North American Saxophone Alliance

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in this issue...

Fudamental Principles of Articulation

Member Update

Regional Update

Saxophone Workshops Update



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Articulation is one of the most crucial elements of a meaningful and convincing performance. Jean-Marie Londeix writes: "For the instrumentalist, articulation is the manner in which sounds are formed and separated; it is the way in which pitch, duration, dynamics, attacks, accents, and tonal color are mixed expressively. Articulation must be mastered if the phrasing is to be played with finesse, emotion, vigor, and authenticity, and so that the artist and his audience may aspire to enjoy to the utmost the music being played." A fine articulation technique is based on proper tongue position, developing a consistent point of contact between the tongue and reed, an efficient tongue motion, maintaining a proper embouchure, and a substantial air stream. Some players acquire these skills easily and quickly develop a fluent articulation technique, while others struggle and are prone to develop bad habits that are difficult to correct. Because we cannot observe the workings of the tongue inside the oral cavity, articulation can be an abstract concept to teach. Michael Hester states: "It is essential that a clear mental picture of articulation be developed by each wind musician. Learning to see where sight is not possible is the beginning of a concept,

and a clear concept of what occurs in the mouth is central to the creation of a consistent articulation technique." ²

The basics of articulation

The tongue regulates the flow of the player's air stream into the saxophone, releasing air into the instrument and allowing the reed to vibrate (starting the sound) when it pulls away from the reed and interrupting the airflow and the reed's vibration (stopping the sound) when it returns to the reed. In order to achieve a fluent articulation technique, the tongue must work in the most efficient way possible. This efficiency is dependent on several factors. The place where the tongue makes contact with the reed must remain the same in slow, moderate, and fast articulations. and in all registers of the instrument. Each saxophonist has a unique tongue size, and must determine a position where the tongue can easily and comfortably make contact with the reed. Regardless of individual tongue position, the following points apply to fundamentally correct articulation technique. The motion of the tongue in leaving and returning to the reed should be as minimal as possible in the same way that an accomplished violinist uses very little of the bow when playing a rapid staccato passage. The shape of the oral cavity and

(Continued on next page)



Fundamental Principles (cont'd)

throat should be open and relaxed as if playing a long tone exercise, and the embouchure must remain properly formed: lips in a firm seal around the mouthpiece, top front teeth in secure contact with the mouthpiece approximately one half inch from the tip, chin firm and flat, cheeks not puffed, and jaws relaxed. Excessive tension in the tongue, oral chamber, or throat will impede the development of accuracy and velocity.

The exercises shown in Example 1 can help to establish optimal tongue position and a consistent point of contact with the reed, develop proper tongue motion, and demonstrate the importance of a substantial air stream in articulation. Prior to beginning, the player should take a full breath, form the embouchure, place the tongue against the reed, and build up air pressure behind the tongue. Remove the tongue from the reed at "A" (starting the sound), and return the tongue to the reed at "B" (stopping the sound). The player must keep the embouchure formed and maintain air pressure behind the tongue during the "B" sections

These exercises should be played at a variety of metronome settings and in all registers, and can be quite effective in improving response in the low register of the saxophone. The player should be careful to use as little tongue pressure as possible to stop the air stream and the reed's vibration. An overly hard tongue stroke will result in the development of an unnecessarily heavy articulation technique, which will detract from the player's overall fluency. Students should experiment with a variety of articulation syllables ("tah", "dah", "too", "that", "daht", "doo", etc.) to determine which is the most effective for the individual player. Familiarity with a variety of syllables will also help develop the broad vocabulary of articulation styles required in more advanced music. Hello! Mr. Sax contains a comprehensive discussion of the wide variety of articulations possible on the saxophone (including notation, articulation names, visual symbols of the various articulations, and the phonetic equivalent of each articulation) that should be studied by every serious saxophonist.³ Finally, a consistent and substantial air stream will ensure good response from note to note and the maintenance of a

beautiful, characteristic sound. Teal writes: "A good staccato must have the best possible tonal quality at all times-a point which is often overlooked when notes of short duration are employed. A student who may play a legato phrase beautifully sometimes abandons all thought of tone quality when tonguing the same phrase, despite the fact that staccato notes need the *maximum* resonance to respond quickly."

Further Practice

The developing saxophonist should practice repeated note exercises to reinforce proper articulation technique as well as scales, arpeggios, and other moving note exercises to coordinate the fingers and tongue. Common rhythm patterns for repeated note exercises are shown in Example 2. An exercise that can be used to develop control and velocity is shown in Example 3, and frequently used patterns for moving note exercises are shown in Example 4.

