THE NEW SOUND

A TRANSCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF SELECTED SOLOS OF WOODY SHAW

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ABSTRACT

This work is in two parts. The first section consists of ten transcriptions of the solos of the trumpet player Woody Shaw. These have been transcribed by ear directly from the recordings. The second section of the work consists of analyses of the transcriptions.

Woody Shaw remains one of the most harmonically progressive jazz trumpet players today, years after his death. Like the great saxophone player John Coltrane, he liked to superimpose tonalities of his own choosing over the original tonality of the music.

By transcribing and analysing his solos, the author has demonstrated how he does this. His melodic ideas can be seen together, as notes that spell out certain harmonies or altered tones that are not specified in the original chord structure. These can be often recognised as belonging to various pentatonic scales from different tonalities.

By examining the transcriptions in analysed form, one can begin to see patterns forming at specific points in the musical form. Woody Shaw employs the concept of superimposed tonalities. By studying his methods, the student can incorporate them in his or her own playing.
I would like to take this opportunity to thank Bruce Cassidy, jazz trumpeter, EVI player and studio musician. Bruce has been my teacher, and is also the finest jazz musician I have been privileged to know.

I would also like to thank Resha Revishin and Hamsa le Roux for their assistance in formatting and editing this document.
Woody Shaw is arguably the most important figure to emerge in jazz trumpet history, harmonically speaking, since Clifford Brown or Miles Davis. In this analysis of his solos, the author hopes to unlock some of the secrets of his unusual and progressive style of playing. There are many transcription books available on the market today, but none offer an in-depth explanation of what concept the soloist was using at the time.

To understand his playing style, one needs to transcribe and see for oneself the superimposition of different tonalities that he uses.

The author has chosen ten tunes for this purpose. These tunes were chosen because they all demonstrate his use of polytonality very clearly. They are also all good examples of his best playing. Several of the tunes are standards and there are also a few blues tunes. The student can relate more easily to these more familiar forms before looking at tunes such as 'The Moontrane', an original Woody Shaw composition with unusual chord changes.
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREFACE</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HISTORY</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRANSCRIBED SOLOS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backstairs Blues</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gingerbread Boy</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I were a Bell</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Moontrane</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandu</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sippin' at Bells</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solid</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve's Blues</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There will never be another you</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You stepped out of a dream</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>METHOD OF ANALYSIS</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANALYSES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backstairs Blues</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gingerbread Boy</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I were a Bell</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Moontrane</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandu</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sippin' at Bells</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solid</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve's Blues</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There will never be another you</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You stepped out of a dream</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After two choruses I get tired of playing the changes ... I like to superimpose harmonically. I like to play it deliberately in another key and resolve it. I consider myself from the straight-ahead school of jazz. I'm able to handle any kind of music, but I think that when jazz stops swinging, it's not jazz.

Woody Shaw¹

¹ Eclipse – http://www.eclipse.net/~fitzgera/blakey/woody.htm
HISTORY

Woody Shaw was born in Laurinburg, North Carolina on 24 December 1944. He died on 10 May 1989.¹ On the one hand Woody Shaw saw himself as a straight-down-the-line bop trumpet player but on the other, he played in a style that was and is to this day very progressive and unique amongst jazz trumpet players. Woody Shaw bridged the gap between hard bop and the avant-garde by respecting the tradition and playing with controlled freedom.²

Woody Shaw was born 20 years too early to hit the revival of mainstream jazz that has been fronted by Wynton Marsalis.³

In August 1970 when he was 25, Woody Shaw tied with Kenny Wheeler in the 'Talent deserving wider recognition' section in the Downbeat poll.⁴ In 1978 he was voted best trumpet player and Rosewood best jazz album in the Downbeat poll.⁵ Dizzy Gillespie said of him, "Woody Shaw is one of the voices of the future".⁶

So why is there so much mystery surrounding this musician?

