suggest a ii, V approach to F#mi in bar twenty-five:

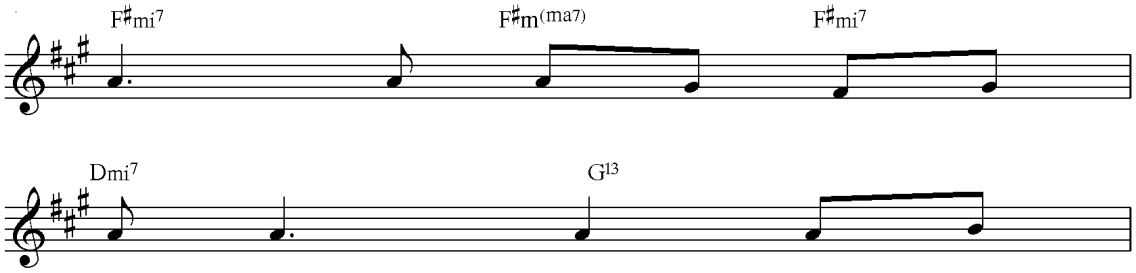
Example 3.40



G#mi11

Bar 24 has G#mi11 as chord ii moving to chord V, C#b9b5, resolving to F#mi7 on beat one of bar 25:

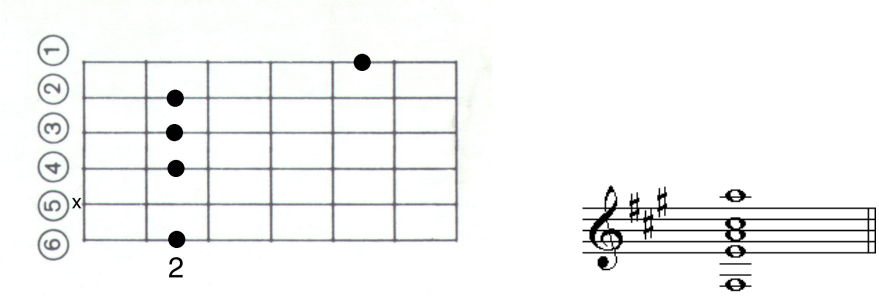
Example 3.41



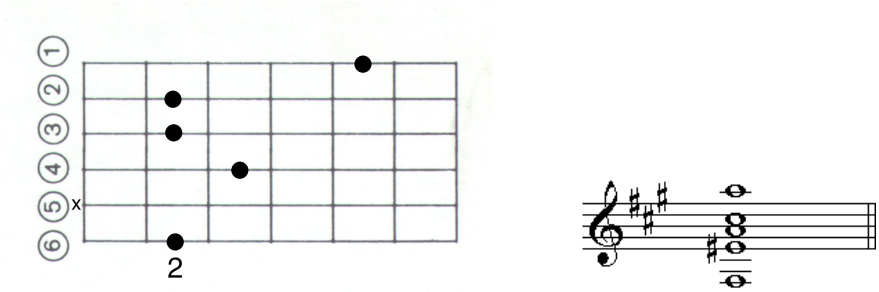
25-26

On beat three of bar twenty-five Fourie raises the seventh in the F#mi chord, and by so doing implies the C#7b5 chord, returning to the tonic on beat four. In bar twenty-six the ii, V progression in C occurs but there is no resolution to the tonic in bar twenty-seven. The chord shapes used here are fairly standard, with the F#mi chords pivotal to the sound:

Example 3.42

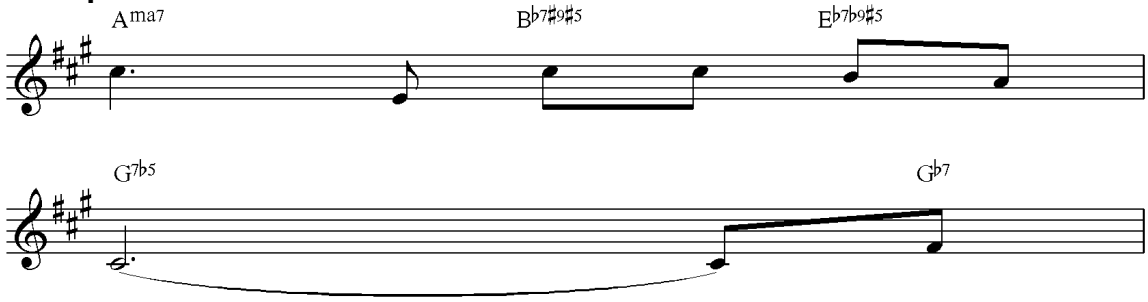


F#mi7



F#mi ma7

Example 3.43



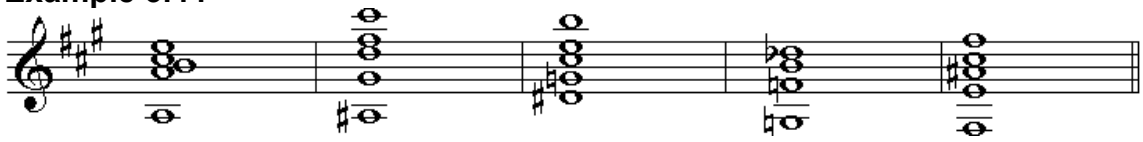
27-28

The sequence of chords in bars twenty-seven and twenty-eight can be viewed in a number of ways. The resolution chord in bar twenty-nine is Bmi7 and the F#7 is its dominant. The chords contain less chromatic voice leading than previously, the only explanations being (Figure 3.7 and Example 3.44):

