

HISTORY AND USE OF THE SAXOPHONE

Credit for the invention of the saxophone goes to Adolph Sax, a French instrument maker. It is supposed that the idea for the saxophone was suggested to him by the "Ophicleide," an instrument now obsolete. Records show that the instrument was invented in the year 1840, and patented in 1846.

The saxophone found its way into the French military bands, and over a period of time became recognized also as a solo instrument by many of the great composers. Some of those who have used it in their compositions are: Bizet, Glazounov, Ravel, Debussy, etc. However, the saxophone did not attain any considerable amount of popularity until it was introduced into the American dance orchestras. At present, it may be said that virtually all dance orchestras have anywhere from one to five saxophones. They are generally used in the following combinations:

One saxophone—usually a tenor, sometimes an alto or baritone.

Two saxophones are rarely used.

Three saxophones—two altos and one tenor.

Four saxophones—two altos and two tenors, occasionally two altos, one tenor and one baritone.

Five saxophones—usually two altos, two tenors and one baritone.

Some of the larger orchestras, and especially radio groups, use more than five in varying combinations.

While on the one hand it must be admitted that the saxophone has not had wide acceptance as a concert instrument, on the other, it has proven itself to be the back-bone of the dance orchestra. Its tremendous value in the latter type of musical combination results from its expressive, singing quality, its flexibility in technical passages and its fullness of tone, especially when three or more saxophones are used together as a concerted section.

Practically all saxophonists find it useful and convenient to double on the clarinet; in fact, every professional saxophonist is expected to play the clarinet well. Some saxophonists double also on other related instruments, such as flute, oboe and bassoon. The latter doubles are used more by saxophonists in theatres and large radio groups, than by those in dance orchestras.

PHRASES ON DOMINANT SEVENTH CHORDS

Using chord notes only, to familiarize you with the notes that actually form each chord.

The musical score is organized into three sections, each corresponding to a dominant seventh chord: G7, D7, and C7. Each section contains four staves of music, for a total of 12 staves. The G7 section is in C major (one sharp), the D7 section is in D major (two sharps), and the C7 section is in F major (two flats). Each staff begins with the chord symbol (G7, D7, or C7) and a C-clef. The music consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, with various articulations such as accents (>) and slurs. Some passages include triplets, indicated by a '3' over the notes. The score is designed to help the learner internalize the specific note patterns of each dominant seventh chord.