

FLX MY SAXOPHONES!!!: Tips for improving your saxophone section.

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I. Defining the Role and Purpose of the Section

A. Only section that uses the entire "family"

*B. Physical set up of the section (see **figure 1**)*

*1. **Balance:** Tenor 1, Alto 2, Alto 1, Tenor 2, Baritone*

*2. **Disaster:** Alto 1, Alto 2, Tenor 1, Tenor 2, Baritone*

*C. Creating Listening Lanes (see **figure 2**)*

D. Assigning Roles

*1. **Lead Alto:** Principal Voice. Reference for volume, pitch and style.*

Generally will double upper trumpet, trombone or 1st tenor saxophone

*2. **2nd Alto:** A harmony voice for lead alto, occasionally playing in unison with lead alto. A bridge between upper and mid/low tessaturas. Generally doubles inner trumpet or trombone.*

*3. **1st Tenor:** Generally considered "2nd in command" in the section. This voice will serve a dual role of playing melody lines and serving as a harmony voice for either lead alto or trumpet. Often paired with lead trombone, tenor 2 or jazz trumpet chair (4th trumpet). May serve as lead voice in saxophone soli's.*

*4. **2nd Tenor:** Generally a bridge between the upper and lower voices in the band. In saxophone soli's their parts are often very awkward (due to unusual voice leadings). Often doubled with baritone saxophones and lower trombones in section playing.*

*5. **Baritone Saxophone:** The lowest voice in the section it is also an important voice with regard to blend, balance, and pitch. Often paired with second tenor and bass trombone/bass. This voice may share melody line with lead alto in "supersax" style voicing.*

II. Equipment

A. Can equipment make you sound "jazzy"?

*B. Mouthpieces (see **table 1**)*

1. Metal vs. Hard Rubber

2. Choose medium facings and chambers with little use of baffles

3. Price Ranges \$50-\$500

C. Reeds

1. Synthetic vs. Natural Cane

2. French/Filed vs. American/Unfiled

3. Standard Brands: Vandoren, Rico, La Voz

4. Jazz Specific: Rico Jazz Select, Vandoren Java & ZZ, etc.

III. *Improving the Mechanics of Your Section*

A. *Articulation*

1. *Hooked on Phonics: "TA, DA, LA, TOT"*
2. *The need for extreme articulation on the saxophone*
3. *Playing the topography of the jazz line*
4. *Bebop-Offbeat Articulation*

B. *Tone Production*

1. *Defining the strength of the "section" sound...AIR!*
2. *Using the tongue to improve your sound...just say "LAY"*

C. *Tuning and Tendencies*

1. *The right hand and the upper register*
2. *Middle C# (using the side C key) for pitch*

D. *Vibrato*

1. *Old vs. New...the decline of the vibrato in the jazz band*

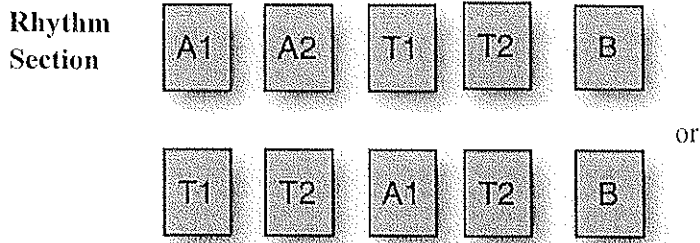
IV. *Developing Style and Concept (see **Tables 2&3**)*

A. *Learn from the masters...the development of a listening regiment*

1. *The "Ellington" sound (a.k.a.-baritone lead)*
2. *The Basie Sound (tenors in the foreground)*
3. *East Coast vs. West Coast Sound*
4. *The "Supersax" sound*
5. *The Herman/Four Brothers Style*
6. *The "Miller" style...clarinet in the lead*

Figure 1. Section Set-Up

Common Mistakes:



For Best Balance:

