



The Bass Saxophone: A Historical Account and Performer's Guide

by

Lucas Hopkins

B.M., University of Minnesota

M.M., Northwestern University

A thesis submitted to the
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The Bass Saxophone: A Historical Account and Performer's Guide

Thesis title

Lucas Hopkins

Written by

For a Doctorate Degree in Saxophone Performance

Tom Myer
Main Advisor

DocuSigned by:
Tom Myer
Signature
895EC5979FBA4E6...

5/20/2021
Date

Keith J Waters
2nd Advisor

DocuSigned by:
Keith J Waters
Signature
44FD13879DF8F4D2...

5/24/2021
Date

Daniel Silver
3rd Advisor

DocuSigned by:
Daniel Silver
Signature
P858E8058F294E0...

5/24/2021
Date

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Abstract

Lucas Hopkins

Name & Title

The Bass Saxophone: A Historical Account and Performer's Guide

Thesis title

Tom Myer

A

Directing Professor & Title

Around 1840, Adolphe Sax created the saxophone with the original intention of bridging the tonal disparities between the different sections of the orchestra. Although an entire family of saxophones would come into existence shortly after its invention, the bass saxophone was the first saxophone that Adolphe Sax created. At the time, the bass instruments of the orchestra often lacked power or had a harsh sonority as mentioned in the saxophone patent, and Sax likely envisioned the bass saxophone as solving these issues. The bass saxophone has a rich history, from early descriptions of the instrument and its uses in military bands and orchestral compositions, to its significant use in the jazz music of the 1920s-1930s. Additionally, the instrument has seen continuously increasing use as a contemporary solo instrument.

This document is intended to serve as a comprehensive resource about the bass saxophone through discussing the extensive history of the instrument and as a tool to aid performers interested in performing on the bass saxophone. Various uses of the bass saxophone throughout time are examined: from its invention, to its use in jazz music, the wind ensemble, as a solo instrument, and more. In terms of playing the bass saxophone, few resources exist and the Performer's Guide section is intended to aid anyone interested in playing this instrument. Included are discussions on equipment, suggestions and tips for playing the instrument, altissimo fingering charts, and extensive repertoire lists.

THE BASS SAXOPHONE:
A HISTORICAL ACCOUNT AND PERFORMER'S GUIDE

by

LUCAS HOPKINS

B.M., University of Minnesota, 2012

M.M., Northwestern University, 2014

S.M., University of Michigan, 2016

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ABSTRACT

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Around 1840, Adolphe Sax created the saxophone with the original intention of bridging the tonal disparities between the different sections of the orchestra. Although an entire family of saxophones would come into existence shortly after its invention, the bass saxophone was the first saxophone that Adolphe Sax created. At the time, the bass instruments of the orchestra often lacked power or had a harsh sonority, as mentioned in the saxophone patent, and Sax likely envisioned the bass saxophone as solving these issues. The bass saxophone has a rich history, from early descriptions of the instrument and its uses in military bands and orchestral compositions to its significant use in the jazz music of the 1920s-1930s. Additionally, the instrument has seen continuously increasing use as a contemporary solo instrument.

This document is intended to serve as a comprehensive resource about the bass saxophone by discussing the instrument's extensive history and as acting as a tool to aid performers interested in performing on the bass saxophone. Various uses of the bass saxophone throughout time are examined: from its invention, to its use in jazz music, the wind ensemble, as a solo instrument, and more. In terms of playing the bass saxophone, few resources exist, and the Performer's Guide section is intended to aid anyone interested in playing this instrument. Included are discussions on equipment, suggestions and tips for playing the instrument, altissimo fingering charts, and extensive repertoire lists.

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As I think back on what brought me to where I am today, finishing a doctoral degree and writing a major document on the bass saxophone, I realize that many opportunities, life choices, and supportive individuals have helped make this possible. I probably would not be playing the bass saxophone or writing this document if it were not for my former teacher, Timothy McAllister. During my Master's degree at Northwestern, Dr. McAllister assigned me to play bass on a piece in the wind ensemble in the spring of 2014. Shortly after this, he decided to make the move to the University of Michigan, where I would follow to continue studying with him for a Specialist degree. It was at this time that Dr. McAllister recommended me to join the Michigan-based Moanin' Frogs saxophone sextet as their new bass saxophonist. If not for this, I likely would not be in this group, nor would I have begun my journey with the bass saxophone. With this, I would like to thank the past and present members of the Moanin' Frogs, especially founding members Eddie Goodman and Jonathan Hulting-Cohen, for accepting me into their group. Additionally, with the support and financial sacrifice by the members of the Moanin' Frogs, we were able to save and fundraise enough money to purchase a bass saxophone for the group, which in turn, I have been able to use for many personal projects unrelated to the group. Playing in the Moanin' Frogs has been the joy of a lifetime and has spring-boarded my fascination with the bass saxophone.

I would also like to thank Tom Myer, my major professor at the University of Colorado, for all of his support, wisdom, and opportunities provided to me, as well as all of my committee members for being so supportive, especially Keith Waters for help with revisions to this document. Lastly, I would like to thank my family and friends for all of their support.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE INVENTION AND EARLY USES OF THE BASS SAXOPHONE

Introduction

Since the saxophone's invention, the instrument has quickly made its way around the world and over time has become widely incorporated into numerous genres of music. However, Adolphe Sax initially envisioned the instrument for use in orchestras and military bands, primarily as a low voice. The exact date of the saxophone's invention remains unclear, but 1840 is often cited as being the most likely contender. Although Adolphe Sax eventually created a full family of saxophones, early descriptions of the saxophone confirm that the bass saxophone was the first saxophone. Therefore, the story of the invention and early history of the saxophone is largely about the bass, even though many sources do not make this abundantly clear in their references to the earliest saxophones. It is therefore my intention to write an account of the first saxophones through a more targeted lens, and focus on the bass saxophone.

Early Descriptions of the Saxophone

Although Sax was not the first to combine a single-reed mouthpiece with a conically bored instrument, Sax was the first to make an instrument that used a single-reed clarinet type mouthpiece on a conical metal body, which had all of the holes covered by keys. There are many theories about how Adolphe Sax invented the saxophone and which instruments he may have drawn inspiration from when creating the new instrument. Some believed that Sax was searching

for a way to make a clarinet overblow in octaves instead of twelfths, others believed that Sax used a single-reed mouthpiece on some early bassoon-like instruments, while others believed that Sax substituted a single-reed mouthpiece in the place of a typical cup mouthpiece on the ophicleide.¹ Although Sax may have been searching for a way to improve the clarinet, based on various clues and accounts, it seems likely that Sax at one point experimented with putting a clarinet mouthpiece on an ophicleide. Georges Kastner, a proponent and friend of Sax, wrote his interpretation of Sax's invention of his new instrument in the *Manuel general de musique militaire*, written between 1845-1847. This account describes Sax contemplating a way to combine the beautiful tone quality of woodwind instruments with the power of the brass, and after several attempts, he created a new instrument with an entirely new sound. "A sound so powerful, so full, so expressive, and so beautiful such has never been heard by human ear... By bringing together strength and softness, the new instrument would not be overwhelmed by one voice and would not overwhelm the others. It is in a word, a perfect instrument. The first saxophone created belonged to the low register."² Although Kastner does not specifically call this instrument a bass saxophone, he does confirm that the first saxophone was of the low register.³

In 1841 at the Belgian exhibition, even though the saxophone was not officially showcased, it was likely present. Kastner later wrote that "an instrument wrapped in cloth which Sax had hoped to present or at least perform before the admission jury was sent flying with a kick by an unknown person." Kastner fully believed this instrument was the saxophone, indicating that a

¹ Frederick Hemke, "The Early History of the Saxophone" (DMA diss., University of Wisconsin, 1975), 8-9

² Hemke, "*History of the Saxophone*," 12.

³ I heavily rely on Hemke's dissertation in this chapter as it is a well-respected source related to saxophone history, drawing from many primary sources. Many other books on saxophone history and primary sources also contain much of the same material I reference here.

playable form of the saxophone likely existed at this time.⁴ However, on March 13, 1842, Hector Berlioz gave perhaps the first written account of the instrument in a series of articles on instrumentation in the *Revue et gazette musicale*. He ended his study of wind instruments with a description of the ophicleides and also included a description of a new instrument by Adolphe Sax. Berlioz doesn't mention the saxophone by name, perhaps because Sax had not named it yet, or possibly because Berlioz did not yet know its name.

A valuable invention, by nature of the beautiful sound it gives to the ophicleides, is that which has recently been invented by Mr. Sax of Brussels. It involves the replacing of the mouthpiece with a clarinet mouthpiece. The ophicleides thus become brass instruments with a reed; the difference in sonority which results from those instruments using this system is much to their advantage, in the words of those who have been able to judge it. Very probably the ophicleide-à-bec will come into general use in a few years.⁵

This favorable review by Berlioz, not long after the saxophone was created, foreshadows the instrument's potential and also gives weight to the theory of Sax experimenting with putting a clarinet mouthpiece on an ophicleide to create the saxophone. Even though the key work and design of the saxophone would have been different than that of an ophicleide, Berlioz describes the saxophone by comparing it to the instrument that it most closely resembled at the time.

Soon after moving to Paris in June of 1842, Sax was invited to showcase some of his new instruments at the Paris conservatory to the director and several professors. A news article again references Sax's new ophicleide and bass clarinet, making note of their beauty. "They cannot be compared to any others by virtue of their range, quality and the infinite variety of nuances they are capable of producing."⁶ Another account of this performance by Escudier, editor of *La France musicale*, describes Sax's demonstration of a new clarinet, a bass clarinet, and a third instrument.

⁴ Hemke, 16.

⁵ Hemke, 18.

⁶ Hemke, 19.

His third invention is destined to replace the ophicleide. This brass instrument is played with a clarinet mouthpiece and has a range close to two and a half octaves beginning from the Bb of the bassoon. You cannot imagine the beauty of sound and the quality of the notes in its lower octaves. These different instruments have been heard by a committee at the Conservatory and by the best composers, who highly approved of the improvements which Mister Sax demonstrated in his performance. They have encouraged him to give the finishing touches to his inventions which they feel will be a great help to the orchestra.⁷

This description of a new instrument by Sax, seemingly superior to the ophicleide, is almost certainly of a bass saxophone. The range of two and a half octaves resembles that of the saxophone, and the lowest note of Bb₁ suggests that this was a bass saxophone, possibly in the key of C.

Soon after, on June 12, 1842, Berlioz describes the saxophone again, using its name for the first time in writing (though misspelled), in an article describing the inventions and improvements Sax had made to various instruments, entitled *Musical Instruments-Monsieur Adolphe Sax*.

The saxophon, named after its inventor, is a brass instrument rather similar to the ophicleide in form and is equipped with nineteen keys. It is not played with a mouthpiece as the other brass instruments, but with a mouthpiece similar to that of the bass clarinet. The saxophon will thus be the head of a new family; those brass instruments played with a reed. Its range is three octaves from low Bb under the bass clef; its fingering is almost the same as a flute or the second register of the clarinet. As to the sonority, it is of such nature that I do not know of any low instrument presently in use which can, in this regard, compare to it. It is full, mellow, vibrant, with an enormous power and easy to play sweetly. It is much superior in my mind to the low notes of the ophicleides, in terms of tuning and flexibility of sounds; moreover it is altogether new and does not resemble any of the timbres one hears in the present orchestra, with the sole exception of the bass clarinets' low E and F. Because it uses a reed, the saxophon can crescendo and diminuendo its sound. In its upper register it produces notes of an impressive sound which can be pleasantly applied to melodic expressive lines. Without doubt, it will never be appropriate for rapid passages or for complicated arpeggios; but low instruments were not meant for nimble movements. Instead of complaining therefore, we must rejoice that it is impossible to abuse the saxophon and destroy its majestic character by giving it musical futilities to perform.

⁷ Hemke, 20-21.

Composers will owe much to Mr. Sax when his new instruments will come into general use. If he perseveres he will meet with the support of all the friends of art.⁸

This longest review of the saxophone to date confirms that the saxophone Berlioz had heard was a bass by descriptions of its range and use as a low instrument. It also seems likely that at this point in time Adolphe Sax had not yet created the other members of the saxophone family, and had not described any intentions to expand the saxophone family to Berlioz. This is evident in the fact that Berlioz only refers to the saxophone as a low instrument, without mentioning other current or potential future additions to the saxophone family. However, as early as August 1843 there is mention of an entire saxophone family, specifically mentioning a bass saxophone as well as an alto and two sopranos in an article by Castile-Blaze. Whether or not he specifically saw or heard an alto and soprano saxophone in person remains unclear as he did not go into detail about these instruments. Based on his descriptions, however, it appears he was familiar with the bass saxophone. First, he describes the saxophone as resembling the ophicleide, which the bass saxophone surely did at the time, but the resemblance between an alto or soprano saxophone and ophicleide would not have been as obvious. He also specifically gives the range of only the bass saxophone, as being “that of the bassoon, three octaves between the low Bb and the fourth Bb.” Interestingly, this goes above the keyed range of the saxophone, indicating that even in its earliest days, Sax had intended the saxophone to play above what is now considered its normal range, into the “altissimo.” He goes on to describe the sound of the (bass) saxophone: “The sonority and the timbre are admirable, it will be the ‘bull’ of the orchestra, and yet the huge vibrant full rich gratifying sounds of the saxophone can be softened almost to the final degree of

⁸ Hemke, 23.

pianissimo without effort, without constraint. The saxophone can sing and play a melody with the charm and polish of the English horn.”⁹

Despite the mention of a family of saxophones by Castile-Blaze in 1843, the following month an article by Blanchard on Adolphe Sax and his instruments only refers to the saxophone as being a large bass instrument. The fact that he does not refer to any smaller members of the saxophone family perhaps indicates that at this time most people only knew of the saxophone solely as a bass instrument.¹⁰ Blanchard gives similar descriptions of the saxophone as others did before him, mentioning that it has a “low, noble, and mellow voice,” and that it was close to eight feet in length with nineteen keys. Blanchard also gives the range of the saxophone as being three octaves, but with its lowest note being an A. There are several possibilities that could explain this difference in the range of the low end of the saxophone from other accounts: Blanchard may have seen a Bb bass saxophone keyed to low B natural (concert A), or alternatively Sax may have demonstrated a prototype bass that actually went down to a written A, or at least he intended to extend to a low A in the future development of the instrument. Given that several later descriptions of the saxophone’s range list the lowest note as a written B natural, it seems plausible that Blanchard may have observed Sax playing a Bb bass saxophone, and was simply describing the instrument in concert pitch. This also brings uncertainty as to why previous descriptions listed Bb as the lowest note. Did Adolphe Sax decrease the range from Bb to B? Or perhaps was the first bass saxophone actually in Bb and was only keyed to a low C (sounding as a Bb)? Blanchard also described Sax’s comments about the need for his new bass instrument in an 1843 article in the *Revue et gazette musicale*, giving insight into Sax’s original intention for the saxophone. According to Blanchard, Sax stated that bass wind instruments are

⁹ Hemke, 26-27.

¹⁰ Hemke, 28-29.

either too soft or too loud. Ophicleides play forte and with a “raucous, uneven, and above all, disagreeable sound,” and the bassoon in contrast only works well in accompaniments, being almost useless for fortes and playing outside. He also states that besides the bassoon, no wind instruments work well with the strings. Blanchard goes on to describe how the saxophone is the perfect solution due to its beautiful sound quality.

The saxophone remedies these inconveniences: because of its more intense sonority, it lends better with stringed instruments and its sound can be modified better than any other instrument. From its low sound, which resounds with the solemn thundering quality of an organ, to the intoning of the human voice, spinning out its sound to its softest level, the saxophone unites with all types of sonority. This beautiful and curious instrument is, so to speak, an eclectic composite of the most pure and suave effects of a sonorous body.¹¹

Detailed descriptions of the saxophone continued to show up in more publications, though many of these early descriptions only refer to the saxophone as a low brass instrument. In 1843 Berlioz included a description of the (bass) saxophone in his *Grand traité d'instrumentation et d'orchestration modernes*.

The saxophone is a grand low brass instrument invented by Mr. Adolphe Sax who has given it his own name. It is not played with an ophicleide mouthpiece and doesn't resemble the sound of an ophicleide at all. I do not hesitate, therefore, to place it among the members of the clarinet family.

The Saxophone is a transposing Bb instrument, its range is this: contra B natural to C², including the chromatic tones.

Trills are possible throughout the entire range of this scale, but I think that they should be used only in a very reserved manner.

The timbre of the saxophone has something vexing and sad about it in the high register; the low notes to the contrary are of a grandiose nature, one could say pontifical. It possesses, as the clarinets, the ability to crescendo and decrescendo a sound. This results, especially in the lower portion of its scale, in extraordinary effects which are completely its own. For works of a mysterious and solemn character, the saxophone is, in my mind, the most beautiful low voice known to this day. Its sound takes on the quality of the bass clarinet and a harmonium which sufficiently indicates, I believe, that one must generally use it only in slow movements. It could be admirably used also in a solo

¹¹ Hemke, 28-29.

passage or to sustain and color the harmony of a vocal ensemble or wind instrument ensemble.

In spite of the extraordinary power of its sonority, it is inappropriate for the energetic and brilliant effects of military music.¹²

Here, Berlioz specifically describes the bass as being in Bb with the lowest note being written B natural (concert A), making it plausible that this may have been the same saxophone that Blanchard had described earlier the same year as going down to low A. Additionally, at this point Berlioz essentially expands upon what he said in a previous article, that the saxophone should not be used in fast or nimble passages by saying it is inappropriate for energetic military music and should only be used in slow movements. This is an interesting statement considering that the bass was likely the first saxophone to be used in military ensembles, not long after this was written. However, he does give high praise to the bass saxophone by essentially stating that it is “the most beautiful low voice known to this day.”

In a later revision of his Treatise in 1855, Berlioz changes how he describes the saxophone and also mentions an entire family of saxophones. He describes the sound qualities and timbre of the saxophones, mentioning that “(i)n the high range they are soft yet penetrating. In the low range they are full and rich and in the middle range they are very expressive.”¹³ One notable difference between his earlier description is that he now says the saxophone can be used in any kind of music, whether rapid passages or soft melodies, though he still believed the saxophone was best suited for slow and tender compositions. This change is likely due to the fact that Berlioz had only heard Adolphe Sax demonstrate the bass saxophone shortly after its creation, but in later years would have heard the smaller saxophones, better suited for rapid passages. Berlioz lists six sizes of saxophones, made in both C and F as well as Bb and Eb, and mentions

¹² Hemke, 30-31.

¹³ Hemke, 32.

Sax's intentions to create an even larger seventh size, the double-bass saxophone. It is also interesting to note that his description of the range of the saxophone has diminished. The entire revised description is provided to draw a comparison to Berlioz's original descriptions.

These newly gained orchestral voices have rare and valuable qualities. In the high range they are soft yet penetrating. In the low range they are full and rich and in the middle range they are very expressive. On the whole it is a timbre quite to its own, vaguely similar to that of the violoncello, the clarinet and the English horn with a half metallic admixture which gives it an altogether peculiar expression. The body of the instrument is a parabolic cone of brass with a system of keys. Agile, suited just as well for rapid passages as for soft melodies and for religious and dreamy effects, saxophones can be used in any kind of music; but they are particularly suited to slow and tender compositions.

The high tones of the low saxophones have a plaintive and sorrowful character; their low tones, however, have a sublime and, as it were, priestly calm. All saxophones, especially the baritone and bass, can swell and diminish their sound; this permits entirely new and quite peculiar sound effects in the extremely low range, which bear some resemblance to the tones of the "expressive organ." The sound of the high saxophones is much more penetrating than that of the clarinets in Bb and C without the sharp and often piercing tone of the small clarinet in Eb. The same can be said of the soprano saxophone. Ingenious composers are going to achieve wonderful, still unpredictable effects by joining the saxophones with the clarinet family or by means of other combinations.

The instrument can be played very easily, its fingerings being similar to that of the flute and oboe. Players familiar with the clarinet embouchure will master its mechanism within a short time.

There are six kinds: the high, soprano, alto, tenor, bariton and bass saxophones. Mr. Sax is about to produce a seventh one, the double-bass saxophone. The range of all these is about the same.

The following list shows the extreme points of their scales, written – as proposed by Sax and already adapted by composers – in the G clef for all instruments.

1. High saxophones in Eb (small B to D³ including the chromatic intervals, actual pitch D¹ to F³)
2. Soprano saxophones in C or Bb (small B to D³ including the chromatic intervals, actual pitch of the Bb soprano, small A to C³)
3. Alto saxophone in F or Eb (small B to F³ including the chromatic intervals, actual pitch of F alto, small E to Bb²)
4. Tenor saxophone in C or Bb (small B to F³ including the chromatic intervals, actual pitch of the C tenor, Great B to F²)

5. Bariton saxophone in F or Eb (small B to F³ including the chromatic intervals, actual pitch of F bariton, Great E to Bb¹)
6. Bass saxophone in C or Bb (small B to Eb³ including the chromatic intervals, actual pitch of the C bass, contra B to Eb¹)

Major and minor trills are practical almost over the entire scale of the saxophones; only the following should be avoided: C#¹ to D#¹; F#¹ to G#¹; C² to D²; C#² to D#²; C³ to D³; D³ to Eb³; D#³ to E#³ and E³ to F³.¹⁴

In Georges Kastner's 1844 supplements to his 1837 *Cours d'instruments* and *Traité Générale d'instrumentation*, Kastner describes a family of saxophones ranging from soprano to contrabass, in both C/F and Bb/Eb. Interestingly, the present-day tenor and baritone sizes are not listed.

Kastner also describes how composers should write for the instrument and how it is best used, noting that "(m)asters are eager to use this valuable instrument, especially in scenes of a solemn, grave, and religious character." Seeing a future for the instrument, Kastner also predicts that the saxophone will "take an important place in our orchestras and in our military bands because of the nobility and beauty of its timbre." In terms of technical considerations when writing for the instrument, Kastner notes that trills are possible throughout the range but should be used sparingly and that the saxophone is capable of easily producing crescendos and decrescendos. He also mentions that it is best to keep rapid passages in the soprano and alto, instead of the bass and contrabass, and write in the character of the instrument, even though he had heard Adolphe Sax marvelously demonstrate such rapid passages on the low saxophones.¹⁵

It wasn't until 1846 that Sax patented the saxophone, despite creating it a number of years earlier. This was in part due to Sax taking extreme caution, given that he was involved in a lawsuit with his 1843 saxhorn patent and that he also faced much backlash from his competition, claiming that Sax did not create the saxophone. Additionally, In France, the burden of proof was also placed on the inventor in regards to claims of patent infringement. Thus in 1845 Sax stated

¹⁴ Hemke, 32-33.

¹⁵ Hemke, 35.

that he would wait one year before taking out a patent on the saxophone to allow others to have the opportunity to create a saxophone if they could.¹⁶ The “explanation” in Sax’s patent gives insight into Sax’s intentions in creating the Saxophone and perhaps could give insight into why the bass was the first saxophone he made. Sax mentions the need to remedy various issues of other instrument families, and also specifically mentions that these issues are most apparent in the bass instruments. Part of the patent is listed below.

Explanation – We know that in general, wind instruments are either too harsh or too weak in sonority; one or the other of these faults is most especially perceptible in the basses. The Ophicleide, for example, which reinforces the trombones, produces a sound so disagreeable that it must be kept out of resonant halls because of its inability to be played softly. The bassoon, to the contrary has such a weak sound that it can be used only for accompanying and filling parts; yet for specific forte effects in orchestration it is absolutely useless. One should note that the bassoon is the only instrument of this type which blends well with string instruments.

Only brass wind instruments produce a satisfying effect in outside performance. Bands comprised of these instruments are the only kind of ensembles which can be used in these circumstances.

Everyone knows that for outside performance the effect of stringed instruments is null. Because of the weakness of their timbre, their use is almost impossible under such conditions.

Struck by these different drawbacks, I have looked for a means of remedying these situations by creating an instrument, which by the character of its voice can be reconciled with the stringed instruments, but which possesses more force and intensity than the strings. This instrument is the Saxophone. The Saxophone is able to change the volume of its sounds better than any other instrument. I have made it of brass and in the form of a parabolic cone to produce the qualities which were just mentioned and to keep a perfect equality throughout its entire range. The Saxophone embouchure uses a mouthpiece with a single reed whose interior is very wide and which becomes narrower at the part which is fitted to the body of the instrument.¹⁷

The patent also included descriptions and sketches of the different saxophone sizes. Sax numbered the saxophones in accordance with their sketch, and except for the “bourdon,”

¹⁶ Hemke, 46.

¹⁷ Hemke, 47-48.

“contrabass,” and “tenor” (present-day baritone), he did not list their names. The keys in which the instruments are made and their ranges were also indicated. Although Sax included a sketch of eight different saxophones, each of which could theoretically be made in two different keys, he only included the key work on saxophones no. 1 and 2, the baritone and bass saxophone sizes (Figure 1). The key work on these saxophones indicates that the baritone had a range of low B to high F, while the bass had a range of low Bb to high Eb.¹⁸ While most of the saxophones on the patent have a similar shape to their modern counterparts, the bass saxophone and the saxophones larger than the bass have a shape that is very similar to that of an ophicleide. This confirms that the earliest bass saxophones were made with this design and helps to explain why so many people compared the saxophone to the ophicleide. Also included in the patent was a sketch of an actual size bass saxophone mouthpiece, the only mouthpiece that was shown.

¹⁸ Hemke, 49.