He never made a name for himself in the way that other trumpet players like Miles Davis or Freddie Hubbard did, however Miles Davis said of him that he was someone who did not sound like anyone else. In other words, he was original. Freddie Hubbard even asked him to come and play on one of his albums. If you listen to the recording of them playing Clifford Brown's Sandu it is very obvious whose playing is the more progressive.

³ Album sleeve of Woody Shaw, Solid, MCD 5329.
⁵ Eclipse – http://www.eclipse.netl-fitzgeralblakeywoody.htm
Thus Woody Shaw is seen as a musician's musician. In South Africa it is hard to find his albums on the shelf in record shops. He did not become famous but if you mention his name to those who know, the effect is always the same; a tone of reverence for a great player who paved the way for a more contemporary approach to the horn harmonically. He can be regarded as the Coltrane of the trumpet except that he never became famous like John Coltrane.

His playing is a combination of two opposites. On the one hand, the vehicles he chooses for his improvisation are mostly in the traditional bop mode, i.e. his ensembles are traditionally acoustic, and the tunes are usually from the standard jazz repertoire. A great deal of the time, he plays using lines that are typical to bop players. However, it is in another area that his trump card rests. As he has said himself earlier, "I like to play it deliberately in another key and then resolve it". It is his artistry in playing in and also totally outside the changes so effectively and so musically that makes him such a great player. He said of himself, "I consider myself to be one of the great trumpet players because trumpet players try to imitate me now".

Each of Woody Shaw's learning experiences gave him an increasing number of tools to bring out his own individual sound. The more he absorbed, the stronger his identity as a player became. He played with some of the world's best jazz musicians, many of whom have been trendsetters in their own right. He recorded and performed with artists including, Art Blakey, Horace Silver, Chick Corea, Dexter Gordon, Freddie Hubbard, McCoy Tyner, Gil Evans, Kenny Garrett, and Eric Dolphy, Larry Young, Jackie McLean, Herbie Hancock, Joe Zawinul, Joe Henderson, Max Roach, Bobby Hutcherson, Bud Powell, Kenny Clarke, Jonny Griffin, Joe Farrell, Elvin Jones, Cedar Walton, Kenny Barron, Kirk Lightsey, Wayne Shorter, Sarah Vaughan, Scott Lafaro,

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Betty Carter, Hank Mobley, Kenny Dorham, Lou Donaldson and Stanley Turrentine.¹

Woody Shaw's father sang in a gospel group, The Diamond Jubilee Singers. Woody started on the bugle but changed to the trumpet at the age of 11. His teacher, Jerry Ziering, gave him classical lessons and also introduced him to the playing of jazz greats such as Dizzy Gillespie, Bix Beiderbecke and Bunny Berigan.² He played with Brady Hodge's Newark based R&B orchestra and worked with local acts such as Alan Jackson and the Jive Five while in high school where he made the All City and All State orchestras in 1959.³ He never graduated from high school, favouring learning his craft on the job. Woody began to sit in with visiting guest stars, and at the age of 18, he toured with Rufus Jones.⁴ Also at 18, he played with Latin jazz pioneer Willie Bobo in Brooklyn at a club called the Blue Coronet along with Chick Corea and Joe Farrell.⁵

Using, as background, his influences of Clifford Brown and Freddie Hubbard, he spent time with the reed player Eric Dolphy, who he claims opened his vision to new harmonic possibilities. This was where he began to embark on a musical journey that headed into unchartered waters. After gigging with various bands he got his first big break playing with Dolphy.

Dolphy is quoted as saying, "I think of my music as tonal. I play notes that would not ordinarily be said to be in a given key .... I hear other resolutions on the basic harmonic patterns and I try to use them." Woody Shaw said "Eric helped me to find my own individual approach to playing trumpet. He taught

³ Eclipse – http://www.eclipse.net/~fitzgera/blakey/woody.htm
⁵ Eclipse – http://www.eclipse.net/~fitzgera/blakey/woody.htm
⁶ Album sleeve of Eric Dolphy, Music Matador, LE JAZZ CD14
me to play inside and outside at the same time."¹ This quote is crucial in understanding the music of Woody Shaw.