Figure 3.7 less chromatic voice leading

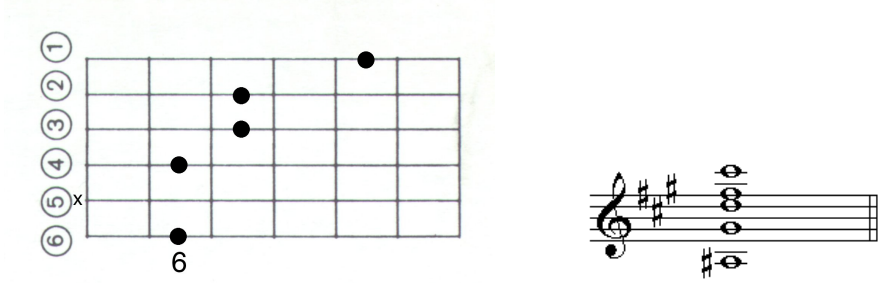
Ama7	A#7#9#5	D#7b9#5	G7b5	F#7
C#	C#	C#	C#	C#
B	A#	B	B	A#

Example 3.44

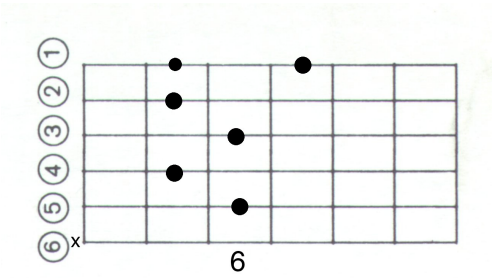


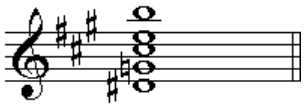
The other voices in these chords move more erratically. However, if one views G7b5 as a tritone substitute for C#7, the dominant approach to F#7, then it seems as if Fourie is implying an incomplete sequence. If completed it creates a series of successive dominant sevenths: A#7#9#5, D#7b9#5, (G#7), C#7 (G7b5), F#7. This is a more conventional type of movement, and while Fourie does not complete the progression, it does offer the most probable explanation:

Example 3.45



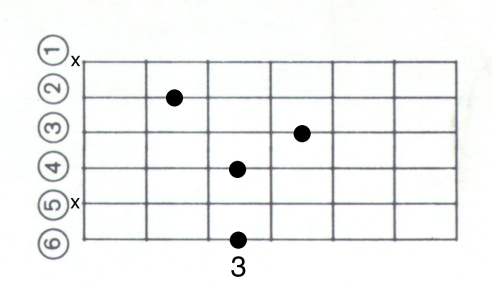
A#7#9#5

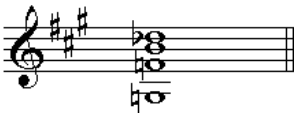




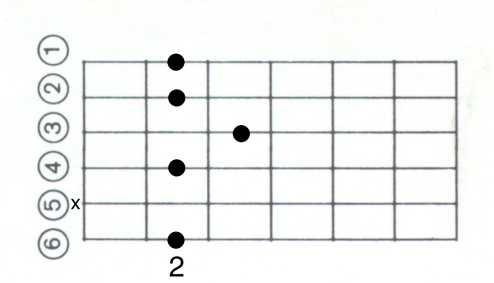
D#7b9#5 (The smaller dot on string 1 is the melodic resolution to the b5 in Example 3.46)

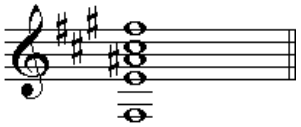
Example 3.46





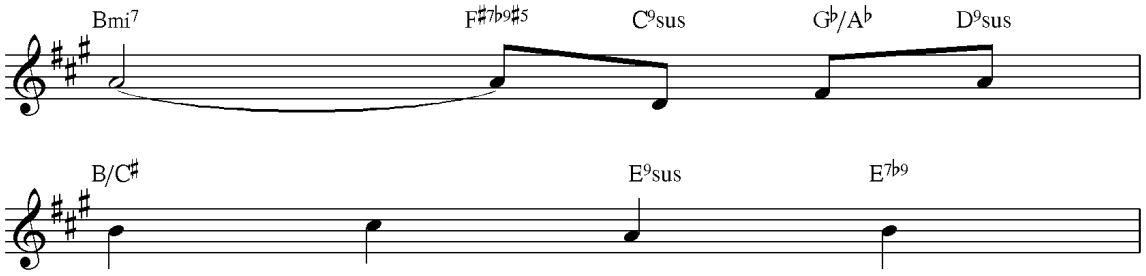
G7b5





F#7

Example 3.47



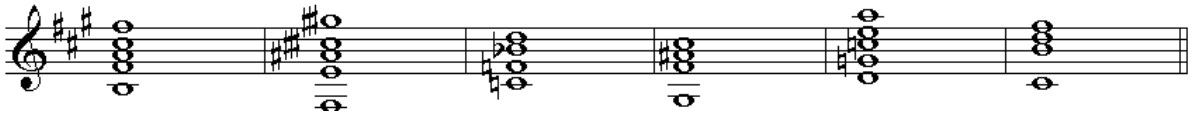
29-30

In this progression the voice movement returns to the more chromatic leading, but also has elements of dominant substitution. Some of the voices move in leaps, others are chromatic (Figure 3.8 and Example 3.48):

Figure 3.8 voices moving in leaps

Bmi7	F#7b9#5	C9sus	F#/G#	D9sus	B/C#
D	D	D	C#	D	C#
B	A#	Bb	A#		
F#	F#	F	F#	G	F#
				C	C#
				D	D#

Example 3.48

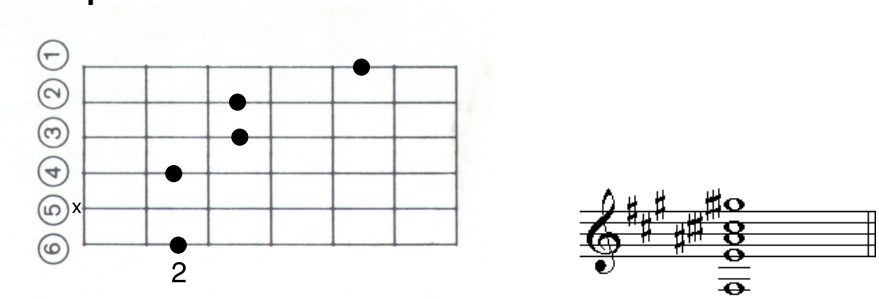


On beat three of bar twenty-nine Fourie states the dominant of Bmi7, then on beat four sounds the triad of that same chord with the natural ninth in the bass.