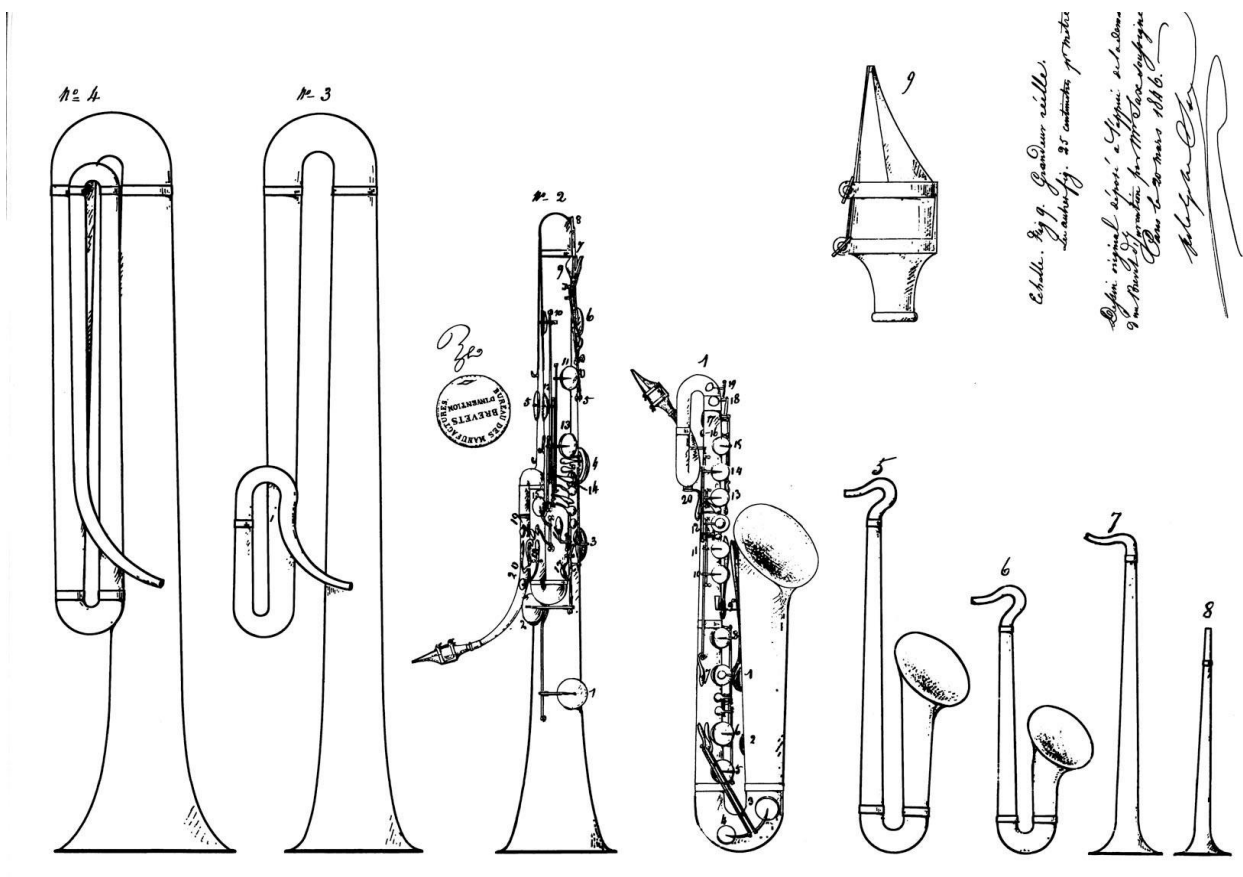


Figure 1, sketch from saxophone patent

Why the Bass?

Why did Adolphe Sax choose to create the bass saxophone first, instead of a higher-pitched saxophone which would, with time, see significantly more use? Although it is impossible to know for certain, given that no documents exist in which Sax describes the saxophone and the process of its creation, there are a number of theories and clues that make sense of this decision. After all, it is likely that Sax envisioned an entire family of saxophones very early on, perhaps even before he created the first saxophone.

As described earlier, one theory of inspiration for the saxophone has to do with Sax experimenting with an ophicleide by putting a bass clarinet mouthpiece on it. Given that the

early bass saxophone had a similar shape to an ophicleide, this seems plausible to a degree. To take this a step further, the most common size of ophicleides were the Bb and C bass ophicleides, which had a similar range to that of a bassoon. Thus, if Sax did experiment with a single reed mouthpiece on the ophicleide, this hybrid instrument would have had a similar range and shape to the bass saxophone, which Adolphe Sax could have then experimented with further, modifying its design and key work until he created the bass saxophone. Additionally, Sax may have chosen to create a bass instrument in order to fill out the low end of an orchestra with an instrument more powerful than a bassoon, more practical than an ophicleide, and yet still retaining the tonal colors and agility of a woodwind instrument. This is confirmed in the saxophone patent where Sax made it clear that his goal was to address certain issues of various instruments, especially in the bass voices.

There are also other compelling reasons that Sax may have decided to make the bass his first saxophone. Sax was a skilled instrument maker, inventing and making improvements to many instruments. In 1835 Sax created a new bass clarinet design, which he patented in 1838, and soon after also created a contrabass clarinet. During this time, he spent a significant amount of time researching and experimenting with low-pitched instruments, and in turn, this may have influenced his decision to start with the bass saxophone first.¹⁹ Sigurd Raschèr believed that the invention of the saxophone was well thought out and the decision to first create a bass was intentional and the most logical choice. Adolphe Sax's father, Charles-Joseph Sax, was a prominent instrument maker in Dinant, Belgium, and began to train his son Adolphe in the trade at an early age. Having learned to play and work on many instruments, Adolphe became aware of the tonal disparity between the strings, woodwinds, and brass instruments. He thus set out to

¹⁹ Hemke, 44

create an instrument that bridged the gaps between these instrument groups with an instrument that fused traits of each of these groups into one, with the flexibility of the strings, tonal variety of the woodwinds, and power of the brasses. With his goal in mind, Sax began experimenting. Due to his thorough knowledge of instrument making, Sax knew that he needed a large conical bore to create an instrument that overblew in octaves rather than twelfths, like the clarinet, and that this could be more easily made out of brass, instead of wood, yet did not want to use a brass mouthpiece. Sax also knew that large instruments are easier to control and experiment with, due to their larger proportions. This is the reason Raschèr believes Sax created the bass saxophone first.²⁰

Early Uses of the Bass Saxophone

Soon after inventing the saxophone, Sax began demonstrating the instrument to various composers and musicians in private settings. In the early years of the saxophone's existence, this would have been a bass saxophone that Sax showcased. The bass saxophone, however, also holds the distinction of holding the first public performances of the saxophone. Over numerous occasions, Hector Berlioz had written favorably about the saxophone and was a proponent of Adolphe Sax and his instruments. He was also the first to write for the saxophone in an arrangement he made, "Hymne," of one of his choral works. Berlioz organized a concert on February 3, 1844, which included this work on the program, written as a sextet utilizing only instruments that Adolphe Sax had invented or improved. The instruments consisted of a high trumpet, a cornet, a bugle, a soprano clarinet, a bass clarinet, and a bass saxophone performed by Sax himself. There were various reviews of this concert and, according to Comettant, apparently

²⁰ Sigurd Raschèr, "The Story of the Saxophone", *The Raschèr Reader*, ed. Patrick (The State University of New York at Fredonia), 190.

the saxophone was not yet fully completed and Sax had used string and wax to attach parts of the instrument;²¹ Comettant also wrote:

“Each performer had a chance to show off the advantage of his instrument. There was a held note in the middle of the final section. Sax spun out his sound in an excessive fashion with crescendos and diminuendos and coloring every nuance most delicately. He had forgotten the fingering for the following note and needed time to remember it. Finally his memory returned and just in time, he was hurried for air.”²²

Théophile Gautier also wrote favorably about the Hymn, specifically complimented the saxophone, and also mentions that it was not fully complete.

The Hymne composed by Berlioz for the new instruments of Sax was greatly praised. The effect of the piece surprised the listener by the grand and beautiful sonority of the instruments. The saxophone, especially, which has not really reached, however, the point to which the able manufacturer wishes to bring it, has an imposing and religious quality. I would not be able to compare it to anything which is presently used in the orchestras.²³

A significant review was also published in the *Revue et gazette musicale* by Maurice Bourges that complimented the sound of the new instruments despite any mechanical difficulties and the lack of familiarization with the new instruments by the performers.

The Hymne arranged for six wind instruments of Sax, written for this concert by Mr. Berlioz, was not presented in its original designation. Composed for words, this Hymne has been sung in Marseille with great success. By reducing it, in order to make an instrumental sextet, the composer simply wished to give Mr. Adolphe Sax an opportunity to produce in public his inventions and improvements. Almost every composer and distinguished critic of this time has expressed appreciation for their merit. Here is the impression generally experienced by the listener. The high valve trumpet in Eb, the little valve bugle in Eb, the large valve bugle in Bb, the soprano clarinet, the bass clarinet and the saxophone portrayed a beautiful timbre and sonority as full as satisfying. If performers alone have the right to pass judgment on the difficulties of the mechanics, of which they are the natural judges, every well informed and even little trained ear is competent to appreciate the quality of sound of an instrument. The public opinion ratified, by its approval, the endeavors of Mr. Adolphe Sax. Everyone recognized that in spite of their uncontestable talent, the performers did not have the time to familiarize themselves with these new instruments, but this is only secondary. By presenting works, they will eventually bring convincing proof to every unprejudiced ear.²⁴

²¹ Hemke, “History of the Saxophone,” 316.

²² Hemke, 317.

²³ Hemke, 318.

²⁴ Hemke, 319.

Although Berlioz, among others, was impressed by Sax's new instruments and worked to promote Sax's creations, Adolphe Sax also faced quite a bit of backlash at the time, led by many of his competitors. There was one critic from *La France musical* that was not impressed by Sax's new instruments and gave a negative review of the work, stating: "It is not enough to almost bring about the illusion of an imitation of the most sonorous organ. Unhappily the piece written, or rather arranged by Mr. Berlioz for that circumstance was not to the public's taste and I share the public's opinion on this subject."²⁵

Although Hemke's 1975 dissertation lists several logical possibilities from which Berlioz's "Hymne" was transcribed,²⁶ a 1976 article by Wayne Richards provides compelling evidence that confirms that the "Hymne" was in fact an arrangement of Berlioz's "Chant Sacré."²⁷ In reference to Bourges's review of the 1844 performance of "Hymne," it states that this work was previously sung in Marseille, and Richards found evidence that "Chant Sacré" was performed there, being mentioned in the *Le Sud* and the *Gazette du midi*. However, this alone is not conclusive evidence that the "Hymne" was taken from "Chant Sacré" given that another one of Berlioz's works "Résurrexit," which Hemke also listed as a possible contender, was also performed at Marseille. Richards also provides additional evidence that ties "Chant Sacré" to the "Hymne." First of all, he found that "Chant Sacré" was performed on December 17, 1843, in Marseille, just days before it is known that Berlioz had visited Sax's workshop to see a demonstration of various instruments and just over a month before the February performance of "Hymne." Richards believes that Berlioz may have arranged "Chant Sacré" soon after, with the success of his Marseilles performance fresh on his mind, and wrote it for a similar

²⁵ Hemke, 320.

²⁶ Hemke, 320-321.

²⁷ Wayne Richards, "The 'Hymne' of Hector Berlioz," *The Saxophone Symposium* 1, no. 2 (1976): 7-10.

instrumentation to the instruments he had heard Sax demonstrate. Richards also found that musical descriptions of the 1844 performance closely resemble the score of “Chant Sacré.” Although “Chant Sacré” is written for six voices with accompaniment, doublings made it possible to cover all of the parts in the sextet arrangement. Comettant’s review of the “Hymne” also describes that “after a large tutti section, each player displayed the advantages of his instrument.” This corresponds to the score of “Chant Sacré” which starts with a tutti section, followed by a tenor recitative that could be easily transcribed into solo passages for various instruments. Comettant also wrote about a long note held by the bass saxophone, which likely relates to a solo bass line leading to a fermata in the score. Although no known manuscript of Berlioz’s “Hymne” arrangement exists, given this evidence, it seems very likely that “Chant Sacré” is the work that Berlioz arranged for the February 1844 performance in which the saxophone made its public debut.

Soon after the performance of “Chant Sacré,” the first original composition that used the saxophone was performed. Georges Kastner was quick to write for the instrument by including a bass saxophone part in his biblical grand opera, *Le dernier roi de Juda*, which had its sole performance on December 1, 1844, at the Paris Conservatory.²⁸ The saxophone part was written for a bass saxophone in C, notated in bass clef, and played by Adolphe Sax. Instead of positioning the saxophone part near the woodwinds on the score, Kastner grouped it with the low brass. The range of the bass part extended from low Bb to a high F# as seen in Figure 2, even though the bass saxophone was only keyed to an Eb. Kastner does however mention in his treatise that it is possible to go over three octaves, but suggests limiting the upper range of

²⁸ Hemke, “History of the Saxophone,” 290-291.

saxophones to an F natural for orchestral use; given that he knew Sax would be playing this part, he deviated from his own advice.²⁹

Le Dernier Roi de Juda
Georges Kastner
Nr 12 (2^{me} partie) - Air
Saxophone ut
Andante sostenuto
String. ucc.
Trio
Andante

Figure 2,
Kastner

Also in 1844, Kastner wrote a saxophone sextet and a solo work, which he included in his *Methode complete et raisonnée de saxophone*. The “Sextuor” was written for two sopranos in C, an alto in F, two bass saxophones in C, and a contrabass saxophone in F.³⁰ At this time all of these saxophones certainly did not exist, nor is it likely that a contrabass saxophone in F has ever been made, but that did not stop Kastner from writing for a family of saxophones that his friend Adolphe Sax had planned to make. Given that this work is impossible to perform on the instruments in which it was originally written, various editions of this work have been made for modern saxophones. The 1982 edition by Sigurd Raschèr is for two Bb sopranos, Eb alto, Bb tenor, Eb baritone, and Bb bass, which has been transposed to fit the ranges of this instrumentation.

²⁹ Sigurd Raschèr, “A Few Words about Low-pitched Saxophones,” *The Saxophone Symposium* 14, no. 3 (1989): 12-13.

³⁰ Raschèr, “Low-pitched Saxophones.” 13.

Several other early uses of the bass saxophone in orchestral and operatic music exist. In 1852, Fromental Havély's grand opera, *Le Juif errant*, used a quartet of saxophones including a bass in C, played by Adolphe Sax for the premiere.³¹ Another work composed in 1852, *Marche Russe pour les instruments d'Adolphe Sax* by Alex Stadfeld includes a bass saxophone in C with a soprano, alto, and tenor as the only woodwind instruments along with various brass instruments. Sigurd Raschèr also claims that the bass saxophone was used by William Fry, the first American composer to write for the saxophone, in his 1853 *Santa Claus Symphony*. This does not appear to be the case, however, as only one soprano saxophone was scored in this work. In another work, Fry did include a Bb bass along with a soprano saxophone in his symphonic poem, *Hagar in the Wilderness*, in 1854. Figure 3 shows an excerpt of the bass saxophone part, written in bass clef.³² Later, in 1903, Richard Strauss composed *Symphonia Domestica* which used four saxophone parts, including a C soprano, F alto, F baritone, and C bass. Due to a lack of saxophone performers however, Strauss had to make the saxophone parts ad libitum and doubled them in other instruments.³³ Other early twentieth-century works that included the bass saxophone include Romanian composer Philip Lazar's 1925 orchestral scherzo, *Tziganes* (Gypsies), written for a bass in C, and Arnold Schoenberg's one-act opera buffa *Von Heute auf Morgen*, written in 1928.³⁴ This twelve-tone work includes two saxophone parts, a C bass doubling on Bb tenor and an Eb alto doubling on Bb soprano, with the bass part being the most prominent and challenging saxophone voice. Likely aware of the normal range of the saxophone, Schoenberg seemingly chose to exploit the tonal colors of the altissimo range on the bass, writing up to an altissimo A.³⁵

³¹ Hemke, "History of the Saxophone," 295.

³² Raschèr, "Low-pitched Saxophones," 14.

³³ Hemke, "History of the Saxophone," 302.

³⁴ Raschèr, "Low-pitched Saxophones," 14.

³⁵ Kandace Farrell, "The Use of the Saxophone by Composers of the Second Viennese School," *The Saxophone Journal* 13, no. 1 (1988): 29-31.

Hagar in the Wilderness

William Henry Fry
1854

D (Maestoso)

Bass Saxophone in B \flat

molto cresc. ed affrett.

f

ff

tacet al fine

Figure 3,
Fry

Although composers and performers typically gave preference to the smaller saxophone sizes over the bass, the bass did see wide use in jazz starting in the 1920s. The bass saxophone's role in jazz will be further discussed in the next chapter. However, around this same time, the bass saxophone was used in a historically significant way in an orchestral setting. Leopold Stokowski, one of the leading conductors of this time, used the bass saxophone in numerous orchestral recordings with the Philadelphia Orchestra between 1919 and 1925 that were released on the Victor label. Recording at this time was often unpredictable and Stokowski had very high standards; of the 450 acoustic recordings made between 1917-1924, only less than 70 were released. Stokowski began recording with the orchestra in 1917 using a full orchestra of 93 musicians, but due to issues of the acoustic recording technology of the time, by 1919 the orchestra size was greatly reduced to around 46 musicians to improve clarity on the recordings. Even with the reduced orchestra size, musicians were uncomfortably cramped together in order to be in close proximity to the recording horn. In terms of balance in his orchestras, Stokowski is

known for having a preference for a strong presence of bass voices; yet, given that string basses did not record well on acoustic equipment with wax masters and the need to reduce the size of the orchestra, Stokowski often replaced the string bass parts with a bass saxophone and tuba in these recording sessions. First used in 1919, the bass saxophone was used in various recordings until 1925 when electrical recording technology by Bell Laboratories came into use. The bass was used on pieces by such composers as Stravinsky, Tchaikovsky, Weber, Mussorgsky, Rachmaninoff, Dvorak, Saint-Saëns, Borodin, Lyadov, and more. Many of these recordings can be heard, along with more information on these sessions, on the Stokowski.org website.³⁶

Interestingly, when creating the saxophone, Adolphe Sax envisioned the saxophone as playing an important role in the orchestra, especially in regards to supplementing the bass instruments.

Roughly eighty years later, Sax's vision came true due to the power, flexibility, and timbre of the bass saxophone that allowed it to function as a member of the string section, compensating for the weaknesses of the string bass in this situation.

The Bass Saxophone in Military Bands

Although Sax originally intended his instrument to be used in the orchestra, the saxophone instead found its home in the wind ensemble, starting with French military bands soon after its invention. French military bands before 1845 were in desperate need of reform: many instruments were not suitable for outdoor use and the balance in the band was less than desirable. Middle register parts were completely covered up and bass parts given to the bassoon couldn't be heard, whereas the ophicleide blended poorly with other instruments and could only be

³⁶ Larry Huffman, "Leopold Stokowski Philadelphia Recordings," *The Stokowski Legacy*, accessed January 31, 2021. <https://stokowski.org>.

satisfactorily played in the high or middle registers.³⁷ After much correspondence between Sax, the minister of war, General Rumigny, King Louis Philippe, and an assembled commission created to reform the bands, many proposals were submitted and even a competition was held that led to many of Sax's instruments being included in French military bands. In order to fairly compare a proposal by Sax with that of Carafa, director of the *Gymnase Musical*, whose band consisted of more traditional instruments, the commission decided to hold a contest. On April 22, 1845, at the Champ de Mars field, Sax's band went head-to-head against Carafa's band in front of a large audience who would help decide the winner. Although each band had a proposed forty-five-member ensemble, ten members of Sax's band did not show up, including the two saxophonists, likely due to bribes. Despite having fewer musicians, Sax's band won, and being much more powerful, was the clear audience favorite.³⁸

Although there were no saxophones in this band, this competition helped various Sax instruments, including the saxophone, gain acceptance into military ensembles. Soon after the competition, a new proposal was put forward by the commission that included two unspecified saxophones in the infantry bands, and by August of 1845, the new instrumentation for the bands was approved.³⁹ It did take some time for these changes to take effect, however, and for the saxophone to be widely used in the various infantry bands. When saxophones were used in these French bands in the earliest years of its acceptance, it was the Bb bass and Eb baritone that were primarily used until around 1856, when use of the entire family became widespread. Because the saxophone was still relatively unknown, many composers were hesitant to write for the instrument and when they did, they wrote the saxophone parts in bass clef which could be played

³⁷ Hemke, "History of the Saxophone," 192.

³⁸ Hemke, 191-200.

³⁹ Hemke, 205.

by either saxophone or bassoon. In 1847, Kastner also confirmed in his *Manuel général de musique* that the baritone and bass saxophones were being used at the time in infantry bands.⁴⁰ By 1854, the instrumentation for the Garde Impérial band was set to include eight saxophones, including two baritone or bass saxophones, though the expansion of the saxophone family did not immediately apply to the rest of the infantry bands.⁴¹ Regular use of the bass saxophone eventually fell out of favor; by 1860, a decree to reduce the size of infantry bands no longer specifically mentioned the bass saxophone, but rather two each of soprano through baritone saxophones.⁴² The bass was not completely eliminated from French military bands, however, as the French Guides band still employed the use of a bass in 1867. There is also reference to a Spanish military band using two bass saxophones in the 1870s,⁴³ although it is possible that these may have been baritones, given that the baritone was sometimes referred to as an Eb bass saxophone.

Concluding Remarks

When reading various historical accounts related to the saxophone, it is interesting to think that the majority of references related to the saxophone in in the early 1840s were specifically in regards to the bass saxophone. Although no original bass saxophones exist, it is known that they took the shape of the ophicleide through not only descriptions of the instrument, but also Sax's patent sketches. Many believe that the bass in C was the first saxophone, while others believe that the Bb bass was first. Although it may be impossible to know with absolute certainty, it is known that both types existed given that a Bb bass is specifically mentioned in some early

⁴⁰ Hemke, 207-208.

⁴¹ Hemke, 225.

⁴² Hemke, 230.

⁴³ Hemke, 240.

reviews, while other reviews may lead one to believe that a C bass was observed. Nonetheless, Kastner's opera from 1844 was specifically written for a C bass. The question of which bass was made first perhaps lies in how you interpret early descriptions. If it was a bass in C, then this means Sax may have reduced the range of the instrument given that the earliest descriptions list the lowest note as Bb, but later descriptions list a B natural as the lowest note. Conversely, perhaps the earliest descriptions that listed the lowest note as a Bb were actually of a Bb bass that only went down to low C (concert Bb), in which Sax later increased the range. There is at least one other description that was most likely of a Bb bass described in concert pitch. Blanchard's description listed a low A as the lowest note, which one would infer that he was talking in concert pitch as other descriptions around the same time list a B as the lowest note, and it seems unlikely that a low A bass was made at this time. Another possibility is that these discrepancies in range exist because Sax may have been demonstrating instruments that were not completely finished or the fact that Sax may have made and demonstrated prototypes with various ranges. Regardless, by 1846, the patent seems to indicate a low Bb as being the lowest note on the bass saxophone and Kastner's 1844 opera also extends down to a low Bb in the written range.

Additionally, I will point out that evidence indicates that the saxophone originally read music in bass clef. Given that Sax originally made a bass saxophone, it would make sense that it would read bass clef like most other bass instruments. This would make it easier for the saxophone to play parts that were perhaps written for other instruments or for other instruments to play the saxophone part if one were not available, as in early French Military bands. The first works for bass saxophone, such as Kastner's opera, were also written in bass clef and Berlioz's 1844 treatise also lists both the written and sounding pitches for the saxophone in bass clef.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Berlioz, Hector, *Grand traité d'instrumentation et d'orchestration modernes* (Paris: Schoenberger, 1844), 151

Interestingly, Kastner's *Manuel Militaire* from 1847, shows the bass saxophone as being written in bass clef, while the baritone saxophone was written in treble clef.⁴⁵ Even after the smaller saxophone sizes were introduced, it seems that the bass saxophone would continue to occasionally read in bass clef for some time. In William Fry's 1854 orchestral work, *Hagar in the Wilderness*, the Bb bass part is written in bass clef (figure 3). However, in 1852 Alex Stadfeld's *Marche Russe pour les instruments d'Adolphe Sax*, the C bass part is written in treble clef.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Georges Kastner, *Manuel général De Musique Militaire* (Paris: Firmin-Didot Frères, 1848), <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9064148c/f472.item>, 376.

⁴⁶ Raschèr, "Low-pitched Saxophones," 14.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BASS SAXOPHONE IN JAZZ AND POPULAR MUSIC

Introduction

Adolphe Sax originally intended for the saxophone to be used in orchestras and military bands. Yet in the early 20th century, the saxophone quickly found a home in popular music of the day. It was frequently used in the vaudeville circuit and was primarily popularized by artists such as Rudy Wiedoeft and the Six Brown Brothers saxophone sextet. Around 1920, the saxophone made its way into early jazz music, became an essential part of dance bands, and was used by pioneering jazz musicians such as Sidney Bechet. Soon after the saxophone gained acceptance as a jazz instrument, the bass saxophone also began its fascinating and largely unknown history in jazz. From its role as a bass instrument in dance bands to its use as a melodic and solo instrument, the bass saxophone played a vital role in the development of jazz and dance music. However, its strong association with hot jazz and foxtrots of the 1920s-1930s also led to the instrument's demise. As this music fell out of mainstream popularity, so did the bass saxophone.

The Six Brown Brothers

The earliest use of the bass saxophone in popular music of the early twentieth century was likely in saxophone ensembles performing for vaudeville and minstrel shows. A number of saxophone sextets existed at the time, but the most prominent group was the Six Brown Brothers.

Originally the Five Brown Brothers, the group began to gain recognition around 1908 and made their first recordings for Columbia records in 1911 as a quintet that included a bass saxophone. In 1912 the group started performing as a sextet and was the only saxophone ensemble to issue recordings between 1911 and 1917. The group gained immense popularity through their work with the successful Broadway show, *Chin Chin*, from 1914 to 1917, and regular tours as a vaudeville act in the late 1910s through 1920s. After many years of successfully performing around the world and recording, the stock market crash of 1929 eventually brought the group to an end in the early 1930s.⁴⁷ The Six Brown Brothers can be heard on numerous recordings, with the bass saxophone primarily playing very simple bass lines on the beat.

The Bass Saxophone in Dance Bands

Although the alto and tenor were the first saxophones adopted into dance bands, the first known use of a bass saxophone in a dance band was in Harry Yerkes' band in 1918, used to play simple bass parts. By 1920, multiple dance bands used the bass saxophone. One of the first was Ted Lewis' band, styled after the Original Dixieland Jazz Band (ODJB). At this time, the bass saxophone was used more often than the baritone saxophone in dance bands. In conjunction with the tuba, the bass saxophone use was often preferred over the string bass due to its superior ability to project over a band. Although much of the early bass saxophone playing simply filled an "oom-pah" bass role, one of the first to take the bass beyond this was Joseph Samuels. Samuels was a violinist and reed player who occasionally played the bass saxophone in his groups and sometimes even soloed on the instrument.⁴⁸ Other bandleaders that were quick to

⁴⁷ Stephen Cottrell, *The Saxophone* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 145-147.