In 1964 he went to Paris with Bud Powell, Kenny Clarke, Johnny Griffin, Art Taylor and Larry Young. He also played in Belgium and Germany before returning to the States where he joined Horace Silver in 1965. In 1968-9 he played with Max Roach, touring the Middle East and played at a festival in Iran. From 1970 to 1972, he played with Joe Henderson and Gil Evans. In 1973, he joined Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers before entering the West Coast freelance scene where he played with Herbie Hancock. Art Blakey's band the Jazz Messengers has hosted every major trumpet star in its long history. In New York in 1974 he recorded Moontrane, his third album and received favourable reviews. Miles Davis recommended him to Columbia Records who signed him up. He continued to tour and play at festivals and clubs with his own groups while forging a highly individual style composed of playing inside and outside the chord changes. In 1985 he played at the Camden festival in London with Joe Farrell.²

Woody Shaw's own influences included Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis, Clifford Brown, Booker Little, Donald Byrd, Lee Morgan, Freddie Hubbard, Eric Dolphy and McCoy Tyner. He also drew on the work of European classical composers particularly those who used pentatonics in their work such as Debussy and more importantly, Kodaly. Woody Shaw was a spiritual man. He liked Thai Chi and even wrote a composition for his teacher, Joshua.³

Woody suffered from retinitis pigmentosa, a vision defect that meant he could hardly see at all towards the end of his life. However he had such good ears that he could pick up a new tune in a few minutes.⁴ His poor eyesight caused

him to fall underneath a subway train in New York in 1989. He died three months later of his injuries.¹

He left behind many compositions, all of which are extremely progressive harmonically, including Katrina Ballerina, Little Red's Fantasy, The Moontrane and The Organ Grinder, to name a few.

His legacy lies in the fact that modern jazz trumpet players either tend to copy the Clifford Brown school that includes Lee Morgan and Freddie Hubbard in learning from the bop masters or, if they want to sound harmonically progressive, they borrow from Woody Shaw. Today, 10 years after his death, there has yet to be someone who has left such a lasting impression at the progressive end of the modern jazz trumpet fraternity. His recordings are as innovative today as they were ten years ago. There have been many who have copied his style such as Roy Hargrove, but no one that has yet taken his place as the new leader.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

1. Altered dominant scale

The altered dominant scale. It is used over a dominant 7 chord as it displays all the altered tones.

2. Alterations

The alterations in a dominant chord are the $9, 9, 11, 13$. These are indicated below the altered tones by the number of the scale degree and the sign, $\flat$ or $\natural$.

3. Bebop cliche

There are many different stylistic phrases in bebop that are commonly used among jazz players. Only 2 examples are given here.

4. Chromatic Enclosure

In approaching a note, in this example "C", the note may be preceded by an enclosure i.e. notes either side of it that enclose the note. Listed above are 3 examples.

5. Diminished scales

6. Natural Minor scale

Contains notes diatonic to minor key.

7. Out of key directional approach

The B♭ and G♯ are not in the key of the tune (F major). They approach the G which is a chord tone.

8. Pattern

This example contains a 4 note grouping repeated 3 times.

9. Pentatonic scale

The C minor pentatonic scale contains the same notes as B♭ major pentatonic. In analysis I look at the key of the moment. For example, if the key is C minor then C minor pentatonic is a more obvious choice than B♭ major pentatonic even though the notes of the scale are the same.
10. Tritone Substitution.

The notes of the above bar clearly imply a II - V progression a tritone away from the original chord changes. This is a common jazz reharmonisation. The new chord changes would be $\text{Ab}_7$ to $D_7$ to $C$.

11. Bebop family of scales

The recognizable feature of these scales is the semitone, for example between the $i7$ and $i7$ or between $i3$ and $i3$ etc.