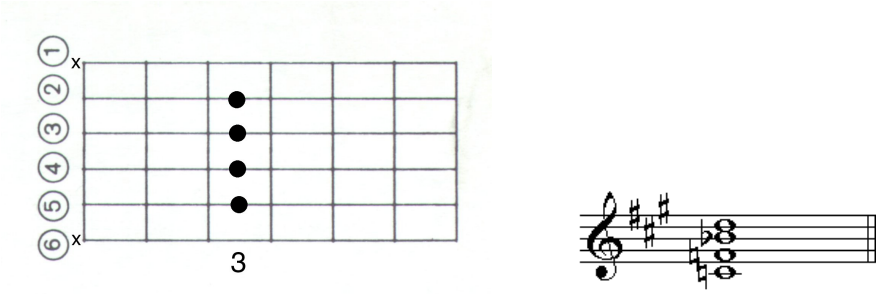
Unlike the previous versions of the chord, this particular F#/G# seems to serve as the dominant of the B major slash chord on beat one of bar thirty. C9sus and D9sus both occur on the weak beats, are chromatically coloured and harmonically ambiguous.

B/C# serves as a substitute ii chord for Bmi7, resolving to E9sus and then E7b9 (no fifth), and finally to Ama9 in bar thirty-one:

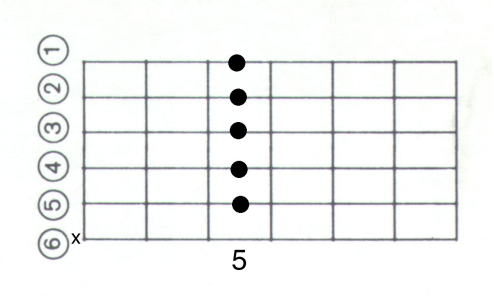
Example 3.49

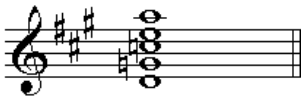


F#7#9#5

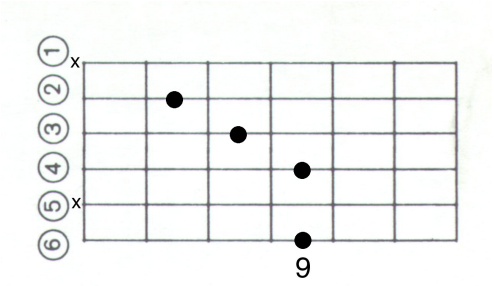


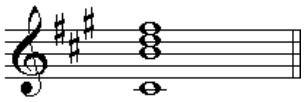
C9sus



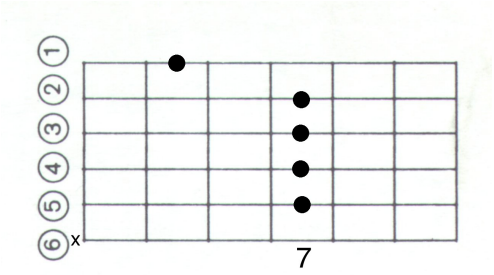


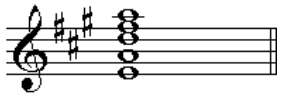
D9sus



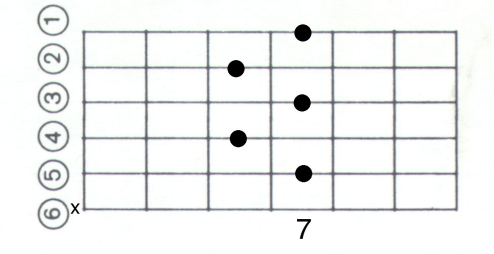


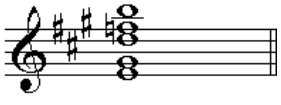
B/C#





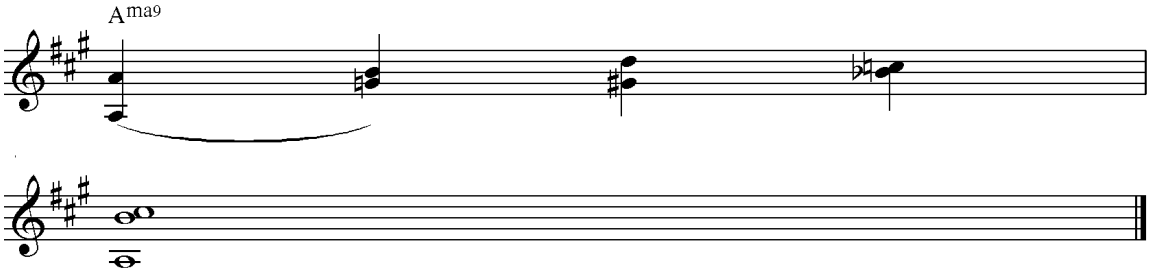
E9sus (no fifth)





E7b9

Example 3.50



The final cadence is an embellishment of chord one. Fourie first states two roots of the chord, an octave apart. Then on beat two he introduces the ninth and then the flattened seventh. The flattened seventh resolves to the major seventh on beat three while the ninth moves to the eleventh. On beat four the final two voices are both approached from a semitone below, Bb resolving to B and C natural resolving to C#.