⁴⁸ Ate van Delden, *Adrian Rollini: The Life and Music of a Jazz Rambler* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2020), 55.

regularly adopt the bass saxophone include Ray Mille, Earl Gresh, Mike Markel, Ben Selvin, Paul Specht, Les Stevens, Henry Santry, Herb Wiedoeft, Ted Lewis, Nebby Krueger, Ted Weems.⁴⁹

As the bass saxophone became increasingly popular in dance bands, Adrian Rollini took notice and decided to pick up the instrument. Through recording and performing with various dance bands, Rollini quickly became a bass saxophone specialist and is perhaps the most well-known and talented bass saxophone player of all time. Rollini's prominence and success as a bass saxophonist further inspired many saxophonists to play the instrument. However, none played with the level of dedication, output, and mastery of the instrument that Rollini displayed. Prominent artists such as Coleman Hawkins and Sidney Bechet are known to have performed on the bass saxophone. Additionally, Spencer Clark, a devoted admirer of Rollini, followed in his footsteps to become a bass saxophone specialist and acted as Rollini's replacement in several instances.

Adrian Rollini

Adrian Rollini, a true master of the bass saxophone, performed with many of the best musicians of the 1920s-1930s and appeared on an astonishing number of recordings. Given Rollini's importance in the history of jazz music and the use of the bass saxophone, a significant account of his life and career is necessary in a document that focuses on the bass saxophone.

⁴⁹ Robinson, Scott, "The Changing Role of the Bass Saxophone," *The Saxophone Journal*, Vol. 14, No. 4.

Below, I aim to provide a modest summary of Rollini's career, primarily as a bass saxophonist,⁵⁰ derived from Delden's biography on Rollini.⁵¹

Born in New York on June 28th, 1903, Adrian Rollini took to music at a very early age, studying piano throughout his youth. At the age of sixteen, with a dislike for school, Rollini decided to leave high school and make music his profession.⁵² His first significant opportunity was to join the Republic Player Roll Corporation in June of 1920 as a pianist. He was marketed as a "sixteen-year-old prodigy" and recorded piano rolls, playing popular tunes of the day. Between the Republic, DeLuxe, and MelOdee labels that Rollini had contracts with, he recorded thirty-five piano rolls in a span of nine months.⁵³

After Rollini's work in recording piano rolls came to an end in the spring of 1921, he spent some time focusing on playing with his orchestra on the piano and xylophone, in which he greatly excelled. Rollini's exceptional xylophone playing, noticed by violinist and bandleader Arthur Hand, led to Rollini being hired by Hand. Soon after, he became a member of the California Ramblers in April 1922, when Hand and Ed Kirkeby formed a partnership to lead this group.⁵⁴ A significant portion of Rollini's career was spent as a member of the California Ramblers, managed by Kirkeby, and when Rollini joined, the band consisted of nine members:

Arthur Hand - leader, violin
William Henry "Bill" Moore – trumpet

⁵⁰ In addition to bass saxophone Rollini performed to varying degrees on piano, vibraphone, goofus, hot fountain pen, drums, and more.

⁵¹ For anyone interested in learning about Rollini's life and career in extensive detail, I suggest reading his newly published biography, *Adrian Rollini: The Life and Music of a Jazz Rambler*, by Ate van Delden. This book of over five hundred pages results from almost forty years of research, started by Tom Faber in 1980 and passed off to Delden in 2006. Delden continued Faber's research and began the immense task of writing this biography, which took twelve years to complete. Delden gives the reader a glimpse into Rollini's life and goes into great detail describing the various groups that Rollini played with, including his performances and recording dates. Additionally, with many specific recordings mentioned, this source is a great starting place for anyone looking to find and listen to some of the many Rollini recordings that can be found online.

⁵² Delden, *Adrian Rollini*, 12-19.

⁵³ Delden, 24-39.

⁵⁴ Although the California Ramblers was initially formed the year before by Ray Kitchingman, when Rollini joined as xylophonist and second pianist, the band was reformed and only included two original members

Lloyd “Ole” Olsen – trombone
 Jimmy Duff – clarinet, alto saxophone
 Fred Cusick – clarinet, tenor saxophone
 Adrian Rollini – xylophone, piano
 Irving Brodsky – piano
 Ray Kitchingman – banjo
 Fred Henry – drums

Kirkeby managed to keep the band very busy, booking many performances including an extended engagement at a lodge in New York and through frequent trips to the recording studio.⁵⁵

In the 1920s, the saxophone was becoming extremely popular, and the bass saxophone was increasingly used in dance bands. Soon after joining the California Ramblers, Rollini rather suddenly decided to pick up the bass saxophone and started playing it in the group in April 1922. As a xylophonist and second pianist, Rollini did not have as much work as the other members and likely saw an opportunity to increase his role in the California Ramblers. There are a couple of accounts as to how Rollini came to playing the bass saxophone. In an interview, Kirkeby stated: “Once during a rehearsal, we sat and talked about how we ought to add some bass instrument to the band like a tuba, bass trombone or something like that. Rollini wondered if it would be OK with a bass sax, and of course it would. The same day he got a sax and started to practice and after only a couple of weeks he had found his right place in the Orchestra.”

However, in a 1934 interview with Warren Scholl, Adrian Rollini told a different story:

Ray Kitchingman played guitar and directed the orchestra. One day “Kitchy” was at Conn’s buying new strings for his guitar when he noticed a reconditioned bass saxophone which was being sold at the special price of \$75. When he next met Adrian he told him to purchase it. The next day Adrian went down to Conn’s and bought the \$75 bass saxophone. Rollini himself does not know to this day why he bought the instrument...The first night Adrian played on his new instrument he acquired a stiff neck, sore throat, and a tightening of the muscles of his stomach. Gradually he played sax more and more often and finally abandoned the piano entirely.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Delden, *Adrian Rollini*, 48-54.

⁵⁶ Delden, 55-56.

After switching to bass, Rollini rarely recorded on the piano or xylophone in the California Ramblers. According to his brother Arthur and Ed Kirkeby, it only took Adrian a few weeks to learn and master the bass, and his progress can be heard on recordings over the first several months playing the bass with the group. The first recording that Rollini can be heard playing the bass was for a gramophone record on June 8th, 1922, where Rollini played simple parts on the beat, with a hard slap-tongue articulation. Sometimes the band would hire a brass bass player for recording sessions, but by September, Rollini was the band's official bass player. The first recorded "solo" line by Rollini was a two-bar break, in "I Wish I Could Shimmy Like My Sister Kate,"⁵⁷ recorded on September, 13th 1922, for Vocalion.⁵⁸ On this record, Rollini's playing is very basic with bass lines consisting of two notes per bar and a carefully played melodic solo break. With time, Rollini's bass parts improved, becoming more intricate and gradually playing more and more solo breaks and extended solos.

After the Post Lodge Inn contract and some touring, Kirkeby entered into a deal to manage an Inn, renaming it the California Rambler's Inn, and thus giving the band a home. The Inn was a huge success; many guests came for dinner and dancing, the band played seven nights a week, and an ample supply of alcohol was available, despite prohibition. In the winter months, when business was slow, Kirkeby would book the band elsewhere, including an extended engagement at the Monte Carlo, starting in October 1923. Additionally, the band frequented the recording studio, put out many recordings on various labels, and quickly gained popularity. Rollini continued to improve at the bass saxophone, playing more prominent roles, including several

⁵⁷ Many referenced Rollini recordings in this document can be found online, on YouTube, or through other streaming sources. I encourage anyone interested in Rollini to find these historical recordings and hear his playing and progress for yourself. Select recordings of Adrian Rollini: <https://bit.ly/Rollini-Bass>

⁵⁸ Delden, *Adrian Rollini*, 55-57.

short solo moments as in the November 1922 recording of “Bees Knees.” By April 1923, Rollini played his longest solo to date on an arranged solo of “I Love Me” and several short solo breaks on “Who’s Sorry Now;” these recordings are likely Rollini’s best playing to date.⁵⁹

The 1922 recording of “Bees Knees” shows Rollini’s improvement on the bass saxophone from his earliest recordings just months earlier. Starting to sound more at ease with the instrument, Rollini no longer restricts himself to bass lines of just two notes per bar and his solo breaks include constant eight note lines. In later years Rollini specifically wrote that one should play mostly in the upper register of the instrument when playing solos and breaks, however in this recording Rollini stays in the lower register of the bass saxophone, perhaps due to the fact that this instrument was still relatively new to him. His Solo on “I Love Me” also stays in the lower range of the instrument and displays Rollini’s increasing technical mastery of the instrument.

In the summer of 1923, the band started to record extensively with Columbia records, almost always featuring Rollini, who sometimes played longer sixteen to thirty-two bar solos. By November, Kirkeby entered an agreement to give Columbia exclusive use of the California Ramblers name on records. However, this did not stop Kirkeby and the musicians of the California Ramblers from recording for other labels, rather many pseudonyms were used, with the Golden Gate Orchestra being the most common. Kirkeby also featured smaller groups from the full band at the Inn and on recordings, such as the Varsity Eight. The smaller groups gave Rollini a chance to shine even more, as in the 1923 recording for the Cameo label, “Oh Joe,” and the Vegabonds’ (another pseudonym) recording of “Sittin’ in a Corner” on the Gennett label.⁶⁰ Rollini’s solo on “Oh Joe” is primarily a statement of the melody, with some embellishments and

⁵⁹ Delden, 62-67.

⁶⁰ Delden, 68-72.

a more virtuosic ending. In “Sittin’ in a Corner,” recorded only about a year and a half after Rollini picked up the bass saxophone, his mastery of the instrument is shown. Rollini is featured playing virtuosic lines with ease in a duet with the melody played by the cornet. Rollini and members of the California Ramblers recorded with many labels under different names, including: The Golden Gate orchestra (Edison and Perfect), the Varsity Eight (Cameo), the Vegabonds (Gennett), the University Six (Harmony), the Goofus Five (Okeh), the Little Ramblers (Columbia), the Five Birmingham Babies (Pathé/Perfect), the Kentucky Blower’s (Gennett), and Ted Wallace and His Orchestra (Okeh).

Given that Kirkeby’s contract with the musicians prohibited them from recording with musicians outside of the California Ramblers, there are not many recordings of Rollini in his early years as a bass saxophonist that exist outside of his role in the California Ramblers. Even if these restrictions were not in place, Rollini might have found it difficult to regularly record with other groups, given that Kirkeby kept him very busy performing almost every night and recording multiple times a week. However, given Rollini’s position in the band, he negotiated with Kirkeby on two occasions to record with other artists. In November 1934, Rollini had the opportunity to record on bass saxophone with Rudy Wiedoeft in his saxophone sextet, playing “The Rosary” by Ethelbert Nevin for the Brunswick label. This work is nothing like the upbeat dance music that the California Ramblers played or even the typical music for which Wiedoeft is known. Rollini was extremely proud of this recording; in a 1929 interview about his career, Rollini hardly mentions his jazz recordings but did mention this recording with Rudy Wiedoeft and the fine organ sound created by six saxophones.⁶¹

⁶¹ Delden, 73-74.

The only other time that Rollini had recorded outside of the California Ramblers while a regular member was with Cliff Edwards (known as Ukulele Ike) in February 1925. After trumpet player Red Nichols joined the California Ramblers, Kirkeby had difficulty enforcing his exclusivity clause. Nichols already had a successful recording career with various artists and did not let Kirkeby stop him from continuing to record with other musicians. Thus, given Rollini's prominent role in the group, Kirkeby permitted him to take this recording date. Rollini played bass saxophone along with Edwards, who sang and played the ukulele on "That's All There Is, There Ain't No More." In addition to providing a prominent bass line throughout, Rollini had a couple of solo breaks. Rollini also played piano and celeste on another title, "Let Me Linger Longer in Your Arms."⁶²

By 1926 Rollini began to lead the band, with Kirkeby still handling the business side of the organization. Additionally, despite the early success of the California Ramblers Inn, business was dying off, and the band often had tour in order to make ends meet. In the spring of 1927, Kirkeby could no longer afford to keep all of his musicians on payroll and began paying musicians for individual occasions. Finally free from Kirkeby's contract, which restricted Rollini from performing with outside musicians, Rollini began freelancing and had no trouble finding work. Although Rollini had stopped performing live with the California Ramblers, Kirkeby continued to hire him for recording sessions. Between April and August, Rollini had participated in at least twenty-five recording sessions for Kirkeby and began recording with many prominent musicians outside of the California Ramblers for the first time. Rollini notably played and recorded with Red Nichols and his Five Pennies, Bix Beiderbecke and his Gang, and other musicians such as Miff Mole, Joe Venuti, and Frank Trumbauer. In March, Rollini participated

⁶² Delden, 101.

in another recording session with Cliff Edwards, whom he had previously recorded with while still under contract with Kirkeby. For this date, Edwards organized a small jazz ensemble to record two titles, “Oh, Baby! Don’t We Get Along” and “Side by Side,” in which Rollini is heard on bass saxophone. In the summer, Rollini maintained a busy recording schedule with various artists. He was prominently featured with Red Nichols and his Five Pennies, on “Cornfed,” “Five Pennies,” and “Mean Dog Blues,” and on various recordings organized by Kirkeby, such as “Clementine” and one of his own compositions “Heartbreakin’ Baby,” which featured Rollini’s longest solo to date of forty-four bars.⁶³ These tunes showcase Rollini’s ability to create masterful bass lines and fills between phrases of the melody, and Rollini’s mature sound. His solos are often based around the melody and he even uses harmonic splits,⁶⁴ an advanced technique for this time period. At this point, Rollini regularly makes uses of the full range of the instrument extending up to a high F, a whole-step above the keyed range of the bass saxophone.

Although Rollini had stayed busy recording with various artists after officially leaving Kirkeby’s payroll, in September 1927, Rollini backed off on his recording dates and focused on his goal of starting his own band. Rollini organized a band of eleven members,⁶⁵ drawing from various musicians he had played with in the past and won a contract to perform at the Club New York for a weekly sum of \$1,750 for the band. Although his band, the New Yorkers, was well paid for the time, it didn’t come close to the weekly pay the Paul Whiteman band received by the same club owners, of \$6,400 per week.⁶⁶ The band began rehearsing regularly; with high standards for the group, Rollini even had the band rehearsing from midnight until 5:00 a.m. on

⁶³ Delden, 141-162.

⁶⁴ Harmonic splits are a form of multiphonics in which multiple partials of a note are sounding at the same time.

⁶⁵ Adrian Rollini-bass saxophone, Sylvester Ahola-trumpet, Bix Beiderbecke, Bill Rank-trombone, Frank Trumbauer-C-melody saxophone, Bobby Davis-alto saxophone, Don Murray-clarinet, Joe Venti-Violin, Frank Signorelli-piano, Chauncey Morehouse-drums

⁶⁶ While on tour, Whitman’s band would sometimes command over \$16,000 per week, according to Delden.

the day that they were to open at the club on September 22nd. Despite a less than desirable turnout, in part due to a radio broadcasting of a world championship boxing match, the band played until 5:00 a.m. Performing at the club at night left the days open, allowing Rollini to participate in a number of recording sessions organized by Frank Trumbauer and Bix Beiderbecke. The band's contract at the Club New York was short-lived due to a lack of business. By October 8th, the club had dropped their dinner show, and soon after, closed on October 15th. Although Rollini got the band an engagement playing at a movie theater, providing entertainment before the picture started, this too was short-lived. Next, Rollini got the band a contract performing with comedian Jack Benny at the Audubon Theater, though this only lasted less than two weeks. Unable to find steady work for the band, the group broke up only two months after their debut at the Club New York. Everyone was able to quickly find work, playing with various groups such as the Whiteman band; Rollini, on the other hand, accepted an offer to join a dance band in London.⁶⁷

Ready for a more stable income source, Rollini and Bobby Davis (from Rollini's band and the California Ramblers) moved to London just before the new year to join a band led by Fred Elizalde at the Savoy, London's top hotel. While at the Savoy, Elizalde's band played for tea dances every other week and performed each night, alternating half-hour sets with two other house bands. In addition to being broadcast at least twice a week by the BBC at the Savoy, Rollini was also featured on a number of recordings of Elizalde's band on the Brunswick label. Although Rollini wasn't freelancing, or making frequent trips to the recording studio as he had in the past, he was happy with his decision to move to London. Rollini was paid very well, earning about \$360 per week;⁶⁸ at the time, this was as much as an average person would earn in six

⁶⁷ Delden, *Adrian Rollini*, 164-176.

⁶⁸ Adjusted for inflation, this would be equivalent to about \$5,500 per week in 2021.

months. Although Rollini had been prominently featured in the band, at first, he was the only bass instrumentalist, and it was thus necessary that he fulfill that role. However, in April 1928, Elizalde expanded the band and hired a bass player,⁶⁹ this freed Rollini from his role as a rhythm section instrumentalist and gave him more freedom as a soloist and melodic ensemble member. In addition to playing at the Savoy, the band also toured around Europe in mid-1928, including a contract for several weeks at Les Ambassadeurs, a luxury hotel in Paris, and at the Royal Palace Hotel in Ostend Belgium. After returning to the Savoy, Elizalde wanted to further expand his band, particularly with more American musicians; therefore, he sent Rollini back to New York to recruit musicians. While in New York, Rollini drew on his past connections and had no trouble finding work, recording with Bert Lown and Red Nichols on various titles. He even participated in a performance and recording session with his old group, the California Ramblers. After the Savoy chose not to renew Elizalde's contract, which ended July 31st, 1929, the band toured Europe and even recorded a soundtrack for a film, *The Way of the Lost Souls*. By December, the effects of the Great Depression were starting to be felt in Europe and Elizalde could no longer continue paying his musicians, resulting in Rollini's decision to return to the United States.⁷⁰

When Rollini returned to the United States, he managed to get a job playing and recording for Bert Lown's band, with whom he recorded during his previous trip to New York. The band regularly performed at the Biltmore hotel and produced many recordings for the Brunswick label. Although Rollini stayed with Bert Lown's band through March 1931 as his primary source of income, he also did a lot of freelance recording work on the side with various artists.⁷¹ Rollini recorded about 190 titles in 1930, hot jazz was becoming obsolete, and his recording output was

⁶⁹ The timing of this may have been in part due to the fact that Rollini returned to the USA for a month due to his father being terminally ill, and to marry his girlfriend, Dixie.

⁷⁰ Delden, *Adrian Rollini*, 177-233.

⁷¹ Delden, 234-256.

cut in more than half the following year. Further, Rollini did not appear on any recordings in 1932. Ready for change, Rollini reconnected with Ed Kirkeby, and together, they led the California Ramblers at a new location, Will Oakland's Hunter Island Inn. Once again, Rollini was a part of the California Ramblers, leading the band at the Inn between May and November 1931. Even though Rollini temporarily left the group when the band stopped playing at the Hunter Island Inn, he and Kirkeby decided to try to recreate their past success of having their own place. In June, they opened the New California Ramblers Inn. This endeavor did not go as planned; business was slow, the musicians were poorly paid, and by September, Kirkeby and Rollini decided to sell the Inn.⁷²

Rollini likely didn't have much work for the remainder of the year, but 1933 brought the return of regular freelance work, recording with various artists. In February, he recorded the first titles issued under his own name, Adrian Rollini and his Orchestra, on the ARC label. Although Rollini does not take any solos on any of the recordings from this date, he moves between bass saxophone, goofus, vibraphone, and xylophone. The same month, Rollini also rejoined Bert Lown's band, performing on bass saxophone and various other instruments. Although the band used a string bass when Rollini joined, the bass was later replaced by Rollini's successor in the California Ramblers, Spencer Clark. This led to a band that used two bass saxophones, with Clark playing the bass part and Rollini functioning as a fourth saxophone. Rollini continued to record under his own name and with other musicians for the rest of the year, though times were changing. In 1933, Rollini played the vibraphone more than ever as the bass saxophone was starting to become obsolete; many viewed it as old-fashioned and preferred to use the string bass. As a master of multiple instruments, Rollini adapted to the changing musical tastes and kept

⁷² Delden, 274-283.

steady work.⁷³ In addition to recording on bass saxophone, vibraphone, and goofus, there are recordings from as late as 1936 in which Rollini played piano and drums.⁷⁴ Rollini did however continue performing in various dance bands and recording on bass saxophone for a number of years. In 1934, Rollini recorded as Adrian's Ramblers for the Brunswick label and also organized a recording session with the Decca label for the first time, listed as Adrian Rollini and His Orchestra. Rollini only played the bass saxophone for this date, despite not having touched the instrument for three months. In these titles, "Sugar," "Davenport Blues," "Somebody Loves Me," and "Riverboat Shuffle," Rollini's days acting as a "bass" player were behind him, as he often played the melody and melodic accompaniment parts.⁷⁵

Ready for a change and a more stable income source, in 1934 Rollini started various businesses. Although his Whitby Grill did not last long, he also started and managed a successful club, Adrian's Tap Room, whose jam sessions attracted many musicians. Rollini even released some records with some of these musicians as Adrian's Tap Room Gang.⁷⁶ After two years of running the Tap Room, in September 1936, Rollini took a different path and started a very successful music store specializing in percussion instruments. With his wife Dixie primarily running the shop, Adrian continued performing and started the Adrian Rollini Trio, consisting of vibraphone, guitar, and bass. Although the trio was a great success, Rollini continued to freelance, rarely playing bass saxophone.⁷⁷ Rollini's final recordings on the bass saxophone took place in January 1938 for Decca. Adrian Rollini and his orchestra recorded three titles, "Bill," "Singin' the Blues," and "The Sweetest Story Ever Told."⁷⁸ Rollini's trio stayed very busy

⁷³ Delden, 285-294.

⁷⁴ Delden, 310-312.

⁷⁵ Delden, 301.

⁷⁶ Delden, 303-305.

⁷⁷ Delden, 317-321.

⁷⁸ Delden, 332-333.

performing, recording, and appearing on radio broadcasts, with Rollini's last recording being from 1953. However, by 1947, Rollini was less invested in his trio as he purchased a lodge in the Florida Keys and would often spend time in Florida engaging in his boating and fishing hobbies.⁷⁹

After spending a couple of weeks in the hospital due to an injury, Rollini passed away from complications on May 15th, 1956. The cause of the injuries remains a mystery, however, with various stories and rumors told. Rollini claimed that he slipped on a rock and twisted his foot; his brother Art said that he fell down a flight of stairs, while a bartender said that after escorting Rollini to his car, he heard him screaming for help and found him on the side of a back road. Other rumors, confirmed by his cousin, state that Rollini's legs were broken by the "mob" to dissuade him from opening a new club. Rollini's wife was encouraged not to pursue further investigation.⁸⁰

Despite Rollini's prominence and contributions to early jazz music, Rollini remains relatively unknown today. A true master of the bass saxophone, among other instruments, Rollini has earned his place amongst the greatest musicians of the day. He performed and recorded with some of the most talented and respected musicians: Benny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey, Jimmy Dorsey, Bix Beiderbecke, Red Nichols, Frank Trumbauer, Artie Shaw, Eddie Lang, Buddy Rich, Joe Venuti, Glenn Miller, Mannie Klein, Fats Waller, Jack Teagarden, and many more. Rollini never had trouble finding work throughout his career and earned an excellent living by playing in various dance bands and freelancing as a recording artist. His recording career spanned over thirty years, appearing on roughly 1,500 titles, with a large portion of that being on the bass saxophone. Perhaps his name is not better known today, given that he was most well-known for

⁷⁹ Delden, 369-371.

⁸⁰ Delden, 381-384.

playing an instrument that ultimately fell out of fashion and general use in the jazz and popular music scene. However, Rollini's legacy lives on through his music and the countless musicians, past and present, that he has influenced.

Rollini's Influence

Rollini influenced many musicians to take up the bass saxophone over his career. Most notably, after hearing Rollini play, Coleman Hawkins decided to get a bass saxophone and recorded with it numerous times with Fletcher Henderson and His Orchestra. Many musicians took notice of Rollini's bass saxophone playing, implementing it in various bands and driving up sales of the bass saxophone for the Conn and Buescher companies. Joe Tartto of the Paul Specht orchestra got a bass saxophone after hearing Rollini play and posed in a photograph with it.⁸¹ Tartto later wrote that although he decided to get a bass "after hearing Adrian play all those beautiful solos and good bass lines, I knew I would never be able to play all those nice musical notes... so I decided to sell my bass sax, and put all my ideas into my tuba."⁸²

While playing at Les Ambassadeurs with Fred Elizalde's band, Rollini met soprano saxophonist Sidney Bechet. Bechet was a member of another band led by Noble Sissle that was also providing entertainment at the hotel. As a result of hearing Rollini play and admiring the bass saxophone's sound, Sissle decided to buy Bechet a bass saxophone, who soon mastered the instrument and later recorded on the instrument in the thirties. While on tour with Elizalde's band, Rollini also met Belgian saxophonist Jean Robert, who had many discussions with Rollini about bass saxophone playing. Inspired by Rollini, Jean Robert decided to get a bass saxophone, and he can be heard on various recordings made by Gus Deloof's band in 1931 on the Pathé

⁸¹ Many bands often took photographs with a bass saxophone, even if no one in the group could play the instrument.

⁸² Delden, *Adrian Rollini*, 104-105.

label.⁸³ Another musician that Rollini had influenced was baritone saxophonist Harry Carney of Duke Ellington's band. Although Carney never played bass saxophone, in interviews, Carney stated: "I tried to get a sound as big as Adrian Rollini... so I suppose whatever sound I get goes back to that." However, Ellington's band did sometimes use a bass saxophone. Adrian's wife, Dixie, had mentioned that whenever they visited the Cotton Club, the band would hide the bass sax when they saw Adrian.⁸⁴

Spencer Clark

Besides Adrian Rollini, few musicians are specifically known for specializing on the bass saxophone. Many professional and amateur saxophonists have picked up the bass, but typically only for occasional use or as secondary to the other saxophone sizes. One musician that primarily performed as a bass saxophonist in a significant way was Adrian Rollini's replacement in the California Ramblers, Spencer Clark. Like Rollini, Clark played multiple instruments, including the mandolin, trumpet, clarinet, alto and tenor saxophone, guitar, xylophone, string bass, and vocals, although he is primarily known as a bass saxophonist.