The tonal areas that Woody Shaw uses in his solos has been mapped out by grouping the notes in a particular tonality together under a curved line. This line is only used for this purpose and is not to be confused with a phrase marking. Thus lines denoting phrase or style have been deliberately left out to avoid this particular ambiguity.
Gingerbread Boy

Woody Shaw

Selected choruses

Fast blues

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<tr>
<th>Chord</th>
<th>Beats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>C7</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>F7</td>
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<td>G-7</td>
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<td>A7</td>
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<td>D-7</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>C7</td>
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<td>F7</td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td>C7</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-7</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
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</table>

DRUM SOLO
If I were a bell

Woody Shaw

G7
A7
D7
GΔ7
GΔ7
B-7(b5)
E7(b9)
A7
A-7
D7
G7
C7
G7
BΔ7
E7
E-7
Db-7
Gb7
BΔ7
Gb7
BΔ7
E7
A7
A-7(b5)
D7
GΔ7
GΔ7
B-7(b5)
E7(b9)
A7
A-7
D7
Solid

Woody Shaw

C7  F7  C7  G7  C7
F7  C7  E7(b5)  A7(b9)
D7  C7  E7  A7  D7  G7
C7  F7  C7  G7  C7
C7  E7(b5)  A7(b9)
D7  G7  E7  A7  D7  G7
C7  F7  E7  A7  C7  G7
C7  G7  C7  C7

32
Steve's Blues

Woody Shaw

```
G7   C7   G7   D7   G7
1     2     3     4     5

C7   C#07  G7   B7(13)  E7(13)
6     7     8

A7   D7   B7   E7   A7   D7
9     10    11    12

G7   C7   G7   D7   G7
13    14    15    16

C7   C#07  G7   B7(13)  E7(13)
17    18    19    20

A7   D7   B7   E7   A7   D7
21    22    23    24

G7   C7   G7   D7   G7
25    26    27    28
```
There will never be another you

Woody Shaw
You stepped out of a dream

Woody Shaw
METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The analysis on Woody Shaw's interpretation of selected jazz standards was done by asking the following questions:

1. What scales do the notes form?
2. What chords do the notes outline if one puts them together?
3. What alterations do the notes highlight?
4. Do the notes form a pattern?

It is important to realise that there is more than one way to analyse any given musical excerpt in jazz. If, for example, one looks at a II–V–I progression in C major that contains notes that are altered, one can either say that certain notes are altered, or that the musician uses the altered dominant scale, or perhaps that he uses a pentatonic scale that is not of the key of the moment. All three would be correct.

In the ten selected tunes, Woody Shaw often superimposes different tonalities over the existing chord changes. When this occurs, the clearest and most useful way for a student to understand the concept behind the improvisation is to look at the big picture. Thus, to describe a particular pentatonic over three bars is a much more logical way to see a particular situation than to analyse every single note in each bar.

This is probably the way that Woody Shaw himself would have seen a particular musical situation. An overview of the tunes analysed shows the student that Shaw uses tonalities superimposed on each other quite freely but also by intention at specific points in the form to obtain a specific musical effect. This is in opposition to for example the free improvisation of Ornette Coleman where the superimpositions might occur at any point with less intention.

Woody Shaw played outside the chord changes but in a clearly ordered and structured way. For example, he knew that to obtain the alterations over a C7 chord he wanted, he only had to play a specific pentatonic. For example F
sharp minor pentatonic would yield the following alterations; flat 9, natural 7, sharp 11. Different pentatonics would yield different alterations. Although it is impossible to say exactly how Woody Shaw himself conceived his playing style, there are clear patterns that enable one to see the structure underlying his playing. He was definitely a chord player.

Important to note is that the inflections such as half valve, smears, ghosted notes etc. that make up so much of jazz trumpet style have not been included. This thesis is concentrating on the harmonic aspects of the music.

