



update

North American Saxophone Alliance

January/February 2006

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Michigan State Hosts Delangle and Alumni at Saxophone Summit

The Michigan State University School of Music and Professor of Saxophone, Joseph Lulloff, hosted the 2005 Saxophone Summit October 23rd through the 25th. This year's Summit featured internationally acclaimed French saxophonist and professor of saxophone at the Paris Conservatory, Claude Delangle, as well as Odile Catelin-Delangle, and MSU Alumni Saxophonists: Griffin Campbell, Eric Lau, John Nichol, Joseph Lulloff, and The Great Lakes Saxophone Quartet, featuring Joseph Lulloff, Donell Snyder, Paul Forsyth, and Eric Lau. The schedule of events began with an Opening Recital by the Lulloff-Okada Duo with Joseph Lulloff, saxophone, and Jun Okada, piano, performing Sonata in G minor BWV 1020 by J.S. Bach, Rapsodie by Claude Debussy, Flow by Murray Gross, Two Preludes by Dorothy Chang, and a World Premiere of Night Songs and Flights of Fancy by Charles Ruggiero. The concert on the second night of the Summit was an MSU Alumni Recital featuring Eric Lau performing Four Impromptus by Paul Cooper, Griffin Campbell performing Sonata by William Albright, the Eclectic Trio with Joanna White, flute, Kennen White, clarinet, and John Nichol, saxophone, performing American Counterpoint by David Gillingham and Eclectic Trio by

Catherine McMichael, and the Great Lakes Saxophone Quartet performing Three Blues by Charles Ruggiero.

The Summit also featured a total of 8 hours of master-classes with Claude Delangle, Eric Lau, Griffin Campbell, and John Nichol, with performances by students from Bowling Green State University, Central Michigan University, Michigan State University, the University of Michigan, and a high school student



Professor Delangle works with MSU graduate student Paul Nolen on Luciano Berio's Sequenza VIIb

from the studios of Brent Mondoskin and Joseph Lulloff. The Summit concluded with a Final Recital featuring Claude and Odile Delangle performing Scaramouche by Darius

(Continued on next page)



Saxophone Summit *(cont'd)*

Milhaud, *Airs Autour du Tango* by Gustavo Beytelmann, *Fantasia* by Heiter Villa-Lobos, *Fantasia* by Ronaldo Miranda, *Vals Venezolano*, *Contradanza* by Paquito D'Rivera, and *Tango Etudes* by Astor Piazzola. The Summit was very successful in attracting saxophonists and non-saxophonists alike to Michigan State to enjoy a weekend of wonderful music making. The 2005 Saxophone Summit was generously supported by Vandoren, Inc., Dansr, Inc., the MSU School of Music, Meridian Winds, and the Viridian Quartet. Plans are underway for the 2006 Saxophone Summit to be held next November on Campus



The Viridian Saxophone Quartet from Michigan State University and Professor Delange in rehearsal.



Call for Conference Hosts 2007 Regional Conferences 2008 Biennial Conference

Please contact your Regional Director or a member of the NASA Executive Committee if you, or someone you know might be interested in hosting a conference.

President's Message



I hope this issue of the NASA Update finds you well at the New Year. Scott Turpen has done a wonderful job soliciting content for this publication. Thanks, Scott, for making this publication more valuable, and important part of our NASA community.

It's almost here! Be sure to reserve your hotel room for the Biennial Conference in Iowa. The conference web site has all the information you need to plan your visit to Iowa City. You may also view the conference program online. <http://www.uiowa.edu/~nasa2006/>

As we eagerly anticipate the upcoming Biennial Conference, it is time to begin preparations for Regional Conferences in 2007 and the next Biennial Conference in 2008. If

you would be interested in hosting any of these events, or if you know of someone who might, please contact a member of the NASA Executive Committee.

As always, the NASA Executive Committee is interested in hearing from members with comments and suggestions on any aspect of the Alliance's activity.

We'll see you in Iowa!

Jonathan Helton, President
jhelton@ufl.edu

A Short Lecture on Vibrato

John Sampen – Distinguished Artist Professor, Bowling Green State University

For the saxophonist, the concept of vibrato has become a personal trademark that provokes great debate and endless conversation. Certainly conventions are constantly changing, along with society's visions of beauty and taste. Perhaps we can agree, however, with Dr. Frederick Hemke who asserts that "vibrato on the saxophone cannot be thought of as an embellishment superimposed on the tone. When vibrato is to be used, it must be considered inseparable from the total sound." (Hemke 7)

The actual history of vibrato is well beyond the scope of this short article but Jean-Marie Londeix observes that "vibrato had been used sparingly by wind instrumentalists until the beginning of the twentieth century..." (Londeix 64). By the mid 20th century, Marcel Mule had helped popularize his wide and distinctive vibrato, a "fashion" which is largely gone today; one may observe the current trend towards minimal or even *senza vibrato* as pioneered by some French saxophonists of the late 20th century. Londeix agrees that "since about 1970, there has been a noticeable diminution [sic in] the use of vibrato in serious music, as well as in jazz." (Londex 64).