Born March 15th, 1908 in Baltimore, Spencer Clark grew up in New York and started playing music at a young age. With his first professional gig in 1923 on C-melody saxophone, Clark took up bass saxophone the next year after hearing Rollini perform. Clark describes his first experience hearing Adrian Rollini at the California Ramblers Inn:

So we made it down there one evening and not having any money we sat outside and listened to the band through the open windows. I heard Adrian Rollini, I later learned that it was Adrian, playing xylophone. This guy playing fantastic xylophone... Then I heard

⁸³ Delden, 197-200.

⁸⁴ Delden, 105.

him play the bass saxophone which I'd never heard of before, I didn't know there was such an instrument. And that started a long, long relationship in love with the bass saxophone.

Given that Spencer lived near the Rollini's in Larchmont, Adrian would sometimes give Spencer suggestions on playing the bass saxophone. Eventually, Adrian asked Spencer to sub for him; thus, starting in late 1925, Spencer would occasionally cover for Adrian at the Inn and in the recording studio. Ultimately, Spencer would serve as Adrian's replacement in the group.⁸⁵

Dixie, Adrian's girlfriend at the time, also gave Spencer valuable advice which helped to shape his style as being distinct from Rollini's. Clark recounts this conversation in an interview with Tom Faber:

She said: "I'm going to tell you something. I hope you don't take it the wrong way but I think it's for your own good. Don't try to play like Adrian!" I said: "Why not?" and this was my goal you know. She said: "Well, you're not the right kind of personality to do this. He is a very aggressive person. I don't see you as an aggressive person and it takes that to play as forceful as he does, to be as aggressive as he is on the instrument as well as in his personal life. He is a very aggressive person. Find some other avenue for yourself and don't set him as a goal. Think of other things." And that, in later years, actually paid off because I finally realized that she was right. I was not cut out to do as he was doing. I couldn't do, so why try?⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Delden, 114-115.

⁸⁶ Delden, 115.

As opposed to Rollini, who often had more soloistic and melodic roles in ensembles, “Clark’s musical inclinations and temperament were different from his idol’s, and over the years, his playing became more mellow and inclined towards playing supporting or back-up roles.”⁸⁷

From the late 1920s through the 1930s, Clark played regularly with various dance orchestras in the United States and Europe. In addition to the California Ramblers, Clark played in Joe Tenner’s Stage Band, with George Carhart’s band in France and on Atlantic Ocean liners. While in Europe, Clark also worked with Julian Fuhs in Berlin, Belgian bandleader Lud Gluskin for two and a half years, and French bandleader Ray Ventura, among others.⁸⁸ In addition to primarily serving a supporting role, Clark can also be heard as a soloist on various titles, such as Gluskin’s recording of “I Wanna Go Places and Do Things” and “Tiger Rag.” In the 1930s, Clark played with various dance bands after returning to the United States, including with Bert Lown’s band in 1931 after Rollini left the group, and again in 1933, playing alongside Rollini as a second bass saxophonist. Clark has appeared on over one hundred recordings throughout his career. Many of these were with Gluskin’s band in which he improvised all of his parts, solos and accompaniments.⁸⁹

After 1939, music became secondary to Clark, with careers working for a newspaper, in the airline industry, and as a purchasing agent. Still gigging on the side, Clark joined the Windy City Seven in 1954 on bass saxophone, which produced an album, *Echoes of Chicago*, in 1957. After his retirement in the early seventies, Clark formed a trio that regularly performed in North Carolina. Clark also produced a full album in 1979 playing various jazz standards on bass saxophone with a rhythm section, titled *Spencer Clark and his Bass Sax play Sweet & Hot*. The

⁸⁷ Clark, Spencer, *Master of the Bass saxophone*, Fat Cat’s Jazz 171, 1976, vinyl, liner notes.

⁸⁸ Eugene Chadbourne, “Spencer Clark: Biography & History,” AllMusic, accessed March 12, 2021, <https://www.allmusic.com/artist/spencer-clark-mn0000729748>.

⁸⁹ Robert Williams, “Spencer Clark,” *Saxophone Journal* 14, no.4 (1990): 14-22.

liner notes describe this album as one of a kind and give some background on Clark and his experiences and developing style:

For the first time ever, the bass saxophone is presented as the dominant instrument through a complete set of tunes. This horn is cumbersome, unwieldy and awkward to play, mechanically vulnerable to fingering pressure as well to travel knocks. Yet its voice, rich and sonorous, possessing a timbre all its own, gives pleasure to those who master its problems. The soloist on this album, SPENCER CLARK, has had a love affair with this horn since he first heard it played by ADRIAN ROLLINI with the California Ramblers in 1924. After a period of emulating ROLLINI and subbing for him at times, he began to develop his own playing style – more melodic yet still rhythmic. His recorded works from 1925 through 1928 clearly show the ROLLINI influence but later discs with LUD GLUSKIN in Europe (1929-1930) show the developing style. With BERT LOWN in 1931, when he replaced ROLLINI, the earlier approach was required but, with VIC BERTON and DICK STABILE, from 1934 through 1937, the melodic, rhythmic style became established, as demonstrated in this album. In 1974 when the Legendary JOE VENUTI decided to recreate his old BLUE FOUR on *Chiaroscuro*, Spence was asked to participate, and again we heard the Rollini-type sound.

Through his love affair with the bass sax, Spence felt a growing desire to show that the big horn could do more than pop out bass notes or play short spot solos. This desire has become a reality here. With just a rhythm section, the bass sax is the only horn present. In this LP it is heard in many moods – hot, sweet, sometimes pensive but always inventive and exciting...⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Spencer Clark, *Spencer Clark's Bass Sax Plays Sweet and Hot*, Audophile 131, 1979, vinyl, liner notes.

Clark also has another album issued under his name, *Spencer Clark, Master of the Bass Saxophone*, from 1973. This album, however, does not feature Clark in a significant way, like his 1979 album. Instead, this album was recorded live at the Manassas Jazz Festival with a small jazz ensemble. Although Clark does solo, he is not featured any more than the other musicians on this recording and primarily plays a supporting role.⁹¹

Significant Performers

Min Leibbrook

Min Leibbrook (1903-1943) was an American musician that performed in various dance bands, specializing in bass instruments. Although he started on cornet, he picked up bass saxophone and tuba, performing in the Ten Foot Band in Chicago, with the Wolverines, and with the Paul Whiteman Orchestra from 1927 through 1931. In the mid-thirties, Leibbrook also performed on string bass, in addition to bass saxophone, with Lennie Hayton and the Three T's. As a freelance musician, Leibbrook appeared on various sessions led by Frankie Trumbauer and Bix Beiderbecke and occasionally filled in for Adrian Rollini in the late twenties. Though not at the level of Rollini, Leibbrook was a fine bass saxophone player, capable of playing with a good tone, playing compelling bass lines and engaging solos.⁹² His solo on "San" with the Paul Whiteman Orchestra is an especially great example of his melodic playing and the incorporation of harmonic splits that were popularized by Rollini.⁹³

⁹¹ Clark, Spencer, *Master of the Bass Saxophone*, Fat Cat's Jazz 171, 1976, vinyl, liner notes.

⁹² Wilford F., "Leibbrook, Min," Grove Music Online, accessed March 13, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.J264600>; Scott Yanow, "Min Leibbrook: Biography," AllMusic, accessed March 13, 2021, <https://www.allmusic.com/artist/min-leibbrook-mn0001798278/biography>.

⁹³ Select recordings of Min Leibbrook on bass saxophone: <http://bit.ly/Leibbrook-Bass>

Joe Rushton

Another prominent bass saxophonist that performed regularly on the instrument from 1928 through 1964 was Joe Rushton (1907-1964). Although he started with drums, clarinet, and the other saxophone sizes, once Rushton picked up the bass saxophone it became his primary instrument. Throughout his career, Rushton occasionally played with the California Ramblers, as well as with Ted Weems, Jimmy McPartland, Bud Freeman, Benny Goodman, Horace Heidt, Floyd O'Brien, the Rampart Street Paraders, and Red Nichols' Five Pennies. Playing with Nichols was Rushton's most significant and long-term gig lasting from 1947 until 1963. Primarily playing as a sideman, his only recordings as a bandleader were for six songs with the Jump label in 1945 and 1947, as Rushton's California Ramblers. Rushton played with impressive control over the instrument and played many well-crafted virtuosic and rhythmic solos, as in Nichols' recording of "Clarinet Marmalade" and Rushton's "After You've Gone." Rushton's playing incorporates more modern jazz language in comparison to earlier players and also uses harmonic splits. The sweeter side of his beautiful playing is featured on Nichols' recording of "Peaceful Valley," a ballad that featured Rushton as the lead over most of the melody.⁹⁴ Though Rushton does not have the name recognition of Rollini, he was undoubtedly a master at the bass saxophone and rightfully belongs next to Rollini as one of the greatest jazz bass saxophonists of all time.⁹⁵

Coleman Hawkins and Billy Fowler

One band from the 1920s that regularly used the bass saxophone was Fletcher Henderson and his Orchestra. Billy Fowler typically played the bass lines in this group on bass saxophone and,

⁹⁴ Select recordings of Joe Rushton on bass saxophone: <http://bit.ly/Rushton-Bass>

⁹⁵ Helen Kahlke, "Joe Rushton: A Very Well-Known Bass Saxophonist," The Bassic Sax Blog, March 11, 2014, <https://bassic-sax.info/blog/2014/dixieland-band-video-bass-sax/>.

after Coleman Hawkins joined the group in 1923, Fowler and Hawkins would occasionally switch parts. After Fowler left the group, bass lines were typically played by the tuba; however, Hawkins did continue to play the bass saxophone in the group occasionally.⁹⁶ Fowler can be heard on many recordings with the group from 1923. Some recordings in which Fowler has short exposed solo moments include “West Indian Blues,” “Charleston Crazy,” “You’ve Got to Get Hot,” “Shake Your Feet,” and “Gulf Coast Blues.”⁹⁷ Although Fowler’s bass saxophone playing is not at the level established by Rollini, nor was he ever featured in extended improvised solos, Fowler’s playing was superior to Hawkins’ earliest attempts on the instrument. Some early recordings in which Hawkins is featured on the bass saxophone include a June 1924 recording of “I Can’t Get the One I want,” on the September 1924 recording “Cold Mamas,” and on the August 1925 recording of “Carolina Stomp.” In these recordings, it is clear that Hawkins was new to the instrument; Hawkins lacks the control over the instrument that Rollini plays with, and his solo breaks sound labored and do not compare to his tenor playing. A later recording from November 1925 of “Spanish Shawl” also features Hawkins on the bass saxophone as a bass instrument and in two extended solos. This recording shows significant improvement in Hawkins’ bass playing, sounding more at ease with the instrument and playing with an improved tone. Though the December 1925 recording of “Peaceful Valley” seems to use the tuba throughout as the bass instrument, Hawkins is heard on bass saxophone in a short but effective break at the very end of the tune. That same month, Hawkins is heard on a recording of “Nobody’s Rose” with some of his best bass playing to date, playing a thirty-two-bar solo based on the melody. Hawkins also is featured with an extended solo on the 1925 recording of “Pensacola.” In 1927, on a recording for Paramount, Hawkins can be heard on bass saxophone

⁹⁶ “Coleman Hawkins,” [basssax.com](http://www.basssax.com), accessed April 17, 2021, <http://www.basssax.com/colemanhawkins.htm>.

⁹⁷ Select recordings of Billy Fowler on bass saxophone: <http://bit.ly/Fowler-Bass>

playing soloistic lines over the arrangement throughout the tune “Hop Off” in the style of Adrian Rollini. After 1928, Hawkins rarely played bass saxophone, although he is heard briefly towards the end of a 1931 recording of “Clarinet Marmalade.”⁹⁸

Harry Gold

British saxophonist Harry Gold (1907-2005) was directly inspired by Rollini to take up the bass saxophone, making it his primary instrument. Gold played as a full-time musician in various dance bands. After seeing Rollini perform in Fred Elizalde’s band, he immediately decided to adopt the bass and bought an old spare bass from Rollini. Gold was most well-known for his work with his group, Harry Gold’s Pieces of Eight, a Dixieland band that Gold toured with on bass saxophone.⁹⁹ Gold can be heard improvising on various recordings with this group, including his album *Harry Gold and His Pieces of Eight – Live in Leipzig*. The Ballade “Poor Butterfly” features Gold as the lead with a beautiful, expressive sound.¹⁰⁰

Other Groups and Artists

Many dance orchestras, big bands, and small groups used the bass saxophone in the twentieth century. In addition to the many groups previously mentioned, in 1923, Charlie Jackson can be heard playing the bass saxophone alongside Louis Armstrong in King Oliver’s Creole Jazz Band.¹⁰¹ In the late 1930s, Joe Garland, composer of “In the Mood”, even doubled on bass saxophone in Edgar Hayes’s swing band, replacing the baritone, and in the 1940s with Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra. Later, Otto Hardwick occasionally played bass with the Duke Ellington Orchestra between 1927 and 1943. Recordings of his bass playing are not common, but

⁹⁸ Select recordings of Coleman Hawkins on bass saxophone: <http://bit.ly/Hawkins-Bass>

⁹⁹ Jason Ankeny, “Biography: Harry Gold,” <https://www.allmusic.com/artist/harry-gold-mn0001898960/biography>.

¹⁰⁰ Select Recordings of Harry Gold on bass saxophone: <http://bit.ly/Gold-Bass>

¹⁰¹ Recordings of King Oliver’s Creole Jazz Band, including bass saxophone as indicated: <http://bit.ly/Jackson-Bass>

he can be prominently heard on “Doin’ the Frog” from 1927.¹⁰² Later, in the 1960s, Stan Kenton also used the bass saxophone in some of his groups, including the Mellophonium Orchestra and the Neophonic Orchestra. Other groups that used the bass saxophone included Boyd Raeburn and His Orchestra from the 1940s, and a Dutch band, the Original Ramblers. Additionally, the 1970s Dixieland revivalist band, The Memphis Nighthawks, prominently used the bass saxophone, played by Dave Feinman. Another current group, Uptown Lowdown, frequently features two virtuosic bass saxophonists, performing Dixieland style music.¹⁰³

Vince Giordano

In terms of jazz bass saxophonists that are still performing at the time of this writing, Vince Giordano (b. 1952) is among the most established. Giordano’s specialty is in jazz music of the 1920s and 1930s, leading a New York-based group, the Nighthawks Orchestra. With a collection of over 60,000 dance band arrangements from the era, the band plays music from various artists. As the bass player, Giordano regularly switches between bass saxophone, tuba, and string bass. In addition to regularly performing at various clubs and festivals, the band has been featured on the soundtracks of multiple movies and TV shows and a documentary was created about this group in 2017.¹⁰⁴

James Carter

Today, there are a handful of players that regularly perform on the bass, playing hot jazz and Dixieland music. However, few players have significantly used the bass saxophone in more modern jazz music. Although jazz musician James Carter does not primarily play the bass

¹⁰² Robinson, “The Changing Role of the Bass Saxophone.”

¹⁰³ Select recordings of Uptown Lowdown: <http://bit.ly/Uptownlowdown-Bass>

¹⁰⁴ Vince Giordano, Vince Giordano: Musician and Leader of the Nighthawks Orchestra, accessed March 25, 2021, <https://vincegiordano.com/>; *Vince Giordano: There's a Future in the Past* (Hudson West Productions), accessed March 15, 2021, <https://www.amazon.com/Vince-Giordano-Theres-Future-Past/dp/B0795BV7GG>.

saxophone, he is known to occasionally perform on the instrument and has appeared on a number of recordings playing the bass saxophone. In particular, his album *Chasin' the Gypsy* from 2000 prominently features the bass saxophone on several tracks. “Nuages,” “Artillerie Lourde,” and “I’ll Never Be the Same” all showcase Carter on the bass saxophone, playing the melody and in extended virtuosic solos. Carter also appears on bass saxophone as a sideman on Sonny Simmons 2001 album, *The Cosmosamatics* and with Odean Pope on the 2009 album, *Odean’s List*. On these recordings Carter displays impressive mastery over the instrument, playing with a brighter sound and more aggressive approach than many of the early jazz bass saxophonists.¹⁰⁵

Bass Saxophone in Rock Music

In addition to the bass saxophone’s prominence in early jazz and revivalist groups, the bass saxophone has also made appearances in various rock bands. For example, some prominent groups that have used the bass saxophone include Angelo Moore with the band Fishbone, John Linnell in They Might Be Giants, Rodney Slater in the Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band, Ralph Carney in Tin Huey, Dana Colley in Morphine, Kurt McGettrick with Frank Zappa, Alto Reed with the Bob Seger and the Silver Bullet Band, and Blaise Garza in Violent Femmes. Colin Stetson has also performed with many groups and artists including Arcade Fire, Bon Iver, TV on the Radio, and LCD Soundsystem. The bass saxophone was even used in the horn section of Paul Simon’s historic album *Graceland* on “You Can Call Me Al,” played by Ronald Cuber.

¹⁰⁵ Select recording of James Carter on bass saxophone: <http://bit.ly/Carter-Bass>

CHAPTER THREE

MODERN USES OF THE BASS SAXOPHONE

Introduction

Since the invention of the saxophone, the bass saxophone has risen and fallen out of popularity multiple times. After its initial uses in the mid-nineteenth century, it saw declining use as other saxophone sizes rose to prominence. However, in the 1920s, the bass saxophone was in the spotlight through its frequent use in dance bands. In the 1930s, when hot jazz was starting to fall out of style, so did the bass saxophone. Although it saw regular use in the following decades, its frequency of use does not compare to that of the 1920s. In the early to mid-twentieth century, the bass saxophone was increasingly being used in the wind ensemble, however its use in this ensemble also diminished with time. In recent years the bass saxophone has yet again seen increasing use. A series of articles written about the bass saxophone in the late 1980s mentions a sort of revival of the bass saxophone, both in terms of performing early jazz music and in contemporary music. In 1989, two concert solo works for the bass saxophone were cited to exist, however the number of solo works for the bass saxophone has grown substantially in recent years, in large part thanks to Andreas van Zoelen, who has commissioned many works for the instrument. Recently, saxophonist Colin Stetson has also helped to rise the bass saxophone to prominence with his unique multi-layered performance style that explores the harmonic and timbral possibilities of the instrument.

Use of the Bass Saxophone in Wind Ensembles

In addition to the bass saxophone's use in early military bands, it began to be used in civilian bands in the late nineteenth century as well. Bands led by Patrick Gilmore and John Philip Sousa often featured full saxophone sections, including the bass saxophone. Many editions of Sousa's marches include bass saxophone parts, likely staying true to the original scoring, though some may have also added bass saxophone parts as that was part of the standard instrumentation for a wind ensemble at the time. In the first half of the twentieth century, the bass saxophone was typically considered part of the standard wind band instrumentation and it was common for original works and transcriptions to include a bass saxophone part. In particular, A.A. Harding, director of the University of Illinois Wind ensemble from 1905-1948, is credited with influencing the instrumentation of wind ensembles at American universities. In the twenties, Harding regularly used a full saxophone section including the bass and likely influenced other wind ensembles and composers to use the instrument.¹⁰⁶ Another aspect that helped solidify wind ensemble instrumentation had to do with the National School Band Contest. After the initial contest in 1923, discussions to solidify an instrumentation for bands interested in entering the competition began and in 1927 the National School Band Contests booklet listed an acceptable instrumentation for a sixty-eight-member band, which included a bass saxophone.

To give an idea of the magnitude of works that include a bass saxophone part, a wind ensemble repertoire list of works that make use of the bass saxophone is given in Appendix B. Many commonly performed works include bass saxophone parts, even though directors frequently omit this part. Many marches by Sousa and Karl King use the bass saxophone and the

¹⁰⁶ Manfredo, Joseph, "Albert Austin Harding and His Influence on the Development of the Instrumentation of the American Collegiate Wind Band," *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, no. 125 (1995): 60-74. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40318726>.

commonly performed Boosey & Hawkes editions of Holst's First and Second Suites include bass saxophone parts (though Holst didn't originally write for bass). Numerous works by Percy Grainger used a large saxophone section, including the bass saxophone, such as *Lincolnshire Posy*, and Florent Schmitt's *Dionysiaques* also includes a part for the bass. Other prominent wind ensemble works that have a bass saxophone part include *Toccata Marziale* by Ralph Vaughan Williams, *Suite Française* by Darius Milhaud, *Chester* by William Schuman, and *An Outdoor Overture* by Aron Copland. Karel Husa also used the bass saxophone in many of his wind ensemble works, such as *Music for Prague* and *Apotheosis of this Earth*. Alfred Reed included optional bass saxophone parts in many of his works and multiple recent works by various composers also include optional parts. Recent works by prominent composers that uses a bass saxophone include David Maslanka's *Traveler* and his *Symphony VIII*, as well as William Bolcom's *First Symphony for Band*. Unusual scorings of works that use bass saxophone include *Atmósferas* by Alicia Terzian in which bass saxophone is the only saxophone that is used, *Dream Sequence, op. 22* by Ernst Krenek which uses two bass saxophone parts, *El Arca de Noé* by Oscar Navarro which uses three bass saxophone parts, and *Night Journey* by Daniel Basford which uses a bass saxophone, and optional contrabass and subcontrabass saxophones.

Despite the bass saxophone's relatively prominent use in wind ensemble literature in the first half of the twentieth century, the instrument is seldomly written for in modern compositions and rarely used even when bass saxophone parts do exist. Many composers likely choose not to write for the bass saxophone because many players and institutions do not own bass saxophones due to their prohibitive cost. Furthermore, even if a university program owns a bass saxophone, many directors may choose not to use the bass saxophone even when a part is written for the instrument, given that many bass saxophones are old and in poor playing condition. These

instruments are also very difficult to play in tune and with an acceptable sound, without requiring the player to spend a considerable amount of time becoming acquainted with the instrument.

Recently, the bass saxophone has seen an increased use in university wind ensembles. This is likely due to the fact that more music programs are investing in modern bass saxophones that are often easier to play than their vintage counterparts. An increased number of affordable bass saxophones have also become available in recent years. A number of university wind ensembles, such as the University of Michigan, have regularly started using the bass saxophone after acquiring a new instrument. In addition to utilizing the instrument on some of the many works that include a bass saxophone part, it is also frequently used as a substitute for the contrabass clarinet. The bass saxophone will likely see a steady increase in use in wind ensemble music and beyond as more players and universities acquire new instruments.

Modern Orchestral Uses of the Bass Saxophone

As previously mentioned, the bass saxophone was used in a few early orchestral and operatic works by Kastner, Fry, Strauss, and Schoenberg. Besides these works, the bass saxophone is seldomly used in the orchestra. One orchestral work that includes a bass saxophone part (doubling on tenor saxophone) is Gérard Grisey's 1974 spectralist work, *Dérives*, for two orchestral groups. Besides these works, I am not aware of any other orchestral compositions using the bass saxophone. However, it has been used in the pit orchestras of a couple of musicals. The bass saxophone is used in one of the reed books of Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story*, as well as in *The Music Man*, by Meredith Wilson.

Significant Performers

More players have started playing the bass saxophone in recent years, exploring the various tonal possibilities of the instrument. There are many professional and amateur musicians that regularly perform on the bass saxophone in a variety of genres, some of whom use the bass in a jazz context were discussed in chapter two. Below I will highlight a few select performers that are helping to establish the bass saxophone in contemporary music through unique and innovative performance styles and by significantly increasing the repertoire for the instrument. Additionally, the bass saxophone has been seeing an increased use in various saxophone ensembles, further increasing its general use.

Andreas van Zoelen

Dutch saxophonist Andreas van Zoelen studied at the Barbants Conservatorim in the Netherlands, teaches at the Fontys Academy of Music in Tilburg, and is a member of the Raschèr Saxophone Quartet. As a bass saxophonist, he has grown the repertoire for the instrument more than any other individual. With over 140 works written for Zoelen, a majority of these are for bass saxophone. These works for bass saxophone cover a broad spectrum, including solo works, works with piano, electronics, chamber music, and concertos. Zoelen also regularly performs in the Spectrum Duo with his wife and has commissioned many works for this ensemble, consisting of bass saxophone and English horn. Repertoire lists in Appendix B indicate which works were written for Zoelen.¹⁰⁷ Some of the many works written for Zoelen are fairly simple and by no means compositional masterpieces. However, a number of these works are quite effective and some use extended techniques on the bass saxophone, such as altissimo, quarter tones, slap tongue, and multiphonics.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Andreas van Zoelen, November 9, 2020, <https://vanzoelen.eu/>.

¹⁰⁸ Select recordings of Zoelen on bass saxophone: <http://bit.ly/Zoelen-Bass>

Colin Stetson

Colin Stetson (born 1975) is a Canadian-American saxophonist and composer and is well-known for his work on the bass saxophone. Stetson holds a degree in saxophone performance from the University of Michigan and pioneered a new style of saxophone playing. Stetson's playing is truly unique, turning the saxophone into a polyphonic instrument capable of producing multiple layers at the same time: melody, accompaniment, harmony, percussion, etc. Stetson's avant-garde and experimental style fuses together various genres such as metal, post-rock, contemporary electronics, and minimalism to create something completely new. It is necessary to hear for one's self to fully grasp its nature.¹⁰⁹ Typical characteristics of Stetson's playing may include repeated rhythmic ostinato motives, glissing through the harmonic series, multiphonics, singing while playing, percussive key sounds, and circular breathing, all of which create captivating and intense musical soundscapes. Stetson frequently performs as a solo musician and has numerous albums, in which the bass saxophone is frequently used. Some examples that demonstrate Stetson's style and the polyphonic nature of his music include, "Judges" from his 2011 album *New History Warfare Vol. 2: Judges*, "Hunted" from the 2013 album *New History Warfare Vol. 3: To See More Light*. Stetson has also composed and recorded soundtracks for various motion pictures using his characteristic compositional and performance style. Besides his work as an individual artist, Stetson frequently collaborates with other artists and has performed with many indie rock groups, such as Arcade Fire, Bon Iver, Feist, TV on the Radio, Tom Waits, and more.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Select recordings of Stetson on bass saxophone: <https://bit.ly/Stetson-Bass>

¹¹⁰ "Colin Stetson," Colin Stetson, accessed April 7, 2021, <https://www.colinstetson.com/>.