Fourie views the alterations and substitutions in many different ways, but all his choices are firmly rooted in fretboard harmony. Many of the chords he uses in this arrangement are ambiguous, and are chosen for this very quality. He also makes it clear that the use of 9sus or slash triads is intentional, and he feels that they often embody a ii, V progression on their own. These choices are evidenced for example in the way he uses the F#/G# chord in bar one and then in bar twenty-nine. In bar one it serves as a dominant approach to C#mi11, while in bar twenty-nine it serves as the dominant approach to B/C#. The resolution chord B/C# serves to even further disguise the dominant – tonic movement and enhances his suspended but not overly dissonant approach to re-harmonisation.

4. Linear method

The second component of this part of the report is devoted to Fourie's linear concept, which deals with his method for studying improvisation. His approach to soloing has varied a great deal over the years, coming from an almost entirely ear based approach through modal treatments, the lydian chromatic concept and Pat Martino's line forms, amongst others. However, in the last few years of teaching, Fourie has settled on a simpler way of communicating basic information to his students, and this chapter outlines the way he initially teaches improvisation.

His diatonic method is a simple, yet thorough major scale study and encompasses a working method for absorbing the basic scales, triads, quartads and pentatonics that can be derived. It is documented here from a guitarist's perspective, with Fourie referring to pentatonics as minor only. Also, as the theory is viewed from a guitarist's perspective, the scales have been written out in neck diagrams only.

The method focuses on diatonic or chord tone treatments for certain chord structures and is surprisingly close to the methods and treatments that were prevalent in his early playing style. Fourie advocates technical fluency in a number of areas, many of which are basic study concepts, but he proposes approaching them from an angle which will 'spark off original ideas of pure invention' (Fourie: 2001,6).

The study commences with a major scale. From this the student must draw up a chart containing: seven triads, seven quartads, seven major modes, three minor pentatonics and five inversions of each of the pentatonics. The chart is prepared

in letterform only, not in standard notation, and this method facilitates an exploration of the guitar, which provides a simple pathway to improvisation. It also encourages a visual approach to guitar playing, with a mental roadmap of the neck being created.

The chart should be prepared and explored in every major key, with the student later comparing and mapping visual similarities between the keys. Here are examples in C Major.

C Major – C D E F G A B

Chords	Triad	Quartad
CM7	CEG	CEGB
Dm7	DFA	DFAC
Em7	EGB	EGBD
FM7	FAC	FACE
G7	GBD	GBDF
Am7	ACE	ACEG

Modes

C Ionian	C D E F G A B
D Dorian	D E F G A B C
E Phrygian	E F G A B C D
F Lydian	F G A B C D E
G mixo-lydian	G A B C D E F
A Aeolian	A B C D E F G
B Locrian	B C D E F G A

Three minor pentatonics (roots based on minor chords ii iii and iv)

Dm pentatonic D F G A C

Em pentatonic E G A B D

Am pentatonic A C D E G

While the above chart may appear simple, its value lies within its execution and exploration. Fourie advocates a three-notes-per-string method for practicing the modes. This means that while the mode may begin with the root on the sixth string, it does not resolve to the root on the first string. Here are the neck diagrams for each of the modes. The root of the mode is indicated by the letter R, while the tonic of the key is indicated by the letter T.

