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SECTION I – THE TECHNICAL FOUNDATION

Chapter 1: Ranges, Transpositions, Characteristics and Restrictions of Instrument Families

- 1) This chapter will define the ranges, transpositions, general characteristics and restrictions of the more available instruments comprising today's big bands and jazz/rock ensembles.
Each instrument family will be detailed. Although this information can always be used as a reference source, it is the arranger's obligation to become familiar with and relate to the specifications of *all* the instruments as soon as possible.
- 2) It is suggested you ask musicians playing instruments that you are not familiar with, specific questions regarding inherent weaknesses of their instruments. Make it your business to gain a realistic knowledge of them all.
- 3) I should add that I have not attempted to go into the characteristics of some of the newer synthesized and electronic instruments such as the Moog Synthesizer and any number of other rather more extreme electronic devices. I am still in the process of studying the devices in this category, which seem to me worthwhile, and they are quite rare in the overall big band and average jazz/rock or pop group even today.

THE SAXOPHONE FAMILY

- 4) Saxophones, as a family, function as a flexible section of the band. The blending character of the saxophone helps to give our jazz and jazz/rock ensembles their unique sound.
- 5) Many stylistic effects can be produced on the various saxes, such as slurs, degrees of vibrato, no vibrato, fall offs, bending of notes, staccato and sforzando attacks. Saxes have a distinct ability to articulate and blend with the brass section.
- 6) Saxes are capable of very fast arpeggios, scale runs, skips and leaps.
- 7) The saxophone family consists of:
 - Bb Soprano Sax
 - Eb Alto Sax
 - Bb Tenor Sax
 - Eb Baritone Sax
 - Bb Bass Sax
- 8) You will be shown each instrument's CONCERT RANGE (where it actually sounds) and its TRANSPOSED or WRITTEN RANGE. Each instrument in the saxophone family has the same written range.

Ex. #1



- 9) TRY SINGING BALLAD PHRASES YOU WRITE. If YOU run out of breath, the players won't be far behind you.
- 10) In a slow tempo a whole note can present several problems, i.e., where does the cutoff occur? The following examples show several solutions to this problem, which, in every instance, you have to decide and notate accordingly.

Ex. #282



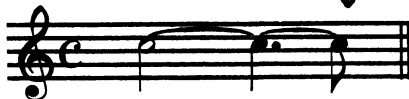
OFF?

Ex. #283



OFF

Ex. #284



OFF

Ex. #285



OFF

- 11) Try to conceive ballad phrasings as legato statements rather than short, interrupted, choppy fragments. This is a basic way of thinking to obtain a smooth flow.

ROCK PHRASINGS

- 12) A jazz/rock chart can actually use conventional jazz phrasings for the horns, with a rock rhythm section, or any degree of authentic rock phrasings for horns. Decide exactly WHERE your chart fits in this type of conception.

- a) In the more authentic big band rock phrasings, eighth notes are usually phrased short.

Ex. #286