Nick Zoulek

Nick Zoulek is a saxophonist specializing in contemporary music who frequently performs on the bass saxophone. His performances often feature his own compositions, incorporate improvisation and multimedia in creative ways, and fuse together classical, jazz, experimental, and rock idioms. His own works seem to draw inspiration from the work of Colin Stetson, exploring the harmonic spectrum of the bass saxophone with multiphonics and overblowing of partials, the use of repetitive and gradually changing ostinatos, as well as the incorporation of singing while playing, as a way to add an additional voice.¹¹¹ His album, *Rushing Past Willow*, features the bass saxophone on several tracks: “Silhouette of a Storm-bent Tree,” “These Roots Grow Deep,” “Leafless, Against The Gray Sky,” and “Held Within Untamed Space.” Much of Zoulek’s work is accompanied by compelling visual media. Also an accomplished classical saxophonist, Zoulek holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Contemporary Music Performance from Bowling Green State University.¹¹²

The Saxophone Ensemble

The saxophone ensemble has played an important role in the history of the instrument and has provided a commonplace for the bass saxophone to be heard in an ensemble setting. One of the first pieces ever written for saxophone was a sextet that called for two bass saxophones in C by Georges Kastner, and saxophone sextets such as the Six Brown Brothers in the early twentieth century helped propel the saxophone into fame. In more recent years, saxophone ensembles have become a common sight at many universities, and a number of professional and community-based groups have formed. Prominent saxophone ensembles of the past and present

¹¹¹ Select recordings of Zoulek on bass saxophone: <https://bit.ly/Zoulek-Bass>

¹¹² “Nick Zoulek,” Nick Zoulek, accessed April 6, 2021, <http://nickzoulek.com/>.

include such groups as the Raschèr Saxophone Orchestra, the Mi-Bemol Saxophone Ensemble, the Eastman Saxophone Project (E.S.P), the Megalopolis Saxophone Orchestra, and the National Saxophone Choir of Great Brittan, the Nuclear Whales Saxophone Orchestra, and the Moanin' Frogs Saxophone Sextet.

Many university saxophone ensembles exist; however, the Eastman Saxophone Project is likely the most prominent and highly regarded ensemble of this nature. E.SP. was formed in 2010 and performs entirely from memory, without a conductor. This virtuosic, high-level ensemble has seen significant success and, in many ways, has set the standard for saxophone ensemble playing.

In addition to the saxophone sextet's prominence in the early twentieth- century, several saxophone sextets have seen success in recent years, such as the Nuclear Whales, and the Moanin' Frogs. The Nuclear Whales, though no longer performing, were a successful touring ensemble in the 1980s through the early 2000s. This ensemble performed popular and entertaining arrangements in a theatrical manner and has five albums: *Nuclear Whales* (1986), *Whalin'* (1989), *Thar They Blow* (1991), *Gone Fission* (1992), *Isotopia* (1997), and *Fathom This: A Retrospective* (1999).

The Moanin' Frogs, formed by students at the University of Michigan in 2011, has since transitioned to become a professional touring ensemble. With the original intention to bring back the music of the "Sax Craze," the groups repertoire quickly expanded to include a variety of genres, including ragtime, orchestral transcriptions, jazz, popular music and more. The group frequently performs for concert series and educational events around the country and abroad, and was the first-prize winner of the M-Prize Chamber Arts Competition Wind Division in 2018. The Moanin' Frogs currently have one self-titled album released in 2017 and have begun planning

their second album. Lucas Hopkins, the author of this document, has been the group's bass saxophonist since 2014.

CHAPTER FIVE

A PERFORMER'S GUIDE TO THE BASS SAXOPHONE

Many pedagogical resources exist for the saxophone, but few include any information directly related to the bass saxophone. This chapter discusses equipment for the bass saxophone and gives advice for playing the instrument, including essential alternate fingerings and altissimo fingerings.

Equipment

Bass saxophones and its related equipment are fairly rare products in music stores and are often impossible to play test. Lists and descriptions of some of the available products related to the bass saxophone are given below in order to aid the bass saxophonist in selecting the proper equipment for their needs.

Bass Saxophones

There are essentially two main types or styles of bass saxophones, the American-style long wrap, or the French-style short wrap. Many players describe the long wrap horns as having a bigger sound and the short wrap horns as being more focused and easier to play. The most common long wrap instruments are the vintage Conn and Buescher basses from the 1920s-1930s. Although there are many bass saxophones from this time period branded under different names, most are stencils of the Conn and Buescher basses and are essentially exactly the same. German manufacturer Keilwerth also currently makes a long wrap bass saxophone. Additionally, the

Chinese manufacturer Jinyin makes long wrap bass saxophones that are sold under various brand names.

The French style short wrap instruments are based on the design of Selmer mark VI and Series II bass saxophones. In addition to Selmer, many short wrap stencils are being produced by the Chinese company Jinbao, and sold by various brands. Many of these Chinese basses play quite well and are much cheaper than a Selmer, though they may lack some of the quality control and refinement that the Selmer basses possess. In general, short wrap basses have improved response and intonation over their long wrap counterparts.

In addition to the two main types of bass saxophones, instrument manufacturer Benedikt Eppelsheim also has a uniquely designed bass saxophone. This instrument includes an additional valve for the ease of altissimo. Brazilian manufacturer, Gallasine saxophones also makes bass saxophones of various shapes, and has even made bass saxophones with an extended low range, down to low A or G.

Long Wrap Bass Saxophones:

Conn
Buescher
Couf
Kenilworth SX90
International Woodwind 602
Various other stencil names

Short Wrap Bass Saxophones:

Selmer Series II
Selmer Mark VI
International Woodwind 661
Oleg
Levante
John Packer
P. Mauriat

Sakkusu
 J'Elle Stainer
 Various other stencil names

Others:

Benedikt Eppelsheim
 Galassine

Mouthpieces

A number of modern and vintage mouthpiece options exist for the bass saxophone. Some players even find success using a baritone saxophone mouthpiece, though this could potentially cause issues with intonation. Several modern bass saxophone mouthpieces have the same outside dimensions of their baritone counterparts, allowing the use of baritone reeds and ligatures, although the inside chamber does differ. In addition to modern bass mouthpieces available today and original vintage bass mouthpieces, a number of players use modified baritone mouthpieces.

Bass Saxophone Mouthpieces:

Selmer C*
 Vandoren V5
 Jody Jazz DV
 International Woodwind
 Caravan
 Runyon model 88 (modified baritone)
 Conn
 Buescher

I have only tried a handful of bass saxophone mouthpieces and therefore cannot comment on all of these. The Selmer C* is a good mouthpiece that is especially well-suited for classical playing and has an ease of control and a warm sound. The Jody Jazz DV bass mouthpiece is capable of producing a big, full sound that is not too bright. I felt the Caravan lacked a warm core to the sound and power as compared to my Selmer C* (I also had to expand the bore of the

mouthpiece to fit on my Selmer bass). I haven't tried a Vandoren V5 but some players consider them inferior to a Selmer C* bass mouthpiece in terms of sound and tuning.

Reeds

Bass saxophone reeds by several manufacturers exist, although it may be possible to use baritone saxophone reeds, depending on the mouthpiece. A number of modern bass saxophone mouthpieces, such as the Selmer C*, appear to have the same external dimensions as a baritone mouthpiece, allowing baritone reeds to fit (and they are cheaper). Bass saxophone reeds would also work on these mouthpieces, but often are not necessary and likely will not give improved results. With larger mouthpieces, especially some vintage bass mouthpieces, bass saxophone reeds may be the best option to ensure that the reed is wide enough to fully covering the rails. I personally prefer using baritone reeds, D'Addario Reserve 3.5, on my Selmer C* bass mouthpiece, and Hemke or D'Addario Jazz select reeds on my Jody Jazz bass mouthpiece. I have tried Vandoren bass saxophone reeds, but do not prefer these, especially since Vandoren's bass saxophone reeds do not come in half-size strengths.

Suggested Reeds:

Baritone saxophone reeds by your favorite manufacturer, such as D'Addario, Vandoren, or Légère

or

Bass specific reeds:

Vandoren, traditional

Légère, classic (synthetic)

Alexander, Classique

Marca, Superieure

Rico

Cases

Having a good case that fits your needs is essential for protecting your instrument. Often the case that comes with your instrument will suffice, but many vintage horns may no longer have sturdy cases in good shape. Alternatively, lighter cases allow for easy transportation to gigs, or

sturdy cases could perhaps be checked on an airplane. Several commercially available and custom-made cases exist. As I often fly with a bass saxophone for performances, I use a custom carbon fiber case made by Michael Manning, and check it under the plane without issue.

Available Bass Saxophone Cases:

Gard Bags, Bass Saxophone Gig Bag
 Gard Bags, Bass Saxophone Wheelie
 Fazley, Bass Saxophone Case
 Bass Bags, Bass Saxophone Gig Bag
 Glenn Cronkhite, Bass Sax
 Selmer, Bass saxophone Light Case
 Manning Custom, Bass Saxophone Case (custom made)

Stands

Several bass saxophone stands exist. The SaxRax stand may be the most widely available, and there are a couple other options made and sold on a smaller scale. The new stand by WoodWindDesign is carbon fiber and can fit in the bell of the saxophone. The stand made by Andreas Kaling can be easily used at different heights allowing the player to play in various positions with the saxophone supported with by the stand. A number of individuals have made their own bass saxophone stands: Adrian Rollini even made his own stand that he used to hold the instrument while playing.

Available Bass Saxophone Stands:

SaxRax, bass saxophone stand
 Andreas Kaling, bass saxophone stand
 WoodWindDesign, bass saxophone stand

Playing the Bass Saxophone

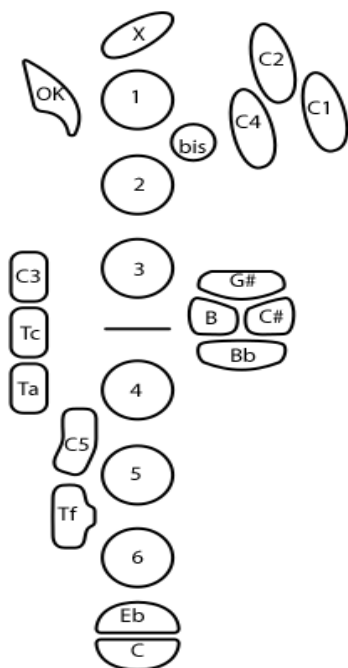


Figure 4:
Fingering chart with labels

General Advice

Although the bass saxophone shares the same set of fingerings as any other saxophone, it certainly has its challenges and is unlikely that anyone's first attempt at playing the instrument will be without fault. One of the obvious challenges with the bass saxophone is the amount of air needed to play the instrument. It is essential that the player takes efficient breaths to maximize lung capacity, but nonetheless, playing the instrument will require more frequent breaths than even the baritone and careful planning of breaths may be necessary. Additionally, the bass saxophone is heavy, so be kind to your body and don't use a neck strap. Most harnesses that work well for baritone will also work on bass, though using a peg or stand to support the instrument is also advisable when possible.

In general, a proficient saxophonist can reasonably switch between the various saxophone sizes without too many major issues. The bass on the other hand may pose a problem to many players at first, given its idiosyncrasies and flaws. I have heard several saxophonists attempt to play the bass without success, often having trouble keeping a stable tone and not accidentally overblowing notes to a higher partial. In terms of accidentally producing higher partials on a given note, one should experiment with their voicing on the bass saxophone to find what works for them, even if this is different than what you might do on the other saxophone sizes. I find that if you play with too high of a voicing (tongue position too far forward or high) then you will overshoot notes more frequently. For example, when working with a student on bass saxophone, they found it almost impossible to play a handful of notes without consistently overshooting them. I tried the instrument the student was playing and was able to play it without issue. However, when I changed to a higher voicing, I started experiencing the same issues as the student. Although this student was used to playing with a relatively high and forward voicing, which can work well on the other saxophone sizes, it did not work for him on the bass. As soon as he stopped trying to play the bass as he was used to playing his alto or baritone, he started having more success with this issue.

In terms of articulation, saxophonists are often told to tongue at or near the tip of the tongue on the tip of the reed. With bass saxophone this works well for middle and higher register notes, and is even often possible on lower notes. However, it may be necessary to use a little bit more tongue, or at least articulate further back on the tongue in certain situations, depending on desired articulation quality, dynamic, range, etc. One must be particularly careful not to use too much tongue though to avoid a slap tongue articulation.

Tuning Considerations

As with any saxophone, I recommend that you familiarize yourself with the tuning tendencies of your particular instrument. The bass saxophone in particular may face a number of tuning challenges with tendencies that are often different than what is typical of the smaller saxophone sizes and can drastically vary, instrument to instrument. This is especially true between vintage and modern basses, which have opposite tuning tendencies on certain notes. In general, I suggest addressing tuning issues on the bass saxophone the same way as on any other saxophone, by experimenting with alternate fingerings, adding or subtracting keys, and by voicing up or down. The bass saxophone does possess a number of unique challenges, however, and alternate fingerings and voicing alone may not always be enough to fully correct a note's intonation. Although I do not normally recommend changing the embouchure between notes while playing saxophone, depending on the bass saxophone and the note in question, I sometimes find it necessary to drop my jaw and play as loose as possible to bring down a note that is very sharp.

Alternate Fingerings

Perhaps one of the most problematic notes on bass saxophone is middle D. Although middle D is typically sharp on all saxophones, on bass saxophone this note also faces serious issues in terms of response. Theoretically, every note on the saxophone should have its own octave vent in order to produce perfect octaves. This is impractical, however, and a compromise is made with an octave mechanism that uses two vents, one for D5-G#5, and another for A5 and above. As a result, notes with an octave vent placement that is furthest from its ideal location, such as middle D, are the most problematic. On bass saxophone, this note will typically crack or split when

using the normal fingering, especially when articulating.¹¹³ Although it may be possible to play this note with a clean response and with acceptable tuning by experimenting with your voicing, articulation or embouchure, alternate fingerings are often necessary when playing middle D's on bass saxophone.

Several alternate fingerings for middle D exist that anyone playing the bass saxophone should be aware of. One is to simply use only c1 (palm D key); although this would be flat on other saxophones, it is a viable option on the bass. This fingering has excellent response, matches the timbre of the notes below it well, and is relatively in tune (try adding Tc if the pitch is low). Additionally, instead of using the octave key, I recommend using c1 as the octave vent in conjunction with the regular fingering: this too significantly improves response. Although this may also bring the pitch down slightly, it will likely still be very sharp and is necessary to either voice it down or further modify the fingering. To help with pitch, I typically will add the low B key to this fingering, but be careful: although the cracking issue is fixed, if you are not careful this fingering may produce a brief dip in pitch similar to a diphthong, depending on your articulation. Another option that may work is to simply leave off the octave key and add the low B key. Out of all of these options for middle D fingerings, any one fingering will likely not yield the best result for all situations. For middle Eb, a similar fingering may offer similar results; instead of the octave key with the regular fingering, use c2 and add low B. I personally regularly use all of these fingerings, depending on the context. Some fingerings will be better suited for a particular passage, depending on the articulation, dynamics, and surrounding notes.

¹¹³ Curt Altarac of MusicMedic.com claims to have fixed the response and tuning issues of middle D on bass saxophone by adding a third octave vent. Currently in the prototype stage, he plans to make bass saxophones with this modification available through his line of Wilmington saxophones. He may even be able to modify existing bass saxophones to remedy the issue.

Besides these essential fingerings for middle D on bass, it is likely that additional alternate fingerings will be necessary for optimal tuning and response, depending on the type of bass saxophone and musical context. Vintage American basses often have many tuning issues which can be improved with alternate fingerings. Low D is typically quite flat and requires the addition of the low C# key to raise the pitch. One other note that is often problematic is middle C. This note is often very sharp and lacks power. However, the side C fingering fixes these issues. Many other notes can be raised if needed by the addition of the G#, Ta, or Tf keys, and lowered by closing additional keys or manipulating one's voicing or embouchure pressure.

Modern basses have fewer tuning issues in general, though they are still problematic. As opposed to the flat low D on vintage basses, low D on Selmers tends to be sharp. Besides manipulating voicing or embouchure pressure, there is not much that can be done besides modifying the instrument. In this case, you might find success by having a repair technician add some material to the inside of the tone hole. However, you must be careful not to add too much as to not affect the timbre and response of this note. Low C can be lowered slightly by the addition of a bass saxophone mute as made by Peak Performance Woodwinds that is inserted in to the bell and placed just below the C# tone hole.

Altissimo

Fingering charts for altissimo on the bass saxophone are hard to come by and are virtually nonexistent in published material. However, a number of contemporary works for bass saxophone include altissimo, and more will surely be written in the future. Two separate altissimo fingering charts are provided for both modern French-style and vintage American-style bass saxophones, on pages 74 and 79 respectively. These fingerings were tested with a Selmer Series II bass saxophone, and a Conn bass saxophone, but I encourage players to experiment

with modifying the given fingerings, adding and subtracting keys, to achieve the best tuning and response for your particular instrument. Often times the octave key makes little to no effect on modern basses, however some notes on vintage basses are more significantly affected by the octave key and its use, or lack thereof, should be taken into account to achieve improved intonation. The mouthpiece will likely also have a significant effect on the tuning of altissimo notes. These fingerings were tested with a Selmer C* bass mouthpiece, though similar results were achieved with a Jody Jazz DV bass mouthpiece. Using a Bundy mouthpiece for example, resulted in significantly lower tuning for many of the fingerings. Altissimo on the bass saxophone is relatively easy to produce compared to some of the smaller saxophone sizes, though fingerings do differ. In general, many commonly used altissimo fingerings for alto saxophone also work on the bass, though they typically sound a half-step lower than expected. Although you may choose to primarily use fingerings that are more in line with what you use on alto, when possible, I provided multiple options to choose from. Longer/fuller fingerings for example, may improve response when slurring up to an altissimo note by a large leap, or potentially provide a richer timbre.

Helpful Alternate Fingerings for Bass Saxophone¹¹⁴

Diagram illustrating alternate fingerings for the note *D* on a Bass Saxophone. The notation shows a single note *D* on a treble clef staff. To the right, five fingering diagrams are shown, each representing a different fingering option. The diagrams use circles to represent keys: white circles for keys to be pressed and black circles for keys to be held down. The diagrams show various combinations of fingerings for the keys: 1 (index), 2 (middle), 3 (ring), 4 (pinky), 5 (thumb), 6 (index), 7 (middle), 8 (ring), 9 (pinky), 10 (thumb), 11 (index), 12 (middle), 13 (ring), 14 (pinky), 15 (thumb), 16 (index), 17 (middle), 18 (ring), 19 (pinky), 20 (thumb), 21 (index), 22 (middle), 23 (ring), 24 (pinky), 25 (thumb), 26 (index), 27 (middle), 28 (ring), 29 (pinky), 30 (thumb), 31 (index), 32 (middle), 33 (ring), 34 (pinky), 35 (thumb), 36 (index), 37 (middle), 38 (ring), 39 (pinky), 40 (thumb), 41 (index), 42 (middle), 43 (ring), 44 (pinky), 45 (thumb), 46 (index), 47 (middle), 48 (ring), 49 (pinky), 50 (thumb), 51 (index), 52 (middle), 53 (ring), 54 (pinky), 55 (thumb), 56 (index), 57 (middle), 58 (ring), 59 (pinky), 60 (thumb), 61 (index), 62 (middle), 63 (ring), 64 (pinky), 65 (thumb), 66 (index), 67 (middle), 68 (ring), 69 (pinky), 70 (thumb), 71 (index), 72 (middle), 73 (ring), 74 (pinky), 75 (thumb), 76 (index), 77 (middle), 78 (ring), 79 (pinky), 80 (thumb), 81 (index), 82 (middle), 83 (ring), 84 (pinky), 85 (thumb), 86 (index), 87 (middle), 88 (ring), 89 (pinky), 90 (thumb), 91 (index), 92 (middle), 93 (ring), 94 (pinky), 95 (thumb), 96 (index), 97 (middle), 98 (ring), 99 (pinky), 100 (thumb).

Diagram illustrating alternate fingerings for the note *E_b* on a Bass Saxophone. The notation shows a single note *E_b* on a treble clef staff. To the right, a single fingering diagram is shown, representing a specific fingering option for the note. The diagram uses circles to represent keys: white circles for keys to be pressed and black circles for keys to be held down.

Specifically for Vintage Long Wrap Basses

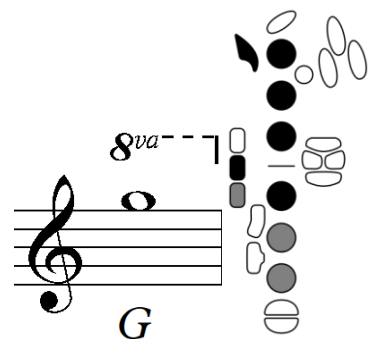
Diagram illustrating alternate fingerings for the notes *C* and *D* on a Vintage Long Wrap Bass Saxophone. The notation shows a single note *C* on a treble clef staff. To the right, a single fingering diagram is shown, representing a specific fingering option for the note. The diagram uses circles to represent keys: white circles for keys to be pressed and black circles for keys to be held down.

Diagram illustrating alternate fingerings for the note *D* on a Vintage Long Wrap Bass Saxophone. The notation shows a single note *D* on a treble clef staff. To the right, a single fingering diagram is shown, representing a specific fingering option for the note. The diagram uses circles to represent keys: white circles for keys to be pressed and black circles for keys to be held down.

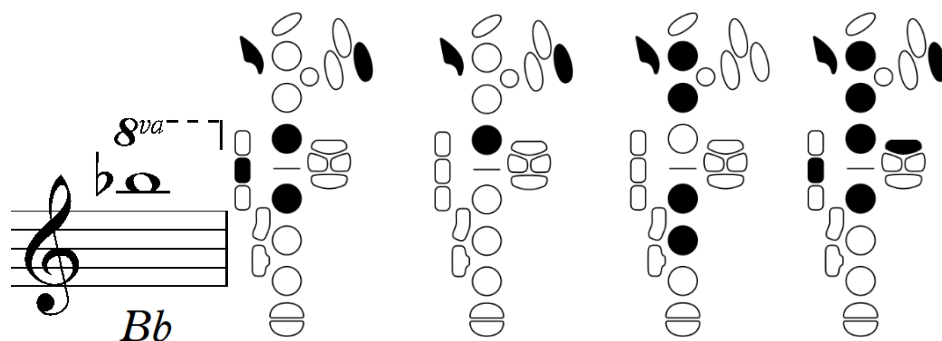
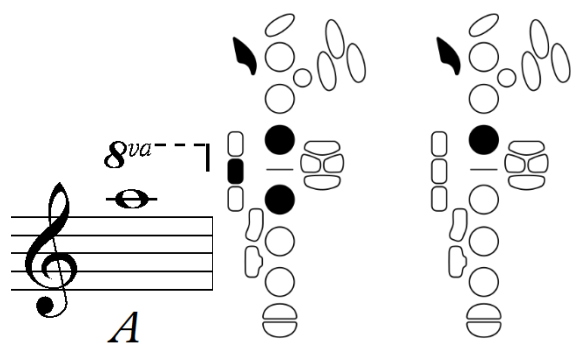
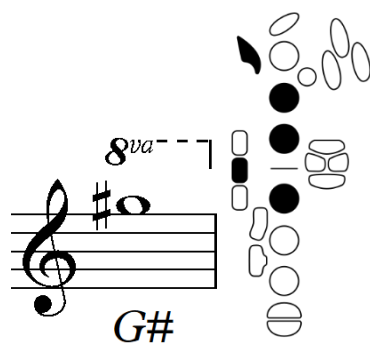
¹¹⁴ For more advice and fingerings, see the preceding “Alternate Fingerings” section on page 69. In order to achieve the best results in terms of intonation, additional fingerings may be necessary by venting or closing keys.

Bass Saxophone Altissimo Fingering Chart (for modern French-style, short wrap horns)¹¹⁵

*gray shaded keys are optional, for intonation and response



Altissimo G tends to be very sharp; it may be necessary to voice this down by as much as a quarter tone.



¹¹⁵ Reference the preceding "Altissimo" section on page 71 for more information.

B

C

C#

D

Detailed description of the fingerings: Each row shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a specific note (B, C, C#, D) with a flat sign. A dashed line labeled '8va' indicates the octave. To the right of each staff are four or five keyboard diagrams. Each diagram shows a sequence of circles representing keys. Some circles are filled black, indicating which keys are to be pressed for that fingering. The fingerings are numbered 1 through 4 or 5.

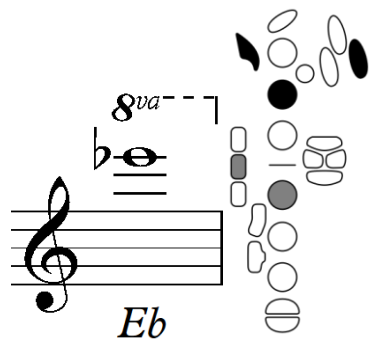


Diagram illustrating the fingering for the Eb (E-flat) chord. The notation shows a treble clef with a flat sign (b) and the chord name *E_b*. The fingering is shown on a vertical staff with circles representing strings and numbers 1-4 indicating finger positions. A dashed line labeled *8^{va}* indicates the octave position.

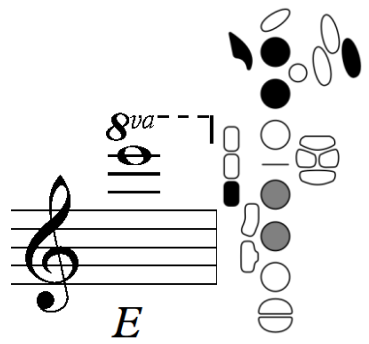


Diagram illustrating the fingering for the E chord. The notation shows a treble clef with a natural sign (no sharp or flat) and the chord name *E*. The fingering is shown on a vertical staff with circles representing strings and numbers 1-4 indicating finger positions. A dashed line labeled *8^{va}* indicates the octave position.

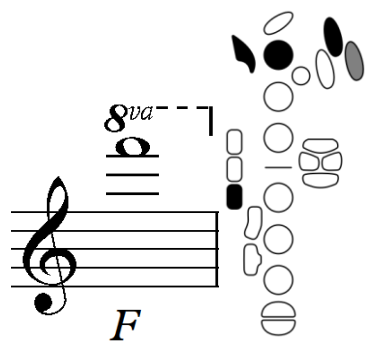


Diagram illustrating the fingering for the F chord. The notation shows a treble clef with a flat sign (b) and the chord name *F*. The fingering is shown on a vertical staff with circles representing strings and numbers 1-4 indicating finger positions. A dashed line labeled *8^{va}* indicates the octave position.