Figure 4.1 Ionian

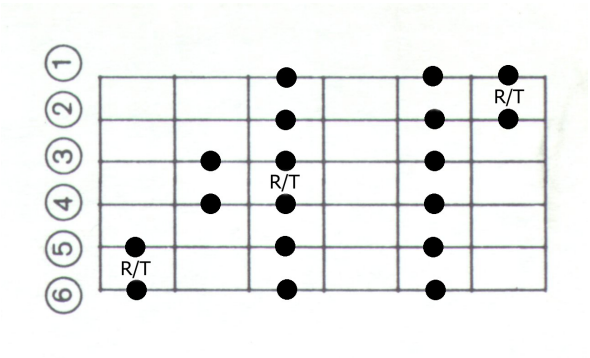


Figure 4.2 Dorian

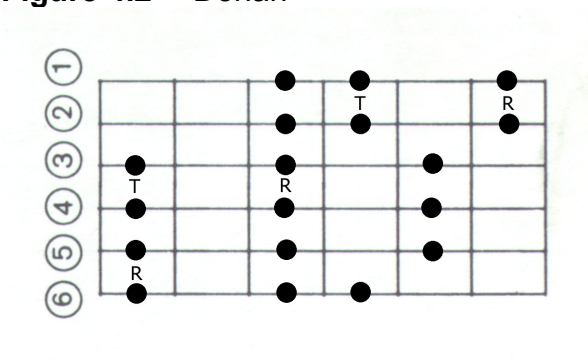


Figure 4.3 Phrygian

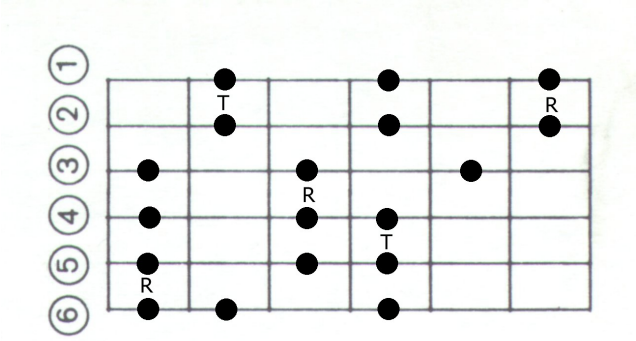


Figure 4.4 Lydian

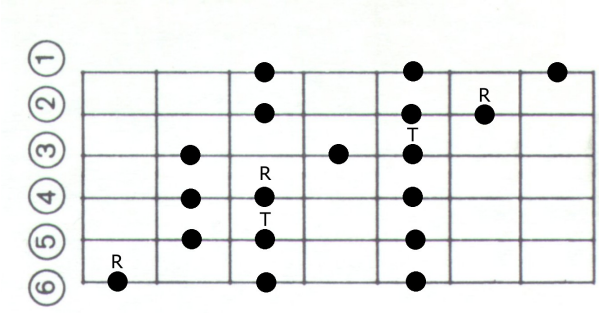


Figure 4.5 Mixo-lydian

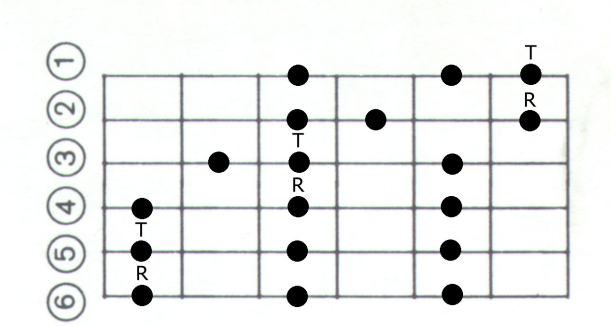


Figure 4.6 Aeolian

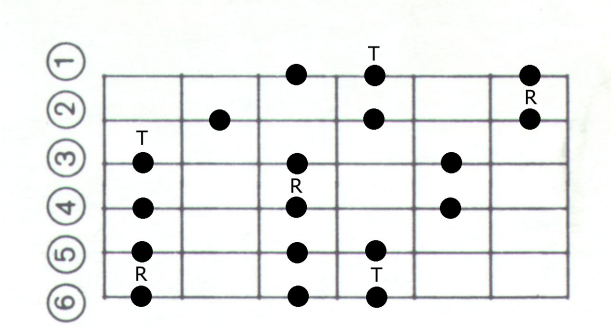
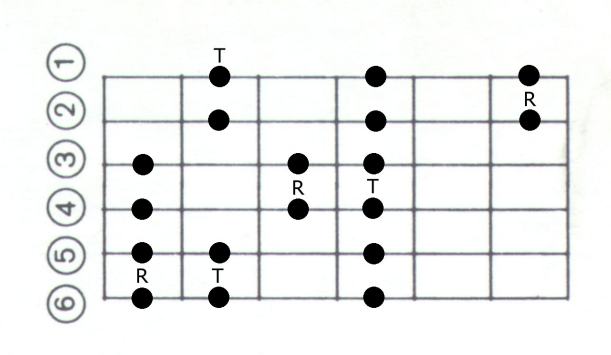


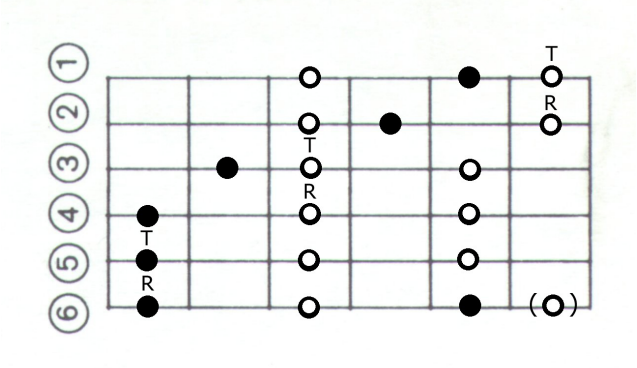
Figure 4.7 Locrian



When learning these patterns Fourie advocates a continual awareness of the tonic of the key as well as the root of the mode. This, along with the regular statement of the roots triad or quartad, will keep the ear grounded. This visual approach to the modes allows for comparison to the relevant pentatonic inversions. For example, if one looks at the mixo-lydian mode one finds that the pattern for the minor pentatonic (built on note one of the scale) falls perfectly into the mode.

The notes of the mode are indicated by ● while the notes of the pentatonic that are shared with the mode are indicated by ○; when the note is not shared it is in brackets.

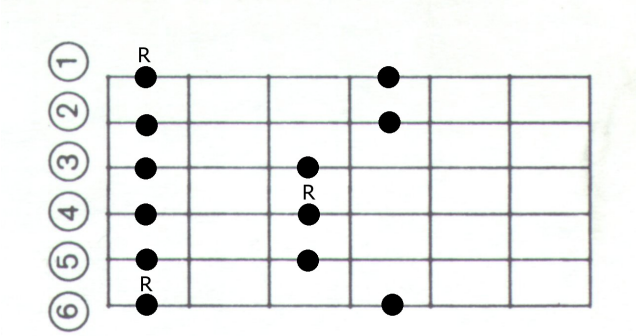
Figure 4.8 Mixo-lydian mode with minor pentatonic



By having a visual map such as this the guitarist can freely change between the two distinct sound worlds.