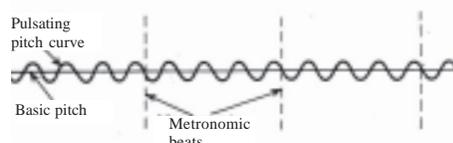
Concerning vibrato production, the noted American pedagogue Larry Teal describes four distinctive types:

- a) Jaw – "the lips...become the recipient of changing pressures when the jaw moves"
- b) Lip – "moving the lips in something like a 'wa-wa-wa—motion'"
- c) Throat – "tensing the throat muscles, and results in a 'quiver'"
- d) Diaphragm – "...predominantly an intensity vibrato...induced by a changing of the rate of air pressure" (Teal 55-56)

The throat vibrato is rarely favored by saxophonists. Diaphragmatic vibrato is often used for flute, oboe, bassoon and sometimes clarinet. Saxophonists seem to prefer some variety of jaw and/or lip vibrato (also labeled "pitch changing" or "frequency modulating" vibrato). Dr. Steven Mauk writes that "saxophonists use a 'pitch-change' vibrato created by slight up-and-down motion of the jaw. It is called jaw vibrato..." (Mauk 39). Dr. Hemke agrees that the vibrato best meeting "... the requirements of the saxophonist is the frequency modulating vibrato." (Hemke 7).

Assuming that most saxophonists employ lip and/or jaw motion, it is important to consider the vibrato's pitch change in relation to the pitch center. Larry Teal diagrams the pitch as a horizontal line around which the vibrato makes equidistant loops. (Teal 54).

Example #1



However, it should be noted that most saxophonists of the 21st century play "at the top" of their pitch. In other words, when a *senza vibrato* note is produced, there is very little room to raise the sound above the pitch. Conversely, there is plenty of room below the pitch. At least in our current era of musical practice, it is accurate to suggest that "...the tone begins on pitch, moves slightly flat, and then returns." (Mauk 39). Dr. Hemke elaborates by saying that "if diaphragmed, the saxophone frequency vibrato would take the shape of a uniform undulation. The undulation will dip from the actual pitch by .05-.15 of a semitone and then return to pitch." (Hemke 8).

In learning the vibrato technique, one may consider the production of either curving undulations (Example 2) or small loops in the tonal pitch (Example 3). This author has found the looping technique conceptually more successful in controlling and maintaining the tonal center.

(Example 2)



(Example 3)



One common vibrato problem involves tongue movement in conjunction with vibrato. There is no logical reason to involve the tongue in the vibrato process; indeed additional tongue movement may diminish the tone quality. One may conduct an analysis of tongue activity in the vibrato by comparing the verbal production of "WaaWaaWaa" vs. "YaYaYa". With the "YaYaYa"



Vibrato (*cont'd*)

production, the tongue movement may be highly active.

In addition, check for throat constriction and high/low tongue position. A high tongue may cause difficulty in the vibrato production. Also consider the embouchure pressure by playing the mouthpiece alone. Most teachers prefer blowing a concert A or concert Bb on the alto saxophone mouthpiece. A higher pitch center may constrict vibrato production. Finally, analyze the chin position (non-bunched) and the actual lip/jaw movement (up and down, not forward and back).

Below are three typical “problem” vibratos. The first (Example 4) involves ending the undulations on a downswing, thus creating the impression of a flat intonation. This usually occurs prior to a rest or breath. The second (Example 5) demonstrates a late-starting vibrato. While this technique may occasionally be desired for musical effect, its use with younger saxophonist more likely represents a bad habit and/or a lack of listening skills. The third instance (Example 6) diagrams the obvious problem of unequal pitch undulations.

(Example 4)



(Example 5)



(Example 6)



There are many authors who provide exercises for the development of vibrato control and speed (e.g., books by Larry Teal, Eugene Rousseau and Steven Mauk), so we have no great need here for such

discussion. Most teachers recommend the use of metronome practice while still realizing the ultimate goal of vibrato production that is not measured or coupled with the performance tempos or rhythms. Having said this, the speed and width of the vibrato will most certainly vary with the style and tempi of the musical selection.

Finally, it is absolutely permissible and often desirable to choose *senza vibrato* as a special color or musical effect as long as the performer considers all options and makes intelligent choices. There is a tendency for students to automatically play contemporary music without vibrato, often creating a tonal effect that is bland, cold and colorless. Remember that a tasteful vibrato can also add great loveliness and warmth to our beautiful instrument and to the exciting new literature of the 21st century.

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ATTENTION NASA MEMBERS

There is a special start time for the NASA Biennial Conference at the University of Iowa. Professional and student recitals as well as a lecture will be at 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 15.

In addition, Special Guest Frederick Hemke will present a recital with organ at 4:00 p.m. on February 15th. Please plan to arrive early!

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Member Update

Saxophonist **Cory Barnfield** made the semi-final round of the Concert Artist Guild competition in New York City this March.

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EIGHTH ANNUAL SUMMER SAXOPHONE WORKSHOP WITH THE ANCIA QUARTET. 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. 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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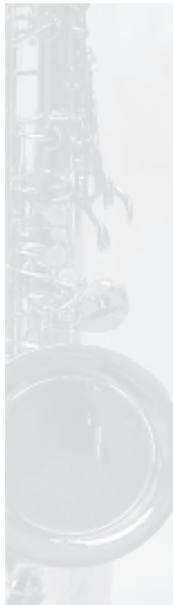
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