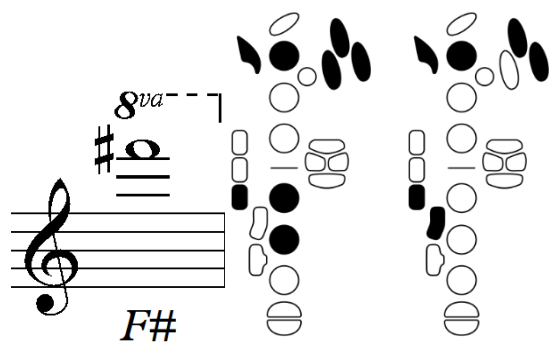


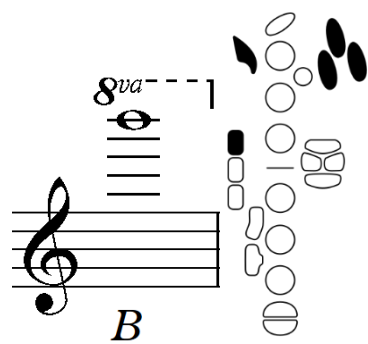
Diagram illustrating the fingering for the F# (F-sharp) chord. The notation shows a treble clef with a sharp sign (#) and the chord name *F#*. The fingering is shown on a vertical staff with circles representing strings and numbers 1-4 indicating finger positions. A dashed line labeled *8^{va}* indicates the octave position. A second vertical staff to the right shows an alternative fingering for the chord.

G

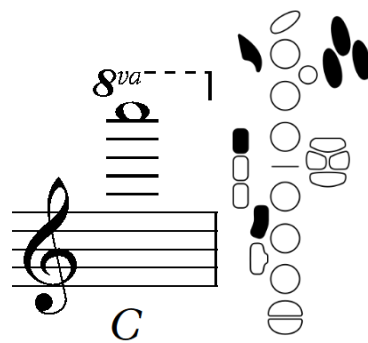
G#

A

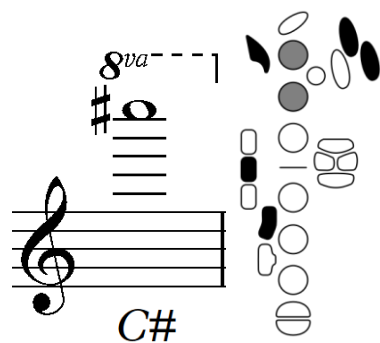
Bb



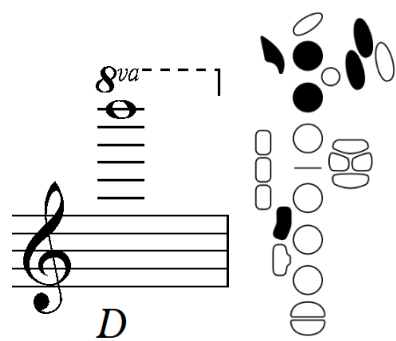
Musical notation for the note B. It features a treble clef and a staff with a whole note B. To the right, a diagram shows the fingerings for the right hand (RH) and left hand (LH) on a piano keyboard. The RH fingering is 1-2-3-4-5, and the LH fingering is 5-4-3-2-1. A dashed line labeled *8va* indicates the octave position.



Musical notation for the note C. It features a treble clef and a staff with a whole note C. To the right, a diagram shows the fingerings for the right hand (RH) and left hand (LH) on a piano keyboard. The RH fingering is 1-2-3-4-5, and the LH fingering is 5-4-3-2-1. A dashed line labeled *8va* indicates the octave position.



Musical notation for the note C#. It features a treble clef and a staff with a whole note C#. To the right, a diagram shows the fingerings for the right hand (RH) and left hand (LH) on a piano keyboard. The RH fingering is 1-2-3-4-5, and the LH fingering is 5-4-3-2-1. A dashed line labeled *8va* indicates the octave position.



Musical notation for the note D. It features a treble clef and a staff with a whole note D. To the right, a diagram shows the fingerings for the right hand (RH) and left hand (LH) on a piano keyboard. The RH fingering is 1-2-3-4-5, and the LH fingering is 5-4-3-2-1. A dashed line labeled *8va* indicates the octave position.

Bass Saxophone Altissimo Fingering Chart (for American-style, long wrap horns)¹¹⁶

*gray shaded keys are optional, for intonation and response

The chart displays four rows of fingering diagrams for altissimo notes on the bass saxophone. Each row includes a musical staff with a treble clef, a key signature, and a note name. The notes are Eb, E, F, and F#. A dashed line labeled '8va' indicates the octave. To the right of each staff is a vertical diagram of the saxophone keys, with circles representing fingerings. Some circles are solid black, some are white, and some are gray. The gray circles represent optional keys for better intonation and response.

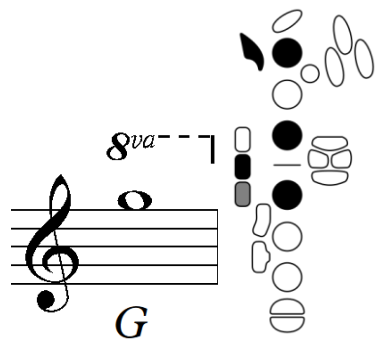
Eb

E

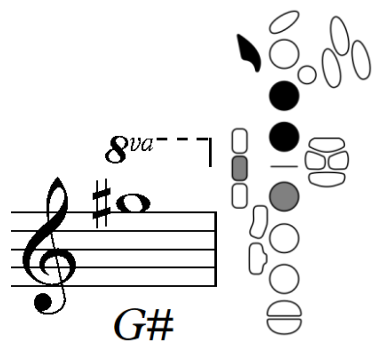
F

F#

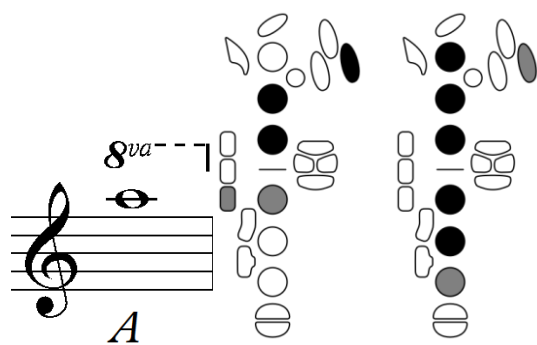
¹¹⁶ Reference the preceding "Altissimo" section on page 71 for more information.



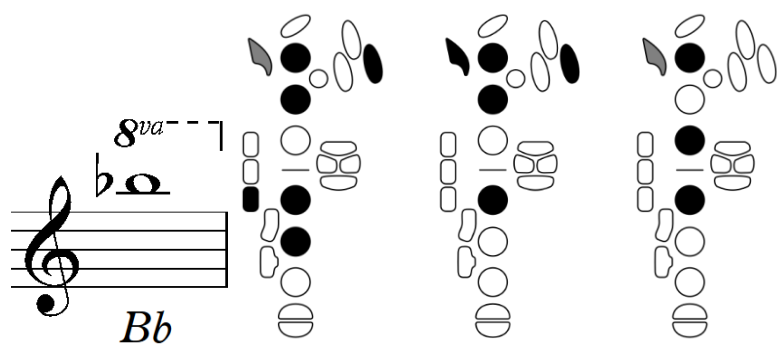
Musical notation for G: Treble clef, G note on the second line. Fingering: 8va (octave) indicated by a dashed line above the staff. Fingering diagram shows the right hand with the index finger on the G string, and the left hand with the index finger on the second fret of the G string.



Musical notation for G#: Treble clef, G# note on the second space. Fingering: 8va (octave) indicated by a dashed line above the staff. Fingering diagram shows the right hand with the index finger on the G# string, and the left hand with the index finger on the second fret of the G# string.



Musical notation for A: Treble clef, A note on the second space. Fingering: 8va (octave) indicated by a dashed line above the staff. Fingering diagram shows two possible fingerings for the right hand: one with the index finger on the A string and another with the middle finger on the A string. The left hand fingering is consistent with the G# diagram.



Musical notation for Bb: Treble clef, Bb note on the second space. Fingering: 8va (octave) indicated by a dashed line above the staff. Fingering diagram shows three possible fingerings for the right hand: one with the index finger on the Bb string, one with the middle finger on the Bb string, and one with the ring finger on the Bb string. The left hand fingering is consistent with the G# diagram.

The image displays musical notation and fretboard diagrams for four notes: B, C, C#, and D. Each note is presented on a treble clef staff with a flat sign and an *8va* marking. To the right of each staff are two diagrams of a stringed instrument fretboard, illustrating different fingering patterns for the note.

- B:** The first diagram shows the 7th fret on the 1st string (index), 5th fret on the 2nd string (middle), 4th fret on the 3rd string (ring), and 2nd fret on the 4th string (pinky). The second diagram shows the 7th fret on the 1st string (index), 5th fret on the 2nd string (middle), 4th fret on the 3rd string (ring), and 2nd fret on the 4th string (pinky).
- C:** The first diagram shows the 5th fret on the 1st string (index), 3rd fret on the 2nd string (middle), 2nd fret on the 3rd string (ring), and 1st fret on the 4th string (pinky). The second diagram shows the 5th fret on the 1st string (index), 3rd fret on the 2nd string (middle), 2nd fret on the 3rd string (ring), and 1st fret on the 4th string (pinky).
- C#:** The first diagram shows the 5th fret on the 1st string (index), 3rd fret on the 2nd string (middle), 2nd fret on the 3rd string (ring), and 1st fret on the 4th string (pinky). The second diagram shows the 5th fret on the 1st string (index), 3rd fret on the 2nd string (middle), 2nd fret on the 3rd string (ring), and 1st fret on the 4th string (pinky).
- D:** The first diagram shows the 2nd fret on the 1st string (index), 2nd fret on the 2nd string (middle), 1st fret on the 3rd string (ring), and 1st fret on the 4th string (pinky). The second diagram shows the 2nd fret on the 1st string (index), 2nd fret on the 2nd string (middle), 1st fret on the 3rd string (ring), and 1st fret on the 4th string (pinky). The third diagram shows the 2nd fret on the 1st string (index), 2nd fret on the 2nd string (middle), 1st fret on the 3rd string (ring), and 1st fret on the 4th string (pinky).

Musical notation for Eb (E-flat) in treble clef. The note is on the second line (G4) with a flat sign. A fingering of 1-2-3 is shown. A bracket labeled *8va* indicates an octave shift. To the right is a diagram of the hand with circles representing strings and dots representing finger positions.

Musical notation for E (E natural) in treble clef. The note is on the second line (G4) with a natural sign. A fingering of 1-2-3 is shown. A bracket labeled *8va* indicates an octave shift. To the right is a diagram of the hand with circles representing strings and dots representing finger positions.

Musical notation for F (F natural) in treble clef. The note is on the first space (F4) with a natural sign. A fingering of 1-2-3 is shown. A bracket labeled *8va* indicates an octave shift. To the right are two diagrams of the hand with circles representing strings and dots representing finger positions.

Musical notation for F# (F-sharp) in treble clef. The note is on the first space (F4) with a sharp sign. A fingering of 1-2-3 is shown. A bracket labeled *8va* indicates an octave shift. To the right is a diagram of the hand with circles representing strings and dots representing finger positions.

Musical notation for the note G. It features a treble clef and a single G note on the second line. A dashed line above the note is labeled "8va". To the right of the staff is a vertical column of fingerings, with the first finger (index) indicated by a black dot on the first line.

Musical notation for the note G#. It features a treble clef and a G# note on the second line, with a sharp sign (#) placed above the note. A dashed line above the note is labeled "8va". To the right of the staff is a vertical column of fingerings, with the first finger (index) indicated by a black dot on the first line.

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APPENDIX A
ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

The bass saxophone is often excluded from many resources for the saxophone. However, a number of articles about this instrument have been written in various journals. Below, I give brief descriptions of some of these articles to highlight the literature about the bass saxophone and to provide a starting place for anyone that would like to learn more.

Rollini Articles in *The Melody Maker*, 1928-1929

Beginning in December 1928, while a member of Fred Elizalde's band, Adrian Rollini wrote a series of monthly articles about the bass saxophone for the British magazine, *The Melody Maker* that was titled "The When, Why and How of the Bass Saxophone."¹¹⁷

"The When, Why and How of the Bass Saxophone"

In his first article, Rollini discusses the need for a bass instrument in dance bands and describes why the bass saxophone is superior to other bass instruments such as the tuba and the string bass. Rollini claims that the bass saxophone has all of the advantages of these instruments and none of the disadvantages. The greatest advantage of the bass saxophone that Rollini gives is its ability to be used equally well on solo melodies and rhythm parts.

"Selecting the Right Instrument"

In his next article, from January 1929, Rollini discusses various characteristics that a good bass saxophone possesses. He mentions things like the thickness of the metal, key heights, spring tension, drawn tone holes, and other aspects related to the construction of the instrument.

¹¹⁷ Adrian Rollini, "The When, Why and How of the Bass Saxophone." *The Melody Maker*, 1928-1929, <https://modernbarisax.com/category/bass-saxophone/>.

“Mouthpiece Methods”

His third article is about the importance of the mouthpiece in achieving a good tone. Rollini describes different parts of the mouthpiece and suggests using a long lay (facing) as this allows the reed to vibrate more freely and is easier to control.

“Mostly About Reeds”

In the fourth article, Rollini gives advice about reed selection, care and adjustment.

“Tone Production”

His fifth article no longer focuses on equipment, but rather what the player should do to achieve a good tone. Rollini recommends starting with long tones to establish a good tone before moving on to anything else. He also mentions that you shouldn't put the mouthpiece too far in the mouth, to maintain the most control over the reed. Rollini also discusses proper playing position and the use of a stand to hold the instrument.

“The Problem of Transposition.”

Despite the fact that the bass saxophone is built in the key of Bb, Rollini suggests learning it as a C instrument in order to avoid having to deal with transposing bass parts. Rollini also gives advice about which registers to play in depending on what part you are playing. Harmony and melody parts should use the upper range, while bass parts should only use the lower range

“Playing Bass Parts”

In article number seven, Rollini mentions that most printed arrangements include simple, unambitious bass parts that typically only have two notes per bar. Because of this, Rollini suggests improving the written bass parts and gives describes how to do this. A simple bass line with a melody is shown, and Rollini describes how he would improve the bass part with passing notes, rhythmic alterations, and breaks.

“Breaks – Their Phrasing and Accentuation”

In the next article, Rollini gives practical advice about constructing effective breaks in the bass line. Rollini notes that, most often, breaks will occur in bars fifteen-sixteen and suggests not using too many notes, using a mostly legato articulation, and not accenting passing tones. Several musical examples of breaks are given with accompanying descriptions by Rollini.

“Solo Choruses”

His final article in this series is from September 1929. A solo example solo is given which Rollini describes and he gives several suggestions in regards to soloing. In particular, Rollini suggests implementing aspects of the melody into improvised solos.

The Saxophone Symposium, Vol. XIV No. 3, Summer 1989

This issue of the *Saxophone Symposium*, a journal of the North American Saxophone Alliance, is dedicated to the bass saxophone and contains many articles on the instrument which are briefly detailed below.

“A Few Words about Low-Pitched Saxophones” – Sigurd Raschèr¹¹⁸

Raschèr discusses the early history of the saxophone as it relates to the bass saxophone, including descriptions of the instrument and its early uses. A number of pieces that used the bass saxophone are mentioned and several musical examples are included.

“Taming the Bass Saxophone” – Joseph Powel

Powel gives advice on what to look for when buying an old bass. He also describes a method of sealing pads with a spray coating to prevent air leaks through the leather. Also included are some alternate fingering suggestions for better response and tuning, and mention of the small but growing repertoire for the instrument.

“The Bass Saxophone in Jazz” – Randy Emerick

This article gives an overview of the bass saxophone in jazz music, starting with hot jazz in the 1920s, through the Big Band Era and revivalist players. Many bass saxophone players are mentioned, along with the groups and artists they played with.

“The Bass: Its Voice, Renovation, and High Register” – Mark Aronson

Aronson references several of the earliest descriptions of the saxophone, making note that they were specifically about the bass saxophone given that other saxophone sizes were not introduced until around the end of 1844. Aronson also discusses characteristics of the original sound of the saxophone that are influenced by the parabolic curvature that is no longer present on saxophones after the 1930s. Another important factor is matching the dimensions of the mouthpiece chamber with the neck, and suggests using a large chamber mouthpiece as used by Adolphe Sax. If the mouthpiece chamber is too small, intonation in the high register will be sharp. In general, Aronson suggests not to use a baritone mouthpiece, unless the size of the chamber matches the neck. Aronson also discusses

¹¹⁸ This article is also published in the *Raschèr Reader*.

correct placement of the octave vents on the bass saxophone and describes how he changed the position of the lower vent to improve response and intonation a few troublesome notes. Suggestions to deal with other intonation problems are also given, such as raising the key heights for low notes that are flat, or even filing down the tone holes. To bring a pitch down, it may be possible to add a cork crescent inside of the tone hole. A fingering chart for altissimo notes on vintage bass saxophones is also provided.

Saxophone Journal, Volume 14, Number 4. January/February 1990

This issue of the *Saxophone Journal*, is dedicated to the bass saxophone and contains many articles on the instrument which are briefly detailed below.

“Vintage Saxophones Revisited: An Historical Celebration of the Bass Saxophone” – Paul Cohen

In this article, Cohen discusses the history of the bass saxophone, from its invention to its early orchestral uses, and its use by the Six Brown Brothers and early jazz musicians such as Adrian Rollini. Cohen also mentions the bass saxophone’s use in big bands and its modern revival in jazz and concert music.

“Spencer Clark” – Robert Williams

This article gives in depth details about Clark’s life and career, primarily as a bass saxophonist playing with various artists in the US and Europe. Clark played full-time in the 1920s-1930s, and part-time after this, with a career outside of music and during retirement. An interview with Clark is also included.

“Walter Hartley’s Sonatina Giocosa for Bass Saxophone”- Laura Hunter

At the time of writing this, Hunter mentions that there were only two original concert works for bass saxophone, *Melody Variante* by Carls Frangkiser, and Walter Hartley’s *Sonatina Giocosa*, composed in 1987. Various considerations are given in regards to performing the Sonatina and descriptions of each movement, including a list of quotations present, are included.

“Making a Bass Saxophone Pad” – Emilio Lyons

This article discusses issues related to repairing a bass saxophone and describes how to make a pad for the bass saxophone if a large enough one cannot be found.

“Creative Jazz Improvisation: Beauty and the Bass” – Scott Robinson

Robinson describes the bass saxophone’s use in improvised music through jazz and avant-garde music. Musical examples and descriptions are given of an improvised Rollini bass line, as well as a solo chorus. An example of an improvised solo from a work on an album by the author is also included.

The Changing Role of the Bass Saxophone- David Robinson

Robinson gives a history of the bass saxophone’s uses, from its original uses in the 19th century, to its use in dance bands and jazz music, citing various performers and band leaders that used the bass saxophone. Robinson also discusses more recent uses of the bass saxophone in modern jazz, contemporary music, and saxophone ensembles.

Theme and Variations of the Bass Saxophone Mouthpiece – Ralph Morgan

To write this article, Morgan got a number of bass saxophone mouthpieces that he tested and took detailed measurements on. He notes that depending on the chamber size, intonation on the bass can vary greatly and that one should be careful not to choose a mouthpiece with too small of a chamber.

Writing for Bass Saxophone: An Interview with Bill Holcombe by Jim Snedeker

Holcombe discusses his experience with the bass saxophone and the benefits it provides when including it in arrangements.

Saxophone Playing Techniques: The Joy of Playing Basso- David Bilger

Bilger describes his experience with the bass saxophone and gives considerations for choosing a bass mouthpiece, as well as alternate fingering suggestions. He also describes the versatility of the instrument by discussing its use in various works.

Bass Saxophone Publications – David Demsey

Demsey gives short descriptions of saxophone ensemble works that include bass saxophone, as well as Hartley’s *Sonatina Giocosa*.

Record Reviews – Mel Martin, Joseph Viola, Paul Wagner, David Liebman, Tim Price

This section provides reviews of various albums that feature, or make use of, the bass saxophone. Included are reviews of albums by Bix Beiderbecke, Spencer Clark, The Nuclear Whales, The World Saxophone Orchestra, The Netherlands Saxophone Quartet, Scott Robinson, The International Saxophone Sextet, Red Nichols and His Five Pennies, and more.

New Products – Various Manufacturers

In this section of the journal, various manufacturers describe their mouthpieces and other products available for bass saxophone. Included are products by J.J. Babbitt Company, Bilger-Morgan, Rico, Vandoren, Woodwind (Leblanc), Selmer, and Keilwerth. In Rico's advertisement, Arnold Brillhart describes how most prominent bass players have used baritone mouthpieces with greater success over actual bass mouthpieces.

Saxophone Journal, Volume 14, Number 5. March/April 1990

Collecting Vintage Jazz Bass Saxophone Recordings – Marie Erickson

This article describes Joe Bussard's 25,000+ 78 rpm jazz record collection consisting primarily of primarily music from the 1920s and 30s. Many of these recordings include a bass saxophone and Bussard mentions several of his favorite recordings with the bass sax. A selected discography of works from Bussard's collection that use bass saxophone is also included.

APENDIX B

BASS SAXOPHONE REPERTOIRE LISTS

The following solo and chamber music repertoire lists are meant to give an idea of the sheer volume of works written for bass saxophone, as well as act as a starting place for those interested in performing works on the bass saxophone. Many of these works were commissioned by Andreas van Zoelen and most of the works on this list are unpublished and may be hard if not impossible to find any information about. To address this issue, I put an asterisk (*) in the final column of works that I was able to find some information about, either a score available for purchase, a recording, or even a mention of the work on the composer's website. Though it may be possible to find some of the other works by contacting the composer, I suggest starting with the works marked by an asterisk when looking for works to perform. I have also noticed that a number of the works that Zoelen listed as commissions for the bass saxophone are published or referenced as being for baritone saxophone or another bass instrument, likely to increase their accessibility.

Solo Bass Saxophone

Composer	Title	Year	Publisher	Duration	Dedication	
Abbinanti, Frank	Div. Solostukken				Zoelen	
Brizzi, Aldo	Barravento	1998		18'		
Brnčić, Gabriel	Baix-Concert	1991	La Ma de Guido	9'30"	Kientzy	*
Bröder, A.	Modeles	2002			Zoelen	
Bryce, J.	Piece for bass sax.	2000			Zoelen	
Carcache, Manuel	Tientos VIII	1999			Zoelen	*
Cavalone, Paolo	Le Cahier Musical d'Andreas				Zoelen	
Cavana, Bernard	Cache-sax	1984		10'		

Charlwood, D.	Celebrate the Beast	2000	Musikverlag Chili Notes		Zoelen	
Coppard, S.	Rise Again Arthur				Zoelen	
Corbett, Ian	Something Serious		Emerson		Zoelen	*
Eetenpt, R. van	Je T'aime moi non plus	1999			Zoelen	
Eyser, Eberhard	Risonanza		Edition con brio		Zoelen	
Fourchette, Alain	Digression VI	1984		5'	Kientzy	
Gambarana, A. B.	Les Liaisons Dangereuses				Zoelen	
Gill, Mathew	Five Songs for Bass Saxophone Solo	2001	Dorn	7'	Eason	*
Grisey, Gérard	Anubis et Nout	1990	Durand	11'30"		*
Jacopucci, Alberto	Pressione				Zoelen	
Kan-no, S.	Work				Zoelen	
Kan-no, S.	Otnaca				Zoelen	
Klein, Joseph	Der Schönheitsmolch	2000		4'30"	Zoelen	*
Konecny, M.	Solo voor bassaxofoon				Zoelen	
Kox, H.	Inventies	2005			Zoelen	
Laurillard, A.	Gotta Blow!	1999			Zoelen	
Lerstad, Terje Bjorn	Improvisation & tarentella	1979	NB Noter	7'		*
Liturri, V.	Seeds	2003			Zoelen	
Lybin, Dmitry V.	Lamento with cradle song	2001			Zoelen	
Marina, Christian	Infra	2007		5'	Kientzy	
Mateju, Zbyněk	Saxomania	1994			Zoelen	
Matheson, Ian	Extra Time	1999	Scottish Music Information Centre Ltd	5'	Zoelen	*
Matheson, Ian	One More Time	2003	Scottish Music Information Centre Ltd	5'	Zoelen	
Meyering, C.	The Lonely Crowd				Zoelen	
Meyering, Chiel	Het vocht verdwijnt niet...	2000			Zoelen	
Miereanu, Costin	Aksak	1983	Salabert	5'	Kientzy	*
Milita, F.	Candy Floss				Zoelen	
Moerk, Alice	Zanities	2001			Zoelen	*
Moussa, S.	Saxophonie				Zoelen	
Mozejko, P.G.	Muziek voor van Zoelen	2003			Zoelen	
Palinckx, Jacq	Haal Loop Draai	2013		6'	Zoelen	*

Rainford, Robert	Rumblings	2012	Forton Music			*
Rubbert, Rainer	Vision (Urban music II)	1993				
Samodayeva, Ludmila	Solo no. 5	1999		2'	Kientzy	
Scelsi, Jacinto	Maknongan	1976		4'		*
Shehetynsky, A.	Utterance				Zoelen	
Solare, Juan	Carpe Noctem	2000		6'	Zoelen	
Souza, J.	Soliloquy	1999			Zoelen	
Sporck, A.	Concept	1999			Zoelen	
Sporck, Jo	Epitaaf voor Fasolt	1999	Hubert Hoche Musikverlag	4'	Zoelen	*
Sporck, M.	Bassatelle	1999			Zoelen	
Summers, A.	ABZ				Zoelen	
Taccani, G.C.	Mit Äxten Spielend	1999	Edizioni Suvini Zerboni	6'	Zoelen	
Tessei, T.	From the Abyss				Zoelen	
Toebosch, Louis	Uit de diepten (De profundis)	2000	Donemus	10'	Zoelen	*
Torstensson, Klas	Solo	1988		10'		*
Tortensson, Klas	Solo from Licks and Brains	1988		10'		*
Tzanou, Athanasia	Desert				Zoelen	
Usher, P.	Blue Ostinato				Zoelen	
Vakkilainen, A.	Metos X				Zoelen	
Vanneschi, L.	Il quarto angelo				Zoelen	
Weydom- Claterbos, P.	8 stukken voor bassax solo	2000			Zoelen	
Winter Owens, Terry	Klage				Zoelen	
Witney, Paul	Ritual 4(son of the dragon)	2000	Reed Music	5'	Zoelen	*
Wright, J. W.	The Story Already Told				Zoelen	
Yanov-Yanovsky, F.	Monologue	2001			Zoelen	
Zoelen, Andres van	Aus der Tiefe				Zoelen	