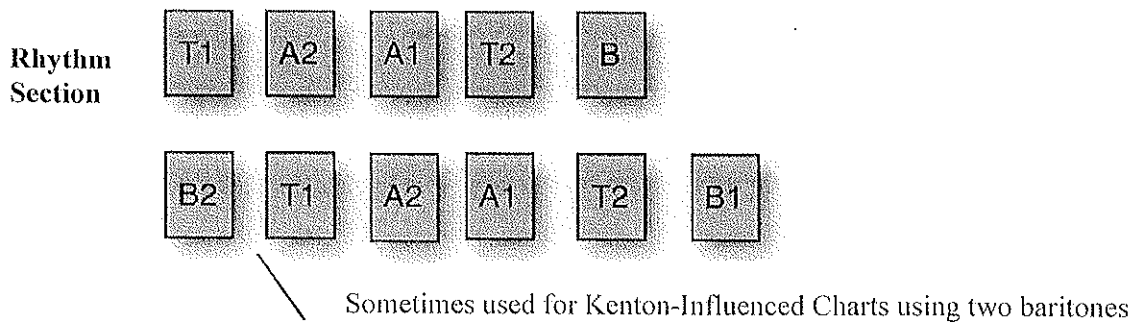


Figure 2. Listening Lanes

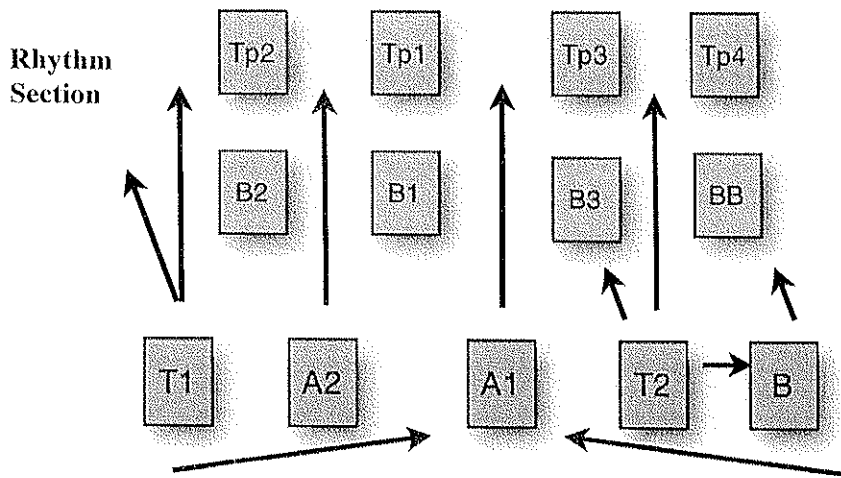


Table 1: Starting Points for Saxophone Mouthpieces

Note: Berg Larson's numbers refer to facing (hundreds of an inch)/brightness. For example 0=bright and 3=dark.

Instrument	Common Brands and Sizes* *Denotes starting point
Soprano	Selmer S-80 C*, C** or D, Selmer Soloist C*, C** or D, Bari 60, Meyer 5 or 6, Otto Link 5 or 6
Alto	Meyer 5 or 6, Beechler s5s or s6s, Berg Larson 85/1 or 85/2*, Otto Link 5, 5* or 6, Morgan 5 or 6,
Tenor	Otto Link 6, 6*, 7, 7*, Berg Larson 100/1 or 2, 105/1 or 2, Meyer 6 or 7, Jody Jazz 100, 105 or 6, 6*, 7, 7*
Baritone	Otto Link 6 or 7, Berg Larson (metal or hard rubber) 100/0 or 1, 105/0 or 1, Jody Jazz 105

Table 2: Players to Know

Instrument	Players to Know *Denotes starting point
Soprano	Sidney Bechet, John Coltrane, Wayne Shorter, Branford Marsalis, Jane Ira Bloom, David Liebman, Steve Lacy
Alto	Benny Carter, Johnny Hodges, Tab Smith, Charlie Parker, Sonny Stitt, Paul Desmond, Cannonball Adderley, Phil Woods, Ornette Colman, Vincent Herring, Kenny Garrett, Dick Oatts, Bobby Watson
Tenor	Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, Ben Webster, Don Byas, Dexter Gordon, James Moody, Sonny Stitt, John Coltrane, Wayne Shorter, George Colman, Joe Henderson, Michael Brecker, Bob Mintzer, Joshua Redman, Chris Potter
Baritone	Harry Carney, Serge Chaloff, Gerry Mulligan, Pepper Adams, Gary Smulyan, Nick Brignola

Table 3: Lead Players, Their Bands and Recordings

Band	Player(s)	Recordings
Duke Ellington Orchestra	Johnny Hodges	The Essential Duke Ellington-Sony
Count Basie Orchestra	Marshall Royal (early to late 60's) Bobby Plater (70's -80's)	The Complete Atomic Basie-Blue Note
Thad Jones/Mel Lewis	Jerry Dodgien, Jerome Richardson	Central Park North-Blue Note (originally Solid State)
Mel Lewis Orchestra	Dick Oatts	20 Years at the Village Vanguard-Atlantic
Stan Kenton Orchestra	Lennie Niehaus, Lee Konitz, Gabe Baltazar, Quinn Davis, Bud Shank	Contemporary Concepts-Blue Note (originally Capitol)
Toshiko Akiyoshi-Lew Tabackin Big Band	Dick Spencer	Road Time-BMG (originally RCA Japan)
Toshiko Akiyoshi	Jim Snidero	Carnegie Hall Concert LIVE-Sony
George Stone	Gene Burkert	Piece by Piece-Sea Breeze
Louie Bellson	Matt Catingub, Dick Spencer	Dynamite-Concord
Quincy Jones	Phil Woods, Dan Higgins	The Quintessence-GRP
WDR Big Band	Heiner Wiberny	Traces of Trane-Polygram
Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra	Wes Anderson	They Came to Swing LIVE-Sony
Carnegie Hall Jazz Band	Dick Oatts	The Carnegie Hall Jazz Band Live-Blue Note
Maria Schneider	Mark Vinci	Coming About-Enja
Clayton-Hamilton	John Clayton	Best of the Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra-JVC Victor
Bob Florence	Don Shelton	Soaring-Sea Breeze
Bob Mintzer Big Band	Peter Yellin	Art of the Big Band-DMP
Diva Jazz Orchestra	Karolina Strassmayer	Live in Concert
Charles Mingus	Eric Dolphy	Ah Um-Sony
Rob McConnell	P.J. Perry, Moe Kofman	Rob McConnell and the Boss Brass