

# SAXOPHONE

Universal Areas

**Goal: playing musically, regardless of style.**

General concepts but not necessarily absolutes

**Classical**

**Jazz**

## SOUND

- \* air support, overtone work, long tones
- \* drastically different otherwise
- \* different mouthpiece, reed and likely ligature set-up

## Tone

- \* strive for a pure, clear sound
- \* controlled, generally darker/warmer
- \* typically smooth/connected
- \* consistency throughout the full range
- \* emulates one of two, maybe three 'schools' their instrument follows (each 'school' based on a major pedagogue who has published method books and has a lineage of students)

- \* highly personal
- \* varied
- \* brighter
- \* breathiness
- \* sub-tone
- \* less attention to connecting sound
- \* typically imitates the sound of master players
- \* most master/virtuoso players have very individualized sound
- \* need a large sound in order to play over a rhythm section

## Intonation

- \* important for all
- \* not affiliated with a specific style but universal
- \* constant performance concern
- \* will use alternate fingerings to resolve intonation issues
- \* intervallic tuning especially in sax ensembles
- \* sometimes compromised due to attention to other areas

## Vibrato

- \* essential expressive tool
- \* more uniform, consistent
- \* like tone, emulates one of two, maybe three 'schools' their instrument follows (each 'school' based on a major pedagogue who has published method books and has a lineage of students)
- \* highly personal
- \* varied
- \* imitate master performers
- \* sometime avoided

## Dynamics

- \* important in both areas, but largely ignored in jazz
- \* controlled with attention to detail
- \* as required by piece
- \* need to play into and out of silence 'niente'
- \* personal
- \* tends to be louder
- \* typically smaller dynamic range
- \* often an overlooked element
- \* performers and composers rely more heavily on harmony, rhythm, and tempo to create interest and variation in the music
- \* most jazz tends to follow slow=softly, fast= loudly, especially in a combo setting

## TECHNIQUE

- \* extremely important in any genre
- \* constant, essential area of study

\* the study of etudes and pieces that push to the edge of ability and constantly force the learning of new techniques

\* some will study classical material and etudes, but most will focus on studying other players and what they develop or 'hear' themselves

## Articulation

- \* dictated by composer
- \* controlled \* consistent
- \* attention to detail
- \* variety of releases, how short/how long
- \* more reasons to have a greater variety of articulation options

- \* interpreted by the performer in regard to the style
- \* highly personal
- \* varied
- \* no standard but common practice is the norm
- \* primary legato
- \* less control
- \* tongue infrequently used
- \* consistent in a big band perspective as a section player
- \* connected to rhythmic pulse
- \* often articulations are omitted in written music and left for the performer to interpret
- \* individual will be consistent within their own playing but not between players

## Extended Techniques

- \* studied, altissimo, alternate sounds, harmonics

- \* as performance material requires
- \* contemporary material may contain, require extended techniques
- \* standardized extended techniques – circular breathing, slap and double tonguing, multi-phonics – require attention/practice
- \* will practice extended techniques whether current repertoire requires or not

- \* personal
- \* based upon individual skill
- \* rarely explicitly called for in a composition/arrangement
- \* some musicians may choose to implement it in their own works

## PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES

- \* solo performer/concertize
- \* quartet/sax ensemble
- \* Wind Ensemble/Symphonic & Concert Band
- \* Orchestral
- \* Contemporary groups

- \* required to blend with different instrumental combinations

- \* solo performer
- \* duo
- \* trio
- \* combo – quartet, quintet, etc
- \* jazz ensemble/big band
- \* commercial options

- \* able to adapt to different ensemble combinations

# REPERTOIRE

## ***Compositions/Arrangements***

\* primarily 20<sup>th</sup> century for both

- \* from established literature for the instrument
- \* varied \* the nature of the material performed
- \* few compositions by performers
- \* compositions are typically long
- \* performers often commission or request new works
- \* often experiential

- \* material from all idioms but rarely classical
- \* mainly from popular styles
- \* numerous compositions by performers
- \* improvisation is a primary component
- \* the music is ever evolving/changing due primarily, but not solely, to the element of improvisation
- \* compositions are typically short but extended through improvisation

## ***Transcriptions***

- \* typically pieces from earlier styles (baroque, romantic, etc) by significant composers
- \* used to understand and perform other styles

- \* major component of study
- \* individual does the transcription
- \* transcription is memorized
- \* for ear training
- \* learn the jazz language
- \* used to understand and absorb styles and performance techniques by major artists
- \* often used like an etude

## ***Scale, Chord, Patterns***

\* vital part of performance practice, essential for technique

- \* used to secure technique \* all keys
- \* for understanding harmony

- \* used to secure technique \* all keys
- \* provide basis for improvisation, harmonic understanding and memorization
- \* pattern (motif) study is essential to develop the jazz language
- \* patterns chosen and developed from compositions, transcriptions and other stylistic source material
- \* memorization is essential and required

## ***Memorization***

- \* not a major component of study
- \* frequently memorized scale and chord study
- \* concertos and like works memorized

- \* essential component of study
- \* scale, chord and pattern study memorized
- \* goal to memorize all performance material

## LISTENING

- \* the vast majority of all material and performances has been recorded and available
  - \* will listen to understand the context of the work
  - \* for study and appreciation of performances and performer
- \* will play along with recording so as to assimilate tone and articulation of the performer, study stylistic direction and to gather material for improvisation

## SELF-EXPRESSION

- \* through the material chosen to study and perform
  - \* individual tone quality
  - \* phrasing
- \* through dynamic adjustments
- \* improvisation
- \* through tone adjustments

## *Improvisation*

- \* not a major factor in the vast majority of material
- \* possibly included in more progressive, contemporary pieces
- \* could be part of a cadenza
- \* the essential element for the jazz saxophonist

## *Composition*

by the performer

- \* not typically an area of interest
- \* often an area of interest

## PRACTICE

- \* essential
- \* varied by individual
- \* more targeted for specific works, phrases
- \* systematic approaches
- \* less systematic
- \* more focused toward improvisation and jazz vocabulary than learning specific compositions

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**Michael Tracy**

**[www.michaeltracy.com](http://www.michaeltracy.com)**

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