(See Diagrams on Page 3)

Repeated note exercises should be played in all registers, and articulated scales and arpeggios should be played through the full range of the saxophone to develop consistency. Slow, careful practice is important for the development of good technique and finger/tongue coordination, and practice with the metronome is essential. Additionally, fine exercises for the development of articulation technique can be found in books such as Larry Teal's The Saxophonist's Workbook and Daily Studies for the Improvement of Saxophone Technique, Jean-Marie Londeix's Le Detache, and Pasquale Bona's Rhythmical Articulation.







Beyond Technique: Style and Variety

Accuracy and velocity are important components of any player's articulation technique, but they are only means to an end. The real purpose of articulation is to enable the performer to realize the composer's intentions as closely as possible. Londeix writes: "Articulation may be compared with the diction of an actor or singer. The intelligibility of the expressive content depends upon the precision and the 'nature' of the articulation: the successful interpretation of the piece depends upon its clarity and correctness." 5 It is of the utmost importance that the saxophonist acquires a thorough understanding of the articulation styles of various periods and composers in addition to mastering the physical technique of articulation. Careful listening to great instrumental artists and singers can be helpful in developing an astute sense of articulation style, and playing chamber music, where a higher sensitivity to articulation is generally required than in large ensemble music, provides an excellent means to develop and use a large vocabulary of articulations.

- 1 Londeix, Jean-Marie, Hello! Mr. Sax (Paris, Alphonse Leduc, 1989), 82
- 2 Hester, Michael Eric, Saxophone Master Classes, Second Edition (Tuscon, AZ: Smooth Stone Productions, Inc., 2003), 37
- 3 Londeix, Jean-Marie, Hello! Mr. Sax (Paris, Alphonse Leduc, 1989), 80-111
- 4 Teal, Larry, The Art of Saxophone Playing (Seacaucus, NJ: Summy-Birchard, Inc., 1963), 82
- 5 Londeix, Jean-Marie, Hello! Mr. Sax (Paris, Alphonse Leduc, 1989), 82

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Member Update

The West Point Saxophone Ouartet welcomed its newest member, Staff Sergeant James McCain in November 2005. SSG McCain came to the United States Military Academy Band from the University of Michigan where he completed a Masters Degree in performance, studying with Don Sinta. He also holds a Bachelors Degree in performance from the Peabody Conservatory, where he studied with Gary Louie. The West Point Saxophone Quartet, Sergeant First Class Wayne Tice and Staff Sergeants Brian Broelmann, James McCain and Chris Rettie, debuted their most recent incarnation at the 2006 NASA Biennial Conference at the University of Iowa.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln saxophone ensemble has been invited to perform at this year Music Educators National Conference in Salt Lake City, UT and the meeting of the International Society for Music Education (ISME) in Kuala Lumpur, Malysia. The ensemble program will include premiers of works and arrangements by Randall Snyder, Percy Grainger and J.S. Bach.

Dr. Paul Haar recently presented a featured saxophone clinic at the 59th Annual Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic, Chicago, IL. Dr. Haar is also in the process of recording a featured CD of jazz influenced works for saxophone that will be available on Centaur Recordings. This recording will feature works by Bozza, Wilder, Woods, Nelson and Latief.



UNL Saxophone Ensemble

Call for Submissions for the UNL Chamber Music Institute. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln School of Music is now accepting submissions for saxophone quartets to participate in their annual Chamber Music Institute. This institute gives chamber groups the opportunity to work with renowned UNL faculty as well as our featured artists in residence, The Chiara String Quartet, in performance and entrepreneurship opportunities. One saxophone quartet will be chose to attend the free event in which they will improve their performance skills as well as build their knowledge of promoting their ensemble by working with the University of Nebraska's acclaimed Center for Arts Entrepreneurship.

It is free! All invitees will receive full-pay fellowships. All students invited by audition to the Chamber Music Institute will receive a full-pay scholarship to attend, including registration, double-occupancy campus residence housing, and meals. Transportation to Lincoln and the UNL campus is not included. In addition, CMI fellows will receive a pass at no charge to all concerts and activities of the nationally celebrated Meadowlark Music Festival, which

runs concurrently with the Chamber Music Institute.

Please log onto www.unl.edu/music for more information, eligibility, instrumentation, and auditions. You may also contact Dr. Paul Haar at phaar2@unl.edu

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In February, **Taimur Sullivan** performed the premiere of Keith Moore's concerto "Radial" with the Columbia Sinfonietta at Merkin Hall in New York, and was a guest artist at the University of Minnesota's Sparks Festival. From March 22-26 he will perform Mihaud's "La Création du Monde" with the Mark Morris Dance Company at the Brooklyn Academy of Music.