Bass Saxophone and Piano

Composer	Title	Inst.	Year	Publisher	Duration	Dedication
Ameller, André	Kryptos	Bssx, pno				
Barnhouse, C.L.	Barbarossa : air varie	Bssx, pno	1935	Barnhouse		*

Cavalcanti, Nestor de Hollanda	3 Canções Populares	Bssx, pno	1999		7'	Zoelen	*
Charlwood, D.A.	A Box with Holes	Bssx, pno	2002			Zoelen	
Dijk, Jan van	La Rue Grande	Bssx, pno	2007			Zoelen	
Frangkiser, Carl	Melody Variante	Bssx, pno	1939	Belwin	3'30"		*
Goddard, Philip	The Unknown	Bssx, organ		Musik Fabrik			*
Guentzel, Gus	Mastadon	Bssx, pno	1945	Mills Music			*
Hartley, Walter	Sonatina Giocosa	Bssx, pno	1988	Tenuto Publications	5'15"		*
Hartley, Walter	Romance	Bssx, pno	1996	Ethos Publications	2'		*
Hartley, Walter	Concertino no. 2	Bssx, pno reduction	2000	Wingert-Jones		Zoelen	*
Hartley, Walter	Sonorities VIII	Bssx, pno	1996	Ethos Publications	1'		*
Mabry, Drake	Silent Durations XXXVIII	Bssx, pno	2011		9'	Zoelen	*
Maros, Miklós	Danza profunda	Bssx, pno	2012		7'	Zoelen	*
Matheson, Ian	Taking Shape	Bssx, pno				Zoelen	
Nispen tot Pannerden, van Than	Andrebas	Bssx, pno				Zoelen	
Potter, R.	Sonate	Bssx, pno	2000			Zoelen	
Radlescu, Horatiu	Astray	Snsx through Bssx -1 player, prepared pno	1985				
Samodayeva, Ludmila	Le rêve d'un saxophoniste	Bssx, organ	2006		14'	Kientzy	
Solomons, David	Rose Fantasia	Bssx and strings - pno reduction	1999	Musik Fabrik		Zoelen	*
Stoop, H.	Tiglio	Bssx, pno	2005			Zoelen	
Theobald, J.	Digressions on L'Homme Arme	Bssx, pno			4'	Zoelen	*
Vaughn, John	Gorges	Bssx, pno	1991				

Bass Saxophone and Electronics

Composer	Title	Inst.	Year	Duration	Dedication	
Alla, Thierry	Ancestral	Bssx/tam tam and electronics		8'30"		*
Allen, John Clay	Turn	Bssx, live electronics	2020	8'30"	Hopkins	*
Arranz, Ángel	Qumran	Bssx, electronics	2001	17'		*
Azguime, Miguel	Para saxofone	Bssx, electronics	2003	13'		

Berenguer, José-Manuel	Fuego	Bssx, tape	1998	8'		
Crijns, Frank	Merge	Bssx, tape	2006	10'	Zoelen	*
Cruz, Zulema de la	Chio	Bssx, tape	1989	8'	Kientzy	
Fuzzy	Three Retrospects	Bssx, electronics	2013	19'		*
Giusto, A.	Bottom	Bssx, tape			Zoelen	
Ioachimescu, Calin	Musique spectrale	Ssx/Bssx, tape				
Kurtag, György	Interrogation	Tsx/Bssx/CBssx, tape	1983	11'30"		
Molteni, Marco	Saturna pyri	Asx/Bssx, tape	1986	6'		
Rua, Vitor	Truffle Sax	Bssx, tape	1998	6'	Kientzy	
Rua, Vitor	A.I.R.	Bssx, tape	1998	9'		
Teruggi, Daniel	Xatys	Bssx/Tsx/Ssx, electronics	1988	18'30"		
Torstenson, Klas	Solo	Bssx, electronics		10'		
Tousis, G.	Tyrvie	Bssx, electronics	2010	6'	Kientzy	
Vaggione, Horacio	THEMA	Bssx, tape	1985	10'	Kientzy	
Vaggione, Oracio	Thema	Bssx, electronics	1985	10'		
Wolman, Amnon	Exit	Bssx, tape			Zoelen	

Bass Saxophone Concertos

Composer	Title	Inst.	Year	Publiher	Duration	Dedication
Cibiescu, Julia	Concerto	Bssx, strings	2007			Kientzy
Cooman, Carson	Concerto	Bssx, Strings	1999	Musik Fabrik	20'	Zoelen *
Dijk, Jan van	Concerto	Bssx, Strings	1999	MuziekGroep Nederland	3'30"	Zoelen *
Dumitrescu, Iancu	Astrée Lointaine	Bssx, Winds, Pno, Perc	1992			Delangle *
Dumitrescu, Iancu	Orbite d'Uranus Concerto	Bssx, Orchestra				Delangle
Ebenhöh, Horst	Konzert, op. 76	Bssx, Orchestra			25'	
Hartley, Walter	Concertino no. 2	Bssx, Band	2000	Wingert-Jones		Zoelen *
Israel, Brian	Double Concerto	Snsx, Bssx, Band	1984			
Kroupova, O.	Agapé	Bssx, Orchestra				Zoelen
Solomons, David	Rose Fantasia	Bssx, Strings	1999	Musik Fabrik		Zoelen *
Thomas, Stefan	Engführung	Bssx, Orchestra	2006			Zoelen *

Bass Saxophone Chamber Music

Composer	Title	Inst.	Year	Publisher	Duration	Dedication	
Blauvelt, Peter	Herbstliches	Eh, Bssx, pno	2001			Zoelen	*
Braun, Gerhard	Discorsi I	Eh, Bssx		Edition Gravis		Zoelen	*
Brophy, Gerard	Bisoux	Eh, Bssx				Zoelen	
Bryce, James	Three Days	Eh, Bssx				Zoelen	
Charlwood, David	Chase Me	Eh, Bssx	2000	Musikverlag Chili Notes		Zoelen	
Charlwood, David	Reign or Cheyenne	Eh, Bssx		Musikverlag Chili Notes		Zoelen	*
D'Adamo, Daniel	Coeli et terræ	Bssx, contrabass sax	2000	Billaudot			*
de Azevedo Souza, Jose	Dialogue	Ob, Bssx	2000			Zoelen	
Devillers, Jean-Baptiste	Ground	Bssx, string quintet	2003		4'	Kientzy	
DiBetta, Philippe	Fissures	Bssx, Harp	1991		4'		
Dijk, Jan van	Ce qui passe	Eh, Bssx	2004			Zoelen	
Dijk, Jan van	Trois arabesques a deux	Ob, Bssx	2003	MuziekGroep Nederland		Zoelen	
Dumitrescu, Iancu	Nadir	Bssx, Cl	1990				
Dumitrescu, Iancu	Mnemosyne	Bssx, Octobass fl, Perc, Prepared pno, Tape	1994		13'30"		
Eeten, Ruud van	Concerto	Eh, Bssx, orch	2004			Zoelen	
Eeten, Ruud van	Van Kalmthout liederen	Eh, Bssx, voice	2006			Zoelen	
Eyser, Eberhard	Permutazioni Interfogliate	Eh, Bssx	2000	Edition Con Brio		Zoelen	
Gill, B.	Kalpa	Bssx, Harpsichord, Perc				Zoelen	
Groot, Rokus de	Cadenza	Bssx, Harp	1993		9'		*
Hartley, Walter	Duet	2 Bssx	2003	Tunuto Publications		Zoelen	*
Hartley, Walter	Invention for Two	Eh, Bssx	2000	TrevCo		Zoelen	
Hartley, Walter	Old American Hymn Duet	Eh, Bssx		TrevCo		Zoelen	
Holbrooke, Joseph	Serenade for 12 Instruments	various, including Bssx	1915				
Kivu, A.	Roar	Bssx, Pno, Perc, Tape				Zoelen	
Kroupova, Olga	Duetti Amichevoli	Eh, Bssx	2005	Edition Gravis		Zoelen	

Lechner, Adam	Square Peg in a Round Hole	Bsx, Bssx	2017	Dorn		
LEMAY, Robert	Misu no kisetsu	Bssx, Voice	1998	Deitions Jobert		Zoelen
Linden, Johan van der	Lament	Bsx, Bssx	2003	Molenaar	6'	
Longo, Paolo	Dialogues en mode rouge	Eh, Bssx				Zoelen
Mabry, Drake	Crystal	4 Ssx, Bssx	2000			Zoelen
Maros, Miklós	Trio saxetto	Bassett Horn, Bssx, Pno	1996		7'	
Maros, Miklós	Paarweise	English Horn, Bssx	2001		8'	Zoelen
Maros, Miklós	Paarweise	Eh, Bssx	2003	Swedish Music Information Centre		Zoelen
Matheson, Iain	On Bartok Street	Ob, Bssx	2000			Zoelen
May, Beth S.	Ruck	Eh, Bssx				Zoelen
Nelissen, B.	Saxofolie	Snsx through Bssx, 2 players	1999			Zoelen
Nelissen, B.	Mikrokorstmos	C melody, Bssx	2001			Zoelen
Newton, Bret	Romance	Bssx, strings	2004		5'30"	
Owens, Terry Winter	Lay your shadows on the sundial	Eh, Bssx				Zoelen
Reinshagen, Frank	Study for low woodwinds	Eh, Bssx				Zoelen
Schoonenbeek, Kees	Titbits	Eh, Bssx	2001	Bronsheim Muziekuitgeverij		Zoelen
Simon, Art Oliver	Strahl A	Eh, Bssx, Ssx	2003			Zoelen
Slohouwer, Jan	Tafelmuziek bij een galgenmaal	Eh, Bssx				Zoelen
Solomons, David	Rose Fantasia	Bssx, string quartet		Musik Fabrik		Zoelen
Solomons, David	At sevens and eights	Eh, Bssx	2006	Musikfabrik		Zoelen
Solomons, David	A rose by any other name	Eh, Bssx		Musikfabrik		Zoelen
Solomons, David Warin	Two Duos	English Horn, Bssx		Musik Fabrik	2'45"	
Sporck, Antal	Scène d'Air	Eh, Bssx	2001			Zoelen
Sporck, Jo	Abîme d'amour	Eh, Bssx	2003			Zoelen
Taccani, Giorgio C.	Spectrum	Eh, Bssx	2003			Zoelen
Theiler, Christoph	Gate I	Eh, Bssx	2001			Zoelen

Toebosch, Louis	Intro-Canto-Fine	Eh, Bssx	2003	MuziekGroep Nederland		Zoelen	
Voorn, Joop	Sonate	Eh, Bssx/C-melody	2005			Zoelen	
Waddle, Kellach P.	Some sunsets strange but beautiful	Eh, Bssx				Zoelen	
Yanov- Yanovsky, Felix	Tryptich	Eh, Bssx	2003			Zoelen	
Zoelen, Andres van	Weinig Woorden	Eh, Bssx	2004			Zoelen	
Zoelen, Andres van	Judgment Day	Eh, Bssx, tape	2001			Zoelen	
Zoelen, Andres van	Van Kalmthout liederen	Eh, Bssx, voice	2006			Zoelen	

APPENDIX C

LARGE ENSEMBLE REPERTOIRE LISTS

Although the bass saxophone is not typically used in most wind ensemble literature today, it was commonly included in wind ensemble scores of the first half of the twentieth-century. The following list is primarily meant to give an idea of how often the bass saxophone was used in works for wind ensemble, both in original compositions, as well as arrangements and transcriptions. Some of the works in this list may be out of print, hard to come by, or available in multiple editions from various publishers (some of which may not include bass saxophone parts). Additionally, any saxophonists performing works on this list may consider speaking with their ensemble director about possibly using the bass saxophone, if one is available to them.

Works marked with an asterisk in the final column specifically indicate that the bass saxophone part is optional, and works that are marked with a “D” include a bass saxophone part that is doubled, typically with the Bb contra bass clarinet. The given year is typically the composition date, not the date of a later edition. However, for arrangements and transcriptions, the given year corresponds to the date that it was scored for wind band, not the original date of composition.¹¹⁹

This appendix also includes repertoire lists for orchestral works that use the bass saxophone and musicals that use the bass saxophone in the pit.

¹¹⁹ Most of this list was compiled by the use of the Wind Repertory Project’s database. www.windrep.org

Wind Ensemble Works with Bass Saxophone

Composer	Title	Year	Publisher	Optional (*), Doubled,(D)
Sousa, John Philip (ed. Fennell)	The Washington Post March	1889	Carl Fischer	
Sousa, John Philip	The Belle of Chicago	1892	Harry Coleman	
Sousa, John Philip, (ed. Fennell)	Manhattan Beach March	1893	Theodore Presser	
Laurendeau, Louis-Philippe (arr.), Josef Franz Wagner	Under the Double Eagle	1895	Carl Fischer	
Sousa, John Philip	The Stars and Stipes Forever	1896	Theodore Presser	
Tobani, Theodore Moses (arr.), Franz von Suppé	Morning, Noon and Night in Vienna	1896	Carl Fischer	
Sousa, John Philip (ed. Fennell)	Hands Across the Sea	1899	Theodore Presser	
Laurendeau, Louis-Philippe (arr.), Genaro Codina	Zacatecas	1903	Carl Fischer	
Grainger, Percy Aldridge (ed. Kreines)	The Lads of Wamphray	1905	Carl Fischer	
Sousa, John Philip, (ed. Brion.)	The Invincible Eagle	1905	C.L. Barnhouse	
Laurendeau, Louis-Philippe (arr.), Pytor Tchaikovsky	Marche Slav	1906	Carl Fischer	
Blankenburg, Hermann	The Gladiator's Farewell, Op. 48	1907	Hawkes &Son	
Sousa, John Philip, (ed. Fennell)	The Fairest of the Fair	1908	Theodore Presser	
Holst, Gustav (ed. Mathews)	First Suite in Eb for Military Band	1909	Boosey & Hawkes	
Safranek, V.F. (arr.), Jacques Offenbach	Les Contes d'Hoffmann	1910	Carl Fischer	
Holst, Gustav (ed. Mathews)	Second Suite in F for military band	1911	Boosey & Hawkes	
King, Karl	A Night in June	1912	C.L. Barnhouse	
King, Karl	Princess of India	1912	C.L. Barnhouse	
Laurendeau, Louis-Philippe (arr.), Franz Lehár Jr.	Gold and Silver	1912	Bovaco	
Safranek, V.F. (arr.), Antonín Dvořák	Slavonic Dance No. 3, Op. 46	1912	Carl Fischer	
Safranek, V.F. (arr.), Antonín Dvořák	Largo, From The New World Symphony	1912	Carl Fischer	
Safranek, V.F. (arr.), Ferdinand Hérold	Zampa Overture	1912	Carl Fischer	

Safranek, V.F. (arr.), Thomas Ambroise	Raymond Overture (The Queen's Secret)	1912	Carl Fischer	
Sousa, John Philip	Tales of a Traveler	1912	Southern Music Company	
King, Karl	Barnum and Bailey's Favorite	1913	C.L. Barnhouse	
Lake, Mayhew (arr.), Carl Friedman	Slavonic Rhapsody, Op. 114, No.1	1913	Carl Fischer	
Laurendeau, Louis-Philippe (arr.), Alex Lithgow	Invercargill March	1913	Carl Fischer	
Safranek, V.F. (arr.), Richard Wagner	Tannhäuser Overture	1913	Carl Fischer	
Schmitt, Florent	Dionysiaques	1913	Durand	*
Alford, Kenneth J. (ed. Fennell)	Colonel Bogey	1914	Boosey & Hawkes	
Sousa, John Philip (ed. Byrne)	New York Hippodrome	1915	Wingert-Jones Publications	
Grainger, Percy Aldridge	Marching Song of Democracy	1917	Hal Leonard	
Alford, Kenneth J.	Hallelujah chorus from the oratorio "The Messiah"	1918	Boosey & Hawkes	
Clark, Thomas (arr.), Léo Delibes	March and Procession of Bacchus	1918	BOVACO Music Publications	
Grainger, Percy Aldridge	Irish Tune from County Derry	1918	Carl Fischer	
Clarke, Herbert	Stars in a Velvety Sky	1919	Carl Fischer	
Grainger, Percy Aldridge	Children's March	1919	Southern Music Company	
Ketèlbey, Albert	In a Persian Market	1920	Bosworth & Co.	
Bancroft, Richard (arr.), Alexander Glazunov	Autumn from "The Season"	1921	Carl Fischer	
Goldman, Edwin Franko	The Chimes of Liberty	1922	Leo Feist	
Hall, Robert Browne, Harold Walters (ed.)	Independientia	1922	Carl Fischer	
Godfrey, Charles (arr.), Albert Ketèlbey	Bells Across the Meadows	1923	Boosey & Hawkes	
Ketèlbey, Albert	In a Chinese Temple Garden	1923	Bosworth & Co.	
Sousa, John Philip	Nobles of the Mystic Shrine	1923	Sam Fox	
Sousa, John Philip	March of the Mitten Men	1923	Theodore Presser	
Yoder, Paul (arr.), Zez Confrey	Dizzy Fingers	1923	Mills Music	

Sousa, John Philip	The Black Horse Troop	1924	Sam Fox	
Williams, Ralph Vaughan	Toccata Mariziale	1924	Boosey & Hawkes	*D
Williams, Ralph Vaughan	Folk Song Suite	1924	Boosey & Hawkes	D
Sousa, John Philip	The National Game	1925	Southern Music Company	
Sousa, John Philip	The Gridiron club	1926	Sam Fox	
Sousa, John Philip	The Pride of the Wolverines	1926	Sam Fox	
Lake, Mayhew (arr.), Charles Gounod	La Reine de Saba	1927	Carl Fischer	
Lake, Mayhew (arr.), Gioacchino Rossini	Barber of Seville Overture	1927	Carl Fischer	
Sousa, John Philip	Magna Carta March	1927	Theodore Presser	
Hume, Ord (arr.), William Myddleton	Imperial Echoes	1928	Boosey & Hawkes	
Page, Clifford (arr.), Jean Sibelius	Finlandia	1928	Theodore Presser	
Lake, Mayhew (arr.) Camille Saint-Saëns	La Princess Jaune, Op. 30	1929	Carl Fischer	
Sousa, John Philip	University of Illinois March	1929	John Church	
Sousa, John Philip	The Daughters of Texas	1929	John Church	
Sousa, John Philip, (ed. Fennell)	Daughters of Texas	1929	Theodore Presser	
Fillmore, Hennry	The Klaxon	1930	Filmore Brothers	
Leidzén, Erik (arr.), Stanleigh Friedman	Down the Field	1930	Leo Feist	
Sousa, John Philip	The Royal Welch Fusiliers	1930	Theodore Presser	
Sousa, John Philip	The Wildcats	1930	Harold George	
Sousa, John Philip	Harmonica Wizard	1930	Theodore Presser	
Clark, Thomas (arr.), Percy Aldridge Grainger	Country Gardens	1931	Schirmer	
Clarke, Herbert (arr.), Antônio Carlos Gomes	Il Guarany : Overture	1931	Carl Fischer	
King, Karl	National Glory	1931	C.L. Barnhouse	
Sousa, John Philip	The Northern Pines	1931	Schirmer	
Sousa, John Philip	The Aviators	1931	Theodore Presser	

Sousa, John Philip (arr.), Traditional	Turkey in the Straw, Cowboy's and Old Fiddler's Breakdown	1931	Schirmer	
Eisenberg, Ralph	Little Monster Overture	1932	C.L. Barnhouse	
Roth, Alfred (arr.), Earl Elleson McCoy	Lights Out	1932	Carl Fischer	
Wood, Haydn	Mannin Veen: Dear Isle of Man	1933	Boosey & Hawkes	D
Alford, Harry L. (arr.), Ernest Seitz	The World is Waiting for the Sunrise	1934	Harold Gore	
Filmore, Henry (arr.), Smith John Stafford	Star-Spangled Banner	1934	Carl Fischer	
Huffer, Fred (arr.), Carleton Colby	Headlines: a modern rhapsody	1934	Hal Leonard	
King, Karl	The Big Cage	1934	C.L. Barnhouse	
Yoder, Paul (arr.), J. Fred Coots	Santa Claus Is Comin' to Town	1934	Alfred Music	
King, Karl	The University of North Dakota	1935	C.L. Barnhouse	
Leidzén, Erik (arr.), Ferde Grofé	On the Trail from "Grand Canyon Suite"	1935	Robbins	
Sartorius, Harvey A. (arr.), Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov	Dance of the Buffoons	1935	M. Witmark	
Winter, Aubrey (arr.), Jaime Texidor	Amparito Roca	1935	Boosey & Hawkes	
Alford, Harry (arr.), Oscar Straus	My Hero	1936	Ludwin Doblinger	
Brown (arr.), Franz Liszt	Les Préludes	1936	Masters Music	
Goldman, Edwin Franko	Bugles and Drums	1936	Carl Fischer	
King, Karl	The University of Chicago	1936	C.L. Barnhouse	
King, Karl	Herald of Progress	1936	C.L. Barnhouse	
Leidzén, Erik (arr.), Antonín Dvořák	Finale from "Symphony No. 9"	1936	Carl Fischer	
Leidzén, Erik (arr.), Johann Sebastian Bach	Jesu, Joy of a Man's Desiring	1936	Carl Fischer	
Leidzén, Erik (arr.), Modest Mussorgsky	Coronation Scene from "Boris Godunov"	1936	Carl Fischer	
Seredy, Julius (arr.), Julius Fučík (trans. Laurendeau)	Entry of the Gladiators : Thunder and Blazes	1936	Carl Fischer	
Drumm, George (arr.), Richard Wagner	Lohengrin. Introduction to Act III	1937	Carl Fischer	
Duthoit, William James (arr.), Alexander Glavunov	Valse de Concert	1937	Boosey & Hawkes	
Duthoit, William James (arr.), William Walton	Crown Imperial	1937	Boosey & Hawkes	

Grainger, Percy (arr.), Gabriel Fauré	Tuscan Serenade, Op.3, No.2	1937	G&M Brand	
Grainger, Percy Aldridge, (ed. Fennell)	Lincolnshire Posy	1937	Ludwig Masters	
Henning, Franz (arr.), Hector Berlioz	Overture to "Béatrice et Bénédict"	1937	Carl Fischer	
Henning, Franz (arr.), Mikhail Glinka	Russlan and Ludmilla Overture	1937	Carl Fischer	
Lake, Mayhew. (arr.), T.R. Boyer	Joyce's 71st NY Reg't March	1937	Carl Fischer	
Leidzén, Erik (arr.), Gioacchino Rossini	William Tell Overture	1938	Carl Fischer	
Alford, Harry L.	A Step Ahead	1938	Harry L. Alford Studios	
Bennett, David (arr.), Morton Gould	The Deserted Ballrom	1938	Mills Music	
Brown, Conway (arr.), Haydn Wood	A Manx Overture	1938	Boosey & Hawkes	
Cailliet, Lucien (arr.), Richard Wagner	Elsa's Procession to the Cathedral	1938	Alfred Music	
Drumm, George (arr.), St. Clair Floyd	The Steel King	1938	Carl Fischer	
Enesco, George	Roumanian Rhapsody No.1	1938	Boosey & Hawkes	D
Keller, Don	Northern Trails	1938	Keller	
King, Karl	Hawkeye Glory	1938	C.L. Barnhouse	
King, Karl	War March of the Tartars	1938	King Music House	
Lake, Mayhew (arr.), Carl Teike	Old Comrades	1938	Carl Fischer	
Lake, Mayhew (arr.), Johann Sebastian Bach	Sixteen Chorales	1938	Schirmer	
Leidzén, Erik (arr.), Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov	Procession of the Nobles	1938	Carl Fischer	
Maddy, Joseph (arr.), Howard Hanson	Nordic Symphony No. 1: (movement 2)	1938	Carl Fischer	
Maddy, Joseph (arr.), Howard Hanson	Nordic Symphony No. 1 : second movement	1938	Carl Fischer	
Roberts, Charles (arr.), Béla Kéler	Lustspiel Overture, Op. 73	1938	Carl Fischer	
Roberts, Charles (arr.), Louis Ganne	Father of Victory	1938	Carl Fischer	
Skornicka, Joseph (arr.), Franz J. Haydn	Overture Militaire	1938	Alfred Music	
Yoder, Paul (arr.), Harry J. Lincoln	Repsz Band	1938	Mills Music	
Yoder, Paul (arr), Duke Ellington	Rhythmooods	1938	Mills Music	