In any event it is the author's strongly held belief that to copy the style of Woody Shaw's playing the student must obtain the original recording and learn to imitate by ear. There is no other way. Trying to read inflections off a written part is to try and put a classical frame of reference over Jazz music. It will not fit.
Backstairs Blues

Woody Shaw

\[ \text{C minor pentatonic} \]

\[ \text{Diatonic to key of C major} \]
C minor pentatonic

Flats from altered dominant scale.

C major pentatonic

Sequence from previous bar

G7 altered dominant
B is major 7 diatonic to home key of C.

G7#11 and V7 of C

Major 7 and G minor pentatonic

4 note pattern descending in major 3rds

Chromatic enclosure of G

Harmonic anticipation of G7.

G7 begins in bar 69.

G7 is part of the bebop dominant scale in G7

Bar 72: G7 throughout
Ds is chromatic passing tone.  
A½ is chromatic passing tone.

4 note pattern descending chromatically

D major pentatonic to B minor pentatonic

B major pentatonic.  F½, A½, and G½ are diatonic to actual chord changes but are passing tones in key of B.

Diatonic to C home key  
G diminished scale  
G7 altered
Backstairs blues is a blues in C for the trumpet. The blues scale is a device often used by jazz players in this situation. Look at the similarity between the blues scale and the pentatonic scale as used by Woody Shaw in bar 13.

By using the pentatonic scale of keys outside the key of the moment, Woody Shaw implies other key areas superimposed over the top of the original changes. For example, in bar 36, he uses a G minor pentatonic scale over a II - V progression, D minor - G7. Thus he implies a tonality of G minor. Using this pentatonic scale also gives the♯9 in G7 (♯5).
Gingerbread Boy

Selected Choruses

Fast blues

C7

E7

G7

C7

A7

C7

C blues scale

C minor pentatonic

C blues scale

C minor pentatonic

Major 3rd
D major pentatonic over C. D major continues over F.

G major pentatonic

G major pentatonic

D minor pentatonic

G minor pentatonic

E♭ natural minor

Chromatic

Diatonic to C home key

G chromatic passing tone
He plays off the minor 3rd and the major 3rd of the home key. This is a popular theme in Woody's playing. Also on 7 and 7.
Chromatic descending line

F# to A forms a chromatic enclosure approach to G.
Chet Baker lick in Bb minor
from his solo on Autumn Leaves.

Original key is G minor
See Chet Baker's solo on Autumn Leaves from
the 'She Was Too Good To Me' album, bar 1.
C to E chromatic enclosure of D
B minor pentatonic

Gi chromatic passing tone
B minor pentatonic

Diminished scale
G minor pentatonic

A♭ minor pentatonic
One of Woody Shaw's favourite devices in his improvisation is the use of polytonality. This can be seen in two ways. The first is to play another tonality over the existing one in a way that, on paper, would look obviously as though it implies a different key area. It is always different to the listener as opposed to the music reader as the listener can relate the various altered tones back to the original chord changes in some way or another. The listener hears the sounds together, and thus they make logical sense. To the uninitiated reader of the transcription, the note choices may appear strange at first. In essence, every note of the chromatic scale can be related back to the original chord changes in some form or another. Yesteryears "wrong notes" are the "hip" notes for the progressive musician today. In any event these techniques are not that new. Coltrane did it already, 40 years ago.

For example to see how the chromatic scale relates to the original C major scale, see below.

By playing foreign notes over the original chord changes in a very strong and obvious way, we can say that he is implying a different tonal area from the one originally stated by the chord changes. The listener however will hear all these sounds at once and thus assimilate them together as one sound. Since jazz is more about sound than what is written on paper, this makes sense.

