Alligator Boogaloo
By Lou Donaldson
Arranged by Terry White

INSTRUMENTATION

Conductor
1st Eb Alto Saxophone
2nd Eb Alto Saxophone
1st Bb Tenor Saxophone
2nd Bb Tenor Saxophone (Optional)
Eb Baritone Saxophone (Optional)
1st Bb Trumpet
2nd Bb Trumpet
3rd Bb Trumpet (Optional)
1st Trombone
2nd Trombone (Optional)
3rd Trombone (Optional)
Guitar Chords
Guitar (Optional)
Piano
Bass
Drums

Optional/Alternate Parts
C Flute
Bb Clarinet
Vibraphone
Tuba (Doubles Bass)
Horn in F (Doubles 1st Trombone)
Baritone Horn T.C./Bb Tenor Saxophone (Doubles 1st Trombone)
NOTES TO THE CONDUCTOR

In 1967, alto saxophonist Lou Donaldson recorded an album entitled *Alligator Boogaloo*. The tune on the album by the same name was actually a “riff tune” composed on the spot to fill out three minutes remaining on the album. The style is a combination of hard bop and soul jazz. The term boogaloo is used for a style of music in the 1960s that was a fusion of African American rhythm and blues & soul music with the mambo Latin style.

This arrangement is structured around the two-measure rhythmic pattern in the introduction. The staccato notes should really pop and the bassline should contrast with the legato quarter notes on beats 3 & 4 of the second measure of the pattern.

The melody provides an excellent opportunity to have students learn to “ghost” notes. Ghost notes typically occur on the “+” of the beat, where the wind player fingers the note as usual, but only provides about 65% of the air flow behind it. In addition, have the students play the note before the ghost note as long as possible. The resulting sound is a musical phrase that is less stiff. This concept is also utilized in swing interpretation as well.

Sometimes the noteheads will be replaced with an “x” to indicate a ghosted note.

Regarding articulation, staccatos are short, but not clipped or too short. The marcato or rooftop accent is detached and accented—think “daht.” Tenutos of course mean full value. Speaking of full value, always give full length to notes, especially half, dotted-half, and whole notes. Releases are equally important. Make sure the ensemble and sections release together and with a clean release. It will definitely make your band sound more polished and mature.

Notice that although this a 12-bar blues form, unlike many forms of blues, the harmony does not go to the IV7 chord (B♭7) in m. 2. The I7 chord (F7) is played for the first four measures.

This is an excellent tune for beginning improvisers. Feel free to open up the solo sections as needed.

The full ensemble at m. 57 gives the ensemble a chance to stretch and takes the tune from being a combo vehicle to a traditional big band. There are optional cues for the melody in this arrangement and it gives almost everyone an opportunity to learn the melody to *Alligator Boogaloo*.

Enjoy the music of Lou Donaldson!

—Terry White

Terry White is a retired music educator having taught instrumental music at all levels—from beginning band to college jazz ensembles—for over 34 years. He has been a composer, performer, and bandleader in the Portland, Maine area. Terry has written for many idioms including the Portland Symphony Orchestra, marching band, jazz ensemble, and concert band. His music has been performed at the Midwest Clinic in Chicago, listed on the NYSMA list, and is a published composer. Terry presently writes and performs with the Portland Jazz Orchestra and is an active adjudicator and festival conductor. Visit: www.twhitemusic.com