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PREFACE

This booklet on saxophone basics is meant to provide a handy reference guide for daily practicing. Its portability should enable a student to easily carry it with him or her as desired. It is purposely written in a direct and summarizing style.

For detailed explanations of why certain principles work, diagrams and demonstration we refer you to David Liebman's book ***Developing A Personal Saxophone Sound*** (Dorn Publications) and the DVD titled ***A Complete Guide To Saxophone Sound Production*** (Caris Music Services).

The principles espoused here are applicable to all styles and the entire saxophone family.

Enjoy
David Liebman
Matt Vashlishan

It may also be beneficial to take an etude or transcribed solo which you are familiar with and play it at a very slow tempo while watching the tuner. If you have a recording of the etude or solo, play along with the recording and pay close attention to your intonation.

Don't forget to include a wide range of dynamics, for it requires different muscles to play soft than to play loud and most of all go slowly. Another challenge is to try to match the color of one note to the next, making adjustments along the way.

ARTICULATION

The reed can be conceived as an extension of the tongue. Articulation is produced by the amount of tongue area used from the edge going back no more than approximately one-half inch (depending upon whether the

reed is soprano, baritone, etc.) in relation to how much of the reed surface moving inward from the edge is stuck, again depending upon which saxophone reed is being played.

For example, when the tongue is in the "EE" position (described earlier), very light, almost legato tonguing can be easily accomplished because the edge of the tongue is already in close proximity to the edge of the reed.

There are three general areas for both the reed and tongue which can be conceptualized for purposes of articulation, always remembering that these are broad generalizations with many gradients in between.

1. Approximately 1/16th of an inch in from the edge of the reed and tongue as in the "EE" position and saying "TEE".

1. Various forms of vibrato ranging from jaw movement to a slight quivering of the lips and other techniques, always remembering that vibrato is a combination of the speed of the vibrato and its intensity (wide or small wave).

2. Pitch bending by using the larynx as described above in the overtone exercises.

3. Portamento (sliding) also known as "finger bends". These are created by a fast and "smear"-like motion from a neighboring tone(s) up to the target note. For a quick bend, it could begin from a half step below, or for a more dramatic slide from a whole or even minor third below (depending upon the ease of the fingerings).

When combined with laryngeal and embouchure adjustments, portamento can sound very seamless (like a trombone gliss) and voice-like.



4. Miscellaneous techniques such as use of the voice to growl or even "sing" along or against a pitch; false fingerings resulting in color and slight pitch deviations; altissimo (high register above F#) and multi-phonics (two or more notes simultaneously sounded) which are extensions of the overtone laryngeal feeling accompanied by altered fingerings.

The best way to explore expressive devices is through study of other artist's ways of doing it, attempting to mimic them.