Bainum, Glenn (arr.), Giuseppe Agostini	The Three Trumpeters	1939	Alfred Music	
Cailliet, Lucien (arr.), Jean Sibelius	Finlandia	1939	Carl Fischer	
Cailliet, Lucien (arr.), Tolchard Evans	Lady of Spain	1939	Sam Fox	
Goldman, Edwin Franko	Golden Gate March	1939	Belwin	
Leidzén, Erik (arr.), Irving Berlin	God Bless America	1939	I. Berlin	
Leidzén, Erik (arr.), Johann Sebastian Bach	Komm, Susser Todd	1939	Carl Fischer	
Yoder, Paul	Mantilla	1939	Alfred Music	
Yoder, Paul (arr.), John Bratton	The Teddy Bear's Picnic	1939	Hal Leonard	
Bennett, David (arr.), Morton Gould	Cowboy Rhapsody	1940	Ludwig Masters	
Bennett, David (arr.), Sigmund Romberg	The Student Price: Overture	1940	Alfred Music	
Goldman, Edwin Franko	Christmas March	1940	Schirmer	
Goldman, Richard Franko (arr.), Jean Sibelius	Onward, Ye Peoples!	1940	E.C. Schirmer Muisic Co.	
Harvey, Russell (arr.), Giovanni Palestrina	Adoramus Te	1940	Elkan-Vogel	
Olivadoti, Joseph	El Caballero	1940	Rubank	
Wood, Haydn	The Seafarer	1940	Hawkes & Son	D
Yoder, Paul (arr.), Irving Berlin	Say It with Music	1940	Irving Berlin	
Yoder, Paul (arr), Eric Coates	Knightsbridge March	1940	Chappell	
Chiaffarelli, Albert (arr.), George Frideric Handel	Hallelujah Chorus from the Oratorio "The Messiah"	1941	Carl Fischer	
Chidwester, Lawrence (arr.), Guillaume Belay	Au Pays Lorrain	1941	Sam Fox	
Gould, Morton	Jericho Rhapsody	1941	Alfred Music	
Grainger, Percy (arr.), César Frank	Choral No. 2 for Organ	1941	G&M Brand	
King, Karl	King Henry	1941	K.L. King Music House	
Lang, Philip (arr.), José Padilla	El Relicario	1941	Masters Music	
Leidzén, Erik (arr.), Frank Churchill	Snow White Overture	1941	Irving Berlin	
Leidzén, Erik (arr.), Johann Strauss	Blue Danube Waltz	1941	Carl Fischer	
Richards, Joseph John (arr.), Various	March of Time No.2	1941	C.L. Barnhouse	
Sartorius, Harvey A. (arr.), Frederick Handel	Royal Fireworks Music	1941	Theodore Presser	

Schuman, William	Newsreel in Five Shorts	1941	Schirmer	
Yoder, Paul (arr.), Frank W. Meacham	American Patrol	1941	Ludwig Masters	
Alford, Kenneth J.	Eagle Squadron	1942	Boosey & Hawkes	
Bennett, Robert Russell (arr.), George Gershwin	Porgy and Bess: Selections	1942	Alfred Music	
Creston, Paul	Legend, Op. 31	1942	Leeds Music	
Grofé, Ferde (arr.), George Gershwin	Rhapsody in Blue	1942	Alfred Music	
Keller, Don	Front and Center	1942	Keller	
Lang, Philip (arr.), Morton Gould	Red Cavalry March	1942	Mills Music	
Leidzén, Erik (arr.), Johann Sebastian Bach	Toccatina and Fugue in D Minor	1942	Carl Fischer	
Leidzén, Erik (arr.), Modest Mussorgsky	Pictures at an Exhibition	1942	Carl Fischer	
Morino, Carlo (arr.), Amilcare Ponchielli	Dance of the Hours	1942	Carl Fischer	
Morrissey, John	Caribbean Fantasy	1942	Edward B. Marks	
Whitney, Leonard (arr.), Frank Meacham	American Patrol	1942	Mutual Music Society	
Yoder, Paul	Gypsy Princess Overture	1942	Belwin Music	
Yoder, Paul (arr.), Morton Gould	Pavanne	1942	Mills Music	
Filmore, Henry	Waves March	1943	Carl Fischer	
Lang, Philip J. (arr.), Jack Lawrence	Heave Ho! My Lads, Heave Ho!	1943	Kaycee Music Co.	
Saverino, Louis	March of the Women Marines	1943	Belwin	
Lake, Mayhew (arr.), Jerome Kern	The Way You Look Tonight	1944	T.B. Hams	
Milhaud, Darius	Suite Française	1944	MCA Music	
Reed, Alfred	Russian Christmas Music	1944	Alfred Music	*
Alford, Kenneth J.	The Voice of the Guns	1945	Boosey & Hawkes	
King, Karl	The Trombone King	1945	K.L. King Music House	
Lang, Philip (arr.), Aaron Copland	Celebration, from Billy the Kid	1945	Boosey & Hawkes	
Lang, Philip (arr.), Morton Gould	Yankee Doodle	1945	Schirmer	
Satz, Ralph (arr.) Arman Khachaturian	Armenian Dances	1945	Masters Music	
Still, William Grant	From the Delta	1945	Alfred Music	

Gould, Morton	Ballad for Band	1946	Schirmer	
Lake, Mayhew (arr.), Jacques Offenbach	Orpheus in the Underworld Overture	1946	Carl Fischer	
Lake, Mayhew. (arr.), Giuseppe Verdi	Overture to "La Forza del Destino"	1946	Carl Fischer	
Yoder, Paul (arr.), Sergei Prokofiev	March, Op. 99	1946	Hal Leonard	
Bennett, David (arr.), Cole Porter	Cole Porter Selection	1947	Harms, Inc.	
Bennett, David (arr.), Grigoraş Dinicu	Hora Staccato	1947	Carl Fischer	
Elkus, Jonathan (arr.), Charles Ives	The Alcotts	1947	Schirmer	
Grainger, Percy Aldridge	The Power of Rome and the Christian Heart	1947	Masters Music	
Leidzén, Erik (arr.), Aram Khachaturian	Three Dances from Gayane Ballet	1947	Leeds Music	
Leidzén, Erik (arr.), Burton Lane	How Are Things in Glocca Morra?	1947	Crawford	
Righter, Charles (arr.), Dimitri Shostakovich	Finale from Symphony No. 5	1947	Boosey & Hawkes	D
Campbell-Watson, F and R.Gillette (arr.), Paul Fauchet	Symphony in Bb	1948	Alfred Music	
Copland, Aaron	An Outdoor Overture	1948	Boosey & Hawkes	
Guentzel, Gus	Comandante, Marche Espagnole	1948	C.L. Barnhouse	
Leidzén, Erik (arr.), Richard Rodgers	Carousel: Selections	1948	Hal Leonard	
Morrissey, John	Carnival Day in New Orleans	1948	Remick Music	
Red Cavalry March	Dark Eyes	1948	Mills Music	
Richards, Joseph John	The Golden Bear	1948	C.L. Barnhouse	
Stebbing, George (arr.), Giacomo Puccini	La Bohème	1948	G. Ricordi	
Leidzén, Erik (arr.), Richard Wagner	Trauersinfonie	1949	Associated Music Publishers	
Reed, Owen H.	La Fiesta Mexicana	1949	Alfred Music	*
Kay, Hershy (arr.), George Frideric Handel	Water Music Suite	1950	Theodore Presser	
Leidzén, Erik	First Swedish Rhapsody	1950	Mills Music	
Schuman, William	George Washington Bridge	1950	Schirmer	
Grundman, Clare	The Green Domino	1951	Boosey & Hawkes	
Grundman, Clare	The Blue-Tail Fly	1951	Boosey & Hawkes	

Jirak, Karel Bohuslav	Symphonic Scherzo	1951	Alliance Publications	
Yoder, Paul (arr.), "Original Dixieland Jazz Band"	Tiger Rag	1951	Leo Feist	
Grundman, Clare	Fantasy on American Sailing Songs	1952	Boosey & Hawkes	
Yoder, Paul (arr.), Harold Arlen	The Wizard of Oz Fantasy	1952	Leo Feist	
Cailliet, Lucien (arr.), Gioacchino Rossini	La Gazza Ladra	1954	Masters Music	
Farrell, Kenneth	El Matador Overture	1954	Hal Leonard	
Jacob, Gordon	Flag of Stars	1954	Boosey & Hawkes	
Piket, Frederick	Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star, Variations for Concert Band	1954	Schirmer	*
Jenkins, Joseph Wilcox	American Overture for Band, Op. 13	1955	Theodore Presser	
Cailliet, Lucien (arr.), Georges Bizet	Overture to "The Pearl Fishers"	1956	Sam Fox	
Grundman, Clare	Music for a Carnival	1957	Boosey & Hawkes	
Schuman, William	Chester	1957	Theodore Presser	
Giannini, Vittorio	Symphony III	1958	Belwin Mills	
Schuman, William	When Jesus Wept	1958	Theodore Presser	
Werle, Floyd (arr.), Henri René	Passion in Paint	1958	Mills Music	
Cailliet, Lucien (arr.), Giuseppe Verdi	Overture to "Nabucco"	1959	Sam Fox	
Jacob, Gordon (arr.), Gustav Holst	Moorside March	1960	Boosey & Hawkes	
Bainum, Glenn (arr.), Jaromir Weinberg	Polka and Fugue from "Schwanda, the Bagpiper"	1961	Associated Music Publishers	
Benson, Warren	Remembrance	1962	Shawnee Press	
Grundman, Clare	Hebrides Suite	1962	Boosey & Hawkes	
Kay, Ulysses S.	Forever Free, A Lincoln Chronicle for concert band	1962	Associated Publishers	
Dragon, Carmen (arr.), Samuel Ward	America the Beautiful	1963	Alfred Music	*
Giannini, Vittorio	Fantasia for Band	1963	Belwin Mills	
Krance, John (arr.), Leonard Bernstein	Danzón	1963	Harms, Inc.	
Jacob, Gordon (arr.), William Byrd	The Battell	1964	Boosey & Hawkes	

Gotkovsky, Ida	Symphonie por Orchestra d'Harmonie	1965	Molenaar Music	
Reed, Alfred (arr.), Edward Elgar	Nimrod, from Enigma Variations	1965	Alfred Music	*
Gotkovsky, Ida	Concerto for Alto Saxophone and Wind Band	1966	Molenaar Music	
Celardi, Alessandro (arr.), Olivio di Domenico	Concerto per Banda	1967	Scomegna Edizioni Musicali	
Husa, Karel	Concerto for Alto Saxophone and Concert Band	1967	Hal Leonard	
Schuman, William	The Band Song	1967	Theodore Presser	
Brown, Conway (arr.), Carl Maria von Weber	Second Concerto for Clarinet	1968	Boosey & Hawkes	D
Husa, Karel	Music for Prague	1968	Associated Music Publishers	D
Schuman, William	Dedication Fanfare	1968	Theodore Presser	
Jacob, Gordon	Fantasia for Euphonium and Band	1969	Boosey & Hawkes	
Jacob, Gordon (arr.), Giles Farnaby	Giles Farnaby Suite	1969	Boosey & Hawkes	
Husa, Karel	Apotheosis of this Earth	1970	Associated Music Publishers, In.	* D
Reed, Alfred	A Jubilant Overture	1970	C.L. Barnhouse	*
Husa, Karel	Concerto for Percussion and Wind Ensemble	1971	Associated Music Publishers, In.	
Terzian, Alicia	Atmósferas	1971	Ediciones Encuentros	bass is only sax used
Reed, Alfred	Armenian Dances, Part One	1974	Sam Fox	*
Husa, Karel	Al Fresco	1975	Associated Music Publishers	D
Reed, Alfred (arr.), Johann Sebastian Bach	My Jesus, Oh What Anguish	1975	C.L. Barnhouse	*
Schuman, William	Be Glad Then America	1975	Theodore Presser	
Reed, Alfred (arr.), Johann Sebastian Bach	Come Sweet Death	1976	C.L. Barnhouse	*
Krenek, Ernst	Dream Sequence, Op. 224	1977	Universal Edition	2 bass sax parts
Reed, Alfred	Othello	1977	Hal Leonard	

Reed, Alfred (arr.), Johann Sebastian Bach	Jesu, Joy of a Man's Desiring	1981	C.L. Barnhouse	*
Reed, Alfred (arr.), Johann Sebastian Bach	Sheep May Safely Graze	1981	C.L. Barnhouse	*
Benson, Warren	Symphony II	1982	Carl Fischer	
Benson, Warren	Wings	1984	Carl Fischer	
Gotkovsky, Ida	Concerto pour Grand Orchestre d'Harmonie	1984	Molenaar Music	
Husa, Karel	Smetana Fanfare	1984	Associated Music Publishers	
Lancen, Serge	Symphonie de l'eau	1984	Molenaar Music	
Reed, Alfred (arr.), Johann Sebastian Bach	Sleepers, Awake!	1984	C.L. Barnhouse	*
Reed, Alfred (arr.), Johann Sebastian Bach	If Thou Be Near	1984	C.L. Barnhouse	*
Reed, Alfred (arr.), Johann Sebastian Bach	God Still Lives	1985	C.L. Barnhouse	*
Reed, Alfred (arr.), Johann Sebastian Bach	Our Father Who Art in Heaven	1988	C.L. Barnhouse	*
Reed, Alfred	A Celebration Fanfare	1989	C.L. Barnhouse	*
Reed, Alfred	Mr. Music	1990	C.L. Barnhouse	*
Binney, Malcolm (arr.), Ottorino Respighi	Huntingtower	1991	Maecenas Music	*
Felice, Frank	Antics (Pagliacciata)	1996	Mad Italian Brothers Ink Publishing	*
Husa, Karel	La Couleurs Fauves	1996	Associated Music Publishers	D
Hutcheson, Jere	Caricatures	1997	Schirmer	
Reed, Alfred	The Golden Year	1997	C.L. Barnhouse	*
Boyd, John (arr), Ralph Vaughan Williams	Flourish for Glorious John	1998	Ludwig Masters	
Reed, Alfred (arr.), Johann Sebastian Bach	Arioso	1998	C.L. Barnhouse	*
Foster, Robert (arr.), José Franco Ribate	Agüero	1999	Alfred Music	D
Reed, Alfred	Mellennium III	1999	C.L. Barnhouse	*
Reed, Alfred	Sumus Futuro	1999	C.L. Barnhouse	*

Ponsoda, Amando Blanquer	Entornos	2000	Molenaar Music	
Deval, Juan-Gonzalo Gómez	Dragón Elliot, Symphonic Poem to a Drawing	2001	Rivera Editores	
Godfrey, Daniel	Shindig	2001	Carl Fischer	
Maslanka, David	Traveler	2003	Carl Fischer	
Felice, Frank	Fanfare and Dances from the Court of the Woodland King	2004	Mad Italian Brothers Ink Publishing	*
Qian, Chen	A Lovely Rose	2004	HeBu	
Barnes, James	Jubilation Overture	2005	Southern Music Company	*
Hesheng, Wang	Yuanming Yuan	2005	HeBu	
Cober, Jan (arr.), Zoltán Kodály	Peacock Variations	2006	De Haske	
Dan, Chen (arr.), Traditional	The Love Song of Kangding	2006	HeBu	
Lynch, John P.	Where You There?	2006	C. Alan Publications	
Rouse, Christopher	Wolf Rounds	2006	Boosey & Hawkes	
Bolcom, William	First Symphony for Band	2008	Hal Leonard	
Maslanka, David	Symphony VIII	2008	Carl Fischer	
Basford, Daniel	Night Journey	2009	Maecenas Music	Bass, and optional contrabass and subcontrabass
Plog, Anthony	Textures	2010	Editions Bim	
Brotons, Salvador	Symphony No.6, Op. 122	2011	Brotons & Mercadal	
Navarro, Oscar	El Arca de Noé	2011	Oscar Navarro Music	3 bass sax parts
Basford, Daniel	Symphony No. 1	2013	Maecenas Music	
Carvalho, Luis	Chiaroscuro, Três Esquissos para Banda Sinfónica	2016	Molenaar Music	
Simms, Bekah	Amok	2016	Canadian Music Center	
Waespi, Oliver	Out of Earth	2016	Beriato Music	*
Daugherty, Michael	Of War and Peace	2017	Bill Holab Music	*
Pina, Jose Alberto	Ghost Ship	2017	Molenaar Music	

Copley, Katahj	Haywire	2018	Katahj Copley Music	*
Copley, Katahj	Nova	2019	Katahj Copley Music	*
Dooley, Paul	Manifestos	2019	Paul Dooley	*

Orchestral and Operatic Works with Bass Saxophone

Composer	Title	Year	Opera (*)
Kastner, William	Le dernier roi de Juda	1844	*
Havély, Fromental	Le Juif errant	1852	*
Fry, William	Hagar in the Wilderness	1853	
Magnard, Alberic	Symphony no. 1	1890	
Strauss, Richard	Symphonia Domestica, Op. 53	1903	
Holbrooke, Joseph	Hommages, Symphony no. 1	1908	
Holbrooke, Joseph	The Children of Don	1912	*
Indy, Vincent D'	La légende de Saint-Christophe	1920	*
Lazar, Philip	Tziganes	1925	
Schoenberg, Arnold	Von Heute auf Morgen	1929	*
Grisey, Gérard	Dérives	1974	
Stockhausen, Karlheinz	Samstag aus Licht, Lucifer's Dance	1983	*

Musicals that Use Bass Saxophone in the Pit Orchestra

Composer	Title	Year
Bernstein, Leonard	Wonderful Town	1953
Hammerstein, Oscar	Me and Juliet	1953
Wilson, Sandy	The Boy Friend	1954
Porter, Cole	Silk Stockings	1955
Bernstein, Leonard	West Side Story	1957
Wilson, Meredith	The Music Man	1957
Styne, Jule	Gypsy	1959
Coleman, Cy	Wildcat	1960
Goldman, James	A Family Affair	1962

Sondheim, Stephen	Anyone Can Whistle	1964
Styne, Jule	Funny Girl	1964
Tierney, Harry	Irene (revised version)	1973
Menken, Alan	A Christmas Carol	1994
Shire, David	Big the Musical	1996
McHugh, Jimmy	Lucky in the Rain	1997

APENDIX D

BASS SAXOPHONE RECORDINGS

Bass Saxophone Discography

Few albums solely feature the bass saxophone as in Spencer Clark's LP, *Spencer Clark Play's his Bass Saxophone Sweet and Hot*, however, there are many albums that feature the bass saxophone on one or more tracks. This is by no means a fully encompassing list, but it does include many albums that feature the bass saxophone in a prominent way, not just as an accompanying instrument.

- Brötzmann, Peter. *Low Life*. Celluloid-5016. 1993
 Carter, James. *Chasin' the Gypsy*. Atlantic Recording Corp-7567-83304-2. 2000
 Clark, Spencer. *The Art of Bass Sax*. Fat Cat Jazz-171. 1973
 Clark, Spencer. *Spencer Clark and his Bass Sax play Sweet and Hot*. Audiophile-131. 1979
 Crijs, Frank. *[B]ONE*. Vonk-14. 2015
 Easton, Jay. *So Low*. De Profundis. 2003
 Gold, Harry. *Harry Gold & His Pieces of Eight, Live in Leipzig*. Lake Records-LA5003. 1985
 Hod'a, Pavol. *Sax-O-Phun*. Pavlik RecordsPA01562131. 2017
 Kientzy, Daniel. *IBERSAX*. Nova Musica-NMCD 5106. 2000
 Klein, Joseph. *Improbable Encounters*. Innova Records-873. 2014
 Stetson, Colin. *All This I Do for Glory*. 2017
 Stetson, Colin. *Never Were the Way She Was*. 2015
 Stetson, Colin. *New History Warfare Vol. 3: To See More Light*. 2013
 Stetson, Colin. *New History Warfare Vol. 2. Judges*. 2011
 Stetson, Colin. *New History of Warfare Vol. 1*. 2008
 Stetson, Colin. *Stones*. 2012
 Stetson, Colin. *Those Who Didn't Run*. 2011
 Allen, Clay and Lucas Hopkins. *Turn*. 2021
 Zoulek, Nick. *Enter Branch*. Innova Records. 2021
 Zoulek, Nick. *Rushing Past Willow*. Innova Records-953. 2016

Suggested Listening List

The following list comprises of various recordings that feature the bass saxophone or use it in a historically significant way, throughout history. Many prominent performers are included, with several listening suggestions provided for each artist. Given the sheer output of Rollini's work and his prominence as a bass saxophonist, a larger number of his recordings has been included to show his evolution as a player over time. There are of course many recordings and artists that feature the bass saxophone that are not included below, but this list will hopefully give you a starting place for finding listening examples of the bass saxophone. Many of these recordings can be found on YouTube or various streaming services, as well as on the Discography of American Historical Recordings website.¹²⁰

Six Brown Brothers

“Bull Frog Blues.” 1916

“At the Darktown Strutters Ball.” 1917

Harry Yerkes's Orchestra

“Roses at Twilight.” 1919

“Burning Sands.” 1922

Billy Fowler with the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra

“You've Got to Get Hot.” 1923

“West Indian Blues.” 1923

“Shake Your Feet.” 1923

Coleman Hawkins with the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra

“I Can't Get the One I Want.” 1924

“Carolina Stomp.” 1925

“Spanish Shawl.” 1925

“Nobody's Rose.” 1925

“Pensacola.” 1925

“Hop off.” (Louisiana Stompers). 1927

Philadelphia Orchestra, Conducted by Stokowski

Stravinsky, *Firebird Suite*. 1924

Saint-Saëns, *Danse Macabre*. 1925

Tchaikovsky, *Marche Slave*. 1926

Adrian Rollini

“I Wish I Could Shimmy Like My Sister Kate.” California Ramblers. 1922

“I Love Me.” California Ramblers. 1923

¹²⁰ <https://adp.library.ucsb.edu/index.php>

"Oh Joe!" Varsity Eight. 1923
 "Sittin' In A Corner." Vegabonds. 1923
 "I Must Have Company." California Ramblers. 1924
 "I Ain't Got Nobody to Love." California Ramblers. 1925
 "That's All There Is (There Ain't No More). Cliff Edwards. 1925
 "San." The University Six. 1926
 "Brand New Mama." California Ramblers. 1926
 "Stockholm Stomp." California Ramblers. 1927
 "Cornfed." Red Nichols and His Five Pennies. 1927
 "Five Pennies." Red Nichols and His Five Pennies. 1927
 "Beatin' The Dog." Joe Ventuti's Blue Four. 1927
 "Clementine." The Goofus Five. 1927
 "Crazy Words, Crazy Tune. California Ramblers. 1927
 "At The Jazz Band Ball." Bix Beiderbecke and His Gang. 1927
 "Dixie." Fred Elizalde's band. 1928
 "Tiger Rag." Fred Elizalde's band. 1928
 "Arkansas Blues. Fred Elizalde's band. 1928
 "Sugar Step." Fred Elizalde's band. 1928
 "My Pet." Fred Elizalde's band. 1928
 "Crazy Rhythm." Fred Elizalde's band. 1928
 "Allah's Holiday." Red Nichols and His Five Pennies. 1929
 "Karavan." Louisiana Rhythm Kings. 1930
 "Ragging The Scale." Joe Venuti and His Blue Four. 1930
 "Beloved." Adrian Rollini and His Orchestra. 1933
 "Sugar." Adrian Rollini and His Orchestra. 1934
 "Davenport Blues." Adrian Rollini and His Orchestra. 1934
 "Bouncin' In Rhythm." Adrian Rollini and His Tap Room Gang. 1935
 "Swing Low." Adrian Rollini and His Orchestra. 1936.
 "Stuff, Etc." Adrian Rollini and His Orchestra. 1936
 "Bugle Call Rag." Adrian Rollini and His Tap Room Gang. 1937
 "Bill." Adrian Rollini and His Orchestra. 1938

Spencer Clark

"Would Ja?" California Ramblers. 1926
 "The Pay Off." California Ramblers. 1928
 "I Wanna Go Places and Do Things." Lud Gluskin and His Orchestra. 1929
 "A Smile Will Go A Long Long Way." Vic Berton and His Orchestra. 1935
 "Farewell Blues." Sons of Bix. 1953
 "Sunday." Sons of Bix. 1978
Sweet and Hot, full album. 1979

Min Leibrook

"San." Paul Whiteman Orchestra. 1928
 "Thou Swell." Bix Beiderbecke & His Gang. 1928

Joe Rushton

"After You've Gone." Rushton's California Ramblers. 1945
 "That's A Plenty." Red Nichols and His Five Pennies. 1949
 "Clarinet Marmalade." Red Nichols and His Five Pennies. 1940s

Harry Gold

“Long John Stomp.” 1950

“Davenport Blues.” 1985

“Poor Butterfly.” 1985

Various Performers

Anubis et Nout. Gérard Grisey. 1990

James Carter

“Nuages.” *Chasin the Gypsy*. 2000

“Artillerie Lourde.” *Chasin’ the Gypsy*. 2000

“I’ll Never Be the Same.” *Chasin’ the Gypsy*. 2000

Colin Stetson

“Judges.” 2011

“Those Who Didn’t Run.” 2011

“Hunted.” 2013

“All This I Do for Glory.” 2017

Andreas van Zoelen

“Der Schonheitsmolch.” 2014

“Danza Profonda.” Miklós Maros. 2014

“Merge.” 2015

Nick Zoulek

“Silhouette of a Storm-bent Tree.” 2016

“These Roots Grow Deep.” 2016

“Egregore.” 2020

Pavol Hod’a

Sonatina Giocosa. Walter Hartley. 2017

Moon Hooch

“Nonphysical.” 2020

“Keep it Moving.” 2020

“Bass Horns.” With Andrew Huang. 2020

Lucas Hopkins

“Turn, for bass saxophone and electronics.” John Clay Allen. 2020

“To Ash.” *Turn*. John Clay Allen. 2021

“To Stone.” *Turn*. John Clay Allen. 2021

Select Artists Playlists

Adrian Rollini: <http://bit.ly/Rollini-bass>

Joe Rushton: <https://bit.ly/Rushton-Bass>

Harry Gold: <https://bit.ly/Gold-Bass>

Spencer Clark: <http://bit.ly/Clark-Bass>

Charlie Jackson (King Oliver’s Creole Jazz Band): <https://bit.ly/Jackson-Bass>

Min Leibrook: <https://bit.ly/Leibrook-Bass>

Billy Fowler: <https://bit.ly/Fowler-Bass>

Coleman Hawkins: <https://bit.ly/Hawkins-Bass>

Charlie Ventura: <http://bit.ly/Ventura-Bass>
Lucas Hopkins: <http://bit.ly/Hopkins-Bass>
Daniel Kientzy: <http://bit.ly/Kientzy-Bass>
Nick Zoulek: <http://bit.ly/Zoulek-Bass>
Colin Stetson: <http://bit.ly/Stetson-Bass>
Uptown Lowdown: <http://bit.ly/Uptownlowdown-Bass>
Andreas van Zoelen: <http://bit.ly/Zoelen-Bass>
Burt Brandsma: <https://bit.ly/Brandsma-Bass>
James Carter: <http://bit.ly/Carter-Bass>

Videos Related to the Bass saxophone

The Lowest of the Low: <http://bit.ly/Bass-Documentary>
Why More Composers Should Use the Bass Saxophone: <http://bit.ly/WritingforBass>
Vince Giordano: There's a Future in the Past: <http://bit.ly/Giordano-Documentary>