On February 9th, the PRISM Quartet joined the Brentano String Quartet and the new music ensemble Mosiac in recital at Carnegie Hall, in a concert dedicated to the music of Steven Mackey. The Quartet will present Salvatore Sciarrino's eveninglength "Pagine" and "Canzonierre da Scarlatti" on March 17 in New York, and March 19 in Philadelphia.



The Crosstown Trio, **Jackie Lamar**, saxophone, Karen Griebling, viola, and John Krebs, piano, announce their spring tour schedule.
They will have performances on March 8 at Arkansas State University in Jonesboro, March 14 at the University of Central Arkansas in Conway, March 20 at Hendrix College in Conway, and March 26 at the University of Texas in Austin. Jackie Lamar is Professor of Saxophone at the University of Central Arkansas.

University of Wyoming saxophone student **Amy Adams** won the Northwest Regional MTNA Young Artist Competition in January and will compete in the National Competition in March in Austin, Texas. Amy is a student of **Dr. Scott Turpen**.

Admiral/Londeix/Street 2006 TOUR

Submitted by William Street

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We are currently organizing our fifth (an almost certainly our last) tour of the **Admiral/Londeix/Street trio** of activities for late September 2006. I am sending the information hoping that your school (or a consortium of schools with yours) might be interested in our visit to your campus. The description of events is below and it will take place during the September 15 - October 4, 2006 period.

Scheduling depends quite a bit on geography and transportation. We generally arrive at a venue present a 90 minute lecture in French and English on an educational/artistic subject related to saxophone history and performance, present a 90 minute master class with the students presented by the organizers, have a rehearsal in the hall and present a full recital of music for saxophone and piano. The list of lecture topics is not

yet fixed, but there are samples of our topics below. As well we try to present some new and some traditional music in the concert. This year we have commissioned a number of new pieces to take on tour and rotate depending upon the venue. The cost of the events (3 people for a very full day of musical activities) is \$1,950 US, plus 2 hotel rooms (in home OK), and meals while we are with you. All other expenses including transportation is included in the cost. There is also the possibility that some money will be available through artist support grants from Selmer US, by application at least 30 days in advance of the educational event. I hope that the events can fit into your schedule and budget. Please let me know if I can provide any further details. Many schools have incorporated their French departments as co-sponsors because of the French language component of our presentations. Don't worry EVERYTHING is translated, too!

From September16 – October 4, 2006 Saxophonist Jean-Marie Londeix, pianist Roger Admiral and I will be making a lecture/master class/ concert tour of the Canada and the United States that will be of interest to saxophonists/music students and French language students. The format will include a lecture (in French/ translated into English) on a number of topics related to French music and the saxophone, followed by a master class with Professors Londeix and Street and a recital presented by pianist Roger Admiral and saxophonist William Street. We have toured in this format for several years and have had extremely exciting and successful full days of events at each venue. Some financial support is available upon special request forms from the educational sponsorship of Selmer US. SAMPLE lecture topics offered on past tours:

- Music of Pierre-Philippe BAUZIN
- Music for or OF saxophone
- Today's saxophonist
- Christian LAUBA. His work and his place in today's music
- The saxophone in the various musical streams
- Claude DEBUSSY and the Rapsodie with saxophone
- Jacques IBERT, Alfred DESENCLOS
- Edison DENISOV and his followers

NASA Call for Submissions

The Saxophone Symposium accepts submissions in the areas of saxophone history, literature and repertoire, pedagogy, jazz studies, and interdisciplinary areas involving the saxophone. Reviews of books, music, compact disks, films, pedagogical materials, and works in alternative media pertaining to the saxophone are also encouraged.

Additional information is available at the website: http://www.saxalliance.org/ submitarticles.html

Although submissions are accepted throughout the year, the priority deadline for the 2006 issue is June 1, 2006. Manuscript submissions and correspondence should be addressed to:

Stacy Maugans

Editor, The Saxophone Symposium Center for the Arts Valparaiso University Valparaiso, IN 46383-6493 Stacy.Maugans@valpo.edu <mailto:Stacy.Maugans@valpo.edu>

Materials for review may be sent to:

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North American Saxophone Alliance presents

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For information on NASA publications, visit http://www.saxalliance.org

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Regional Update

NASA is pleased to make an early announcement of the Region 2 Conference to be held on October 27 and 28, 2006 at the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley. The conference host will be Andrew Dahlke. Mark your calendars and there will more information on this in the future.

