

The Saxophone: *Beyond the Basics*

CPE 1-16-221 (1.0 Hour) | Division: B

Thursday, February 11th, 2016

4:00 – 5:00 p.m. | Room CC 221

Clinician: Neil Dusseault, Private Music Instructor

Hand-out: www.neilsite.net/tmea

Survey:

- How many of you are saxophonists (as your principal instrument)?
- How many of you currently teach saxophonist(s)?
- How many of you are private music instructors?

Articulating Rhythms: Kodály Method

- Please refer to my web site for this hand-out:
- www.neilsite.net/tmea
- (It is a .pdf)
- This chart is NOT exhaustive of all rhythms; however, it does accomplish two goals with one task:
- Using this method, you are articulating rhythms (as you should be) for specific durations—therefore, you do NOT have to count as you will NEVER be off the beat!
- ‘Sizzle’ rhythms before playing: If you cannot chant out the rhythms while singing their pitches, then you will not be able to play them...Remember: If you can't say it, then you can't play it!” (Better to do this with a metronome)

Daily Articulation Exercises:

- Please refer to my web site to download the .pdf (Vol. I & Vol. II)
- www.neilsite.net/tmea
- Each practice routine should include some kind of articulation exercise, thereby working out the tongue (which is a muscle) in order to play various rhythmic durations with ease.
- Remember to play with a metronome & tap your foot!

Major Scales and Arpeggios:

- Once your student(s) are playing songs other than in Concert B-flat Major, then they should play the Major Scale w/Arpeggios in the key of the song just prior to playing the song...
- Using the picture of the Circle of 5ths really helps students to identify what key a song is in by looking at its key signature.
- More advanced students should practice ALL 12 Major scales & arpeggios on a regular basis to be comfortable in any key.
- Remember to visit my web site for the .pdf of this hand-out:
- www.neilsite.net/tmea

Chromatic Scale:

- Once the student can 'comfortably' play the written range of the saxophone (from low B-flat to high-F) then this should also be practiced daily, so as to maintain embouchure muscles, etc.
- I try to ascend the entire range in one breath, then descend in another breath, which exercises control of the embouchure in multiple registers.
- This exercise can also be found on my web site at:
- www.neilsite.net/tmea

Improving Intonation with Vibrato:

- Practice exercises with long tones...
- For example: Your warm-up can begin with long tones using vibrato and a tuner (this is NOT an advanced technique!)
- Don't forget—long tones can be anything longer than a half note in a slow tempo or anything longer than a whole note in a fast tempo.
- Practice crescendo & diminuendo regularly for optimal sound!
- Vibrato is done from either the diaphragm or the lip...
- Record yourself for evaluation of your sound...
- Each beat should be pulsed out in Tri-pl-ets.

Ensemble Sound: Balance Vs. Blend

- The best way to improve sight-reading skills is to practice often with a chamber group...
- Schedule sectionals on a regular basis and make sure each student has a different part...
- The goal is to be able to 'balance' your own part while 'blending' in to the tempo of the ensemble!

Circular Breathing Technique:

- Read *Circular Breathing for the Wind Performer* by Trent P. Kynaston (1978)
- Practice with a cup of water in front of mirror & sink, 'spitting' the water into a direct stream over a few seconds while breathing through your nose...eventually replace water with air & add mouthpiece & neck!
- Note: You are NOT exhaling when taking a circular breath!
- Most advantageous in sight-reading contexts or any music that has little to no rests to take a breath.
- Use breath marks for a better approach to performing!

Circular Breathing (cont.)

- Check out my web site for a copy of *Daily Exercise No. 1* (by H. Klosé), available as a .pdf
- www.neilsite.net/tmea
- This is a good example of a piece that could be used to employ a circular breath or two in the middle and towards the end...



Altissimo Register:

- Read *Ted Nash's Studies in High Harmonics for Tenor and Alto Saxophone* (1985).
- Every professional saxophonist uses the altissimo register, therefore, advance your students by encouraging them to learn notes beyond high-F!
- Daily exercises for practice should include scales, including the chromatic scale (ascending & descending) & pitch identification
- Great for pep and jazz band, too! (Alto & Tenor Sax. Only)

Repertoire Selection:

- Although they all claim to be ‘comprehensive’, no one set of Book 1 (Beginner), Book 2 (Intermediate), or Book 3 (Advanced) will give you everything you need.
- Many of the songs tend to be same, just arranged differently.
- Therefore, I custom-create all warm-up/cool-down exercises and select songs from each book that teach a new concept AND is either fun and/or familiar...I use ***Finale!*** and once a file has been created with several songs for trumpet from book 1, I can easily transpose that to saxophone, flute, etc. and my students never need to actually buy these books.

Recommended Methods Books:

- Ed Sueta Band Method (by Macie Publishers)
- Premier Performance (by Macie Publishers)
- Standard of Excellence (by Bruce Pearson, Neil A. Kjos Publishers)
- Tradition of Excellence (by Bruce Pearson, Neil A. Kjos Publishers)
- Essential Elements (by John Higgins, Tim Lautzenheiser, et.)
- Use accompaniment CD/play-along (audio) files!

Repertoire Selection & Retention Strategies:

- Your average sax player in band (or taking lessons) is most likely not in this gig to play UIL contest music or pretty much anything from the Prescribed Music List...
- Solution: Remember to ASK what they hope to get out of this! Perhaps allow solos etc. during concerts or arrange pop songs, or transpose the trumpet parts (often the melody) for sax!

Questions?