Fourie chooses a two-note-per-string method for the pentatonic scales. The basic scale is shown below with the root indicated by the letter R:

Figure 4.9 Minor pentatonic, inversion 1



He also advocates that the scale should be learnt in non root positions, i.e., with the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th as starting notes, but at all times the student should be

aware of where in the scale the root lies. The different inversions appear as follows:

Figure 4.10 Minor pentatonic, inversion 2

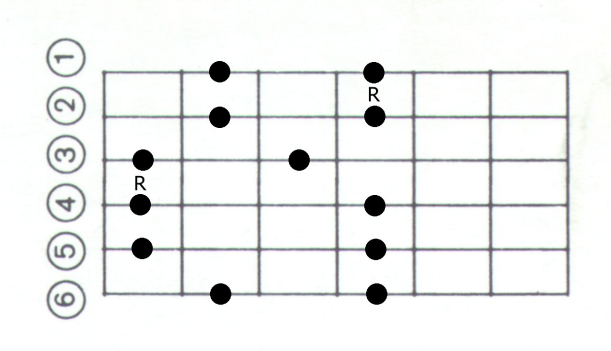


Figure 4.11 Minor pentatonic, inversion 3

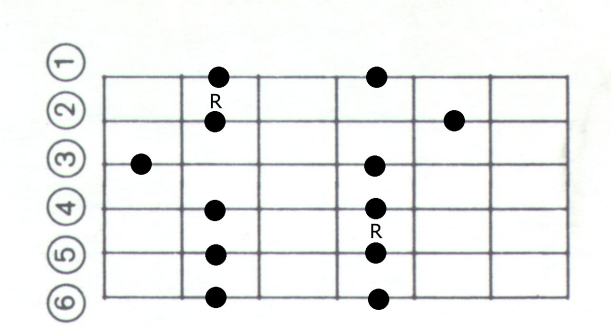


Figure 4.12 Minor pentatonic, inversion 4

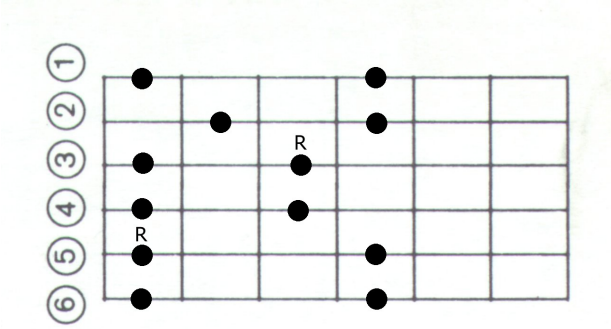
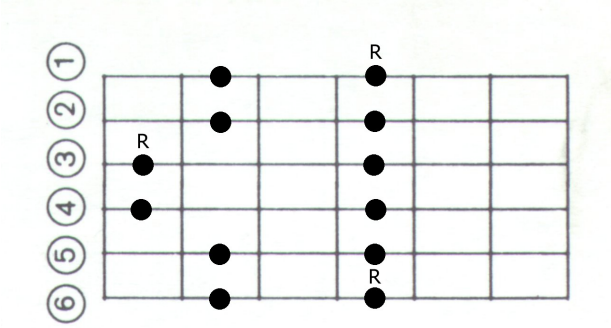


Figure 4.13 Minor pentatonic, inversion 5



As there are three minor pentatonics (constructed on notes 2, 3 and 6 of the scale), the tonic lies in a different place in pentatonics 2 and 6, while 3 does not contain the tonic.

Figure 4.14 Minor pentatonic, inversion 1, on note 2

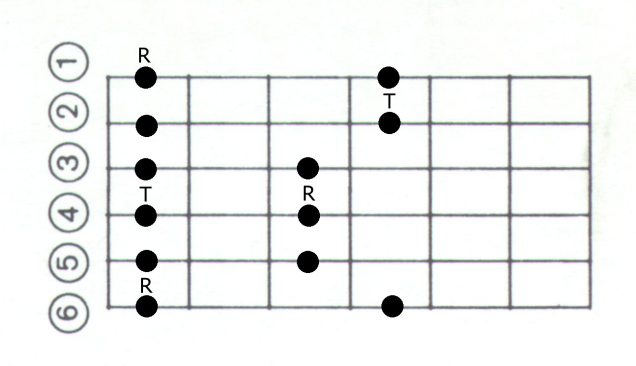


Figure 4.15 Minor pentatonic, inversion 1, on note 3

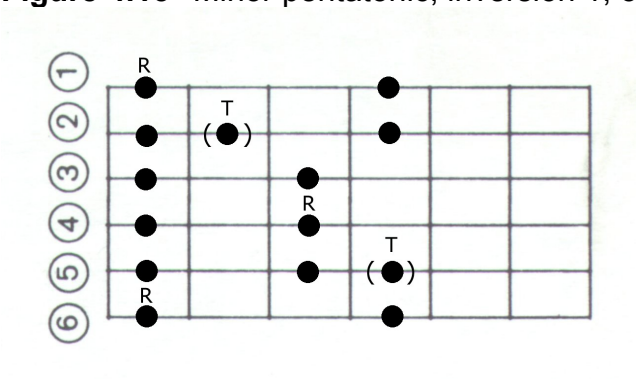
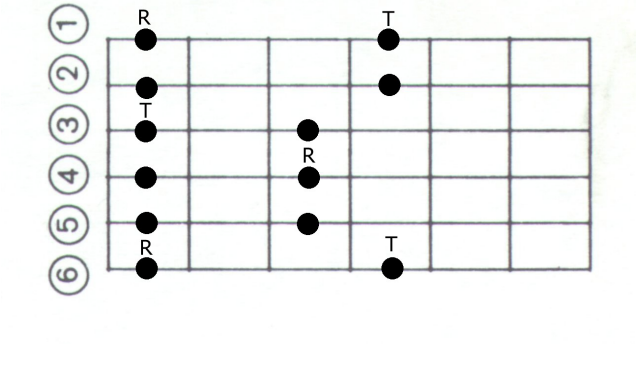