Saxophone **Workshops** Update

THE UNIVERSITY OF **GEORGIA** SAXOPHONE PERFORMANCE WORKSHOP - Athens, Georgia – June 18-23, 2006

Faculty:

Dr. Kenneth M. Fischer

Workshop Director Professor of Saxophone The University of Georgia

Dr. J. Scott Turpen

Professor of Saxophone The University of Wyoming

Dr. John Bleuel

Professor of Saxophone The University of West Georgia

The UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA SAXOPHONE PERFORMANCE WORKSHOP is a unique and intensive six day musical experience, offering students of all ages the opportunity to experience the highest level of musical growth on the saxophone. Held on the beautiful campus of The University of Georgia in the Hugh Hodgson School of Music, students will study the saxophone in all styles of music, classical through jazz. Each student will receive private instruction from the internationally acclaimed faculty. In addition, participants will have the opportunity to perform as a soloist, in quartets, and in a large saxophone orchestra, involving sopranino, soprano, alto, tenor, baritone and bass saxophones. All students will gain performing experience on each of the saxophones. Workshop participants



will end the week with a public performance held in the renowned Ramsey Concert Hall. All workshop activities will take place in The University of Georgia's State-Of-The-Art Facilities in Athens, Georgia. The UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA SAXOPHONE PERFORMANCE WORKSHOP is designed for all levels of saxophone performers. Lodging is available in the dormitories of The University of Georgia. For further information and application materials contact Dr. Kenneth Fischer at: kfischer@uga.edu

Kenneth Fischer to Present a Three-week Intensive Saxophone Program in Alessandria, Italy

The Hugh Hodgson School of Music of the University of Georgia in conjunction with the Alessandria Conservatory of Music, Alessandria, Italy will host **Dr. Kenneth Fischer** from May 15 - June 4, 2006 in a three-week Saxophone Workshop at the Alessandria Conservatory of Music. This workshop presents saxophonists with a unique opportunity for intensive study and performance in the culturally rich surroundings of Italy. The program's three week curriculum includes daily lessons with both Dr. Kenneth Fischer of The University of Georgia and Claudio Lugo of the Conservatory in Alessandria, as well as chamber music study, weekly performances, and the opportunity to study Italian. Nestled among Milan, Torino, and Genova in the heart of the Piemonte region, Alessandria is within reach of three of Italy's most exciting cities, the foothills of the Alps, the sparkling waters of Lake Como, and the beaches of Liguria. Despite these many attractions, the relaxed setting of Alessandria itself provides the ideal environment for intensive saxophone

study. Since all student needs are within walking distance, individuals are left with plenty of time for both studying the saxophone and absorbing Italian culture. Frequent excursions to museums, opera houses, and historical sites are also included in the program. For further information and application procedures please see:

www.uga.edu/musicabroad<u>or</u> contact Ms. Tina Caterino, Program Assistant (706)254-5736 or caterino@uga.edu

Central Florida SaxFest

The 7th Annual Central Florida SaxFest will take place on Saturday, March 25 at the University of Central Florida. This year's featured guest is Grammy Award winning saxophonist Branford Marsalis. Also appearing will be George Wolfe, Professor of Saxophone at Ball State University and mouthpiece craftsman Peter Ponzol. For more information about this event, please visit the UCF Saxophone website at: www.cas.ucf.edu/music/sax

The Eastern Music Festival announces the addition of a new saxophoneprogram as part of its 45th season. The two week chamber music program for young artists aged 14-20 will be led by saxophonists **Steven Stusek** and Susan Fancher. The program is scheduled for July 24-August 9. For more details please visit the EMF home-page at http://www.easternmusicfestival.org/sax.htm

Rousseau to be Guest Artist at Eighth Annual Ancia Summer Saxophone Workshop.



2005 Ancia Participants

Individuals as well as existing quartets are invited to join the Ancia Saxophone Quartet, one of the Midwest's premiere saxophone quartets, for a jam-packed week of chamber music. Dr. Eugene Rousseau will be the guest artist at this year's Workshop.

This workshop for middle school through adult saxophonists is offered

June 11 - 16 at St. Olaf College in Northfield, MN. Participants will be placed in a quartet for coachings, masterclasses and performances. Registration deadline is April 1.

Visit our website for more information (www.anciaquartet.com) or contact us at workshop@anciaquartet.com



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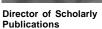
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