Using pentatonics as a vehicle for implying polytonality is a technique shared by many saxophone players, notably those from the John Coltrane school of playing, such as Mike Brecker, Eric Dolphy, Jerry Bergonzi, Bob Berg and others. What makes Woody Shaw unusual is that there are not many trumpet players who use this technique. The trumpet, unlike the saxophone does not lend itself easily to lines that involve large skips and angular movement. For example one will not see many arpeggiated style lines in trumpet playing. The notes tend to be closer together. Woody Shaw was a major pioneer in this area.
To the listener, the notes that are outside of the original chord changes may appear as altered notes related to that key but to the performer and to the analyst, the pattern is quite clear. Woody Shaw uses D major as a key centre as specified particularly by the D major pentatonic scale and the D major triad. Thus in a simplistic way, one could say that the whole of the above example is in D major.
If I were a bell

Woody Shaw

Bar 9: The B♭ is a chromatic approach. Bebop cliche.

Bar 12 has an F♯ against a G♭ in the chord.

C7 sound over the E7 using the C7 bebop dominant scale.
Bar 17 begins using a motif from the dominant 7th bebop scale in C. Then over the 2nd half of the bar, he goes into A♭ major.

Bar 18 is in A♭ major pentatonic over the minor II - V in G.

Bar 19 uses notes from F♯ major over G major7.

C7 bebop cliche over A minor. Then the lick is transposed and inverted into A minor.

C major pentatonic
C major pentatonic over G7 gives 113.

Bar 42 bebop dominant scale. C# is a chromatic passing tone.

Repeated pattern ascending in thirds ------------------- Breaks pattern
If I were a bell

Detailed analysis

Woody Shaw

In this tune, the section that stands out is bars 5-8. Once again Woody Shaw uses pentatonic that take the tonal cent into areas not specified by the chord changes. Over the B7b5 he uses a D major pentatonic which has a b5 against the b5 specified in the chord changes. Over the E7b9, he uses a C minor pentatonic which gives a b13, b11, b9. Over the A7, he uses D# major pentatonic and continues in this tonality all the way through the A minor chord. The D7 then returns to diatonicism.
The Moontrane

Woody Shaw

E minor pentatonic

F# minor pentatonic

DELAYED

F major pentatonic

F# major pentatonic

E minor pentatonic

Chord progression moves upward. Woody moves downward harmonically.

F major bebop scale
C and B non chord notes

C\# anticipates harmony in the next bar.

B minor pentatonic

E major pentatonic

B major pentatonic

C major pentatonic

G major pentatonic

A major pentatonic

Harmony from previous bar

B\# minor pentatonic

G major pentatonic
G major pentatonic
Lydian

C# minor pentatonic

G major pentatonic

B minor pentatonic

D major

F# minor pentatonic

B minor key centre

F# minor pentatonic
One of the favourite devices used by Woody Shaw is the pentatonic scale. This is what gives his playing that angular effect. The pentatonic scale can be seen in 2 ways: either in its major or minor form. The C minor pentatonic scale is the same scale as the B major pentatonic. In the example below one can see clearly how he moves in and out of tonal areas using the pentatonic scales.

Bars 37-40:

He uses B minor pentatonic here.
This whole section from the C minor chord to the G minor is all B minor pentatonic. Over the C minor, this scale gives V7, V5 and over the G minor, it gives I6, I5.

The effect of moving in and out of these various pentatonics creates very different tonal centres even if these are not those specified by the chord changes.
Sandu

Woody Shaw

F minor pentatonic scale opening

F7   Bb7   F7   C7

1   2   3   4

Bb7   F7   A-7(b5)   C7(b9)

5   6   7   8

G-7   C7   A-7   C7

9   10   11   12

F minor pentatonic

F7   Bb7   F7   C7

13   14   15   16

Tritone substitution.
F7-7 - B7.

Bb7   Bb7   F7   A-7(b5)   C7(b9)

17   18   19   20

He often swaps between Major 7 and Dominant 7.
D♭ Chromatic passing tone
Suggests G7 chord.
B♭ minor  9  B major

B♭ implies diminished chord common in bar 5 of a blues.
A and C act as enclosure.