Figure 4.16 Minor pentatonic, inversion 1, on note 6



Each of the three minor pentatonics has its own five inversions and Fourie encourages the student to explore each one thoroughly, while being aware of the root and tonic. He also encourages exploration of the different inversions of each pentatonic and how they fall within each one of the diatonic modes. For example, if we take the mixo-lydian mode, the different three pentatonics fall inside the mode as below:

Figure 4.17 Mixo-lydian mode with 1st inversion of the minor pentatonic built on note 6 of the tonic key

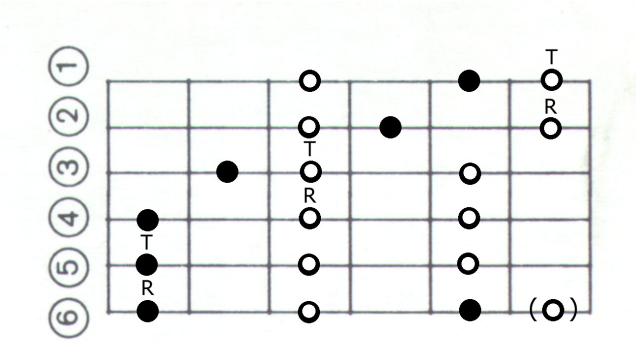


Figure 4.18 Mixo-lydian mode with 4th inversion of the minor pentatonic built on note 2 of the tonic key

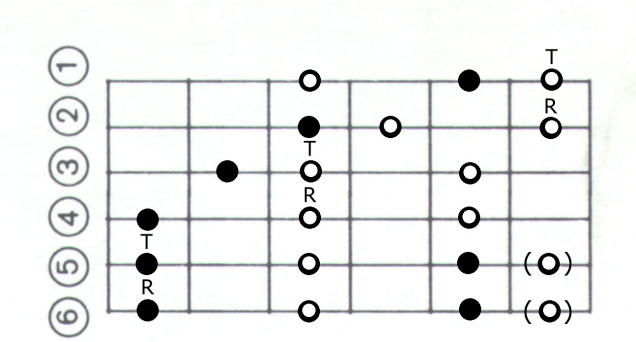
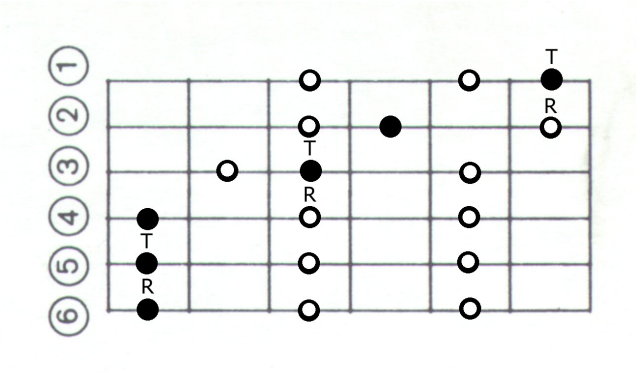


Figure 4.19 Mixo-lydian mode with 3rd inversion of the minor pentatonic built on note 3 of the tonic key



The above example is just a guideline for exploration, and this approach should be applied to all the inversions of the three pentatonics across the seven modes. A similar approach should be taken to exploring the seven triads and quartads. Each chord should be mapped out as part of each mode, going from the lowest to highest available chord tone in the mode map. Within this approach one should look not only for arpeggio shapes, but also for new and unusual inversions of the various chords.

Fourie's next step would be to get the student to apply this approach to a jazz standard. He recommends a piece such as *All The Things You Are,* as this piece moves through a variety of keys. He suggests that one should initially analyze the various keys present in the piece. Once the student has established what keys are present, a key chart (as above) should be prepared for each key. The various explorations mentioned should be worked through for each key to as deep a degree as possible. This thorough analysis will not only develop the

students ear, but will deeply ingrain the harmonic structure of the chosen jazz standard, and provide a departure point for further linear study. The application or study method must then be extended to firstly the melodic minor scale, and then to as many scales as possible, with their relevant modes and chords.

5. Conclusion

The objective of this research report was to collect and document information about the life and musical achievements of South African jazz guitarist, Johnny Fourie, so as to pass on Fourie's technique and legacy to a further generation of guitarists. The paper contains both biographical and technical information: The biography contains information on bands, gigs, study and an account of the many prominent local and international musicians that Fourie has worked with during his career. The technical information documents his style, musical concept and most importantly his contribution towards harmonic improvisation and linear study on the guitar. But before one can draw a conclusion to the significance of Fourie's life and musical concept within a broader context, it is imperative to understand his very personal perception of what music should and should not be:

> Music as an art form has nothing to do with struggle (politically); it has only to do with itself. Music as I see it has nothing to do with political ideals, it has no agenda but itself. Music is a mathematical thing that we are working with; it is malleable within the hands of the artist. Nothing will make him do it better (other) than his talent, research and love of it (Fourie: 2001, 6).

This statement expresses the essence of Johnny Fourie's conception of music and it runs like a golden thread throughout his career. It is interesting to note that despite the many acclaimed musicians he has worked with, and regardless of the respect and admiration he has received from them, success or the lure of fame and fortune has never distracted him from this goal.

It is true that an artist's life and style are moulded by his socio-economic conditions, and analysis of these circumstances can bring great insight into an artist's career. Fourie's life spanned a very difficult and problematic period of South African history. As the biographical information documents, this affected him negatively, in terms of the restrictions on venues he could play in, and more importantly the divide it caused amongst players, and the subsequent difficulties associated with performing with musicians from different cultural groups. In Fourie's opinion 'the only reason things went the way they did was because we were separated by law' (Fourie: 2001, 6). For him 'there was no racial issue' (Fourie: 2001, 6), and he believes that white musicians were just as musically compromised by apartheid as black musicians.