B♭ minor scale

B♭ chromatic passing tone  F7 key centre
B♭ minor pentatonic

G♭ passing tone.  D minor pentatonic
C minor pentatonic  A major pentatonic
Below are the last 3 bars of the final chorus on Sandu. Notice the angular lines created by the use of pentatonics. By merely glancing at the extract one can see that the notes are foreign to the key of the moment or the home key of F. Woody Shaw uses a B♭ minor pentatonic over the A minor to D7 progression.

Bars 34-36: B♭ minor pentatonic. C major pentatonic C minor pentatonic

By looking at all the flats that he plays over the A minor to D7 progression, one can see that he is obviously playing consistently and intentionally a half step away from the original changes, i.e. in B♭ minor over A minor.
Sippin' at Bells

Woody Shaw

Bar 6 anticipates the harmony of the next bar. Tonality of B minor superimposed over F7.

Bar 12 in A minor throughout. A♭ is a chromatic passing tone if one sees this bar as being in the superimposed key of A minor instead of changing to A♭7.

B♭ minor continues into the next bar.

Triplet is a bebop cliche chromatic approach to the A♭.

B minor pentatonic harmonic anticipation of the next bar.

D7 dominant bebop scale.

D# chromatic passing tone

D major over C7. Diatonic to home key.

A and C are non chord tones.
Chromatic passing tone. Chromatic non chord tone suggests A major.  

Diatonic chromatic passing tone, bebop cliche.  

Pattern  

Non chord tone 11

Chromatic approach tones Chromatic enclosure  

C7 over B minor
Harmonic anticipation

Chromatic approach triplet
bebop cliche

Major 7
Lydian

Harmonic anticipation
of A♭ minor

Pattern
G major
Compare these three excerpts. The first one is taken from Sippin' at Bells, bars 24-26. The second is from Gingerbread Boy at the beginning of the 7th chorus, and the third is from the opening of Solid, a blues. He uses exactly the same line. This is an often used Woody Shaw lick that is to be found on other recordings as well.

 Bars 24-26:

He uses exactly the same line over very different chord changes. The idea of playing off the flat 7 against the natural 7 is a recurring theme in his playing, as is the same concept used on flat 3 or major 3.
Solid

Woody Shaw

C7 dominant bebop scale

G altered dominant scale

G7 bebop scale
Same lick from bar 2 transposed

A minor pentatonic

Accented passing tone

C major
Bb major
F minor

G min - C7 bebop scale (same scale)

Gb7 and Bb non chor tones

C7 bebop scale
using a chromatic step after starting on the 9th.

B minor pentatonic
E and G in original tonality
A minor pentatonic

C minor pentatonic

C7 altered dominant scale

Pattern repeated
Solid
Detailed analysis

Woody Shaw

Bars 28 - 30

Bars 52 - 54

Compare these 2 examples taken from the same point in the tune in different choruses. Woody Shaw uses Ab minor pentatonic scale. This scale can also be described as B major pentatonic. It is exactly the same scale, just beginning on a different note. Thus he could be said to be playing a semitone away from the home key. Also of interest is where he does this in the tune. When there is a II-V progression seems to be a favourite point, such as this progression at the end of the first line of the blues. As you can see, he does the same thing each time he gets there.
Steve's Blues

Woody Shaw

Flats in altered dominant scale

C minor pentatonic

C minor pentatonic

G7 to G7 dominant bebop scale

Pattern ascending in major 3rds.
Pattern overrules diatonicism

Same pattern

Same pattern

C chromatic passing tone

A7 chromatic passing tone

G7 chromatic passing tone

C minor pentatonic
G\# triad over G7

G7 bebop scale

D\# minor - G\#. Tritone substitution.

G\# chromatic passing tone
C7 bebop scale

Pattern in 4ths overrules diatonicism

A-7

D7

G major

A major

G minor pentatonic
D\# major

Chromatic enclosure of D

Bb from G blues scale

A-7

D7

G major
G7 bebop scale

C7 anticipation of 7 in C

Db min - G7. Could be seen as tritone substitution or as altered dominant.

Db key centre

B7

A-7

Db key centre

A anticipation of G7 chord
Notice the common notes in these two areas of the tune, both taken from the II-V-I progression at the end of the 1st line of the blues. The 1st example is from the 3rd chorus, the other is from the 5th chorus.

Both the above excerpts are identical. This would lead the student to assume that this is something Woody Shaw has worked on. It is a II-V-I lick that he has obviously practiced.
There will never be another you

Woody Shaw

There will never be another you

Woody Shaw

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There will never be another y
B chromatic passing tone
Bebop minor scale

F major
E major--
G7 major
G minor
G7 major---
Tritone substitution

B to D forms an enclosure approach to the C.
F7 and G7 suggest tritone substitution. B7 - Bb.

Bb7 is an anticipation of the harmony in the next bar.

Tritone substitution.

F7 - F.
Chromatic approach

B♭ - A

Tritone substitution

B7 - B♭

F major

C♯ - F

C♯ - F

C♯
There will never be another you

Woody Shaw

Detailed analysis

Compare the similarities between these 2 excerpts. They are both taken from the last line of the tune. Looking at the big picture, one can see use of similar superimposed key areas in the same places, just by noticing the areas with plenty of sharps and those using flats. The lines are devised from patterns created from the pentatonic scale.

Below are some examples of how one can create such lines from the pentatonic scale:

All the above patterns are derived from the C minor pentatonic scale as seen in the first bar. There are many possibilities in creating varied patterns using pentatonics.
You stepped out of a dream

Woody Shaw

Bar 1 - 4 Lydian  E major  F major

Enclosure Chromatic approach to F

F major  F non chord tone

E minor harmony anticipated

Lydian  F major
Repeated pattern

G7 major

A major

£..7 A 7

OA7 £..7 A' £

£...

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I

41

42

A7

D7

D7 dominant

bebop scale

DELAYED

Chromatic enclosure

of Bb, Bbop cliche.
G chromatic passing tone

C minor pentatonic
D major
Minor bebop scale

Anticipation of the harmony

DELAYED
C major
C minor pentatonic
E major pentatonic

C major

Chromatic enclosure approach to A7

F minor
CONCLUSION

Note to the student:

It is hoped that this book has been in some way beneficial in developing your own playing. It cannot be stressed enough how important it is to avoid merely playing these transcriptions from the written page.

The order of approach should be as follows:
1. Obtain the original recording and spend a lot of time listening to it.
2. Learn to play it by ear, copying his style and feel (sense of swing and inflection)
3. Refer to the transcription only when you get into trouble. If you have to choose between the written notes and what you hear – trust your ear.
4. Find those lines on the recording that you relate to. Seek them in the transcription and learn them in all keys so that you can absorb some of these styles in your own playing.

I hope that these transcriptions and analyses help to unlock some of the secrets in Woody Shaw's playing.

David Lilley
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The Transcribed Solos were taken from the following recordings of Woody Shaw on compact disc:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Album</th>
<th>Catalogue Code</th>
<th>Recording Date</th>
<th>CD Release Date</th>
<th>Composer</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Backstairs Homecoming</td>
<td>CS 34650</td>
<td>11-12/12/76</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Dexter Gordon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gingerbread Boy</td>
<td>CS 34650</td>
<td>11-12/12/76</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>J. Heath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I were a bell</td>
<td>MCD 5338</td>
<td>24/6/87</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>F. Loesser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Moontrance</td>
<td>MCD 5472</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Woody Shaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandu</td>
<td>BST 84121 (Double Take)</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Clifford Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sippin' at Bells</td>
<td>I OR CD 7003-2</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Miles Davis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solid</td>
<td>MCD 5329</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Sonny Rollins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve's Blues</td>
<td>MCD 5338</td>
<td>24/6/87</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Steve Turre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There Will Never Be Another You</td>
<td>MCD 5329</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>M. Gordon &amp; H. Warren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You Stepped Out of a Dream</td>
<td>MCD 5329</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>N. Brown &amp; G. Kahn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>