It is again his musical ideals that dictate Fourie's outlook on the political problems prevalent in South Africa throughout his career: in his opinion no political agenda could ultimately raise the technical quality of one's musicianship. Although it can be said that from a monetary standpoint white musicians were advantaged during the apartheid era, Fourie asserts that: 'Musically I wasn't advantaged. I believe that no amount of hardship or advantage could have made me play better or not; it has to do with the manipulation of intervals' (Fourie: 2001, 6). Fourie in no way supported the political regime, and is acutely aware of the 'sins of the past', but also believes that musicians of all races were technically disadvantaged as they were not allowed to play together, and share techniques.

Although he believed that the conditions in South Africa needed to change, he didn't believe that music should be used as a political tool. 'Anything can or could be used politically, but I don't always believe it should be, it is not right to argue a case for one race being better at music than another. Any colour can do it' (Fourie: 2001, 6). His outlook on music was also greatly influenced by eastern

spiritualism. McLaughlin's approach during his Shakti period influenced Fourie's thinking, with the notion of music being a vehicle for peace, love and divinity. These ideals have persisted throughout his life: 'The emotion in music should be an emotion of love, to make the music divine; anger in music is to no advantage' (Fourie: 2001, 6).

While such notions of love, peace and divinity may seem to run contrary to his belief that 'Music is a mathematical thing', Fourie does not believe that there is any inconsistency. He believes the objective of the artist should be a continual and exhaustive study of his craft no matter what the external circumstances of his own life, or of society in general. Part of the artist's study is the pursuit of creative freedom and this 'freedom comes from mastery of the form' (Fourie: 2001, 4). Fourie believes that it is when an artist touches this freedom during a performance that concepts such as divinity can be communicated to an audience.

Due to the deep entrenchment of these beliefs, Fourie's primary goals, throughout his life, were to pursue technical advancement in music, and to play as much as possible, with as many people as possible. While on the surface this may seem an innocent and easy stance to have adopted, it actually proved to the contrary, bringing him criticism from both political camps, and further isolating him from work.

During the apartheid period Fourie's neutral position brought him into conflict with state ideals and those who supported those ideals.

> 'I did not make a conscious decision to be neutral, and I didn't consider myself to be sitting on the fence. I played with whomever I was musically

attracted to. I was playing with black people and white people; I only consider them to be “nice” or “not-nice”. I didn’t consider myself a power to fight the system, I was chasing the musical dream’ (Fourie: 2001, 6).

While Fourie was not active through involvement in a specific anti-apartheid group or political party, he was, with friends and associates, vocal in his anti-apartheid views. Fourie says: ‘In associations with friends I have always been open with my anti-apartheid views. Then one of my friends obviously informed the state police. A friend of my uncle was in the police and warned me that they were keeping a file on me’ (Fourie: 2001, 6). This is not surprising, as Fourie had already made the headlines in South African newspaper during 1962, when it was reported that while in the UK as a member of the Ray Ellington Quartet, he was employed by a black drummer and singer.

On the other side of the political divide it has been argued that Fourie was advantaged by the political regime. In many instances white musicians were used almost exclusively for recordings and concerts. This applied to radio sessions, recording sessions and gigs, both at the SABC and private record companies. I have often heard black jazz performers be openly critical of Fourie, claiming that he was greatly advantaged by the political system. Fourie doesn’t agree with this perspective as his only interest was playing with as many people on as many occasions as possible. Often, due to the style of music he was playing, he was not booked for certain gigs, and in this way himself experienced a certain sense of isolation and discrimination.

Fourie does concede to a major political error: between 1984 and 1989 he enlisted as a member of the army band. ‘A major in the army offered me this job, which was some financial security at a time when the system wasn’t exactly filling

my pockets. I didn't consider myself to be upholding the arm of apartheid, there I might be considered to be naïve' (Fourie: 2001, 6). It wasn't a happy period for Fourie, the pecking order within the ranks did not meet with his 'freedom in jazz' approach. Although members of the army band were not engaged in any kind of military action or service, certain aspects of 'life in uniform' were present in the band. In fact, after that experience he 'hated the concept of the army' and 'avoided letting Sean go at the risk of being arrested' (Fourie: 2001, 6). The army at that time had a strong session musician line-up, including three guitarists, Joe Willis, Joe Moretti and Fourie. Fourie concedes that he had been naïve: 'I was quite surprised to find out how cross people were with me for being in the army, I didn't realise how hated the SADF was' (Fourie: 2001, 6). Fourie admits and recognises the mistake: 'On that one I will concede that it was an error for me to be involved with the SADF at that sensitive time. To me it was just another opportunity to play music' (Fourie: 2001, 6).

It would be hard to believe Fourie if his personal financial reward had paralleled the larger successes of the historically left-wing or right-wing aligned musicians. Many of these musicians have benefited by aligning themselves with various political stances. Fourie never did so. His career and reputation are mainly contained in gigs, and memories of fellow musicians and students. His quest for excellence has even made him ambivalent about recording. Of recording he says: 'I have been reluctant to record as for me the recording must reflect the values of times gone by. I want my recording to touch people, it must give them both melancholy and upliftment' (Fourie: 2001, 6). While Fourie feels that his 'lack of success was only because' he 'came back to SA', he has no regrets (Fourie: 2001, 6). His new album is a set of re-harmonisations of his favourite jazz standards, and the treatments contain pieces showing all his influences; from George Shearing, Barney Kessel and Tal Farlow, to John McLaughlin, the

music still grows and develops. Through his playing and teaching Fourie has contributed vastly to the development of music and specifically jazz guitar in South Africa, and continues to do so.

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Appendix A

Photographs

Appendix B